



Internal Migration in India Initiative

National Workshop  
on Internal Migration and  
Human Development in India

6–7 December 2011

Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, India

Workshop Compendium

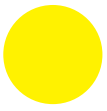
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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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IN COLLABORATION WITH  
Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) | Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)



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Social and Human Sciences (SHS)

UNESCO New Delhi Office

B-5/29 Safdarjung Enclave

New Delhi 110029, India

Tel: + (91) 11 26713000

Fax: + (91) 11 267 13001/3002

Email: [newdelhi@unesco.org](mailto:newdelhi@unesco.org)

Website: [www.unesco.org/newdelhi](http://www.unesco.org/newdelhi)

Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

UNICEF India

73 Lodi Estate

New Delhi 110003, India

Tel: + (91) 11 2469-0401

Fax: + (91) 11 24627521

E-mail: [newdelhi@unicef.org](mailto:newdelhi@unicef.org)

Website: [www.unicef.org/india](http://www.unicef.org/india)

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# Internal Migration in India

## AN OVERVIEW OF ITS FEATURES, TRENDS AND POLICY CHALLENGES

Ravi Srivastava<sup>1</sup>

Professor of Economics

Centre for Study of Regional Development

School of Social Sciences

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

## 1. Introduction

The UNDP Human Development Report of 2009 states that there are four times as many internal migrants in the world as there are international migrants (UNDP 2009, p.22). Internal migration not only involves much poorer segments, its impacts on the economy as a whole, on sending and receiving regions, and on the migrants and their families are also arguably much more than international migrants.

India has been characterized by some (Davis 1951) as a relatively immobile society. Yet, even by conservative estimates, three out of every ten Indians are

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1. I am grateful to Arvind Kumar Pandey and Ajaya Naik for research support. Some parts of this paper build up on recent earlier work (Srivastava 2011a, 2011b).

internal migrants. And, as we discuss in this paper, there are many more who are uncouncted and invisible.

Structurally, in the last two decades or so, capital has become hugely more mobile than earlier. The verdict on whether labour too has become more mobile is still not out, although many would argue that population and workers have also become somewhat more mobile than before, both nationally and internationally.

Migration is a form of mobility in which people change their residential location across defined administrative boundaries for a variety of reasons, which may be involuntary or voluntary, or a mixture of both. The decisions on whether to move, how, and where are complex and could involve a variety of actors in different ways.

In recent years, several changes in India are likely to have impacted on the pattern and pace of migration. The pattern of growth in the last two decades has steadily widened the gap between agriculture and non-agriculture and between rural and urban areas, and it has steadily concentrated in a few areas and a few states. The growing spatial inequalities in economic opportunities must have necessarily also impacted on the pace and pattern of migration. Uneven growth and a growing differential between agriculture and industry is a necessary concomitant of the pattern of development. Migration has historically played a role in reducing the gap in living standards between sectors and areas and in fuelling growth in the more dynamic sectors. The crucial question is whether, and to what extent, migration has been able to play this role in the Indian context.

Since migration is diverse, attention has generally been focused on different groups of internal migrants, and a great deal of analysis has focused on the poorest segments, for whom both the costs and benefits could potentially be the highest.

Changes in several factors in recent decades have impacted on migrant labour markets and on migration, but many of these have not been yet studied in detail. There has been a significant improvement in road infrastructure and telecommunications, which has also been accompanied by declining real costs of transport and communication. This has led to improved information flows, potentially reducing information asymmetries and isolation for the migrant, and a reduction both in the costs of migration and in the speed at which migrants can move from origin to destination. Improved infrastructure and reduced transport costs have also made daily commuting to work (sometimes over several hundred kilometres) a viable option to migration.

The pattern of growth under globalization has led to changes in the pattern of demand for workers and consequent changes in labour market structure. First, there has been an overall growth in certain sectors, and this has generated a certain type of demand for workers. Second, the premium which employers place on flexible labour and reducing labour costs appears to them to be higher than the gains that could accrue to them from a dedicated and long-term labour force. There is, as a result, a 'race to the bottom' and an increase in informal employment.



Correspondingly, there are also supply-side changes owing to changing social structure and a slow accretion of literacy and education in the workforce.

Further, the impetus to make cities attractive for global finance has also exacerbated the exclusionary nature of urban policies, deterring migration by the poor and increasing its costs.

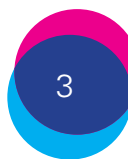
Finally, social prejudices and political mobilization based on theories of 'sons of the soil' not only persist, but may have grown stronger in recent decades, at least in some states, outweighing the advantages which migrants could potentially reap from higher density of social networks.

These changes, briefly described above, provide the context in which the pattern and trends in migration have been changing in India. However, an analysis of these changes and their implications is limited by the availability of data and studies. In the following sections, while drawing our conclusions from available evidence, we also point to the existing gaps.

## 2. Internal Migration in India: Conceptual and Data Issues

Data on internal migration in India is principally drawn from two main sources – the decennial population Census and the quinquennial migration surveys carried out by the National Sample Survey Office. Both these sources provide a wealth of data on migration. The Census defines a migrant as a person residing in a place other than his/her place of birth (Place of Birth definition) or one who has changed his/her usual place of residence to another place (change in usual place of residence or UPR definition). The NSS confines itself to the UPR definition. In both the surveys, a resident is defined as one who has been staying in a location for six months or more (except newly born infants). The Census collects data on the age and sex of the migrant, reason for migration, its duration, place of origin, and the industry and occupation of the migrant; the results are available up to the district level. The NSS also collects additional data on items such as the consumption expenditure of the migrant's household, educational attainment, activity, industry and occupation of the household at the place of origin, as well as remittances. Since NSS data are available at household and individual levels, it can also be cross-classified and analysed in detail. But the NSS underestimates population and may not be as reliable a source for aggregate migration as the Census. However, at present, Census results for migration are available only till 2001, whereas NSS results are available till 2007–2008, hence much of our comparison is based on NSS results.

Migration can result in the permanent relocation of an individual or household, which we may term permanent migration. But if individuals migrate leaving their families and land and property in the area of origin, they may do so with the intention of reverting back to the area of origin. This is more likely to happen if the individuals have precarious jobs in the destination areas or if the cost of permanent relocation is high relative to its benefits. In such a case, although individuals may find a toehold in



the destination areas, we may term such migration as semi-permanent or long-term circular. If individuals, or groups of individuals, migrate for temporary periods, either moving from place to place or to a fixed destination, such migrants are seasonal or circular migrants. Usually, these three types of migrants have different modal characteristics.

One of the main lacunae of both the Census and NSS surveys is their failure to adequately capture seasonal and/or short-term circular migration, and their coverage is best for permanent migrants and reasonably adequate for semi-permanent migrants. However, while the Census confines itself to only one definition of a migrant, the NSS has tried to collect information on migration flows from different perspectives. The 64th Round of the NSS, which is the recent and most comprehensive round on migration, collects data on (i) migrants using the UPR (usual place of residence) approach; (ii) migrant households; (iii) out-migrating individuals; (iv) seasonal or short-duration migrants, that is, those who have migrated out for a period of more than one month but not exceeding six months, for employment; and (v) return migrants. However, except in the case of UPR migrants, strictly comparable estimates are not available from the earlier rounds.

Despite improvement in coverage of seasonal/circular migrants, NSS estimates are still inadequate for such migrants for two major reasons. First, in many cases, the seasonal/circular migration cycle is longer than six months. Second, quite often, entire households and not individuals participate in seasonal migration. In order to cover this lacuna, the author relies on field studies, which also bring out many other important dimensions of migration that are not captured by the macro-data. In section 3, which follows, the analysis is confined to the first two types of migrants, and it is principally based on the Census and NSS.

### 3. Migration: Trends and Pattern<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.1 Magnitude of migration

In 2001, the Census reported 309 million internal migrants. Of these migrants, 70.7 per cent were women. Two thirds of the migrants (67.2 per cent) were rural and only 32.8 per cent urban. Male migrants were relatively more numerous in the urban stream (53.1 per cent of male migrants were urban compared with only 24.4 per cent of female migrants) and in more distant streams. The percentage of male migrants in intra-district, inter-district and inter-state migration was 52.2 per cent, 26.7 per cent and 21.1 per cent, respectively, compared with 66.9 per cent, 23 per cent and 10.1 per cent, respectively, for female migrants in these three streams.

The NSS estimates 326 million migrants in 2007–2008 (28.5 per cent of the population). It gives a picture similar to the Census in terms of female

---

2. This section is based on the Census and NSS data for (in) migrants, which, as we have argued earlier, provides a reasonably comprehensive coverage of permanent and semi-permanent migration.

predominance, and the relatively higher proportion of male migrants in the urban stream and with increasing distance.

However, the trends in migration emerging from these two sources give a slightly different picture.

According to the Census (Table 1), the migration rate for all segments peaked in 1981 to 30.3 per cent, declined in 1991 to 27 per cent, and increased to 30.1 per cent in 2001. Between 1981 and 1991, the total number of migrants grew by only 12 per cent, but between 1991 and 2001, the migrant stock increased by 37 per cent.

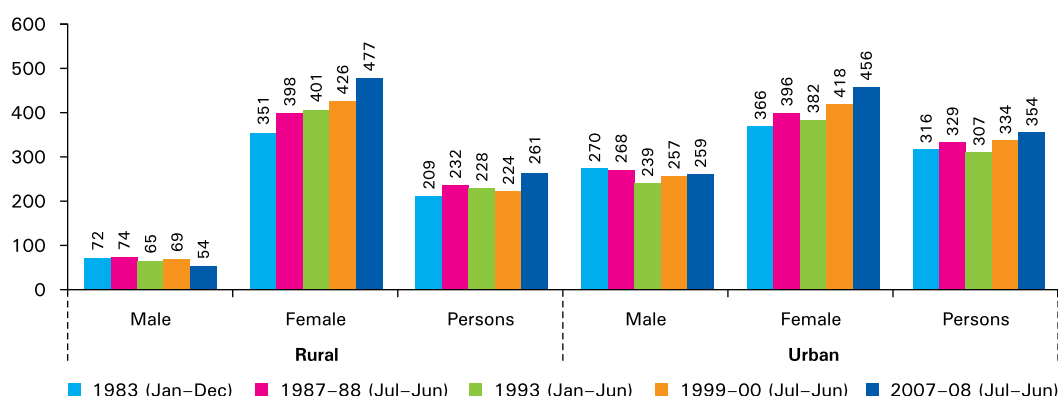
**Table 1: Number of migrants and migration rate, 1981–2001**

Census Year	Place of Resident	Number of Migrants			Migration Rate		
		Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1981	Total	201607061	59235306	142371755	30.3	17.2	44.3
	Rural	143583222	31354273	112228949	28.3	12.1	45.3
	Urban	58023839	27881033	30142806	36.8	33.2	40.8
1991	Total	225887846	61134303	164753543	27.0	14.1	40.9
	Rural	159190095	31196064	127994031	25.6	9.8	42.5
	Urban	66697751	29938239	36759512	31.0	26.3	36.2
2001	Total	309385525	90677712	218707813	30.1	17.0	44.1
	Rural	207773661	42528896	165244765	28.0	11.1	45.8
	Urban	101611864	48148816	53463048	35.5	32.0	39.4

Note: The Migration figures for 1981 exclude Assam and the 1991 figures exclude J&K.

However, the successive rounds of the NSS (except the 49th Round, which was also less representative and a half year round) show increasing total migration rates since 1983. But, as shown in Figure 1, the NSS findings are that these trends are mainly due to rising female migration rates both in rural and urban areas.

**Figure 1: Migration per 1000 persons (NSS Rounds)**



### 3.2 Stream-wise migration

Over time, the Census shows an increase in urban migration and in inter-state migration (Table 2). Total urban migration as a percentage of total migration increased from 28.7 per cent in 1981 to 29.5 per cent in 1991 and further to 32.85 per cent in 2001. As a correlate, rural-ward migration declined. However, interpreting 2001 stream-wise results are problematic, because a high percentage of migrants both in rural and in urban areas could not be classified by stream.

**Table 2: Percentage distribution of internal migrants in India by different streams 1981–2001**

Census Year	Rural-Rural	Urban-Rural	Unclassified-Rural	Total Rural	Rural-Urban	Urban-Urban	Unclassified-Urban	Total Urban	Total
1981	65.03	6.11	0.08	71.22	16.59	12.1	0.1	28.79	100
1991	64.21	5.97	0.29	70.47	17.67	11.7	0.16	29.53	100
2001	55.51	4.2	7.45	67.16	16.71	11.82	4.32	32.85	100

Note: The figures under 'Unclassified' are those that are not included in any stream in both areas (Rural and Urban).  
Source: Census of India, 1981, 1991, and 2001, Table D-2.

The NSS results for the more recent period (1999–2000 to 2007–2008) show that among the total migrants, there was an increase in rural-urban and urban-urban migration streams (NSS Report 533, p. 31). Rural-urban migration increased from 18.8 per cent of total migrants to 19.5 per cent of all migrants between 1999–2000 and 2007–2008, respectively. In the same period, urban-urban migration increased from 12.9 per cent to 13.1 per cent. While this increase occurred for both male and female migrants, it was more prominent for male migrants for whom rural-urban migration increased from 34.4 per cent to 39 per cent between 1999–2000 and 2007–2008, respectively, while urban-urban migration increased from 22.6 per cent to 24.8 per cent. At the same time, NSS data show that urban-rural migration has declined.

Both the Census and NSS confirm an increase in long-distance (inter-state) migration in recent years. Census results show that inter-state migrants as a proportion of total migrants declined marginally from 12.02 per cent in 1981 to 11.82 per cent in 1991 and then increased to 13.31 per cent in 2001 (Table 3).

The NSSO specifically shows an increase in inter-state migration between 1999–2000 and 2007–2008 in the two urban streams; in the rural-urban stream, the percentage of inter-state migrants increased from 19.6 per cent to 25.2 per cent; in the urban-urban stream, inter-state migration increased from 19.9 per cent to 22.9 per cent (NSSO Report No-533, Statement 4.11).

**Table 3: Percentage distribution of internal migrants in India by different distance categories, 1981–2001**

Census Year	1981	1991	2001
Intra-District	64.96	62.14	62.57
Inter-District	23.02	26.05	24.12
Inter-State	12.02	11.82	13.31

Source: Census of India, 1981, 1991, and 2001, Table D-2.



### 3.3 Stated reason for migration

As we have noted above, internal migration figures for India show that migration is dominated by female migration. This is mainly due to the widely prevalent social custom of exogamous marriages. Both the Census and the NSS record this as the first reason for migration given by respondents. Since the NSS gives an elaborate set of 18 reasons, which can further be clubbed into broader categories, we have discussed the NSS results below.

Table 4 compares the stated reasons for migration for 1993, 1999–2000 and 2007–2008. Marriage-related migration predominates in both rural and urban migrants. Among women, 91.3 per cent in rural areas and 60.8 per cent in urban areas (83.9 per cent totally) gave marriage as the reason for migration in 2007–2008. Marriage-related migration has increased as a percentage of female migrants, over the successive surveys. Among all (male+female) migrants, marriage-related migration of women alone constitutes 68.5 per cent of all migration.

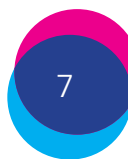
For males, migration for economic reasons has been cited as the most important reason for migration. In 2007–2008, 28.5 per cent of rural male migrants and a majority – 55.7 per cent – of urban male migrants gave economic reasons for migration.

Joining one's parents and/or the earning member of the family is the second most important reason for migration for both male and female migrants in both urban and rural areas. Eight per cent of rural male migrants also cite involuntary reasons for their (forced) migration.

Table 4 shows that among urban male migrants, economic reasons for migration have become more important in recent years. In 1992–1993, 41.5 per cent urban male migrants cited economic reasons for migration. But this figure increased to 51.9 per cent in 1999–2000 and further to 55.7 per cent in 2007–2008.

Both the census and the NSS show an increase in employment-related migration rates. The Census shows an increase in these rates over 1991–2001, although the figures are still less than the rates in 1981 (Figure 2). On the other hand, the NSS shows a steady increase in these rates but only for urban male migrants. In 1993, 12.73 per cent of the urban population consisted of people migrating to and within urban areas for economic reasons. This increased to 13.17 per cent in 1999–2000 and further to 14.36 per cent in 2007–2008.

The overwhelming preponderance of marriage-related migration skews results on trends and patterns in certain directions. Excluding marriage-related migration, internal migration in India is comparatively more employment oriented, male oriented and long distance. A re-tabulation of the NSS 2007–2008 migration data without marriage-related migration shows that males form 59.1 per cent of migrants, while females formed 40.9 per cent of migrants. Of the male migrants, 49.55 per cent were employment oriented, while 5.1 per cent of the female migrants were employment oriented.

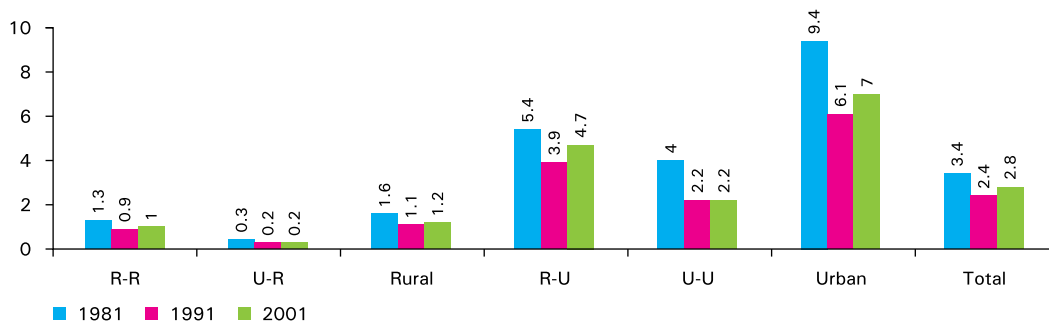


**Table 4: Distribution (per 1000) of migrants by reason for migration during 1993, 1999–2000 and 2007–2008, all India**

Reason for migration	Migrated in			
	Rural areas		Urban areas	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5
<b>49th round (1993)</b>				
Employment related reason	477	83	415	49
Studies	41	11	180	70
Marriage	23	616	9	317
Movement of parents/earning member	208	237	283	495
Other reasons (incl.n.r)	251	53	113	69
All	1000	1000	1000	1000
<b>55th round (1999–2000)</b>				
Employment related reason	303	10	519	30
Studies	53	4	62	13
Marriage	94	888	16	585
Movement of parents/earning member	260	63	270	310
Other reasons (incl.n.r)	290	35	133	62
All	1000	1000	1000	1000
<b>64th round (2007–2008)</b>				
Employment related reason	286	7	557	27
Studies	107	5	68	22
Marriage	94	912	14	608
Movement of parents/earning member	221	44	252	294
Other reasons (incl.n.r)	292	32	109	49
All	1000	1000	1000	1000

Source: Statement-4.13, Report No. 533 (Migration in India), 2007–2008, NSSO.

**Figure 2: Total Census based employment-related migration rates**



### 3.4 Inter-state migration and its pattern

Inter-state migration trends, estimated from the NSS 2007–2008 survey show that, in general, gross in-migration rates are higher in high-income states (NSS Report



533, Statement 6.10.) such as Haryana (10.24 per cent), Punjab (7.79 per cent), Maharashtra (5.97 per cent), Gujarat (4.20 per cent), Karnataka (4.11 per cent), and West Bengal. States that have undergone reorganization (including Punjab and Haryana) and also Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand show high rates of inter-state in-migration.

Gross out-migration (both inter-state and international) are high for some high- and middle- income states (Kerala, 8.01 per cent; Punjab, 6.52 per cent; Haryana, 6.72 per cent) along with low-income states (Uttarakhand, 7.81 per cent; Bihar, 6.37 per cent; Uttar Pradesh, 4.99 per cent; Rajasthan, 3.96 per cent; Jharkhand, 3.37 per cent). As a result, the correlation between gross out-migration rates and per capita NSDP (Net State Domestic Product) is also low, although positive.

Further disaggregating between out-migration to other states and migration abroad, the findings show that international out-migration rates are highest in Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Inter-state out-migration rates are the highest for Uttarakhand and Rajasthan. The correlation between the state's per capita income and out-migration rates between the former is lower (0.27) than the latter (0.40), but both continue to be positive on account of high rates of out-migration in some high - and middle-income states (for example, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab).

Net inter-state in-migration rates are the highest for Maharashtra (4.1 per cent), followed by Uttarakhand, Haryana and Chhattisgarh. The correlation between these rates and per capita NSDP is high (0.77). The same holds for net in-migration rates. The correlation between the latter and per capita NSDP is also high (0.76). Further analysis is needed to examine the education and skill levels, and nature of employment, of the inter-state migrants across different categories of states. But these results show that while the general trend is towards higher out-migration by low-income states and in-migration into developed states (after taking cognizance of the administrative division of three states in 2000), many of the middle- and high-income states also have high out-migration rates and the net inter-state in-migration rates are quite low, with the percentage of inter-state migrants in the highest net in-migrating state also being less than five.

### 3.5 Migration and urbanization

The provisional results for 2011 show that the urban population in India has touched 377 million or 31.16 per cent of the total population (Table 5). The decennial growth rate of population during 2001–2011 is more or less the same as the preceding decade. Both the role of migration in the increasing urban population and the future prospects of urbanization are subjects of great importance.

In the preceding sections, this analysis has examined the trends in overall migration as well as the changes in stream-wise migration. It has shown that the overall migration rate in urban areas has increased (including mobility of urban residents), reflecting greater overall mobility. However, the exact contribution of net rural-urban migration to urban growth is more difficult to assess and requires a combined assessment of various factors contributing to urban growth.

Kundu (2003) had earlier estimated the contribution of net rural-urban migration along with natural increase, (net) population of new towns, and increase due to expansion of existing towns and merger of towns into them. He found that the percentage contribution of natural increase and new towns declined from 61.3 per cent and 9.4 per cent, respectively, in the 1980s to 59.4 per cent and 6.2 per cent, respectively, in the 1990s. The contribution of area/coverage increase of existing towns/cities was obtained on the assumption that the number of towns being merged in the existing towns in the 1990s was more than double compared with the 1980s, and the contribution of net rural-urban migration for the 1990s was then obtained as a residual and was estimated at 21 per cent – that is, slightly lower than its contribution in the 1980s (21.7 per cent). Kundu has argued that the role of migration can be expected to decline further owing to the anti-migrant bias in some states and to the exclusionary urbanization policies being pursued.

More recently, Bhagat and Mohanty (2009) have also estimated the contribution of migration to urban growth in India during the recent decades. In their study, Bhagat and Mohanty have used the actual data on migration from the Census, which is also available for the period 1991–2001, and unlike previous studies, they have made adjustments for natural increase of the inter-censal migrant population. As in the previous study by Kundu, the components of urban growth that have been assessed are natural increase, net increase in towns, jurisdictional changes, and net rural-urban inter-censal migration. In their estimate, they find the contribution of natural increase to have declined from 62.3 per cent in 1981–1991 to 57.6 per cent in 1991–2001. The contribution of new towns also declined from 17.2 per cent to 12.3 per cent, while that of internal migration increased from 18.7 per cent to 20.8 per cent. The residual component (jurisdictional change) contributed 1.8 per cent and 9.2 per cent to the urban growth in these two decades. If unclassified migrant decennial population in urban areas is classified as rural-urban migrants, then the contribution of migration to urban growth during the 1990s would increase to 22.4 per cent. Thus, Bhagat and Mohanty find the contribution of migration to have increased during the 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

In the period 2001–2011, urban population has increased from 286 million to 377 million. For the first time since independence, urban population growth (91 million) has exceeded rural population growth (90.5 million). However, the number of new towns has increased very significantly in this period – by 2,744 towns. Kundu (2011a, b) has argued that this spurt in the identification of new towns is proactively induced by policymakers. Be that as it may, the contribution of this element to urbanization is likely to go up significantly in this decade. Bhagat (2011) has estimated that the contribution of natural increase to urban growth during 2001–2011 has further declined to 44 per cent. Since data on new towns and migration are currently not available, it is not possible, at present, to assess the separate contribution of the three other factors.

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3. Both these approaches use net inter-censal migration figures. One of the unaddressed issues is that the percentage of persons not reporting duration of migration has been going up since 1981, and the non-reporting is much higher in urban areas, compared with rural areas.



**Table 5: Trends of urbanization in India (1901–2011)**

Census Year	Urban Population (In Millions)	Per cent Urban	Decennial Growth Rate (%)	Annual Exponential Growth Rate (%)
1901	25.85	10.84	–	–
1911	25.94	10.29	0.35	0.03
1921	28.07	11.17	8.2	0.79
1931	33.46	11.99	19.2	1.76
1941	44.15	13.86	31.97	2.77
1951	62.44	17.29	41.42	3.47
1961	78.94	17.97	26.41	2.34
1971	109.11	19.91	38.23	3.24
1981	159.46	23.34	46.14	3.79
1991	217.18	25.72	36.19	3.09
2001	286.12	27.86	31.74	2.75
2011	377.11	31.16	31.80	2.76

Source: Bhagat and Mohanty (2009); Bhagat (2011).

Note: Estimations/Interpolations have been made for populations for whom census operations could not be conducted in 1981, 1991 and 2001. Census 2011 figures are provisional.

Thus, there is some debate on whether the contribution of migration to urban growth is declining or not. Kundu (2003, 2009 and 2011) has repeatedly argued that this is the case owing to policies promoting 'exclusionary urbanisation'. He also points out that the three mega cities of Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi have shown low rates of growth in this decade. He further argues that in any case the data (see below) does not show that cities are likely to be inundated by poorer migrants. Given the low overall contribution of migration, and declining natural increase, it has been argued that further impetus to urbanization can only come from urban reconfiguration. Along with Kundu (2003, 2011a, b) and Bhagat (2011), Bhagat and Mohanty (2009), recent UN projections (see Kundu, 2011b) have also downwardly revised their projections of urban growth in India.

The Census and the NSS results discussed in this paper show some increase in urban migration. But, at the same time, rural-urban migration growth has been slow. This is surprising given the pattern of growth which the country has been witnessing. The answer probably lies in the urban environment and the policy environment, both of which have raised the costs of urban migration for the poor, and also in the emerging nature of urban migration. As we have shown, urban migration has become more male and employment oriented. Within total urban migration, the component of urban-urban migration has increased. We have also shown elsewhere (Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2003) that since 1992–1993, labour market changes along with changes in urban environment have tended to increase the relative magnitude of the migration of the better off. The poor are finding it more difficult to get a toehold in the urban areas, but as shown below, there is an increase in seasonal and circulatory labour migration. Nevertheless, given the absolute increases in urbanization and migrant population, including its vulnerable segment, proper urban planning, urban investment in basic

infrastructure and urban policies to make urbanization more inclusive will remain high priorities. These issues will be discussed further in this paper.

### 3.6 Migrant characteristics

From the analysis in the preceding sections, it is already clear that migration occurs for a variety of reasons for different groups of people, and migrants are involved in different kinds of migration streams over diverse periods. Migration is also characterized by enormous economic and social diversity spanning socioeconomic variables such as caste, landholding size, age, sex, education, family size and composition, activity, consumption levels and more.

Micro-studies show a bimodal relationship in respect of wealth/income and land, viz., a clustering of migrants at both high and low levels (Connell et al. 1976). The National Commission for Rural Labour (NCRL) Report, 1991, suggests that labourers and farmers with little or no land have a high propensity to migrate as seasonal labourers. In terms of education, migration rates are high among both the highly educated and the least educated, while there is a preponderance of illiterates among seasonal migrants (Connell et al. 1976; Rogaly et al. 2001; Haberfeld et al. 1999). Data on individual migrants from micro-surveys show a significant clustering of migrants in the 16 to 40 years age group (Connell et al. 1976), in particular among poorer semi-permanent or temporary labour migrants. In the overall migrant population, differences across caste groups are not significant, but ST and SC migrants are more often involved in short-term migration (NSS 2001). This is also corroborated by field survey data. Further, as many studies have noted, since migration requires a minimum critical amount of resources and networks, people without these resources are less likely to migrate.

In other words, migrant characteristics depend upon the segment of migrants, and many of the broad characterizations are an aggregation of the migration spectrum, but specific data may not actually relate to the entire spectrum. This is specifically relevant to the Census and NSS data, which, as noted earlier, are better designed to cover permanent and semi-permanent migrants. For this reason, this section is devoted exclusively to the analysis of migrant characteristics that are captured by the Census and NSS, whereas seasonal/short-duration circulation is discussed separately in this paper.

It further needs to be pointed out that often (as in India) the data on migration relate to stocks of migrants and not to their current flows, the ex-post characteristics of migrants' stocks do not fully allow separation of migrant characteristics at the time of migration with their current characteristics. Nonetheless, clarifications on certain issues are possible. Moreover, the NSS also provides useful data on certain characteristics of migration before and after migration, distinguished by duration of migration. This has been analysed elsewhere (Srivastava 2011b) and they will be referred to only briefly here.

Analysis of earlier NSS rounds by several authors (Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2003; Kundu and Sarangi 2007) has shown that migrants are better off than non-

migrants. The NSS provides the MPCE (monthly per capita expenditure) decile-wise distribution of migrants as well as the migration rate by deciles (NSS Report No. 533, Statement 4.5). The migration rate is much higher in the top deciles, especially for males. In fact, the rate is more than six times in the highest decile than in the bottom decile (for males) and more than five times in the highest decile compared with the lowest decile for urban males. As a result, there is a higher percentage of migrants in the top deciles.

Table 6 compares the quintile-wise distribution of migrants and non-migrants and shows that both in rural and urban areas, a much higher percentage of the migrant population is in the higher quintiles. In urban areas, 49.2 per cent of the migrant population was in the top two quintiles compared with 34.8 per cent of the non-migrant population. There is an even sharper concentration of migrants for economic reasons in the top quintiles, which is expected since these migrants had self-selected themselves for migration.

The employment profile of migrants and non-migrants is presented in Table 7. It can be seen that there are marked differences in the type of employment between male migrants and non-migrants in both rural and urban areas. Male migrants are much better represented in regular wage/salaried jobs and a lower percentage of them work as self-employed or as casual wage workers, both in rural and urban areas. But, on the other hand, female migrants are less well represented in regular jobs and are more likely to be self-employed than non-migrant women.

Table 8 gives the migration rate of males and females by levels of education. Again, these results are ex-post and relate to stocks of migrants. But they show that while for the migrant population as a whole, there is a U relationship, for male migrants, migration rates increase with increasing levels of education.

Thus, by and large, urban migrants are better represented among the more educationally and economically better-off segments of the urban population. But, still about half the migrants are in the bottom six consumption deciles and work mainly as casual wage employed or as self-employed in the informal sector. The characteristics of urban informal sector migrants have been studied in a few field-based studies and their brief findings are described here. These migrants have poor

**Table 6: Percentage of migrants, economic migrants & non-migrants by MPCE Quintile, 2007–2008**

MPCE Quintile	Rural			Urban		
	Migrant	Economic Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Economic Migrant	Non-migrant
1	16.7	7.5	21.1	14.3	7.1	23.1
2	18.1	11.0	20.7	16.4	11.9	21.9
3	19.4	11.5	20.2	20.1	18.6	19.9
4	20.4	17.0	19.9	22.7	26.7	18.4
5	25.3	53.0	18.1	26.5	35.7	16.4

Source: Computations based on NSS, Round 64, Schedule 10, Individual-level data.

**Table 7: Migrant and non-migrant workers by type of employment (% of all workers), 2007–2008**

Employment Status	Male				Female			
	Migrants		Non-Migrants		Migrants		Non-migrants	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Self-employed	40.2	30.6	54.3	46.2	59.5	43.7	51.7	37.6
Regular	26.7	57.6	8.8	36.7	3.7	36.6	6.1	43.4
Casual	33.1	11.8	36.9	17.1	36.8	19.7	42.2	19.1

Source: Computations based on NSS, Round 64, Schedule 10, Individual-level data.

access to housing and basic amenities, have poorer entitlements, and suffer from poor working conditions and labour market discrimination. Poorer migrant workers who enter urban job markets face large uncertainties in the potential job market. To begin with, they have very little knowledge about the markets and incur risks of high job-search costs. The perceived risks and costs tend to be higher the greater the distance from the likely destination. Migrants minimize risks and costs in a number of ways. Recruitment is often done through middlemen, which reduces unemployment risk. In many cases, these middlemen are known to the job seekers and may belong to the source area.

In many cases, migrants move to the destination areas on their own. This is generally the situation where ‘bridgeheads’ have been established, which lower potential risks and costs. The movement of migrants in groups, often sharing kinship ties, also provides some protection in the context of the harsh environment in which migrants travel, seek jobs and work. Mosse et al. (2002) have shown how workers are incorporated in the labour market in different ways, depending upon their initial status, with somewhat better-off migrants having superior social networks and thus better able to exploit ‘bridgeheads’ in urban locations. Although labourers’ bargaining power tends to improve with improved information and networks, they are still often underpaid (Deshingkar et al. 2008) and networks may not also assist in upward mobility (Gupta and Mitra 2002).

One of the sectors that has seen enormous growth in the recent period is the domestic maid industry. Both part-time and full-time maids in large cities are usually immigrant, but we refer here to full-time maids. In the big cities, a large number

**Table 8: Migration rate (per 1000) by broad level of general education during 2007–2008**

Category of Person	General educational level					All
	Not literate	Literate and up to middle	Secondary and higher secondary	Diploma/Certificate	Graduate and above	
Male	60	93	173	344	299	109
Female	547	374	508	583	576	472
Persons	349	218	302	413	397	285

Source: Computations based on NSS, Round 64, Schedule 10, Individual-level data.

of private placement agencies have sprung up that are involved in the recruitment process. In Delhi, most of the maids are from the tribal belts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and from West Bengal. The new genre of private recruitment agencies recruit through informal channels and make unspecified deductions from wage payments. Some are also involved in the trafficking of the women. Some church-based organizations also play a small, more benign role in bringing potential employers and employees together (Neetha 2002).

Jobs in the urban informal sector are highly segmented based around people of same caste, religion and kinship (Gupta and Mitra 2002). Social networks provide initial income support, information, accommodation, and access to jobs. However, parts of the urban unorganized sector may be characterized by a high degree of organized migration, as in the rural areas discussed above (Mazumdar 1983; Dasgupta 1987; Mehta 1987; see also Piore 1983).

To conclude: permanent migrants probably self-select themselves because they have various endowments as also the ability to take and bear risk. Urban labour markets, in particular, have been changing towards better-off migrants (in terms of skills, education and other characteristics). At the bottom, there is a very substantial chunk of poorer migrants involved in low-paid and low-earning jobs, principally in the informal sector. They suffer from various deprivations and handicaps which also have to do with the nature of urban policies and absence of employer support. These issues are also discussed later in this paper.

#### 4. Pattern and Characteristics of Seasonal and Circular Migration

In this section, we subject available macro- and micro-sources to greater analysis to identify short-duration migrants who are predominantly seasonal migrants. Characteristics of seasonal migration emerging from field studies have been extensively examined by us (Srivastava 1998, 2005) as well as by other authors (Deshingkar et al. 2003).

Both macro-data and field studies show that seasonally migrant labour belong to the most poor and deprived sections of society such as the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). These migrants are a product of individual and household livelihood deficits (generally due to absence of assets) and regional resource and livelihood deficits. Migration provides subsistence to the workers and their families, but exposes them to a harsh and vulnerable existence, in which working and living conditions are poor.

In the process of migration not only are families, including children, uprooted from their homes year after year, they also end up disenfranchised. Families lose the benefits of state welfare – they forgo the facilities of the public distribution system in the villages and cannot access the public health system and the immunization drive for young children that take place during the migration season. A large

proportion of migrant labour do not have their entitlement papers like caste certificates, election cards, BPL cards, old age pension cards and so on. In the entire process, the lives of children are adversely affected. They are forced to drop out from school or never enrol in one. One has to remember that a child out of school is an important indicator of child labour in the country. Seasonal migrants migrate alone (male only, female only, or child only) or quite often in family units (husband, wife, children). When migration takes place as a family unit, each part of the family unit, excluding infants, contributes to family subsistence in one way or another – in work or as part of the household 'care' economy. For children, the work environment means unusual harshness and deprivations.

All studies show that seasonal migrants are in the prime working ages (15–45 years). Since these migrants come from the poorest and economically the most vulnerable sections of the working population, their own educational attainment is nil or negligible. A majority of those who are married in this age group have young children. Migration of either one or both the parents has the potential of reducing the child's probability of being educated. Whenever both men and women migrate, more often than not, migration also takes place as a family unit involving children.

There is large diversity in migration situations within seasonal or, short-term circular migration. Migration cycles range from a few weeks to a few months (7–9 months), and depending upon their length, may occur once or several times during the year. Migration may involve one or more adults in a household, often also the children. The extent to which migration is individual or family based, organized through recruiters, the type of destination (proximity, rural/urban, intra- or inter-state, and type of work) to which it occurs, and so on, may vary. In the destination areas, the migrants' experience depends upon issues such as whether the migrants originate from neighbouring or distant areas; their cultural/linguistic commonalities with these areas; the type of work that they do (including its organization, intensity, etc.); the extent to which children are an essential part of the labour process; the degree of isolation, fragmentation, and segmentation that the migrant labour force is subject to, etc. There are excellent ethnographical field studies describing and analysing these aspects but for lack of space, they are not discussed here. The following sections in this paper briefly analyse the magnitude and characteristics of short-period migration emerging from the NSS surveys (mainly the 2007–2008 survey) before turning to field studies to corroborate the findings on a few principal aspects.

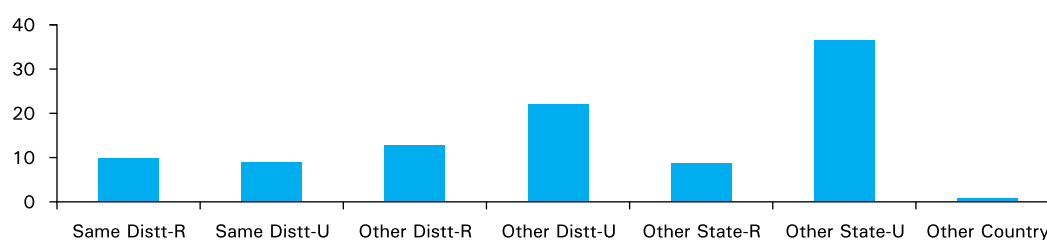
The NSS 55th Round separately estimated for the first time, the number of short-duration out-migrants in 1999–2000 (those who stayed away for a period that was between two and six months for work or seeking work). This represents a better attempt at estimating seasonal migration directly, although a substantial possibility for underestimation remains, since seasonal household migration as well as seasonal migration of more than six-months duration (which occurs in many seasonal industries) may not be covered adequately. The NSS round estimated that a total of nearly 12.24 million people stayed away from their UPR (usual place of residence) for work/seeking work for a period that was between two and six months. Of these, 77 per cent were resident in rural areas and 23 per cent in urban areas.

The NSS 64th Round shows an increase in short-duration out-migration although there is a slight change in the concept.<sup>4</sup> There were an estimated 15.2 million short-duration out-migrants, of whom 12.9 million (85.1 per cent) were male, and 13.9 million (71 per cent) were rural out-migrants (that is, census-adjusted figures). The overall out-migration rate was 1.33 [1.72 for rural areas and 0.4 for urban areas]).

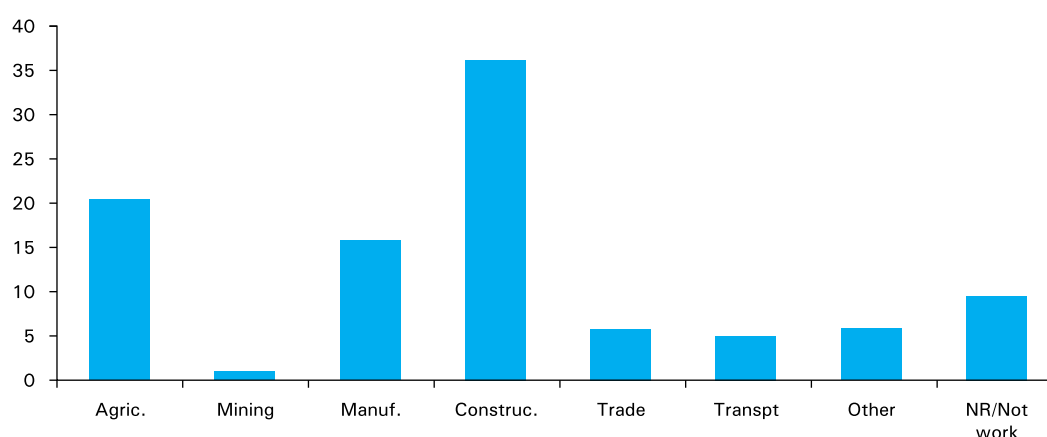
While most migrants were from rural areas, more than two thirds migrated to urban areas. Here, too, the more distant urban destinations predominated. Figure 3 shows that 36.4 per cent of the out-migrants went to urban areas in other states (a total of 45.1 per cent went to other states) and 22.1 per cent went to urban areas in other districts. But inter-state migration was more among males (47.9 per cent) compared with females (27.5 per cent).

Construction has emerged as the principal industry employing short-duration out-migrants. The out-migrants constituted 36.2 per cent of those employed in the construction industry, followed by agriculture (20.4 per cent) and manufacturing (15.9 per cent). The other major industries were trade and transport (Figure 4).

**Figure 3: Principal destination of short-duration migrant (%), 2007–2008**



**Figure 4: Percentage distribution of short-duration migrants by industry in principal destination, 2007–2008**



4. The 64th Round considered the people who stayed away from their UPR for work / seeking work for a period between one month and six months as short-duration out-migrants, provided further that they had stayed away for more than 15 days in any one spell.

The socioeconomic profile of the short-duration/seasonal out-migrants is very different from the other migrants. These migrants are much more likely to be from socially deprived and poorer groups, have low levels of education, less land and more likely to be engaged in casual work. Table 9 compares the profile of short-period and long-term out-migrants. Scheduled Tribes are especially involved in short-duration migration; 18.6 per cent of such migrants were short duration compared with only 6 per cent of long-term migrants. Similarly a higher proportion of Scheduled castes were short-duration migrants.

In terms of their economic status (measured below in terms of per capita consumption quintiles), they predominate in the lower quintiles just as long-term out-migrants predominate in the higher quintiles. The percentage of short-duration out-migrants in the lowest two quintiles was 54 per cent, whereas 57 per cent of the long-term migrants were in the highest two quintiles.

Most seasonal/short-duration out-migrants were young. Half of them were in the age group 15 to 29 years and more than a quarter in the age group 30 to 44 years. Fifty-two per cent were either illiterate or had not even completed primary education and 55.4 per cent were casual workers.

The state-level pattern of short-duration migration is given in Table 10. One needs to keep in mind that this data will exclude migration cycles of more than six months. The pattern emerging from an analysis of this data shows that seasonal and short-duration out-migration is high in a variety of contexts, which is probably dictated by uneven development within states, across states, and across sectors. Male out-migration is the highest in Bihar and Jharkhand, followed by Gujarat (a high-income state), Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal (middle-income states). The rate of female out-migration is the highest in Gujarat, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh,

**Table 9: Seasonal out-migrants and long-term out-migrants: a comparative profile, 2007–2008**

Social Group	Seasonal Short-Duration Out-migrants			Long-term Out-migrants		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
ST	20.1	3.5	18.6	6.8	2.2	6.0
SC	23.7	17.5	23.1	19.2	11.8	17.9
OBC	39.5	43.6	39.9	44.5	37.9	43.3
Others	16.7	35.4	18.4	29.5	48.0	32.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>MPCE Quintile</b>						
1	29.2	34.0	29.9	10.3	14.0	11.0
2	24.0	23.6	23.9	14.4	15.9	14.7
3	20.2	19.4	20.0	17.0	18.9	17.3
4	15.8	13.2	15.4	22.2	21.2	22.1
5	10.9	9.9	10.8	36.1	29.9	35.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Computations based on NSS Round 64, Schedule 10, Individual-level data.



Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Overall, seasonal out-migration rates are the highest for states at two ends of the growth spectrum – Bihar and Gujarat.

As stated earlier, we expect NSS estimates to undercount seasonal or short-duration circulation. As far as the inter-temporal trend is concerned, the NSS results are suggestive of some increase in seasonal migration in recent years, but since the results are not strictly comparable, there is no firm evidence of this. Since these two issues are both significant, other results will be examined to assess the magnitude and trends in short-duration circulation or seasonal migration. A number of micro-studies suggest a high incidence of such migration as well as its growth. In out-migration endemic rural areas of central and tribal regions, such as Andhra Pradesh, north Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, the incidence of families with at least one out-migrant ranges from 30 per cent to 70 per cent. Deshingkar et al. (2008) in their survey of villages in Madhya Pradesh find that 52 per cent of households were involved in seasonal migration in 2006–2007, mainly to the construction sector. Mosse et al. (2005) find that in 42 Bhil villages studied by them in central-western India, at a conservative estimate, about 65 per cent of households (up to 95 per cent in some villages) and 48 per cent of the adult population are involved in seasonal migration, overwhelmingly for casual urban construction work.

**Table 10: State-wise short-duration out-migration (per thousand), 2007–2008**

State/All India	Male	Female	Male+Female
Andhra Pradesh	20	8	14
Assam	20	2	12
Bihar	57	1	30
Chhattisgarh	23	9	17
Gujarat	43	24	34
Haryana	6	2	4
Himachal Pradesh	10	0	5
Jammu	26	1	13
Jharkhand	46	6	26
Karnataka	17	6	11
Kerala	9	1	5
Madhya Pradesh	39	11	26
Maharashtra	16	8	12
Orissa	22	5	13
Punjab	7	8	7
Rajasthan	25	5	15
Tamil Nadu	18	5	11
Uttarakhand	8	0	4
Uttar Pradesh	25	1	14
West Bengal	44	4	24
All-India	28	5	17

Source: Statement 5.1.1, Report No-533, Migration in India (2007–2008), NSSO.

An industry or sector-wise picture also reveals a very high incidence of seasonal and circulatory migration in many industries/sectors. Seasonal migratory labour is concentrated in a large number of industries, but the largest sectors are agriculture, construction, brick-kilns, textiles, mines and quarries, large-scale and plantation agriculture, sericulture, headloaders and coolies, rice mills and other agro-processing, salt pans, rickshaws and other types of land transportation, leather manufacture, diamond cutting and polishing and other unorganized industries that have a seasonal nature, while circulatory labour is concentrated in many other industries including textiles (powerlooms and garments), manufacturing, domestic and other support services, land transport, headloaders and others. Most seasonal/short-duration circulatory migrants are casual workers, but in some sectors, they could be counted as self-employed (for example, rickshaw pullers or headloaders) or regular workers (for example, garment workers).

The recent nationwide employment data show that in 2009–2010, there were an estimated 91.4 million casual workers in agriculture and 58.6 million casual workers in non-agriculture. Of the latter, 32 million were employed in the construction industry alone. Casual workers in construction work in and around large urban centres are principally migrants. Some studies have estimated that 90–95 per cent of casual workers are migrants. But the figure may be lower in small towns and rural areas. Rough estimates by the authors show that about 35–40 million labourers – almost half the number of casual labourers outside agriculture – and 10 per cent of agricultural labourers (about 9 million) could be seasonal migrants. It is more difficult to put a figure on circulatory migrants who are self-employed or work on regular wages. But several million circulatory migrants work either as self-employed in the informal sector or as informal regular workers on piece rates or wages. These numbers constitute a very large segment of workers and a large proportion of waged and self-employed workers in the non-agricultural informal economy.

Inter-temporal trends over time for seasonal migration are difficult to establish in the absence of firm data. However, micro-studies that are based on resurveys indicate an increase in seasonal migration over time. Deshingkar et al. (2008) in their study of villages in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh between 2000–2001 and 2006–2007 indicate an increase in seasonal migration. The percentage of households involved in seasonal migration grew from 40 per cent to 52 per cent over the survey periods. Mosse et al. (1997) also report an increase in seasonal migration in the Bhil villages studied by them. However, following the introduction of MGNREGA, there is a reported decline in seasonal out-migration, at least of a distress kind, and also in areas where MGNREGA implementation has been lacklustre, although the impact appears to have been principally confined to female seasonal migrants (Banerjee and Saha 2010; Pankaj and Tankha 2010; Khera and Nayak 2009). Correspondingly there are reports of labour shortages in some destination areas, for example, Punjab. However, we carried out fieldwork in a few migration-endemic areas in Gujarat, Orissa and Maharashtra in early 2009 and found that the impact of MGNREGA on seasonal migration in the study areas had been marginal. Field documentation by the noted journalist P. Sainath in several articles in

*The Hindu*<sup>5</sup> suggests vast and increasing out-migration from rural areas because of diminishing possibilities of rural livelihoods. At a macro-level, as already noted, there has been very significant growth in informal employment and labour circulation, and some of the main industries employing seasonal/circular migrants have grown at a frenetic pace in the last decade. As noted, labourers in the construction sector are principally seasonal migrants, and the total number of such workers alone has increased by 26.5 million in the decade 2000–2010. Thus, on balance, seasonal migration can have expected to have increased over this period, although more studies are required to assess the pace and pattern of changes that have occurred in recent years.

## 5. Migration by Women and Children: Some Features

### 5.1 Female migration

The main features and contours of female migration in the preceding sections have already been discussed. This section highlights some of these features. At the macro-level, we have shown that women form a large majority of the migrants. But most women recorded as migrants are migrants because of exogamous marriages. A very small proportion of women migrate primarily for economic reasons, although as Figure 5 shows, most of these women migrants are part of the workforce. And among women migrants who do not migrate for economic reasons, a sizeable proportion is in the workforce. Finally, about 15 per cent of seasonal migrants are women.

Female mobility is thus much more limited than men's except when they move to join their husbands or parents. Since patriarchal norms that restrict the independent mobility of women vary across regions, caste, social groups, educational levels and so on, we would expect these to be reflected in the data. Figure 6 gives the percentage of women out-migrating for the long term for reasons other than associational (among long-term out-migrants) or for employment (among seasonal migrants). There is a clear pattern with seasonal female migration (involving more SC/ST women) being higher than long-term out-migration, and migration in the centre-west and southern region being higher than the northern and eastern region.

Although we have seen that it is the poorer workers who participate in seasonal migration, the gender distinctions even in this stream are interesting. First, nearly 60 per cent of female short-duration out-migrants came from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households compared with only about 38 per cent males. Second, only 43.7 per cent female seasonal/short-duration out-migrants went to urban destinations compared with 71.1 per cent of male out-migrants. Third, agriculture was the main sector employing 37.2 per cent of female short-duration out-migrants. This was followed by construction and manufacturing. No other industry employed more than 2.5 per cent of the female out-migrants. Among male out-migrants, construction was the major employment (37.7 per cent migrants), followed by

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5. See, < [www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/sainath](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/sainath) >

Figure 5: Profile of female migrants by streams, 2007–2008

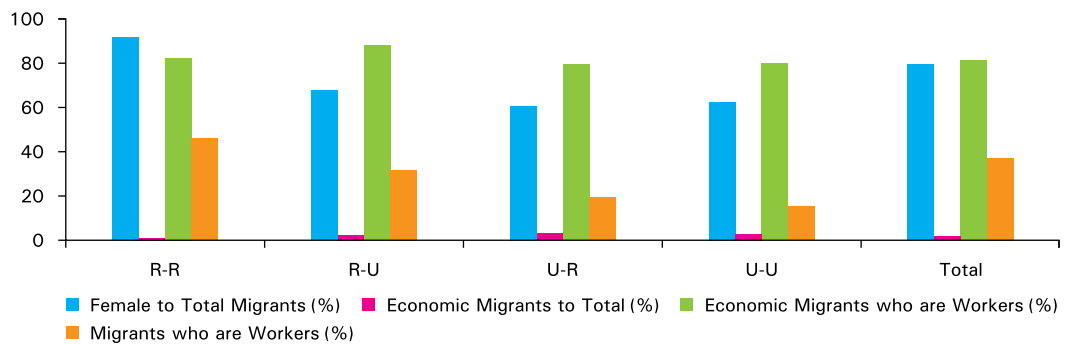
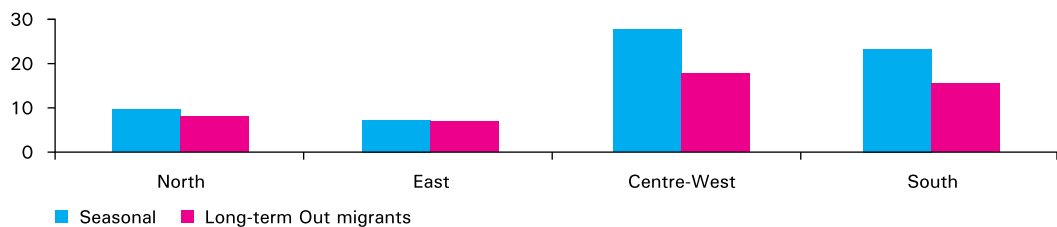


Figure 6: Percentage of women out-migrants (long term and seasonal) migrating for non-associational or employment-related reasons, 2007–2008



agriculture and industry. In the earlier sections, facts of wage discrimination and skill segmentation among male and female labour migrants have already been noted.

## 5.2 Migration by children

As per the NSS estimates, only 82,370 children below the age of 15 or 0.4 per cent of the migrating children in 2007–2008 were reported as migrating for work, while 70 per cent were reported as accompanying their parents or earning members. At the destinations, 298,747 children were reported as workers, with male children being represented in almost the same proportion as female children. Forty-six per cent of children worked in self-employed enterprises, 38.8 per cent as casual workers and 15.2 per cent as regular workers. But these figures probably undercount both migrating children and those working.

Children may migrate alone, just as adults do, or with their parents. Often they end up on the streets. Nearly 44.5 of the estimated 1.1 to 1.8 million street children in India live alone.<sup>6</sup> But a large number of children also migrate alone for work. Migrant child labourers migrating alone are usually pledged against loans taken by their parents and are under neo-bondage. We have reviewed the incidence of bondage among migrant child labour in India in a number of sectors in India (Srivastava 2005b). Human Rights Watch (1996), based on a survey in five states (Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh) has identified the presence of bonded child labour in a number of occupations including brick-kilns, stone quarries, carpet-weaving, beedi-rolling, rearing of

6. Estimated by the Street Children Consortium, <[www.streetchildren.org.uk](http://www.streetchildren.org.uk)>.

silk cocoons, production of silk sarees, silver jewellery, synthetic gemstones, precious gem cutting, diamond cutting, leather products, etc. In a review of bonded child labour in India, Mehta (2001) has also brought out the extent of the problem in a number of sectors including carpet-weaving, agriculture, beedi-rolling, silk, salt-making, fireworks and matchboxes, glass, silver works, gemstone, leather, and brick-kilns. There have been several reports of migrant child workers in embroidery and other outsourced processes in the garment industry around Delhi. Several hundred thousand tribal children and young adolescents are estimated to migrate from southern Rajasthan to cotton hybrid seed farms in neighbouring Gujarat, against advances taken by their parents (Katiyar 2005). A similar practice had also been prevalent in the cotton seed farms in Andhra Pradesh (Venkateswarlu 2003).

Migrants migrate either alone (male only, female only, or child only) or quite often in family units (husband, wife, children). Children who migrate with their parents who are seasonal migrants are also very vulnerable in many respects. When migration takes place as a family unit, each member of the family unit, excluding infants, contributes to family subsistence in one way or another: in work or as part of the household 'care' economy. For children, the work environment means unusual harshness and deprivations. All studies show that seasonal migrants are generally in the prime working ages (18–45 years). Since these migrants come from the poorest and economically the most vulnerable sections of the working population, their own educational attainment is negligible. A majority of those who are married in this age group have young children. Migration of either one or both the parents has the potential of reducing the child's probability of being educated. Whenever both men and women migrate, more often than not, migration takes place as a family unit also involving children.

The diversity of migration situations needs to be emphasized as the impact on children depends upon the nature of this migration. Migration cycles range from a few weeks to a few months (7–9 months). There is considerable diversity on aspects such as, whether the migration is individual or family based; the extent to which migration is organized through recruiters; the type of destination (proximity, rural/urban, intra- or inter-state, and type of work) to which it occurs; and so on. At the destination areas, once again different types of diversities may be confronted depending upon issues such as whether the migrants originate from neighbouring or distant areas; their cultural/linguistic commonalities with these areas; the type of work that they do (including its organization, intensity, etc); the extent to which children are an essential part of the labour process; the degree of isolation, fragmentation, and segmentation that the migrant labour force is subject to, etc.).

In general, these children live in unhealthy conditions, miss going to school, and are involved in either the care economy or working alongside their parents. Smita (2007) has examined the condition of seasonal migrants and their children in a number of settings. As is well known, there is a preference for child labour in some contexts. She finds that there is a premium on hiring work teams consisting of man, woman

and child in the brick-kiln industry, because in certain processes, employers have a marked preference for child labour.

In a review of educational interventions for migrant children partnered by America India Foundation and several NGOs, on the basis of surveys conducted by the NGOs and our own field visits (Srivastava and Dasgupta 2010), we found the incidence of migrant children to be alarmingly high in the field areas as also the huge impact migration made on the children's involvement in labour and in their schooling. In western Maharashtra, in sugar cane cutting alone, it is estimated that about 180,000 children from 0–14 years migrate with their parents every year, of which at least 75,000 are between 8 and 14 years (Janarth 2006). The yearly disruption plays havoc on these children's lives as they are forced to eventually drop out of the formal education system. Children are subject to both the dismal quality of life in the sugar cane settlements and the hardship of child labour. Understandably, every child has a vital role to play in the household activities in these settlements such as fetching water and taking care of toddlers. Any girl or boy above 10–12 years accompanies parents to the fields to cut sugar cane along with them. The children in the settlements, as in most poor families, act as part of the indispensable support system – and wage earners for the family.

In Kutch, Surendranagar, and Jamnagar districts several hundred thousand migrants migrate for six to eight months to the salt pans, for charcoal making, for work in fisheries, etc. Because of the inhospitable terrain of salt pan areas, children were found to be living in extremely harsh conditions. They were deprived of schooling, and young girls were almost always involved in the care of siblings.

In the Nuapada district of Orissa (part of the erstwhile Kalahandi district), thousands of labourers, generally from the OBC category were recruited for brick-kilns in Andhra Pradesh and in states as far off as Uttar Pradesh. Recruitments took place after the festival of *Nuakhali*, and were based on loans. The contracts were for a work unit or using the *pathri* system comprising a man, a woman and two to three children. Children of different age groups had different roles to play: the younger children were engaged in sorting out coal from a heap; while those between 9–11 years were part of the assembly-line labour, spending hours mixing mud and straw, sieving coal dust, making balls for moulding, carry wet bricks for drying. In fact many of these operations are dangerous for the young children because of their tiny hands and light bodies – work such as walking on dried bricks to flip them and, worst of all, carrying loads on their heads. Small children were seen carrying 12–16 brick head loads.

In all the situations that we studied, a large percentage of these students continued to be nominally enrolled in schools, although they had dropped out of schooling.

## 6. Impact of Migration

Migration is known to have diverse impacts on growth and development, on migrants and their households, and on the social and political life in the source and

destination areas. These impacts are complex and run in different directions. For example, in the development economics literature, rural-urban migration is a primary source of growth and accumulation in the economy and in the destination regions, but there is a theoretical and empirical debate on its implications for source areas and on whether it promotes regional convergence or divergence. This section is a brief incursion into some of the implications of internal migration in India.

A large volume of discussion on migration is dictated by popular perceptions. This particularly includes discussions on the number of migrants and their impact on the destination areas. Unfortunately, there are not too many studies on the impact of migration on growth and accumulation, especially in the destination areas. This paper provides only some general facts.

There are more studies on the impact of migration on migrants and the migrant households and the areas of origin, but these are generally confined to poorer migrants, usually seasonal migrants.

