



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2016; 2(4): 447-450
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 19-02-2016
Accepted: 21-03-2016

Harpreet Singh
Assistant Professor,
Department of Geography,
National Defence Academy
(NDA), Khadakwasla,
Pune, Maharashtra,
India.

Increasing rural to urban migration in India: A challenge or an opportunity

Harpreet Singh

Abstract

Migration is one of the basic determinant of population change and population redistribution over the space. Migration has many positive as well as negative implication. The rate of net rural to urban migration has increased from 21.2 percent in 1991-01 to 24.1 percent in 2001-11. The present study tries to understand the trends in rural to urban migration and its implications in the form of urbanization (an opportunity) and in the form of development of slums (a challenge). The subject matter of migration is very vast and complex, it may be difficult to project all the possible implications arises due to rural-urban migration. Keeping in mind the limitations of the subject, the present study focus on the two most important implications of rural-urban migration covering the positive aspect on the development and growth of cities (urbanization)-as an opportunity and negative aspect on the development of slums-as challenge.

Keywords: Migration, rural-urban migration, census, India, challenge, opportunity

1. Introduction

The study of migration of people is important to understand the transitory phase of development of a country by knowing the trends of rural to urban migration over a period of time. There is a close association between the trends of migration and the development phase of the country. In fact "Internal migration is an integral part of development and should be recognized as such" said Mr. Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF India Representative. Migration is the geographic movement of people across administrative/political boundaries with a permanent or semi-permanent nature of residence. As per the provision of right to movement to the citizens of India by the constitution of India, the people of India are free to move anywhere in India in search of better opportunities or otherwise. Migration refers to the movement of an individual or family or group of persons from one place to another place with change in residence for a number of reasons like social, cultural, economic and non-economic factors. Migratory movements are basically a product of social, cultural, economic and political and/or physical circumstances in which individuals or groups find themselves (Bhende and Kanitkar, 1982: 304). Apart from being an important determinant of population change, migration is a major channel for the process of diffusion of ideas and innovations, and thus it is an important force of spatial change. From functional point of view migration is both a cause and effect of spatial and temporal variations and a main cause for changes in the organization of society. The areas from which the migration takes place, the areas to which the migrants go, and the migrants themselves never remain the same (Beaujeu-Garnier, 1966, p. 212). Migration of people is one of the greatest social and political issues of the 21st century, affecting more than 230 million people worldwide. Migration should not just be looked at as a simple movement of people across boundaries but it should be looked as a much more complex issue that involves development, security and other social issues. As per 2001 census, 309 million persons are recorded as migrants based on place of last residence. This figure indicates an increase of 83 million people from 1991 census. The phenomenon of rural to urban migration is increasing because of globalization, economic and demographic disparities. In term of volume of migrants rural-urban migration stream is the second largest migration in India. But it is the most significant and dominating stream of migration if the reason is jobs/employment. Rural-urban migration stream is a male dominating stream which significantly contributes to the process of urbanization (an opportunity) and development of slums (a challenge).

Correspondence
Harpreet Singh
Assistant Professor,
Department of Geography,
National Defence Academy
(NDA), Khadakwasla,
Pune, Maharashtra,
India.

Study Area

Geographically, India is located in south Asia with its latitudinal extent from 8°4' and 37°6' north latitude and longitudinal extend from 68°7' to 97°25' east longitude. It is the seventh-largest country in the world, with a total area of 3,287,263 square kilometers. India's north to south distance is 3,214 km and east to west distance is 2,933 km. It has a land frontier of 15,200 km (9,445 mi) and a coastline of 7,517 km (4,671 mi). The northern frontiers of India are defined largely by the Himalayan mountain range, where the country share its border with China, Bhutan, and Nepal. It share western border with Pakistan. In the far northeast, India share its boundary with Burma. On the east, its border is with Bangladesh.

Study Area



Fig 1

Objectives

- a) To understand the trends of rural to urban migration.
- b) To understand the rural to urban migration as challenge (development of slum).
- c) To understand the rural to urban migration as an opportunity (urbanization).