Remittances and savings are a primary channel through which migrant workers are able to stabilize or improve their conditions of living. Remittances also impact on intra- and inter-household relations and the pattern of growth and development in the source areas. It has been the focus of several studies recently, especially by the World Bank, but the focus has been on international remittances. The NSS surveys provide data on both internal and international remittances and their use, which are briefly analysed below.

The other important channels through which migration affects workers and impacts on the source and destination areas are the nature of their involvement in labour markets and changes in workers' tastes, perceptions and attitudes. The latter are less tangible but nonetheless of great significance.

## 6.1 Aggregate impacts

India's growth story, as in all other cases, needs the supply of workers, both skilled and unskilled. The more concentrated growth is in certain regions and areas, the greater will be the demand for migrant workers. In India, an examination of recent patterns of regional growth has shown that state policies have encouraged agglomeration economies in and around pre-existing growth centres in advanced regions (Srivastava 2009b). An examination of the pattern of growth in industry (Srivastava *ibid.*) shows that industrial growth and related employment growth has been less in the primary metropolises and has been higher in peripheral areas. The growth pattern has followed the 'spokes' in the well-recognized 'hub and spokes' pattern of growth in secondary centres. The pattern of employment growth in the services sector is slightly different. While the headquarters of service sector corporations tend to be concentrated in urban agglomerations, services usually require a more decentralized delivery. So while there is a high absolute growth of service sector employment in the main agglomerations, overall regional inequality in service sector employment has remained stable. In fact, the pattern of migration that has been observed and discussed in the preceding sections is associated with this pattern of growth.

The other main feature influencing the pace and pattern is the emerging characteristics of the labour market in India. There has been a shift in labour regimes towards greater informalization and flexibilization, which has been described in detail in the two reports of the NCEUS (2007, 2009). As shown in this paper, employment-related migration has definitely increased. Further, while documented migration flows show that migration propensity is higher among the better off and the more skilled, this paper shows that is only part of the story; there is an increase in labour circulation and seasonal labour migration, partly dictated by the emerging labour regimes and partly by the growth in sectors such as construction, which mainly depend upon migrant labour.

The impact of migration on growth is not only confined to the industrial and services sector, but increasingly agricultural development, too, is coming to depend more on labour migration, because young people move out of cultivation in more developed areas, and agricultural employers become more and more unwilling to deal with local sources of labour.

Thus, migration is an unusually large part of India's growth story. It is another issue that while large benefits accrue to the economy and society, there are exceptionally large and asymmetric costs for poor migrants in India, since both employers and the state appear unwilling to subsidize the costs of migration either through appropriate labour and social policies or through investments in basic needs and infrastructure for migrants.

## 6.2 Impact on destination areas

There are no studies which directly link migration to the pattern of growth and accumulation in the destination areas in India. However, evidence points to the following: first, migrant workers ease the supply of labour, forming a major component of the labour force in many sectors and industries. This holds for all segments of migrant workers, both skilled and unskilled. Second, there is a marked employer preference for migrant labour which is partly related to labour costs, and partly because employers find it easier to discipline migrant labour (that is, the transaction cost of dealing with them is low). Third, migrant workers often work in areas, where local labourers are sometimes unwilling to work, because of preferences or because the work is arduous or unsafe. The second reason for migrant employment indicates that there could be potential areas of competition or conflict between local and migrant labour, which could have different consequences.

Although evidence clearly suggests that the conditions under which migration occurs facilitate accumulation, labour circulation promotes accumulation via a 'low' road to capitalism. According to Breman (2006), the basic rationale for the growing informalization, two-way mobility and segmentation is to be found in the nature of entrenched mercantile capitalism, just as international migration has been embedded in the structure of international capitalism (cf. Sassen 1988; Piore 1990). Capitalists operate in uncertain markets, under circumstances in which they are highly dependent on traders. Casualization of labour is one of the strategies favoured by petty commodity entrepreneurs to shift both risk and cost of production



on to workers. Another reason for continued informalization is to keep their businesses away from state surveillance.

Breman (1996) has argued that the continued existence of a large mass of unorganized workers belies expectations that workers would eventually shift from the traditional to the modern sector. An examination of the major informal sector industries shows a steady replacement of local workers by migrant workers. He also finds that rural-urban migration shares a number of features in common with rural-to-rural migration. The urban and rural informal sector markets are increasingly linked through horizontal circulation as migrants may move from one to the other in search of jobs (Gill 1984; Chopra 1995; Breman 1996). Despite the growing linkages between the urban and rural labour markets, the markets are not generalized but instead segmented in various ways. Breman (*ibid.*) shows that for locals as well as migrants, horizontal stratifications are generally preserved as workers move from rural to urban milieus. Migrant workers are often segmented along lines of gender, ethnicity, community, and religion, or along networks and chains, which fragment the labour market and increase employer control (Meher 1994; Das 1994; Breman 1996). Schooling and resources act as two important barriers for the poorer social groups to obtain on-the-job training and skills that could lead to semi-permanent jobs (Breman *ibid.*; Das *ibid.*). The overall tendency of the labour market is to be broken into 'circuits' of labour (Breman *ibid.*).

There are several micro-studies which show that migrant labour is cheaper than local labour. Of course, these studies may not always take into account market segmentations, skill requirement or work intensity. Nevertheless, it is worth noting them. It has been pointed out that migrants in the urban informal sector often receive lower wages compared with non-migrants. The migrant status of the labourers accounts for 38–56 per cent of the wage differential in Madras city, when other characteristics are accounted for (Duraisamy and Narsimhan 1997). Interestingly macro-data, which relate principally to migrants who are permanent or semi-permanent, do not show poorer labour market outcomes for casual migrant workers compared with non-migrants (Srivastava 2011b). The all-India results, based on analysis of NSS 64th Round individual-level data, show that male migrant wages are higher than non-migrants almost in all sectors, whereas there is a much smaller difference in female wages. The same result holds for all major states, including major immigrant states, such as Maharashtra, Gujarat or Haryana. These differences could also reflect greater work intensity and piece wages common to migrants, and probably do not capture skill-related returns. In any case, these results are worth noting and require further empirical examination.

Studies show that the seasonal and migrant labour supply is highly flexible in terms of work intensity, payment regimes, working hours and so on. Migrant labourers work for long and odd hours. Moreover, the payments are not given on time. Piece rates are mostly prevalent, which provide greater flexibility to employers. Of course, migrants may also prefer these wage systems as they can maximize returns to labour on a per day basis, raising the possibility of their saving part of the wages. In many cases, organized migration results in credit-labour

interlocking, such that the net return to labour may have no relation to wages in destination areas (Singh and Iyer 1985; Das 1993; Krishnaiah 1997; Mosse et al. 2002). The low wage structure of the seasonal workers are the result of instability of demand, segmented labour markets, unregulated nature and dominance of labour contractors and vulnerability of workers (Study Group on Migrant Labour 1991). Women migrant labourers are usually paid even less than the male migrants (Pandey 1998). In the construction industry they are viewed as assistants to their husbands and confined to unskilled jobs. The consequential segmentation is used as a justification for low payments.

Virtually all available evidence shows that recruitment of immigrant labour is motivated by multiple issues – labour control, wage cost-reduction strategies and non-availability of local labour. While in Punjab, rural immigration took place in a context of relative labour scarcity and considerable competition among employers to secure labour during agricultural peaks (Singh and Iyer 1985), the reverse has been found in Gujarat (Bremant 1985). In Gujarat, employer strategies encourage migration to substitute surplus local labour for better labour control. Paradoxically, the Gujarat migration experience, for which important source areas are in neighbouring Maharashtra, also indicates parallel circuits of migration with source and destination areas being interchanged (Teerink 1995; cf. also Bremant 1996). This also occurs in several other industries. Brick-kilns in Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh often interchange source areas importing labour from different parts of the same district and from neighbouring districts and states (Chopra 1982).

Employers in India rarely take responsibility for providing more than wage subsistence requirements of migrants. Migrant labourers have to fend for themselves to meet their health, shelter and other basic requirements. Although the sub-human condition in which labourers subsist is a result of employers' not internalizing the legitimate costs of hiring labour (contravening numerous laws), society regards the resulting urban congestion to be a consequence of unplanned mobility. The social, political and other consequences of immigration, especially where such migration is by linguistically, ethnically or regionally distinct groups, have not been considered in the growing economic literature on internal migration, but figures prominently in the corpus of sociological and political literature (cf. Weiner 1978).

### **6.3 Impact on source areas and migrant households**

The impact of out-migration on source areas is manifold. Out-migration contributes to the income of migrant workers and, depending upon the condition of the migrants and the nature of migration, could also contribute to savings and accumulation. Our brief discussion in the earlier sections has emphasized that the pattern of migration is closely related to the diverse economic and social endowments of the migrant workers, and this diversity persists even among the poorer migrant workers and labourers. At one end, workers could be locked into a debt-migration cycle through some form of labour bondage, where earnings from migration are used to repay debts incurred at home or in the destination areas, thereby cementing the migration cycle and resulting in conditions of neo-bondage

(Srivastava 2005b, 2009a). At the other end, however, migration could be largely voluntary, although shaped by limited choices, which increase if the migrants' initial endowments are more favourable.

The major impacts of migration on source areas occur through changes in the labour market, income and assets and changes in the pattern of expenditure and investment.

Although seasonal out-migration would have the effect of smoothing out employment of labourers over the annual cycle, rural out-migration may cause a tightening of the labour market in some circumstances. However, existing empirical evidence from out-migrant areas does not often attest to a general tightening of the labour market (Connell et al. 1976; Srivastava 1999). While out-migration often takes place in labour-surplus situations, there is also evidence of the replacement of out-migrant male labour by female and even child labour. Analysis of the 2007–2008 NSS data shows that out-migration increases the probability of women's participation in the workforce in the migrant households. Women's participation in out-migrant households receiving remittances remains higher than non-migrants households, but is lower than all out-migrating households taken together, irrespective of their remittance status.<sup>7</sup>

Labour out-migration may also speed up qualitative changes in extant labour relationships in rural areas, and thereby affect the pace of change. This may occur in several ways. First, there is the well-documented impact of migration on attitudes and awareness as migrant labourers and return migrants are more reluctant to accept adverse employment conditions and low wages. Second, out-migration leads to a more diversified livelihood strategy. Combined with some increase in the income and employment portfolio of poor households, this may tend to push up reservation wages in rural areas and may make certain forms of labour relationships (as, for example, those involving personalized dependency) more unacceptable (Srivastava *ibid.*; cf. Rogaly et al. 2001.).

Out-migration as a result of debt or debt-interlocking involving the employers in the destination areas or their middlemen is quite common. Such out-migration may or may not lead to the elimination of the causes of debt. On the other hand, the reduction of personalized dependencies or interlocked relationships may accelerate labour mobility and migration (Srivastava 1987; Breman 1974, 1985; Mosse et al. 1997).

Remittances play an important role in bringing financial resources to the migrant households and to the source areas. Although there is limited direct evidence of the amount of remittance brought in by migrants, evidence can be inferred from the NSS surveys on migration and consumption and employment/unemployment. These

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7. Results of logistic regression with women's participation in the workforce as dependent variable and out-migrant status in one case and remittance status in another case, along with other variables (such as urban/rural status, MPCE quintile, religion, social group, employment status, and state category by income) give an odds ratio of 1.38 for out-migrating households, and 1.22 for households receiving remittances.

surveys give the percentage of out-migrants making remittances and households receiving remittances and households depending upon remittances as their major source of livelihood.

These estimates depend upon the definition of out-migrants used in the survey design, which has been varying. The NSS 49th Round estimated that in 1992–1993, 89 per cent of permanent out-migrants sent remittances. The NSS consumption surveys show that the percentage of all rural households receiving remittance income is also fairly high – in some regions of the country, one quarter to one third of the households receive remittances. Remittances are only one form in which resource flows occur as a result of migration, the other forms being savings brought home by migrants in cash or kind. Field studies show that a majority of seasonal migrants remit or bring home savings out of migrant income. In many cases, a substantial proportion of household cash income is attributed to migrant earnings (Haberfeld 1999; Rogaly et al. 2001; Mosse et al. 2002).

The NSS 64th Round provides estimates of remittances received by households in which one or more person is an out-migrant. The survey further provides estimates of the frequency of remittances and the use to which they are put.

The NSS estimates report that total remittances by out-migrants amounted to Rs 493.5 billion in 2007–2008, of which internal migrants contributed the lion's share – about two thirds – while the remaining came from international out-migrants. Given that these figures do not include all savings, as well as savings/remittances made by seasonal migrants, the impact of migration on the living conditions of the poor migrant workers in these states could be quite considerable.

A regional disaggregation of remittances by internal migrants shows that these are higher in some of the poorer and heavily out-migrating states (such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and Orissa). The percentage of all rural households receiving remittances in these states is 18.6 per cent, 16.3 per cent and 14.6 per cent, respectively. These states also constitute a sizeable proportion of households receiving remittances from internal migrants (Table 11).

Of the 27 per cent of households that reported out-migrants in 2007–2008, 33.9 per cent households (or 9.2 per cent of all households) received remittances. A very large proportion of out-migrants engaged in any economic activity reported remittances. The proportion of all households receiving remittances and the average amount of remittance received increased in the higher consumption quintiles. On average, 8 per cent of households in the lowest three quintiles received an average remittance of Rs 14,720 (including non-classifiable households).

The impact of remittances on the household economy could be via changes in income, income distribution and the pattern of expenditure and investment. However, the cash incomes which accrue may not always add to the resource base of migrant households, since in some proportion of cases, they are used to adjust

**Table 11: Percentage contribution to migrant households and remittances – selected states**

States	% to total households reporting remittances			% to total remittances reported		
	Domestic	International	Total	Domestic	International	Total
Andhra Pradesh	3.3	8.5	4.0	3.0	7.7	4.6
Bihar	15.0	3.0	13.5	12.4	2.6	9.1
Kerala	3.2	38.6	7.7	5.2	39.9	16.9
Maharashtra	6.5	3.0	6.1	5.1	3.7	4.6
Orissa	6.3	0.5	5.5	5.3	0.5	3.7
Punjab	0.8	7.6	1.7	2.2	12.7	5.7
Rajasthan	7.0	6.0	6.9	10.9	4.9	8.9
Tamil Nadu	5.5	15.3	6.7	6.2	12.4	8.3
Uttar Pradesh	24.6	8.3	22.6	19.6	5.4	14.8
West Bengal	8.6	1.7	7.7	7.9	1.2	5.8
All India	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Computed from unit data, NSS 64th Round.

earlier debts (NCRL 1991 ; Mosse et al. 2002). Nonetheless, it does appear that the income and consumption levels of migrant households are generally higher than that of similarly placed non-migrants (cf. Sharma 1997; Krishnaiah 1997; Deshingkar and Start 2003; Deshingkar et al. 2006, 2008). But, this conclusion needs to be carefully verified as it is generally based on ex-post cross-sectional comparisons. As Mosse et al. (2002) have noted, and as other studies testify, migrants are not only differentially placed at the entry point, their differential status also leads to different trajectories, so that changes in post-migration average incomes may provide only a limited picture of the varied set of changes. One of the few careful ethnographical studies (Rogaly et al. 2001) provides some evidence of improvement in incomes of seasonal labour migrants as a result of migration, but these conclusions need to be supported by other studies.

The use of the remittances is diverse, and they are usually deployed to address a hierarchy of needs (cf. Deshingkar et al. 2006, 2008). This also results in stimulating the local economy to some extent and also affects the economy through changes in consumption patterns. The evidence on investment is, however, mixed. Investment by migrant households on consumer durables, housing and land occurs sometimes, and migrant income may also be used, sometimes, to finance working capital requirements in agriculture. Evidence of other productive farm or non-farm investment is generally scarce, but a number of studies do report such investment by a small percentage of migrant and return migrant households (Oberai and Singh 1983; Krishnaiah 1997; Sharma 1997).

The NSS 64th Round provides information on use of remittances. For all households, in rural and urban areas taken together, the highest percentage of households reported expenditure on food, followed by expenditure on other essential consumption items, health, education and household-durables-related expenditure. Expenditures on these categories of expenditures were undertaken

by 75 per cent, 45.1 per cent, 37.4 per cent, 31 per cent, and 20.1 per cent households, respectively. Expenditure on any consumption-related item was reported by 94.6 per cent households receiving remittances. Expenditure on debt servicing and improvement in housing was undertaken by 10.2 and 8.7 per cent households, respectively. Saving/Investment and expenditure on working capital were reported only by 6.4 per cent and 1.1 per cent households, respectively. Whereas expenditure on food, other consumption, and education was reported by a higher percentage of households in the lowest deciles, it was the other way round for expenditure on working capital and saving/investment. The last item was reported only by 1.8 per cent of households receiving remittances in the lowest decile (NSS 2007–2008, Appendix Table 8).

While studies do not fully discount for the impact of some factors such as the life cycle effect, rural out-migration appears to provide some evidence, although weak, of an improvement in the productive potential of source areas, and the ability of some poor migrant households to acquire small surpluses and strengthen their productive base and bargaining strength in the rural economy (cf. Rogaly et al. 2001). Similarly, as urban migrants find a toehold in cities, there is evidence that their poverty declines and well-being increases (Gupta and Mitra 2002; Mitra 2010). The question of social and economic mobility can also be examined from the changes in worker occupations both in the destination areas and in the source areas.

The question of their mobility is linked to their circumstances of migration, its duration, and its being highly gendered. As shown earlier, the macro NSS data show that urban migrants are more likely to experience occupational change and mobility than other migrants. On the whole, after the initial change, a very small proportion of male migrants achieve further economic mobility in the destination areas (Srivastava 2011b; Haberfeld 1999; Mosse et al. 1997; Mitra 2010). The limited mobility occurs as migrants acquire a foothold in the destination areas or acquire some skills, and they are thus better positioned to exploit the labour market situation. Interestingly, Gupta and Mitra (2002) show that social networks are not very helpful in achieving upward mobility. In the source areas, there is a slightly greater impact on social and economic mobility, which, however, generally eludes the poorest, and in most cases, is not substantial for poor migrants (Rogaly et al. 2001; Deshingkar et al. 2008).

Studies of the impact of migration on income and asset inequality are quite limited. The ethnographical study quoted above (Rogaly et al. 2001) finds some evidence of reduced inequality, as incomes of labour households rise vis à vis non-labour households. On the other hand, Mosse et al. (1997) suggest that these inequalities increased because the differentiated nature of the migration process led to the amplification of income and asset inequalities.

Finally, migration has a differential impact on individual household members and intra-household relations. When one member of a family migrates alone, or even when family members migrate together seasonally, migration may have varied intra-

household impacts. The impact of migration on women, children, and the elderly, both as participants in migration and as those who are left behind is an important area of study.

The impact on gender relations as a result of migration is complex. There are cases when women migrate alone. Sometimes single women or widows accompany other family workers or kinsfolk in a migration stream. Migration can lead to greater freedom, cash incomes, and change in attitudes among the migrating women (see Shah 2006), but may also expose them to exploitation and sexual harassment at the workplace (Sarodamoni 1995). Except in such cases, women have been seen to participate in the migration streams along with male members of their households. It is usual in such cases for younger siblings and older children to accompany their parents and to work along with them. This also affects negatively the participation of these children in education. At the destinations, the women and the girl child also have to cope with household work and sibling care and there is little change in gender relations as a result of migration (Mosse et al. 2002).

Even where only males migrate, the impact on women and children left behind can be quite substantial. At one level, male out-migration may influence the participation of women in the directly productive sphere of the economy as workers and decision makers and increase the level of their interaction with the outside world. The increased awareness that migrants, especially in urban areas, gain helps them realize the importance of their children's education. But given the patriarchal set up, women may have to cope with a number of problems, which are exacerbated because of the uncertainty of the timing and magnitude of remittances on which the precarious household economy ultimately depends. This, in turn, pushes women and children from poor labouring households to participate in the labour market under adverse conditions (Harris and Garikipati 2008). Thus, the impact of migration on the women can be two-sided, but the strong influence of patriarchy restricts the scope of women's autonomy (cf. Teerink 1995; Menon 1995; Harris and Garikipati 2008). As noted earlier, the impact of male migration can be especially adverse for girls, who often have to bear additional domestic responsibilities and take care of younger siblings.

## 7. Migration and Urbanization: Challenge of Inclusion

There are only a few studies which analyse the problems of the poor urban migrants separately from the problems of the urban poor. There is a belief that the authorized as well as unauthorized slums, as well as all other temporary urban housing structures mainly house poor migrant populations. But as a consequence of deindustrialization and shortage of affordable urban housing in the metropolitan cities, these locations provide shelter to both migrants and non-migrants. In a study of a Mumbai slum, Narayan et al. (2008) found that 91.8 per cent of the residents were migrants and 75 per cent had settled in Mumbai before 1995 (the then cut-off date for slum regularization). However, in another study in slum clusters across four cities, Mitra (2010) found that the percentage of migrants was

only 24 per cent in Jaipur, 47 per cent in Ludhiana, 39 per cent in Mathura, and 28 per cent in Ujjain.

The main argument that has been adduced in the studies above and in a number of others is that urban policy regimes and urban governance systems have moved sharply in favour of urban elites (builder lobbies, corporate interests, and middle/upper class 'resident welfare associations') and that pro-rich changes have further been abetted by judicial pronouncements, either in support of an upper middle-class environmentalism or on other grounds. These changes have concentrated growth and basic infrastructure in a few large cities, depriving other smaller cities of financial support and infrastructure. A set of policy changes have eased the entry of builders and corporate interests in and around the urban agglomerations. Simultaneously, the reshaping of the urban space to prepare cities for their advent into the 'global' era has also resulted in the eviction of the poor from the living and working spaces that they enjoy (Mahadevia 2009; Batra and Mehra 2008; Narayan et al. 2008; Mahadevia and Mathew 2008). The economic structure of the cities has also undergone a change with manufacturing jobs moving out into the periphery and beyond (Kundu 2003, 2009).

It has further been argued that urban land prices have witnessed a sharp secular trend owing to demand and speculative pressures that drive the urban poor out of these markets as well as formal markets for urban housing. Urban land policies have steadily been manipulated in favour of a certain pattern of use which supports builders and corporate interests through changes in land use, zoning policies, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and increase in FSI/FAR (floor space index / floor area ratio) (Mahadevia 2009).

For the urban poor, the main problem is shelter. Mahadevia et al. (2010) study the contrast between India and China with respect to housing for the migrant poor. In China, 20 to 40 per cent of migrant workers were provided dormitory accommodation by employers compared with a negligible percentage in India. Of course, this also has to do with the differences in the pattern of employment between the two countries. The authors note that since 2005, local governments in China had shifted their stance favouring provision of residential rights and housing to migrant workers. In India, by contrast, issues related to migrant workers did not figure equally prominently in policy.

Mahadevia (2009), Batra and Mehra (2008), and Mahadevia and Brar (2008) have studied the evolution of land and housing policies in urban India. The authors note that the national and local governments tend to follow a threefold policy to increase the supply of housing for the urban poor living in slums. These are the Slum Resettlement Schemes through which persons evicted from slums are resettled in the urban periphery; schemes for in situ development of slum areas, where part of the land under slums is sought to be developed for the slum residents with cross-subsidies obtained from the remaining land development, which is made more profitable for builders by raising the FSI, and non-transferable land tenures, and schemes for Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS). These schemes



have made very little progress and have covered a small proportion of the existing slum population. As noted by Mahadevia (2009, p. 213), the urban poor 'access land through a variety of occupancy and ownership rights that would not stand the test of legality'. De facto rights are sometimes recognized by governments although with a considerable time lag (from time to time cut-off dates are announced and tenurial rights are recognized and slums are regularized through notifications (notified slums).

A National Housing Policy was developed in 1992, under which housing for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) is sought to be augmented by making land available to private builders, and by providing them further incentives through raising FSIs. The latest policy in respect of housing is the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy 2007, which is also based on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. The Policy provides direction and guidelines to states, local bodies and parastatals to augment supply of housing for the poor (Mahadevia *ibid.*).

The major programme instrument for urban development currently is the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) which has two sub-missions devoted to urban infrastructure and basic services to the urban poor (UBS). The UBS Mission objectives include a city development plan and 'security of tenure at affordable prices, improved housing, water supply, sanitation and ensuring delivery through convergence of other already existing universal services of the Government for education, health and social security. Care will be taken to see that the urban poor are provided housing near their place of occupation.'<sup>8</sup>

However, analysis of recent urban development experience in several studies shows that the overriding objective of creating global cities has created reverse trends, which have increased insecurity of poor urban residents in its leading to large-scale evictions in the large metropolitan cities (Narayan et al. 2008; Mahadevia and Mathew 2008; Mahadevia 2009; Batra and Mehra 2008), and which have not led to improved planning to accommodate the needs of urban migrants for shelter, basic services and social protection (Mahadevia 2009; Kundu 2003, 2006, 2009). The schemes mentioned above have been able to provide shelter security to a minuscule proportion of urban dwellers living in slums, shanties and squatter settlements (Mahadevia 2009). A high proportion of these are rural-urban migrants.

In conclusion, despite certain public policy pronouncements and programmes, poor migrants face greater barriers and higher insecurity in meeting shelter and other basic amenity requirements. This is combined with a more hostile socio-political environment in host environments and less secure job environments. All this leads to the kind of urban exclusionary process referred to by Kundu (2009), making it less likely that poorer migrants and their dependants would be able to settle in urban areas or in other states. Without changes in the socio-political and economic policymaking environment, it would be naive to expect that migration could be relied upon to reduce the gap between regions or become the principal driver for

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8. Modified Guidelines of the Basic Services for the Urban Poor, JNNURM, February 2009.

increasing employment or reducing poverty in the poor regions, while at the same time noting (as this paper has done throughout) the positive and important role played by migration in both these respects.

## 8. Emerging Pattern of Growth, Challenges for Migration and Migration Policy

As discussed above, the recent period of rapid growth in India has increased the demand for both skilled and unskilled workers in the areas of concentrated growth and agglomeration. For over a decade and a half, elements of regional policy were abandoned, and the state deliberately encouraged and supported a strategy of growth concentration, which in turn encouraged migration. Simultaneously, there has been a shift in labour regimes towards greater informalization and flexibilization, captured in detail in the two reports of the NCEUS (2007, 2009). As shown in this paper, employment-related migration has definitely increased. Further, while documented migration flows show that migration propensity is higher among the better off and the more skilled, this trend is only part of the story; there has been an increase in the numbers of poor labour migrants in numerous sectors constituting the most flexible and poorly remunerated sections of labour.

While results of our analysis do confirm the overall benefits of migration to households, and to the economy and society in terms of a large number of indicators, they also point to the significant and asymmetric costs that are borne by the poorer labour migrants and their families, which ultimately also translate into costs for the economy and society as a whole. These costs are exceptionally large for poor migrants in India, because they arise out of a pattern of development in which both employers and the state appear unwilling to subsidize the costs of migration either through appropriate labour and social policies or through investments in basic needs and infrastructure for migrants. There are clear distinctions between India and China in this regard. In China, both the employers and the governments have been much more proactive in the last few years in reducing the restrictions to and the cost of migration.<sup>9</sup>

In the coming years, despite policies that may result in some reduction in distress migration, we expect total migration to increase. This will call for policies and approaches to reduce regional and sectoral balances in development, appropriate policies for recipient areas, policies to support seasonal migrants and so on.

The development policy discourse in India still has not grappled with the extent to which the nature of migration in India impacts on the key developmental goals

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9. Studies show that employer-provided provisions for migrants, for example, provision of some sort of housing, is comparatively more extensive in China. The Chinese central and other levels of government also appear to have been more proactive in putting into place policies affecting migrants by relaxing *hukou*, introduction of labour market regulation, and measures to increase portability of basic old-age insurance and basic medical insurance for mobile employees (Zhu 2010). However, as Zhu (ibid.) has pointed out, most policy changes extend to permanent rural-urban migrants, while most labour migrants are multi-locational.

adopted by the country as well as the international community in several areas including health, education, and poverty alleviation. This is reflected in the lack of any systematic policy framework for internal labour migrants.

The National Commission for Rural Labour had first focused on a policy agenda for migration. Recently, the NCEUS advocated a systematic approach to labour migration within the framework of policies and programmes for informal workers. First, the NCEUS proposed a comprehensive legislation for informal workers, covering minimum labour standards and issues specific to migrant labour. Second, the NCEUS proposed a universal minimum social security package for informal workers that incorporated all three elements crucial for extending the coverage to migrant workers, viz., complete portability in terms of registration, payment of premium (where applicable), and receipt of benefits. The NCEUS recommended that grass roots organizations be involved in the registration of workers and that the workers be issued a family smart security ID card, which could be simultaneously utilized by the migrant and her/his family members. Other recommendations of the NCEUS included livelihood promotion, addressing the regulatory framework in urban areas, and an approach to agricultural and rural development.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan did consider issues related to migration mainly in the rural-urban context and proposed some strategies. It proposed a two-pronged approach to deal with the expected rapid migration of rural population towards urban centres. First, upgradation in the quality of infrastructure in existing cities to provide improved municipal services to larger numbers of people and, second, development of new suburban townships as satellites/counter-magnets to reduce/redistribute the influx of population. JNNURM is a key mission to achieve these two goals through the integrated development of the cities in which long-term vision for the development of the cities has been proposed. The development of small and medium Industries such as village and cottage industries, handlooms, handicrafts and food processing and agro-industries were also considered important in reducing rural-urban migration. PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) is the other programme which has been promoted by the government to check the rural-urban migration.<sup>10</sup>

Civil society organizations have been involved in various states in working with urban and rural migrants. We have reviewed elsewhere the role and strategy of some of these organizations (Srivastava and Sasikumar 2005; Srivastava and Dasgupta 2010). Some of the organizations are involved with general migrants' support and protection, while others are involved with migrants' entitlement in specific sectors. Their experiences provide a very useful context in which broader policies and programmes can be considered.<sup>11</sup>

10. Government of India, *Eleventh Five Year Plan*, Volume I and III, Planning Commission (New Delhi:Oxford University Press).

11. Organizations working under the banner of the coalition, such as Aajeevika Bureau (Rajasthan), Disha (Maharashtra), Samarthan (Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh) have been separately working for the social, economic and health issues of the migrants in their areas.

In recent years, they have been collectively advocating an approach towards migration by the government. Recently, a network of such organizations under the banner of *Wada Na Todo* Campaign (Don't Break Your Promises Campaign) presented an analysis and approach towards migration to the Planning Commission for the formulation of the Twelfth Five Year Plan. The main focus of the campaign has been on registration and identity cards.<sup>12</sup>

The National Coalition of Organizations for Security of Migrant Workers is a coalition which unites all the NGOs that are working for the social and economic issues of migrants. The coalition has raised several issues in relation to migration and has advocated the building of a national-level policy on migrants that addresses the concerns of migrant workers in a comprehensive fashion. It has emphasized the coverage and effective implementation of social security provisions for the migrants, creation of a data base of migrant workers at panchayat level/urban local bodies, and changes in laws covering migrant workers.

Given the importance of the issues involved we have been advocating the formulation of a migration policy for India which could focus on the following issues:

- i. **Inclusive urban development:** The Constitution of India (under Article 19, which is a fundamental right of citizens) gives the right to citizens to travel, reside and carry out any trade, profession or business in any part of the country. However, this right can be undermined by governments and urban bodies, which do not implement enabling development policies and measures. In the absence of suitable measures, poor migrant workers have no residential security and are compelled to live and work in crowded slums and unauthorized public lands/locations with poor civic amenities and access to basic services, and they undergo repeated displacement. They also do not acquire rights to basic entitlements (see, iv below). Instead the centre, states and urban bodies can pursue a coherent policy in this regard. Urban policy is becoming more exclusionary, increasing the cost of migration for the poor, and the anti-migrant rhetoric is becoming more strident in many states and urban metropolises.
- ii. **A regional development policy and pro-poor development in backward areas:** In order to mitigate migration under very adverse circumstances, a major set of policy initiatives has to aim for a more vigorous pro-poor development strategy in the backward areas that can strengthen the livelihood base in these areas. These could take the form of land and water management through the watershed approach; and public investment in the

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12. The campaign has proposed that a mechanism should be developed for the computerized registration of migrant workers at panchayat/urban local body level. The UID should integrate its project with the organizations working with migrant workers across the country like the National Coalition of Organization for Security of Migrant Workers. They argue that with the help of the universal ID issued by Aadhar, migrant workers can avail health, education and public distribution services and the services of banks for savings, credit and remittances. ([http://12thplan.gov.in/12fyp\\_docs/REPORT.pdf](http://12thplan.gov.in/12fyp_docs/REPORT.pdf)) dated 15.09.2011, 'Civil Society inputs for the Approach Paper- 12th Five Year Plan').

source areas, such as better irrigational facilities, improved infrastructure and the creation of non-farm employment where land is scarce. These strategies need to be accompanied by changes that improve the access for the poor to land, to common property resources, social and physical infrastructure, and to governance institutions. The latter set of changes will require strong organizational intervention by and on behalf of the poor. In the rain-fed areas, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) that proposes to dovetail employment with the need for the building of physical and social infrastructure could have important implications for pro-poor development.

- iii. **Employment and food security, and credit support for vulnerable groups:** Providing a livelihood floor will also obviate the need for the poor to undertake distress migration. The MGNREGA has presently emerged as a major entitlement-based initiative in this regard. It not only provides employment in lean periods, but also has several important labour market impacts. The Act can reduce some of harsher and distress-related features of migration but is unlikely to eliminate these altogether. Further steps can be taken to strengthen the position of the poor who resort to survival migration. This involves helping the poor overcome two major constraints they face, viz., food and credit. The poor's access to food can be improved through the proposed Food Security Act and a more effective public distribution system, both of which are now under discussion. Organizing the poor into self-help or savings groups that are specifically tailored to the requirements of migrants could help increase the access to credit at comparatively low cost.
- iv. **Ensuring basic entitlements and social security:** A major policy focus has to be on ensuring that migrant households have citizenship rights in the destination areas and are able to access basic facilities, benefits of public programmes, and social security schemes meant for poor households. All central government schemes should be designed to be fully portable and the central government should enter into agreement with state governments to ensure that their benefits continue to accrue to migrant workers and their families. The NCEUS had proposed a universal registration system and unique social security number for all workers. It had further built elements of portability into its proposed universal minimum social security package. The government did pass a legislation on social security for unorganized workers, but its proposals were fragmented and piecemeal and fell far short of the universal proposals mooted by the Commission. Further, the government's proposed UID (identity card) system is likely to strengthen exclusionary policies, unless multi-local identities are explicitly recognized and schemes providing basic entitlements become universal and fully portable.
- v. **Implementing the Right to Education (RTE) for migrant(s') children:** A special focus under the Act has to be to ensure access of migrant labourers' children to schooling (and that they are not pushed into labour). The education of several hundred thousand children is affected by migration, and bringing

them into the educational mainstream will require innovative governmental and non-governmental support.<sup>13</sup>

- vi. **Improving the information base and bargaining strength of migrant workers:** Being economically extremely vulnerable, poor migrant workers lack bargaining strength. Further, their sense of vulnerability and social isolation is exacerbated by their ignorance, illiteracy and the alien environment in which they have to work. In many parts of the country, NGO strategies as well as initiatives taken by governments have enabled migrants to form groups or unions and to negotiate directly with employers, ensuring a better deal for themselves.
- vii. **Role of Panchayats:** Panchayats should emerge as the focus of the resource pool for migrant workers residing in their area. They should maintain a register of migrant workers and issue identity cards and pass books to them. Further, it should be mandatory for recruiters to deposit with the panchayats a list of the labourers recruited by them along with other employment details. With growing IT-based communication, it may become possible for panchayats or NGOs to maintain a record of potential employers and employees.
- viii. **Enforcement of labour laws and enactment of a comprehensive law:** At the workplaces, stricter enforcement of existing labour laws, including the Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act, is essential. However past experience suggests that there is need for the scrutiny, simplification and modification of some of these laws. Recently, some proposals have been made in this regard by the National Coalition for the Protection of Migrant Workers.<sup>14</sup> The comprehensive Unorganized Sector Workers Act proposed by the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector sets a floor in terms of working condition and wages for all unorganized workers and covers many issues that are potentially beneficial to migrant workers. There should be a vigorous debate on the proposed Act and how it can meet the requirements of migrant workers as fully as possible.

## 9. Conclusion

Internal migration in India is large and diverse. In a historical sense, migration goes hand in hand with growth and development. But, it can have both costs and benefits for households and individuals as well as economies and societies. Migration needs

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13. While the SSA has developed a framework to deal with migrant children, its effective implementation depends upon a number of other steps (see Smita 2007; Srivastava and Dasgupta 2010).

14. It has been suggested that: (i) Minimum agricultural wages should be indexed to inflation and revised annually. (ii) The responsibility of registration under the Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act should be transferred to the owner and not the contractor. (iii) Disputes under the Minimum Wage Act and the Payment of Wage Act case should be filed at the native place and payment cases should be settled within six months. (iv) In Child Labour Act, the age of a child should be increased to 18 years and agriculture should be included as industry. (v) An alternative legal response structure for settlement of migrant worker's dispute and cases is needed.

to be facilitated through a proper development strategy and a coherent policy, so that its benefits can be maximized at all levels. A growth strategy which transfers large costs of subsistence to the poorer migrants themselves will ultimately defeat the objectives of both growth and development. Our overview of internal migration in India indicates that this is presently the case.

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## 8. List of Abbreviations Used

EIUS	Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FSI	Floor Space Index
JNNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National rural Employment Guarantee Act
NCEUS	National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector
NCRL	National Commission for Rural Labour
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation
PURA	Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas
RTE	Right to Education
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
UBS	Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services
UID	Unique Identity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPR	Usual Place of Residence



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# Migration and Human Development in India

## NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Priya Deshingkar**

Research Director, Migrating Out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium

**Matteo Sandi**<sup>1</sup>

Associate Tutor (Economics)

University of Sussex, UK

This paper discusses unexplored linkages between migration and human development through an analysis of outcomes for health and education among different social groups. The analysis is based on the NSS data for 2007–2008 (the 64th Round) and case studies of specific castes and tribes to understand the factors that lead to positive and negative impacts of migration for migrants belonging to historically disadvantaged and excluded communities. Main findings are that numbers of international migrants are relatively low, especially for the Adivasis where less than 1 per cent migrated internationally, illustrating the barriers to international migration faced by lower social strata. The analysis of spending patterns shows that migration is satisfying immediate consumption needs and

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is likely to result in greater shares of spending on health with rising incomes. The implications for spending on education are mixed and this is linked to Dalits and Adivasis perceiving education as a risky investment with uncertain outcomes. The paper ends with recommendations for health and education policy in order to achieve a more inclusive and migrant friendly approach.

Key words: Migration, human development, India, caste, tribe, health, education

Despite rapid economic progress in recent years, India continues to be one of the most socially stratified societies in the world, where the status that one is ascribed to by birth continues to have a strong bearing through one's lifetime. Although caste discrimination is outlawed by the Indian Constitution, the caste system continues to create barriers to opportunity for large sections of the population. According to the 2001 Census, the so-called Scheduled Castes (SCs), who include the lowest tier in the Hindu caste system,<sup>2</sup> comprised 15 per cent of the population and the Scheduled Tribes (STs),<sup>3</sup> or indigenous people also known as Adivasis, comprised 7.5 per cent of the population. The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) continue to be the most deprived sections of Indian society. Despite a number of government programmes targeting the SCs and STs, they remain the most disadvantaged educationally (Sedwal and Kamat 2008) and in terms of health.

SCs (henceforth Dalits) and STs (henceforth Adivasis) in modern India are highly mobile and engage in various forms of seasonal and circular migration. The reasons for migration are complex, ranging from a lack of employment opportunities in source locations and better wages at destination locations to a desire to experience a 'different life'. Escaping traditional caste hierarchies can also be an important factor motivating migration (HDR 2009). Migration can also be a way of escaping restrictive social norms and may explain continued migration into occupations that are known to be harsh and poorly paid such as brick-kiln work (Shah 2008). It is now widely accepted that migration is not just an individual's rational economic choice but a family decision (Stark and others) where costs and benefits are shared by the migrant and the family. Minimizing risk plays a key role in the migration decision, while wage differentials are not always the primary reason as was once believed. Thus families may make sacrifices to gather the resources needed to send one member away with the expectation that he/she will remit money. Migration can also provide critical cash for credit-constrained rural enterprise, including agriculture in developing country contexts with imperfect credit markets. This analytical approach is in contrast to views that portray migration mainly as a symptom of rural distress and a failure of development.

The paper begins with a brief overview of the literature on migration and health, followed by a section that presents the differential outcomes on health and education by analysing the spending patterns of migrant households in different

2. The Hindu caste system, has four broad categories : Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders), and Shudras (menial workers). Those who were below these were the untouchables and these are now grouped into the Scheduled Castes.

3. There are many tribal communities in India who lived mainly in remote forested, hilly and mountainous areas.

caste groups based on NSS data. The third part of the paper is devoted to analysing these differences with insights gained from in-depth case studies of tribal and Dalit migrant households in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.

## Migration and Health

Whether or not migration leads to positive human development outcomes in terms of health and education is a matter of heated discussion because the evidence is variable and mixed. On the one hand, there is research showing that migrants are less likely to use health care and that they receive lower quality care because of their socioeconomic background, language difficulties, policy barriers in access to health care, location and social stigma (Derose et al. 2007). Indeed studies conducted by CEHAT show that migrants are disadvantaged relative to the native population in accessing education and health services. Other problems highlighted are delays in health-seeking owing to costs, opportunity cost of missing work as well as problems of transportation. Furthermore, migrants are unfamiliar with health-care systems at destination, and this also creates difficulties in accessing health services. Additionally, migrants are exposed to greater risks both during transit and at destination owing to hazardous working and living conditions (Sundar et al. 2000; VHA 2000). Migrant workers in India are frequently exposed to occupational hazards such as toxic chemicals (in dyeing units, for example), harmful levels of dust (in quarries and kilns), industrial accidents (in factories and construction sites) and unsanitary and unhealthy conditions (working in poorly ventilated and dark places with poor drainage and inadequate toilet facilities).

Poor migrants often end up in slums where living conditions are extremely crowded, unhygienic and insecure. Poor nutrition and lack of clean water are compounding factors. The World Bank estimates 21 per cent of communicable diseases in India are water related.<sup>4</sup> Migration and mobility have also been identified as a major risk factor for HIV transmission (Gupta and Singh 2002). But others rightly argue that it is not population mobility per se that causes HIV transmission, but the increased likelihood of unsafe sex as a consequence of migrants' being away from their families. Being away from traditional social norms and networks that influence and regulate behaviours puts individuals in a liminal state during which they may behave in ways that they would not consider or be allowed to at home.

Yet, we also find studies showing a positive link between migration and health. Research in Mexico based on nationally representative data by Amuedo-Dorantes and Pozo (2005) shows that the single largest category of intended use of migrants' remittances was health expenses. Research conducted by the University of Oxford in Somalia shows that remittances were also spent on health and education apart from other essentials (Lindley undated).

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4. < [www.who.int/mediacentre/multimedia/2002/ind\\_sanitation/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/multimedia/2002/ind_sanitation/en/index.html) >



## Migration and Education

The literatures on migration and education show that the two intersect in a number of ways. First education plays a critical role in the self-selection of migrants. As Dustmann and Glitz (undated) note, education and skills play an important role at many stages of migration. Differential returns to skills and education in origin and destination are a major driver of migration. Educational attainment is a key determinant of success at destination. In fact, certain types of education may be embarked upon in order to apply for migrant jobs. Migrant remittances can impact positively on the education of family members or others (ibid.). Mueller and Sharif (2009) analyse the 2004–2005 Human Development Profile of India survey to examine correlations between the receipt of remittances from internal migrants and human capital investment in rural areas. The data contained information on 26,734 rural households for all states except Assam and Delhi. They find a positive correlation between remittances received from internal migrants and the schooling attendance of teens. The magnitude of the correlation is greater when focusing on low-caste households, and male-schooling attendance, in particular, becomes more positive and statistically significant. Research in Pakistan conducted by Mansuri also finds large positive effects of migration on education in Pakistan. The analysis is based on the 2001–2002 Pakistan Rural Household Survey and finds that one in four households in rural Pakistan have at least one migrant member. The educational gains were much greater for girls (possibly because of a lower starting base), yielding a substantial reduction in gender inequalities in access to education. Notably, there was no detectable protective effect of female headship on the education of girls. In fact, female headship was found to favour boys at the cost of girls, not a surprising finding as investing in a son would be more likely to secure the prosperity of the household than investing in a daughter would. Other studies finding a positive correlation between migration and education are Lopez-Cordoba (2004), Yang (2004), Hanson and Woodruff (2003) and deBrauw and Giles (2005), all quoted in Mansuri 2006.

However, there is also evidence that migration can impact negatively on education. This has been seen among international migrants from Mexico (McKenzie and Rapoport 2007) and some groups of seasonal migrants in India where children travel with their parents and, subsequently, drop out of school (Smita 2008). Also, even if households are receiving remittances, these are not always invested in education. Research conducted under the Migration DRC in Jharkhand shows that while education was seen as being symbolic of upward social mobility, there were no strong links between migrant remittances and investments in the two villages studied (DRC 2009). Only in a few exceptional cases were remittances invested in children's education.

## Explaining Differential Outcomes

It is now well known that human development outcomes of migration are mediated by a number of factors at the household level, meso-level and macro-level (HDR 2009). While the role of economic factors has been the subject of

intensive research, relatively little is known about the link between migration, caste and human development outcomes in India. Thus, we know that factors at the household level such as assets, health, education and individual attributes interact with macro-level factors (policy, market, conflict and environmental factors) to shape outcomes. But we do not know whether being a Dalit or an Adivasi has a strong bearing on the health and education outcomes of migration.

We probe these relationships first through an analysis of the 64th Round of the NSS and then through case studies from Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan which are culturally, economically and politically diverse. Andhra Pradesh was, until recently, the poorest southern state in India, but recent increases in the GSDP have put it in the top five states nationally. The state has a dynamic and growing information technology (IT) sector and receives a large flow of remittances from abroad and internally. It is the fifth largest state in India in terms of geographical area (276,814km<sup>2</sup>) and has a population of 84 million, comprising 23 districts and 29,994 villages. There is a great deal of diversity and disparity in terms of agro-ecology, irrigation, infrastructure and poverty levels in the three regions of Coastal Andhra, Telangana and Rayalaseema. Rajasthan is the largest state in India with a total geographical area of 342,239 km<sup>2</sup>, 10 per cent of which is classified as forest.

The state borders with Pakistan to the left and Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to the south and east respectively. The north-western portion of Rajasthan is generally sandy and dry. Eleven out of 33 districts (home to roughly 40 per cent of the population) are covered by the Thar desert (HDR 2008 for Rajasthan). The Aravalli hills run diagonally across the state, separating the arid west from the semi-arid south-east. Household strategies are diversified to cope with environmental variability and livestock keeping, and migration has long been a part of life for the poor. The literacy rate in the state is 67.1 per cent, which is below the national average of 74 per cent according to the 2011 Census. The school drop-out rate of 46.6 per cent is almost twice as high as the national average of 25.6 per cent (Segal and Sen 2011). It also has a sizeable population of Adivasis in the southern parts of the state for whom migration is an established livelihood strategy to cope with the lack of work in the winter and summer.

Data from the 64th Round of the NSS is analysed to examine spending on health and education as well as housing and durables by landholding and location of migrant source households (that is, rural or urban). Both average spending and the propensity to spend (marginal budget shares) are calculated using a systems approach so that spending on one is interlinked to other end uses, and this reflects the fungibility of resources at the household level. We know from NSS data that the number of internal migrants in India exceeds the number of international migrants. Although the 64th Round made efforts to count internal migrants including seasonal and circular migrants more effectively than previous rounds, the total number appears to be a gross underestimate. As argued by this author in another paper (Deshingkar and Akter 2009), the true figure is likely to be closer to 100 million. Internal migrants, permanent and circular, remit considerable sums of money. Individual transfers are small, but according to the 64th Round of the NSS, we now

know that, in total, internal migrant remittances exceed international remittances, amounting to over US\$ 7.5 billion per year (as compared with less than US\$ 4 billion, the value of transfers received from migrants outside the country) (Castaldo et al. 2011).<sup>5</sup>

One of the critical debates in the migration literature is how remittances are spent and whether they have any lasting impacts on poverty. Many studies indicate that the poor and internal migrants spend mainly on consumption because of their immediate unmet need for food and other basics and because their earnings are smaller than the better-off international migrants who can and do invest part of their remittances in productive enterprise (Adams 2005; Mendola 2008; Gray 2009; Wouterse 2008; Batterbury 2001).

Lasting impacts on poverty reduction appeared to be more pronounced among international migrants. However, recent research based on the 2007–2008 NSS data by Chellaraj and Mohapatra (2011) suggests that both internal and international remittances have a poverty-reducing effect. They also establish that remittances are associated with higher expenditure on health and education, even after controlling for selectivity of migrant-sending households and other household and region-specific characteristics. Research by Srivastava (2011), based on the same dataset, indicates that the largest expenditure item across all remittance-receiving households, including rural and urban, was food – 75 per cent of the households spent their remittances on this. This was followed by expenditure on health (37.4 per cent), education (31 per cent) and household durables (20.1 per cent). Debt servicing as an end use was reported by 10.2 per cent of the households and 8.7 per cent of the households spent money on improving their houses. Only 6.4 per cent households reported expenditure on working capital and saving/investment. As expected, this proportion was extremely low among the poorest decile.

It is not clear from the preceding analysis how such benefits are shared across all social groups in India, and whether such positive impacts of migration and remittances are significant among the Dalits and Adivasis. We know that remittance investment decisions depend on a number of factors, including the overall policy context, aspirations for the future, entrepreneurial skills and family occupation histories. A variety of outcomes are therefore possible, including spending on enterprise, health and education and housing. Investing in health and education would seem logical as these are known to be important in exiting poverty, but as we shall see in the case studies, there are structural reasons for this not always occurring.

## Migration Patterns by Social Group

First, some descriptive statistics: The sample covers 125,578 households in total, 79,091 located in rural areas and 46,487 in urban areas; 572,254 persons were

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5. This result would be different if compared to IMF/World Bank estimates of international remittances to India.

surveyed, 374,294 residing in rural areas and 197,960 residing in urban areas. Of these, 17,267 households (13.75 per cent of the total) belong to the Scheduled Tribes (STs or Adivasis); 20,917 households (16.66 per cent of the total) belong to Scheduled Castes (SCs or Dalits); 46,768 households (37.24 per cent of the total) belong to Other Backward Classes (OBCs); 40,615 households (32.34 per cent) belong to the General Category (GC) which includes upper castes and, finally, for 11 households (0.008 per cent) the information on the social group was not reported (these households are not reported in Table 1).

Excluding non-migrant households, among all social categories, intra-state migrants accounted for the largest proportion, followed by inter-state and finally international. In other words, a majority of migrants moved to destinations within the same state; this holds true for both weighted and unweighted figures. The proportion of non-migrants was highest among the STs followed by the SCs and OBCs and Others in that order, showing that the STs and SCs are relatively less mobile.<sup>6</sup> However previous research by this author (Deshingkar and Akter 2009; Deshingkar and Farrington 2009) and many others show conclusively that STs and SCs are highly mobile for a number of economic and non-economic reasons.

Within the category of STs, who comprise 17,267 households or 13.75 per cent of the total, the bulk of migrants were intra-state migrants with a much smaller proportion of inter-state migrants. A striking statistic here is that less than 1 per cent of Scheduled Tribe households had an international migrant for both weighted and unweighted statistics. In other words, in the sample, only 100 Scheduled Tribe households with international migrants were surveyed, (representing approximately 35,713 households as resulting from the application of weights). This finding powerfully illustrates the barriers to international migration faced by the lowest social strata, which are likely to be a combination of economic (not having the resources to meet the high costs and risks) and social factors (lack of networks, discrimination). While these proportions shift progressively towards more distant types of migration as we moved from ST to SC, OBC and Others, the proportion of international migration remains low. Among the surveyed OBCs, who are numerically the largest group at 46,768 (representing 91,905,806 households), the proportion of surveyed intra-state migrants is 23.88 per cent or just over 11,000 households (roughly representing 17.89 per cent of OBC households, 16,441,949 households).

On examining the data for short-term and long-term migration, one further factor was considered – the period since departure of out-migrants. This was done in order to distinguish between households that sent out migrants in recent years (short-term migrants) and households that sent members away at least five years ago (long-term migrants). The motive for discrepancies in the aggregate figures

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6. Nonetheless, weighted statistics suggest that the proportion of non-migrants was slightly higher among the OBCs than among the SCs.

(that is, total number of households) is simply that some households did not report information on the period since departure for at least one migrant (and, therefore,

**Table 1: Profile of migrants by social category and migration type (weighted figures in brackets)**

<b>Out-Migrants</b>				
<b>Social Group/Migration Status</b>	<b>Scheduled Tribe</b>	<b>Scheduled Caste</b>	<b>Other Backward Class</b>	<b>Others</b>
% No-Migrants (Weighted %)	60.95 (80.83)	58.83 (74.18)	56.28 (71.56)	55.33 (71.17)
% Intra-State Migrants (Weighted %)	28.53 (15.29)	24.38 (17.7)	23.88 (17.89)	23.20 (18.27)
% Inter-State Migrants (Weighted %)	9.90 (3.67)	15.08 (7.35)	16.16 (8.5)	16.90 (8.49)
% International Migrants (Weighted %)	0.58 (0.18)	1.59 (0.68)	3.61 (1.98)	4.53 (2.01)
% Not Known Destination (Weighted %)	0.05 (0.027)	0.11 (0.1)	0.07 (0.066)	0.04 (0.061)
Total (100%) (Weighted – Households' Number)	17,267 (19,840,710)	20,917 (43,739,039)	46,768 (91,905,806)	40,615 (67,047,038)
<b>Short-Term Out-Migrants</b>				
<b>Social Group/Migration Status</b>	<b>Scheduled Tribe</b>	<b>Scheduled Caste</b>	<b>Other Backward Class</b>	<b>Others</b>
% No Short-Term Migrants (Weighted %)	76.83 (92.03)	80.92 (90.42)	79.46 (89.45)	81.04 (90.08)
% Intra-State Migrants (Weighted %)	17.05 (6.2)	10.67 (05.88)	10.57 (6.03)	9.39 (5.97)
% Inter-State Migrants (Weighted %)	5.78 (1.67)	7.43 (3.3)	8.05 (3.61)	7.55 (3.2)
% International Migrants (Weighted %)	0.31 (0.067)	0.93 (0.37)	1.88 (0.86)	2.01 (0.74)
% Not Known Destination (Weighted %)	0.02 (0.025)	0.05 (0.031)	0.04 (0.054)	0.01 (0.0088)
Total (100%) (Weighted – Households' Number)	16,828 (19,710,600)	20,429 (43,378,611)	45,859 (91,269,884)	39,611 (66,365,522)
<b>Long-Term Out-Migrants</b>				
<b>Social Group/Migration Status</b>	<b>Scheduled Tribe</b>	<b>Scheduled Caste</b>	<b>Other Backward Class</b>	<b>Others</b>
% No Long-Term Migrants (Weighted %)	85.71 (89.33)	79.31 (84.38)	77.94 (82.61)	75.70 (81.83)
% Intra-State Migrants (Weighted %)	10.39 (8.76)	13.23 (11.53)	12.89 (11.71)	13.19 (11.94)
% Inter-State Migrants (Weighted %)	3.64 (1.82)	6.81 (03.76)	7.57 (4.65)	8.70 (04.99)
% International Migrants (Weighted %)	0.24 (0.091)	0.58 (00.27)	1.57 (1.01)	2.38 (1.19)
% Not Known Destination (Weighted %)	0.02 (0.002)	0.06 (0.065)	0.03 (0.012)	0.03 (0.052)
Total (100%) (Weighted – Households' Number)	16,828 (19,710,600)	20,429 (43,378,611)	45,859 (91,269,884)	39,611 (66,365,522)

was omitted from the table).<sup>7</sup> For both short-term and long-term migration, it can be seen that overall figures on international mobility are extremely low ranging between 0.24 per cent and less than 3 per cent (always below 2 per cent in weighted statistics). Most importantly, these results suggest that those who migrated recently did so mainly within the state.

When the same households are grouped by landholding, it is seen that, among surveyed households, 29,770 (23.71 per cent of the total) are functionally landless (owning less than 50 square metres of land); 78,611 households (62.6 per cent of the total) are marginal landowners; 10,503 (8.36 per cent of the total) are small landowners; 6,572 (5.23 per cent of the total) are medium and large landowners and, finally, for 122 households (0.09 per cent of the total) the information on the amount of land possessed was not reported (these households are not reported in Table 2). Among all categories of migration, intra-state migration still applies to the largest proportion of population, again followed by inter-state and finally international; the proportion of non-migrants was highest among the landless, followed by the marginal and small landowners and medium and large landowners, in that order, suggesting that the landless and the marginal landowners find it more difficult to migrate (these conclusions hold true for both weighted and unweighted figures). Interestingly, the sharpest differences between the bottom and the top category of landholding are observed in their rates of internal migration, especially when the analysis is restricted to the mobility within the state (that is, intra-state mobility). With the only exception of landless households, the rates of mobility across states (that is, inter-state mobility) are not dissimilar among marginal, small and medium-large landowners. Finally, the proportion

**Table 2: Profile of migrants by land possession and migration type (weighted figures in brackets)**

Out-Migrants				
Land Possession/Migration Status	Landless	Marginal Landowner	Small Landowner	Medium & Large Landowner
% No-Migrants (Weighted %)	70.64 (83.99)	54.64 (70.44)	47.22 (65.9)	39.81 (57.47)
% Intra-State Migrants (Weighted %)	17.44 (11.33)	24.57 (18.34)	33.57 (24.05)	38.88 (31.02)
% Inter-State Migrants (Weighted %)	9.59 (3.88)	17.15 (9.18)	16.92 (8.67)	17.53 (10.11)
% International Migrants (Weighted %)	2.25 (0.7)	3.57 (1.99)	2.24 (1.35)	3.76 (1.4)

7. For 2,841 households, the information on the period since departure was not reported for at least one migrant; out of the 11 households (mentioned above) for which information on the social group was not reported, only one household did not report information on the period since departure of at least one migrant either (which implies that this household is included in both figures -2841 and 11-). For these reasons, 2,851 households (i.e., 2841+10 households) are not reported among short-term and long-term migrants in Table 1. This is likely to increase disproportionately the fraction of non-migrant households, since all those that were excluded from this bit of analysis were households that did not report full information on out-migrants, but they undoubtedly produced out-migrants, a shortcoming which the authors acknowledge; however, by doing this we can make a correct comparison across different categories of migration (an unbiased 'within-migrants' comparison).

Table 2: Contd.

% Not Known Destination (Weighted %)	0.09 (0.098)	0.06 (0.067)	0.05 (0.033)	0.03 (0.0029)
Total (100%) (Weighted – Households' Number)	29,770 (56,399,028)	78,611 (134,736,334)	10,503 (19,278,799)	6,572 (11,989,968)
<b>Short-Term Out-Migrants</b>				
<b>Land Possession/Migration Status</b>	<b>Landless</b>	<b>Marginal Landowner</b>	<b>Small Landowner</b>	<b>Medium &amp; Large Landowner</b>
% No Short-Term Migrants (Weighted %)	85.26 (93.55)	78.47 (88.88)	76.48 (88.79)	76.99 (88.83)
% Intra-State Migrants (Weighted %)	8.35 (4.3)	11.32 (6.37)	14.94 (7.37)	14.84 (7.69)
% Inter-State Migrants (Weighted %)	5.01 (1.71)	8.49 (3.92)	7.46 (3.31)	6.70 (2.98)
% International Migrants (Weighted %)	1.34 (0.37)	1.70 (0.82)	1.08 (0.5)	1.44 (0.49)
% Not Known Destination (Weighted %)	0.04 (0.067)	0.03 (0.023)	0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.003)
Total (100%) (Weighted – Households' Number)	29,354 (56,160,719)	76,655 (133,450,348)	10,214 (19,118,966)	6,401 (11,866,646)
<b>Long-Term Out-Migrants</b>				
<b>Land Possession/Migration Status</b>	<b>Landless</b>	<b>Marginal Landowner</b>	<b>Small Landowner</b>	<b>Medium &amp; Large Landowner</b>
% No Long-Term Migrants (Weighted %)	86.38 (90.8)	77.57 (82.24)	72.08 (77.66)	63.88 (69.24)
% Intra-State Migrants (Weighted %)	8.59 (6.82)	12.65 (11.69)	18.12 (16.54)	23.61 (23.06)
% Inter-State Migrants (Weighted %)	4.15 (2.05)	8.01 (4.97)	8.76 (5.03)	10.30 (6.8)
% International Migrants (Weighted %)	0.84 (0.31)	1.74 (1.06)	1.03 (0.77)	2.22 (0.89)
% Not Known Destination (Weighted %)	0.04 (0.032)	0.04 (0.042)	0.01 (0.0038)	0.00 (0.00)
Total (100%) (Weighted – Households' Number)	29,354 (56,160,719)	76,655 (133,450,348)	10,214 (19,118,966)	6,401 (11,866,646)

of international migration remains constant – and low – across all categories, especially after applying weights.

In the distinction between short-term out-migrants and long-term out-migrants, the period since departure of out-migrants was considered again and, even in this case, the lack of information on the period since departure for at least one migrant caused some households to be omitted from Table 2.<sup>8</sup> Evidence suggests that short-term migration still applies to a very small proportion of population and, most importantly, it is mainly intra-state. Here too, overall figures on international mobility confirm that mobility that took place in recent years did so mainly within the country.

8. There were 2,841 households that did not report information on period since departure for at least one migrant; out of the 122 households for which information on the amount of land possessed was not reported, nine households did not report information on the period since departure for at least one migrant either (which implies that these households are included in both figures -2841 and 122-). For this reason, 2,954 households (i.e., 2841+113 households) are not reported among short-term and long-term migrants in Table 2.

## Spending Patterns on Health and Education

We now examine the spending patterns of rural and urban households with migrants by caste/tribe. The results presented in this section were derived from regression analysis. The analysis aimed at investigating and quantifying differences in consumption behaviour between migrant and non-migrant households. In order to do this, we estimated a system of expenditure equations (a system of seemingly unrelated regressions) where the dependent variables were the share of expenditure on five categories of items namely food (F), goods and services (G), health and medical (M), housing and durables (Hs & D) and schooling (S). However, in order to do this, we had to control for both endogeneity of the migration decision with respect to the spending decisions (at the household level) and for censorship (and selectivity) in the decision to spend on some categories of items at all. For these reasons, the system of expenditure equations was only calculated in the last stage of the analysis. In the first stage of the analysis, we modelled the decision to produce a migrant on a set of variables of relevance and predicted migration probabilities at the household level. In the rest of the analysis, these predicted probabilities were included among the determinants of expenditure behaviour, rather than observed migration. We did this in order to control for endogeneity of migration in the analysis of expenditure demands. In the second stage of the analysis we employed a Heckman-style selection procedure, in order to address censorship (that is, selectivity) in the decision to spend on some categories of items (namely, medical, housing and durables and schooling expenditure). The decision to spend at all on these categories of items was regressed on a set of relevant information, among which was the migration probability predicted in the previous stage of the analysis. In the third (and final) stage of the analysis, we estimated the system of expenditure equations for all expenditure categories, also correcting for selectivity in the decision to spend on medical items, housing and durables and schooling products. By estimating the system of expenditure equations, we obtained the final results on expenditure shares and marginal budget shares, which we present in this section.

More details on the econometric analysis are provided in Appendix I; however, three points are worth highlighting here. First, sampling weights were applied to estimates at all stages of the econometric analysis. Second, remittances were never included in the regression analysis; our decision was motivated by two major concerns arising from the inclusion of remittances in the analysis. The first concern derives from the endogeneity of remittances in the expenditure equation; since they are determined by some of the same elements that may affect the level of expenditure (migration itself, for instance), their inclusion in the regression analysis is likely to lead to estimates with error. A second concern derives from the fact that the impact of migrant remittances is not limited to effects operating through total income and remittances are not likely to adequately control for the range of implications of migration for consumption behaviour; in other words, there are many ways in which the presence of a migrant away from the household may alter the (consumption, as well as production) decisions of the origin household, for instance, by providing the household with information, by reducing its uncertainty, or even



by modifying its attitude towards risk. Finally, in the present study we decided to control for selectivity in the decision to spend at all on some categories of items. However, we are aware that for some categories of items, a minimum level of expenditure different from zero may be necessary for expenditure to be effective; for instance, for educational items, it is conceivable that a minimum amount of expenditure significantly greater than zero will be necessary to provide children in the household with the necessary schooling equipment and services; on the other hand, spending an amount just above zero may not produce any tangible consequences. As a consequence of that, there may not be a significant difference between someone who spends no money on schooling and someone who spends an amount which is just above zero, whereas a significant difference may be observed between someone who spends an amount beyond a certain threshold and someone who does not (the threshold being different from zero). In the present study, we tested for participation in each expenditure category to which censorship is likely to apply whereas we did not address this issue; we recognize its importance and the need for further research in order to address it.

We now examine the spending patterns of rural households with migrants by social group. Table 3 presents the results for rural households with migrants. Spending patterns are presented for five categories of items namely food (F), goods and services (G), health and medical (M), housing and durables (Hs & D) and schooling (S). The data show that, on average and *ceteris paribus*, Adivasi (Scheduled Tribes) migrant households spend 11.24 percentage points more on food on average but 11 percentage points less at the margin – this value is derived from the difference between the two marginal budget shares (MBSs) related to Food (F). More precisely, for each category of items, the value on the left-hand side applies to migrant households (39.4 per cent, in this case) whereas the value on the right-hand side applies to non-migrant households (50.32 per cent, in this case). The difference between these values is interpreted as the difference between migrant and non-migrant households in the marginal propensity to spend on a given product. In this case,  $50.32 - 39.4$  roughly equals 11. The result is interpreted in terms of percentage points. The same applies to all estimates that follow. Adivasi migrant households are also found to spend 3.07 percentage points less on health on average but 8 percentage points more at the margin. In other words, migration enables Adivasis to spend more on food but additional income would not necessarily result in more expenditure on food (as compared with the counterpart without migrants) as this would be spent on other things, in this instance, health. There is thus an unfulfilled need for health expenditure at present (hence the lower health spending on average, which could be satisfied with future earnings). A similar conclusion is valid for expenditure on housing and durables, since migrant households are found to commit to this category of items significantly lower proportions of expenditure on average and significantly higher proportions at the margin.

Table 3 also shows the results for rural Dalit (Scheduled Castes) households with migrants. These results show that, on average and *ceteris paribus*, these households spend roughly 1 percentage point more on average on housing and durables but 1.34 percentage points less at the margin. They spend roughly similar

Table 3: Spending patterns of rural households by social group

	Food		Goods & Services		Health		Housing & Durables		Schooling	
	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants
Scheduled Tribes	11.24	-	1.33	-	-3.07	-	-4.03	-	-5.03	-
Marginal budget shares	39.4	50.32	33.57	35.45	11.95	3.95	9.13	4.77	6.21	5.78
Scheduled Castes	1.92	-	1.26	-	0.75	-	1.04	-	1.08	-
Marginal budget shares	44.93	47.85	32.48	30.57	12.2	10.11	4.67	6.01	5.74	5.59
Other backward Classes	1.49	-	-1.65	-	3.86	-	-1.84	-	-1.89	-
Marginal budget shares	40.99	44.95	30.77	31.42	12.92	10.11	9.78	6.4	5.58	7.15
Others	1.1	-	-4.03	-	5.95	-	-3.21	-	0.21	-
Marginal budget shares	37.92	42.52	31.57	31.41	12.29	10.08	11.65	7.72	6.58	8.29

Note: Results are reported as percentage points; statistically significant average differences and statistically significant differences in MBSs have been highlighted in blue.

Table 4: Spending patterns of urban households by social group

	Food		Goods & Services		Health		Housing & Durables		Schooling	
	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants	Migrant	Non-Migrants
Scheduled Tribes	2.29	-	-11.56	-	1.96	-	0.83	-	6.45	-
Marginal budget shares	28.45	34.91	39.11	38.9	9.66	4.67	15.53	12.77	7.27	8.75
Scheduled Castes	0.41	-	-2.55	-	-2.51	-	8.9	-	-4.25	-
Marginal budget shares	35.89	35.69	38.64	32.97	12.8	7.61	6.75	14.27	5.93	9.46
Other backward Classes	-2.23	-	1.21	-	-3.67	-	7.15	-	-2.5	-
Marginal budget shares	32.19	33.33	34.45	32.91	12.77	6.58	11.3	16.39	9.32	10.81
Others	-3.45	-	6.76	-	0.38	-	3.14	-	-6.83	-
Marginal budget shares	28.52	30.8	36.92	35.75	12.4	5.9	12.48	16.06	9.69	11.48

Note: Results are reported as percentage points; statistically significant average differences and statistically significant differences in MBSs have been highlighted in blue.

amounts on average on goods and services and 2 percentage points more at the margin. The differences between migrant and non-migrant households in the expenditure behaviour on food, health and schooling are not statistically significant; however, the positive differences in the amount spent at the margin on both medical and educational items suggest that some desirable change in expenditure behaviour may be taking place anyway.

Spending patterns are also shown, on average and *ceteris paribus*, for backward class rural households. Results suggest that among these households, those with migrants spend 1.49 percentage points more on average on food but 4 percentage points less at the margin; they also seem to spend 1.89 percentage points less on schooling on average and 1.57 percentage points less at the margin. Finally, they invest 1.84 percentage points less on average on housing and durables and 3.3 percentage points more at the margin. Migration appears to be helping this group of households to spend more on food and, possibly, on health. Higher earnings will result in greater spending on food and schooling since the marginal budget shares are positive for migrant households, but not as much for migrant households as for non-migrant households.<sup>9</sup> Greater earnings may result in more spending on health at the margin for migrant households, as MBSs show a positive difference over non-migrants. However, the difference is not statistically significant.

Finally, the results for the General Category, which includes upper castes, are as follows: on average and *ceteris paribus*, migrant households spend 1.1 percentage points more on average on food and 4.6 percentage points less at the margin, 3.2 percentage points less on average on housing and durables and 3.9 percentage points more at the margin; finally, they spend 0.2 percentage points more on schooling on average and 1.7 percentage points less at the margin. This implies that migrant households are able to spend more on food and schooling, but with greater earnings, the expenditure is likely to shift towards more spending on housing and durables. In other words, once immediate consumption needs have been met and as earnings rise, more will be spent on housing and durables.

We now move on to examine the spending patterns of urban households, again highlighting the different implications of migration on expenditure behaviour by caste/tribe. Table 4 presents the results for urban households with migrants, still presenting spending patterns for food, goods and services, health, housing and durables and schooling. The data show that, on average and *ceteris paribus*, ST migrant households spend 2.29 percentage points more on food on average but 6 percentage points less at the margin, 1.96 percentage points more on health on average and roughly 5 percentage points more at the margin; finally, they seem to spend a similar amount of money on housing and durables on average and 2.76 percentage points more at the margin. In other words, even in urban areas, migration enables Adivasi households to spend more on food, but only 28.45 percentage points of any additional income (as compared with nearly

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9. The z-test always rejected the null hypothesis of MBSs not being statistically different from zero.

35 percentage points for the counterpart without out-migrants) would be committed to food expenditure; this would free up room for expenditure on other items like housing and durables. Even stronger is the result on health expenditure, which is decisively higher among migrant households, both on average and at the margin. The higher marginal propensity to spend on health suggests that migration from Adivasi urban households is likely to encourage investment in human capital and leads to a different use of disposable income. Finally, although the results on schooling are not significant, they show higher spending on schooling on average and a slightly lower increase in spending at the margin.

Table 4 also shows the results for urban Dalit households with out-migrants which show that, on average and *ceteris paribus*, these households spend lower amounts of money on goods and services (2.55 percentage points less), medical items (2.51 percentage points) and schooling (4.25 percentage points). Higher amounts of money are spent, on average, on housing and durables (8.9 percentage points); no significant differences are observed in the consumption patterns of food, neither on average nor at the margin. On the contrary, marginal propensities to spend are 5 percentage points higher on medical items, 7.52 percentage points lower on housing and durables and 3.53 percentage points lower on educational items. These results are consistent with evidence found in rural areas for what concerns marginal propensities to spend on medical items, whereas the same does not apply to marginal spending on schooling; negative and significant coefficients are found in this case, suggesting that urban Dalit households invest decisively less than non-migrant households on education.

Results are also shown on spending patterns, on average and *ceteris paribus*, for the Other Backward Classes, suggesting that no significant difference is found between migrant and non-migrant households in their average and marginal expenditure on food and goods and services; on the other hand, a significantly lower average level of expenditure on medical items is found among migrant households, as well as a 6.19 percentage points higher marginal propensity to spend on medical items; among migrant households, a significantly higher (7.15 percentage points) average level of expenditure and a 5.09 percentage points lower marginal propensity to spend on housing and durables was observed; finally a significant difference is found again between migrant and non-migrant households in their marginal propensity to spend on schooling, with non-migrant households still devoting roughly 1.5 percentage points more of any additional income to education-related expenditure. For backward class households with migrants, higher earnings will result in a greater increase (as compared with non-migrant households) in the level of expenditure on medical items, whereas the opposite is valid for schooling, on which non-migrant households will spend a greater proportion of any additional income.

Finally the results for the General Category, which includes upper castes in urban areas, are the following: on average and *ceteris paribus*, no significant differences are found in the consumption behaviour of migrant and non-migrant households on food, goods and services and housing and durables; migrant households are found to spend a higher share of expenditure on medical items both on average

(0.38 percentage points) and at the margin (6.5 percentage points); a lower increase (1.79 percentage points less) in the level of expenditure on schooling will take place for any additional income among migrant households.

Taken together these results indicate that migration is satisfying immediate consumption needs and is likely to result in greater shares of spending on health with rising incomes. Since higher marginal budget shares on health were found for migrant households both in rural and in urban areas in all social groups (although, in rural areas, in three cases the difference was not statistically significant), the recurrence of this positive difference suggests that, especially in urban areas, migration is indeed encouraging this kind of investment in human capital. But a word of caution is needed in the interpretation of the evidence from rural areas, because of the lack of statistical significance in the majority of the results. Caution is needed in interpreting the findings related to greater spending on health as this may not always lead to positive outcomes. In fact, health expenditure is one of the largest factors for downward slides into poverty. Data from the 60th National Morbidity And Healthcare Survey show that impoverishment due to health care payments is higher than previously thought (Berman et al. 2010). In absolute terms, around 11.88 million households, mainly rural, were pushed below the poverty line because of health care expenditure in 2004 (ibid., p. 68).

The results for education are mixed; they show higher marginal budget shares for both STs and SCs, but these must be taken with caution too, because they are not significant. Also, in the majority of groups in urban areas, this result is not found, and shares of marginal expenditure on schooling items are generally lower for households with migrants. With rising incomes the OBCs and General Category both in rural and urban areas are likely to devote higher shares of budget on health (though the migrant/non-migrant-households' differences are statistically significant only in urban areas) and lower budget shares on education. Finally, mixed evidence is found on the marginal propensity to spend on housing and durables: in rural areas migrant households from the STs, OBCs and General Category will spend higher shares of disposable income on housing and durables, whereas in urban areas SCs, OBCs and General Category will commit lower shares of their budget to this category of products. The absence of beneficial results of migration for education are not surprising, especially for Dalits and Adivasis for whom education is inaccessible and/or a risky strategy with uncertain returns as we show below.

These findings are probed further through case studies in order to understand the factors that influence access to education and health care and how funds are allocated to different uses in the household.

## The Factors That Mediate Health and Education Outcomes

We discuss two contrasting states, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, and the situation of Dalits and Adivasis there in relation to the education and health outcomes of migration. Andhra Pradesh has a relatively high proportion of Dalits

and is one of the top six states with the highest Dalit populations including Punjab, West Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. It also has a relative high proportion of OBCs. The proportion of Adivasis is relatively low at 6 per cent of the population. A majority of Adivasis live in remote forested areas in the Eastern Ghats area, where districts with the highest tribal population are Khammam (where Adivasis constitute 26.7 per cent of the population), Adilabad (16.7 per cent), followed by lower proportions in Vishakhapatnam, Warangal and Nalgonda (Reddy and Kumar 2010). According to the 2001 Census, the literacy rate among Adivasis was 37 per cent, far lower than 60.5 per cent reported for the state population as a whole (ibid.). According to NSS data from 2004–2005, roughly 10 per cent of the population of the state was poor.<sup>10</sup>

By contrast, Rajasthan has a much higher proportion of tribals at 12.5 per cent of the population (2001 Census) and poverty levels were higher at 18 per cent in 2004–2005. Poverty trends in India show that states with higher proportions of Adivasis have seen a slower reduction in poverty. Districts in the south such as Banswada and Dungarpur are heavily tribal with Adivasis comprising 72.27 per cent of the population in Banswada and 65.14 per cent in Dungarpur. Large numbers of children, youth and adults migrate to neighbouring Gujarat, one of the top destinations for migration from all over India. While the adults often work as tea stall assistants, domestic workers, watchmen, construction workers and odd jobbers, children and youth work in cotton fields.

### **Andhra Pradesh (AP)**

Here we discuss migration outcomes based on interviews in three regions of Andhra Pradesh: in rural areas of the poor district of Medak, which has high migration rates to nearby Hyderabad; in the industrialized town of Ramagundam that attracts large numbers of migrants from other parts of the state; and the outskirts of the capital city Hyderabad, which has a concentration of brick-kiln workers.

#### ***Rural Medak***

Migration drivers and outcomes were studied through three rounds of research in six villages of Andhra Pradesh by Deshingkar and others (Deshingkar and Start 2003; Deshingkar and Farrington 2009). Surveys conducted in 2001–2002, 2003–2004 and 2006–2007 showed that poverty rates in households with a migrant fell by about half between 2001–2002 and 2006–2007 (Deshingkar and Akter 2009). But what has migration meant for health and education?

The survey data show that, on average, 60 per cent of the households said that they spent most of their migration earnings on consumption. Next was repaying debt and third was spending on health and education. But there were clear differences in spending priorities and needs by caste. Nearly 86 per cent of Adivasis in AP mentioned consumption as the most important use of migration. Dalits too spend

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10. NSS 61st Round results available at  
< [www.mospi.nic.in/mospi\\_new/upload/nss/seminar\\_61R.pdf?status=1&menu\\_id=108](http://www.mospi.nic.in/mospi_new/upload/nss/seminar_61R.pdf?status=1&menu_id=108) >

most of their earnings on consumption. Paying off debt was mentioned by 21 per cent of the Dalit households as the most important use of migration earnings. These are debts that are incurred for a variety of purposes, foremost of which are medical expenses, weddings, drilling tubewells and social obligations. Previous rounds of research in these villages have shown that health-related expenditure was a major cause of debt and impoverishment among the Dalits and Adivasis (Farrington et al. 2006). But migration has improved the creditworthiness of some families with the result that they can spend or borrow more easily for health-related emergencies and stresses when needed.

Some families are also investing in education (Box 1). The spending being referred to here is spending on private schools, which appear to be mushrooming all over India especially in urban areas but also some rural areas near large cities. Interviews indicate that many Dalits and some Adivasis are now sending their children to fee-paying English-medium schools. An education in English is perceived as one of the best routes to success. Although there are government schools in many of the villages, these suffer from chronic teacher absenteeism, maltreatment of students by the teachers, especially of those belonging to Dalit and Adivasi families, and corruption in the provision of food and textbooks.

This is in line with the national trend captured by the World Bank National Absence Survey (WBNAS), where 3,700 government schools across 20 states were visited unannounced. More than a quarter of the teachers were absent in rural areas (cited in Narayan and Mooij 2010). Furthermore, research has shown that upper-caste teachers have low expectations of Dalit pupils and consider them to be dull and uneducatable, and this negatively impacts on Dalit families who are reluctant to send their children to school (The Probe Team 1999). Detailed ethnographic research among the Chamar in Uttar Pradesh by Jeffrey et al. (2002) shows that even those with education have found it extremely difficult to become upwardly mobile (Jeffrey et al. 2002). This could be one of the reasons that poor families prefer to send their children to private schools. There has been a mushrooming of low-cost private schools, completely unregulated and corrupt (Tooley and Dixon 2005), but with a greater promise of upward mobility because they are English medium. Low-cost private schools are widespread in urban and rural locations in and around Hyderabad (ibid.) and other parts of India (De et al. 2002).

### ***Ramagundam town***

Ramagundam is located in the coal belt in the north of the state. It has been called the 'Manchester of India' because of the large number of private and state companies here, including the state-owned National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and private collieries. Large numbers of migrants are employed in the state and private sector in skilled and unskilled jobs. Adivasis and Dalits work mainly in the lower end jobs on a casual basis. Interviews with migrants indicate that migration is helping them to improve their standard of living and while health outcomes are clear, education is not a priority as the case of Biksham illustrates (Box 2). Biksham's reference to spending on health care is a phenomenon common to the poor in urban areas across India. There are three reasons for this: first, Adivasis continue to

### Box 1: Construction workers and sugar cane cutters in rural Medak

Lingaiah (a member of the Dalit community) is a 50-year-old illiterate labourer who lives in MD, a remote village in Medak district. He and his wife live with their two sons and the sons' families in the same house. Lingaiah's family was landless in the past but he was given an acre of dryland by the government during a land reform programme some years ago. The land yielded very little and both he and his wife continued their traditional occupation of working as agricultural labourers in the local landlord's field. About 10 years ago, his elder son began to migrate to Hyderabad for construction work. The village is only about four hours away from Hyderabad by bus and many other people migrate to the city. The son got married and took his wife with him a couple of years later. But when they had children they left them with Lingaiah and his wife in the village. The son and his wife come back to the village every two months and bring money, clothes and gifts for the parents, children and other relatives. They take rice back with them. The rice is obtained by the parents as wages for their labouring work in the fields. Even when they need to buy rice, it is cheaper in the village to buy from farmers rather than paying town prices in Hyderabad. The second son started migrating eight years ago. The family in the village was able to eat better and send the children to school because of the money brought back by the sons. This was a major step for a family where several generations have been illiterate. They have also managed to borrow Rs 30,000 to dig a tubewell. They were able to borrow because their creditworthiness has improved in the eyes of the moneylenders who know that they have two migrant sons who can repay the debt. The tubewell has raised their status in the village and they are now able to grow two crops a year on their land. Both sons and their wives live in rented rooms in Hyderabad for around Rs 500 a month. Lingaiah says that all families like his are doing the same in the village. If the parents are relatively young and healthy, the sons leave their children in the village and they use migration money to eat better, educate their children, invest in tubewells or improve their houses.

Kishan Nayak is a 50-year-old Lambada (Adivasi) living in the same village. He lives with his wife and five children. He owns 1.5 acres of dry and rocky land and has encroached on an acre of forest department land. He grows rainfed sorghum and paddy on his farm. Kishan has been migrating for sugar cane harvesting within the state for the past 20 years. At first, it was just him and his wife migrating, but later both of his sons started to accompany them, and he now has four earning members in the house. He started migrating when recruiting agents from the sugar cane mill came to his village to find workers to harvest the cane. He bought two bulls and a cart with borrowed money and started migrating. The recruiting agents give workers an advance, which they would use to buy essentials and repay some of the debt. The advance would be paid off through their earnings. In 2006, a team of three workers and a bullock cart can save Rs 30,000 in a season of cane cutting. The first son migrates with Kishan and his wife. The second son goes to work with another person from the village who also owns a bullock cart. He earns Rs 5,000.

The family is no longer in debt and over the years they have improved their living standards considerably. Kishan had enough money to spend on his eldest daughter's wedding and did not have to borrow. He has built a larger house with a separate kitchen/storage room and separate shed for the cattle. He now plans to dig a tubewell.

As a community, the Lambadas have done well through migration. They are now migrating on their own without recruiting agents because they know the market well. They are also investing in the education of their children and the younger generation is going into white collar jobs. There are now two police constables, two school teachers, one assistant engineer and one construction supervisor in the Lambada hamlet.

*Source:* Key informant interviews in MD.

*Source:* Deshingkar and Farrington (2009).



**Box 2: Casual labour in Ramagundam town**

Biksham (58) is a Gond Adivasi who migrated to Ramagundam in 1978 with his wife and father along with 20 other poor Gond households who migrated from Adilabad district to work on construction sites of NTPC. They have lived in the same slum for the last forty years outside the gates of NTPC. Biksham says he has done well. He married off his only daughter five years ago to a boy from his village and spent 5,000 rupees on her wedding. Although dowry was not traditionally required among the Gonds, it has become more common owing to the influence of mainstream Hindu culture.

He has two sons and they both dropped out of primary school. He says, 'I was always concerned with earning a living and didn't have the time to monitor my children's schooling.' But he says they have not done badly; the elder son started working as a construction labourer and the younger one as a cleaner with a truck company. The older son gives him 1,000 rupees a month.

Biksham says that migration has helped him to support his family and meet medical emergencies. A couple of years ago Biksham extended and renovated the family house with their savings. He says, 'Life has been tough but we manage because work is available. We have not saved money but more important we have no debts. We save small amounts for immediate needs and obligations.' Their only worry is that they could be thrown out of the slum any time.

*Source:* Interview conducted by Laxman Rao.

carry high burdens of 'diseases of the poor', namely undernutrition and infectious diseases (Mahindra and Labonte 2010). Data from the National Family Health Survey in 1992 showed that in nearly every health area – whether child mortality, malnutrition, immunization, contraception, pregnancy or maternal care – Dalits and Adivasis had worse outcomes vis-à-vis the national average and in comparison with non-SC/STs (Das et al.).

Second, migration can expose people to greater health risks because of dangerous and dirty occupations and poor living conditions. This has been well researched by others so we will not explore it in greater depth.

Third, spending on private health care is widespread among the Dalits and Adivasis. Although it was previously thought that this was because of their poor physical access to state health care (see, for example, the World Bank report on Adivasis by Das et al.), recent research has challenged this thinking. De Costa et al. (2009), for instance, found that urbanization and the proportion of Adivasis in the population were positively correlated with private physician density in Madhya Pradesh. But all provider densities (public and private) were negatively related to proportions of Dalits. Research by Ergler et al. (2011) in Chennai indicates that affordability and physical access are not the only reasons why people choose private health care. There are other non-economic and non-rational reasons for these choices that need to be better understood.

Spending on private health care can impose huge burdens on the poor. For example, NSS data for 2004–2005 show that private care was chosen for

84 per cent of the illness episodes in urban areas of Tamil Nadu (Vaishnavi and Das 2009). About 60 per cent of households that used private health services faced 'catastrophic' payments (ibid.). Similarly research among Adivasi migrants in urban areas of Orissa by Babu et al. shows that migrants depended heavily on private practitioners, including unqualified practitioners, and spent large proportions of their earnings. In Mumbai, private providers consulted by the poor were found to be ill-qualified and charging high prices for low-quality treatment (Baru 2005). Other scholars have also noted the impoverishing impacts of health spending (Berman et al. 2010).

Thus, while migration has enabled people to spend more on health care, the spending is so heavy that it can push poor people deeper into poverty. Unregulated private health care systems are compromising the developmental outcomes of migration.

### ***Brick-kilns in periurban areas***

Finally, we discuss the example of brick-kiln workers for whom education is not a realistic option at all, although there may be improved ability to spend on health. These are the very poorest migrants who migrate with the entire family, young children included, because they have no assets or employment in the village. According to the All India Brick Kilns and Tile Manufacturer's Federation there are more than 50,000 brick-kilns in India, each employing on an average 100 permanent male workers. If women are counted as well, brick-kilns employ roughly 10 million workers in India. Children accompanying their parents are part of the work team known as a *pathuriya*. An estimated two million people, mainly Dalits and Adivasis, migrate from western Orissa to work in brick-kilns surrounding major cities of Andhra Pradesh (ActionAid 2005, WORLP 2005). Workers are usually recruited by an agent or contractor known as a *Sardar* or *Khatadar*. This is the notorious 'Dadan' system which has long attracted attention for being highly exploitative. At the time of recruitment Sardars give the worker an advance (Rs 18,000–25,000 in 2007) to be paid off through work. Brick-kiln workers are usually paid Rs 175–200 for 1,000 bricks made. They work for 12 to 15 hours, sometimes 18 hours a day to make more money. Wages are settled at the end of the brick-making season and it is common for the workers to be cheated.

The advance money is used for a variety of purposes such as repaying debts (which may have been incurred by spending on health),<sup>11</sup> marriages, buying clothes, building/renovating/extending houses, and medical treatment. Although migration may be helping this group of migrants to spend more on health care, working at the kilns creates new types of risks through constant exposure to dust and smoke. Also, the outcomes for education are not positive, because the education of children who migrate with their parents is interrupted, and they often drop out of school. The question is whether these children would have been better off educationally had they not migrated with their parents. General

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11. Many migrants are indebted to moneylenders at home who charge interest rates as high as 10 per cent per month.

education trends among these social groups discussed earlier in this paper (and again with respect to Adivasis in the section on Rajasthan below) suggest that perhaps they would not have been better off.

## Rajasthan

The case studies in Rajasthan include interviews with migrants in Banswada town in Banswada district and mine and quarry workers in Udaipur district, both of the areas being in the southern Adivasi belt. Average literacy rates are low especially for women. The National Family Health Survey data show that more than half the tribal women and 80 per cent of the children have anaemia (Nagda 2004). Chronic poverty is linked to high child labour rates and an estimated 100,000 children in the age group of 9 to 15 years migrate from South Rajasthan to the cotton fields in Gujarat (Kothai 2007). Additionally large numbers of adolescents migrate to textile markets in Surat (Khandelwal et al. 2009).

### *Banswara town*

Nearly 10,000 migrants from landless and marginal Dalit and Adivasi families come into Banswada town every day from surrounding villages.<sup>12</sup> They come to work in the many marble cutting and polishing units, textile factories and small-scale industrial units in and around the town. Industries locate here because of the availability of cheap labour. Migrants view Banswada as a stepping stone to better work opportunities in Gujarat.

Interviews with migrants show that working in Banswada has improved the economic and social status of their families. They said they were able to manage 'better than before' and do not have to borrow from moneylenders especially for health emergencies. In fact, spending on health and repaying loans taken for health expenses have become easier and this was cited as one of the major benefits of migration.

Access to education continues to be problematic in this part of the state. A recent case study of Dungariya village in southern Rajasthan (Ramchandran 2010) notes: 'School attendance rates were abysmal: of all tribal children in the age group 6 to 12 years, only 29 per cent – 38 per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls – were attending school. Large numbers of children – skinny, with open sores and unhealthy hair – played naked in the houses we visited. As the data show, the primary school in the village has failed entirely to attract children to school or to keep enrolled children in school. The school has two teachers for five classes, and the people of the village have no confidence in either.' Educational attainment among Adivasi communities all over India has suffered for a variety of complex reasons including remote and spatially dispersed habitations, difficult terrain, inaccessible locations and poor infrastructure (Sujatha 2002). Although residential 'ashram schools' were introduced to overcome these structural barriers, the quality of education has been poor and the curriculum is not relevant to the Adivasi way of life. Instead, it attempts to wean young people away from it, alienating

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12. Secretary Sarvodaya Samagra Vikas Evam Sanchar Sansthan (SSVSS), Banswada, interviewed by Pramod Sharma.

### **Box 3: Casual labourer Banswada town**

Bunda Lal, a 40-year-old Bhil from Ladka village in Sajjangarh Block, Banswada district, has been a regular migrant to Banswada town for the last 20 years. He has continued to work as an unskilled labourer, but managed to educate his younger brother up to the B. Ed. level with his earnings. In addition to this, he spent on digging a well, buying certified seeds, fertilizer and pesticides. He hopes that his brother will find a government job through the job reservation scheme for STs. This would improve their lives significantly. According to Bunda and his friends, migration has helped improve farming, nutrition and education, and has lowered borrowing for health expenses and marriages. It has also helped them to buy durables such as TVs, motorcycles, electric fans, kerosene stoves, pressure cookers and mobile phones. But there are negative effects too such as adverse health impacts, children dropping out of school to migrate with parents, vulnerability of adolescent girls left behind, old people left without support.

*Source:* Interviews conducted by Sushil Kumar.

them in the process (ibid.).<sup>13</sup> Furthermore Adivasis speak their own language, and children are alienated when teachers cannot communicate with them in their language (ibid.). It is hardly surprising that many families prefer not to send their children to ashram schools and the dropout rate is high among those who do (Sujatha 2002). Case studies in other parts of India have shown that teacher constructions about the educatability of Dalit and Adivasi children were particularly damaging as assumptions were made about their willingness and ability to learn (Balagopalan and Subramanian 2003).

However, Rajasthan has shown one of the fastest rates of growth in education levels. And although investment in education is not a priority for Adivasis who are alienated from it for the reasons discussed above, migration earnings may be helping in cases where the returns are perceived to be high (see Box 3).

Bunda's case may be illustrative of a phenomenon that has been noted by scholars such as Das – while the returns to primary education are lower for Adivasis compared with the rest of the population, the returns to secondary education are higher (Das et al. p. 12). This could be because they are able to get reserved jobs and indeed this is what Bunda's strategy was.

### ***Mine and quarry workers***

In contrast to this is the situation of mine and quarry workers who are the poorest migrants and often migrate through contractors in a similar way to brick-kiln workers in other parts of the country.

About 4,000 mining and quarry workers work in mines and quarries near Bundi town. The majority of these labourers are Dalits and Adivasis from poor parts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Workers come with their families. Women earn Rs 35–50 a day performing 'light' tasks like the separation of rubble and its disposal.

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13. In fact all 573 Scheduled Tribes in India have their own language, which differs from the state language (Govinda 2002).

Children also migrate with their parents and work alongside their parents. Most of these children drop out of school as the migration cycle continues for 7–8 months.

Small mines and quarries are largely unregulated. Unskilled labourers and semi-skilled are employed on a daily wage basis while skilled labourers, that is, blasters, truck and tractor drivers, cutters etc., are paid on the piece rate or contract basis. Office-related staff, that is, accountants, machine operators, crane operators etc., are paid a monthly salary. For the labourers, occupational health problems and injuries are common and no protection is provided. According to the Bundi Labour Welfare Office, no case of silicosis and tuberculosis has ever been formally recorded, but labourers say there are plenty of such cases. The Welfare Office also says that no legal case of compensation has ever been seen under the Rajasthan Silicosis Rules, 1955, to protect and compensate sandstone mine workers (interview conducted by Sushil Kumar).

Labourers are generally not aware of laws related to minimum wages, health and safety measures, group insurance or provident funds. They often borrow money to meet routine and emergency needs. Many borrow from their contractors or the mine owners and they repay this through work. This means that they are bonded to the same agent or owner until the sum is paid off and the debt can continue for a long time.

The health and education outcomes of this type of migration are clearly not positive and benefits, if any, are mainly economic and probably at the expense of future generations. But in the absence of other remunerative employment, such migration is enabling these poor families to at least eat two meals a day.

## Conclusion

The case studies reviewed show that while migration has been able to ease credit constraints for health, migration also exposes people to greater health risks, and spending on private health care may lead to deepening poverty.

With regard to education, the outcomes are also mixed. While some migrants have been able to spend migration earnings on education, the poorest migrants who migrate with their families are not able to educate their children. The policy implications of these findings are (i) the private health sector needs to be better regulated so that the poor are not exploited; (ii) the structural and social barriers to education need to be addressed so that state schooling becomes a realistic option for Dalits and Adivasis; (iii) the private education sector needs to be better regulated to ensure better quality and good educational outcomes; (iv) ultimately, there is a need for increased inclusive development so that the poorest do not have to migrate in ways that undermine the future of their children; finally, (v) there is untapped potential for human development if the positive impacts of migration and remittances are harnessed properly. But, without accompanying changes in deeply rooted attitudes and governance structures, migrant remittances cannot become a magic wand that will suddenly enable Dalits and Adivasis to become healthier and better educated.

## Implications for Health and Education Policy in India

### Health

The 2002 National Health Policy was progressive in that it increased government health expenditure and decentralized health-care provision. Health insurance was universalized for the poor through schemes such as the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY). Most health schemes are accessible to migrants, but evaluations show that implementation and uptake are problematic for a range of complex reasons that are not yet fully understood. For example, despite ambitious vaccination programmes, studies have found extremely poor outcomes among the Adivasis. Swain reports the result of surveys undertaken in Adivasi slums in urban Orissa. Despite high levels of awareness among mothers, none of the children were fully vaccinated against the six major but preventable diseases (tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, and measles) and a quarter had not received any injections at all. The average for Indian children as a whole is 42 per cent and for Orissa this figure is 44 per cent. A majority of the families, in the report by Swain, depended on government health workers and only 4 per cent went to private practitioners. Clearly a lack of awareness was not the reason for poor uptake and more research is needed in this area.

The few evaluations of the RSBY that exist indicate that implementation is problematic. Research in Karnataka by Rajashekhar et al. (2011) based on a large survey of eligible households and interviews with empanelled hospitals in the state found that although a majority of households were aware of the scheme, the scheme was hardly operational and utilization was virtually zero. A large proportion of beneficiaries had not received cards, and many did not know how and where to obtain treatment. Moreover, hospitals were not ready to treat RSBY patients. Hospitals complained of a lack of training and delays in the reimbursement of their expenses. Many were refusing to treat patients until the issues were resolved, and others were asking cardholders to pay cash. Another review (Narayana 2009) of the RSBY based on national data showed that enrolment varied. Although on average 50 per cent of the BPL population had enrolled, there was huge variation between and within states ranging from 1 per cent in some districts in Maharashtra to 100 per cent in some districts in Kerala. Most of the enrolment had occurred in just four states: Uttar Pradesh (58 districts), Maharashtra (27), Punjab (19) and Haryana (19). Narayana concludes that state governments are neither keen nor have the administrative apparatus to get the poor enrolled.

### Education

The preceding discussion identifies some of the barriers to education faced by migrants and their families especially those belonging to Dalit and Adivasi communities. For migrants, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is arguably the most significant education programme as this is a key tool for achieving universal primary education in India.

While many innovative experiments have been supported by the SSA to reach children migrating with families, clearly there are still gaps. The 2010 Planning

Commission Evaluation of the SSA highlights seasonal migration as a problem, because children migrating with their parents are unable to attend school regularly, and they do not appear for exams. The problem appears to be especially acute in Rajasthan and Haryana, but many other states are also mentioned including Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Jharkhand and Punjab. They rightly suggest that there is a need to reform school curricula and timings to make them more migration friendly. They recommend multi-lingual schools with multi-graded textbooks and designing the academic calendar to correspond with migratory seasons including realigning vacations in migration-prone communities. We would support these recommendations for changes in the education system.

Some innovations deserve particular mention: in Gujarat, migratory cards have been issued to students along with progress cards. Children are then eligible to be enrolled in schools at migration destinations. At the end of the migration period she/he returns with her/his parents to the original school and continues as normal. There is a need to evaluate this experiment and upscale it to other states if it is successful. Other innovations have been led by NGOs such as the: *Shakhar Shalas* for sugar cane workers' children run by Janarth, the *Bhonga Shalas* for brick-kiln workers' children run by Vidhayak Sansad and Action Aid-SSA initiatives in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. But, these are still small experiments and to have any major impact many more such initiatives are needed. Again there is a need to evaluate performance and explore ways of upscaling.

In conclusion, we should like to say that health and education sector reforms are needed to make both systems more migrant friendly. The health sector needs better regulation of private health providers and a better understanding of why Dalits and Adivasis are using private providers even when government services are available. The education system needs to be made more flexible to reach children who drop out because of migration. At the same time, efforts need to be made to reverse decades of exclusion of Dalits and Adivasis from the state education system and to regulate the private schooling system, which is becoming increasingly popular.

While spending on health has been identified as a major use of migration earnings both through the data analysis and through case studies, expenditure on expensive private health care does not necessarily mean positive outcomes as this can be 'catastrophic', pushing people into deeper poverty or into buying inferior health care from poorly qualified practitioners. Spending on education was reported less often, and this is probably because it is still perceived as a high-risk option by many Dalits and Adivasis. However, there are cases where migration has helped people to pay for a private education, and this has been facilitated by growing numbers of private schools.

There is potential for migration earnings to be spent more productively and with better outcomes for human development but that would require existing structural barriers to be addressed. Migration and remittances cannot effectively impact on human development without such a conducive environment.

#### **Box 4: Future trends: How crises may impact on migration**

Looking to the future, it is likely that migratory movements in India will be influenced by environmental, economic and political crises although the degree to which this happens will depend on the level of dependence on the global economy and preparedness among other factors. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore all three in great depth, brief analyses are presented in order to highlight these possibilities.

##### **Economic crises**

Evidence from the 2008 economic crisis can inform us on likely future impacts of such downturns. There is evidence from particular sectors linked to the global economy that migrants, especially those who work on a casual or informal basis, are the first to be affected. When businesses suffer, migrants are laid off – a sad example of flexibility in the labourforce. The Global monitoring report (2010) of the IMF and World Bank notes that internal migrants in some parts of Southeast Asia were affected because increased transportation costs and reduced earnings meant fewer trips back home. This in turn had a knockon effect on family enterprise in source locations on account of the lack of labour because many seasonal migrants in urban areas return to their villages during peak agricultural seasons.

While export-oriented industries in India were badly affected during the recession, many have bounced back and together with them, we assume, workers have also been reabsorbed. More research is still needed on this, but the example of the Indian gems and jewellery industry certainly shows that it has been extremely resilient (Batra and Gupta 2011). It has certainly been through an extremely difficult period: by early 2009 the diamond-polishing industry in Surat which employs around 450,000 workers was so badly affected that most units had shut down (Sahoo 2010). Migrant workers were laid off in their thousands. There were negative implications for families – parents could no longer afford to pay private school fees or medical bills. While some private trusts and NGOs supported laid-off workers and their families with health and education expenses for a while, they could not continue the support for the whole duration of the crisis (ibid.). Many migrant workers returned to their villages and worked on the farm or in other occupations such as selling vegetables (ibid.). Some firms kept workers on and asked them to accept lower wages. Some of these firms have now bounced back – one example is Venus Jewels in Surat (Rao and Bhatnagar 2009) that did not lay off workers despite extreme hardship. This loyalty to workers and trust-based social networks appear to be a hallmark of this industry that may have helped it to weather the recession (Rao 2009).

##### **Environmental Crises**

Migration is already an important coping/adaptation response to idiosyncratic and systemic shocks such as droughts and floods and this has been well researched in India. Major concerns for the future relate to sudden onset events as well as slow onset stresses. Sudden onset events such as glacial lake bursts, floods and cyclones likely to impact the Northeast and Himalayan regions of the country as well as the densely populated flood plains of major rivers (TERI/DFID 2009, Revi 2009). Glacial retreat in the Himalayas will jeopardize the water supply for millions. Cyclones and storm surges could devastate coastal cities including the mega cities of Mumbai and Chennai, as well as other million-plus cities such as Vishakhapatnam and Surat; cities will receive migrants from rural areas where livelihoods are damaged by climate change. This is likely to put greater pressure on scarce housing, water, sanitation facilities, and energy service (Kelkar and Bhadwal 2007).

Sea level rise and cyclones will affect the Bay of Bengal especially the Sunderbans mangroves (Brown 2008, p. 12; Morton, Boncour and Laczko et al. 2008) where



**Box 4: Contd.**

88 per cent of the people depend on cultivation and forestry. Andhra Pradesh was hit by a cyclone in 1977 killing more than 14,000 people; in 1999, Orissa was hit by a super-cyclone killing over 10,000 people. Many more were displaced (Rajan 2011). Flooding is likely to increase along major rivers such as the Ganges, the Brahmaputra in the north; Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna in the south; Indus in the west; and along the north-eastern and eastern regions from Assam and West Bengal to Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (Revi 2008). Northern and west India have already been exposed to frequent floods (De Dube and Prakasa Rao 2005).

Gradual onset changes to the annual monsoon will affect agriculture; drought and water stress is likely (Black et al. 2008; German Advisory Council on Global Change 2008). It has been estimated that climate change could lead to a decline of around 20 million tonnes (25 per cent) in rice production and over 30 million tonnes in wheat (30 per cent) in India during 2000–2050 (Rosegrant et al. 2009)

Longer and more frequent droughts and water stress have been reported in western and central India (Mall et al. 2006). Drought is a known driver of seasonal migration (Rogaly et al. 2002; de Haan et al. 2003).

Greenpeace India estimates that 125 million people would be displaced by the end of the century if its business as usual. If temperature increase is limited to 2 degrees then 5 million will be displaced. Up to 80 million people living along the coast may be forced to migrate inland as a result of SLR. In case of a 3 to 5 metre sea level rise, Mumbai and Kolkata could be significantly de-populated.

However permanent migration into unfamiliar territory is unlikely to be the first adaptive response to environmental catastrophes. Migration is likely to be along established routes where the periods away would get longer but may shorten once the crisis is over. People do return even after natural disasters, e.g., floods in Bihar and cyclones in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.

**Political crises**

Migration can also be a response to political instability; examples include the Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir valley who remain displaced even today and the Santhals in Assam who are also displaced. But the outcomes of displacement for these two groups are very different. While many Kashmiri Pandits are now in the professions all over India and have done well, many Adivasi groups have become impoverished and destitute. The implications for human development are obvious. While there are no hard data on the number of people displaced by insurgency, development projects or other factors, displacement has affected Adivasis across the country (Mandal 2009).

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## Appendix I

### Econometric Methodology

In order to estimate the way (and the extent to which) migration reshapes consumption behaviour of migrant-sending households, we followed closely the work of Taylor and Mora (2006). The reason for this is that we believe they provided a convincing and rigorous investigation of migration's effects on expenditure patterns in rural Mexico, while controlling for censorship in demands and for the endogeneity of migration.

Five expenditure categories appear in our model, namely food, goods and services, medical items, housing and durables and schooling items. At all stages of the analysis presented here, sampling weights were applied and regressions were run on the estimation sample. In the first stage of the analysis, in the attempt to address the endogeneity of migration in the analysis of expenditure behaviour, the predicted probabilities of migration were estimated and they were included in the analysis of expenditure behaviour, rather than the observed mobility. Consequently, in order to explore the linkages between migration and spending behaviour in Indian households, we modelled expenditure decisions on predicted probabilities of migration and other variables of interest. Since the spending decisions on different items are likely to be correlated (that is, the level of expenditure on each item is likely to affect the level of expenditure on the rest of the items), we estimated a system of expenditure equations using the Almost Ideal Demand System (AIDS) method (Deaton and Muellbauer 1980); the dependent variables in this system of equations are the expenditure shares of the five expenditure categories already mentioned. However, before estimating the system of expenditure equations in the final stage of the analysis, an Heckman style selection procedure was estimated, in order to test for participation in each expenditure category. In fact, in the second stage of the analysis (after predicting migration probabilities), we estimated a probit regression for participation in each expenditure category. For three of the dependent variables of the expenditure system (that is, three expenditure categories, namely, shares of medical, housing and durables and schooling items), censorship was found to apply; in other words, some households were found to spend an amount equal to zero on one, at least, of these categories of goods. For this reason, from this equation the inverse Mills-ratios were extracted and included in the final system of expenditure equations. The final results on expenditure shares and marginal budget shares were extracted from the final system of expenditure equations.

### Calculation of Predicted Probabilities of Migration

The reason for not including the observed migration choices in the analysis of consumption behaviour was the endogeneity (reverse causality) of the migration choice with respect to the decision to spend on medical items, housing and durables and schooling items, respectively; indeed, the migration event is likely to have an impact on expenditure on these categories of items, but spending on these categories of items may as well affect the chances to send out a migrant. With these considerations in mind, we decided to include the predicted probabilities of migration in the analysis of expenditure decisions, rather than observed migration.

For this reason the predicted probabilities of migration had to be calculated in the first stage of the analysis. A probabilistic model (probit regression) was used to regress the likelihood of a household to send out a migrant on a set of information at the household level (household size, presence of kids and elders), on information on the head of the household (age, gender, religion, whether s/he ever attended formal school and whether s/he ever got married) and on a set of regional dummy variables (at the state level); the model was identified by the inclusion among the covariates of the number of return migrants in the community, who returned at least 12 years prior to the time of the survey. The identifiers were also interacted with a dummy taking up value 1 if the household was located in urban areas, 0 otherwise.

### Heckman Type Selection Procedure

In the second stage of the analysis we estimated a probit regression for the participation in expenditure on each category of items; censorship applied to expenditure on medical items, housing and durables and educational items, as not all households were found to spend an amount greater than zero on these items. Different (and independent) regressions were run for each category of expenditure and the dependent variable in each equation took up value one if the household was found to spend on that category at all; the dependent variable took up value zero otherwise. The likelihood to spend on these items was regressed on a set of information at the household level (household size, presence of kids and elders), on information on the head of the household (age, gender, religion, whether s/he ever attended formal school and whether s/he ever got married), on a set of regional dummy variables (at the state level), on the natural logarithm of total level of expenditure of the household and on the predicted probabilities of sending out a migrant. The predicted probabilities of migration were also interacted with the natural logarithm of the total level of expenditure of the household; the interactive variable was included among the covariates. From each of these probits the inverse-Mills ratios were calculated and included in the final stage of the analysis. In the last stage of the analysis, the expenditure system was estimated using the Almost Ideal Demand System (AIDS) method (Deaton and Muellbauer 1980). The dependent variable, at this stage of the analysis, was the share of expenditure on each of five categories of items, namely food, goods and services, medical items, housing and durables and schooling items. We included among the covariates information at the household level (household size, presence of kids and elders), on the head of the household (age, gender, religion, whether s/he ever attended formal school and whether s/he ever got married), a set of regional dummy variables (at the state level), the natural logarithm of total level of expenditure of the household, the predicted probabilities of sending out a migrant, the migration interactions presented previously and the inverse-Mills ratios (in the corresponding expenditure equations). In the present case, the correction term provided the effect of selection on the share of expenditure on a certain item relative to a household drawn at random from the sample with average characteristics. In the final system of expenditure shares, robust estimators were used and clustering effects due to the sampling methodology were controlled for. In considering clustering effects, stratification was not specified; the lack of specification of stratification is likely to lead to a more conservative test of the significance of the coefficients (and accordingly, in what

follows, of the significance of the impact of migration on consumption behaviour). Since information on prices was not available, they were not included in the expenditure system; the inclusion of regional dummy variables in the analysis was motivated, in fact, mainly by the lack of data on prices.

### Calculation of Average and Marginal Budget Shares

Finally, we calculated the difference between migrant and non-migrant households in their budget shares on average and at the margin respectively. The difference between migrant and non-migrant households in their average budget shares is reported in the 'AVERAGE DIFFERENCE' rows of the tables presented in this study; this is considered as the impact of having a migrant out of the household on the average share of expenditure on each category of items. For each regression in the expenditure system that we estimated, this was calculated using the coefficient associated to the predicted migration dummy (Phat), the coefficient of the migration dummy interacted with the natural logarithm of expenditure (Phat\*Lnexp) and the average level (in the entire population) of the natural logarithm of expenditure (Mean Lnexp). More precisely, the differential in the average budget shares was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Migr Impact} = \text{Phat} + (\text{Phat} * \text{Lnexp}) * \text{Mean Lnexp}$$

All coefficients were taken from the expenditure system in the last stage of the regression analysis; the impact of having a migrant out of the household was considered significant only if all coefficients involved in its calculation (the coefficients included in the equation above) were found to be significantly different from zero. The tables included at the end of this appendix display all coefficients (whether significant or not) that were extracted from the final system of expenditure equations and that were used in the calculation of the results presented in this study.

The Marginal Budget Shares are reported in the 'MARGINAL BUDGET SHARES' rows of the tables presented in this study; they were simply defined as the change in the consumption of a specific item as a consequence of a change in total consumption. In their calculation, we followed the methodology used by Castaldo and Reilly (2007); for each category of items for migrant households, MBSs resulted from the sum of the mean shares of expenditure on each item (Mean Shares), the coefficient of the natural logarithm of expenditure (Coeff Lnexp) and the coefficient of its interaction with the predicted probability of migration (Phat\*Lnexp). Hence, for migrant households, the calculation we computed was the following:

$$\text{MBS} = \text{Mean Shares} + \text{Coeff Lnexp} + \text{Phat} * \text{Lnexp}$$

For non-migrant households, the Marginal Budget Shares resulted from the sum of the mean shares of expenditure on each item and the coefficient of the natural logarithm of expenditure. Hence, for non-migrant households, the calculation we computed was the following:

$$\text{MBS} = \text{Mean Shares} + \text{Coeff Lnexp}$$

All coefficients were taken from the expenditure system in the last stage of the



regression analysis; in order to test whether or not the MBSs were significantly different from zero, their standard errors were calculated and, consequently, z-tests were performed; in all cases, MBSs resulted to be significantly different from zero, suggesting that an increase in expenditure on each item would occur for all categories of households as disposable income increases. The difference between the MBSs of migrant households and the MBSs of non-migrant households was considered significant only if all coefficients involved in its calculation were found to be significantly different from zero. Again, the tables included at the end of this appendix display all coefficients (whether significant or not) that were extracted from the final system of expenditure equations and that were used in the calculation of the results presented in this study.

## Final Results

**Table 1: Scheduled Tribe -Rural-**

Mean Lnexp		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnexp	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
7.9631	F	0.8459	-0.0921	0.1124	-0.0880	0.5741	0.3940	0.0164	24.0040	1.003
				0.0000	-0.0880	0.5912	0.5032	0.0050	100.9671	1.003
7.9631	G	0.2001	-0.0235	0.0133	0.0324	0.3268	0.3357	0.0138	24.3183	
				0.0000	0.0324	0.3221	0.3545	0.0042	84.5714	
7.9631	M	-0.6115	0.0729	-0.0307	0.0080	0.0385	0.1195	0.0109	10.9380	
				0.0000	0.0080	0.0315	0.0395	0.0034	11.5570	
7.9631	Hs & D	-0.3883	0.0437	-0.0403	0.0187	0.0290	0.0913	0.0066	13.7693	
				0.0000	0.0187	0.0290	0.0477	0.0020	23.4125	
7.9631	S	-0.0408	-0.0012	-0.0503	0.0316	0.0316	0.0621	0.0084	7.4159	
					0.0316	0.0262	0.0578	0.0025	22.7857	

**Table 2: Scheduled Caste -Rural-**

Mean Lnexp		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnexp	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
7.7952	F	0.0781	-0.0125	-0.0192	-0.1103	0.5722	0.4493	0.0110	40.8392	1.000
7.7952				0.0000	-0.1103	0.5888	0.4785	0.0054	89.0128	1.001
7.7952	G	-0.1451	0.0202	0.0126	-0.0103	0.3149	0.3248	0.0091	35.5568	
7.7952				0.0000	-0.0103	0.3160	0.3057	0.0045	68.5034	
7.7952	M	-0.0429	0.0065	0.0075	0.0549	0.0606	0.1220	0.0100	12.2070	
7.7952				0.0000	0.0549	0.0461	0.1011	0.0049	20.5249	
7.7952	Hs & D	0.1182	-0.0138	0.0104	0.0339	0.0266	0.0467	0.0050	9.2488	
7.7952				0.0000	0.0339	0.0262	0.0601	0.0025	24.2664	
7.7952	S	0.0004	-0.0014	-0.0108	0.0331	0.0258	0.0574	0.0059	9.7082	
7.7952					0.0331	0.0228	0.0559	0.0029	19.3772	

Table 3: Other Backward Class -Rural-

Mean Lnext		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnext	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
7.9444	F	0.1873	-0.0217	0.0149	-0.1254	0.5570	0.4099	0.0059	68.9494	1.000
7.9444				0.0000	-0.1254	0.5749	0.4495	0.0035	130.0539	1.000
7.9444	G	0.0488	-0.0082	-0.0165	-0.0027	0.3186	0.3077	0.0051	59.9750	
7.9444				0.0000	-0.0027	0.3169	0.3142	0.0030	105.3546	
7.9444	M	-0.0609	0.0125	0.0386	0.0553	0.0614	0.1292	0.0059	21.8584	
7.9444				0.0000	0.0553	0.0458	0.1011	0.0035	29.2892	
7.9444	Hs & D	-0.302	0.0358	-0.0184	0.0287	0.0334	0.0978	0.0035	27.9824	
7.9444				0.0000	0.0287	0.0354	0.0640	0.0020	31.5006	
7.9444	S	0.1268	-0.0183	-0.0189	0.0444	0.0297	0.0558	0.0036	15.3137	
7.9444					0.0444	0.0270	0.0715	0.0021	33.7261	

Table 4: Other Classes -Rural-

Mean Lnext		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnext	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
8.1053	F	0.2091	-0.0244	0.0110	-0.1386	0.5422	0.3792	0.0063	60.5419	1.000
8.1053				0.0000	-0.1386	0.5638	0.4252	0.0039	108.6812	1.000
8.1053	G	-0.0018	-0.0048	-0.0403	0.0044	0.3161	0.3157	0.0056	56.0347	
8.1053				0.0000	0.0044	0.3097	0.3141	0.0035	89.2701	
8.1053	M	0.0523	0.0009	0.0595	0.0540	0.0680	0.1229	0.0062	19.9859	
8.1053				0.0000	0.0540	0.0467	0.1008	0.0038	26.1856	
8.1053	Hs & D	-0.4019	0.0456	-0.0321	0.0349	0.0360	0.1165	0.0043	26.9779	
8.1053				0.0000	0.0349	0.0423	0.0772	0.0027	28.6026	
8.1053	S	0.1426	-0.0173	0.0021	0.0454	0.0377	0.0658	0.0045	14.7207	
8.1053					0.0454	0.0375	0.0829	0.0028	29.7174	

Table 5: Scheduled Tribe -Urban-

Mean Lnext		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnext	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
8,5224	F	0,4802	-0,0537	0,0229	-0,1365	0,4746	0,2845	0,0227	12,5389	1,000
8,5224				0,0000	-0,1365	0,4856	0,3491	0,0069	50,3739	1,000
8,5224	G	0,0079	-0,0145	-0,1156	0,0451	0,3604	0,3911	0,0221	17,7121	
8,5224				0,0000	0,0451	0,3439	0,3890	0,0067	57,6842	
8,5224	M	-0,3595	0,0445	0,0196	0,0133	0,0388	0,0966	0,0149	6,4736	
8,5224				0,0000	0,0133	0,0334	0,0467	0,0046	10,2220	
8,5224	Hs & D	-0,3333	0,0401	0,0083	0,0464	0,0688	0,1553	0,0199	7,7983	
8,5224				0,0000	0,0464	0,0813	0,1277	0,0061	20,9848	
8,5224	S	0,2034	-0,0163	0,0645	0,0317	0,0573	0,0727	0,0159	4,5586	
8,5224					0,0317	0,0559	0,0875	0,0049	17,9739	

**Table 6: Scheduled Caste -Urban-**

Mean Lnexp		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnexp	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
8,1530	F	-0,0873	0,0112	0,0041	-0,1554	0,5031	0,3589	0,0145	24,7025	1,000
8,1530				0,0000	-0,1554	0,5124	0,3569	0,0061	58,9976	1,000
8,1530	G	-0,4457	0,0515	-0,0255	0,0015	0,3333	0,3864	0,0140	27,6698	
8,1530				0,0000	0,0015	0,3282	0,3297	0,0058	56,6941	
8,1530	M	-0,3020	0,0340	-0,0251	0,0305	0,0635	0,1280	0,0149	8,5985	
8,1530				0,0000	0,0305	0,0456	0,0761	0,0062	12,2470	
8,1530	Hs & D	0,5540	-0,0570	0,0890	0,0694	0,0551	0,0675	0,0128	5,2834	
8,1530				0,0000	0,0694	0,0733	0,1427	0,0053	26,8153	
8,1530	S	0,2805	-0,0396	-0,0425	0,0540	0,0449	0,0593	0,0106	5,5757	
8,1530					0,0540	0,0406	0,0946	0,0044	21,3558	

**Table 7: Other Backward Classes -Urban-**

Mean Lnexp		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnexp	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
8,2735	F	0,0153	-0,0046	-0,0223	-0,1472	0,4736	0,3219	0,0076	42,2504	1,000
8,2735				0,0000	-0,1472	0,4805	0,3333	0,0036	91,8455	1,000
8,2735	G	-0,0288	0,0049	0,0121	0,0001	0,3395	0,3445	0,0077	44,5893	
8,2735				0,0000	0,0001	0,3290	0,3291	0,0037	89,4152	
8,2735	M	-0,3526	0,0382	-0,0367	0,0218	0,0677	0,1277	0,0076	16,7146	
8,2735				0,0000	0,0218	0,0439	0,0658	0,0036	18,0338	
8,2735	Hs & D	0,2552	-0,0222	0,0715	0,0672	0,0680	0,1130	0,0079	14,3760	
8,2735				0,0000	0,0672	0,0967	0,1639	0,0037	43,7480	
8,2735	S	0,1100	-0,0163	-0,0250	0,0583	0,0512	0,0932	0,0067	13,8450	
8,2735					0,0583	0,0498	0,1081	0,0032	33,7127	

**Table 8: Other Classes -Urban-**

Mean Lnexp		Phat	Phat* Inexp	Migr Impact	Coeff Lnexp	Mean Shares	MBS	MBS Std Err	MBS z	Sum shares
8,5619	F	-0,0068	-0,0032	-0,0345	-0,1424	0,4307	0,2852	0,0055	52,0569	1,000
8,5619				0,0000	-0,1424	0,4504	0,3080	0,0028	111,7026	1,000
8,5619	G	0,1336	-0,0077	0,0676	0,0184	0,3586	0,3692	0,0062	59,6155	
8,5619				0,0000	0,0184	0,3391	0,3575	0,0031	114,6705	
8,5619	M	-0,3203	0,0379	0,0038	0,0164	0,0697	0,1240	0,0057	21,5724	
8,5619				0,0000	0,0164	0,0427	0,0590	0,0029	20,3946	
8,5619	Hs & D	0,1412	-0,0128	0,0314	0,0579	0,0797	0,1248	0,0062	20,1612	
8,5619				0,0000	0,0579	0,1027	0,1606	0,0031	51,5468	
8,5619	S	0,0523	-0,0141	-0,0683	0,0497	0,0613	0,0969	0,0055	17,6313	
8,5619					0,0497	0,0651	0,1148	0,0028	41,5118	



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# Migrants' (Denied) Right to the City<sup>1</sup>

**Ram B. Bhagat**

Professor and Head

Department of Migration and Urban Studies

International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, India

## 1. The Context

The history of cities in the Indian subcontinent goes as far as the middle of the third millennium BC with the emergence of cities like Harappa and Mohenjo Daro in the Indus valley (Champakalakshmi 2006, p. 8). During different phases of Indian history, many new cities have emerged and many have declined, shaping the history of India (Ramachandran 1995). The dynamics of city growth shows that migration has been a very important component, because cities have been centres of trade, manufacturing and services. These functions could not have been sustained without migration and migrant labour. People migrate to cities not only for work, but also on account of business, education, marriages, natural disasters, conflicts, etc.