Data Sources and Methodology

National Census, Population Registers and Sample Surveys are the three principal sources of information on internal migration. The most important source of data on internal migration in most of the countries is its national census. In India, census provides data on migrants based on place of birth (POB), place of last residence (POLR), duration of residence in the place of enumeration and the place of residence on a specified date before the Census. In 1981 census, the reasons of migration was added. If the place of birth data or place of last residence is different from place of enumeration, a person is defined as a migrant. To understand the trends of rural to urban migration, migration tables of various census years are used. To support the study and to provide the evidences, data on slum population and urbanization was taken into account. Maps and various statistical diagrams are used to support the study.

Result and Discussion

Trends of Rural-Urban migration in India: Among all four streams of migration, the rural-urban stream of migration is the most important as well as governing factor of spatial patterns and demographic changes. The rural-urban migration is numerically most important especially in the developing countries, in fact rural-urban migration is the main factor of urbanization in developing countries which can be considered as an opportunity from urban growth point of view. Rural to urban migration can be viewed as a challenge also as it result into the development of the slums and many other associated problems. Rural to urban migration can be a response to diverse economic opportunities across space. Migration is a natural outcome of inequality in the distribution of resources. It is positively related to modernization, industrialization and development. In search of better economic opportunities, rural to urban flow has special significance as it represent the shift away from agriculture. The rural-urban migration takes place in the initial stage of development of urbanization. In the year 1991, India initiated its new economic policy, popularly known as LPG (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) of Indian economy which boost the economy and job opportunities, leading to pull factors for migration and accelerated the flow of migration not only in rural to urban stream but also in urban to urban migration stream especially from small urban towns to large urban towns.

Table 1: India: Growth of migrants by migration streams, 1981-91 and 1991-2001

1981-91						
Migration Streams	Lifetime Migrants			Intercensal Migrants		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
All Internal Migrants	10.64	-1.29	13.71	-0.03	-18.74	7.61
Rural to Rural	19.34	11.33	27.03	6.58	-1.03	14.79
Urban to Rural	9.40	0.73	14.42	-5.63	-15.17	1.96
Urban to Urban	8.32	1.22	14.54	-7.29	-14.20	-0.78
1991-2001						
All Internal Migrants	18.40	-1.41	22.82	15.37	7.78	17.71
Rural to Rural	29.51	34.37	25.41	22.84	27.68	18.35
Urban to Rural	-3.56	0.00	-5.37	3.00	6.48	0.70
Urban to Urban	38.39	43.12	34.73	24.27	26.85	22.17

Source: Migration tables, census of India, 1981, 1991, 2001

Table 1 shows that rural to urban migration stream is the most prominent stream among all streams in 1981-91 while some decline is seen in the stream in 1991-01 as compared to other streams. It may be associated to the fact of changing

definitions of urban area in India from time to time. Moreover the decline in the stream is partly due to fact that only lifetime migrants are considered in this table while the temporary migrations are not included.

Table 2: India: Inter-state migration stream (Duration 0-9 years), 2001

Migration Streams	Inter-state migration			2001(percentage)		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Total	16,826,879	8,512,161	8,314,718	100.00	100.00	100.00
Rural to Rural	4,474,302	1,759,523	2,714,779	26.6	20.7	32.7
Rural to Urban	6,372,955	3,803,737	2,569,218	37.9	44.7	30.9
Urban to Rural	1,053,352	522,916	530,436	6.3	6.1	6.4
Urban to Urban	4,490,480	2,201,882	2,288,598	26.7	25.9	27.5
Unclassified	435,790	224,103	211,687	2.6	2.6	2.5

Source: Table D-2, census of India, 2001

Table 2 indicate that in the inter-state migration rural to urban migration stream has highest numbers of migrants (6,372,955) which constitute largest percentage of migrants' i.e.37.9 percent as compared to the other streams. It clearly indicates that after economic reforms of 1991 the differences in the level of development among all states become wider hence interstate migration from rural to urban area increased. Because of increased jobs and employment opportunities in the urban area the migration of rural people increased towards cities.