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1. Republished article, appearing first in: Marie-Helene Zerah, Veronique Dupont, Stephanie Tawa Lama-Rewal (scientific eds), and Marina Faetanini, (publication ed.), 2011, *Urban Policies and the Right to the City in India: Rights, Responsibilities and Citizenship*, (New Delhi: UNESCO and Centre de Sciences Humaines).

As cities have evolved through streams of migration over a long period of time, they are characterized by diversity in terms of ethnic and religious identities, occupations, language, culture, food habits and so on. In fact, heterogeneity is the hallmark of cities, and innovations, in which migrants have played a very significant role, are central to their existence.

Migration, especially internal migration, contributes significantly to the growth of Indian cities. The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of movement and freedom to settle within the territory of India as a fundamental right of all citizens (Article 19). Yet, migrants face several barriers in access to civic amenities, housing and employment, as well as restrictions on their political and cultural rights because of linguistic and cultural differences. These discriminations are articulated in various parts of India in the ideology of the 'sons of the soil' movement, which evokes anti-migrant sentiments (Weiner 1978; Hansen 2001). Migrants are all the more vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation, because many of them are poor, illiterate and live in slums and hazardous locations that are prone to disaster and natural calamities. As such, the condition of migrants in cities needs to be addressed squarely in urban policies and programmes.

Migration is a central issue with regard to the 'right to the city' (that is, the right for everyone, including migrants, to access the benefits that the city has to offer), and how best to promote awareness and representation of migrants within the city is another important concern (Balbo 2008, p. 132). The right to the city perspective seeks to improve the condition of migrants by providing an alternative thinking to counter the negative effects of neo-liberal policies (Purcell 2002). It advocates proactive strategies to include migrants in the decision-making process, recognizing their contribution as valued urban citizens. This paper presents an array of cases of denial of migrants' right to the city: it reviews the nature and process of migration to urban areas in the light of recently available evidence; identifies the exclusionary processes operating in Indian cities that influence migration and migrants, and suggests strategies for the integration of migrants to build inclusive cities in India.

## 2. Migration, Urbanization and Cities: Spatial Pattern and Exclusionary Processes

Migration has been the main component of urbanization. According to the Census 2011, about one third of the population in India lives in urban areas (31 per cent). The urban population comprising 377 million people out of a total population of 1,210 million people, as enumerated in the 2011 Census, is spread over about 8,000 cities and towns. These cities and towns are hierarchically linked to each other, but predominantly embedded in the spatial organization of the national economy. The spatial structure of the Indian economy is shaped by three port cities, namely, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, built during colonial rule (Raza and Habeeb 1975). Delhi also played an important role after it became the capital

city in 1911. Together, these cities dominated the urbanization process and the inter-regional flow of migration. The 2011 Census shows that the urbanization process is vibrant in north, west and south India with the three largest cities, namely, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai forming a nucleus in their respective regions. Hyderabad, Bangalore and Ahmedabad are another group of big cities that shaped the regional pattern of urbanization. On the other hand, eastern and north-eastern India lagged behind, because of the declining importance of Kolkata and the lack of any other megacity in the region. The next ranking city in east and north-east India is Patna, which is about seven times smaller than Kolkata. The exclusion of eastern and north-eastern India on the map of urbanization is also evident in the fact that the region as a whole is characterized by high inter-state out-migration, which is largely due to the lack of vibrant cities in the region. The same is also true for the central region, consisting of the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

India has launched a policy of economic liberalization since 1991. During the post-liberalization phase, the importance of cities and urban centres has been growing in India's economic development; for example, the contribution of urban areas to India's GDP has increased from 29 per cent in 1950–1951 to 47 per cent in 1980–1981, to 62 to 63 per cent by 2007, and it is expected to increase to 75 per cent by 2021 (Planning Commission 2008, p. 394). It is also being emphasized that 9 to 10 per cent of growth in GDP depends fundamentally on making Indian cities more livable and inclusive (Planning Commission, Govt of India 2008, p. 394). However, with increasing economic growth, wealth is getting concentrated in cities and urban centres, and the rural-urban gaps in income levels and wages and employment opportunities are widening. Further, increasing economic growth is also associated with growing regional disparity and lopsided urbanization. Many have argued that the process of urbanization during the post-liberalization phase has been exclusionary (Kundu 2007; Bhagat 2010). It not only is exclusionary in the regional sense, but is also a social and spatial process within the city, and it would be perilous to ignore the conditions of migrants in urban areas.

### 3. Internal Migration: Trends and Patterns

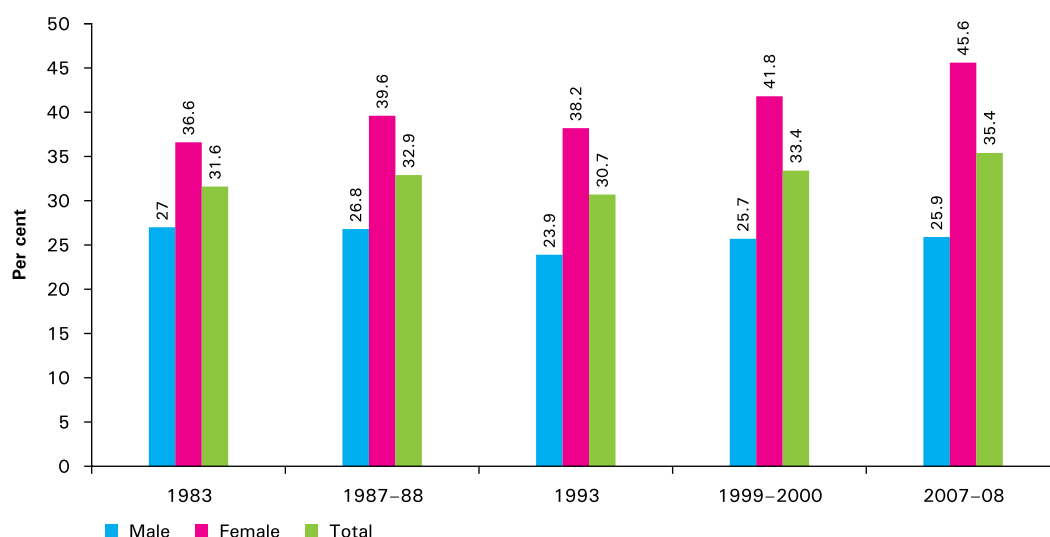
Indian cities are growing through internal migration, unlike some cities of the developed countries where the component of international migration has been relatively larger. Because of the visibility of international migrants in western cities, international migrants received more attention from researchers, international organizations and funding agencies. It is now realized that internal migrants – those who move within the national territory – are several times larger than those who move across countries. According to the *Human Development Report, 2009*, those who moved across the major zonal demarcations within their countries were nearly four times larger (740 million) than those who moved internationally (214 million) (UNDP 2009, p. 21). However, if we take smaller units such as villages and towns as geographical

demarcations, the internal migrants were as many as 309 million in India alone, based on place of last residence in 2001, out of which 101 million were enumerated in urban areas.<sup>2</sup>

### 3.1 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 rate<sup>3</sup> 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 employment-related 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).

Figure 1: Migration rates in urban areas, India, 1983 to 2007–2008 (in per cent)

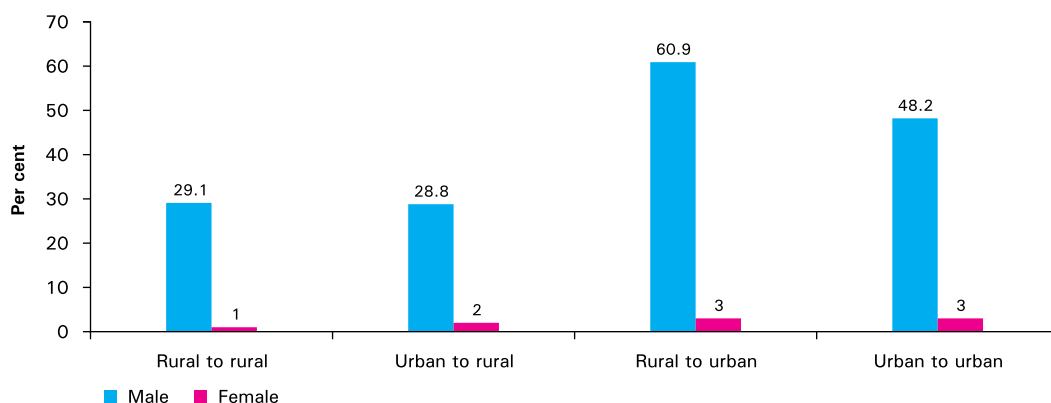


Source: NSSO 2010a.

2. The NSSO uses a slightly different criterion in fixing the place of last residence, that is, a person would have lived at least six months in the place of last residence before arriving to the present place of residence. No such condition is required in the census criterion defining migrants based on place of last residence (see Bhagat 2008).

3. Migration rate is defined as number of all-duration migrants in a particular year divided by the respective population. It is represented as numbers of migrants per 100 persons.

Figure 2: Employment-related reasons of migration by streams of migration, India, 2007–2008

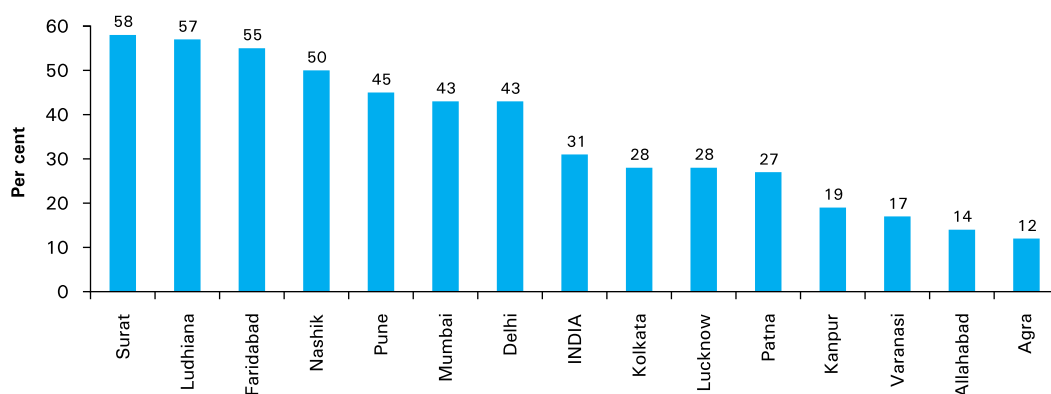


Source: NSSO 2010a.

### 3.2 Migration to cities

As mentioned in the earlier section, internal migration in India is influenced by regional disparity in the levels of development, which had its roots during colonial rule. Migration towards cities became more important when cities with million-plus population acquired new prominence in the urbanization map of India. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Kolkata acquired the status of a million-plus city, followed by Mumbai in 1911. By 1951, Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad joined the ranks of the million-plus cities. By 2001, there were 35 million-plus cities in India, in which about 38 per cent of the total urban population was residing. The number of million-plus cities has gone up to 53 and population residing in them increased to 43 per cent by 2011.<sup>4</sup> The rising importance of million-plus cities, in both numbers and huge concentration of urban population in them, shows the significance of migrants in the city space. The share of in-migrants (all durations of residence) in the entire population varies from less than 15 per cent in million-plus cities like Allahabad and Agra to 55 per cent and more in cities like Surat, Ludhiana, and Faridabad. Mumbai and Delhi had about 45 per cent of migrants in 2001 (see Figure 3). When

Figure 3: Percentage of migrants in selected million-plus cities



Source: Census of India 2001.

4. See <[www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/census2011\\_paper2.html](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/census2011_paper2.html)>



we look at the share of the migrants across the million-plus cities, it is quite evident that this share is closely related to the economic position and vibrancy of cities (Bhagat, Das and Bhat 2009).

Migrants in cities and urban centres are predominantly engaged in the informal sector. They work as construction workers, hawkers and vendors, domestic servants, rickshaw pullers/drivers, electricians, plumbers, masons, security personnel, etc. The majority are either self-employed or casual workers. About 30 per cent of migrant workers, working as casual workers, are quite vulnerable to the vagaries of the labour market and lack social protection. Only 35 per cent of migrant workers are employed as regular/salaried workers (NSSO 2010a).

### 3.3 Seasonal and temporary migration

Migration involves change of residence either on a permanent or semi-permanent basis, but in a year, there are large numbers of people who move for a short duration in the lean season from their current place of residence. Such migrants, known as seasonal and temporary or circular migrants, are not fully captured by the conventional definitions based on the criteria employed by the Census or NSSO, that is, of place of birth or place of last residence criteria. An additional definition of migration has been used by NSSO to capture the seasonal and temporary migration. A seasonal/temporary migrant is defined as 'the household member who has stayed away from the village/town for a period of one month or more but less than six months during the last 365 days, for employment or in search of employment' (NSSO 2010a). This criterion estimated a 14 million<sup>5</sup> seasonal/temporary migration additionally as per National Sample Survey 64th Round in 2007–2008. The seasonal/temporary migration is predominantly (63 per cent) directed towards cities and urban centres (Keshri and Bhagat 2012). Several studies have pointed out that seasonal/temporary migration is more prevalent among the socioeconomically deprived groups, such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and among the poorest of the poor and landless households. It is mostly driven by distress and is a form of livelihood strategy of the rural poor (Deshingkar and Akter 2009; Keshri and Bhagat 2010).

## 4. Migrants' Exclusion and Denial of Rights

There could be enormous benefits of migration both for the areas of origin and for areas of destination with some policy changes and programmes (UNDP 2009). Migration transfers labour from areas of surplus to areas of deficit, raising the overall productivity of the labour force and minimizing imperfections in the labour market. Migrants bring new skills and innovative practices and are willing to take risks where the natives fear to tread. As noted in the preceding sections, cities are important destinations for migrants, and the rising contribution of cities to India's GDP is

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5. Priya Deshingkar and Shaheen Akter (2009) estimated 100 million circular migrants based on their logic and inferences and they estimated that these migrants contribute 10 per cent to the national GDP.

because of migration and migrant workers. Employers in many instances prefer migrant workers, who are hard working, disciplined and pliable, but also less paid.

Migrants contribute to the diversity of cultural life in the city. The migration of actors and other artists, for example, to join the film industry, Bollywood, in Mumbai has greatly contributed to its success. Similarly, the contribution of trading communities, such as Parsis, Marwaris and Gujaratis etc., in promoting trade and commerce in several Indian cities has been possible in the wake of their migration. There are many such instances which point to the fact that migration should not be seen simply as a response to crisis, but as an instrument to fulfil the aspirations of the people. It is not the result of a lack of development, but a sign of people's desire to prosper.

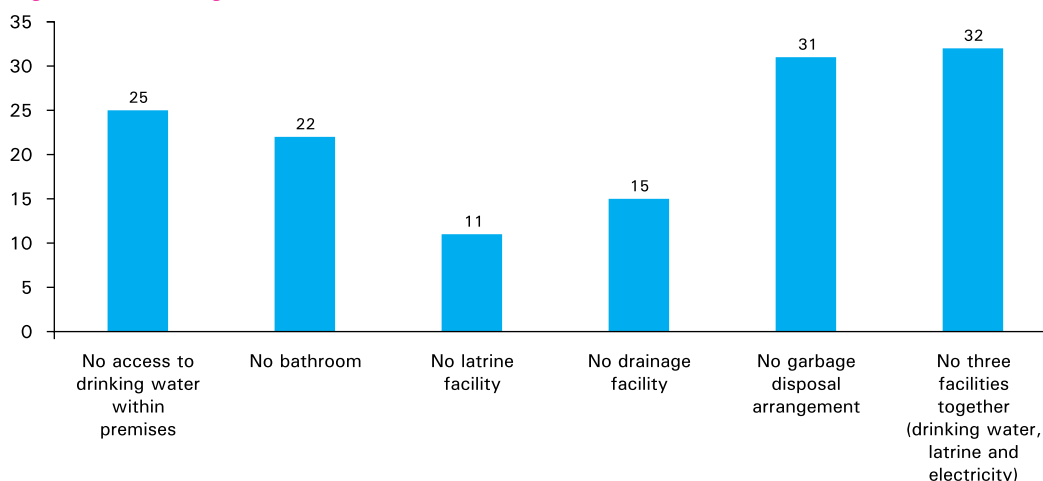
Remittances are vital for improving the living conditions of millions of households. In India, almost all households use remittances for household expenditure in order to improve their quality of life. A very high proportion of households in rural areas use remittances on food items (76 per cent) followed by health care (38 per cent) and education (31 per cent) (NSSO 2010). Apart from financial remittances, migrants bring back a variety of skills, innovations and knowledge, known as social remittances, which contribute to the social and economic changes in the areas of origin. These examples show that migration brings benefits to both areas of origin and areas of destination.

In spite of the enormous contribution of migration to national progress, it is not viewed positively, and there have been growing sentiments against migration to the city (Nath 1986; Rajan et al. 2011). As a result, migrants face a variety of exclusionary forces both directly and indirectly. In India exclusionary processes are more indirect and subtle, unlike China where migrants in urban areas are discriminated against on the basis of the household registration system (*hukou*). In China, migrants are not part of the urban *hukou* and face discrimination in access to employment, pension, housing, health care and education. This has been a matter of intense debate in recent years (Solinger 1999; Li 2010). On the other hand, in India, the exclusion and discrimination against migrants take place through political and administrative processes, market mechanisms and socioeconomic processes causing a gulf between migrants and the locals along ethnic, religious and linguistic lines. India is a federal country of states, which are by and large organized on linguistic lines. Migrants generally originate from the low-income states that are also often linguistically distinct from the high-income states that receive migrants.

Migrants' right to the city is most strongly denied by the political defence of the 'sons of the soil' ideology, which aims to create vote banks along ethnic and linguistic lines, and which divides migrant communities into those who belong to the state (same linguistic group) and those from other states (different linguistic groups).<sup>6</sup> This

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6. Rajan et al. (2011) present examples of 'sons of the soil' movements from various states of India such as Maharashtra, Assam, Meghalaya and Goa.

**Figure 4: Percentage of households with access to basic amenities 2008–2009**

Source: NSSO 2010b.

leads to the marginalization of the migrants in the decision-making process in the city and exacerbates their vulnerabilities with regard to the vagaries of the labour market, the risks of discrimination and violence, risks to health, and also the risks of natural calamities like floods and landslides, because their shelters are located at vulnerable sites within the city. As social protection programmes are hardly geared towards migrants, they are underpaid and exploited; they lack proper housing, access to improved sources of drinking water, sanitation and health services. There are a huge number of urban people living in slums.<sup>7</sup> Slums are a manifestation of deprivations in cities, and the migrants who live in slums are hugely affected by the denial of their right to shelter, to potable water, to sanitation and to health care. A recent study by NSSO (2010b) shows that in 2008, 25 per cent of the urban households had no access to drinking water within their premises, 22 per cent had no bathroom, 15 per cent had no access to drainage facility and 11 per cent did not have any toilet facility (see Figure 4). Only three fifths of urban households owned their dwelling in 2008–2009.

These figures for urban areas as a whole are appalling and indicate deprivations and denial of various rights to vulnerable groups, particularly migrants within the city. The city restructuring and urban renewal process under the aegis of neo-liberal policy regimes have also led to the huge displacement of migrants from even notified/recognized slums within the city. Moreover, squatter settlements of poor migrants are regarded as being illegal settlements by the elites, municipal authorities and courts, and eviction of migrants is increasing. These are examples of blatant violations of the right to shelter as well as human rights of migrants in cities.

Many migrants lack proof of identity and proof of residence in the city. This turns out to be the biggest barrier to their inclusion. Owing to lack of proof of

7. As per the Census of India, 42.6 million people lived in slums in 2001. The figure estimated by Town and Country Planning Organisation (TCPO) was 61.8 million (International Institute for Population Sciences 2009, p.12). On the other hand, according to UN-Habitat (2006, p.193), in 2001, the slum population was estimated at 158 million people and is estimated to be 184 million in 2010. Estimates vary due to different criteria adopted in defining slum population.

residence, many are not included in the voters' lists and cannot exercise their right to vote. Lack of residential proof also leads to various forms of exclusion such as inability to open a bank account, get a ration card and driving licence, etc. These are very important documents, because they give access to the benefits of different government programmes. It is important to note that residential proof depends upon a migrant's ability to either own a house in his/her name or his/her family member's name, or to get a house on rent under lease and licence agreement. The recent UID (Unique Identification) project also insists on residential proof.

The denial of political rights (of voting) to migrants is crucially linked to the denial of right to housing in the city. Owing to the lack of proper housing, many migrants live in informal settlements and are unable to acquire residential proof. In addition, as most of them work in the informal sector, they have no opportunity to get proof of identity from their employers unlike their counterparts who work in the formal sector. Because of lack of identity and residential proof, migrants become non-citizens in the city. They are easily subject to police harassment and implicated in criminal cases. They lack physical safety and security at the work site as well as at the place of stay. Women, who generally migrate to the city as companions to their male counterparts, face greater risk of exclusion. Women generally work as construction workers, domestic helpers or daily wage workers. They are also paid low wages compared with male migrants. Basic needs such as access to drinking water and toilet facilities at the worksite are poorly met, and they face the risk of sexual harassment. There is also an absence of crèche facilities at most of the worksites to take care of their young children.

Children of migrants are denied their right to education, as seeking admission to school is cumbersome and the language barrier is difficult to overcome. Migrants' language is generally different from the local language and this adds to the baggage of their disadvantages.

The exclusion of migrants from access to health services is a very serious issue. Public health services are not available and private health services are too costly to be availed. Migrants in most cases are neither able to reap the benefits of health insurance schemes nor are they provided with health insurance by their employers. They also face greater risks of HIV/AIDS (Saggurti, Mahapatra, Swain, Battala, Chawla, and Narang 2011).

## 5. 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.

## 5.1 Inclusive urban policies and migrants' right to the city

### *5.1.1 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 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.

### *5.1.2 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'.<sup>8</sup> Doing so would require placing migrants at the core of the city-development agenda.

### **5.1.3 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.

### **5.1.4 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.

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8. According to Harvey (2008, p. 23) the lack of freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is the most precious but the most neglected of our human rights.

9. The recent experiment in which a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between a group of NGOs working with migrant workers, known as National Coalition of Organizations for Security of Migrant Workers, and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for facilitating inclusion of migrant workers in the UID programme appears to be a significant step. See <<http://uidai.gov.in>> (accessed on 9th October 2011).

## 6. 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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# Children's Agency, Autonomy and Migration

**Ann Whitehead**

Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, University of Sussex, UK

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Globalized economic development producing highly unequal growth spatially, both within and between nations, is leading to all kinds of enhanced population mobility, so that migration issues are increasingly prominent in public policy, especially in relation to international migration. Globally, the numbers of children affected by these population flows are huge and they include many children affected by migration into and out of India. This conference is exclusively concerned with India's internal migration flows and is to be particularly welcomed. Governments around the world have been extremely reluctant to recognize the policy issues arising out of high rates of internal population mobility. Yet, internal migration rates are much higher than international migration in most countries and this is certainly true of

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1. This paper has benefited from discussions with Priya Deshingkar of the Migrating Out of Poverty Research Consortium and the University of Sussex. Thanks to her and to Gunjan Sondhi, also at Sussex, who prepared Appendix 1 and some of the tables. Other material in the Appendix is based on work by Matteo Sandi and Adriana Castaldo. I am very grateful to these colleagues and to Priya Deshingkar who have allowed access to this data.

### Categories of children affected by migration

Children migrating as family members	Dependant child migrants
Children left behind when parent(s) migrate	Stayed-behind children
Children who migrate without parents or guardians	'Independent' child migrants
Children living in areas of high out-migration	Children in out-migration communities

India. The conference has already heard accounts of the scale and diversity of India's internal migration and some of the reasons for these movements. Internal migration has complex effects on human development and is an important issue in relation to child welfare, and we have already discussed some aspects of this.

Numerically the largest categories of children affected by internal migration are those who move as family members when parents or guardians migrate (dependant child migrants) and those left behind when one or more parents migrate (stayed-behind children). Rossi (2009) points out that there is another large group of children who are affected indirectly by migration, namely, those living in areas where high rates of out-migration have affected the economic, social or political viability of communities (children in out-migration communities).

This paper is specifically concerned with a fourth category – those children who have migrated without parents or guardians or have moved to live without parents or guardians. As we shall see, the processes of migration of such children can be complex and there is debate about what they should be called. The most frequently used term for such children is independent child migrant and it is the one that will be used here.

#### 'Analytically Unexpected'

Yaqub (2009, p.14) points out that, 'In the modern context, children's independent migration is "analytically unexpected"', explaining this as owing to 'prevailing notions of childhood implicit in conceptualizations of migration'. Migration studies assume that the social and economic actors who move are adults and that children's movements are simply the result of their parent's decisions to move. As such, migration research adopts an unthinking application of dominant ideas about childhood and about the family. These ideas assume that the normal status of a child is that of a 'dependant' so that the notion of an 'independent' child is both 'analytically unexpected' and a cause for concern. Several key researchers in child migration studies have pointed out that normative ideas of children as being non-productive members of families, in which parents provide for and protect them, belie the reality of many different family forms and experiences of childhood across the world, (for examples, see Hashim and Whitehead 2005; Thorsen 2007; O'Connell Davidson 2011; Hashim 2011). These same researchers suggest that whether the child who migrates without parents and does not join parents is herself or himself a social or economic actor in such movements is an empirical question. This is to be contrasted with the widespread assumption that a child's mobility occurs at the behest of parents or other adults, as found in many accounts of children's movements. Conceptualizing childhood as a context-specific and highly

differentiated experience in which children may be significant social actors is one of the key features of what has come to be called the new sociology of childhood (Prout and James 1990; Boyden 1990).<sup>2</sup> Some of the current academic research on child migrants adopts these perspectives (O'Connell Davidson and Farrow 2007; Whitehead and Hashim 2005; Thorsen 2006; Ensor and Gozdzia 2010; Punch 2000b; 2000c; 2000d; 2007a).

### Under-researched

A recent review of the research on independent child migrants found that there were about 60 studies on this subject worldwide; of these, studies containing quantitative survey data were available for only 16 countries, while the remaining largely qualitative studies covered not many more (Yaqub 2009). This is an astonishingly small evidence base and places the equally small number of studies in India into some kind of perspective. One reason why there has been such little research attention paid to independent child migrants is the normative ideas about children and childhood referred to above, but a further reason is that child migrants tend to be either highly visible or highly invisible, and the highly visible may be mis-named.

Some child migrants are highly visible in public spaces, notably children living and working on the streets as informal sector workers – hawkers/carriers/rag pickers/ and the like. Some, but not all such street children, are migrants. Studies of and policy for them tend to emphasize their presence and work on the streets, rather than their mobility as key issues. At the other end of the continuum are the child migrants who are largely invisible, notably the many domestic workers under 18 years, children living as family labourers within rural households and those who have migrated as foster children.

Perhaps the most highly visible of all child migrants are trafficked children, in the sense that while they may be exceedingly difficult to identify, they have extraordinary policy visibility – a visibility that has been followed up with substantial international resources for their protection or rehabilitation. Such visibility is justified, since trafficking places children in extremely dangerous circumstances and has severe and long-lasting effects. However, as Whitehead and Hashim pointed out in 2005, apart from the grave difficulties of identifying trafficked children, migrant children may become wrongly identified as trafficked. The sheer extent of the policy attention and resources mobilized to combat child trafficking has meant that until recently, it has been difficult to find any policy space at all to discuss the very real but different needs and circumstances of mobile children who are not trafficked.

A further, but quite different reason why there are so few studies of independent child migrants is that the research is difficult and indeed costly to do.

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2. For an interesting brief discussion of context-specific approaches to childhood that emphasize children's agency see Wells (2009). For a discussion of these approaches from agencies concerned with the rights and welfare of one type of child migrants see Consortium for Street Children 2011.

## Lessons from Comparative Research on Independent Child Migration

This section reports the results from a research on independent child migration carried out from 2005 to 2009 by a consortium of institutions forming the Migration Globalisation and Poverty Development Research Centre (Migration DRC) with its base in the UK at the University of Sussex. In conformity with the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) definition of children based on age, this report also categorizes children as those being under the age of 18 years. Other relevant international age definitions include those of ILO conventions 138 and 182 that specify the kind of work that children over 15 years can do as well as the limited hours and light work that can be done by children who are 12–14 years old. We have used a common sense definition of migration as change in usual residence, as used in the 1978 and 1998 UN Recommendations on Migration Statistics. 'Independent' refers to children living without a parent or legal guardian at their destinations. They may or may not have travelled with a parent or legal guardian and they may or may not be living with other relatives at their destinations. Coerced or forced movements such as those entailed in trafficked and refugee movements are not included.

In all, seven projects were undertaken in Bangladesh, India, Burkina Faso and Ghana.<sup>3</sup> As in much research on child migration, these DRC projects are small-scale case studies. The research used mixed methods in which surveys were combined with open-ended interviewing of child migrants themselves. The research involved about 600 child migrants or former child migrants, and it included both boys and girls who were working in a variety of jobs and circumstances. Many worked as agricultural labourers; they included market porters, hawkers and domestic workers; they worked in teashops and cafes, in small enterprises such as bakeries, and in dressmaker's shops and as shoeshine boys. All the migrants had moved from rural areas, some to other rural areas, many others to towns and cities, including capital cities. Most were usually migrating internally, but a few had also crossed nearby borders.

A specific priority in this research was to find out from children themselves about their experiences of migration, particularly their reasons for migrating, how they did it and their experience of the journey and of life at their destinations. The general approach, therefore, had much in common with the new sociology of childhood in the emphasis put on listening to children, but also in paying attention to the specific local contexts of childhood.

The researchers were aware early on that the scale of independent child migration, as defined here, was grossly under-reported in the areas where this research was conducted and equally under-appreciated nationally.

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3. See Anarfi et al. 2007; Anarfi and Kwankye 2009; Hashim 2005; 2006; 2008; 2011; Hashim and Thorsen 2011; Iversen 2005; 2006; Khair 2008; Kwankye et al. 2007; 2009; Migration DRC 2008; 2009; 2010; Rao 2009; 2011; Thorsen 2006; 2007a; 2007b; Whitehead, Hashim et al. 2007.

Where projects had baseline data from the sending communities, a majority of households might report having one or more children (that is, under 18 years) away working. General discussions in other sending communities with community leaders and parents found them complaining about the high rates of loss of young people. It became quickly apparent that looking for children migrating independently in key likely work contexts at destinations showed up many more.

These reports led the Migration DRC to develop a separate strand of work specifically concerned with the issues of how to count independent child migrants at national levels, some of which are discussed in Appendix 1.

A second early realization was that what children were telling Migration DRC researchers about their experiences differed markedly from common portrayals of independent child migrants. At the time the research began, the general view was that if the children were neither street children nor trafficked, then it was assumed that they had been sent by parents to earn money for the family and that they were abused and exploited at work. In other words they were one of a number of categories of child victims in need of rescue.

In contrast, our researchers found that at the destinations, there was a continuum of children's experiences, from the very bad to the very good, with many children being very positive about their experiences – whether at work, or living with other relatives, or achieving their educational goals (Migration DRC 2008). Negative experiences of migration were not uncommon, although a proportion of children with objectively bad experiences were still committed to migration. A minority of the children reported considerable hardship and being abused and exploited. In addition, the processes of decision making about a child's migration were often complex, but many children felt it was their own decision or that they had a say in the decision, and they gave a number of motives for their decisions to move.

One reason for the mismatch between our research findings and the themes in much of the non-academic literature about independent child migrants is that we have information from two rather different constituencies. Much non-academic literature comes from agencies providing services for children who have got into serious difficulties and, as a result, they see a particular segment of child migrants as representing all child migrants. The DRC research focused on much less visible kinds of child migrants and covers a wide range of children who are moving, including those who go from rural to rural areas and those living with close relatives. While many such children report positive experiences, many others face a range of difficulties. Some report their having to give up ambitions, and some are likely to have shortened, hard and desperate lives. It is extremely important to think about their needs before they come to the attention of rescue agencies and especially to find out what makes independent child migrants vulnerable to the more negative experiences and how these can be prevented.

## Common themes from the DRC projects

A number of key themes emerged from the DRC research (Migration DRC 2008), many of which are also reported from case studies of other kinds of independent child migrants in a variety of national work and migration circumstances.

First and very importantly is the age range at which children start to move. Migration DRC researchers found child migrants who had been as young as 8 years when they first moved, but these were numerically very rare. Very few child migrants are 10 years or below, and rather few are in the ages 10–12 years. There are more child migrants in the ages 13–14 years, but the majority of them are in the ages 15–17 years. These age data are important for several reasons. First, because between 12 and 17 years, children can legally work in certain occupations, depending on the country-specific regulations that spell out the ages and occupations in which they are allowed to work. They may also have crossed the age for compulsory education. Equally importantly, these age ranges are often the subject of local social norms, so that between the ages of 10 (or 8) and 17, children often pass through various locally understood age-defined stages during which different kinds of activity are thought to be appropriate for children. Hashim's work on child migration includes detailed discussion of the age-appropriate activities for children in a community in north-east Ghana and particularly of the age at which it is thought appropriate for children to contribute to various household-based productive activities and also to earn their own incomes (Hashim 2005; 2006; 2011; Hashim and Thorsen 2011). The third reason why this age range is important is that children in their adolescent years are in a period of transition: they are gradually acquiring many different kinds of skills and knowledge, and at a time when significant shifts in social and familial positioning occur. Children in this age range and undergoing these transitions are often referred to as 'young youth'. Migration interacts with these different transitions in complex and, again, often contextually specific ways.

A second key finding is that many of the characteristics of sending areas that trigger adult migration also trigger the migration of children and youth.<sup>4</sup> Many child migrants come from areas where there is and has been a strong propensity for adults to migrate. These are communities that have cultures and well-developed processes of adult migration driven by overwhelming triggers for migration. Broadly speaking, these triggers are economic, although the link between poverty and migration is not a simple one. Poverty in the form of unsustainable rural livelihoods, especially where agricultural productivity is low and there are limited local labour markets, produces high rates of seasonal and circular out-migration. But some wealthier households from poor areas also use migration for better-paid work as part of household accumulation strategies. Many child migrants gave poverty as a reason for their movements, but as the quote below shows this is a complex matter.

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4. For example, there are significant migration flows of children moving without parents from conflict areas. In some contexts, high rates of HIV/AIDS infection promote child migration, although whether this is because of economic insecurity, or because of the insecurity of being orphaned or a complex of other factors is complicated to assess (Ansell and van Blerk 2004; 2005)

**WAHABU: An Internal migrant from north-east Ghana who was working on farms in southern Ghana.**

He was 18 when interviewed and had first migrated when he was 14.

*It was poverty that made me come here. I wasn't in school and I was suffering there so my senior brother brought me here. I did not want to come, but poverty forced me out. ...*

*Here it is good because here I am getting enough food to eat. In Bawku you can eat only once or twice a day but here you will always eat three times.*

He worked for a farmer for a year.

*He treated me well. I had no problem with food or where I stayed. ... I stayed with him for one year and at the end of the year he paid me ₵250,000. I sent ₵150,000 to my parents and kept the rest to buy my clothes and things.*

*I had never had in my hand ₵250,000, so I was happy ... Here you can farm without fertilizer and still you will get plenty.*

*My father did not put me in school or put me in handiwork (apprenticeship). If my father was able to find work for me or if our place was like here, where you could farm all the time, then I would not have come.*

*I prefer home because I left my parents in the house. If I were to be there I would work to help (with the farming). ... (Migration DRC 2007)*

Wahabu was suffering because his family farms did not produce enough and his labour could not be used productively on them. At 14 years, with no opportunity for an apprenticeship or to go to school, he was of an age when he needed to look for work. In the communities researched by Hashim, self-reliance in children as well as their contributing to family workloads is valued.

*A child like Afifo (who is about nine) is someone who is starting to do work. She will ask for a small rice plot behind her mother's and as she is showing interest you will give her a plot and support her (Parent in north-east Ghana) (Migration DRC 2007)*

Child migrants value their opportunities to earn and they feel proud of their ability to send money to their families. Most of our child migrants emphasize their desire to get work or to earn income as a motive for migration. This income is used both to help their families and to support themselves. Child migrants work to earn money for themselves for other reasons, too, and identify needing money for specific purposes – for school fees, for better clothes or for a trousseau – as other motives for their mobility.



Non-economic motives were mentioned by many young migrants. Some hoped to get training or non-formal education, which may not be easily available in their home communities, and they even hoped to go to school, although these hopes are rarely realized. Children also have social objectives. They may migrate to live with other relatives as part of strategies to develop relations with more distant family members who may be of support to them in the future. They also move to be a 'good child' and to earn respect from parents by fulfilling social and economic obligations.

Beyond this, many adolescents are motivated by a desire for new experiences and knowledge and for the greater freedom found in a town or city, or from living independently.

### **BAKARY: A young migrant shoeshine boy in Ouagadougou**

*The time in Ouagadougou has also taught me and the other shoeshiners other things: for example, when we walk around in search of customers, we see lots of things that we'd never seen in the village and we also get a better understanding of how life is. If you're hungry back home, you can make some tô (millet porridge), but here you'll need to get out your money, otherwise you won't eat. In my opinion, this is why migrant life in the city is a way to mature, because you'll know that without sweat you can't eat! (Migration DRC 2007).*

### **Decision making**

For many young migrants, then, their movements are not an expression of a rejection of relations with parents and families. The early ages at which children are encouraged to be economic and social agents may be a reflection of how hard poverty and other stresses bear on families in poor areas, but there is no doubt that many child migrants actively embrace these economic and social roles in the family and their migrations may be in part an expression of this.

These movements are, however, occurring within the processes of age-related development and at a time when the scope for acting as social and economic agents is growing. Migration intersects with these trajectories to greater independence. There may be tensions between children's own aspirations and their economic and social objectives for themselves and those of parents or other close family members. Some migration may be an expression of this. Not all child migrants go with parents' approval or even tell their parents that they are going. Studies cited in this paper show that some child migrants have effectively 'run from' their parents or legal guardians. The extent to which death of one parent or both parents acts as a trigger for a child's migration, because it is likely that there is no one to take care of them or because they may be subject to emotional and physical abuse in the family are found to be significant for a minority of our child migrants in both these circumstances following the death of a parent or both parents.

Iversen (2002) has conducted a particularly detailed investigation of the issues of independence, autonomy and decision making in relation to child migration.

He surveyed 21 villages in one district in Karnataka, covering all households (153) with migrant children under 15 years. He interviewed 95 out of the 134 current migrant children at their migration destinations. Many boys were working in restaurants, bars and shops in Bangalore, while girls were mainly working in domestic service. Iversen adopted a strict definition of children's autonomous migration – 'an unambiguous reflection of a migrant's independent wish to leave home, without any parental pressure on the migrant to leave, and without any parental involvement in decision-making, in employment or shelter arrangement' (p. 821). Iversen found that while 12 year olds rarely migrated without parental involvement, 'boys 12–14 regularly made labour migration decisions independently' (Iversen 2006). Some 25 per cent of migration of children in the ages 10–14 years was clearly autonomous without any direct parental role in the migration decision. All were boys. In the other 75 per cent, some form of co-decisions with parents took place. Of the autonomous migrants, over two thirds did not seek parental consent and three quarters overrode parental wishes on work/residence (this material is returned to in more detail in section 3).

Iversen's research illustrates very well the more general finding in the Migration DRC research that decision making about a child's migration may be complex, although it usually involves children *and* parents. Other adults, especially other relatives, are also very often involved. Some children do move solely as a result of a parent's decision, but in most cases parents seek agreement from the child. It is impossible to assess retrospectively, and often with only one side of the story, how decisions were actually made, but many children assert that their migration had been either their own decision or that they had played a big part in making the decision. Many children's accounts state that it was their own decision to migrate, as it obviously is when the child reports taking precipitate action ('runs away'), but many others report negotiating with parents.

#### **WAHABU (described earlier)**

*No one influenced my decision. I decided myself to come to see if I could get work to support myself... I discussed this with my parents and with my senior uncles, and they were all happy and agreed that I should come. My brother paid my lorry (bus) fare and I travelled here with him.*

In some cases, it is clear that a child has engaged in lengthy negotiations in order to leave and indeed has had to develop considerable strategizing skills.

#### **EMINA: A shopkeeper and domestic worker in Kumasi**

She was 17 when she was interviewed and she had only been in Kumasi for four months. She was planning to go back home in another month. She began to cry during the interview, saying it was because she was so tired. She gave this account of negotiating to leave.

*Me and my mother decided that I should come because there is a lot of poverty there. Although some of my family agreed for me to come here my senior uncle didn't agree because some girls come south and find work and when they get*

*money they don't go back...My senior uncle didn't agree but I told him that if I don't go I will suffer. I said, 'You can't get it for me, my mother can't get it for me, so I have to go; otherwise when I marry I will have nothing. In the end he agreed.(Migration DRC 2007)*

## Independent Internal Child Migrants In India

There has been very little research on independent child migrants in India, although studies on child labour are usually studies of work situations, where some if not many of the children are migrants (see OPM 2010). The numbers of child migrants are very high, (see, Appendix 1) but the majority of them move with their parents. There is high demand for children's labour in some rural and urban areas in India, and studies of the main employment sectors that use adult migrant labour routinely report the presence of child labour. We can surmise that where labour markets for children exist, they will attract children who move independently of their parents to work in them. Studies of the circumstances and impacts of children's work in these sectors will therefore in some cases be relevant to independent child migrants.

Edmonds and Salinger (2007) have estimated the numbers of independent child migrants for Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They use what they describe as a culturally appropriate definition of a child based on the fact that under the Indian child labour laws, most types of work are prohibited for those under 15 years. Using data from the 1997–1998 Uttar Pradesh and Bihar Survey of Living Conditions (the UPB Survey, World Bank 1998), they explore some hypotheses about the economic motives of migrants under 15 years from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They find that one million children between 5 and 14 years are living permanently away from their mothers – this is up to 5 per cent of the total child population depending on the age band. Their data also show that the proportion of older children living away from mothers rises sharply after 15, with about 20 per cent of 17 year olds being away.

These figures are rather lower than those reported by the Population Council (2009), based on the Indian DHS survey of 2005/2006, which shows that approximately 20 per cent of children between 10 and 14 years are not living with their mothers (see Appendix 1).

The qualitative evidence base exploring the migration and work experiences of independent child migrants is thin. Two main studies stand out as being both thorough, in terms of issues covered, and child focused – that is, largely based on evidence gathered from children themselves.

### Children migrating from Udaipur to work in Gujarat

Custer, Macauslan, et al.(2005) report a study of 172 adolescent seasonal migrant workers (ages 10–18 years) from nine villages in Udaipur district who migrate to Gujarat and work in cotton production (48.6 per cent), factories (4.9 per cent) and construction work (24.5 per cent ) for periods of 2 to 5 months. Cotton work

was more poorly paid than construction and factory work, with average monthly remittances of Rs 770, Rs 1050 and Rs 969 per month, respectively. More girls than boys worked in cotton production. In answer to a survey question, 44 per cent of the migrants said their migration had been 'OK'; 29 per cent 'did not like' it, while 41 per cent said they had 'liked' it.

The study was relatively unusual in that it was conducted in the sending villages. Udaipur is an area of small-scale owner cultivators whose off-farm income includes that from wage labour. A total of 292 households in all were interviewed, and they included both households containing an adolescent migrant and households that did not. The rates of adolescent migration from the nine villages varied from 14.2 per cent to 39.9 per cent. Existing rates of largely seasonal adult migration from Udaipur district were high with, in some places, as much as 75 per cent of adult men migrating. Adult women also migrated although in very much smaller numbers. The area is subject to drought; the average farm size is falling because of population increase; the local wage labour market is not well developed and the local youth labour market is contracting because of the drought.

Two thirds of the adolescent migrants were in the ages 15 to 18 (68 per cent), with a fifth (20 per cent) between 13 and 15 and 12.5 per cent between 10 and 12. Very little of the information in the report is given in a way that distinguishes between these age ranges. Sixty per cent of the young migrants report making independent decisions to migrate – with 12.5 per cent going without their parent's knowledge. Although this is not discussed, we may speculate that the older the children, the more likely they may have made the decision themselves.

The study found that households with adolescent migrants were significantly worse off than households without migrants, whether this was measured by the household's economic output, or per capita output and spending. Many adolescent migrants come from what are termed 'distress' households – that is from cultivators who are unable to meet basic consumption needs. When there is no local employment, adolescents from these households migrate during periods when they do not need to work on the household farm.

The adolescents remit, on average, 78.6 per cent of their wages, and 78 per cent report that their remittances are used to buy food. The report finds that most households use the adolescent migrants' earnings primarily for basic needs, including the purchase of food grains. Its authors suggest that, unlike some other kinds of migration flow, their remittances cannot be invested productively, because of the level of poverty in many of their households. Young migrants' remittances also enable their families to meet social obligations, including at festivals, and the authors find that some young migrants earn money for their families for non-essential reasons.

Family poverty, then, in this area of barely sustainable livelihoods is a major reason why adolescents migrate to work and 'to earn money for the family' is the commonest reason migrants themselves give for going. But the report goes beyond this to give a highly nuanced account of the economic motives of the young migrants.

A small proportion says that earning money for themselves is the main reason for going away to work (16 per cent). Nearly all migrants keep some of their earnings for themselves, and while some of this money is spent when they are away from home, many of the young migrants also retain some to return home with savings of their own. On average, 20 per cent of migrant earnings are spent by the migrants themselves. Migrants report enjoying the opportunity to spend on themselves and also having the more interesting choices available at worksite bazaars than they would have had at home. However, the authors point out that the value of earning money for the family for the young migrant 'may not be due simply to its material value, but also due to the respect it purchases'. Migrants report their getting recognition from both family and community as a result of their hard work and money earned. Beyond respect and recognition, it may also earn the migrant a different place in the family. 'When I bring money back from Gujarat, my family takes special care of me. This girl earns money...and so they let me do whatever I want.' The migrants referring to this recognition are mainly girls and the authors suggest that the new respect is potentially more important for girls who have limited channels to get high regard in their home communities. Custer et al. argue that adolescents who earn money, for whatever purpose, are engaging in a form of empowerment and they extend this argument to the young people's experience of being away.

The worksite provides a space for adolescents to exercise independent decision-making power in a range of activities other than spending. While they are away, the migrants appreciate the opportunity to form friendships and spend time with their peers. They are able to decide how to spend their non-work time and with whom. At least half the number of adolescents (usually those who are 16 years old and above) report romantic friendships at the worksite. This leads the authors to stress that, despite hard work in difficult conditions, the risks of being cheated and chastised and the privations of their living conditions, migration can provide adolescents with 'freedom and fun'. The independence and fun, the scope for experimentation and the opportunity to make their own decisions are significant for many migrants. Custer, Macauslan, et al. argue that for these young migrants: 'The exigencies of distress and the promise of enjoyment may combine' (p. 99).

Two other Indian studies, each very different from the other, confirm different aspects of the findings from the Udaipur research. The first is that of Edmonds and Salinger, already briefly discussed. This is one of the very few econometric studies on the economic aspects of independent child migration from anywhere in the world, and it finds an association between poverty and child migration.

Edmonds and Salinger (2007) use the data from the 1997–1998 Uttar Pradesh and Bihar Survey of Living Conditions to explore hypotheses about the financial motives for migrants under 15 years. They compare households with children who are living away from their mothers with households where children are living with their mothers. They find that,

- children are less likely to migrate from more remote villages;
- are less likely to migrate from communities where the child wage is higher;

- are less likely to migrate from wealthier households;
- the negative association between migration and family wealth is largely in the most accessible, least remote areas.

They conclude that 'the patterns observed in this data from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are consistent with this financial motives for migration model when there are competitive rural child labor markets', but note also that 'perhaps the most interesting observation from the present study is that the migration patterns of children out of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh seem similar to patterns observed in older populations and in very different social and political contexts' (p. 29).

Other aspects of Custer, Macauslan et al.'s findings are confirmed in studies by Nitya Rao. These investigate the links between gender, education and migration through research carried out in a village in Jharkhand and also followed migrant girls and women from there who were working as domestic servants in Delhi (Rao 2009). Although they have to work long hours and are often not treated well in Delhi, the relatively high income that can be earned from domestic work in Delhi is an incentive to girls who have few prospects at home. The sums sent home by the migrant domestic workers can be quite considerable and are used in various ways. Rao (2011) argues that the female migrants gain respect, status and influence in their families and home communities through money sent home. Her interviews, like those of the migrants to Gujarat, also emphasize the multiplicity of motives of girl migrants and their agency:

*I had heard about Delhi from the village women working there. They wear beautiful clothes and bring expensive gifts when they come for Christmas. The financial situation at home was worsening. I realized that work was available in Delhi and one could earn money. I also wanted to see the big city I had heard so much about. I had never attended school, but my brothers did. I felt bad so left without informing them. (Rao 2011)*

### **Autonomous migrants from coastal Karnataka**

One of the limitations of Custer, Macauslan, et al.'s pathbreaking study is that there was little or no time to do in-depth qualitative interviewing of adolescent migrants, and much of the data was collected through surveys and focus group discussions. As a result we have very little reported in young people's own words of their experiences of some of their interesting findings about empowerment and decision making. Iversen's study of child migrants described earlier included extensive semi-structured interviews with child migrants (Iversen 2002; 2006). The reader and researcher can get a vivid impression of the child migrant from the material taken from this study (Migration DRC 2007).

### ***GOVINDA: Working in a bakery in Bangalore, southern India***

Govinda was 17 years when he was interviewed in Bangalore where he worked as an assistant in a bakery. He had left his home in Halthor village, Udipi district, in coastal Karnataka at the age of 13 years. Govinda has three elder sisters and two brothers, one younger and one older.

*While in school, I worked as a labourer in local cashew farms during school holidays. I failed my 7th standard – I had high hopes of passing and was shattered to receive my results. I felt humiliated and ashamed and did not want to attend school any more. My mother insisted that I should continue my education, but for me it would be embarrassing to sit in a class with younger students: I also thought that my friends would taunt me (for sitting with the younger students). I told my mother that I wanted to take up a hotel job in Mumbai where my elder brother Rama was already working in a hotel.<sup>5</sup> I spoke to him over the phone, when he called mother as part of his weekend routine. He suggested that I work in a hotel near Halthor for about 4–5 months while awaiting his next visit to Halthor. Meanwhile, a local hotel owner, a Konkani Brahmin approached my mother with a job offer for me: I thus joined this hotel in Halthor as a cleaner and started living in my workplace. My brother had worked in the same hotel for nearly seven years.*

*After six months, I left this job: the owner had promised me a salary increase from Rs 300 to Rs 400 per month, but didn't give it – he also failed to pay me for two-three months of work. My next job was in Shimoga, north-east of Udupi, where I moved to take up a job as an assistant in a hotel after a co-villager from the carpenter caste had approached my mother on behalf of a friend, who owned a hotel in Shimoga.*

*I worked in Shimoga for six months and was paid Rs 800 per month and the work was very intensive. Work hours were from 7 am to 11 pm with a 15 minutes lunch break on all seven days of the week. The working hours in the village hotel had been shorter, from 6 am to 7 pm, with work being moderately intensive. In Shimoga, I fell sick with fever and had to be taken to the local hospital. My employer covered the costs. When the owner closed down the hotel temporarily because his wife delivered a baby, he paid us one month's salary. I left the job because the work was heavy but also because I didn't like the food, the employees were always served cold leftovers that had been stored in the refrigerator and the owner would not even bother to know whether we had eaten or not. I then returned to Halthor.*

*My friend's maternal uncle from a neighbouring village approached my mother at the behest of a friend running a hotel in Bangalore's Magadi Road. My mother agreed and I joined this new workplace as cleaner-cum-counter assistant for a salary of Rs 1,360 per month. I left six months later because of health problems (severe and persistent headache) and after someone had stolen my clean clothes. The work was moderately intensive (10 am to 11 pm) with a two-hour afternoon break. We were also given a bonus of Rs 200 for Diwali (a festival). Before leaving, a customer, a driver from Halthor, suggested I join Davangere Benne Dosa stall in Vijayanagar, owned by an acquaintance, for a month as an assistant. In this new workplace, work intensity was very high on all seven days of the week with a monthly salary of Rs 1,000.*

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5. A hotel is a small, vegetarian south-Indian eating place; these do not take overnight guests.

*Although the employer was willing to extend my contract, I refused to stay because of the poor pay and because my work tasks were not clearly defined (I had to do cleaning, packing, assisting cook etc.). I then approached a cousin who was working in another hotel in the same neighbourhood for help – My cousin talked to the hotel owner who, in turn, spoke to his distant relative, running a bakery in Maratahalli (Airport Road) and found me a job as an assistant for a salary of Rs 1200/month. This work is very intensive, from 7 am to 9.30 pm, on all seven days. The owner has promised me a salary hike.*

Govinda had no plans to return to Halthor – he wanted to settle down in Bangalore, work with the same employer and save money for starting a small business enterprise maybe in 2–3 years where he could become an employer.

*I'm in the city to make a living and not to make friends. I don't keep in regular touch with other migrants from my native place. The advantages of life as a migrant include good food, life in the city, increased income, business contacts and the opportunity to search for alternative options in the future. There are no disadvantages.*

*You migrate in search of a good future and you should always keep that in mind: friendships may even turn out to be counterproductive at workplaces: even though I have a dream of establishing a good hotel in Bangalore in the future, I would prefer to start a Pan Beeda Stall (chewing herbs/tobacco) and then think of the dream since I believe that even when dreams are big, one must start small. You must not try to lie down directly when you're standing – you should first sit down and then lie on the ground. (Migration DRC 2007)*

Very many themes emerge from this account:

1. Govinda justified why he had wanted to quit school by emphasizing his shame at failing his exams, which he did in spite of his mother's ambitions, suggesting a complex link between schooling and migration for work.
2. Mother and son discussed his wish to migrate and her wish that he should stay at school, but Govinda's wish to go away to work won out over his mother's views.
3. Govinda was active in the organization of his migration and first jobs, actively using his family and other contacts.
4. He used a wide range of family kin and other contacts when changing jobs.
5. Govinda was keen to earn money. This prompted him to search for better-paid jobs, and his account reveals the ways in which child migrants negotiate wages and working conditions and the ways in which they may evaluate what is best for them. Govinda looked at both the salary paid in cash and food, expenses for health care met by the employer and bonuses such as gifts on special occasions. The level of the wage in cash and promises of future pay rises were decisive for his accepting a job, and the way he felt treated at the workplace shaped his choice of remaining in the job.
6. Govinda is not working mainly to help his family, but as part of his own aspirations, which is to settle permanently in Bangalore.



There are many similarities in another detailed account from Iversen's research:

### ***UMESH: Working in a factory canteen in Bangalore***

Umesh is one of the runaways in Iversen's study, which, as cited earlier, used a very strict definition of autonomous child migration.

Umesh was 15 years old when he was interviewed and he had left his home in Holihalli village, Mandya district, at the age of 14 years. He has one elder sister and a twin brother. He was working in the canteen of SK Garments, a factory in Bangalore.

*I was a regular student, but was occasionally beaten for lack of punctuality in completing homework. I was good in sports, but mathematics was a tough nut to crack and in my eighth standard I failed in this, my most feared subject. My parents insisted that I should re-sit the exam, but I refused because it would be humiliating to sit with younger students while my peers and friends would be studying in a higher standard. My father beat me and told me that if I refuse to heed their advice I would have to take care of my own life. This prompted me to run away. I was aware of hotel work and the opportunities in the hotel sector in Bangalore after listening to senior migrants from my village.*

*The same afternoon I had been beaten, I stole Rs 60 from my father's shirt and boarded a bus to Bangalore. This would be my first visit to Bangalore and throughout the journey I kept thinking about my future course of action when reaching the city.*

*I decided to approach hotels and ask for jobs and after getting out at Majestic (Bangalore's Main Bus Station), I approached the owner of Hotel Raghavendra Krupa at the bus stand. I was hungry and food and finding shelter were my main concerns. The owner, an Udupi Brahmin, enquired about my background and I narrated everything – unedited. The owner took objection to the fact that I had committed the twin blunders of stealing money and running away without intimation, but appreciated my honesty. He told me not to resort to theft at any cost and sent me to the kitchen after asking his employees to give me some food. He spoke to me again and informed me that I would be working as a cleaner for a salary of Rs 500 per month. He also mentioned that although he was against hiring child workers, it would be his moral duty to offer me a job in the larger interest since I otherwise may resort to anything to ensure food. The work hours were from 6 am to 11.30 pm with 10–15 minutes break for breakfast and lunch. The work was highly intensive. There was no leisure time at all. Continuous contact with water resulted in whitening of my skin and cracks appearing on my palms and feet. There were 20–25 workers, but very little to learn about anyone. Scoldings and beatings by the kitchen supervisor were to be expected if we (the cleaners) were reluctant to get up at 5 am or failed to pay proper attention to our jobs.*

*After I absconded, my parents arranged search parties – consisting of close relatives. While one party headed by my father went to Nagamangala (the taluk headquarters), the other went to Mandya (the district headquarters) and then to Mysore. Meanwhile, my brother-in-law, Venkatesha, working as an operator in a garment factory, was asked to search for me in Bangalore. Venkatesha enquired at many hotels in Peenya and Majestic and also in Bangalore Railway station using a photograph of me. The search ended when Venkatesha visited Raghavendra Krupa and the employer summoned me and offered to let me go. This was two months after I had absconded. I refused to return to Alisandra out of fear of beatings and humiliation. My brother-in-law offered to place me as a cleaner in the canteen of his factory and I agreed to accompany him there. The same day, we went to his house in Peenya and the next day approached the canteen owner who agreed to hire me as a cleaner with a salary of Rs 1,000.*

*There are about 350 workers in the factory, SK Garments, and most workers are women. In the canteen, the owner manages the cash counter, his brother works as a cook and a Lingayat from Mysore works as supplier. The work hours are from 7.30 to 10 am and 11.30 am to 3 pm and from 5 pm to 6.30 pm on six days a week with Sundays off. Our other perks include free food, shelter, uniforms and free clothes (leftovers in the factory). Besides, the employer has promised to hike my salary by a considerable amount every year. Further, I also get a month's salary as a bonus for Ayudha puja (during Dussehra, a festival).*

*At the first workplace, there was no time to learn about anyone – work, work and work was the mantra. I had no specific friends – 'Good to all – and good with all' - was my policy. Vulgar language was very common among the cleaners. Other senior colleagues would discuss movies – life was very mechanical. You are in the central heart of the city, but in a cage called a hotel from where you could hardly get to go out, or get to know about what is going on outside. At SK Garments, I have ample spare time and all the 350 employees know me. (He beams with pride when making this comment.) They make it a point to greet me whenever they visit the canteen. I spend Sundays with my sister's family watching TV and playing with the kids. Occasionally we all go out for a movie.*

On advantages and disadvantages of his migration, he said:

*A main advantage of migration was to avoid the humiliation of having to do the re-sit. Other advantages include higher earnings, a sense of satisfaction, variety and adequacy of food, making contacts. The basic amenities and shelter are very good. Exposure to city life and learning of hotel work are other advantages. I have also learnt to be more patient. There are no disadvantages. You should not leave home prematurely. If you do, you must not return prematurely.*

*I have yet to visit Holihalli but I am planning a visit during the coming Ugadi (major festival). My parents have visited once after I started working for SK.*

He explained his aspirations were to work with the same employer for some more time, earn confidence and through him secure a contract to run a similar canteen elsewhere. The owner had also promised him to be of help (Migration DRC 2007).

In this account we see that Umesh, rather as Govinda had done, emphasizes his failure to make any headway at school as the reason for his migration. In his case it was particularly the intense conflict with his father about these failures and his refusal to go back to school that was the precipitating factor. After being beaten he stole money from his father and got on the bus to Bangalore. He had made no prior arrangements about a job and indeed was careful to keep away from anyone he knew from home in his first search for work.

Umesh was brought back into the family by his brother. Although he has re-established contact with his parents, from their point of view he is no longer a resource or subject to their decision making. Umesh himself aspires to an even more independent life in the future and is not currently expressing obligations to the family other than the need to visit them occasionally.

### ***Links between children's migration for work and education***

One of the long-term impacts on migrants like Govinda and Umesh is that they are rarely able to get back the schooling they have lost or able to return to school. This, as many authors point out, entrenches them in low-skilled, insecure and low-paid sectors of the labour market as adults and contributes to cycles of poverty (Custer, Macauslan, et al. 2005; Yaqub 2009; Rao 2011). National statistics in a large number of countries suggest that most working children are not in education, and this has led some to view children's working as 'causing' them to abandon school. As Hashim (2005) and Migration DRC (2010) point out, the links between migration and not being at school are very much more complex than this.

Several studies of child migrants find that a good proportion of them have never attended school and so did not drop out to migrate for work. Custer et al. found that 50 per cent of their working child migrants had never attended school. While in other cases, communities with high rates of children's migration are found to have low rates of school enrolments.

There may be several reasons for these low enrolment rates. Going to school costs money, even when basic education is free. Parents and children list many other costs – clothing, for example, and in many areas there are a wide range of additional levees that teachers insist on – including in some instances for basic equipment such as desks and chairs! These costs can be prohibitive for some poor parents and may lead them to invest in schooling only for the children who show aptitude and keenness, but not for other children. School students in Ghana sometimes reported migrating during the school holidays to get money needed to continue their schooling. Reports from all over rural India suggest, however, that parents are increasingly committed to sending their children to school – and, as we have seen, this can bring them into severe conflict with their children.

Attitudes by parents and children are also affected by the profile of youth labour and market opportunities available at home and at migration destinations. Where there are few or no jobs locally that require literacy or numeracy, and no likelihood of gaining access as a migrant to these kinds of jobs,<sup>6</sup> there is little incentive to gain these skills. Equally importantly, however, is the question of the quality of education available in poor rural areas. Absent and poorly trained and poorly performing teachers, children being diverted from the classroom to work for teachers and a curriculum barely relevant to the likely work skills these young people may need are significant ways in which many rural schools fail their students.

These are also some of the reasons why many teenagers are keen to gain access to informal training in somewhat more skilled jobs or through migration to gain access to apprenticeships. In some circumstances this is may be a reality for a small number of independent child migrants.

## Child Protection and Children's Agency

Migration enables adolescents to make their own decisions and the decision to migrate is a powerful symbol of this (Custer, Macauslan, et al. 2005).

Academic research suggests that leaving home with the aim of working plays a big part in children's decisions to migrate. They are more or less positive about their experiences, which, to a greater or lesser degree, serve to meet the child's own objectives and strategies. Child migrants are thinkers and doers and strategists. These conclusions are in marked contrast with International Child Protection Conventions that protect children from consenting to actions that make them vulnerable or may harm them and, indeed, with other prevailing ideologies that do not see the child as capable of making independent decisions.

There are many risks involved in their journeys, in finding work, in getting paid, in seeking shelter. Their working and living conditions are hard and unsuitable; they are often cheated; they can rarely get back into school. They and their parents take steps to mitigate these risks as far as they can. They travel with peers, they seek out intermediaries to accompany them and to find them work. Where they can, they move from bad employers to better ones. If they must sleep 'on the streets' they use peer groups and secure adults to keep safe. For many child migrants these risks are successfully navigated, but not for all.

There are three key issues raised for child protection by these points:

1. How do child protection regimes treat child migrants, especially their agency?
2. How are we to think about child's agency when they migrate?
3. What do child migrants need?

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6. This is especially the case where labour markets remain closed to certain kinds of migrant because of their social and/or ethnic statuses (cf. Oxford Policy Management 2010).

## International conventions and child agency

There are no international conventions that deal directly with all children who are migrants, but three instruments are relevant to them:

- The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- A range of ILO conventions: including Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182)
- UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2000) (The Palermo Protocol)

Key elements of the UNCRC are its legal definition that children are all those under 18 years and Article 3 that says that actions taken should be in the best interests of the child. There is a considerable body of literature debating the merits of treating children of all ages under the convention, but it is important to note that the intention of the UNCRC is to give children extra rights, not to take them away. It has certainly meant that independent child migrants reaching some European countries have more rights than those who are 18 years and above, and it is on this basis that they are given leave to remain. A key problem in ensuring that the UNCRC is used in such a way as to give more rights lies in how 'best interests' are interpreted.<sup>7</sup>

The ILO child labour conventions already clearly distinguish between children of different ages in terms of the kinds of work they should legally be able to do. It is noticeable that in India, the emphasis on protecting working children is directed toward the children who are under 15 years, reflecting perhaps the cultural understandings that Edmonds and Salinger talked of and also reflecting the age distinctions in the ILO conventions. There is no provision in the ILO conventions that deals with the additional issues that might come into play when young workers are migrants and living away from their families.

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children is one international instrument that does deal directly with people on the move. But it has become increasingly controversial since 2000. The supplementary protocols that define trafficking are reproduced in Appendix 2.

These protocols draw a clear distinction between women and children in how trafficking is defined. Trafficking of women occurs when there has been an abuse of power or of a position of their vulnerability, or of using coercive means and deception, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve their consent for the purpose of exploitation. Where a person under 18 years is concerned, the protocol does not include coercive means and deception as a factor of child trafficking. This reflects a view that children cannot give consent to something that harms them. As a result, movement itself to abusive or exploitative work is sufficient to define a child as trafficked, if another person has been involved in any way.

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7. There are several articles in the convention which are relevant to the movements of children – for a detailed account see Whitehead and Hashim (2005).

O'Connell Davidson points out there are enormous ambiguities in these definitions and especially in relation to what is exploitative work, and that the trafficking definitions are particularly problematic in relation to the independent movements of children to work (O'Connell Davidson 2011; O'Connell Davidson and Farrow 2007). It is clear that the experiences of independent child migrants are not reflected in these definitions and indeed their exercise of agency effectively conflicts with these international universalizing ideas of what is appropriate to childhood. Many anti-trafficking programmes have been set up since the Palermo Protocol that intercept or identify trafficked children to be returned to their home communities. Research has found some of these have returned children who are overwhelmingly simply independent child migrants and are not trafficked and who promptly set off again to seek work away from home (Castle and Diarra 2003). For these children then the incentives to migrate are very strong. As O'Connell Davidson stresses, the effect of the Palermo Protocol definitions is that the trafficking discourses and anti-trafficking measures ignore the very real needs of such child migrants.

### **The migrant child as a social actor: Constrained agency**

There are many implicit ways in which attitudes towards the agency of child migrants become apparent. Through language and labels, for example: how do we describe children who migrate 'on their own'? Are they unaccompanied or separated, or is their migration voluntary, independent, or autonomous? Our values are also apparent in the way we talk about the risks involved in children who move out of a parental family setting and/or home communities and how we evaluate these risks. Sometimes the agency of child migrants seems to be seen as a threat, with many migrant children routinely discriminated against and stigmatized, even by those who might be thought to have a duty to protect them.

### **Children's migration: A search for opportunity and a signal of constraints**

Many child migrants by no means view themselves as 'victims'. As they make their decisions, with or without adult involvement, they may view migration as a significant opportunity to exercise their own life choices and to improve their opportunities. There is no longitudinal research that tells us how successful these strategies are in the long term and why. For many adults, the life choices that young teenagers like Govinda and Umesh are making do not seem to be choices at all. They point to the real harm that unaccompanied movement and migrant labour can bring. They stress that children are not likely to have enough knowledge to make suitable decisions and their 'choices' to migrate seem the very opposite of agency. So what is experienced as a sense of agency by the child/young person appears to outsiders as the child's having very few options and choices.

Broadly speaking, both these views are correct. Children are doing something in response to adverse circumstances, but the adverse circumstances and the actions they take reflect severely narrowed opportunities. When children migrate independently to work, it is a signal of the constraints they face in their home communities. Other qualitative research has found that working migrant children are fairly realistic about the situations they are moving to, given these constraints.

Huisjmans (2008), for example, argues that Laotian migrants understand they are being exploited, but this does not prevent them from preferring migration. Klocker (2007) argues that the young girl domestic workers in Tanzania, who are often treated badly by their employers, are under heavy pressure from external factors at home and, 'understand and actively negotiate the expectations and power relations that surround them, while making decisions aimed at improving their own lives and those of their families.'

In some of the Migration DRC studies, the very negative impacts of these constraints were apparent. While many child migrants who take responsibilities for their families also feel they have some independent room for their own life choices, this is not always so. Some children, whose parents are ill, or disabled, or destitute for other reasons, speak wistfully of what they have had to give up in order to keep the family, especially younger siblings, going. And there is no doubt that some child migrants have miserable, desperate and shortened lives struggling against deepening disaster.<sup>8</sup>

It is hardly meaningful to talk of children's agency in these cases, when their capacities are simply insufficient to withstand the weight of multiple misfortunes; as of course is also the case for some adults in similar circumstances. Can we describe a child forced to decide within a highly limited set of life choices as someone exercising agency (cf. Yaqub 2009)? The best we can do is to describe child migrants' agency as 'limited', 'constrained' or 'thin', as various researchers have done (Klocker 2007; Yacub 2009; Consortium on Street Children 2011; Hashim 2011; Whitehead; Hashim and Iversen 2007; Huisjmans 2008).

Klocker describes the young women domestic workers as having 'thin' agency. 'Thin agency refers to decisions and everyday actions that are carried out within highly restrictive contexts, characterized by few viable alternatives' (Klocker 2007). We might want to say that, in other words, thin agency is not very powerful, effective or meaningful agency.

Klocker details how agency is 'thinned' by factors such as the social obedience and submission that are central to child-adult relations; internalized inferiority from prevailing gender values; stereotypical attitudes towards ethnic or regional groups and towards people who are simply poor. The factors in this list largely affect the ability to act through psychological processes, but speaking more sociologically, structures, contexts and relationships can all act as 'thinners' (or indeed thickeners) of an individual's agency.

The structural factors affecting children in Udaipur start with local returns to adult labour being very low, whether working on own account or as wage labourers. Livelihoods are no longer viable and adults must migrate to work for part of the year. Also, there is little available youth employment and this too is poorly rewarded.

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8. In the DRC research it was the migrant children working in hawking and carrying work around railway stations and markets in Dhaka who were at greatest risk of suffering substantial harm (Khair 2008).

Poverty of income, extraordinary poverty of opportunity and poor schooling combine to offer little to children making the transition to adulthood in their adolescent years. Justice for children here demands economic justice for their communities. As Custer, Macauslan, et al. argue, to reduce the number of children prematurely seeking work from Udaipur, attention needs to be paid to economic opportunities for adults as well as for youth. Whether we describe these communities as overwhelmingly poor, as marginal or as the wrong side of India's spatial inequalities, child justice demands addressing children and young people's experiences – of being left out, of having so little and the compelling sense of frustration that comes from having no avenues for aspiration. By any measures, these structural factors reduce their life choices and agency to very low levels. The energy and stoicism shown in their work, migration jobs and destinations are a signal of how important this avenue is for the exercise of agency.

The Udaipur communities are socially and economically relatively homogeneous. There are many other rural areas where a significant structural factor affecting children's life choices and agency are India's social and ethnic divisions.<sup>9</sup> The factors in rural Karnataka that compel Umesh and Govinda to migrate and work are not quite as clear-cut as in Udaipur, but belonging to groups of low social status is one factor. As studies of internal labour migration in general show, the severely limited structure of opportunities and low incomes that result bear heavily on young people. Poorly designed and poorly performing schools and teachers not only offer them little, but effectively eject spirited youngsters, whose journeys to find better opportunities are described by Iversen.

In several important ways, the key policy interventions for child migrants are the ones around child labour. Children work when neither they nor their families are migrants, and they work as migrants both with their families and without. A recent key study is that by OPM for UNICEF of child labour in cotton-growing and cottonseed production, covering four main states (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu). This is a comprehensive and substantial report that covered many children who are living with their parents and working, some of them as migrants, as well as some independent child migrants. This study found that parents played a greater role in the decisions that children should work than the studies of independent child migrants find, but many of the structural factors identified earlier and just discussed emerged as significant in how decisions were made. The authors identify as 'key structural drivers of the trade-offs between child work and education...as low household incomes, adult labour opportunities, debt, or poor school quality or accessibility.'<sup>10</sup> They point out many themes within these entrenched structural issues that should be the focus of policy advocacy in combating child labour.

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9. Segmented labour markets linked to these social and ethnic divisions are also discussed in Oxford Policy Management (2010).

10. In relation to education, it lists lack of schools especially secondary schools or lack of free transport; lack of adequate facilities (toilets, drinking water, classrooms); indirect costs; quality of schooling – too few and poorly performing teachers and too few sanctions for non-attendance.



This report also highlights community, parental and children's perceptions as significant factors in decision making about how children should trade off their time between work and education. It suggests that a further key area for policy advocacy should be:

'...interventions that aim to affect decision-makers' perceptions of these trade-offs (through broadening their information set or influence their attitude towards information) or the social bases for these trade-offs (such as norms)' (OPM 2010).

The ambitious measures they go on to recommend are largely not directed at independent child migrants. The material reviewed in this paper suggests that before such recommendations can be made, we need to know a great deal more about, first, the complex process of decision making that results in independent child migration, and how major structural factors affect this, and, second, about how being a migrant affects long-term life courses and success or failure in these, particularly in comparison with non-migrant children in similar circumstances. As they seek to support and protect child and youth migrants, a key yardstick to judge these and any other measures is that *they should not undermine the limited agency child migrants* have made for themselves in the face of very difficult circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

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11. See Reale (2008).

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## Appendix 1

### Child and Youth Migration Data<sup>12</sup>

#### Some global figures

**Global International Migrants:** an estimated 214 million persons worldwide – or 3.1 per cent of the world's population – are international migrants. (quoted in van de Glind 2010; UNDP, S. Zukang: International Migration Trends, Population Division, Geneva, 2009, available at < [www.unctad.org/en/docs/emditctncd\\_10\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/emditctncd_10_en.pdf) >

**Global Internal Migrants:** UNDP estimates the number of internal migrants to be 740 million (quoted in van de Glind 2010; UNDP: Human Development Report 2009).

**Migrant Youth from Developing Countries:** Youth make up about a third of the migrant flow from all developing countries – the age range of 12 to 24 (quoted in van de Glind 2010; World Bank WDR 2007).

#### Comparative figures for young migrants

##### Not living with biological parents

###### *International*

According to McKenzie (2008), young people of ages 12–24 make up one third of the flow and one quarter of the stock of international migrants. Share of youth in the flow is largest in movements to developing countries and least for movements into developed countries.

###### *Cross National*

Edmonds and Shrestha (2009) using MICS data from 21 countries show the number of children under 18 living away from biological parents:

- 7.2 per cent of children are not living with a biological parent
- There are large variations across the countries
- The lowest proportion is 4 per cent of children, in Albania, Bosnia and Herz, and Macedonia, not living with biological parents
- The largest proportions >19 per cent of the children not living with biological parents in Thailand, Sierra Leone and Uganda

###### *India*

Edmonds and Salinger (2007) use the 1997–1998 Uttar Pradesh and Bihar Survey of Living Conditions (the UPB Survey, World Bank 1998) to count children between ages 5 and 14. They found one million children living (permanently) away from their mothers.

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12. Gunjan Sondhi of the University of Sussex Centre for Migration Research prepared this appendix.

In a series entitled *The Adolescent Experience In-depth: Using Data to Identify and Reach the Most Vulnerable Young People* by the Population Council, a report based on India's 2005/2006 DHS survey, highlights that approximately 20 per cent of the children in the ages 10–14 are living in households with a mother only, a father only or with neither parent (Population Council 2009).

## India: children and/or youth who have migrated with or without parents

According to Balk and Liu (2011), based on a measure of migration using 5-year estimates moving within major administrative units and looking at the age range 10–24:

1. <5 per cent of the proportion of migrant population in urban areas is adolescent girls.
2. 80 per cent of the urban female migrants and approximately 60 per cent of the rural female migrants (of ages 10–24) have some schooling.
3. In comparison to the urban and rural female non-migrants, nearly 82 per cent of urban female non-migrants have some education, and 57 per cent of rural female non-migrants have some schooling.

Looking at the relationship between education and migration, Balk and Liu (2011) highlight that:

1. About 27 per cent of the urban female migrants and 45 per cent of the rural female migrant population between the ages of 15–19 years have NO SCHOOLING.
2. Approximately 15 per cent of the urban male migrants and 27 per cent of the rural male migrant population between the ages of 15–19 years have NO SCHOOLING.
3. Urban girl in-migrants are more likely to have no schooling than non-migrants.

An unpublished study by Population Council (2011), uses DHS data to give percentages of girls/women who migrated to the areas less than 5 years' before.

### India females only

Age at survey	Capital/large cities	Other cities	Towns	Country side
Under 20	19.1%	16.7%	19.6%	24.2%
20–24	36.1%	34.3%	32.8%	30.5%



## India's 2007/08 National Sample Survey

The data from the 2007/08 National Sample Survey are nationally representative.

The data was prepared by Matteo Sandi and Dr Adriana Castaldo at the University of Sussex as part of an investigation into youth migration for the Moving out of Poverty RPC.). I am very grateful to these colleagues and to Priya Deshingkar who has allowed access to this data.

Migrant: Any former household member who left the household any time in the past to move to another village or urban area within the country (internal migrant) or to go abroad (international migrant).

**Table 1: Youth and child migrants general sample description**

Country	# Households		# Migrants							
	Total	With migrants	Internal			International				
			0-14	15-24	25+	Total	0-14	15-24	25+	Total
India	125,578	53,961	6,394	26,811	62,114	95,319	148	777	4,242	5,167

**Table 2: Proportion of migrants that are children or youth**

Country	Proportion of internal migrants of age 0-14	Proportion of internal migrants of age 15-24	Proportion of international migrants of age 0-14	Proportion of international migrants of age 15-24
India (unweighted)	6.71%	28.13%	2.86%	15.04%
India (weighted)	5.43%	28.82%	1.95%	13.62%

Source Deshingkar 2011 (tables prepared by Castaldo)

**Table 3: All migrant households**

Country	Total households in sample	Former migrants <sup>a</sup>	Short-Term migrants <sup>b</sup>	Recent Households migrated <sup>c</sup>
India	125,578	53,961	15005	4371

a Households with former migrants: number of households with any former household member who left the household any time in the past to move to another village or urban area within the country (internal migrant) or to go abroad (international migrant).

b Households with short-term migrants: household member who stayed away from village/town for 1 month or more but less than 6 months during last 365 days for employment or in search of employment.

c Households migrated: The complete household moved: whether the household migrated to the village/town of enumeration during the last 365 days.

**Table 4: Migrants under 18**

Country	# Households		# Migrants					
	Total	With migrants	Internal			International		
			0-17	18+	Total	0-17	18+	Total
India	125,578	53,961	9206	86,274	95,480	173	4994	5,167

Migrant: Any former household member who left the household any time in the past to move to another village or urban area within the country (internal migrant) or to go abroad (international migrant).

**Table 5: Proportion of migrants that are children**

Country	Proportion of internal migrants of age 0-17	Proportion of international migrants of age 0-17
India (unweighted)	9.64%	3.34%

**Table 6: Children's reasons for migration (ages 0–17): Internal and international combined.**

Reasons for Migration	Migrants (ages 0–17)	Per cent
Migration of parent/earning member of family	5638	61.67
Studies	1555	17.01
Search of employment	520	5.69
Take up employment	404	4.42
Marriage	345	3.77
Better employment	297	3.25
Others	251	2.75
Housing problems	57	0.62
Own house	30	0.33
Transfer of service/contract	9	0.1
Business	8	0.09
Proximity to place of work	8	0.09
Health care	8	0.09
Displacement by devpt. Projects	6	0.07
Social/political problem	4	0.04
Natural disasters	2	0.02
	9142*	100

\* 237 missing responses.

Notes: Table 6 highlights the reasons for migration of migrants in the ages 0–17. Nearly all the respondents completed this section. Out of 9,142 responses, approximately 62 per cent migrated because their parents migrated. The statement does not say clearly that children moved *with* their parents. But at the time of the survey, the children had undertaken migration because their parents were moving. The second most cited reason for migration was studies (17per cent); followed by search for employment (5.6 per cent).

Tables 3–6 prepared by Sondhi.

## Appendix 2

### Supplementary Protocols to UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000) (The Palermo Protocol)

- a) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
- b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
- d) 'Child' shall mean any person under eighteen years of age. (UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000).

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## Gender and Migration in India

**Indu Agnihotri**

Director

**Indrani Mazumdar**

Senior Fellow

**Neetha N.**

Senior Fellow

Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, India

The past few decades have been marked by growing scholarly and policy interest in migration and particularly women's migration, though it has been directed more at international than internal migration. Attention to the far larger scale of internal migration in developing countries such as India – where the fundamental questions are quite different – had declined, and interest in it appears to be reviving only very recently. At the national level in India, the policy movement away from dirigistic economic development towards an open-market-dependent strategy of growth appeared to have pushed out earlier development and transition perspectives on migration and moved to a generally ebullient expectation of positive outcomes of demand-driven migration in a period of accelerated growth, including autonomous employment-oriented migration by women. Such optimism has faltered somewhat

in the grim face of the agrarian crisis since the mid-1990s, which forced the issue of distress migration into the picture. Arguably, at both the international level and at the national level, liberalization-driven globalization appears to have shifted the terms of reference of migration studies towards a more individualistic focus. At the same time, unfolding difficulties and crises are perhaps propelling the need for bringing in more structurally oriented questions and issues into migration studies, particularly in relation to gender, labour and internal migration.

Development-oriented theories of migration have been, in the main, preoccupied with the expected and desired transition from an agrarian to an industrial or even post-industrial social and economic order, for which rural to urban migration is often seen as a rough proxy. The focus on transition was of course central to the earlier policy regime of decolonization-oriented and state-led 'development' policy that prevailed from the 1950s till the early 1980s. Its proxy in rural to urban migration has perhaps received even greater attention under the present regime of liberalization and privatized resource-driven and globalized market-led 'growth', albeit with less of a structural focus. Nevertheless, a common underlying thread running through otherwise divergent economic policy paradigms is a broad understanding that the migration process leads to some form of settlement at a particular destination (probably urban), usually accompanied by occupational/sectoral change, enhanced incomes and perhaps some degree of social mobility.

In actuality, the experience in India has been of a slow rate of urbanization, the continuance of agriculture providing the majority employment in the workforce, and the expansion of more circular forms of labour migration in, to, and around rural as well as urban areas. Temporary and circular migration appear to have further gained ground in the face of the increasing rather than decreasing weight of unorganized/informal and intermittent forms of employment and in recent years, by the unsettling and shrinking of more durable organized sector employment (NCEUS 2007).<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the macro-data has not provided any picture of trends in relation to temporariness or circularity of labour migration in the country and retains an implicit orientation to what has been called a 'permanent settlement paradigm'. It is in only the most recent NSS survey on migration (2007–2008) that a clear delineation of the specific category of short-term employment-oriented migrants along with the introduction of a subcategory of temporary migrants in the general category of migrants by change of usual place of residence (UPR) has opened up possibilities of constructing a somewhat better macro-picture of the patterns and features of labour migration in India.

National data sets on migration, whether NSS or Census, are of course designed for population movements in contradistinction to theories of migration and development perspectives, which are based on economic/labour migration (Srivastava 2005). Both the Census and NSS use definitions of migrants by change of residence, which for women is projected as being primarily of a

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1. NCEUS (2007) has definitively brought out the expanding numbers and proportion of unprotected, unorganized workers.

non-economic nature. Migrants are of course asked to give reasons for migration, and generally those who give employment-related reasons are then taken to denote as being labour or economic migrants. However, the proportions of female migrants identified as moving for employment-related reasons are so small as to be rendered as insignificant, and the presence of large numbers of females in the migration data is explained away as migration due to marriage. Indeed the widespread practice of village exogamy (the custom of marrying outside natal village) and patrilocal residence (residence with or near husband's parents) has led to the overwhelming majority of women in India being recorded as migrants. This, no doubt leads to some difficulty for those who would use the data on migration for the purpose of understanding gender dimensions of labour migration. Several commentators, particularly economists, therefore, tend to dismiss female migration figures as of little economic relevance. In the process, questions regarding the nature of marriage in different or concurrent modes of production and related organization/allocation or division of labour in the productive economy, the degrees and uneven levels and conditions of commodification of labour and its interaction with pre-capitalist social conditions or processes are all of course passed over.

These questions apart, the attribution of a single reason for migration – adopted by the macro- surveys – has also led to camouflaging of economic migration by women under other apparently non-economic social reasons. For example, some labour migration by women may appear as marriage migration or as other forms of associational movement simply because reasons may coincide, but the social reason is presumed to be all important. Combined with the well-known undercounting of women's economic activities, an underestimation of female labour migration appears to be inbuilt into the macro-data. Several decades of macro-data on migration has thus presented a largely unchanging picture of women's migrating for mainly social reasons and men's for economic reasons. The net result is an entrenched and reasoned proclivity towards using male migration – a perceived proxy for economic migration – as the primary indicator in development-oriented discussions on migration at the cost of gendered analysis. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the macro-data offers scope to raise several issues and questions that are of great relevance to an understanding of gender, migration and development in contemporary India.

## Paradoxes and Puzzles in the Macro-Data

The most striking feature that confronts us on first view of the most recent migration data from the National Sample Survey (NSS) is the increase in rates of female migration for both rural and urban India between 1993 and 2007–2008. This is in contradistinction to male migration rates that have fallen in rural India and moved towards stagnation after an initial increase in urban areas. Figures 1 (a) and (b) present a graphic description of migration rates from the last three NSS rounds on migration. Migration rates are presented by sex and reasons for migration (percentage of total female and male migrants and their subsets

Figure 1 (a): Percentage of migrants in female and male populations by select reasons for migration (Rural India)

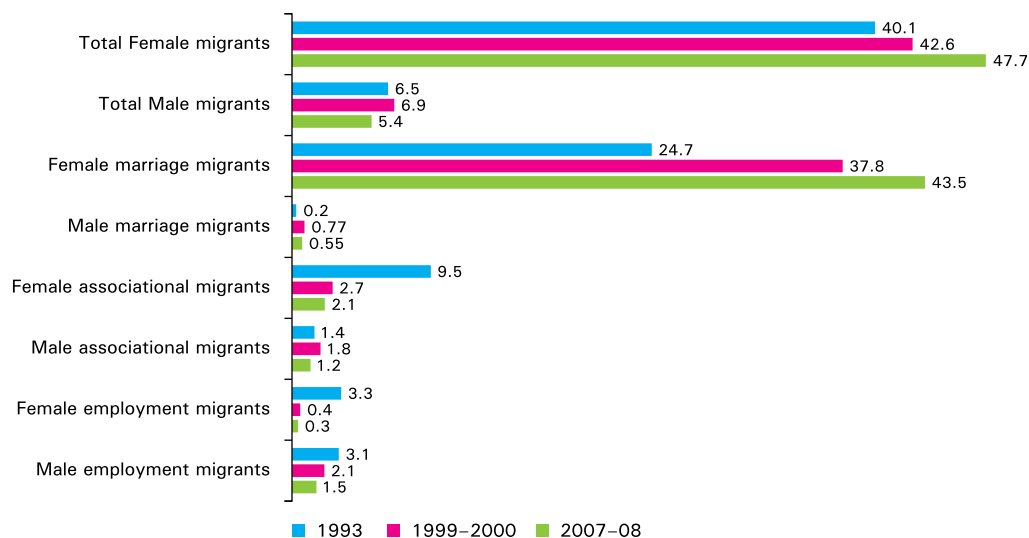
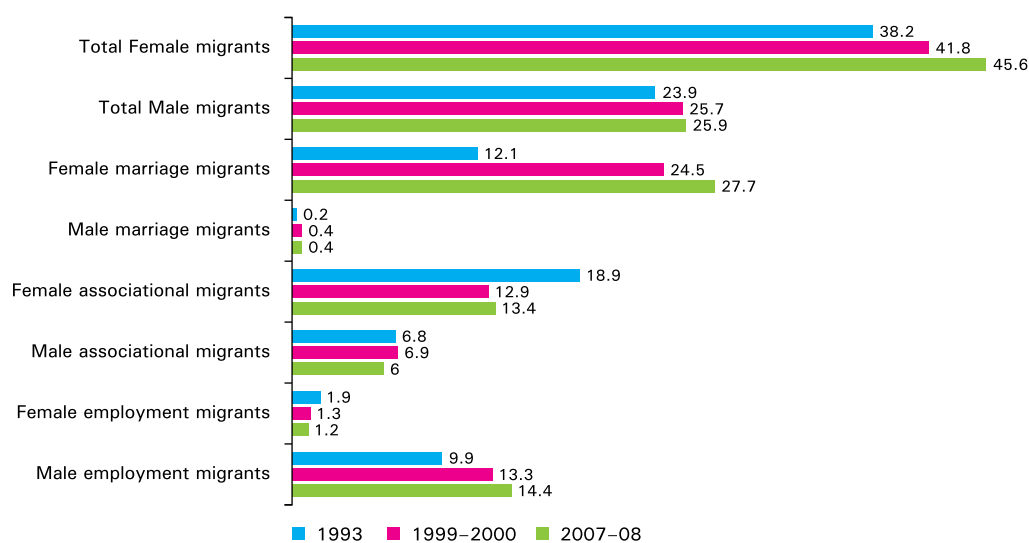


Figure 1 (b): Percentage of migrants in female and male populations by select reasons for migration (Urban India)



by reason for migration to female and male populations, respectively) for rural and urban India from the 49th (1993), the 55th (1999–2000) and the 64th (2007–2008) rounds of the NSS. In the figures, ‘marriage migrants’ refers to those whose reason for migration is given as marriage, ‘associational migrants’ to those whose migration was due to movement of parents/earning member, and ‘employment migrants’ to those whose stated reason was any of the employment-related reasons listed in the surveys.<sup>2</sup>

2. Employment-related reasons include: 1. in search of employment; 2. in search of better employment; 3. business; 4. to take up employment/better employment; 5. transfer of service/contract; 6. proximity to place of work.

The overwhelming and increasing proportions of female migrants are, of course, immediately apparent. It may be underlined that as per the latest survey of 2007–2008, females constituted more than 80 per cent of all migrants (migrants being defined as persons 'whose last place of usual residence [UPR], anytime in the past was different from the place of enumeration'). About a decade and a half earlier, in 1993, the female share of migrants was 72 per cent.

What is most puzzling is that enhancement of female migration rates appears to have been driven by a sharp increase in migration for marriage. The total female migration rates in rural India increased by close to 8 percentage points from 40.1 per cent in 1993 to 47.7 in 2007–2008. However, its subset – the female marriage migration rate – rose by more than double that figure, increasing by 19 percentage points from 24.7 per cent in 1993 to 43.5 per cent in 2007–2008 (Figure 1[a]). Similarly, in urban areas, while the total female migration rate increased by some 7 percentage points, the female marriage migration rate rose by around 16 percentage points (Figure 1[b]).<sup>3</sup> Why migration for marriage should be increasing is difficult to explain. It might be argued that with improved connectivity, women may be travelling greater distances for marriage. But distance is not the issue here, since even if a woman had married and moved into the closest village earlier, she would still have been recorded as a migrant. The mystery deepens because such increases are not a reflection of any general increase in the proportions of married women in the population. The major jump in female marriage migration can be seen to have taken place between the 49th Round (1993) and the 55th Round (1999–2000) when the proportion of marriage migrants in the female population rose by more than 13 percentage points in rural areas and by more than 12 percentage points in urban areas. The Censuses of 1991 and 2001 show that the decadal growth rate of currently married women in the 1990s was 21.9 per cent, just marginally above the general population growth rate of 21.5 per cent, and the mean age at marriage for women actually rose from 17.7 to 18.3 years. We can only conclude that the NSS data indicates not larger proportions of married women, but rather larger proportions of women *migrating* for marriage.

The second feature that emerges from NSS migration surveys is the fall in employment-oriented migration rates of women, which declined from 3.3 to 0.3 per cent in rural areas. The proportion of employment-oriented male migration also dropped by more than half in rural areas, but the fall for women was much steeper. Female migrants dropped from a position of more than half of rural employment-oriented migrants in 1993 to less than a quarter of an already shrinking force of rural migrants for employment. In urban areas, employment-oriented migration by women has always been marginal, no doubt related to the exceedingly low female work participation rates (FWPRS) in urban India. But even the marginal share of migrants for employment in the female population declined from 1.9 per cent in 1993 to 1.2 per cent in 2007–2008.

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3. At the same time, the female migration rate due to movement of parents/earning member (associational) fell by over 7 percentage points in rural India from 9.5 per cent in 1993 to 2.1 per cent in 2007–2008 and similarly from 18.9 per cent to 13.4 per cent in urban India.



In contrast, male employment-oriented migration increased from 9.9 per cent of the urban male population in 1993 to 14.4 per cent in 2007–2008. Thus, declining employment-oriented migration rates among women are visible in both rural and urban areas, while among men they have been increasing significantly in urban areas. The decline in employment-oriented migration by women is perhaps not surprising when we consider that NSS employment data for the period in question also showed a fall in female work participation rates in both rural and urban areas.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it is pertinent to note that the expectations of expanding employment opportunities generating demand for women workers under a liberalized policy regime (the so-called feminization of labour) and expecting this to fuel migration further are not borne out by the NSS data on either employment or migration.

This brings us back to the initial question of why marriage migration by women appears to have been so significantly enhanced. There is of course evidence of some exaggeration of female marriage migration in the NSS when compared with the Census, which is more sharply visible for urban areas, if only slightly for rural areas.<sup>5</sup> A comparison of the NSS surveys of 1993 and 1999–2000 with the Census count of migrants in 1991 and 2001 (unfortunately, migration data for the 2011 Census is not yet available) reveals the following: (i) the NSS appears to underestimate the extent of increase in and actual scale of migration by both women and men in rural areas during the 1990s; (ii) again for rural areas, the drop in employment-oriented migration by women and men as appears in the NSS is not borne out by the Census, although the proportion for both sexes at the end of the decade are a close match; (iii) for urban areas, the NSS estimates of the decline and proportions of female employment-oriented migration are almost exactly the same as the Census count, whereas for urban males, the NSS estimates of the increase in employment-oriented migration in the 1990s appear to be exaggerated, but the proportion at the end of the decade is again very close to an exact match; (iv) in the Census counts, an increasing and substantial proportion of male and female migrants in urban and rural areas appear to have given ‘other reasons’ for migration, which is not reflected in the NSS survey estimates at all; and (v) while the increase in marriage migration by women in rural areas is reflected in both NSS and Census, for urban areas, there is divergence between the two. The NSS estimates a doubling in proportions of urban female marriage migrants in the 1990s, while the Census shows the opposite. The proportion of urban women giving marriage as their reason for migration actually dropped between 1991 and 2001.

4. The 2007–2008 (64th Round) had shown a drop in the rural FWPR from 32.8 per cent to 28.9 per cent (that is, to below the all-time low of 1999–2000). It further dropped to reach 20.2 per cent in usual principal status work/employment (UPS) and 26.1 per cent in usual (principal + subsidiary) status work (UPSS) in 2009–2010. In urban areas, too, FWPR has fallen from 12.1 per cent in 1993–1994 to below 11.9 per cent in the case of UPS employment and from close to 15.5 per cent to below 13.8 per cent in UPSS. With both principal status or main work/employment and subsidiary status or marginal work having lost ground, it appears that relatively more durable work as well as shorter bursts of temporary employment has become less available to women (Mazumdar and Neetha, *EPW*, 28 Oct. 2011).

5. In the Census, reasons for migration are: employment, business, ‘moved with households’, those ‘who moved after birth’ and ‘other’. There are of course also some differences in definitions. The NSS defines migrants by change of usual place of residence. The Census definition of migrants used here are by change from place of last residence.

It appears to us that particularly in relation to marriage migration, the Census reflects the trend more accurately than the NSS, and we would go along with the evidence that there is a substantial increase in migration for marriage in rural areas and not so much in urban.<sup>6</sup> The question then has to be directed specifically to trying to understand developments that have led to a substantial rise in migration for marriage in rural areas.

## Interconnected Processes: Increasing Marriage Migration, Devaluation of Women's Work and Dowry

At a preliminary level, at least for the 1990s, some part of the increase in women who are moving more for marriage may be explained by the fact that they may have followed increasing proportions of migrating men in rural India. Such an explanation is however inadequate, since the increase in numbers and proportion of women migrating for marriage was more than double the increase in male migration. There are then perhaps three other interrelated reasons that could be explanatory for such an increase in marriage migration in village India. The first is that more village exogamous marriages may be taking place in comparison to the past.<sup>7</sup> That village exogamy is indeed expanding is indicated by marriage details of 5,594 couples drawn from a questionnaire-based primary survey on Gender and Migration conducted by the CWDS across 20 states (in 2009 to 2011). The survey showed that among the oldest age cohort of married women, that is, those who were over 50 years of age, the proportion of intra-village marriages was over 22 per cent. This proportion dropped to less than 19 per cent in the youngest age cohort of married women of 20 years and below.<sup>8</sup>

At one level, expanding village exogamy may be due to the socially homogenizing effect of greater integration of relatively isolated or culturally differentiated communities and villages into a mainstream kind of social, economic, political, and even religious value/custom order.<sup>9</sup> A second reason may be an extension of the boundaries in the search for marriage partners owing to increased difficulties in localized commons-based subsistence activities in some areas, propelling a search for marriage partners outside the immediately local. Such enclosure and concomitant exclusion of locals from traditional foraging for food and marketable

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6. It is of course possible that between 2001 and 2011, there has been a spurt in female migration to urban areas. Although migration tables for the 2011 Census are yet to be released, the rural-urban distribution shows that the decadal increase in urban population has outpaced rural population increase. The excess in the urban over the rural applies only to women and not to men.
  7. It needs to be borne in mind that in such a large and diverse country, despite the wide prevalence of village exogamy, assumption of its universality across all castes, communities, and localities must necessarily be tempered by the limitations of our knowledge of the full spectrum of diversity.
  8. All age cohorts in between these two extremes reported that a little more than 19 per cent were intra-village marriages.
  9. In many parts of the country, village exogamy is not a cast iron rule for marriage. Many tribal communities, for example, did not traditionally have such value for village exogamy, but this may be changing. Among several Muslim communities exogamy is/was not the norm, though exogamy among Muslims is becoming prevalent in parts of southern India and also in West Bengal. But, overall, a shift towards village exogamous marriages may be taking place across the board. The state-wise data on reasons for migration, however, does not indicate any significant variation among states in relation to the increase in marriage migration.

produce from CPR (common property resources) necessarily has a negative effect on the value of the contribution of local women and their local knowledge to hitherto commons-dependent households.<sup>10</sup> As households then shift from commons-based subsistence to other activities, in such circumstances, other considerations (including possibilities of more dowry elsewhere) may have become more important than the value of the local knowledge of local women and this leads to an extension of the boundaries of search for marriage partners by both men and women.<sup>11</sup>

The third and perhaps the most generalized of all reasons relates to the agrarian crisis. It would indeed be odd if the agrarian crisis that unfolded since the mid-1990s were not to have an impact on arrangements for marriage of sons and daughters of the peasantry and agricultural workers, particularly in a context of expanding dowry. Historical research indicates that across a longer time scale, a shift from the custom of bride-price in many peasant communities to a more general universalization of the custom of dowry was, in part, a reflection of the increasing devaluation of women's productive labour. Commercialization under colonialism was shown to have reduced the relative value of labour performed by daughters and wives of peasants, agricultural labour and artisans, while simultaneously promoting differentiation. This, in turn, laid the ground for the spread of dowry to classes and communities that traditionally followed a system of bride-price.<sup>12</sup> In the contemporary period, further decline in the value of women's work is evident in the decline in rural female work participation rates and strikingly in the absolute fall in numbers of women in the rural workforce across the last half decade. Is it then not surprising that when the contemporary crisis erupted, precisely because of exposure of artisan and agriculturist to global commercial and market forces and its price fluctuations, the demand for dowry was also ratcheted up?

Curiously, there is some evidence that mounting dowry also entails mounting marriage expenses that even extend to expenditures incurred by bridegrooms. In investigating the relatively new phenomenon of cross-regional marriages taking place predominantly between members of the Muslim communities of Kerala and

10. The highest proportion of households collecting CPR (exceeding 50 per cent) are concentrated in the eastern, southern and western plateaus and hills, (Menon and Vadivelu), where mineral-rich pockets have been opened to private exploitation in the reform era shutting out local residents from much of what was earlier part of their commons.

11. Analysing the 1998 NSS round data on CPR products, Menon and Vadivelu have shown that 48 per cent of the households use common property resources for consumption, and CPR contributes around 3.02 per cent of the consumption for the country as a whole.

12. Ranjana Sheel (*EPW*, 12 July 1997) observes that in the early colonial period, Blunt (Blunt 1912, p. 71) found that the practice of bride-price was prevalent among many of the hierarchically lower castes. He lists such castes and records the average amount of bride-price transacted in their marriages. Turner, in the 1931 Census Report, however, finds a fast-declining control of tribal customs or caste panchayats over settling the amounts to be paid as bride-price. He notes that bride-price amounts were getting settled increasingly in the nature of business transactions as opposed to the traditional customs of settling bride-price (Turner 1933, 312). It may be interesting to link these changes with other changes coming about in the colonial period with regard to the marginalization of women's role in production and emerging sectors of employment (see M. Mukherjee, 'Impact of Modernization on Women's Occupations: A case study of the rice-husking industry in Bengal' in J. Krishnamurthy (ed.) *Women in Colonial India: Essays on Survival, Work and the State*, [Delhi: OUP, 1999]). The growing economic dependency contributed, to an extent, to what has been referred to as the negative net worth of women and perhaps also to augmenting structural factors leading to the expansion of dowry. An article in *Stree Darpan* (1915 [Dec. VI], pp. 418–424) noted this link between women's economic decline and the rise of the dowry system, arguing that the new rich classes that have emerged demand ten times more dowry than they did before, because women, even of respectable families, have lost their traditional occupations on account of the rise of the mill industry and also because women's working for a living now has bad connotations for the status maintenance.

Mysore (popularly known in Kerala as Mysore marriages), we found that while escalating dowry in Kerala had compelled the search for grooms from Mysore, who were ready to accept less dowry, in Mysore, grooms were prepared to accept less dowry from the Kerala brides (when compared with the dowry brought by brides from their own region/community), because it entailed less expenditure on the marriage and could be quickly undertaken. It is, of course, well known that the rule of village exogamy was neither rigid nor universal in southern states like Kerala, and these Mysore marriages may thus be expanding migration for marriage. Our case studies of such marriages indicated that while the Kerala brides were predominantly from agricultural labour ('coolie') or small farmer households, the Mysore grooms who were Kannada, Dakhini (Urdu) or Tamil speaking were most often from the urban informal labouring poor, some of whom then came to work near the natal homes of their brides.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, similar processes and motivations were also found in cross-regional marriages in the north. In the low sex ratio district of Badaun in western Uttar Pradesh, where brides were brought from distant and culturally different regions of Bengal and eastern Bihar (here including Hindus and Muslims), 'the compulsions driving long-distance/cross-regional marriage migration at the source area included poverty, landlessness or marginal landholdings and the inability to meet the dowry demands of local men whether Hindu or Muslim.' At the destination end, 'the compulsions of the grooms also included landlessness or marginal landownership combined with one or other factors such as "flawed" reputation, previous marriage, lack of family elders, older age, etc.' (Chaudhry and Mohan 2011).

Again, similar factors had led to brides being sent from Bihar, Jharkhand and Bengal to the western Uttar Pradesh district of Baghpat for marriage (for example, to village Baoli). Here there were, however, additional reasons operating at the destination end. In Baoli, young male brick-kiln (*bhatta*) workers were facing particular difficulty in finding brides. Some clearly reported reluctance on the part of local families to marry their daughters into a lifetime of hard manual labour and migratory conditions and related disruption of settled family life, a feature of *bhatta* labour. Raw brick makers function almost universally across the country as family labour units with the core team usually comprising a husband and wife (*Jodi*). Inability to find local brides propel male *bhatta* workers to search for brides from afar to fulfil the requirement for the *Jodi* in the *bhattas*. While for this particular line, the value of women's labour, albeit in degraded conditions, is operating as a factor in extension of the search for brides beyond traditional boundaries, the more generalized phenomenon of devaluation of women's work that is reflected in the declining female work participation rates in rural India is obviously eroding such traditional boundaries of marriage arrangements in sending areas.

The discussion above indicates complex and often seemingly contradictory criss-

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13. This point is based on discussions with some Mysore marriage returnees in Nilambur, Kerala, and with groom families located in what is known as the *bidi* (tobacco products) colony of Mysore.

crossing of interlinkages between individual motivations, cultural reflections of changes in the significance of women's work in the agrarian economy, expansion of dowry and marriage expenses, and marriage migration. It is notable that with all the cultural specificities and diversity in the sets of individual motivations and perceptions, the indications are that they all converge towards a more generalized tendency of expanding marriage migration/village exogamy/extension of traditional boundaries of marriage. In our view, developments in the sphere of women's work – paid and unpaid – and its valuation is a key link in the process of evolution of broader sets of social practices and its pressures on marriage arrangements. Any meaningful explanation of enhanced migration for marriage would therefore require looking beyond locally specific cultural factors to the more general processes whereby diverse levels of pre-capitalist economic and social relations are being brought through the expansion of market and commerce into an increasingly homogenized if disturbed system of social relations.

## Gender and Labour Migration: A Macro-View

The continuous erosion of the value of women's work in the natural economy and the expansion of commercially oriented work and employment would imply that opportunities for income from labour should increasingly become more important for women. In the face of devaluation of their traditional work encompassing paid and unpaid labour, diversification and expansion of the arena of paid or income-earning employment is perhaps the only way forward for women, for which an examination of labour migration by women acquires great salience. It is from such a perspective that the following sections investigate the gender dimensions of labour migration in contemporary India. We begin with an attempt to construct a picture of the number of labour migrants and their distribution across sectors/industries from the most recent NSS survey on migration conducted in 2007–2008.<sup>14</sup> At the outset, it bears mention that the employment survey that was conducted in tandem with the 2007–2008 migration survey had revealed that between 2004–2005 and 2007–2008, some 13.3 million women had been eliminated from the paid+unpaid workforce, and around 1.8 million from the paid workforce. Even more were to be eliminated by 2009–2010 (Mazumdar and Neetha 2011).

## NSS 2007–2008: Labour Migration in India

A preliminary point that needs to be noted is our emphasis on the paid/income-earning segment of migrant workers in our analysis of NSS data for the purposes of understanding the links between migration and the labour market. We have elsewhere pointed out that the workforce data as given in the published reports of NSS can be somewhat misleading in terms of the extent of women's paid or

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14. NSSO, *Migration in India 2007-08*, MOSPI, Govt. of India, 2010.

income-earning employment, and we have argued for the need to maintain a focus on paid work when assessing employment opportunities for women (Mazumdar and Neetha 2011). Unit level data from NSS does provide for some useful subcategories by employment/activity status that allow for separation of unpaid helpers from other workers (at least from among the self-employed), following which it is possible to focus on paid/income-earning workers alone by excluding unpaid helpers from the calculation of the employed.<sup>15</sup> It is this procedure that has been followed by us for migrant workers, where from the NSS we have counted only paid/income-earning workers in the category of labour migrants/migrant workers. It may be underlined that the emphasis on paid/income-earning workers is for the purposes of understanding the features of labour mobility and for eliciting the gender structure of the market for migrant labour and not as a negation of the importance of unpaid labour.

Drawing on the NSS data on migrants, our attempts to understand labour or work-based migration by women (defined as those who have change of usual place of residence [UPR]) have hitherto concentrated on the difference in work participation before and after migration. It has been shown that generally women have higher work participation rates after migration than before migration, albeit with some regional variations (Shanthi 2006). Useful as such analysis is in showing that social reasons for migration including marriage may in effect also act as a transfer of female labour or the capacity to work, for example from natal to marital home/village/town, we believe that such a method has little utility for gauging the extent and features of labour mobility among women. Our scepticism is because of the large number of women recorded as migrants only because they have married into another village/area, and who, even if they are workers there, may be so only in their immobile and local capacity as wives and daughters-in-law of the village they have married into. As such the industrial distribution of all female migrants after migration appears virtually the same as the total industrial distribution of the female workforce in the country. From such a procedure, it is neither possible to understand the relative importance of the sectors/industries driving labour migration nor to distinguish migrant workers from immobile local workers among women.

In order to overcome such problems, we believe that the nature of the NSS data offers us little option but to exclude female marriage migrants from the frame as a preliminary step towards identifying patterns of female labour migration. This is notwithstanding our own argument that marriage as a reason for migration may and indeed does camouflage some labour migration by women. But elimination of such camouflaged labour migration is a lesser error when compared with the immensely distorted and inflated picture of female labour mobility that would be the result if all marriage migrants who are workers were counted as labour migrants.

From among the category of migrants by UPR, those who gave 'employment' as their reason for migration may of course ab initio be identified as employment/labour migrants. However, to our minds, a better estimation of labour migration could be made if all usual status *paid/income-earning workers* from among *migrants*

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15. Broad status categories are 1) self employed; 2) regular salaried workers; 3) casual labour.

by UPR, who may have given as an initial reason for migration 'family movement', 'education' and 'other reasons', were also counted as labour migrants, since the nature of their employment may be presumed to be premised on their having moved from some other area of origin. The second category of *short-term* migrants could also ipso facto be counted as labour migrants, since they are defined as those who did not change their UPR but undertook short-term movements and stayed away from village/town for a period of 1 month or more but less than 6 months *for employment or in search of employment*.

The estimated total number of labour migrants so identified, were 66.6 million in 2007–2008, of which 15 per cent were female (9.6 million). The share of female migrants in migration-based employment is thus even lower than the share of all female workers in the total paid workforce, which stood at 22 per cent that same year (Mazumdar and Neetha 2011).<sup>16</sup> In other words, while males accounted for 78 per cent of all jobs that year, their share of migrant jobs was 85 per cent. The relatively greater male bias in migration employment implies that the pattern of labour migration may itself be playing a role in enhancing gender biases in employment in India. Table 1 presents the estimations of the numbers of migrant workers of both categories, that is, of migrant workers (UPR [excluding marriage migrants]) and short-term migrants, by major sector/industry (with percentage distribution in parenthesis) from NSS 64th Round of 2007–2008.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 1: Estimated numbers of labour migrants in sectors/industries (2007–2008)**

Industry	Paid/Income-Earning Migrant Workers Excluding Migrants for Marriage (UPR)		Short-Term Migrants		Total Labour Migrants		Female Share of Total
	[000s]		[000s]		[000s]		[%]
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry, Fishing	6,430 (14.53)	2,399 (31.74)	2,449 (19.32)	922 (43.47)	8,879 (15.60)	3,321 (34.31)	27.22
Construction	4,257 (9.62)	402 (5.32)	5,289 (41.73)	700 (33.00)	9,546 (16.77)	1,102 (11.39)	10.35
Mining, Manufacturing, Electricity	11,258 (25.44)	1,575 (20.84)	2,412 (19.03)	306 (14.43)	13,670 (24.01)	1,881 (19.44)	12.09
Trade, Hotels, Restaurants	8,027 (18.14)	474 (6.27)	1,190 (9.39)	32 (1.51)	9,217 (16.19)	506 (5.23)	5.20
All Services other than Trade, Hotels, Restaurants*	14,280 (32.27)	2,698 (35.70)	1,338 (10.56)	161 (7.59)	15,618 (27.44)	2,859 (29.54)	15.47
Total	44,252 (100.00)	7,556 (100.00)	12,675 (100.00)	2,121 (100.00)	56,927 (100.00)	9,677 (100.00)	14.53

\*All services other than trade, etc., covers community, social and personal services, finance, real estate and business services, as well as transport, storage and communication.

16. Although some labour migration by women that is hidden within marriage migration would no doubt add to the numbers of female labour migrants, it is unlikely that it would be of a sufficient order to alter the basic picture of a lower share of migration-based employment for women when compared with their total share of paid employment.
17. It may be noted that the estimate for female labour migrants is more than likely to be an underestimate because a way could not be found to estimate and include labour migration camouflaged as marriage migration. Nevertheless, the substantive picture of substantially and relatively lower levels of mobility in the female workforce is, we believe, an accurate representation of reality.

The picture that emerges from the table indicates that agriculture is the single largest employer of female labour migrants followed by other services.<sup>18</sup> For males, other services followed by mining/manufacturing/electricity, appear as the prime drivers of labour/employment migration. It may be noted that in the Table, trade, hotels and restaurants have been given separately while all other services have been clubbed together.<sup>19</sup> If trade and other services are combined and construction added to mining/manufacturing/electricity, a broad idea of the distribution of migrant workers across agriculture, industry and services may be had. Among male migrants, the distribution would roughly be as follows: agriculture – 15.6 per cent; industry – 40.8 per cent; and services – 43.6 per cent. In contrast, among female migrant workers the distribution would be: agriculture – 34.3 per cent; industry – 30.8 per cent; and services – 34.8 per cent. At an aggregate level, it does appear that services have emerged as the major driver of migration in contemporary times, and it is interesting that the sector/industry distribution of labour migrants is quite different from the composition of the total paid/income-earning male and female workforce.<sup>20</sup>

The principal difference between the industrial distribution of migrants and all workers, of course, lies in the relative share of agriculture. Agriculture accounted for just 15.6 per cent of male labour migrants in 2007–2008, but constituted 46.6 per cent of the country's income-earning male workforce in the same year. In female labour migration, agriculture is, of course, much more prominent, but its 34.3 per cent share in female labour migration was almost half the 65 per cent share of agriculture in the country's income-earning female workforce in 2007–2008.<sup>21</sup> As further evident from Table 2, it would appear that the agricultural workforce is overwhelmingly more local cultivator/agricultural labour oriented when compared with all non-agricultural industries. Only 7 per cent of its male workforce and even less (6 per cent) of its paid/income-earning female workforce were migrants. Nevertheless, in comparison to all other sectors/industries, the share of women remained the highest among migrants for agriculture at more than 27 per cent, which is more than double their share of about 12 per cent in migration-based employment for all other sectors/industries when taken together. Thus, in any approach to female labour migration in India, agricultural migration merits special attention.

A striking feature is the relative insignificance of trade in female migration. Trade, hotels and restaurants accounted for a mere 5 per cent of female labour migration

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18. Other services here include transport/storage/communications, finance/real estate/business services, and community/social/personal services.

19. Trade is particularly important and requires some specific delineation because of the size of the workforce and also because of the very large proportions of the self-employed in primarily petty retail trade, which in turn numerically dominates the workforce profile of workers in trade, hotels and restaurants.

20. In 2007–2008 among the total paid workforce, the distribution of male workers was as follows: agriculture – 48 per cent; industry – 23 per cent; services – 30 per cent. In the female workforce, it was: agriculture – 65 per cent; industry – 17 per cent; services – 18 per cent.

21. While in the male workforce, services had increased its share of general employment from 26 per cent in 1993–1994 to 30 per cent in 2007–2008, among the female workforce the increase was from 12 to 14 per cent. By 2009–2010, among males, the share of services actually declined marginally by around 0.4 per cent, while among females, it continued increasing, although it was still low at 15 per cent of the total female workforce.



and a similar share in migrant-worker-based employment in trade. It appears that migration for trade-related employment (mostly of a self-employed nature) is most heavily weighted in favour of males. While trade, etc., accounted for 16 per cent of male migrants, more importantly, 95 per cent of all migrant workers in trade were male. Other services, accounting for about 30 per cent of female labour migrants and 27 per cent of male labour migrants, initially appears as more significant in driving female labour migration than male labour migration. However, the limited supply and perhaps demand for women migrants in this segment of the labour market becomes apparent when one realizes that 85 per cent of the jobs for migrant workers in other services had gone to men. A similar pattern of an even larger scale of male domination of migration-based employment in manufacturing, etc., is evident from the fact that men commanded 88 per cent of migrant jobs in manufacturing. If one looks for comparisons with the total workforce (migrant+ non-migrant), the male share is less at 73 per cent in other services and 78 per cent in manufacturing. It thus appears that the impact of diversification of female employment through migration is of a relatively limited nature than suggested by the remarkably even distribution of female migrant workers across the three broad sectors of agriculture, industry and services.