Rural to Urban migration-a challenge (development of slums)

The increasing flow of people from rural to urban area has many positive and negative impacts. The mushrooming of slums near the cities/urban centers, due to continuous flow of migrants from rural area to the urban area is considered as a big challenge. A study done by economic and social commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 1991) observed that "migration from rural to urban areas continues at a rapid pace in many countries of the region, and it was often beyond the capacity of towns, cities and metropolitan areas to cope with the increasing numbers. The increasing trends of rural to urban migration should be seriously reviewed in the context of development of slums in urban area. No doubt, migration is essential for development and it is a desirable phenomenon but what is not desirable is the increasing flow of distressed migrates from rural to urban area which results into overcrowding of cities and development of slums. Migration and slums are inextricably linked, as labor demand in cities and the resulting rural to urban migration creates greater pressures to accommodate more people. Much of the growth of slums is due to the migration of people of economically weaker sections from rural area to urban area. It has been observed that rural labor migrates towards urban areas and settled down in slum. The great slums of India are predominantly created because large numbers of individuals or families move to the urban centers of their dreams, usually in search of better economic prospects. As per census 2011, 68 million Indians lived in slums, comprising one-quarter of the population of India's 19 cities with more than 1 million residents. In Mumbai almost 50 percent population lives in slums and in Kolkata 32percent of the population lives in slums. The slum growth in the cities through fresh arrivals from the countryside increases competition for limited resources. Twenty-five per cent of urban households have no access to drinking water within their premises, 22 per cent have no bathroom, 15 per

cent have no access to a drainage facility and 11 per cent do not have any toilet facility (Bhagat).The rapid growth of urban population has put heavy pressure on public utilities like housing, sanitation, transport, water, electricity, health, education and soon. Not only this the larger slums often become a zone for small-scale industries by illegally diverting public resources (water, electricity) to meet their requirements.

Rural to urban migration-an opportunity (contribution to Urbanization)

No doubt, increasing flow of migration has some negative implications and it can be viewed as a challenge but it is positively related to urbanization, modernization, industrialization and development of not only urban areas but also with migrants. It is a desirable phenomenon. Migrants, in a mobile world are everywhere, move everywhere, contributing in manifold ways to development everywhere. Migration is essential for the development and growth of the cities. Urbanization is the sign of development of any country. More than half of the world's population lives in urban areas. In India, about one third (31 per cent) of the population lives in urban areas. The urban population was enumerated at 37.7 million in 2011, which is likely to increase to 600 million by 2030. India has about 8000 cities and towns, but 43 per cent of the urban population lives in only 53 cities that have a population of a million plus. These cities are centers of wealth and economic growth. The urban-rural growth differential in the 2011 Census was 19.8, which is the highest in last 30 years. The rate of net rural to urban migration has increased from 21.2 percent in 1991-01 to 24.1 percent in 2001-11.The movement of people from rural area to urban area for better jobs/employments from one states/UTs to another states/UTs results into rapid growth of the cities. The development trajectory across countries shows that people are increasingly living in urban areas. As per the census 2011, in rural areas the total population was 83.3 million and in urban area the total population was 37.7 million. This urban population of 37.7 million is very close to the American total population. The percent decadal growth of the population in rural and urban areas in the decade ending of the year 2011 was 12.2 and 31.8

percent.India is one of the fastest developing countries with many emerging metropolitan cities. It may also be worth noting that rural-urban migration constitutes a significant component of inter-state migration (about 41.1 million as of 2001) taking place within the country. Migrants'

contribution to the city should not be underestimated because migrants from rural area provide cheap labour to the industrial, domestic sector and many other sectors.

Conclusion

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

References

1. Bhagat RB. Conceptual Issues in Measurement of Internal Migration in India. IUSSP XXVth International Conference, Contributed Papers, France, 2005, 18-23.
2. Census of India. Soft copy, India D-series, Migration Tables. Registrar General and Census commissioner, India, 2001-2011.
3. Chakravarty B. The Census and the NSS Data on Internal Migration, in Ashish Bose, 1997,
4. Chatterjee Atreyi, Ashish Bose. Demographic Data on Internal Migration and Urbanisation from Census and NSS – An Appraisal, in Ashish Bose, Davendra B. Gupta, and Gaurisankar Raychaudhuri (eds.), Population Statistics in India. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, 1977.
5. Davendra B Gupta, Gaurisankar Raychaudhuri (eds.). Population Statistics in India. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
6. Gosal GS. Internal Migration in India- A Regional Analysis. The Indian Geographical Journal. 1961; 36(2-4):106-121.
7. Government of India. Indian Labour Statistics (various Issues), Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Government of India.
8. Prabhakar NR. Internal Migration and Population Redistribution in India, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1985.
9. Singh JP. Patterns of Rural-Urban Migration in India, Inter-India Publication, New Delhi, 1986.