In 2007–2008, migration for construction too seemed to be overwhelmingly male, with women accounting for just 10 per cent of construction jobs for migrant workers. Given an increase in the share of female employment in construction in the latest employment survey (2009–2010), it is possible that the female share of migration for construction may also be increasing a little after 2007–2008. However, such increases are unlikely to change the general picture of construction labour migrants as being overwhelmingly male at an all India level.<sup>22</sup> It is significant that among female short-term migrants, construction is second only to agriculture, while among female migrants by UPR, the numbers in construction are less than in any other sector. It would then appear that for women, migration for construction work does not offer opportunities for more durable employment or for effecting a more permanent movement out of agriculture.

Table 2 presents an interesting picture of which sectors/industries draw more upon migrants and where migration fits into the country's paid/income-earning labour and employment profile. As would be expected, manufacturing/mining/quarrying and construction are the industries that display a higher share of migrants in their workforce, which is predominantly evident from the proportions of migrants in their male workforce. However, for their female workers, manufacturing/mining/quarrying appears to rely much less on migrants, and it is the construction industry that relies to a much greater extent on migratory workers for its female workforce. Where manufacturing employed more than 36 per cent of migrants in their male workforce, among their female workers, only 18 per cent were migrants. In contrast, where the construction industry employed

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22. Construction is the one industry where there is very little unpaid labour. Standard workforce figures for construction may thus be taken as roughly the same for the paid workforce.

**Table 2: Share of migrants in paid/income-earning workforce (2007–2008)**

	Paid/Income-Earning Workforce [000s]		Share of Female Workers in Paid/Income-Earning Workforce	Share of Migrant Workers in Paid/Income-Earning Workforce by Sex [%]	
	Male	Female	[%]	Male	Female
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry, Fishing	132,467 (46.62)	53,266 (65.05)	28.68	6.70	6.23
Construction	26,529 (9.34)	3,145 (3.84)	10.60	35.98	35.05
Mining, Manufacturing, Electricity	37,725 (13.28)	10,452 (12.76)	21.69	36.24	18.00
Trade, Hotels, Restaurants	36,748 (12.93)	2,838 (3.47)	7.17	25.08	17.83
All services other than trade, etc.	49,494 (17.42)	12,141 (14.83)	19.70	31.56	23.55
Total	284,112 (100.00)	81,881 (100.00)	22.37	20.04	11.82

36 per cent of migrants in its male workforce, in its female workforce too, more than 35 per cent were migrants.<sup>23</sup>

As close to 20 per cent of the paid/income-earning male workforce is drawn through labour migration and as, in fact, 32 per cent of the male non-agricultural workforce are migrants, the role of migration in shaping and diversifying male employment patterns cannot be considered insignificant. In comparison with migrants constituting less than 12 per cent of the paid/income-earning female workforce, the impact of labour migration by women on the structure of the female workforce is far less significant. However, the fact that 22 per cent of the non-agricultural paid female workforce is migrant, suggests that migration is playing a larger role as far as women’s participation in non-agricultural employment is concerned, even if it does not appear to be making such a difference to the general structure of female employment in the country. Of course, the high share of migrants among women workers in construction and a relatively higher proportion of migrants among women in predominantly the domestic worker segment of other services are primarily responsible for the relatively greater presence of migrants in the non-agricultural female workforce. It is doubtful that either or both would ensure a durable move out of agriculture for many of the women currently working in these segments.

Finally, it may be noted that ‘short-term migrants’ constituted some 21 per cent of male labour migration and 22 per cent of female labour migration in 2007–2008. Further, some 10 per cent of UPR-based female migrants and 7 per cent of male migrants reported that their migration was temporary. Acceleration in return

23. Given the nature of the NSS survey, which is based on sets of household samples drawn from rural and urban settlements, and based on our own field experience, we would contend that migrants in agriculture (mostly short term) and in construction are severely underestimated. Further, there are some sub-segments of manufacturing such as brick making, where migrant housing is onsite, and are not likely to have been netted in the NSS survey.

migration also appears to have taken place between 1993 and 2007–2008, with the proportions of return migrants increasing from 12.2 to 16.1 per cent among male migrants and from 4.4 to 10.6 per cent among female migrants. Although they may not all be labour migrants, nevertheless it suggests that term migration is increasing relative to permanent. Taken together, the NSS data seem to suggest that the movement of roughly one third of all labour migration is definitively temporary.

Although the 2007–2008 migration survey does give us a rough outline of labour migration in India, among the several important features that the NSS fails to capture and cognize, probably the most significant is the different types of labour migration and particularly the circular types of labour migration. Despite attempts to make some distinction between temporary and permanent migration in the UPR data and the important step of having a separate focus on short-term migration, a failure to capture the full extent of temporary migration and its features remains a persistent problem with the macro-data.

Our own assessment, supported by the findings of the CWDS meso-level survey, is that when a more worked-out typology of migration is applied, the actual proportions of temporary labour migrants among both men and women appear far greater than the macro-data suggest.<sup>24</sup> The CWDS survey had applied a typology of migration that gave particular space to circularity and duration. These are discussed along with some other aspects of the survey's findings in the following sections. However, before moving to the actual results, a few words on the method and approach followed by the survey and its rationale are perhaps in order.

## CWDS Gender and Migration Survey

Since the central questions addressed in the CWDS survey related to labour migration, a key question that had to be addressed was whether the survey should be directed at households or individuals. After an initial pilot round, it was decided to use two sets of questionnaires in tandem, one for collecting household details and characteristics and one for collecting information on individual experiences. A second question related to how the survey could be pitched at both source and destination of migrants. Both were deemed necessary for a better understanding or comprehension of migration processes, including its compulsions, trajectories, outcomes. Two categories of sites were taken for the questionnaire-based surveys: one comprising 'village sites', broadly representing source areas of migration, (with room for including in-migrants to the village) and the second comprising a range of 'sector sites'. The latter targeted industries/occupations in both rural and urban areas, where prior information indicated concentration of women migrant workers.<sup>25</sup> In the village sites, households were selected following a village census

24. The CWDS research project on 'Gender and Migration' was made possible because of support by the IDRC, which is gratefully acknowledged.

25. There were two kinds of information that guided the selection of sector sites. The first was the employment patterns in urban areas based on NSS employment surveys, and the second was field-based information on the sectors where women migrants were concentrated.

and selection of a stratified sample, with social groups/caste categories as the primary axis, and perceived economic status as a secondary factor for sample selection. A major bias towards households with migrants was emplaced along with a minimum one third quota for Scheduled Castes or Tribes.<sup>26</sup> From these selected households, individual migrant workers were then selected with a minimum quota of one third of women.

In urban areas, broadly considered to be destination sites, only sector-based surveys were conducted. In the identified sectors/occupations, no particular sampling method was used, other than purposive selection of only women. Thus, while several male migrants were individually covered by the surveys at village sites, in general they were excluded from the sector-based surveys.

The same questionnaires were used for village sites and sector sites, although differentiated methods of respondent selection were adopted. At the village sites, details of male and female members of all households were gathered for all respondents, and individual migrants were identified from the stratified household sample. However, where the entry was effected at the sector level, the household details followed the selection of individual migrant worker respondents. Selection of both village and sector sites was done with an eye to dispersion among several states and prominent catchment areas of migrant labour recruitment and not on the basis of agro-climatic zones. While such a method could not obviously generate statistically validated information, the utility of such a meso-level survey lies precisely in filling opacities or gaps in the available macro-statistics and introducing an intermediary-level survey that incorporates greater spatial diversities and empirical breadth than more localized micro-surveys. In combination, the village- and sector-based migrant workers were accessed across more than 75 districts, apart from the large cities that include several administrative districts. The urban areas comprised 7 large cities, and 10 medium and smaller towns.

## The Predominance of the Temporary in Labour Migration: Types of Migration

The household questionnaire generated data on types of migration undertaken for 16,156 labour migrants, of which 7,398 were female and 8,758 were male when the two categories of sites, that is, sector-based and village-based were taken together. Their distribution by type of migration, are presented in Figures 2(a) and 2(b) for females and males, respectively. Although we have presented the distribution in percentage terms, it should be clear that no claim is being made that any of these percentages can be applied to the general population of labour migrants in the country. Rather, they may be viewed as the consolidated presentation of a series of micro-surveys using the same typology for categorizing migrants. As indicated

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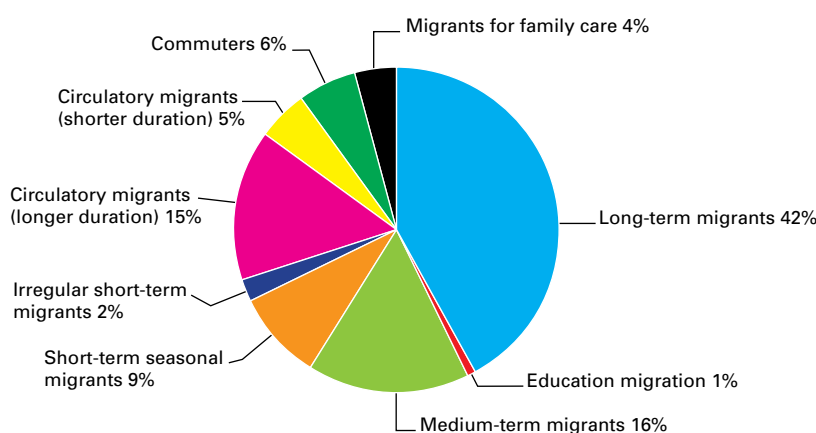
26. The quota for SC/ST was put in place because of our observation that women of these communities had a higher compulsion/propensity to be involved in labour migration.

earlier, the selection of households presupposed several biases, some deliberate and purposive, and others imposed by limitations of outreach. Further, the surveys were conducted over uneven periods across two years (2009 and 2010) and not concurrently in all areas. Nevertheless, to our minds, the consolidated picture does give a fairly accurate and comprehensive picture of the relative importance of different types of labour migration undertaken by women. The information on male migration, while useful for some comparison, is however less comprehensive in nature.

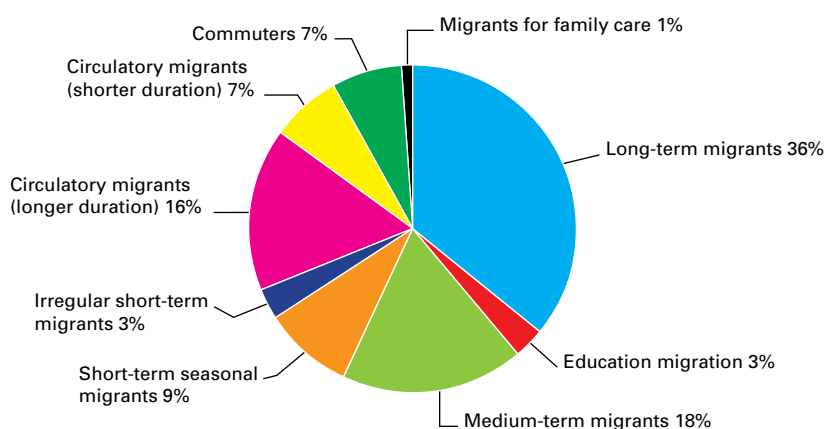
The first point that is clearly highlighted by the CWDS survey is that temporary labour migration (that is, including circular, medium-term and short-term migration) is a major phenomenon for both men and women and draws attention to the unsettled nature of the employment regime that is driving migration in contemporary times.

Within the larger category of temporary migrants, medium-term migration – here referring to employment/work in any predetermined occupation/industry for a

**Figure 2 (a): Distribution of female labour migrants by type of migration (village and sector sites combined)**



**Figure 2 (b): Distribution of male labour migrants by type of migration (village and sector sites combined)**



broad period of up to a few years – appears to be emerging as most significant, accounting for 16 per cent and 18 per cent of female and male migrant workers, respectively. Circulatory migration, which refers to migration without any long-term workplace/residence at any particular destination and return to base for more than a month per year, is still possibly of greater magnitude, at 20 per cent of all female labour migrants and 23 per cent among males. In the typology, a distinction was made between circulatory migration of longer duration (more than four months each round) and shorter duration (less than four months) on the grounds that the experience of migration and related issues is somewhat different according to duration. From a broad-stroke perspective however, both could be considered circulatory and relatively short term.

It may be noted that in urban areas, only households of women migrant workers were covered by the survey. This was also true for rural sector sites. Sector site data is therefore all drawn from households of female labour migrants and cannot be taken as representative for any real assessment of the patterns of male migration. As far as women migrant workers are concerned, we believe that the inclusion of sector sites, which were identified on the basis of our prior information, has been a useful method, and local knowledge, received along the way, further enriched the survey. It was able to capture patterns and characteristics of female labour migration that are actually shaped from more dispersed points of entry, which are otherwise rendered less visible in micro-surveys using the usual methods of just area-cum-household surveys. We have no doubt that, as indicated, circulatory and other short-term migrants constitute about a third or more of female labour migrants and there is increasing significance of medium-term migration.<sup>27</sup> As such when circulatory, short-term seasonal, and irregular short-term migrants are clubbed together, the CWDS survey indicates that the share of the short term in female labour migration should be substantially greater than what appears in the NSS data.<sup>28</sup>

The survey had of course set rough and ready targets for numbers of women workers for each sector site in the survey. Such a pre-selection involved in sector sites would no doubt raise suspicions regarding the capacity of the sample to accurately represent types of migration. It is useful then to see the picture of types of migration without pre-selected sectors, that is, when only the data generated by village surveys is taken as the universe. Figures 3 (a) and 3 (b) present the distribution of female migrants and male migrants respectively by types of migration from only village sites. It covers 4,471 male and 2,817 female migrants netted from households across 42 village sites.<sup>29</sup>

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27. It may be clarified that unpaid migrants for family care have been included in Figures 2(a) and 2(b) among labour migrants.

Further, as would be clear from the pie charts, long-distance commuting has also been included as a type of migration  
28. Table 1 shows that short-term migrants were about 22 per cent among both male and female labour migrants in NSS, 2007–2008.

29. Our own assessment is that the consolidated picture is closer to the actual proportional distribution of types of migration among female labour migrants than the purely village-based surveys. For males, however, no such assertion can be made, and it is likely that male long-term migration is of a greater order than even what is presented in our consolidated figure, while the overall proportions of medium-term migrants are likely to be closer to the village-site-based view.

Figure 3 (a): Type of migration – female (village sites)

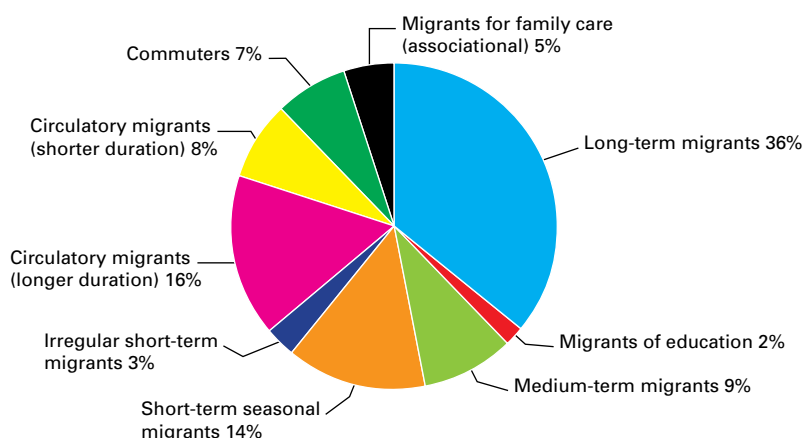
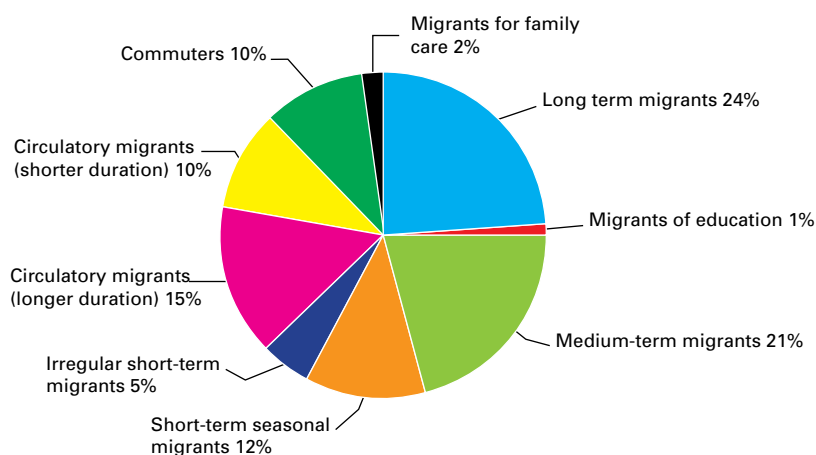


Figure 3 (b): Type of migration – male (village sites)



The most striking difference between the consolidated village plus sector-site based picture and the picture from only the village sites is obviously in the proportion of workers who are long-term migrants. The numbers from the villages show a much lower proportion of long-term migrants and a higher proportion of temporary migrants among both men and women. On the other hand, it is noticeable that medium-term migration appears to be more prominent among male migrants when surveyed from only the village sites and less prominent when some destination sites of female labour migrants get included. In contrast, among female migrant workers, medium-term migration appears more when sector destination sites are included and significantly less when surveyed from only the village sites. This would suggest that the points of origin of medium-term female migrant workers are more thinly dispersed across rural and urban areas, and/or may be drawn/recruited from particular catchment pockets, rather than the more generalized kind of medium-term movement from village India that appears to be occurring among male migrants.

It may also be seen that the proportions of unpaid migrants for family care do not appear as very significant at close to 4 per cent of female migrants and close to

2 per cent among males in the consolidated figure. The proportion increases slightly for women when only village sites are taken. But it is notable that even some men have migrated for family care. A part of this may reflect termination of migration and return to home village because of family responsibilities towards aging parents and work in relation to land.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, in relation to types of migration, it bears mention that when this study was initially conceived, irregular short-term migration by women driven by agrarian distress rather than for any particular form/type of employment/occupation was being reported by women's organizations.<sup>31</sup> The consolidated findings of the CWDS survey show that close to 2 per cent of women migrants and more than 3 per cent of male migrants did report such distress-/contingency-driven irregular migration. This proportion rises slightly to 3 per cent among women migrant workers and 5 per cent among men when the view is from the village sites alone. However, this should not be taken as meaning that distress was not a factor in other types of migration. Field-level discussions with different categories of migrants have provided convincing evidence that distress is and remains an important factor that drives other types of migration, particularly when such migration involves extreme hardship and even forms of bondage. But, specifically in relation to irregular short-term migration, it should be remembered that the fact of contingency that drives it does not necessarily provide any guarantee of employment at destination, experience of which may have prevented emulation at a wider level. Further, it is possible that some of the measures such as supply of cheap rice in several states and the rural employment guarantee law, however inadequately and tardily implemented, may have held back further expansion of such a highly vulnerable type of migration.

## Social Trajectories

Interesting insights into the social implications of different types of migration is revealed when the distribution of the relative shares of the various types of migration among female migrants is seen by social group/caste categories. Table 3 below presents such a distribution. It is noticeable that for upper-caste women the share of long-term and medium-term migration is predominant with 75 per cent of them concentrated in long-term and medium-term migration. In contrast, 59 per cent of migrant women workers from Scheduled Tribes and 41 per cent

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30. Close to 8 per cent of all male migrants were returnees in comparison with close to 5 per cent of female migrants (percentage here of all migrants, that is, including for marriage and education for both sexes).

31. In 2005, Brinda Karat of the All India Democratic Women's Association, for example, reported that women were migrating for just a few days and coming back home for just looking after their children and going out again. 'They [women] are getting on to the trains without tickets to travel, they are waiting at the bus stops for somebody to give them a lift in the bus, they are hitching lifts with trucks, they are hitching lifts with lorries. They are sitting on the roads when they have no place or way to sleep' (CWDS 2005). Reports of such migration were at the time concentrated in areas of extreme agrarian distress, and particularly in the state of Andhra Pradesh, which had, according to Jayati Ghosh, become virtually a laboratory for every neo-liberal economic experiment, with a massive shift towards relying on incentives for private agents as opposed to state intervention and regulation of private activity, in virtually all areas. With the systematic destruction of public institutions affecting agriculture and a push for shift from food crops to cash crops, whose prices later crashed, the share of GDP in agriculture in Andhra Pradesh declined much faster than all India, and the state emerged in the forefront of farmer suicides and agrarian crisis (Jayati Ghosh 2005).



**Table 3: Caste-wise distribution of migrant women workers by type of migration**

Type of Migrant	General	OBC	MBC	SC	ST
Long-term migrant	44.51	41.56	21.51	25.98	20.81
Medium-term migrant	30.02	22.98	30.11	17.36	10.48
Short-term migrant	3.93	11.91	10.75	14.54	25.16
Irregular short-term migrant	6.42	1.13	1.08	1.08	1.45
Circulatory migrant of longer duration	2.90	9.93	5.38	19.52	22.10
Circulatory migrant of shorter duration	4.55	6.95	4.30	6.06	10.00
Daily/weekly commuters	4.97	3.69	25.81	14.67	8.71
Migrant for family care	2.69	1.84	1.08	0.81	1.29
All	100	100	100	100	100
Short term and Circulatory Combined	17.81	29.93	21.51	41.18	58.71

from Scheduled Castes accounted for short-term and circulatory migration. The concentration of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in this mass of general labour that circulates at the lower end of the productive economy, in which casual labour in agriculture, construction and brick making figure prominently, draws attention to the limitations of the migration enterprise that is conditioned by the prevailing economic system in effecting transformation of degrading feudal hierarchies.

At the same time, it is noticeable that among upper-caste women, irregular short-term migration is more significant than for all other caste categories. This is possibly because responses to pauperization may be differentiated along the status grades established by the caste system.

Types of migration are very closely correlated with sectors and occupations. The diversified service occupations, for example, are more linked with long-term and medium-term migration. Occupations based on hard manual labour, generally attached to degraded conditions of work, are, on the other hand, more closely correlated with short-term and circular migration. When examining the more detailed data on individual migrant workers, we found that 66 per cent of upper-caste female migrant workers were in the fairly diversified service sectors such as their being professional, technical and related workers, call centre workers, sales workers, nursing and other white-collared services. As we went further down the caste hierarchy, we found progressive concentrations in bhatta (brick making), seasonal agriculture and paid domestic work. Migrant women workers from Other Backward Classes (OBC) were also relatively more concentrated in paid domestic and agricultural seasonal work, although 36 per cent of them were distributed across a wide range of white-collared services. Scheduled Caste (SC) women appeared to be more concentrated in bhatta labour, while Scheduled Tribe (ST) migrant women were more concentrated in construction. More than 22 per cent of SC women migrants were in brick making, while 28 per cent of ST women migrants were construction workers. The corollary of such concentrations of SC and ST women in occupations based on hard manual labour of a casual nature was their low proportions in white-collar services. White-collar services accounted for 19 per cent of SC and 18 per cent of ST women

migrants. In contrast to these extremes separating workers across caste categories, paid domestic work occupied a significant place in the occupational profiles of all caste categories, while textile-based manufacturing was significant in all categories other than among ST migrant women workers. The indications are that concentration in migrant manual labour in agriculture, construction and brick making at one end and more diversified and relatively more settled forms of employment for migrants at the other end are more determined by initial location in caste hierarchies. On the other hand, gender that is not so differentiated along caste lines is the primary axis that determines migration for paid domestic work. The migrant female workforce in production work in modern textiles also appeared to have less of a caste bias, although it was evident that ST workers had almost no entry into such work.

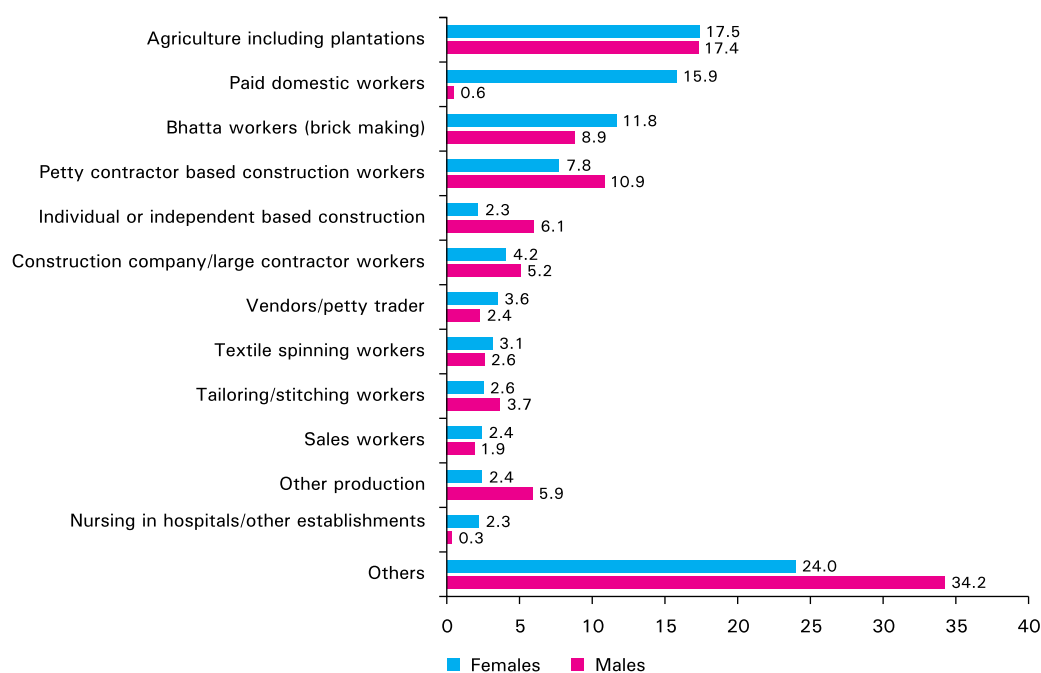
The individual migrant worker questionnaire covered 5,007 migrant workers of which 3,073 were women and 1,934 were men. Of the 3,073 women migrants, 1,623 were surveyed in rural areas and 1,479 in urban, while the men were all covered in rural areas. The majority of male migrants from village India (62 per cent) are moving in an urban direction. Urban destinations accounted for close to 73 per cent of the female labour migrants surveyed. On the face of it, such a picture of a predominantly urbanwards direction to labour migration would appear to be in conformity with general development theory expectations of migration streams. It is only when we look at the occupations of migrant workers that the content of development expectations of diversification of employment come under question as far as women are concerned, including in the urbanwards migration stream.

### **Diversification or Concentration? Changes in Occupations through Migration**

Figure 4 presents a comparison between the occupational distribution of male and female migrant workers, emphasizing the sectors/occupations in which women workers are concentrated. In explicating sector/occupations, we have included some subcategories that are not generally made in industrial or occupational classifications in order to look more closely at the occupations/industries with relatively greater concentrations of women migrants and differentiated from others where women are not so concentrated. Most of the sector/occupations given in the figure are of course self-explanatory, but it perhaps requires clarification that the last category of 'others' includes a wide range of occupations, mainly in services (including in education, various professions, transport, etc.). As may be seen, four occupations/sectors, namely, agriculture (17.5 per cent), paid domestic work (15.9 per cent), brick making (11.8 per cent), and construction (14.3 per cent) together account for around 60 per cent of the surveyed migrant women workers. For male migrants, who were all drawn from the village site sample, three of these sector/occupations, that is, agriculture (17.4 per cent), bhattas (8.9 per cent) and construction (22.2 per cent) are also prominent.

Manufacturing, dominated by textiles and products and including other production workers, was less prominent. Of course, if brick making is included

Figure 4: Occupational distribution of surveyed male and female migrant workers after migration (%)



in manufacturing, as is included in the National Industrial Classification NIC, the share of manufacturing would rise to 20 per cent among women migrants and to 16 per cent among males. To our way of thinking, however, the actual labour process in brick making in India, which involves only manual operations with mud and earth in green brick making and again manual firing of kilns, etc., although no longer artisanal in nature, should be clearly distinguished from other modern industrial manufacturing.

What is perhaps most revealing in Figure 4 is that despite the fact that individual women workers were approached at a diverse range of sectors/occupations, particularly in urban areas, the more limited view of male migration from villages alone shows 34 per cent of male migrants in the others category in comparison to 24 per cent among women.<sup>32</sup> The results from an admittedly female-biased survey thus indicate that despite a degree of concentration in a few sectors/occupations for both men and women, migration leads to far greater diversification of employment for men than for women.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, a more detailed break-up of occupational patterns of women migrant workers before and after they migrated for rural and urban areas separately illustrates the point that migration is leading to concentration of women in a narrow band of employment/occupations.

32. If urban migrant male workers had been approached in urban areas, it is more than probable that the diversified service occupations would be proportionately far higher than what is indicated here.

33. An edge for women migrants is visible in only two occupations – paid domestic work and, on a far lower scale, in nursing.

## Occupations before and after Migration

### Rural women migrants

In rural areas (see Figures 5 [a] and 5 [b]), the big story is of course the obvious shift from a variety of occupations, including from agriculture to brick making, that increased from around 9 per cent of the workers before migration to over 21 per cent after. Such a concentration has several negative implications particularly in relation to gender. The fact of hard labour involved in the circular migratory occupation of brick making, the fact that it virtually condemns women to a lifetime of being away for six to eight months from their village and to return for only the remaining period of the year, and the fact that it offers little potential for autonomy because the unit of labour is family and wage payment is piece rated, all indicate that although some survival may be ensured from this form of labour migration, it offers virtually no opportunity for social advancement or economic independence for women. Since brick making is included under manufacturing in the NIC, the shift from agriculture to brick making would appear in the macro-data as a shift to manufacturing and may be seen as diversification. The reality is, however, that labour migration to brick-kilns and fields presages social immobility even as it involves permanent circulation (Agnihotri and Mazumdar 2009).

Of course, as also indicated by the NSS figures, agricultural migration including for plantations remains the largest occupational destination of rural female labour migration and accounted for 33.4 per cent of rural female migrant workers in the CWDS survey. It may be noted that while cultivating peasants were 11.3 per cent of the women workers before migration, their proportions dropped to around 2.4 per cent after migration. Obviously, a very small proportion of agricultural migrants may be peasants seeking/buying land or entering land-based contractual arrangements at destinations – a form of peasant migration. The broader labour migration picture, however, seems to reflect a shift from cultivation of own land to wage work in agriculture or other sectors. For agriculture, such wage labour migration is generally directed at pockets or regions of more developed agriculture, and is even (as in the migrant sugar cane harvesters in western India) linked to the recruitment by modern factories/sugar mills. While for other crops the spells of migration generally tend to be of shorter duration, for sugarcane cutting, the pattern of migratory life and work are of a longer duration. It involves migration for a significant part of the year, and like bhatta work, it offers little scope for social mobility, despite catering to modern production systems. Unlike bhatta workers, who generally work around one kiln each year, cane cutters move from site to site, a form of nomad labour. They are recruited in gangs, but again are recruited as male-female pairs, and wages are piece rated. The male female pairs are referred to as *koytas*, which incidentally also refers to the implement used for cutting the cane.

Two occupations that were absent in the pre-migration profile of any of these rural female migrants are noticeable. They are paid domestic work and textile-spinning workers. The emergence of migrants among rural domestic workers is a new

Figure 5(a): Occupation pattern of female workers before migration (Rural) [%]

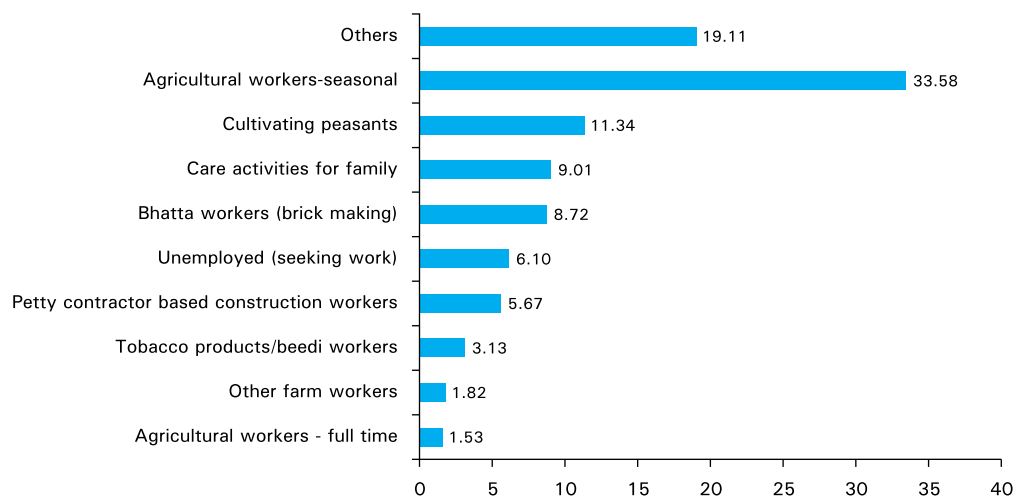
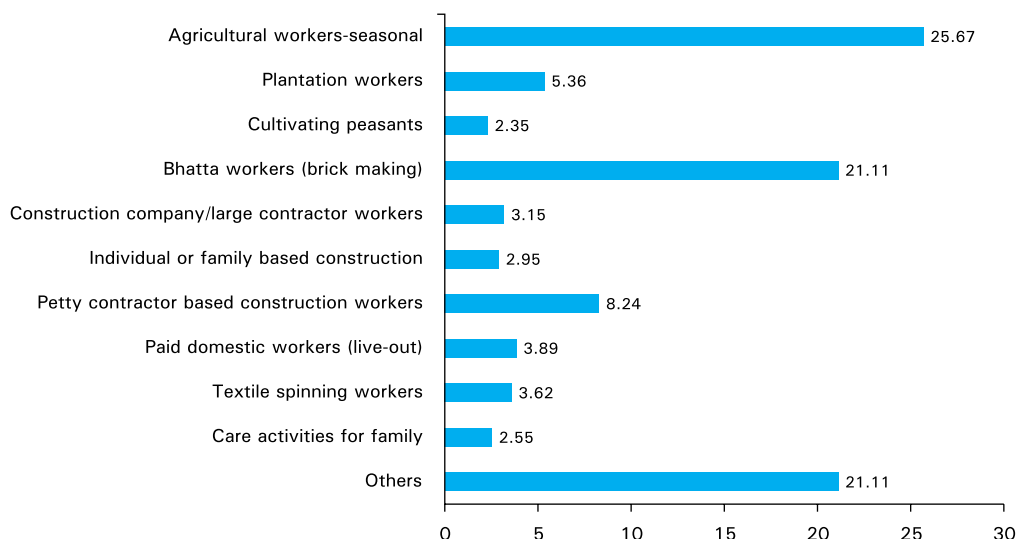


Figure 5 (b): Occupation pattern of female workers after migration (Rural) [%]



phenomenon. Significantly, they are live-out workers and would most probably have been initially part of a migrating family or group for other occupations, perhaps for agriculture or for construction work and then had moved to domestic work. The spinning mill workers, on the other hand, are recruited migrants, generally young and unmarried girls. For some years, such labour recruitment operated under the guise of an apprenticeship-cum-marriage scheme, known as 'Sumangali Marriage Scheme', whereby girls worked on a 2–3 year contract with a spinning mill, at the end of which a lump sum was given to them purportedly for use in their marriage (read dowry). Since the girls were confined to residential camps run by the mill managements, it became known as a 'camp coolie system' and following a court order in 2007, it was decreed as bonded labour. The scheme

has gone underground, although the pattern of migration it initiated does not appear to have changed.

Not so well known is the emergence of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) as a labour market institution mediating the recruitment and migration of girls for a whole range of new spinning and textile factories located in the rural areas of southern India. In the course of field work, we met with several young girls, from the backward districts of Ananthapur and Vizianagram/Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh and from Bhadrak, Orissa, for spinning mills in rural Guntur located in the agriculturally developed coastal region of Andhra Pradesh. Some were recruited with the help of the DRDA. A similar DRDA-arranged migration was also found in Ganjam, Orissa, from where such girls were being sent to work in factories in Kerala. Often, these girls are provided with hostel accommodation either within or near the factories. Some of these mills are state of the art in terms of technology, but are located in rural isolation. Hard and unhealthy though the work is, because of continuous inhalation of cotton fluff, which sticks to the body and enters the lungs, migration to these mills have no doubt brought employment to unemployed young women.

Figures 5 (a) and 5 (b) make it clear that a significant proportion of unemployed or house-bound women effected entry into paid employment through rural migration. Among the rural women migrant workers who were surveyed, 6 per cent were unemployed before migration and another 6 per cent were only involved in unpaid family care work.

### **Urban women migrant workers**

Concentration in some limited sectors/occupations appears to be the outcome of migration even in urban areas where otherwise one would expect much more diversification (see Figures 6 [a] and 6 [b]). Some diversification is indeed evident but so too is the concentration, most strikingly in paid domestic work. At a broad-stroke level, agriculture, construction, and domestic work (at 13 per cent, 10 per cent and again 10 per cent, respectively), together accounted for about one third of the pre-migration profile of the surveyed urban migrant women workers, and another 31 per cent were either unemployed or involved in only cooking, cleaning, care activities within their families. Such a profile became converted through migration to paid domestic work and construction (at 28 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively), together accounting for 44 per cent of the migrant worker sample in the urban context. Further, where some 12 per cent of the sample worked in manufacturing/production, the pre-migration profile had only 5 per cent in the same line. The share of vendors/petty traders doubled from 2.6 per cent pre-migration to 6 per cent of the post-migration sample. The share of nurses also almost doubled from 2.6 to 4.24 per cent. Apart from the above, the urban sample had some 36 per cent in more diverse services (including sales workers, beauticians, call centre workers and professional, technical and related workers), whereas the pre-migration profile showed less than 27 per cent in diversified services.

On the one hand, diversification may be seen in the inclusion and extension of a wider range of occupations in the employment profiles of urban female migrants, such as sales workers, beauticians, hair dressers, call centre workers, professional, technical and related workers. The first three of these are singularly absent in the pre-migration profile of the sample. On the other hand, an intensification of concentration is most noticeable in domestic workers, whose share in the post-migration urban sample is three times more than it was in the pre-migration profile. As may be seen, this is evident for both live-in and live-out domestic workers.<sup>34</sup>

Interestingly, among urban women migrants in construction, it appears that independent and petty contractor-based construction (both in roughly equal measures) and large-scale companies were all involved in drawing women into urban construction activity. From about 10 per cent before migration, the numbers in the post-migration urban sample had risen to 15 per cent. The greater presence of independent construction workers would indicate that the migration of these workers to urban areas was less contractor-driven and more based on independent expectations of finding employment.

But the most significant change effected by urbanwards migration that needs to be highlighted is that 31 per cent of the surveyed women workers who were unemployed or involved in only family-based domestic duties (in a sense housewives) before migration were able to effect entry into paid employment in urban areas. At the same time, it is noticeable that only about 14 per cent of the urban workers had actually made a transition from agricultural to non-agricultural employment. This of course reinforces the point that emerged from the NSS data that female labour migration is not leading to a large-scale shift of the female workforce out of agriculture. However, the reasons for the fact that only a small proportion of urban migrant women workers are being drawn from the agricultural workforce and a much larger proportion are being drawn from unemployed or hitherto house-bound women perhaps need to be located in the different attitudes/compulsions that control or direct women's involvement in paid employment along feudal caste and status hierarchies. It is well known that upper-caste women are traditionally restricted from working outside the home and certainly less involved in the manual labour involved in agriculture. Conversely, lower social and caste status propels/compels greater involvement of women in paid work in agriculture. The more diversified and less stigmatized service occupations that have developed in urban areas have obviously opened up more opportunities for hitherto more restricted upper-caste women than for traditional female workers in agriculture, who are drawn more from SC, ST and even OBC backgrounds.

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34. Live-in domestic workers are those who reside in the premises of their employer (generally full-time workers). Live-outs are those whose residence is independent of the employer and who may be working in many households.

Figure 6 (a): Occupation pattern of female migrant workers before migration (Urban) [%]

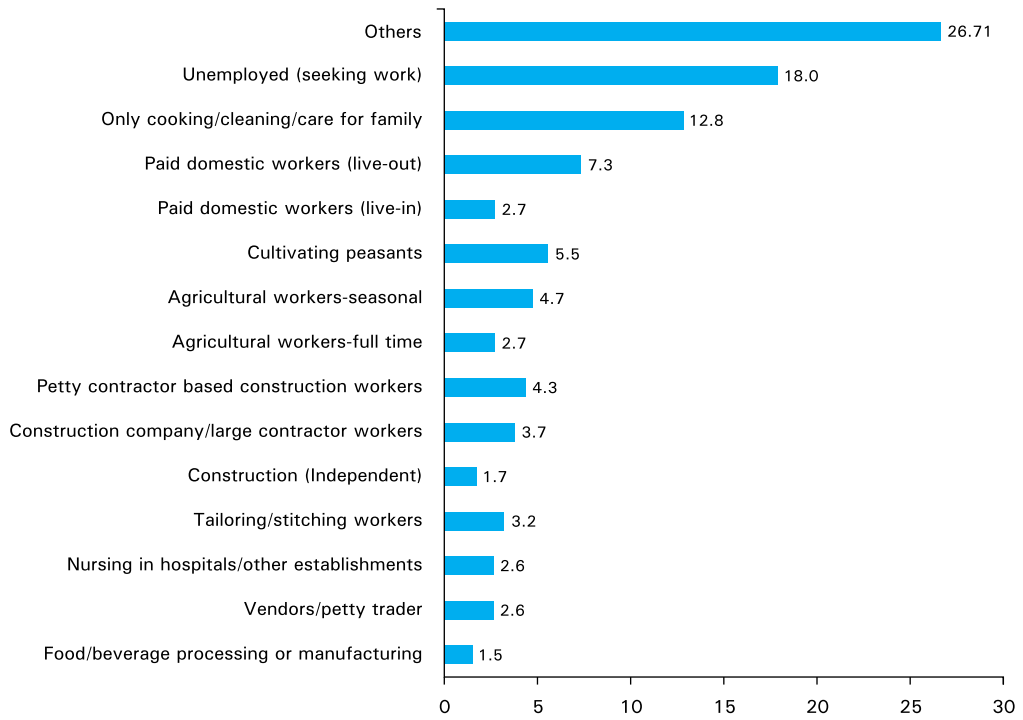
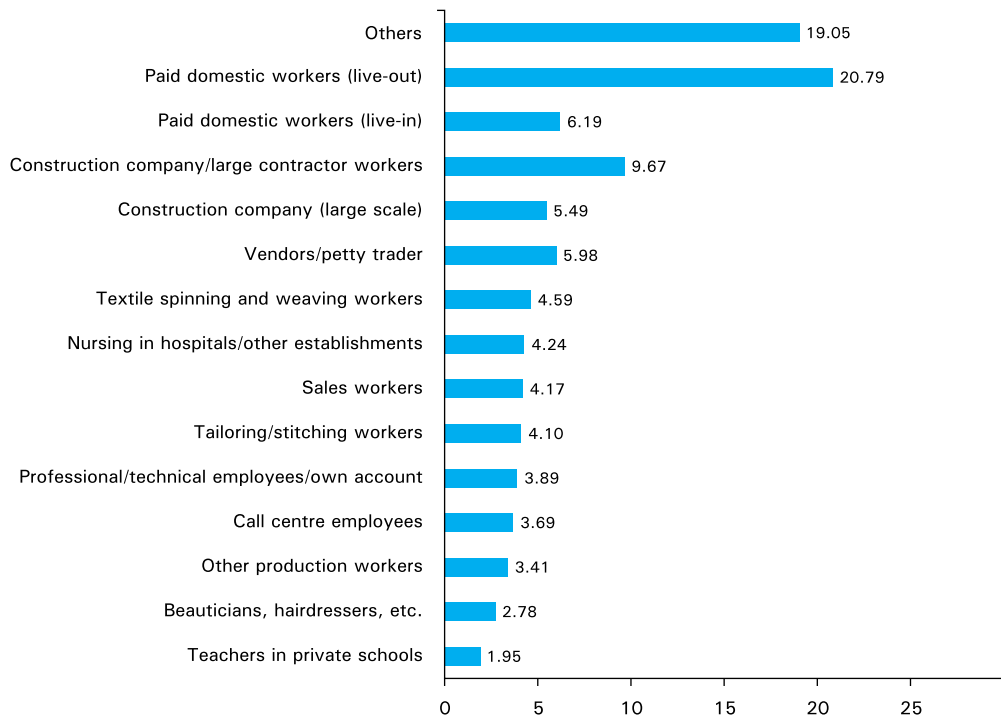


Figure 6 (b): Occupation pattern of female migrant workers after migration (Urban) [%]





## Summing Up/Concluding Remarks

This paper explores some features and aspects of the gender dimensions of migration in India. It argues that the macro-data-based evidence of greatly enhanced female marriage migration, particularly in rural areas, needs to be viewed as a reflection of the nature of development and growth trajectories that have led to the interlinked processes of devaluation of women's work, expansion of dowry and village exogamy, all heightened and accelerated by the agrarian crisis and other market/commerce-driven changes taking place in rural India. It examines and frames a critical analysis of the gender composition and features of labour migration (for paid/income-earning employment) based on the 2007–2008 migration survey of NSS, from a perspective that holds that the expansion and greater diversification of paid employment is the only way forward for women. It compares the sectoral composition of male and female labour migration and the share of migrants in the paid workforce of the country and shows that the extreme degree of male bias in migration-based employment in industry and services (less so in agriculture) is actually enhancing structural gender inequalities in the labour market.

Drawing on a meso-level primary survey on gender and migration, the paper shows the predominance of the temporary in contemporary labour migration, including medium-term and circular labour migration, and posits the need for recognition of these different types of migration in the concepts and definitions adopted by macro-surveys. The meso-survey provides further evidence of limited diversification of women's employment through migration in comparison to men and, in fact, draws attention to occupational shifts through migration that leads to greater concentration of women in a narrow band of occupations.

It shows that greater levels of medium-term and long-term migration among women from upper-caste communities has led to greater levels of diversification into various types of services in urban areas, while greater levels of concentration in occupations based on circular migration and rural occupations based on hard manual labour are more visible among migrant women workers from Scheduled Tribes and Castes. Women migrant workers from OBC communities are also more prominent in rural migration, but have also managed relatively greater entry in urban occupations.

Textile-based factory production is shown to have drawn migrant women from all communities other than Scheduled Tribes, while a distinctive movement towards concentration of women in paid domestic work through migration cuts across all castes/tribes/communities. It highlights the fact that only a small proportion of women migrant workers in urban areas are drawn out from the agricultural workforce and more have made a transition from non-employment to employment. For women, labour migration has had less of an impact on the structure of the female workforce and its continuing concentration in agriculture.

The empirical findings as laid out in this paper challenge some assumptions that have become commonplace in approaches to women's migration and women's

work. On the one hand, the low shares of women in labour migration for industry and diversified services runs counter to the assumption that liberalization and globalization leads to feminization of labour and migration. In fact, the escalated devaluation of women's traditional work is today confronted with constrictions and a narrow range of options rather than compensation or adequate expansion/diversification in paid employment opportunities for women.

On the other hand, the predominance of temporary and circular migration indicates structural limitations to the migration enterprise in effecting durable sectoral/occupational shifts away from agriculture and the degradation of semi-feudal social relations, more so in women migrant workers. In a period of a rapidly declining share of agriculture in the country's GDP, accelerated growth in mainly services, but also in industry has not generated commensurate demand in terms of employment, which is why the conditions of employment are so uncertain and labour migration so predominantly temporary in nature.

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# Internal Migrants and Social Protection in India

## The Missing Link

Ravi Srivastava<sup>1</sup>

Professor of Economics

Centre for Study of Regional Development

School of Social Sciences

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

## 1. Introduction

From time to time, most societies see the elimination of poverty, deprivation, and extreme vulnerability as their goals, and they fashion instruments to help achieve these goals. The most comprehensible basis for these goals is that societies evolve a shared vision of their achievements and enter into a social contract, which eventually also makes them more humane and governable. Since societies also share these goals with each other, they also get expressed in international agreements. Countries agree to make some of these agreements 'binding' and evolve a commitment and framework to monitor their progress.

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1. The author is a former member of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Commission. I am grateful to Arvind Kumar Pandey and Ajaya Naik for research support.

In India, the basic commitment to achieve socioeconomic goals is expressed in the Indian Constitution. Internationally, the multilateral framework expresses the shared commitments in the form of declarations, covenants and agreements, which have been evolving over time. In some cases (as with the Millennium Development Goals), the international community also agrees to monitor its performance in terms of specific goals.

The term 'social protection' has a recent history, and its meaning and relevance are explored in the following section. In the perspective of this paper, social protection measures are viewed as the set of public measures evolved by the state to meet its national and international obligations to eliminate poverty, deprivation and extreme vulnerability. The term social protection must be used in conjunction with the objective of progressive realization of basic socioeconomic rights of citizens to protect themselves against exploitation, poverty and deprivation.

A key argument of this paper is that these goals cannot be met without their achievement by some of the most vulnerable sections of society who include the poorer strata of internal migrants. The reasons for this and the possible strategies to address deprivation are discussed in the paper.

## 2. Defining the Social Protection Framework

Conventionally, the term that has been used to denote public action to protect workers' status in formal labour markets from contingency-related risks has been social security. However, the term has also been used in a broader sense as the use of social means to prevent deprivation and vulnerability to deprivation (De Swaan 1988; International Labour Office 2001). From the point of view of developing countries, the two notions (that is, deprivation and vulnerability) are closely interlinked, necessitating a broader notion of social security. Dreze and Sen distinguish between the protective and promotional aspects of social security (Dreze and Sen 1991; 2002). The former is concerned with preventing a decline in living standards, in general, and in the basic conditions of living, in particular. The latter has the objective of enhancing normal living conditions and helping people overcome regular and persistent (capability) deprivation. Kannan (2004) has distinguished between 'Basic Social Security', that is, social provision of a critical minimum to conditions of 'deficiency' in such basic wants as food, health, education and housing, and Contingent Social Security (CSS), which refers to socially supported institution arrangements to meet conditions of 'adversity' such as sickness, accidents and old age.

The term 'social protection' continues to give varying emphasis to contingencies and deficiencies. The World Bank and the ADB use the term to refer more to measures that relate to contingency-related risks although more in the context of an informal economy and a non-statutory setting.<sup>2</sup>

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2. The ADB defines social protection as the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income. The policies and procedures included in social protection involve five major kinds of activities: labour market policies and programmes, social insurance programmes, social assistance, micro- and area-based schemes, and child protection (ADB 2001, Appendix- 1). It goes on to differentiate the concept from social security which, according to it, is used to refer to the comprehensive mechanisms and coverage in developed countries and is less applicable to new areas such as community-, micro-, and area-based schemes.

The ILO (International Labour Office) and many other international organizations use the concept of 'social protection', to cover not only social security schemes that are statutory but also non-statutory schemes (International Labour Office 2000; 2001). 'Social Protection' is defined by the ILO as 'a set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress caused by the *absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies* (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age or death of the breadwinner), the provision of healthcare and the provision of benefits for families with children' (International Labour Office 2004, emphasis added). The ILO suggests that social protection should be approached in its various dimensions and through various phases. The dimensions include: access to essential goods and services, prevention of and protection against various risks, and promotion of potentials and opportunities in order to break vicious cycles and pervasive tendencies. The phases are: before, during, and after the working years. In a recent paper for employers, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) has elaborated on the concept of a social protection 'staircase' with the Social Protection Floor (see below) as the foundation, and social insurance and voluntary insurance as the stairs (IOE 2011).<sup>3</sup>

### Social Protection Floor

Following the economic crisis of 2008, the UN has mooted the concept of Social Protection Floor (SPF). The idea of a socioeconomic floor and its relationship to social protection was emphasized by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. Since then, the term social floor or 'social protection floor' has been used to mean a set of basic social rights, services and facilities that the global citizen should enjoy. The term 'social floor' can correspond to the existing notion of 'core obligations', to ensure the realization of, at the very least, minimum essential levels of rights embodied in human rights treaties (ILO and WHO 2009). Although there is no universal agreed definition, the UN (ibid.) says that a social protection floor could consist of two main elements that help to realize respective human rights:

- *Essential services*: Geographical and financial access to essential services (such as water and sanitation, adequate nutrition, health and education).
- *Social transfers*: A basic set of essential social transfers, in cash and in kind, paid to the poor and vulnerable to provide a minimum income security and access to essential health care.

Further, the document argues that SPF activities would work on strengthening both the demand (through rights and entitlements) and supply (through availability of goods and services in the areas of health, water and sanitation and

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3. Sabates-Wheeler and Waites (2003) have set out an alternative social protection framework distinguishing between preventive, promotive and transformative. In the rights-based framework set out in this paper, the distinction between these three types of measures becomes blurred.

housing, education, food and related information, etc.) for children, people in the active age group with insufficient income from work, and older persons and persons with disabilities.

Thus, there is an anchoring of the concept of social protection in human rights, set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and subsequent UN conventions. Articles 22 to 26 of UDHR state the universal rights of each individual to a basic standard of life, to proper working conditions, and to social security and social protection. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, again recognizes the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance (Article 9), and Articles 10 to 13 of the Convention elaborate on the right of mothers and infants, the right to a decent standard of living, the right to food, health and education. Subsequent UN conventions have also upheld the right to shelter, principles of non-discrimination, the rights of the child and so on.

The Indian Constitution, recognizing that the immediate fulfilment of economic rights may not be possible for the nascent state, put these in the 'Directive Principles' of the Constitution. These Principles lay down directions and goalposts in the achievement of economic rights, but they are not justiciable. They are, however, to be used by the government in making laws:

*The provisions contained in this Part shall not be enforceable by any court, but the principles therein laid down are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws.*

Here, of particular interest to us in the Directive Principles are: Article 41, which directs the state to 'within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want'; Article 45, by which 'the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years'; and Article 47, by which 'the State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties. In recent years, the distinction between fundamental rights (which are justiciable), and directive principles has increasingly got blurred, with judicial pronouncements seeking to give content to the "right to life" through the latter.'

Taking cues from these definitions, this paper defines social protection as the set of public measures taken for the realization of basic socioeconomic rights. These rights permeate the areas of basic livelihoods, food, elementary education and basic health, shelter, public employment, social security, non-discrimination, and child rights. We, however agree with Standing (2007, p. 513) that 'neither rights nor needs exist as objective facts that are determined scientifically, outside society.

They are social constructs, determined by a process of consciousness. They are always relative and subject to refinements of definition. In practice, social protection systems evolve, and in doing so modify what is covered by the notion of need.'

### 3. Migrants and Vulnerability

The focus of this paper is on the strengthening of social protection measures for internal migrants in India. The Population Census of India estimates that there were 309 million internal migrants in India in 2001. According to the NSS estimates of 2007–2008, the number of internal migrants was 326 million (census-adjusted figures). These included 118 million urban migrants and 208 million rural migrants. These migrants changed their location ('Usual Place of Residence') at various times in the past and for various locations. However, the Census and the NSS undercount poorer migrants in the informal sector, and short-duration seasonal and circulatory migrants. Being among the most vulnerable sections of the working poor, these migrants and their families require special focus.

Migrants differ from non-migrants in that they have experienced mobility and change in location. It remains to be established whether this places them in a specially disadvantaged position. This is clearly not always the case.

In the overview paper to this conference, this author has tried to dispel the notion that all migrants are vulnerable and has shown (and this is also borne out by international experience) that internal migration is possibly increasingly selective towards those with high skills, education, or other resource endowments. These migrants face few difficulties, if at all any, and, that too, temporary difficulties as a result of migration. But this is not true for migrants who have meagre means and networks and who are at the lower end of the labour market.

Among these migrants we further distinguish between semi-permanent migrants, or long-term circular migrants, and seasonal or short-term circular migrants.

*Semi-permanent or long-term circular migrants* are usually rural-urban migrants, although in industries like quarrying, agriculture and rice mills, they could also be rural-rural migrants. These migrants enter the labour market through contractors, or on their own, or through networks. In the urban areas, they are principally employed in the informal sector as casual or 'regular' wage workers, but gradually they could be self-employed, using hired or owned assets, or take up informal employment in the organized sector. We estimate that nearly *half the rural-urban migrants are in the bottom six consumption deciles and work mainly as casual wage employed or as self-employed in the informal sector*. The characteristics of these migrants, described by us in the Overview paper, include poor access to housing and basic amenities, poorer entitlements, poor working conditions and labour market discrimination. Unemployment risks are also lower when recruitment happens through middlemen. In many cases, these middlemen are known to the job seekers and may belong to the source area. In many cases, migrants move to the destination areas on their own.



This generally happens where 'bridgeheads' have been established. Among women migrants, outsourced petty manufacturing and domestic household services provide two large avenues of employment. Jobs in the urban informal sector are highly segmented based along lines of caste, religion and kinship (Gupta and Mitra 2002).

These migrants face special handicaps for the following reasons.<sup>4</sup>

- They are incorporated into the labour market in less favourable ways than non-migrants. This could be because of debt-interlocking, involvement in subcontracting chains, greater isolation, fragmentation, and segmentation. This could lead to poorer working conditions, lower wages, exploitation, harassment, and other aspects of labour market discrimination.
- They have much weaker social networks than non-migrants, although these are usually the most important resource that they do have.
- Poor rural-urban migrants face formidable difficulties in establishing claims and entitlements and, in particular, in acquiring shelter.

*Seasonal or short-duration migrants* return to their place of origin after brief periods, at the most, after a few months. They resume migration, but not necessarily to same workplace or destination. As shown in the Overview paper, seasonal migrants are usually poorer, more likely to belong to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes, and a large proportion work in seasonal industries such as agriculture, manufacture of bricks, quarrying, construction and so on. Construction, manufacturing and agriculture employ the largest percentage of seasonal migrants. But there are a large number of other industries which employ large numbers of seasonal migrants. The total number of such migrants is likely to be close to 40 million.

Seasonal migrants are much more likely to enter the migrant labour market through contractor/middlemen from whom they have taken an advance and are therefore more likely to be involved in debt-interlocked migration cycles. These migrants participate in very diverse migration streams. Migration could take place for a few days or for a few months each time. They could participate in several short-migration cycles or just one in a year. Migrants could migrate to diverse locations, relatively distant or close, rural or urban. The migration streams could consist of men only, women only, or men and women with children and even the elderly.<sup>5</sup> Each of the more vulnerable participants in migration (women, children and the elderly) requires special social protection measures, both when they migrate and when they are left behind. Several million children migrate alone or with their parents to harsh environments, are deprived of developmental opportunities, and get involved in child labour (Smita 2007, 2008, and the Overview paper). These children require focused social protection measures to protect their health, prevent exploitation, and to provide education.

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4. Sabates-Wheeler and Waites (2003) have adopted a different framework for analysing migrant vulnerability. They distinguish vulnerabilities at three stages (origin, transit, and destination) and between three types (spatial-environmental, socio-political and socio-cultural). This paper does not deal with vulnerabilities during transit and adopts a different framework for analysing migrant vulnerabilities, following its entitlement or rights-based approach.

5. For a review of the diversity of seasonal migration and involvement of these migrants in the labour market, see Srivastava (1998), Srivastava and Sasikumar (2005), Deshingkar and Akter (2009) and the Overview paper to this conference by the author.

The constraints faced by seasonal migrants in accessing social protection measures are more severe:

- Their conditions of work severely constrain their ability to access social protection.
- They find it much more difficult to establish their bonafides and identity in the destination areas. Apart from that, their entitlements and claims even in their areas of origin are much weaker.
- It is also much harder to provide agencies to tailor schemes and programmes to suit the requirements of the diverse streams of migrants and the individuals (women, children, the elderly) within the migrant streams.

## 4. Issues in the Extension of Social Protection to Migrants

### 4.1 Structure of social protection schemes in India and issues relating to portable entitlements

This section discusses the institutional structure of social protection schemes in India, including their design, delivery and financing. It shows that this institutional structure creates formidable difficulties in designing suitable schemes for migrants. It suggests some ways forward. These are discussed in the context of specific schemes in the following sections.

India has a huge array of social protection schemes, designed, financed and delivered by various levels of government. These include food-based schemes for distribution of subsidized food items (PDS); schemes for mid-day meals for children; nutritional supplemental schemes such as the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS); social security schemes for the poor and informal sector workers; social assistance schemes including pension schemes for the aged, physically challenged and widows; public employment schemes; elementary education; health care; health insurance for the poor and so on. The role of the different levels of government in the different kinds of social protection arrangements is laid down in the Indian Constitution.

The Constitution of India defines the powers of the central and state governments in Schedule 7. List 1 contains items which are in the exclusive domain of the central government. These include a small number of relevant items such as regulation of labour in mines and oilfields, and inter-state migration. The central government also has residual powers to deal with any issue not mentioned in these lists.

List 2 mentions items in the exclusive purview of the states. This list also covers some items related to social protection. These include: (i) public health and sanitation, hospitals and dispensaries; (ii) relief of the disabled and unemployables.

List 3 contains the concurrent list of items which are in the domain of both the centre and the states. These include a larger number of items which deal with social protection such as (a) vagrancy, nomadic and migratory tribes; (b) economic

and social planning; (c) social security and social insurance; employment and unemployment; (d) welfare of labour including conditions of work, provident funds, employers' liability, workmen's compensation, invalidity and old-age pensions and maternity benefits; (e) education.

Schedule 11 and 12 of the Constitution have been inserted after the Seventy-Third and Seventy-Fourth Amendment to the Constitution relating to rural and urban local bodies. Schedule 11 for rural local bodies includes rural housing and poverty-alleviation programmes, health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries; family welfare; women and child development; social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded; welfare of the weaker sections, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes; public distribution system.

Schedule 12 for urban local bodies includes urban planning including town planning; planning for economic and social development; public health; safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded; slum improvement and upgradation; and urban poverty alleviation.

Unlike the union and state lists, items within the purview of local governments cannot be considered to be within their exclusive domain, but rather that the local governments also play an important role in them.

It is noteworthy that the central government has a very small exclusive domain in areas related to social protection. It is the states, or the states and the centre together, who are responsible for social protection. In addition, the urban and local bodies have to play a very important role in social protection programmes.

This has the following implications:

1. To the extent that it is government domains below the central level that are responsible for the design, financing and delivery of the social protection programmes, these programmes can differ from state to state and even between local bodies in the nature and pattern of financing, coverage, benefits, and manner of implementation.
2. Typically, these programmes will be designed to benefit certain groups of persons recognized as citizens in that domain of government. As a corollary, they will exclude those persons who have primary citizenship in other domains.
3. Higher levels of government can play a moderating role by supporting the design and financing of programmes, which may have some uniformity across domains and may reduce the levels of exclusion. But this moderating role would depend upon several factors including the level of financing, and the design of the programmes that the higher-level government supports.

Given these diversities, when a person migrates from one jurisdiction to another, (s)he can claim benefits in the destination, subject to one of the following: (a) (s) he can establish a claim on the local domicile which the host jurisdiction accepts,

and thereby become entitled; (b) the two jurisdictions can enter into an agreement of some kind till condition (a) becomes tenable; (c) the higher government either plays such a large role in the scheme or is prepared to offset the costs of the lower jurisdiction, so that the second lower jurisdiction becomes indifferent and is prepared to give the benefit of social protection to the migrants; or, finally, (d) the new jurisdiction is legally obliged to grant the entitlement to social protection to the migrants; or in other words, the migrant has a right to the social protection arrangement such that it can also be legally enforced. The first condition can only be applicable to semi-permanent migrants and cannot apply to seasonal migrants.

As a matter of fact, conditions (c) and (d) are becoming more applicable now than before. In the recent decades, the central government has increased the share in funding social protection programmes or programmes with a social protection component both at the state and at the local government level. These include the centre's share in elementary education, basic health, old-age pensions, public employment programmes and so on. Some areas, like elementary education, now invoke a constitutional guarantee, and so migrant children's right to education cannot be denied by host jurisdictions, but inter-governmental funding arrangements still need to be in place. But in some areas, as in subsidized food distribution, states have led the charge with their own schemes, increasing inter-state variability. *Despite these changes, as discussed in this paper, the central and state governments have not put in place any concerted strategy to ensure the portability of migrants' entitlements.*

#### **4.2 Registration, identity and portability – NCEUS proposals on social security**

From the migrants' perspective, claiming entitlements goes beyond the provision (supply) of social protection. The migrant needs to establish a claim to the entitlement. (S)he can do so if (s)he is recognized as a person who is a potential claimant, is considered to be eligible under the norms of the scheme (for which a process of registering may be mandated), and the institutional mechanism through which the scheme is delivered is able to reach the migrant.

It is in this context that issuance of identity cards and registration has been part and parcel of many schemes and programmes for informal sector workers. Many non-governmental organizations include issuance of identity cards as part of their migrant support initiatives (Deshingkar, Khandelwal, and Farrington 2008). This gives the migrant workers an identity and some dignity. This has also been recommended by the National Commission for Rural Labourers as well as the Second National Labour Commission. A large number of social security and social protection schemes of central and state governments require registration of eligible beneficiaries and in some cases, issuance of beneficiary cards to them (see Report of the Second NCL, 2002. Registration is an important component of the Construction Workers Welfare Fund Act, but this is done at the local level). But the registration and identity cards do not ensure portability of benefits. In other words, earlier initiatives had limited objectives and where implemented, led to specific and/or limited outcomes.

The detailed recommendations of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) on social security for informal workers took full cognizance of the issues arising out of the structure of migrant mobility and the structure of social security schemes at the central/state levels, as also their variations between sectors. It then recommended a National Minimum Social Security Scheme which could be fully portable in three main senses.

First, the Scheme consisted of a National Minimum Social Security Package for all workers consisting of a retirement benefit, a life cover, and a family health cover, with a common pattern of financing by the centre and states. *This was to ensure that this package would be portable across locations and sectors.* Beyond this, additional benefits could accrue to workers depending upon location and sector, but these benefits were not automatically portable.

Second, registration was a mandatory part of the Scheme and all unorganized workers were to be mandatorily registered under the Scheme. Each registered worker was to receive a smart identity card with a unique social security identifier. Smart cards would also be issued to family members of the worker so that they could avail of family benefits even in the absence of the worker.

Third, workers could pay their contributions (if any) anywhere in the country, and they or their families could receive benefits anywhere on the basis of the single registration.

An organizational and institutional structure was proposed to ensure the portability of the scheme through a backbone of an integrated IT structure and network of financial institutions (post offices and banks), Workers Facilitation Centres set up by trade unions, CSOs, or local bodies were to facilitate the registration of the worker and her/his family, as well as the disbursement of benefits to her/him.

The NCEUS proposals were made for a single component of social protection, viz., protective social security, but they were carefully built on all premises which could ensure portability. Unfortunately, the NCEUS proposals were accepted and implemented in partial, piecemeal and fragmented fashion, which did not factor in portability.

### 4.3 Open sesame? A 'unique' identity card

The move to provide identity cards for citizens has gained impetus since 2003 with the New Citizenship Rules notified by the Home Ministry. Under the rules, the Registrar General of India (RGI), which profiles the population and carries out a population census, has now been mandated to develop a National Population Register. The Register will keep the full details, including biometrics of Indian citizens (for those above 15 years), and issue a national citizen's identity card which will carry a UID (Unique Identity Card) number.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) came into existence. As per the Registrar

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6. <[www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-Act&Rules/notifications/citizenship\\_rules2003.pdf](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-Act&Rules/notifications/citizenship_rules2003.pdf)>

General of India, the UIDAI is expected to carry out deduplication of the UID number, after which the cards will carry the number.<sup>7</sup> However, subsequently a decision has been taken to use biometric data to issue the Unique Identity Cards called Aadhar by the UIDAI. The UIDAI is also now carrying out surveys to collect biometric and other information for the issuance of Aadhar cards. Initially, the Aadhar was to be based on the existing electoral register. The UID is a smart card on which the person's details, including beneficiary status and benefits received could be stored. It has also been asserted that the Aadhar will not be a citizenship card and will only be an identity card (RGI). However, the UIDAI has taken upon itself the role of enrolling persons and issuing unique identity cards to them with data being collected through bodies appointed as 'Registrar' of whom the RGI is only one. At the moment, the UIDAI is targeting 200 million persons, although it eventually aims to carry out the exercise for the entire population. The UIDAI has made large claims for its project, particularly on behalf of the poor and programmes meant for them, such as the PDS, MGNREGA, and access to health services.<sup>8</sup> The main claim is that the UIDAI will give the marginalized poor person (including migrants) an identity and facilitate the correct targeting of benefits, thereby eliminating leakages.

There are presently a number of issues relating to the overlap between the proposed activities of the Registrar General of India (RGI) for the National Population Register (NPR) and UIDAI and (lack of convergence) with the NPR – the costs of the two exercises, their objectives, technical viability; generation and use of privacy data; lack of legal backing for the data currently being collected by it (masked by its currently 'voluntary' nature) and so on. Similar exercises have failed, or been given up, or have not been accepted even in technologically advanced countries such as the UK or USA. These issues have been considered by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance recently, which has rejected the UIDAI Draft Bill introduced by the Ministry of Planning in its present form (Standing Committee on Finance 2011). These issues are undoubtedly very important but are not central to this paper and are not discussed here any further.

From our point of view, what is important here is that the UIDAI states that on the basis of the UID card, which will contain information on the individual's biometric details and her/his state, poor individuals, including migrants, will receive an 'identity'. Moreover, on that basis, they will be able to claim financial inclusion and various other entitlements. These claims are important since the UIDAI seeks to resolve in one stroke three issues central to migrants' social protection – providing them with identity, *claim* to an entitlement, and an actual entitlement.

The above claim has been accepted even by several civil society organizations working with migrants and/or the poor. The National Coalition for the Security of Migrant Workers, a coalition of about 20 organizations working with migrant

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7. <[www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-FAQ/FAQ-Public.html#L](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-FAQ/FAQ-Public.html#L)>

8. See the working papers on the UIDAI website (<<http://uidai.gov.in>>). The site also contains information on other aspects of the functioning of the UIDAI.

workers has signed an MOU with the UIDAI to work with it on various issues for the inclusion of migrant workers in the Aadhar scheme. The coalition has accepted that the Aadhar will be an important pillar for the inclusion of migrants and creation of entitlements for them.<sup>9</sup>

However, it seems to us that the claims made by the UIDAI on behalf of or for migrants are not well grounded.

First, while a large number of semi-permanent migrants 'belong' to at least two locations, and seasonal migrants are multi-locational, the UIDAI links each individual with *only one* address, that is, it assumes only one type of (permanent) movement. If the UIDAI indeed becomes the only source by which banks or other entities ascribe addresses, then the Aadhar could become a significant source of exclusion of migrants instead of their inclusion. At present, semi-permanent migrants are able to use their informality and social networks and take recourse to other means to build an identity staircase. With a UIDAI card, these routes would be closed for them.

Second, however, it is not clear that the UIDAI will eventually be as inclusive in its registration process as it has repeatedly asserted (Ramanathan 2011). In order to be inclusive, UIDAI has asked its Registrars to accept certificates of authentication issued by Class One officers and others. But, the RGI and other entities are not bound to accept this data (see Ramakumar 2011, p. 4).

Third, and most important, in stating that issuance of ID card alone will ensure entitlements, the UIDAI is putting the cart before the horse and also ignoring political realities. Entitlements can only accrue to *migrants* if they are portable, as discussed earlier in this paper, and if administrative structures and institutions find the information on Aadhar as both valid and sufficient. To give one example, the Reserve Bank of India, while accepting Aadhar as one of the identity proofs, has asked the banks to independently verify address (cited in Ramakumar 2011, p. 10). Further, it is unlikely that political and social factors will expediently allow migrants to be treated as non-migrants.

In our view, the proposals made by the UIDAI are both excessive and untenable. Under the claim of voluntary participation, the UIDAI is making the enlistment of the poor mandatory because of the proposed linkage with benefits.<sup>10</sup> This will accentuate its exclusionary features. Further, the UIDAI wishes to load too many objectives on the Aadhar. But as Richard Whitley, research coordinator of the LSE Identity Project states, 'evidence from other national identity systems showed that such schemes performed best when established for clear and focused purposes'(Interview in *Frontline*, 2 December 2011, p. 30).

9. <[http://uidai.gov.in/UID\\_PDF/Front\\_Page\\_Articles/MOU/CSO/MoU\\_UIDAI\\_Coalition\\_of\\_Migrant\\_Workers\\_NGOs.pdf](http://uidai.gov.in/UID_PDF/Front_Page_Articles/MOU/CSO/MoU_UIDAI_Coalition_of_Migrant_Workers_NGOs.pdf)>

10. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, in its report, expressed the view that, 'It is also not clear as to whether possession of aadhaar number would be made mandatory in future for availing of benefits and services. Even if the aadhaar number links entitlements to targeted beneficiaries, it may not ensure that beneficiaries have been correctly identified. Thus, the present problem of proper identification would persist' (p. 32).

## 5. Making Social Protection Work for Migrants

This section explores the working of social protection arrangements in some specific sectors. It looks at specific experiences and interventions and draws some lessons on how these arrangements/programmes can work more effectively for migrants.

### 5.1 Food

Seasonal migration decisions often take place at the beginning of a lean season during which migrant households are also likely to face food shortages. Advances taken from the contractor help to tide over these shortages and to meet other requirements. At the destination areas, both seasonal migrants and semi-permanent migrants purchase food. In some migration cycles, seasonal migrants also receive small advances at the destination areas from the contractors to meet their cash requirements, which are eventually adjusted against wages. Their food purchases have to be made from designated shops. Even for permanent migrants living in subcontracted tenements, food purchases may have to be made from designated shops. Both seasonal and permanent migrants are deprived of the entitlement to purchase subsidized food available through the Public Distribution System.

Urban migrants cannot establish their local entitlements and a ration card is usually their first step towards acquiring any urban entitlement. But a ration card requires proof of residence, which they are unable to provide for their temporary places of stay. This is where intermediaries step in and may facilitate this acquisition, at a cost. Getting a Below Poverty Line or BPL card is a much more difficult enterprise since the number of such cards is limited and very few urban migrants eventually acquire one.

Seasonal migrants have even less locus standi in the destination areas and hence no possibility of acquiring a local ration card. But one may ask why migrants need to acquire a local entitlement for a programme for which the major costs are borne by the national government? This is because the programmes are operated through a system of local registration (at the PDS shop) on the basis of a more generalized list, and on the basis of differentiated entitlements which vary from state to state.

The national PDS currently creates three categories of entitlements: the very poor are placed in the Antyodaya category, the poor in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category, and the non-poor in the Above Poverty Line (APL). These three categories are identified by the Food and Civil Supplies Department on the basis of certain criteria. In rural areas, in practice, a survey carried out by the Department of Rural Development serves as the basis. The grain allocation (or the allocation of sugar or kerosene) from the buffer stock and warehouses is based on these numbers. The difference between the cost of supplying grain to the warehouses and the price received for them (which varies across the three categories) is the food subsidy borne by the central government. The aggregate numbers in the highly subsidized categories is limited by the central government, based on the states' poverty estimates. If a poor person migrates temporarily from place A to place B, the central



subsidy remains the same, but the local calculations (at the ration shop upwards) may not add up. Hence a ration card of place A will not work in place B. This will hold for both inter-state and intra-state migrants.

The problem is further complicated if place A and place B are different states and have different ways of entitling a person to receive subsidized ration, and local subsidies are added to the central subsidy. In many states, the number of those entitled to subsidized ration is much larger than the limit placed by the centre. For example, in Tamil Nadu, every person is entitled to receive subsidized food; in Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, more than 70 per cent of the population is entitled to subsidized ration. The additional people have to then receive a state subsidy, and in this context, a migrant from place A to place B will receive a state and a central subsidy. This takes place also because several states give subsidized ration at prices below the level designated by the central government. In Tamil Nadu, every person is entitled to purchase the rationed quantity of rice from a PDS shop at one rupee per kilogram, while some states such as Chhattisgarh have fixed the price at two rupees. In both, the state government bears the cost of part of the food subsidy and is not willing to share this subsidy with a person from another state.

These problems are clearly not insurmountable. Given the vulnerable status of the seasonal migrants, the host state could take a policy decision to place them in the highest food subsidy category and to designate an agency to give them temporary registration and entitlement, solely on the basis of their ration card from the origin. The state can also make it obligatory on the employers to apply for temporary registration of the workers at the time of employment.

Civil society organizations/unions working with migrants in urban destinations have advocated this, and some states have implemented policies to give temporary food entitlements. But the numbers of migrants who have been able to avail of such entitlements is limited.<sup>11</sup> This is where a national policy could play an important role.

The National Food Security Act currently being contemplated aims at providing subsidized foodgrains to all households, highly subsidized foodgrains to 'priority' households, cooked meals to the destitute and homeless, and nutritional supplementary diet to children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.<sup>12</sup> A shortcoming in the current draft Bill, which it must address, is that the Bill does not provide for portability of benefits. But it has a provision for the priority group to be designated by criteria laid down by the central government and also has a provision for National and State Food Commissioners to deal with complaints.

11. Borhade (2007) analyses the experience of an intervention project by the NGO Disha working with migrants in Nashik district in Maharashtra. Maharashtra has authorized issuance of temporary ration cards to migrants, but the procedure is cumbersome and despite Disha's support, only 25 out of 351 migrants had been able to obtain temporary ration cards.

12. For the Draft Bill as on 1 September 2011, see <[http://fcamin.nic.in/dfpd\\_html/Draft\\_National\\_Food\\_Security\\_Bill.pdf](http://fcamin.nic.in/dfpd_html/Draft_National_Food_Security_Bill.pdf)>. The Bill has been placed in parliament in the winter session of 2011.

## 5.2 Education<sup>13</sup>

Since independence, the provision of universal elementary education (UEE) has been a salient feature of the national policy in accordance with the Constitutional commitment to 'ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years'. Education (UEE) was declared as a fundamental right (Article 21-A) in 2005 and following this, the Right to Education Act was passed by parliament in 2009.

The Government of India's efforts have led to increased enrolments in school, but the key issues of universal access, retention and quality still remain important, especially with respect to 'hard-to-reach' or 'left out children'. Universal elementary education is being critically impacted upon by seasonal migration to a much greater extent than is realized in policy discourses. Quite often, children accompany their seasonally migrant parents not only because there is no option to leave them behind in their villages (which may hold for infants), but more significantly, because the school-age children are a vital part of the household's survival strategy in the destination workplaces, where they work as hard as their parents, bartering away their future for a miserable present. In the entire process, children's lives are adversely affected. They are forced to drop out from school, or never enrol in one. One has to remember that a child out of school is an important indicator of child labour in the country.

The diversity of migration situations needs to be reiterated as interventions need to confront the specific contexts. But all studies show that seasonal migrants are in the prime working ages (18–45 years). Since migrants come from the poorest and economically the most vulnerable sections of the working population, their own educational attainment is nil or negligible. A majority of those who are married in this age group have young children. Migration of either one or both the parents has the potential of reducing the child's probability of being educated, hampers his/her development, and the possibilities of the child growing out of poverty.

At any point of time, school-age children of migrants fall into two categories – those who are out of school (these children may never have enrolled, or may have enrolled and dropped out), and those who are *nominally* enrolled. Owing to continuous interruptions in schooling, the latter eventually drop out at some stage or another.<sup>14</sup> If account is taken of children who have dropped out (including both the nominally enrolled and the non-enrolled), one would find that the access to education of children of an overwhelming proportion of seasonal family migrants would be adversely affected. Negative but less severe impacts can also be expected for children of migrant households with single adult migrants.

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13. This section draws from the author's review of the work of the America India Foundation (AIF) and its partner organizations (see Srivastava and Dasgupta 2010).

14. In Gujarat, in the destination areas, especially in the salt pans, a number of children were nominally enrolled during the government-sponsored enrolment drive but their schooling was disrupted for several months during the migration cycle. In Maharashtra, in the villages that we visited, most of the children were nominally enrolled but were compelled to accompany their parents to the cane fields in the cutting season, which could last from November to April. During school examinations, if distance permitted, these children were shepherded to their villages to appear in the examinations, which would be no more than a farce for them; farce because they are out of touch with studies in the work sites.

Two main strategies are followed to bring the children of seasonal migrants to schools. These are setting up site schools or seasonal hostels and providing bridge courses.

Site schools are a mechanism through which migrant children can be educated in the migrants' destinations. But, running these schools involves a number of challenges. The setting up of the site schools has to be preceded by a need assessment based on surveys or other mechanisms, which can establish the need for the site school. Second, persistent advocacy is needed, both with employers and with the parents of the children. These schools can rarely succeed without employer support for land and facilities. Their remoteness and poor facilities in these schools may make it difficult to recruit adequately qualified teachers. An institutional arrangement has to develop in conjunction with the government department, so that the site schools are treated either as schools or adjunct schools (with the children's attendance being transferred to the local schools). This requires a large measure of coordination with the local schools and the formal system. Moreover, for the children who are enrolled in schools in the areas of origin, a modality has to be developed by which their enrolment and attendance records can be transferred between the schools in which they are enrolled in the areas of origin and the local formal schools near their destinations. This is quite a complex procedure, more so when the students are inter-district or even inter-state migrants. Finally, adequate systems need to be in place to provide a proper teaching-learning environment. This involves, training, monitoring, hand holding, provision of teaching-learning material, etc.

It needs to be noted that site schools do not necessarily deal with the same set of children year after year, because parents change sites and the pattern of migration varies. Dealing with new children at different stages of education can make the task of teachers quite difficult. Given also the harshness of the environment at destinations, seasonal hostels provide a familiar and hospitable terrain to the migrant children. These schools are set up in the areas of migrants' origin to provide staying facilities for migrants' school-age children during the period that the parents migrate for work. Seasonal hostels provide continuity to the children's education (as well as to the schools since they deal with the same cohort) and keep them away from the worksite environments, which are not only harsh, but also where they are constantly faced with the alternative of being involved in domestic work or employment, if not exposure to sexual abuse. Seasonal hostels, however, impose higher opportunity cost on the parents and require a much greater degree of understanding by the NGOs of local social structures as well as a high level of community support. Bridge schools serve the purpose of easing the re-entry of migrated children into schools.

As in the work site schools, the first phase has to be a needs assessment combined with patient advocacy amongst the stakeholders (migrants and local community) which can ensure that migrants are willing to leave their children behind in the hostels, and they and/or the local community would be willing to support the hostels in multiple ways. Unlike the site schools, the seasonal hostels require 24-hour support and heavier administrative responsibilities. They also require greater

cooperation from the local community. In the case of the American India Foundation (AIF) and its partners, the hostels are also a site for supplementary teaching, but the NGOs have to be conscious that there is no hiatus between children of migrants and the others.

The national flagship programme for elementary education in India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), has recognized the need to have focused initiatives to educate migrant children. It has asked states to identify and include children whose education is affected because of migration and has suggested parameters under some of its existing programmes, such as the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and the Scheme for Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) by which states could assist in setting up seasonal hostels or site schools. The guidelines for the AIE (which is more relevant for migrant situations) provide for support to site schools, resident hostels, bridge courses for dropped out children, and mobile teachers to accompany migrant families. The guidelines also provide for supporting AIE initiatives through voluntary agencies, apart from being directly implemented by state agencies or local governments.

Despite this general framework, the uptake in states has been low, which leaves, as discussed earlier, a large gap in the interventions on the ground (whether government financed and supported or not). Although state governments have set out parameters for supporting NGOs, the process of working together is not easy and financial cycles are particularly troublesome for dedicated NGOs.

A number of NGOs are, however, working in the field to support the education of migrants' children.<sup>15</sup> But our own assessment is that there is a huge implementation gap at present relating to the children of migrating families. For example, our assessment shared with Janarth, one of AIF partners reviewed, was that despite the organization's vast and impressive intervention, only about 7 per cent of the migrant children were covered in the *shakhar shalas* (site schools in the sugar cane areas). Similarly, we made rough estimates of the coverage in Gujarat. Although, in some cases (for example, roof tile factories and salt pans) the coverage was impressive, there was a vast existing gap in the coverage of children in site schools. The AIF partner initiatives in setting up seasonal hostels for children of migrating families also cover only a small percentage of migration-prone villages in the selected districts in all the three states, and not all the affected children in the selected villages are able to benefit from the interventions.

The government's SSA programme, too, as we have seen earlier in this report, does take the needs of migrant children on board and addresses these needs both through support to voluntary agencies and more directly. But, effective coverage under direct government delivery systems is still small. We also do not think it likely

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15. Through America India's LAMP, its partners in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa now directly educate more than 30,000 children every year in four states, and their concerted advocacy efforts have moved the state governments to support and scale up these models of education. These include CARE, Banyan Tree Foundation (BTF) and Action Aid. In Orissa, AIF has worked with its partners and with Action Aid, Andhra Pradesh, as well as the governments of the two states to provide schooling to migrating children at brick-kiln sites in Andhra Pradesh.

that coverage would improve dramatically under existing governmental initiatives. This is primarily because the visibility of migrants is low, both overall and even within local communities (they belong to the most marginalized communities), and drawing the migrants' children into education requires heavy social mobilization and multifaceted initiatives.

This is one of the areas where an effective partnership between the government and the NGOs can yield results, but where financial and administrative procedures discourage result-oriented NGOs, it requires the government and the other stakeholders to take a hard look at the way forward. The Right to Education Act now makes it mandatory for schools to admit children who are moving from one area or state to another for any reason, and for schools at origin to grant transfer certificates expeditiously (Clause 5(2) and 5(3) of the Act).<sup>16</sup> Thus, no child can be denied education at the destination areas under the Act, and it is for the jurisdictions to evolve a suitable modality. As a next step, these modalities should be worked out by the central and state governments so that the right of the migrant child to education can be protected.

### 5.3 Health

Various surveys and studies have shown that migrants are disadvantaged relative to the native population regarding health. The degree of vulnerability of migrants varies depending upon a number of factors. In addition to the health environment in the place of origin, transit and destination (including disease prevalence), factors include patterns of mobility (regular, circular, seasonal, etc.) that define the conditions of journey and their impact on health; the status of migrants in destination areas including the poor working and living conditions, their access to health and social services; and familiarity with the culture and language of the host community determine the extent of their vulnerability (Chatterjee 2006). Additional factors include their isolation and separation from families, lack of disposable cash incomes, and strong hierarchical and exploitative work relationships.

Any strategy to improve the health status of migrants has to take into account the multiple determinants of health status, including their very poor living and working conditions, lack of access to potable water and sanitation, low food and nutritional intake, and lack of access to health facilities.<sup>17</sup> This would lead us to the other aspects of social protection, which are discussed elsewhere in this section. Chatterjee (2006) distinguishes between three types of factors that affect migrant vulnerability in their health outcomes. These are motivational factors (reasons for migration), occupation-related factors, and environment-related factors. These factors are more likely to result in occupational and non-occupational as well as sexually transmitted diseases. In many industries where typically there is strong labour market segmentation, migrant labourers work in the most hazardous segments, as in dyeing in Tirrupur (Tamil Nadu). In quarrying and mining, diseases such as silicosis and TB are common. Chatterjee (ibid.) provides a detailed listing

16. <[www.education.nic.in/elementary/free%20and%20compulsory.pdf](http://www.education.nic.in/elementary/free%20and%20compulsory.pdf)>

17. Unnithan-Kumar, Mcnay and Costaldo (2008) provide an account of these interrelationships in their ethnographical study of poor urban migrants in Jaipur city. They also provide a number of specific suggestions on health interventions for migrants.

of diseases which are more likely to be prevalent among migrants because of the three types of factors mentioned above.

An approach to improving health outcomes for migrants has naturally to deal with all the above-mentioned causes which impact migrants' health. It must also recognize that not dealing with the health problems of any one section can lead to wider public health problems, and it must avoid an excessive focus on any one group as the possible cause of these problems, which could lead to stigmatization. It must also not focus exclusively on one single aspect of ill-health, which can lead to stigmatization of migrants without influencing the general context.<sup>18</sup>

We deal in this section only with migrants' access to health facilities and health care. As Chatterjee (ibid.) points out, factors impacting migrants' health at the destination areas can be attributed to the following:

- *Government-related factors* such as national policies, public service system, community development, development and housing;
- *Employer-related factors* such as work-site safety, living conditions, insurance coverage, women workers' maternal and reproductive health benefits, etc.;
- *Health-sector-related factors* such as health/preventive network, service coverage and approaches, service items and prices;
- *Individual-related factors* like social support at the destination, health awareness, health beliefs, health behaviour and help-seeking behaviour impact the individual and collective health risk of migrants.

This schema suggests possible points of intervention in a health strategy. Migrants' access to health services is crucially determined by their availability and affordability, their working conditions, degrees of isolation, and low cash incomes, as also the other factors mentioned above. Any health strategy for migrants must target all of the above.

A migrant-focused strategy has to take into account the wider context of general deterioration in public health facilities and the lack of access to affordable health facilities by the poor. The International Organization for Migration (IOM 2005) has suggested a framework within which the provision of health services for the host and migrant population can be visualized:

Migrant workers are excluded from whatever public health facilities that exist, since free access to them may be restricted to local residents or, among them,

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18. This has happened, for example, with the focus of the National Aids Control Programme focus on migrants. The NACP-III documents states that: 'To stop the virus from entering into the general population, interventions with bridge populations need greater focus. There are an estimated 2.5–3 million long distance truck drivers in the country with an estimated HIV prevalence of about 11–16 per cent. There are also more than 8 million temporary and short duration migrants amongst whom prevalence is unknown. Socioeconomic and situational pressures make these groups vulnerable.' We have to begin by recognizing the wider context of migrant vulnerability to ill health and to adopt measures to deal with it.

**Table 1: Integrating health and migration: Achieving a balance**

Receiving Population	Migrant Population
Improved disease protection	Timely and safe movement
Better resource utilization	Targeted health intervention
Infrastructure support	Reduced morbidity and mortality
Improved health and productivity	Better health care access, reduced stigma

Source: International Organization for Migration (2005).

only to those holding BPL cards, as is prevalent in some states. Providing access to them will require that local authorities provide access irrespective of their proof of residence, treat all seasonal migrants as eligible for the same treatment as the local poor, and treat all other migrants on the basis of their determined economic category at origin. In addition, since ill health should be treated as a negative externality, authorities and civil society organizations should arrange for mobile clinics and health camps in or in proximity to the labour camps.

#### 5.4 Shelter and housing

Shelter is a basic human right, but the government and/or employers have no responsibility of providing shelter to migrants in India. It is only in some contexts, such as when the Contract Labour Law is applicable that there is liability (of the contractor) to provide shelter. But as we have mentioned, provisions of this Act are rarely properly enforced. Because of shortage of housing of any kind, migrants find shelter in unauthorized slums or shanties, often on public lands, from where they are repeatedly displaced. Migrant labourers live in the open, in makeshift shelters covered with plastic sheets, or under bridges and so on.

The urban situation has been reviewed by us in the companion Overview paper. Urban policy regimes and urban governance systems have moved sharply in favour of urban elites (builder lobbies, corporate interests, and middle/upper class 'resident welfare associations'). Urban land prices have witnessed a sharp secular trend due to demand and speculative pressures driving the urban poor out of these markets as well as formal markets for urban housing (Mahadevia 2009).

National and local governments have followed a threefold policy to increase the supply of housing for the urban poor living in slums. First, there are the Slum Resettlement Schemes through which persons evicted from slums are resettled in the urban periphery, and schemes for in situ development of slum areas, under which part of the land under slums is sought to be developed for the slum residents with cross-subsidies obtained from the remaining land development. This is along the lines of the recommendations of the National Housing Policy, 1992. These schemes have made very little progress and have covered a small proportion of the existing slum population. Second, the urban poor access land through a variety of occupancy and ownership measures, and de facto rights are sometimes recognized by governments although with a considerable time lag (Mahadevia 2009; Batra and Mehra 2008; and Mahadevia and Brar 2008). Third, the urban infrastructure and basic services to the urban poor (UBS) component of the Jawaharlal Nehru National

Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) has the objective of providing security of tenure at affordable prices, improved housing, and providing housing to the urban poor near their place of occupation. But the direction of this provision appears to be through public-private partnership.<sup>19</sup>

The schemes mentioned above have been able to provide shelter security to a minuscule proportion of urban dwellers living in slums, shanties and squatter settlements (Mahadevia 2009). A high proportion of such dwellers are rural-urban migrants.

The situation in India is poorer than in China, where 20 to 40 per cent of migrant workers were provided dormitory accommodation by employers. Moreover, since 2005, local governments in China had shifted stance towards provision of residential rights and housing to migrant workers (Mahadevia et al. 2010). In India, despite policy pronouncements and programmes, poor migrants face greater barriers and higher insecurity in meeting shelter and other basic amenity requirements. This is combined with a more hostile socio-political environment in host environments and less secure job environments. All this leads to the kind of urban exclusionary process referred to by Kundu (2009).

### **5.5 Labour market interventions and social security**

Given the context in which migrants participate in labour markets, social protection initiatives need to focus on regulating conditions of work, improving the flow of information to migrants, creating other initiatives to improve their bargaining power and skills, and protecting them against contingency-related risks. Civil society organizations in India have taken up support activities along this entire spectrum (Deshingkar, Khandelwal and Farrington 2008) and are in fact the only ones promoting active labour market interventions aimed at migrants, but their scale is small.

One of the areas in which the organizations have exerted themselves collectively through federations is towards a comprehensive legal framework to address issues relating to the conditions of work and social security of informal workers, including migrants.

In principle, the condition of work of migrant labourers is regulated by the same laws that cover non-migrant informal workers. NCEUS (2007) has provided a comprehensive picture of laws that cover unorganized workers, and, *inter alia*, also cover migrant labourers. Table 2 gives a list of central laws that cover segments of these workers. In addition, state-specific laws are also discussed in this report.

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19. The latest policy in respect of housing is the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007, which is also based on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. The Policy provides direction and guidelines to states, local bodies and para statals to augment supply of housing for the poor (Mahadevia *ibid.*).



There is only one law in this list dealing exclusively with migrant workers, viz., Inter-state Migrant Workmen's Act (1979). The laws are poorly implemented, and this problem exists for the entire spectrum of unorganized workers.

**Table 2: Central labour and industry laws that deal with conditions of work**

Sl. No.	Broad Categories of Conditions of Work	Description/Details	Laws that Have Provisions to Regulate the Conditions of Work
1a	Physical conditions of work	Space, ventilation, illumination, temperature, humidity, hygiene, occupational health and safety.	The Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, (1983), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
1b	Duration and timing of work	Hours of work, spread over, hours of rest, overtime work, hours of work per week, night work, paid holidays during the week	The Minimum Wages Act, (1948), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, (1986), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
2	Remuneration at work	Wages, wage forms, pay period, advances, bonus, gratuity, pension, provident fund.	The Minimum Wages Act, (1948), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), The Equal Remuneration Act, (1976), The Payment of Wages Act, (1936), The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, (1976), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966.
3	Industrial and labour relations	Recognition of trade unions, redressal of grievances and dispute resolution.	The Trade Union Act (1926), The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, (1976), The Payment of Wages Act, (1936), The Minimum Wages Act, (1948), Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, (1986), The Equal Remuneration Act, (1976), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, (1966), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996)
4	Conditions of work of disadvantaged workers	Disabled workers, women workers, migrant workers, minority workers, bonded labour, other forms of forced labour, child labour	The Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, (1983), Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996), The Equal Remuneration Act, (1976), Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, (1986) and The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, (1976)

Note: The set of issues related to social security are not considered for purposes of the condition of work.

Source: NCEUS (2007), Table 11.2.

But as we have noted in the companion paper to this conference and also in this paper, migrant labourers are fragmented along labour chains, work in more isolated environments, are segmented along ethnic, social, or gender lines and can have a host of other dependencies on the contractor chains. They are, therefore, less likely to seek protective action. No doubt, among the class of seasonal migrant labourers, inter-state migrants are exposed to special vulnerabilities. Ensuring minimum labour standards and the rights of migrant workers at work is a huge challenge.

The approaches to this in India have been twofold. One approach suggests changes and reform in existing labour laws. The other approach, which is complementary to the first, is to suggest a comprehensive law for unorganized sector workers that can provide a framework for a legislation laying down minimum conditions of work and the conditions of their enforcement.

Labour laws in India, including those that apply to migrant workers, are complex and, often, at cross-purposes. Almost all independent and tripartite bodies such as the Indian Labour Conference, the Second National Labour Conference (SNLC), and the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) have recommended a simplification of these laws (Second National Labour Commission 2002; NCEUS 2009). On the issue of implementation, the existing labour relations environment in the country and the weakening of the labour administration have resulted in even weaker proactive enforcement than in the past.

Among civil society organizations and trade unions, the Inter-state Migrant Workmen's Act, 1979, has been the focus of attention, and organizations have emphasized the registration of migrant workers and the responsibilities of the principal employer. But in the context of the labour chains and multiple layers of intermediaries, both these proposals are difficult to implement.

The other major proposal that has been mooted in the last few years is a comprehensive legislation covering all aspects of work, including social security. The approaches towards a comprehensive legislation have been reviewed in NCEUS (2007, ch. 12). Some of these, such as that proposed by the National Coordination Committee for Unorganised Sector Workers, are very ambitious in scope, covering conditions of work, job tenure, and social security. The SNLC proposed a comprehensive umbrella legislation, which combined conditions of work and a proposal for social security.

The NCEUS proposed two comprehensive legislations for agricultural and non-agricultural workers with an overlapping proposal for social security (NCEUS 2007). The NCEUS report showed the need for a comprehensive legislation that can provide a regulatory framework for minimum conditions of work in the country. Such a legislative framework, it argued, needed to distinguish between the different segments of workers, especially agricultural and non-agricultural workers. It also needed to consider the regulatory framework for vulnerable segments of the labour force such as migrant labourers, home workers and others. The NCEUS proposal also took into account the main factors that lead to poor implementation of existing laws and proposed a tripartite framework for dealing with and resolving disputes.

The NCEUS Bill's key recommendations include:

- An eight-hour working day with at least half-hour break;
- One paid day of rest;
- A statutory national minimum wage for all wage workers and home workers;
- Employments specifically done by women to be brought on par with employment certified as being of equivalent value;
- Penal interest on delayed payment of wages;
- No deduction of wages in the form of fines;
- Right to organize;
- Non-discrimination on the basis of sex, caste and religion, incidences of HIV/AIDS and place of origin;

- Adequate safety equipment at the workplace and compensation for accidents;
- Protection from sexual harassment, provision of childcare; and provision of basic amenities at the work place.

The Commission in its recommendations, noted that in mines, quarries, brick-kilns, etc., where the system of contractor-based recruitments is predominant, migrant workers are recruited against advances and adjustments are made against their wages, which often include the contractor's commission, overcharging for provisions and interest rate. The Commission therefore recommended that these adjustments be declared as illegal under the proposed Act and be made subject to the dispute resolution mechanism proposed in the Bills.

An important contribution of the Commission was to recommend a speedy, time-bound and efficacious dispute resolution machinery, which was essentially tripartite in character.

On the issue of social security, too, there have been different approaches, briefly mentioned above. A full discussion is given in NCEUS (2006). One main approach in India is that of welfare funds, to which workers, employers/government are co-contributors; the funds are to be managed by Tri-partite Boards. The other is that of Social Security Schemes which are managed by government and financed by government contribution or through cesses. Both these schemes require worker registration. One of the main social security legislations that covers a very important segment of principally migrant workers, is the Building and Other Construction Workers Act, (1996). The Act, which is an umbrella legislation, came about as a result of pressure by unions and civil society organizations. The notification of the Act by state governments has been a very slow process. The Fund is financed through a cess on building construction, and construction workers who are registered are entitled to receive a number of welfare benefits. But, because registrations are tardy and benefits handed out low, there is a steady accumulation of the funds. A principal flaw in the Act is that it treats construction workers as immobile and does not provide for locational or even inter-sectoral mobility, which is bound to exist. One possible solution would be to simultaneously allow for expenditures on shelters, mobile health units, skill development and so on, which can collectively benefit the class of construction workers.

The NCEUS approach in all this has been discussed earlier (in Section 4.2). This has been to provide a universal National Minimum Social Security Package as a legal entitlement. Such a package would be applicable to all workers irrespective of sector or location. As explained in section 4.2, the NCEUS proposals specifically factored in portability in all crucial respects. But the legislation passed by parliament on 31 December 2008 (Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008) incorporated a diluted and fragmented social security approach to unorganized workers.

Thus, on the issue of reforms in labour legislation to regulate minimum conditions of work of migrants, a number of specific proposals are pending before government. In

the matter of social security, the NCEUS proposals for providing a minimum level of social security through a package and through a modality which ensures portability is a sound and viable approach and needs to be re-examined by government.<sup>20</sup> Finally, a great deal more can be done to reduce the flow of labour market information to migrants and to provide skill training to them, building upon the experiences of grass roots NGOs.<sup>21</sup> For improving the flow of information, panchayats and worker organizations need to be involved, and for training, funds can be earmarked from the Construction and Building Workers Welfare Fund and other sources.

## 6. Conclusion

Seasonally migrant and circulatory labourers, and the lower categories of rural-urban migrants clearly suffer from vulnerabilities caused by their status as migrants. Their numbers are very large and unless social protection programmes are designed and implemented so as to deal with their specific vulnerabilities, it will be very difficult for the country to reach its development goals or its commitment to the international community. Being vulnerable, weak and dispersed, migrants are not able to exercise pressure on policymaking, and India does not have a coherent policy framework for migrants.

Fortunately, many social protection programmes in India are evolving in a rights-based direction, which makes it incumbent upon governments to provide entitlements to their citizens. This is a huge positive. For migrants, the notion of local citizenship is complex, and the rights legislations must provide clear responsibilities to governments to give entitlements to migrants. Clear and simple financial and administrative arrangements need to be coordinated by higher-level governments. In general, host governments should accept the principle that the destination government should be responsible for providing social protection arrangements to workers who work in their areas. But financing arrangements by higher governments can help and incentivize the process.

An identity or a smart card can help migrants in establishing identity and claims, if the arrangements mentioned above exist. But any such process must recognize the multi-locational nature of the citizenry. If these identity cards become the sole basis for establishing identity, they will become highly exclusionary. Moreover, till the technical efficacy, cost issues, and transaction costs are not established for a country like India, one should be wary of loading them with too many functions and objectives.

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20. The basic NCEUS proposal has been revived by the National Advisory Council to the government which is chaired by the chairperson of the UPA. The *Business Standard* (Delhi edition) of 21 November 2011 reports (p. 4) that the Finance Ministry is contemplating bringing in an integrated social security package for unorganized workers consisting of a life and health cover and retirement benefits. In such an eventuality, migrants' gain will be linked to the portability of the scheme.

21. For existing NGO experiences, see Srivastava and Sasikumar (2005).

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# Creative Practices and Policies for Better Inclusion of Migrant Workers

## **The Experience of Aajeevika Bureau**

**Rajiv Khandelwal**

Director

**Amrita Sharma**

Programme Director, Centre for Migration and Labour Solutions

**Divya Varma**

Coordinator-Destination services

Aajeevika Bureau, Udaipur, India

Internal migration for livelihood, a widespread phenomenon across developing economies, has started to receive attention only recently. There are limited practices and policy interventions that help vulnerable rural migrant workers cope with the hardships of migration, the vagaries of the informal labour market, and the increasing alienation from urban spaces. Lately, civil society organizations in India have been at the forefront of initiatives, bringing visibility to the phenomenon, and they have made innovative strides in designing and delivering solutions. This paper reviews the experiences and impact of the work done by Aajeevika Bureau, a public service organization in western India, which has initiated an informed discourse on migration by way of demonstrating scalable models.



## 1. Migration and Development

Migration has become one of the most defining issues for development; more so now than ever before. In the last few decades, labour mobility has increased despite regulations, violence against migrants and scepticism about its impact on wage differentials and development (IOM n.d.; SSRC 2008). According to the Population Division of the UN, the world has a total of 214 million international migrants. This community contributes to the destination economies through cheap labour and to the source economies through transfer of remittances and skills. Notably, most of this number comprises low-skilled, semi-skilled migrants who work at the lowest level of the global economy under highly risky and abusive work conditions. The plight of international migrants moving from Africa to Europe, India to the Middle East, Bangladesh to India, Mexico to USA etc., is well known. Lately, there is a growing interest in better governance of labour mobility and attempts are being made to bring in better legal protection for migrant workers. Given the size of their contribution to the economy of their home countries, calls are also being made for better management of remittances, and migration notably has come to be termed as 'Millennium Development Goal Plan B' (Lant Pritchett cited in Howley 2008).

One important stream that has been overlooked in this discourse is the large number of migrants moving within the boundaries of a nation-state – the internal migrants who move seasonally in search of livelihoods. In most developing and transition economies, there is a large flux between rural to urban areas. High economic disparities among regions and limited opportunities in rural areas have been driving labour increasingly to the urban areas, which are the epicentres of growth. For instance, in India, the number of internal seasonal migrants is estimated to be more than 100 million (Deshingkar and Akter 2009). Preferred for their cheap labour, most of these migrants work in the informal sector devoid of social security and legal protection. Lack of portability of entitlements across state borders makes them lead a sub-human existence, devoid of access to basic services (such as shelter, health and education), and labour rights. Despite the magnitude of the problem, the policy attention to the phenomenon is abysmally low and there is a serious lack of development initiatives focused on migration.

In the past few years, there have been certain dedicated attempts to design solutions and services for migrants in India; focused interventions that would make migration a more secure and dignified experience. These interventions, notably, have been led by civil society organizations working on the increasing casualization and informalization of labour. This paper focuses on one such initiative, Aajeevika Bureau, a public service organization in western India, and shares its experiences in implementing targeted services and solutions for migrant workers. To set the broader context, the first few sections provide an overview of internal migration in India – its incidence, patterns and the nature of social exclusion faced by migrant communities. Sections five and six discuss solutions that have been successful on the ground. In the final sections, the paper highlights the constraints that come in the way of scaling up of these creative practices on migration.

## 2. Internal Migration in India

Migration in search of livelihood is a pervasive reality in India today. The bleak livelihood scenario in rain-fed, flood-affected or drought-affected, high-density or conflict-ridden areas has led to the emergence of migration as a survival strategy for a large number of poor people in the country. More than 100 million people (Deshingkar and Akter 2009), almost one tenth of India's population, are known to derive their livelihood out of seasonal migration. Over time, this movement has become more long distance with an increase in inter-state mobility. Analysis using Census data show that inter-state migration has grown from 12.02 per cent in 1981 to 13.31 per cent in 2001 (Srivastava 2011a). NSS data, specifically in the rural-urban stream also show that the percentage of inter-state migrants has gone up from 19.6 per cent in 1999–2000 to 25.2 per cent in 2007–2008 (ibid.). States such as Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, with laggard economies and a surplus of labour, are the primary suppliers of labour. At the other end, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, known for their robust and flourishing local economies, attract large numbers of workers. Maharashtra, for example, shows a high correlation (0.77) between net in-migration rate and per capita NSDP (ibid.).

The construction sector is known to be the largest employer of migrant workers with 40 million migrants (Deshingkar and Akter 2009). This is followed by employment as domestic workers (20 million), employment in textile industries (11 million), brick-kilns (10 million), transportation, mines and quarries and agriculture (ibid.). Within these sectors, seasonal migrants are mostly employed to do bottom-end tasks, which entail back-breaking labour and high risks; tasks that the local labour would not be willing to undertake. Managed by private labour contractors and social kinship networks, migrants show clear trends in movement across regions – people from a region move to work at a certain specific destination; the choice being determined by a range of factors – a leading one being social contacts/networks (Breman 1996; De Haan and Rogaly 2002). While providing a safety net and access to job opportunities, these informal networks, however, tend to perpetuate caste and gender relations and often limit the mobility of workers up the value chain. Gupta and Mitra (2002) also observe that in the informal labour markets, which are the primary destination for workers, jobs are highly segmented across lines of caste, religion and kinship.

Not all migrants, however, face the same set of vulnerabilities. Migration of semi-permanent or long-term circular migrants and seasonal or short-term migrants need more attention (Srivastava 2011b), because seasonal migrants are engaged as casual labour and face difficulties both in establishing and in claiming their entitlements. Seasonal or short-duration migrants are more vulnerable and more likely to come from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and more likely to have lower levels of education, skills and lower asset ownership (ibid.) than other migrants. NSS statistics show that 54 per cent of short-term migrants fall in the bottom two MPCE quintiles (Srivastava 2011a). Notably, incidence of temporary, circular movement is found to be more dominant among

women migrant workers. Using NSS data from 2007–2008, Agnihotri et al. (2011) report that among short-term migrants, 52 per cent are women migrating for employment, a figure higher than that for men (28 per cent). Child migrants, though undercounted, form a significant part of seasonal migrants, migrating either alone or with parents. A study by Human Rights Watch (1996, cited by Srivastava 2011a) finds that bonded child labourers are employed in large numbers to work in brick-kilns, stone quarries, carpet-weaving, beedi-rolling, etc. The focus of this paper is on these seasonal and circulatory migrant labour groups.

### 3. In a State of Drift – Migrant Workers and Social Exclusion

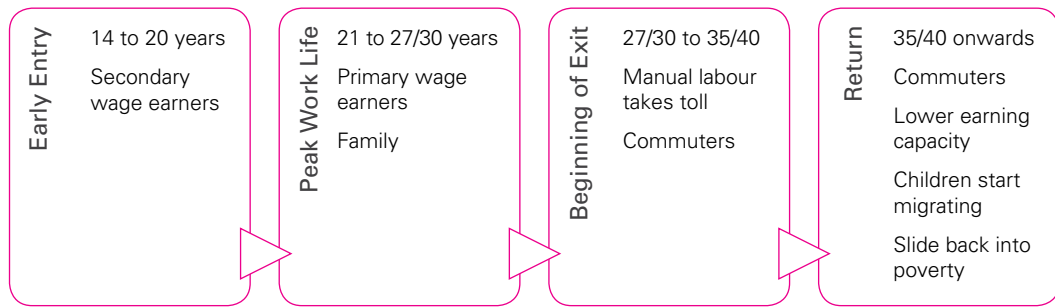
Despite the compelling numbers that underlie this phenomenon, the policies of the Indian state have failed to provide any form of legal or social protection to this vulnerable population. In a continuous state of drift, migrants are left out of the scope of state provisions at both ends – the source and the destination. Further, the urban labour markets treat them with opportunistic indifference, extracting hard labour but denying them basic entitlements such as decent shelter, rations, subsidized health and education (Mosse et al. 2005). This section discusses the characteristics of social exclusion, as experienced by migrant communities. The root of this exclusion lies in the way economic relations are increasingly structured in the larger economy – relations that incentivize informalization and casualization of labour. This section primarily draws from micro-studies done by Aajeevika in southern Rajasthan and Gujarat – one of the larger labour corridors in India.

#### 3.1 Short economic life cycle of migrants

The entry of migrant workers into the urban labour market, as seen in southern Rajasthan, is marked with endemic disadvantages. Most workers join the market at an age as young as 13–14 years. As dropouts from school, migrant youth lack both education and skills and are forced to undertake manual labour at whatever meager wages is offered. A number of occupational studies, undertaken by Aajeevika, show that unskilled migrant workers are paid less than the official minimum wage and made to work long hours without suitable compensation (Dwivedi and Sharma 2007; Rao and Varma 2010). Lack of skills exacerbates their vulnerabilities, because they are highly replaceable and are found to be frequently rotated across worksites and sectors.

An analysis of the economic life cycle (Figure 1) of migrants working as headloaders or unskilled casual labour reveals that between the ages 27–30 years, when skilled workers reach their prime, unskilled migrants start their exit from the labour market. Long working hours, hard manual labour, and exposure to several occupational health hazards take a toll on their physical health. A survey done in 2008 by Jatan and Aajeevika in Rajsamand showed that 46 per cent of rural youth were returnees. This early return is characterized by poor health, limited or no savings and a slide back into poverty. At the age of 40, their earning capacity is significantly lowered,

Figure 1: Economic Life Cycle of a Migrant



because they are unable to take up hard manual labour and subsequently have to exit the labour market. They are replaced by younger workers, which perpetuates this cycle of poverty.

### 3.2 Problems in establishing identity

An early departure from the village also means that migrant youth lack all verifiable proof of their identity. The database of 60,000-plus migrants registered with Aajeevika shows that 34 per cent of workers do not even have a voter ID. The inability to establish one's identity becomes a cause of frequent harassment by civic authorities and police in the cities. Migrants become easy suspects in case of theft or other crimes. Lately, a growing regionalism has made their survival in cities more difficult, as they fall victim to identity politics. The killing and marauding of migrant workers in Assam and Maharashtra is a case in point (Talukdar 2007; *Mid-Day* 2011).

### 3.3. Vagaries of the informal labour market

Scattered, ill-informed and uneducated migrants also become victims of poor labour practices, unfair wage deduction and fraudulence. A study done by Sharma et al. (2008) shows that more than 65 per cent of migrant workers from Udaipur reported their experiencing labour disputes at work, most of them relating to payment of wages. Caught in a chain of contractors and middlemen, they have little recourse to legal action or redress. None of these disputes ever make their way to the labour court or the labour department.

### 3.4 Poor portability of entitlements

Owing to the highly mobile nature of their employment, migrant workers get excluded from the scope of both urban and rural policy design. This has a significant impact on their access to public amenities and welfare schemes. Sainath (2004, 2011) in his writings has repeatedly brought out how migrants from Odisha fail to get captured in the Census enumeration, which leads to under-reporting of total population. A recent study (Sharma et al. 2010, unpublished) revealed that a large number of migrants are unable to cast their vote and participate in elections, because they are highly mobile and are not entitled to vote outside their place of origin. Serious citizenship issues arise as the state machinery does not allow a portability of basic entitlements.

At the destination areas, migrants do not have access to reasonably priced, good-quality public facilities for food, health, transportation and financial services. They are also known for paying much more than the local population for basic services (Bremner 1996). As found in an Aajeevika study in Ahmedabad, for lack of access to subsidized ration, expenses on food account for majority of the living costs (40 per cent) for migrants in cities (Ali 2008). In such a scenario, migrants often have inadequate nutritional intake, which affects his/her ability to work and earn a livelihood in a sustainable manner (ibid.). Among the various services that migrants lose their access to, the services of formal financial institutions is most illustrative. For lack of valid identity proof and residence proof, migrants are unable to open bank accounts at the destination areas. Thorat and Jones (2011) in a study of the Rajasthan-Gujarat corridor report that 86 per cent of the respondents do not own bank accounts.

Women and child migrants form an even more vulnerable group within this community facing serious lack of security at the destination areas. Women in particular face high risks of trafficking and various forms of exploitation, including forced prostitution (personal communication with Arif Kapadia, Saathi, Mumbai, 13 May 2011). Because of the real estate prices in the cities and low disposable incomes, migrants are compelled to live in sub-human conditions on work sites, pavements, filthy and congested slums which lack basic amenities and sanitation facilities. This gives rise to issues such as harassment and abuse by the police and local land mafia, increased vulnerability of women and children and risks to health and well-being. For households that migrate with children, access to good quality education also becomes a significant challenge. In India, the estimated number of children out of school because of seasonal migration is six million, which is 60 per cent of the total number of children out of school (MHRD 2003 cited in Smita 2007).

## 4. Migration Policy and Practice – Missing Links

*In general, the policy environment for migrants is hostile: city master plans aim to keep migrants out; rural development and agriculture policies aim to control out-migration; and migration is viewed as a socially and politically destabilising process. The result is that the costs of migration are borne mainly by the migrant and governments escape the responsibility of providing them with the basic needs.*

(Deshingkar 2004, p.2)

### 4.1 Inadequate state and civil society response

Migrant workers are largely out of bounds for any form of governance or civil society initiatives. The existing legislations are heavily biased towards the formal and organized sector (Mosse et al. 2005). The Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979, is aimed at safeguarding the interests of migrants; however, it is largely obsolete and is hardly enforced anywhere. There is no state machinery for ensuring the operationalization of the basic provisions of the Act, which requires the registration of the migrants by the contractor who is hiring them for work at an outside-state

destination. There is also a need to make the provisions of the Act more conversant with the realities of today's labour market. Among recent policies, MGNREGA is regarded as a response to minimize migration; however, it is also geared towards containing migration by providing local employment, an endeavour that has been largely ineffective as reported by several studies (see Sharma and Poonia 2010; Samarthan 2011).

Another government strategy, the creation of Counter Magnet Areas (CMAs) (Roy 2010) was designed with the aim to reduce the burden on cities. It primarily reflects the concerns of the cities. In the last five years, certain welfare boards and legislations have come into existence for informal sector workers, that have the potential to address the risks faced by migrants, such as the Social Security Act, 2008. There is, however, a lack of clarity on the implementation mechanism and the required resources.

Even in civil society, migration largely has been viewed as an undesirable phenomenon. In the past, civil society organizations have focused on checking migration through watershed programmes and alternate income-generating activities at the village level, arguing in part that these will at least slow migration (see Mosse et al. 2005). Further, most of the development organizations have their own territorial mandates (specifically urban or rural), which are not inclusive of such a population. For instance, the urban development discourse on shelter does not have a grounded perspective on seasonal migration. The perspective, if at all, is heavily inclined towards slum development, while most of the seasonal migrants are outside the slum population and hence invisible.

One of the serious constraints in framing an effective policy response to internal migration is lack of credible and robust data on incidence of seasonal migration. The Census and NSS, which have a significant impact on policymaking, are unable to capture seasonal and circular migration. Research that is informed by macro-estimates also tends to differ from the discourse emerging from micro-studies (see Kundu 2009), which give a radically different picture of the ever-increasing labour mobility. The large variances and contradictions between what macro-data and data from micro-studies say have created serious hurdles in emergence of effective policy and practice.

#### **4.2 Need for an institutional response**

While debates abound on the impact migration has in bringing people out of poverty and decreasing inequality (see Mendola 2006; Taylor 2006; Breman 1996), the centrality of its contribution to a household's income basket is undeniable. Analysis of NSS data reveals that 41 per cent of income for migrant households comes from migration (Tumbe 2010). Scholarship has time and again pointed to the sedentary bias of development policies in India (see De Haan 2000) and has stressed upon the need for an institutionalized response to migration. For instance, in a longitudinal analysis of the impact of migration on rural labour market and rural society, Rodgers et al. (2001, p.1983) point out: 'The potential for sustained growth

(through migration) is certainly present. But the existing institutions, both state and social institutions in the village are clearly inadequate. It is necessary to think how the state could take advantage of this opportunity for growth by providing incentives, the institutions and the public investment in infrastructure which can convert this potential to reality.' There is an imminent need to come up with solutions that can possibly transform work opportunities for migrants into a more lucrative means of livelihood.

In the recent past, some focused interventions have been established that address certain specific vulnerabilities faced by migrants. The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) with a focus on sexual health and in particular HIV/AIDS prevention, for example, is the earliest known example of an initiative which has worked with migrant communities in a service delivery mode. Certain NGOs in Odisha, Maharashtra and Gujarat have worked on integrating children from migrant households who are school dropouts back into the formal schooling system. Labornet in Bangalore has made attempts to establish a credible interface between informal sector workers and employers, addressing problems of information asymmetry in informal labour markets. These specialized migrant support programmes have been categorized by Deshingkar et al.(2006) into four broad categories – social protection model, market-led approach, unionization model and the rehabilitation model. Aajeevika Bureau is an example of a social protection model which strives to work with migrant communities at both the source areas and the destination areas, and to address the specific vulnerabilities of both places.

## 5. Targeted Services for Migrant Workers – An Emergent Model

With the mandate of improving livelihoods and social security for migrant workers, Aajeevika Bureau works in a pocket of high out-migration in Rajasthan in the western part of India. The initiative includes a comprehensive set of services aimed at reducing hardships, enabling access and facilitating better returns for vulnerable migrant groups. Unlike earlier development interventions that tried to address rural deprivation and urban exclusion in isolation, this initiative treats mobility as a given and works with the migrant groups at both the source areas and the destination areas. This section gives an overview of the core migration services piloted at Aajeevika and dwells on the operational model adopted for their delivery, while also discussing their impact.

### 5.1 Creating migrant facilitation centres

The initiative is anchored by a network of walk-in resource centres for migrant workers, namely, Shramik Sahayata evam Sandarbha Kendras. These centres work as the operational nodes of the model, offering pre-departure counselling access to information and targeted services to workers. They are functional at both the ends of the migration corridor – the source and the destination. At the source, the centres are based at the block level, while at the destination they are set up close to either the work sites or residence of the targeted migrant community.

One of the defining features of the centres is its accessibility to the community – efforts are made to keep them within the reach of migrants and also to adapt its functioning to suit the migration and work cycle of migrant workers and provide a safe, enabling environment for them.

## **5.2 Addressing concerns related to identity and establishing numbers**

As a response to lack of documentation and valid identity proof, the centres carry out the process of registration and issuing of photo IDs to workers. With the help of a simple registration form, important demographic, migration and work-related information are collected. Verification is done with the help of the head of the panchayat and an identity card is issued to him/her. The photo IDs are recognized by Rajasthan Labour Department through a government order. This simple yet powerful innovation has resulted in securing the identities of a mobile and vulnerable population. It has gone beyond a mere proof of introduction and is serving as a gateway to banking services, and in getting SIM cards and gas connections at the destination. There are several instances where it has helped workers avoid harassment from police and civic authorities. The card has also been used by workers left out of the voter ID registration process at the source to vote in elections. The most important contribution is the visibility that the card has brought to seasonal migrants who otherwise remain invisible in the urban space.

Till date, the Bureau has registered more than 60,000 migrant workers. This initiative has also helped the larger goal of creating a database of migrants at the block level. Details provided by migrants are digitized with the help of registration software and shared with the Rajasthan Labour Department on a quarterly basis, thus building strong evidence on inter-state labour mobility from southern Rajasthan and impacting the policy agenda of the state.

## **5.3 Impact on skills, incomes and employment**

Organizing vocational skill training and placement services are aimed at helping rural youth upgrade their skill-set and enter the labour markets with greater competitive advantage. Given that the target group is already in the labour market, focused short-term training courses have been designed that provide rigorous inputs on both theoretical and practical aspects of the trade. There is an emphasis on hands-on training where trainees spend close to 60 per cent of the training time on worksites. Imparting specialized inputs in life-skills is a vital component of this programme. Sessions are conducted on improving communication, self-confidence, and interaction with customers with the intention of improving employability and retention of the youth in the labour market. Inputs are provided on time and stress management, legal and financial literacy and on managing both occupational and health risks. In addition to direct training, the centres offer job counselling, short-term preparatory trainings, life skills training and linkages to placement opportunities. Elaborate tools for testing person-job fit, systematic evaluation and periodic follow-up mechanisms help ensure quality and test the final impact of the training. By December 2011, Aajeevika had trained 1,822 youths and provided placements for 3,026 youths.



The initiative to help the youth upgrade their skill-sets and diversify to organized work settings, however, has been fraught with challenges. In particular, taking this intervention to scale has been a test for the Bureau. The manner in which present-day labour markets are structured is such that entry-level wages in the organized settings are lower when compared with casual daily wage work. This becomes a serious deterrent to encouraging rural youth to diversify to organized sector jobs. A bigger problem is that of resources for skill development, especially for sectors such as construction. While the state programmes focus on skills on the higher end of the spectrum such as computer training and retail, the corporate sector absolves itself of all responsibility – it needs skilled labour but is not ready to make required investments in skill building.

#### 5.4 Legal protection for workers and providing platforms for asserting collective strength

To address the widespread disconnect between the formal legal machinery and informal sector workers, the walk-in resource centres offer legal counselling, arbitration services and legal literacy to workers. In case of a dispute, workers can approach the centres to register their case and seek counsel or aid. This process of intermediation is institutionalized through regular legal clinic days. Legal clinic days are adaptations of the formal court mechanism, wherein disputing parties are given

##### **Box 1: Labour Line**

Aajeevika launched a phone-based help line for workers in Udaipur in August 2011. The helpline involves a dedicated phone line answered by a trained counsellor. It allows workers to reach out for counsel in case of any problem related to wages, retrenchment or abuse. The Labor Line is supported by the network of walk-in resource centres at the source and destination. Effort is being made to create a wider support network which can respond in case of emergencies. In a period of less than six months, Labor Line has received more than 600 calls, 350 of them being from a small destination city of Udaipur.

an objective hearing and advice by a trained lawyer. The centre plays the role of an objective arbiter between the complainant and the offenders. There is an emphasis on resolving disputes through intermediation and negotiation, rather than litigation, which can be expensive and hugely time consuming for workers to pursue. Only the more complex cases that are not amenable to arbitration strategy are taken to the labour court. So far, Aajeevika has resolved 550 disputes and facilitated compensation worth Rs 52 lakhs.

The overwhelming numbers of cases that reach the centre, however, pertain to wage payments and are limited mostly to male workers. Instances of disputes being reported by women are less and the initiative to reach out to female workers continues. Further, while elaborate mechanisms have been developed for settling disputes in cases of short-distance movement, there is a need to develop response mechanisms for long-distance migration. Nevertheless, the success of the legal-aid service offered by the Bureau so far and the high rate of calls to the Labor Line demonstrates that there is a great need to provide fast-track dispute redressal forums to workers in the unorganized sector.

## 5.5 Enabling financial inclusion and linkages with social security schemes

The Bureau has promoted a specialized agency called Rajasthan Shram Sarathi Association (RSSA), a Section 25 Company that offers targeted financial services to migrant workers moving from southern Rajasthan. The initiative has been quite successful in linking the migrant workers to a diverse range of financial products such as micro-credit, insurance and pension. Micro-loans offered by RSSA help migrants to prevent abrupt breaks in the migration cycle and help women to manage volatility in cash flows through informal savings instruments at the source areas. It is a decentralized model that has the ability to cater to the various life-cycle needs of the clients. Under its financial inclusion programme, migrant workers are linked to bank accounts at both source and destination – the major objectives being promotion of savings and facilitating remittances. This service is much in demand, especially at the destination, where the banks have started accepting the ID cards issued by the Bureau as a valid document to satisfy their Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements. It deserves mention, however, that this acceptance is limited to some banks and often depends on the sensitivity levels of branch managers. Migrant workers are also linked to different social security provisions of the state and insurance products available in the market. Lately, workers are being linked to the Construction Welfare Board in both Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Formal insurance claim settlement mechanisms, however, have documentation requirements which migrant workers find difficult to fulfill. Getting a copy of an FIR and medical reports in the event of an unnatural death is often too arduous a task, especially in long distance inter-state movement. In several cases, workers also fail to avail benefits on account of poor awareness levels. The Bureau runs dedicated financial literacy programmes to educate workers on social security schemes and their documentary requirements.

## 5.6 Access to essential services at the destination

In addition to the services mentioned above, the facilitation centres at the destination help migrants link up with health and banking services. Community kitchens have been promoted in Ahmedabad in partnership with HPCL, where workers have access to subsidized LPG at the rate of Rs 6 per hour. Regular advocacy events are organized, and there are efforts to create a healthy interface between civic authorities, police and migrant worker communities. An important strategy in service delivery in the cities is formation of trade-based collectives. At the destination, migrant workers live in groups that are dispersed through the expanse of the city. This greatly constrains their chances of coming together or exercising collective bargaining power. The trade-based collectives promoted by the Bureau serve as unique platforms for the workers to come together, find solutions to their common problems and negotiate with the government for their rights. Regular inputs on leadership building and technical skills are imparted to the collective members. Many collectives have organized public hearings to protest against human rights violations such as atrocities committed against migrant workers and to advocate for access to amenities at the labour

congregation points. These collectives also serve as vehicles for service delivery on food, health and banking.

### 5.7 Strengthening support systems for migrant families at source

A range of family support and empowerment programmes are carried out in the source areas. These programmes, while addressing specific vulnerabilities faced by migrant households, play a crucial role in helping migrants complete their migration cycle successfully. There are special initiatives for enabling the access of women to public welfare schemes, promoting food security and agricultural outcomes, and linking families to specialized health care services. Under the leadership of change agents from the community, women from migrant households are mobilized into common-interest groups that serve as platforms to facilitate negotiation in the public space and enable mutual support. Through these programmes, families have also come to benefit from better access to work entitlements and social security schemes. A strong emphasis on individual and group education directly empowers women to equally gain from the benefits and thrive despite the challenges of male migration. The family support programmes are carried out in close partnership with the panchayat representatives.

**Table 1: Migration services – outcomes and impacts**

Services	Outcomes and Impacts
Registration and Photo ID	Better ability to negotiate in urban spaces Reduction in police harassment in cities Access to basic services at the destination
Training and Placement	Better integration in urban labour markets Increased stability in income and employment cycles Improved confidence levels and bargaining power
Legal Aid	Access to fast legal recourse Awareness of labour rights and entitlements Increased visibility to labour disputes in the informal sector
Financial Inclusion & Social Security	Linkage to formal financial system Access to specialized financial services Linkage to insurance, pension, labour welfare schemes
Destination Support	Access to subsidized food & good quality health care Improved interface with police and civic authorities Improved collective bargaining power with contractors, employers and government
Family Support Programme	Improved social support systems for women of migrant households Increased access to work entitlements, specialized health care services, and public welfare schemes Improved food security and agricultural outcomes

### 5.8 A growing recognition

One of the early outcomes of these interventions was the authorization by the Rajasthan Labour Department of the photo ID issued by Aajeevika. This was the first ever example of a state government's acknowledging the high incidence of labour migration and taking a concrete step towards better documentation and management of the phenomenon. Advocacy efforts by the Bureau have also led to inclusion of Rajasthan migrants in the Construction Worker Welfare Board of Gujarat. The Bureau has also been an active participant in the Rajasthan Construction Worker Welfare Board for the design and delivery of welfare programmes.

Challenging the conventional approach to migration and development, the initiative has also received attention from several national and international donors. It has helped create an environment which questions the existing approach of strengthening rural livelihoods and reducing hardships for urban poor in isolation from one another. It has led to a greater appreciation of how millions of livelihoods are in a state of transition, that rural and urban are part of the same continuum, and there is a need to treat this reality more effectively. These efforts have found acknowledgement and support from Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT), Sir Ratan Tata Trust, World Bank, India Development Marketplace, IFMR Trust and OXFAM. SDTT has particularly taken this forward as part of its urban poverty work. Migration services are now an important component of SDTT's funding portfolio wherein enabling systems are being created for civil society organizations to learn from each other's field experiences. It has triggered the creation of a large community of people dealing with issues on migration, spreading across 9 states covering more than 40 districts and 16 towns/cities. This community has come together as a national coalition, namely, National Coalition for Security of Migrant Workers (NAC-SOM) to ensure protection of various kinds of labour, livelihood, citizenship, constitutional and human rights of workers.

## 6. Other Frontiers in Migration Practice and Policy Change

Other frontiers of creative experimentation and interventions with migrant communities involve education of children of migrant workers, sexual health of migrant communities, unionization of workers and issues related to child migrant workers. This section discusses some more examples in migration practice, which have come up as a response to the unique needs of their context, and the attempts to address specific issues of migrant communities.

### 6.1 Enabling access to education for children of migrant workers

Migration is a leading cause of the high dropout rate from schools. Though there is a government order under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan<sup>1</sup>, providing for the education of migrant workers' children, its implementation is highly deficient. NGOs in high-migration areas have undertaken dedicated initiatives such as seasonal hostels/residential care centres to enable inclusion of children in school both at the source and at the destination. Notable examples include education initiatives run by Lokadrushti in western Odisha for children of brick-kiln workers, SETU in Gujarat for children of migrants working in salt pans, Janarth in Maharashtra for children of sugar cane cutters. Aide et Action and America India Foundation are two leading resource agencies providing support to education initiatives for children affected by migration.

### 6.2 Social mobilization for advocacy on wages and legal entitlements

PRAYAS Center for Labor Research and Action has been a leading agency working through unionization of vulnerable migrant streams. It has a focus on specific

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1. This is a campaign launched by the Government of India to promote universal education for children in the age group of 6–14 years.

migrant groups, such as those working in the cotton ginning, brick-kiln and construction sectors. The model rests on extensive mobilization of workers to help them assert their rights collectively and promotion of their unions as platforms to negotiate with employers, contractors and the government. They have used the media extensively for creating public sensitivity around problems faced by the highly vulnerable migrant populations. This initiative has met with substantial success through checking of child labour trafficking to Bt cotton seed farms in northern Gujarat and collectivization of intermediary labour agents through whom an increase of 40–50 per cent in local wages was achieved. Similarly, efforts of the union promoted by PRAYAS in the brick-kiln sector have led to substantial wage increase for workers. PRAYAS's work with child migrants has triggered a response both from the sending and receiving state governments from Rajasthan and Gujarat through the creation of a special task force and an increased fund allocation for education.

### 6.3 Creating institutionalized access to jobs

As an effort to mainstream unorganized workers and link them gainfully with the urban labour market, organizations such as Labornet, Bangalore, have set up elaborate systems for member registration, certified training and placement. The registration process aims to formalize the identity of informal sector workers across trades and occupations. A social enterprise, Labornet has both a profit and non-profit component in its work as it actively provides an interface between workers and employers. This interface, a charged service for employers, offers them a centralized and convenient access to trusted, certified workers. To the workers, it offers regular access to jobs with social security safeguards and skill upgradation opportunities through a mix of technology and an apprenticeship system. The organization has so far developed a database of 45,000 workers, and offers wide-ranging services on financial inclusion, linkage with social security products and welfare schemes to unorganized sector workers.

### 6.4 Enabling portability of entitlements

As a measure to address food security concerns, efforts have been made by civil society organizations to help migrants access subsidized ration through temporary ration cards in cities. A leading example of this can be seen in the Government Resolution (GR) to ensure PDS portability passed by the Maharashtra government on 9 November 2000. The GR acknowledges the vulnerabilities of migrant communities and the problems they face in obtaining and producing documentary proof of their identity and residence. Certain relaxations are proposed under the GR that would enable migrants to access subsidized grain and fuel in the destination cities. Ration Kruti Samiti, a network of civil society organizations in Maharashtra, working with the urban poor was instrumental in the passing of the GR. Though it started with the intention of helping the urban poor access the PDS, the network has reached out to both inter- and intra-state migrants, who constitute the majority of the urban poor population. Disha, a pioneer organization working on migration in Nashik, used this GR to help seasonal migrants in Nashik get temporary PDS cards for a period of 4 months (extendable to 12 months) with relaxed documentary requirements. As per the existing practice, a migrant is required to cancel his card on departure so that his/her PDS at the origin can be renewed.

## 7. 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 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.

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## Migrants' (Denied) Access to Health Care in India

**Anjali Borhade**

Assistant Professor, Lead, Migration, Health and Development Unit

Indian Institute of Public Health, Delhi, India

Convener – The National Coalition of Organizations for Security of Migrant Workers

### Abstract

In most countries international migration has received more attention than internal migration. Even though internal labour migration has become an important livelihood strategy for many poor groups across the world, these migrants are often neglected or excluded from the various welfare programmes of their respective countries, such as mainstream programmes in education, health, adequate living conditions, minimum wages and freedom from exploitation and harassment. This increases the vulnerabilities of the migrants and leads to their poor health status, which has significant public health implications.

This paper concludes that a multitude of factors affect the health of migrants, including inadequate nutrition, poor housing conditions, hazardous occupational conditions, lack of access to health care services and a low level of awareness. Hence a population health approach is necessary that will align strategies, policy

options and interventions for improving health outcomes among migrants. Possible strategies to improve the health of migrants can be: promoting migrant-sensitive health policies, assessment of the health of migrants and identifying and filling the gaps in service delivery to meet their health needs, sensitizing and training relevant policymakers and health stakeholders and initiating migrant friendly public health services for those with special needs. There is also a need for convergence of the existing programmes at source and destination levels, so that the needs of marginalized migrants are accommodated in the programmes such as food security, education for migrant children, and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

*Key words:* India, internal labour migration, magnitude of migration, health risk, health needs, HIV/AIDS, Millennium Development Goals, malaria, tuberculosis, sexual and reproductive health, mother and child health, occupational health, health programmes and policies for migrants.

## Introduction

The primary goal of this paper is to understand the vulnerabilities of migrant workers to various health issues and their public health implications. The paper also focuses on the absence of programmes and policies to address special health needs of migrants in India, while demonstrating the ways forward.

Internal labour migration has become an important livelihood strategy for many poor groups across the world (Deshingkar et al. 2009), but this segment of the population faces exclusion from the various existing mainstream programmes, such as education and health, which increases their vulnerabilities. In the case of internal migrant labourers, their susceptibility to various health problems stems from their peripheral socioeconomic existence in the host area. This leads to their poor health status, which has significant public health implications pertaining to infectious and occupational diseases (Borhade 2011).

The rationale for this paper is to understand these vulnerabilities and the ensuing public health issues, the current programme and policy environment and to provide recommendations for improving the health status of migrants. This paper addresses voluntary internal labour migration (within the country, inter-state and intra-state) for paid work, which includes both permanent (residing in undeclared urban slum areas) and temporary migration (for 2–6 months in a year) from rural-rural, urban-urban, urban-rural and rural-urban areas.

## Internal Labour Migration

India currently stands at the brink of an era that is expected to bring tremendous economic growth; yet there are pockets of neglected populations whose development indicators are disconcerting (NHDR 2001). One such neglected group is internal labour migrants. Seasonal migration for livelihood is a growing

phenomenon in India. The National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL) (Nandita et al. 2002) estimates the number of internal labour migrants in rural areas in India alone to be about 10 million (including roughly 4.5 million inter-state migrants and 6 million intra-state migrants). The 2001 Census has recorded about 53.3 million rural to rural migrations within the country. While the latest 64th Round NSS survey puts a figure of 30 million on internal migration, various estimates based on micro-level studies (Deshingkar et al. 2009) suggest that the figure is close to 100–120 million. Intra- and inter-state labour migration is an important feature of the Indian economy. Most of this movement has been from the most populous and poorest states with net in-migration being higher for the more developed states.

According to NCRL (1991), a large number of migrants are employed in cultivation and plantations, brick-kilns, quarries, construction sites and fish processing. A large number of migrants also work in urban informal manufacturing and construction services or transport sectors and are employed as casual labourers, headloaders, rickshaw pullers and hawkers.

Most seasonal migrants seek work in the above-mentioned unorganized sectors as daily labourers providing unskilled services. Men usually work as manual labourers, while women are employed as domestic workers, headload transporters or agricultural workers.

## Vulnerabilities of Migrant Workers

While migration is an important livelihood strategy for many and has shown to have social and economic benefits (Club et al. 2000; Deshingkar et al. 2009), it also has serious negative repercussions (Borhade 2011). A combination of factors at the area of destination complicates the vulnerability, which is primarily premised on the alien status of the migrants. Limited choice and reduced capacity to negotiate result in increased discrimination in life chances. A migrant is considered an 'outsider'. Various surveys and studies have shown that migrants are disadvantaged relative to the native population regarding employment, education and health (Chatterjee 2006; NACP III 2007). It is difficult to pinpoint specific separate reasons for this, such as deficient education, inferior health care provision, poor wages, initial prejudice and sustained discrimination, but these factors mutually reinforce each other. For instance, a bias against the migrants may translate into health providers' neglect, which in turn perpetuates poor migrant health (Borhade 2011).

The degree of vulnerability in which migrants find themselves depends on a variety of factors ranging from their legal status to their general environment. The hiring of migrants in an irregular situation allows employers to escape providing health coverage to them, and then the labour force becomes cheaper than recruiting locals/natives. With regard to internal migrants, their fluidity in terms of movement and their working conditions in the informal work arrangements in the city debar them from access to adequate curative care (Chatterjee 2006; WHO 2008; WHO 2003).

## Determinants associated with the health of migrants

Different types of migration lead to diversified vulnerability among internal migrants. The common determinants of health risks among migrants are the motivational factors (reasons for migration, occupations at the source of origin) and occupation-related factors (Borhade et al. 2006; Sundar et al. 2000; WHO 2008). In addition, the living conditions of migrants affect their health, and these factors are inter-correlated. The factors are:

- Overcrowded living conditions, which facilitate increased transmission of infectious diseases;
- Poor nutritional status (consequent lowered immunity) due to lack of food before, during and after migration;
- Inadequate quantities and quality of water to sustain health and allow personal hygiene;
- Poor environmental sanitation;
- Inadequate shelter or shelter without sanitation facilities; Choices of occupation and working conditions (Alderete et al. 2000; Borhade 2011; MOHFW 2002).

## Public Health Issues Stemming from Migration

Migrants are often exposed to difficult and unsafe conditions, face occupational hazards, live in poor conditions and are without their supportive family and societal structure. In addition, they are excluded from several mainstream programmes, including those for education and health. As a consequence, they are susceptible to several categories of health problems, as discussed below.

### Morbidity pattern among migrants

The morbidity patterns among migrants vary with type of migration and its potential for generating health risks. For instance, in the case of migration into big cities like Mumbai, which takes place on a more or less permanent basis, the susceptibility of the migrants to health problems stems from their peripheral socioeconomic existence in the host areas (Ray 1993; Slesinger et al. 1986; Schenker 1996). With regard to migration for agricultural labour for a duration of three to four months – for example, those who go from Nandurbar (Maharashtra) to Gujarat and return home after the harvest – the migrants are exposed to various health hazards. The specific problems for the migrants include infectious diseases, chemical- and pesticide-related illnesses, dermatitis, heat stress, respiratory conditions, musculoskeletal disorders and traumatic injuries (Phoolchand 1991). Itinerant sugar cane harvesting groups in Maharashtra and other states differ enormously from other migrant categories. Sugar cane workers have a high level of occupational accidents and are exposed to the high toxicity of pesticides. They may also have an increased risk of lung cancer, possibly mesothelioma. This may be related to the practice of burning foliage at the time of cane cutting. Bagassosis is also a problem specific to the industry, because it may occur following exposure to bagasse (a by-product of sugar cane). The workers may also be affected by chronic infections, which reduce their

productivity (Phoolchund 1991; Weill et al. 1966). Migrants are working in stone quarries scattered all over India and work-related illness endemic to the stone industry include respiratory diseases such as silicosis and tuberculosis (TB) due to prolonged inhalation of silica dust (Tribhuwan et al. 2009).

### **Infectious Diseases**

Lack of proper water supply, poor drainage system, unhealthy practices and deplorable sanitary conditions expose the migrants to various kinds of health risks predetermined by their standard of living and their choice of occupation (Borhade 2006; Chatterjee 2006; Hansen Eric et al. 2003; Jeyaranjan et al. 2000). Their living conditions and health behaviours increase their susceptibility to infectious disease. Infectious diseases such as malaria, hepatitis, typhoid fever, and respiratory infections are found to have a higher incidence among migrants. Migrant labourers avail of curative care, but they fall outside the coverage of preventive care largely because of their fluidity of movement caused by uncertainty of employment.

### ***Malaria and tuberculosis (TB)***

Migration is a matter of concern in relation to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for HIV/AIDs, malaria and other major diseases (Waddington et al. 2005). In case of malaria, migration may increase exposure to disease by transporting mosquitoes to new areas and/or create habitats that are favourable to mosquitoes. Migration may also help spread resistance to drugs.

The 44th World Health Assembly (WHO) recognized the growing importance of TB as a public health problem (Chatterjee 2006). Migrants are approximately six times more likely to have tuberculosis than the general population (Villarejo et al. 1999). Migration is an important reason for the persistence of TB, besides other reasons such as poor management of TB control programmes, poverty, population growth, and a significant rise of TB cases in HIV endemic areas (Coker 2004; Ogden et al. 1999; Khatri et al. 2000). The study (Jaggarajamma et al. 2006) in the tuberculosis unit of Tiruvallur district of Andhra Pradesh, under The Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), identified migration as an important factor for default of treatment of tuberculosis. The migration was mainly occupational reasons, following which migrants return home. The study concludes that irregular and incomplete treatment on account of migration is likely to increase the burden of TB in the community. Since migration, whether temporary or permanent, contributes to nearly one fourth of the default, it is important to work out strategies to overcome this. Providers should be made aware that migration is an important factor for default, and they should be encouraged to motivate patients to take regular treatment for the prescribed duration. Recently, the RNTCP has started providing a duplicate card to migrants to continue TB treatment anywhere in India, which is a significant step to reduce the default cases due to migration.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Usher et al. 2005) also identifies the linkages between migration and MDGs (including MDG 6 – prevention of TB, malaria and other infectious diseases) and the potential to deal with the challenge and achieve the MDGs.

## Migration and HIV/AIDS

Many studies show that a migrant worker is more susceptible to HIV/AIDS infection. Prevalence of HIV/AIDS among male migrants is 0.55 per cent, while it is only 0.29 per cent among non-migrants (NFHS III 2005–2006). IOM argues that migrants and mobile people become more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, but being mobile by itself is not a risk factor for HIV/AIDS. It is the situations encountered and behaviours possibly engaged in during the mobility or migration that increases vulnerability and risk. Migrant and mobile people may have little or no access to HIV information, prevention (condoms, STI management), and health services (Usher et al. 2005).

## Occupational health

The occupation-related commonly reported problems among migrants workers in the informal sector are cold-cough/fever, diarrhoea, tiredness, lack of appetite, giddiness, weight loss, stomach pain, hip pain, headache, pain in the neck, swelling of legs, swelling of hands, hair loss, skin diseases, injuries, chest pain and eye problems (Chatterjee 2006; Jaggarajamma et al. 2006). Other illnesses include infectious diseases, chemical- and pesticide-related illnesses, dermatitis, heat stress, respiratory conditions, musculoskeletal disorders and traumatic injuries, reproductive health problems, dental diseases, cancer, poor child health, and social and mental health problems (Borhade 2006; Phoolchund 1991; Tribhuvan 2009).

## Mother and child health

The low health status of migrant women can be seen from indicators such as antenatal care coverage, prevalence of anaemia, prevalence of reproductive tract infection and violence against women (Nandita 2002). Temporary migration to their native villages, especially of pregnant women for delivery, results in their missing out on services from either of their places of stay. Mother and baby do not receive services in the village because of distances, unavailability of previous record of services received and lack of awareness and negotiating capacity. Despite availability of government and private hospitals at destinations, the urban migrants prefer deliveries in their native places (MOHFW 2008). Expensive private health-care facilities, perceived unfriendly treatment at government hospitals, a more emotionally secure environment at home, and non-availability of caretakers for other siblings in the event of hospitalization are some of the reasons for this preference (Chatterjee 2006; MOHFW 2008).

Migrant children suffer from malnutrition and lack of immunization when their parents are in perpetual low-income uncertain jobs that necessitate frequent shifts based on availability of work (MOHFW 2008). Measles is found to be common among migrants, mainly among children who do not have immunization (Harpham et al. 1994). As per the re-analysis of the NFHS III data, Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) among the urban poor migrants is at 72.7 per cent, significantly higher than the urban average of 51.9 per cent. About 47.1 per cent of urban migrant children under 3 years are underweight as compared with the urban average of 32.8 per cent and the rural average of 45 per cent. Among the urban poor, 71.4 per cent of the



children are anaemic as against 62.9 per cent of the urban average. Sixty per cent of the urban poor migrant children miss complete immunization as compared with the urban average of 42 per cent (MOHFW 2008)

### **Reproductive health**

Prolonged standing and bending, overexertion, dehydration, poor nutrition, and pesticide or chemical exposure contribute to an increased risk of spontaneous abortion, premature delivery, foetal malformation and growth retardation, and abnormal postnatal development (Gwyther et al. 1998; NRHA 1986; Smith 1998). Migrant workers are also at increased risk for urinary tract infections, partly as a result of a lack of toilets at the workplace and stringent working conditions that lead to chronic urine retention (NCFH 2001; NRHA 1986). Urine retention in turn encourages bacterial growth and stretches and weakens the bladder wall; this in turn promotes chronic infections or colonization (Hansen et al. 2003).

### **Social and mental health**

Migration brings out numerous stress factors for migrants, including job uncertainty, poverty, social and geographic isolation, intense time pressures, poor housing conditions, intergenerational conflicts, separation from family, lack of recreation, and health, shelter and safety concerns (Hansen et al. 2003; Villarejo et al. 1999). Manifestation of stress includes relationship problems, substance abuse, domestic violence, and psychiatric illness. Heavier alcohol usage and risky sexual behaviour have been noted in communities of predominantly single men compared with those consisting primarily of families (NACP III 2007). Children of migrant workers experience a sixfold greater risk of mistreatment than children in the general population (Slesinger et al. 1986; Villarejo et al. 1999).

Prolonged stay at destination cities leads to an increased risk of psychiatric disorders; the increased risk may be attributed to the loss of protective socio-cultural factors (for example, cohesive communities based on strong social support, family ties, language and group identity), or it could represent initially healthy migrants becoming less psychologically healthy with acculturation over time (Alderete et al. 2000; Hansen et al. 2003).

## **Addressing Migrants' Health: Current Policy and Programme Environment in India**

### **Policy environment**

Although India does not have a comprehensive policy on internal migration, fragmented policies for the protection of migrants do exist (Borhade 2011). The Indian Constitution contains basic provision relating to the conditions of employment, non-discrimination, right to work, etc., (for example, Article 23[1], Article 39, Article 42, Article 43), which are applicable for all workers including migrant workers within the country. Migrants are covered under various labour laws. However, those laws, which do exist to protect the rights of migrant workers, are widely disregarded by employers and intermediaries because of a

lack of political will to implement them and ignorance among illiterate migrants of their rights as workers. Additionally, as migrants do not have fixed employers, the latter escape from their responsibilities of providing various benefits to migrants that are mandatory under the existing laws. These laws hold the government as well as the employers responsible for contributing financially towards providing benefits such as basic health care, insurance and an education allowance for children of workers. The Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act has been in force since 1979, and it has great potential to address inter-state migration issues, but it is not implemented owing to lack of awareness among migrants as well as NGOs and the lack of willpower among politicians and government officials dealing with inter-state alliance. It is crucial to activate and implement the available laws to address migrants' issues related to exclusion of services. However, within national health programmes and policy, currently, there is little related to the health of migrant workers (Borhade 2011).

India has ratified many International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions but is neither a signatory nor has ratified the Convention of Migrant Workers (CMW),<sup>1</sup> which provides the formal sanction for protection of the migrants. The UN Convention of Migrant Workers<sup>2</sup> clearly articulates the human rights of migrants and puts the global focus on their issues, but India has not adopted these conventions and hence interests of migrants are not protected, including most importantly their health.

Some important policies such as the National Health Policy 2001 (MOHFW 2001) aim to achieve an acceptable standard of health amongst the general population and to promote equitable access to public health services across the social and geographical expanse of the country. Similarly, the National Population Policy 2002 (MOHFW 2002) affirms the commitment of the government to voluntary and informed choice and consent of citizens while availing of reproductive and health-care services, and the continuation of the target-free approach in administering family planning services. As per Vision 2020 (GoI 2002), by 2020, the people of India will be more numerous, better educated, healthier and more prosperous than at any time in our long history. While all these policies aim to achieve improved health status for the whole population of India, they do not however address health issues specifically pertaining to migrants (Borhade 2011).

There are very few examples of government policies to support the migrant population in India. Currently, most of migrant health care is in the non-governmental

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1. The Hague Declaration focused on adopting a more humane approach to migrants and migration. They have two sets of international instruments for migrants rights: first the core human rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, whose provisions apply universally and thus protect migrants; and second, the CMW and the ILO conventions which specifically apply to migrants. Despite several attempts, migrants continued to be protected under an amalgam of general internal law, human rights law, labour law and international law, but with the CMW, the provision for the protection of the migrants' received formal sanction. The CMW was adopted by General Assembly at its 45th session on 18 December 1990.
  2. The United Nation's International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families entered into force on 1 July 2003. It constitutes a comprehensive international treaty regarding the protection of migrant workers' rights. It emphasizes the connection between migration and human rights, which is increasingly becoming a crucial policy topic worldwide. The Convention aims at protecting migrant workers and members of their families; its existence sets a moral standard and serves as a guide and stimulus for the promotion of migrant rights in each country.

sector (wherever such organizations exist). The existing central government guidelines allow all migrant children to avail of nutritional supplementation under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) at destination cities irrespective of whether or not they are registered in the area (see Annexure I). As a result, all migrant children can benefit from the childcare centre (anganwadi) services in or near where the migrants reside (*nakas*). Pregnant women can also avail of antenatal and post-partum care through these anganwadis, which will be linked to government health services. Adolescent girls can be given treatment for anemia at the anganwadi centres and, in addition, be provided life skills and sex education through the ICDS programmes. Disha Foundation,<sup>3</sup> an NGO based in Nasik, has played a role in identifying sites for the establishment of such anganwadis that are convenient for migrants, as well as in encouraging migrants to make use of the facilities. This guideline has tremendous potential to address the health concerns of migrant children, adolescents and women; hence its effective implementation is of the utmost importance.

Similarly for food security, the Public Distribution System (PDS) has issued a Government Resolution (GR) (see Annexure II), which affirms the right of seasonal migrants to access and use a temporary ration card during their stay in a destination city and the obligation of each District Collector (administrative head of the district) to issue these temporary ration cards. This GR is implemented at Nasik by the Disha Foundation and the PDS has issued 50 temporary cards to migrant families. However this needs the continuing support of the government and NGOs.

Other examples of policies that have helped migrants include the government health insurance in a few states of India. An example is the Jivan Madhur Yojana (insurance programmes) where the government and the migrants each contribute half the insurance premium that covers health problems and accidental death of the worker and also provides an education allowance for the children of workers studying in the 8th to 10th standard of school. These programmes have been effective and helpful for poor migrants, but the eligibility criteria are different in different areas, and the workers from one state are not covered if they move to a different state. This needs to be looked into in order to foster collaboration between the different state governments and insurance companies.

Another example is the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)<sup>4</sup> scheme launched on 1 April 2008 by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, to provide health insurance coverage for BPL families. RSBY is a smart-card based

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3. Disha Foundation is an NGO based in Nasik, Maharashtra, a state of India. Disha is one of the pioneer NGOs working with migrant communities in Maharashtra, since 2002, to facilitate the internal labour migration via direct interventions for migrants and policy dialogue with governments and to address migration and different needs of migrants including health, education, livelihood and rights in general.

4. The objective of RSBY is to provide protection to BPL households from financial liabilities arising out of health needs that involve hospitalization. In the absence of the desired scenario of universal access to health care by the government, affordable health insurance such as RSBY is one way of providing protection to BPL households against the risk of expenditures on illness. With a one-time enrolment fee of merely Rs 30, the scheme provides coverage to five members of a family and an annual total coverage of up to Rs 30,000. It covers several serious illnesses and procedures that require hospitalization, but excludes maternity benefits. <[www.rsby.gov.in](http://www.rsby.gov.in)>

health insurance system with unique portability of access to health care services. Thus this scheme can be used by migrant labour at source and at destination.

The scheme has few major limitations, One of them is its restriction to hospitalization benefits and the absence of provision for outpatient treatment. This is an extremely critical limitation because the majority of the medical expenses of the poor are incurred for outpatient treatment. Even for hospitalization, the coverage is low. Migrant workers face the risk of occupational injuries, and in the absence of workplace coverage, the low amount of coverage is a bigger problem. It is worth noting that the poor may be willing to pay more for better coverage as experienced by an NGO, Nidaan, in Bihar.

The restriction of RSBY to BPL households is a considerable problem for migrant families. Migrants may not be able to register in their source village. Migrant families often do not have location-specific identity documents. They are casual labourers who earn their income in cash, and they have no means to establish income proof. Further, most seasonal migrants are attached to contractors and dependent on them for services at destinations. It is extremely difficult to reach out to them.

Migrants also have difficulty in accessing the RSBY, because the local administration in many areas does not recognize the presence of seasonal migrants. For example, in Gujarat, the brick-kiln workers were denied access to RSBY, because they were told that enrolment in the scheme is to be done only in the home state.

Despite the drawbacks of RSBY, it must be recognized that there have been some changes made in the scheme based on experiences from implementation and feedback from the field. To enable greater utilization, there is the facility to get a 'Split Card' for migrant families, which can be used by migrant workers at destination as well as at source by family members of the migrants. Some state governments have linked their Emergency Transport System with RSBY; some are about to hire civil society organizations for increasing awareness.

Evidence suggests that despite good health policies, the special health needs of migrants are unmet because of inadequate outreach to this population. This could be due to lack of official data on labour migration. Gaps in available data lead to corresponding gaps in policy. In the absence of a comprehensive database regarding the extent and scale of distress migration, and a better understanding of its impact on both families and communities, the issue is unlikely to find a place in the policy discourse or, therefore, in national or state planning frameworks.

### **Programme perspective**

India runs several vertical programmes for health (funded by the central government), which include those against diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. Interventions pertaining to these programmes are often long term and require follow-up; thus these programmes often find it extremely challenging to maintain continuity of medical care and monitor health outcomes in migrant populations (MOHFW 2008). Currently, few government databases have data pertaining to

migrants; almost none have data over time. Even when this information exists, it remains confined to the labour sector. There is need to consciously channelize this information into the health sector and devise 'tracking strategies' for improving health outcomes of migrants (Borhade 2011).

Some currently functioning programmes, such as the National AIDS Control Programmes, (NACP III 2007) have a mandate to provide outreach services. This programme has adopted an outreach approach for HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment of few categories of the migrant population, viz., truckers, sex workers and construction workers in India. Another example of outreach services for migrants is the Indian Population Project. This project was initiated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the support of the World Bank. It has been undertaken in some cities, such as Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai, to improve urban health service delivery. The project uses link-workers for improving reproductive and child health in slums. It is important to carefully study programmes such as the ones mentioned above and draw lessons for replicability and scaling up of other public health outreach interventions for migrants (Borhade 2006).

In India, urban local bodies are statutorily responsible for provision and maintenance of basic infrastructure and services in cities and towns. At present, these bodies undertake very limited outreach activities pertaining to health. It is clear that public health services need to initiate and reinforce a more 'migrant-friendly' approach (WHO 2008).

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), India's flagship health programmes launched in 2005, has generated some interest in demarcating 'vulnerable' populations in decentralized state and sub-state health plans (NRHM 2005; NRHM 2012). These plans have been useful in identifying some earlier neglected pockets of the migrant population, but since the NRHM targets rural areas, urban migrants remain neglected. There is strong political interest in rolling out a National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) in the next few years, focusing on the health of the underserved poor urban population dwelling in slums and other temporary sites (like construction sites). The NUHM aims to provide essential primary care to all urban poor through partnerships with the private sector, social insurance schemes and community involvement (NUHM 2008). Thus, it is a good time for academicians and programmes implementers to reflect on what would enable upcoming health programmes and policies to better target migrants (Borhade 2011).

## Rationale to Address Migrants' Health

Evidences suggests that internal migration can play an important role in poverty reduction and economic development, hence positive facilitation of safe migration should be specially emphasized, which includes mainly access to basic necessities and public services, predominantly in health, education and livelihood. Further, the high volume of migration and inter-linkages of the health needs of migrants with

all the Millennium Development Goals and national policies (National Health Policy, National Population Policy and India Vision 2020) mean that success in meeting these needs can help support the achievement of the MDGs and these policies. Hence, increased emphasis is required to address the special health needs of the migrant population, which can help to improve their health indicators as well the general experience of migration

Migrants are poor, uneducated, socially excluded and face a very alien environment when they come to urban landscapes. They have trouble proving identity/eligibility, find language to be a barrier, have insufficient awareness of entitlements/rights, little understanding of how hospitals and insurance providers operate, etc. Thus there is an urgent need to design health programmes and policies for them that are simple and easily accessible.

## Current Challenges and Ways Forward to Address Migrants' Health Needs

**1. Need for Improved definition of migrants:** Unlike categories such as Schedule Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) or Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (who are categorized as 'vulnerable populations' in all development sector strategies), 'seasonal migrants' are rarely culled out as a vulnerable group in different health studies and programmes. This is partly due to the fact that definitions of internal labour migrants are still not consistent (Borhade 2011).

### **Recommendation**

An improved definition of the internal migrant population and its sub-categories is necessary to enable more accurate measurements of health care utilization indicators and health outcomes within this group.

**2. Detailed mapping of internal migration at a countrywide level:** One of the serious constraints in framing an effective policy response to internal migration is lack of credible data on the volume of migration. While the latest 64th Round NSS survey puts a figure of 30 million on internal migration, various estimates based on micro-level studies suggest that the figure is close to 100–120 million. Concerted efforts are required to address this knowledge gap on migration.

### **Recommendations**

- (i) One way is to involve the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) to initiate a countrywide documentation of migrant workers moving out of rural areas. Civil society organizations and the labour department can take a proactive role in supporting this initiative. At the source, civil society organizations can support PRIs in undertaking surveys/registrations. The database being built as a result of this effort could be computerized and then integrated at successive block, district and state levels. Registration of migrants at destination cities can be done collectively by the labour department of the receiving state and civil society organizations.

*Reference cases*

- (a) Disha Foundation, Nasik, works in Maharashtra with PRIs to register the villagers who migrate for livelihood. The Migration register is maintained by the PRI and the data is used for implementation of various government and non-government programmes for the migrants' families.
- (b) Rajasthan Labour department has initiated such registration through an NGO, Aajeevika Bureau, in southern Rajasthan. The NGO registers migrant workers, issues photo IDs and maintains a database of migrant workers. The database is shared with the Rajasthan Labour Department on a quarterly basis. The panchayats being the closest link to migrant workers in the chain act as the signing and verifying authority on the Photo ID cards.
- (ii) The second approach could be by way of adapting the Census and NSS methodology to capture seasonal and circular migrant populations, but this needs to be done with care because, as mentioned earlier, both in the Census and NSS the reported figures of migration are gross underestimates.

**3. Health care Service Delivery:** Health care utilization rates among migrants are often found to be poor (NUHM 2008). To some extent, this can be attributed to migrants' feeling alienated from the government health system at temporary destinations and private facilities being too expensive. Migrant populations often cannot access the services/programmes on account of their migration status, timings of their work and distance to services (Borhade 2011). Constantly changing destinations is also a problem.

*Recommendations*

A system for universal access to health care for migrants is crucial. Ways in which this could be achieved are given below:

- (i) There is need to consciously channelize information pertaining specifically to migrants into the health sector and devise 'tracking strategies' for improving their health outcomes. Providing mobile health cards to migrants that can be utilized both at source and destination in any state is crucial. The migrant health card can be tracked by any health official at any location in order to continue treatment. This would be similar to the RNTCP and RSBY programmes, which provides a duplicate card to a migrant to continue the treatment anywhere in India. Coordination among health facilities at village, block, district and state levels is crucial for effective implementation.
- (ii) It is important to carefully study programmes, such as the Indian Population Project and a few initiatives by NGOs, and draw lessons for replicability and scaling up of other public health outreach interventions for all categories of migrants.
- (iii) Initiating or reinforcing migrant friendly public health services, and creating greater awareness about those services among migrants would be important

to address migrants' special health needs. Onsite mobile health services or providing special assistance to migrants in regular health services would be helpful.

*Reference cases:*

- (a) Disha Foundation has initiated migrant friendly health programmes in Nasik; Migrant's awareness building about health issues and empowerment for utilization of government health services are major components of the programme. Sensitization of government health providers is also initiated. A formal referral system for utilization of government health services is introduced that is approved by district health services. A triplicate referral form is developed for migrants, government health services (civil hospital, urban health centre, etc.) and Disha. Migrants are referred to health services by Disha through its trained community leaders. The referral system is getting popular among migrants, because it helps them to get direct treatment from doctors without much discussion, as the medical history and related details are provided in the form. The back of the form also contains contact information of all government health services; the referral service provides increased access levels to health care for migrants, and it also helps increase awareness levels to the government health system (see Annexure IV for more details).
- (b) Employment State Insurance Corporation's (ESIC) hospitals and health centres can be made accessible to migrant workers of all categories; as ESIC's latest guideline includes workers in construction sectors, similar guidelines can be broadened for inclusion of all types of migrants.
- (c) Since the health of migrants is affected by a multitude of factors, a population health approach is necessary in order to align strategies, policy options and interventions for improving health outcomes among migrants (WHO 2008). Strengthening the existing inter- and intra-state programmes for migrants, especially convergence of the health insurance, mother and child health and other programmes at source and destination levels, with respective government departments is necessary. RSBY should be revised and also made applicable to non-BPL families, and it should also cover OPD (outpatient department) use. Also, since mother and child health care is a genuine concern among migrants because of their mobility, the central government's guideline for utilization of ICDS services for migrants (Annexure I) should be strictly followed. Strict implementation of this guideline and resource allocation for it would be a significant step, because none of the states is implementing this programme where both the state and central governments have major role to play.

**4. Addressing basic needs of migrants** in cities would be crucial step as these are important determinants affecting the status of migrants.

**(i) Improving living and work conditions:** Crowded living conditions without basic amenities constitute the most important determinant of poor health status of migrants (see Annexure III). Temporary accommodation with basic amenities in cities is a significant need for migrant workers. Hence night shelters, short-stay homes and seasonal accommodation for migrant workers must be provided in cities.



The current Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission programme has the potential to set up such shelters in cities. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (Vol. 1, para 4.48) is explicit in the recognition of a severe gap in policies vis-à-vis migrants; the Plan argues for improving the living and working conditions of migrants. In 2009–2010, the Ministry of Labour and Employment piloted an intervention to improve the work and living conditions for migrant workers in the brick-kiln sector in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. The model of this pilot project can be used for its replication in other states. But it seems that the implementation envisaged in the Eleventh Plan has not happened on a large scale. It is important to understand why such extensive implementation has not occurred, and a study should be commissioned to find out the reasons. Only then can an effective plan be put in place for the Twelfth Plan.

**(ii) Food and nutrition:** Food and nutrition expenses account for a significant share of living expenses for daily wage workers in cities. A study done by Aajiveeka Bureau on migrants in Ahmedabad suggests that, on an average, 41 per cent of their income is spent on food. It has been observed that migrant children suffer from malnutrition when their parents are in perpetual low-income uncertain jobs that necessitate frequent shifts based on the availability of work (NUHM 2008). There is a need to create provisions for low-cost and good quality food options for migrant workers.

### **Recommendation**

**Portability of PDS for migrant workers across state borders.** A national roaming (mobile) ration card for such migrants can be provided. A few states such as Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have started such an initiative. But, because of the lack of awareness, there is low usage of this provision. More information needs to be disseminated about this, and other states need to take it up. A national roaming ration card would be a proactive step to address food insecurity among migrants.

### **Reference cases:**

- (a) Disha Foundation has worked with the PDS, Maharashtra, towards the activation of the GR for providing a temporary ration card for migrant workers. According to this GR, intra-state migrants of the BPL category should be able to get a temporary ration card at the destination city and can avail of up to 35 kg of food grains during the migration period. It is working successfully in Nasik. This GR can be replicated in other states of India, and a system can be set up within the PDS to make temporary ration cards available to inter- and intra-state migrants.
- (b) Bhopal Municipal Corporation has initiated low-cost food facility for migrant workers in Bhopal. Similarly Aajiveeka Bureau has started low-cost tiffin facility for migrant workers in Ahmedabad. These models can be studied for wider applications in the country.

**(iii) Setting up of migrant resource/assistance centres** at the major source and destination locations that provide information and counselling and respond to public services including health, education and other emergencies.

*Reference case:*

- (a) The National Coalition of Organizations for Security of Migrant Workers<sup>5</sup> have set up such assistance centres by the name of Shramik Sahayata evam Sandarbha Kendras (Migration Resource Centres) which provide such services to migrant workers both at source and at destination. These centres are being run in five states including Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Gujarat by over 23 organizations. Such models can be studied and replicated in other high migration corridors.

**5. Capacity building:**

- i. Sensitizing and training of concerned policymakers and health stakeholders for effective implementation and convergence of state policies would be important to address migrant health issues. These stakeholders can be the nodal ministry, that is, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), other ministries such as Labour and Employment, Urban Development, Rural Development, Women and Child Welfare Municipal corporations, etc. Other stakeholders could include NGOs, migrant employers' associations, insurance companies, financial institutions, academic institutions and health professionals involved with migrants' health.
- ii. Building partnerships with NGOs working at source and destination levels of migration to raise awareness among migrants to become more knowledgeable and stay updated about the available health services.
- iii. Human resource development and cadre building in the government bodies (MOHFW, Labour Ministry) as well as in the private sector would be crucial steps to address migrant's health and other related development issues.
- iv. Promoting collaboration among government, different donor agencies, and agencies working on migration for health policies/programmes implementation would be an important step for capacity building of these stakeholders.

**6. Research:**

- i. Encouraging health and migration knowledge production, including both quantitative and qualitative studies is crucial.
- ii. Documentation and dissemination of best practices and lessons learnt in addressing migrants' health needs at source and destination would be important steps to create a knowledge bank on migration and health.
- iii. Identifying the required convergences of existing health services and filling gaps in service delivery to meet migrants' health needs would be crucial.
- iv. Promotion of a National Policy Think Tank for advice on matters of migration, health and development should be initiated jointly by The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Labour and Employment. The think tank would also undertake the above-mentioned programme and policy research.

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5. The National Coalition of Organizations for Security of Migrant Workers is a network of organizations working on issues related to internal migration and urban poverty. The Coalition represents 40-plus organizations spread across the states of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The Coalition has been working to mainstream concerns of migrant workers at the state and national level and make the existing policies sensitive to the rising incidence and complexity of rural to urban and inter-state migration. It is currently convened by Disha Foundation, Nasik.

## 7. Advocacy and policy development

- i. There is strong need to advocate for strengthening the existing programmes for migrants specially for convergence of the programmes at source and destination levels with respective government departments, including inter-state departments.
- ii. Covering all categories of migrant workers is crucial under the government's different national health programmes, including occupational health, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programmes, testing and counselling, RTI/STI diagnosis and treatment, antenatal check-ups and family planning services. There is an urgent need for rolling out of the proposed National Urban Health Mission, which recognizes and plans to cover these health needs of migrants.
- iii. Promoting migrant-friendly health policies that aim to address the diverse health needs of migrants is crucial. India currently does not have a comprehensive national migration policy that could act as an umbrella under which the health, education, livelihood and rights issues of migrants could be addressed and which would define the roles of the states in execution of policy.

## Conclusion

India is facing migration challenges and has increasing need to formulate and implement policies to improve migrants' health. Currently, India has few or no structural policies or programmes targeting the migrant issues in totality, and this segment of the population still faces exclusion from the various mainstream programmes. There is a need to modify the existing policy structures and programmes so that the needs of this marginalized group are accommodated in the various national policies and programmes. Development of a National Migration Policy would be a proactive step towards it. Effective implementation of the available programmes as well as their convergence at source and destination levels at both inter- and intra-state levels would be important to improve the status of migrants' health. For this, inter-state collaboration is required among government departments to assess and subsequently tackle occupational risks and their health consequences before, during and after migrants' period of work, both in their place of origin and in their destination.

Sensitization and capacity building of concerned policymakers and health stakeholders, mainly Ministries of Health and Family Welfare, Labour and Employment, Urban Development, NGO networks, employers associations of migrants, insurance companies and financial institutions need to be done on a large scale. Cadre building in government as well private sector is critical. The provision of basic services would require better coordination among departments located in different sectors and different areas. The central government has a major role to play in the whole process, including promoting an alliance between key health services providers and their respective departments, facilitate their capacity building, and oversee resource allocation.

Migrants have rarely had visible champions to take up their causes. The few struggles and rights movements around migrant issues have focused on survival, livelihood and exploitation issues, while health has been given a back seat. It is time to mainstream health into dialogues on migrant's development.

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## Annexure I

### Integrated Child Development Scheme guideline for migrant women, children and adolescent in India

#### ICDS guidelines

Office of the Commissioner  
Integrated Child Development Services  
Raigarh Bhawan, Rear Wing, First Floor  
CBD, Belapur  
22 May 200

#### *Sub: Central Government directive regarding nutritional supplementation*

#### **Ref:**

1. Central Government letter no. 1-5/92-Cd-2 dated 6.11.1992
2. Central Government letter no. 19-5/2003-Cd (PT) dated 7.3.2006
3. Central Government letter no. 1-2/2006-CDI dated 8.3.2006
4. Department of Women and Child Development letter no. ABV -2006/No. 80/ dated 15.4.2006

With reference to Central Government letter no. 1, all pregnant and lactating mothers and their children should be eligible under ICDS for nutritional supplementation and should be allowed to take advantage of all other services of ICDS. All pregnant and lactating mothers and their children (6 months to 6 years) who are not registered with ICDS anganwadis are also eligible to receive nutritional services under ICDS.

All beneficiaries who migrate should be provided a certificate from the anganwadi in their village of origin. When they migrate to other villages/ towns, they should carry the original certificate with them and should submit it in the anganwadi at the destination so that they can avail of uninterrupted services. A copy of the certificate is annexed.

Central Government letter no. 19-5/2003-Cd (PT) dated 7.3.06 has the following clarifications on nutritional supplementation: The Government has not fixed a precise number of beneficiaries for each anganwadi for the distribution of nutritional supplementation. There is no upper or lower limit for beneficiaries but the number of beneficiaries is expected to vary according to the population.

All anganwadis should register all children below the age of 6 years and all pregnant and lactating mothers for the purpose of nutritional supplementation. It is mandatory to provide nutritional supplementation to all children below 6 years. ICDS services are applicable not just to malnourished children but to all children in this age group as well as pregnant and lactating mothers. The ICDS scheme is open to all and not just to children and women below the poverty line. The scheme is in no way linked to income category or the nutritional status of the beneficiary.

#### **The Commissioner**

Integrated Child Development Services  
State Government of Maharashtra

## Copy:

1. Dy. Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, 2. Child Development Project Officer, Urban (Nasik)

Copy submitted for information: Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, Mantralaya, Mumbai

Copy of Certificate for Mothers and Children

Copy of certificate for beneficiaries who migrate to other villages/towns to allow them to avail of ICDS services

Name of beneficiary	Name of ICDS project In village/town at place of origin	Beneficiary's current nutritional status and illness if any	If beneficiary is malnourished, degree of malnutrition	Name of ICDS project to which beneficiary is migrating	Remarks
Signature of ICDS Project Officer in village/town/anganwadi at place of origin					
Signature of ICDS teacher/worker in village/town/anganwadi at place of origin					

## Annexure II

### Temporary Food Ration Card Directives for Migrants In Maharashtra, Government of Maharashtra, India

Extract from the State Government Resolution 1000/G.R.399/2000/NP28

*Issued on 9 November 2000 for providing ration cards to migrant (temporary) and unorganized workers in urban areas*

...As workers in the unorganized sector migrate in search of employment, do not reside in a fixed place and do not live in their native place, they do not have documentary proof, such as a birth registration certificate or a certificate for school enrolment for their children.

It is also very difficult to get documentary proof on migration. Since these families are generally eligible for services under the Public Distribution System, the requirements of documentary proof are hereby relaxed.

The normal procedure for getting a ration card– to complete an application form–should be observed on the basis of this information being given by the applicant, and the Supply Inspector should physically verify the living conditions of the family members and then the procedure to issue temporary ration cards for a certain period should be adopted. If the family wishes to reside at the same address for a longer period, the ration card should be renewed for such further period as necessary...

*(Translated from Marathi-local official language of Maharashtra state of India)*

### Annexure III

Poor Living Conditions of Migrants (Photo Source: Disha Foundation, Nashik)



## Annexure IV

### Addressing Health Needs of Migrants: Learnings from Disha, Nasik

Disha Foundation piloted a project that intended to improve sexual and reproductive (SRH) health of migrants in Nasik, India, covering about 15,000 migrants in Nasik of which 40-45 per cent were women in the age group 12-55 years. Migrants are largely seasonal and they remain in Nasik for 8-10 months in a year. The project adopted a participatory approach for improving the quality of life of migrants. Migrant workers were directly involved in identifying their needs and approaches followed for getting access to public services. The project also initiated need-based advocacy with authorities to address the SRH health needs of migrants.

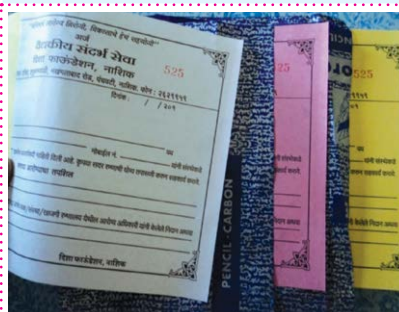
Conclusions and lesson learnt: While the initial objective was to address the health needs of the migrant population, it broadened to include issues related to overall quality of life. Seasonal migrants were made aware of their rights and a communication link was established between the migrants and government authorities to facilitate the provision of public services.

The project helped migrants to gain access to basic amenities including health services, water supply and food through temporary ration cards. Child-care services were introduced, children were enrolled in schools, and birth registration certificates issued. It helped to develop vocational skills and provided access to financial security through insurance schemes.

The project discovered that motivating the beneficiaries is not enough; public authorities must also be sensitized. Policies and programmes need to be modified to suit the health needs of migrants. It is difficult to sustain the motivation of temporary migrants to adhere to the time-consuming processes of obtaining services.

Without a strong institutional structure, provision of services to migrant workers will remain ad-hoc and unsustainable. Hence a formal referral health service is introduced with government health services. A triplicate referral form is developed for migrants, health providers and Disha. Migrants are referred to health services by Disha through its trained community leaders. The form is helpful for migrants to get direct treatment from doctors without much discussion, as the medical history and related details are provided in the form; the back of the form also provides contact information of all available government health services in Nasik. The referral service provides increased access levels to health care for migrants, and it also helps to increase awareness levels about the government health system.

#### Referral Form in Three Copies for 1. Govt. Hospital, 2. Patient, 3. Disha Foundation



In short, the project highlights that in order to address the needs of seasonal migrants one must work at both the level of the population of seasonal migrants and the administration. A variety of priorities and concerns need to be addressed that influence their lives. Moreover, one must work to enable seasonal migrants to gain access to services to which they are entitled, as well as to apprise them of their rights and support them to access their rights. This project has had limited success in making this population self-sufficient as a result of their mobility, the nature of their irregular migration to destination cities, and the difficulty in tracking seasonal migrants. The project has had some success in galvanizing the administration but it is apparent that seasonal migrants will continue to need a mediator to help them address their multiple needs. The lessons learned from the implementation of this project are valuable, and should have wider application among similarly disadvantaged mobile populations across the country. (Borhade 2006)







Marina Faetanini  
Programme Specialist  
Social and Human Sciences (SHS)  
UNESCO New Delhi  
B-5/29 Safdarjung Enclave  
New Delhi 110 029, INDIA  
Phone: + (91) 11 26713000  
Fax: + (91) 11 26713001/ 26713002  
Email: [m.faetanini@unesco.org](mailto:m.faetanini@unesco.org)  
Website: [www.unesco.org/newdelhi](http://www.unesco.org/newdelhi)

Ramya Subrahmanian  
Social Policy Specialist  
Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation  
UNICEF India  
73 Lodi Estate  
New Delhi 110 003, INDIA  
Phone: + (91) 11 24690401  
Fax: + (91) 11 24627521  
Email: [rsubrahmanian@unicef.org](mailto:rsubrahmanian@unicef.org)  
Website: <http://www.unicef.in>