

Internal Migration in India

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Source: *The Hindu*

Manifest pedagogy: The sudden lockdown of the nation brought migrant livelihoods to a halt. The migrant crisis brought to the fore the unfulfilled obligations of the government to restore dignified work to its most vulnerable citizens in an era of economic liberalisation.

In news: Internal migrants are most affected due to COVID -19

Placing it in syllabus: Migration

Static dimensions:

- Factors for migration
- Internal migrant statistics census 2001 and 2011
- Provisions of Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act of 1979

Current dimensions:

- Trends and patterns of internal migration
- Challenges faced by internal migrants
- Covid crisis and internal Migrants

Content:

Factors for internal migration: Migrants who move within the boundaries of their own country are known as internal migrants. There are **four streams** of Internal migration.

- Rural to urban (R-U)
- Rural to Rural (R-R)
- Urban to Rural (U-R)
- Urban to Urban (U-U)

Causes of Internal Migration:

Urbanization: An increase in the demand for labour in urban areas and better wages increase migration. The **pull factors** of better job facilities, good salary, more income, medical and educational facilities are attracting the rural people to move to the cities. The **push factors** of no job facilities, low salary, less income, drought, less medical and education compel people towards cities.

Marriage: Marriage is an important social factor for migration, from one rural area to another rural or urban area, especially in case of females.

Employment: Search for better employment in industries, trade, transport and services results in R-U and U-U migration.

Education: Due to lack of educational facilities in rural areas, people migrate to the urban areas for better academic opportunities. In the 2011 census, about 1.77% people migrated for education.

Lack of security: Political disturbances and inter-ethnic conflicts is also a reason for internal migration.

Environmental and disaster induced factors force people to move from rural to urban areas due to gradual deterioration of changing environmental conditions. There can also be forced displacement due to reasons such as developmental projects.

Challenges faced by internal migrants:

Documentation and Identity: Proving their identity is one of the core issues impoverished migrants face when they arrive in a new place. Identity documentation that is authenticated by the state ensures that a person has a secure citizenship status and can benefit from the rights and protections that the state provides.

The basic problem of establishing identity results in a loss of access to entitlements and social services. The issue of

lack of access to education for children of migrants further aggravates the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Housing: Labor demand in cities and the resulting rural-to-urban migration creates greater pressures to accommodate more people. Unaffordable rents in slums force migrants to live at their workplaces (such as construction sites), shop pavements or in open areas in the city. This further perpetuates their vulnerability to harassment by the police and other local authorities.

Limited Access to Formal Financial Services: Since migrants do not possess permissible proofs of identity and residence, they fail to satisfy the Know Your Customer (KYC) norms as stipulated by the Indian banking regulations. They are thus unable to open bank accounts in cities which has implications on the savings and remittance behaviors of migrant workers.

Political Exclusion: In a state of continuous drift, migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights. As migrants are not entitled to vote outside of their place of origin, some are simply unable to cast their votes.

A 2011 study on the political inclusion of seasonal migrant workers found that 22 percent of seasonal migrant workers in India did not possess voter IDs or have their names in the voter list.

Rampant Exploitation: Migration flows are mediated by an elaborate chain of contractors and middlemen who perform the critical function of sourcing and recruiting workers. These networks largely operate in the informal economy.

Migrants, completely dependent on the middlemen for information, end up working in low-end, low-value, hard, and risky manual labor and are constantly subject to exploitation with little or no opportunity for legal recourse.

As migrants are dispersed throughout a vast urban or rural canvas, it inhibits their potential to organize themselves in formal or informal ways. This further weakens their bargaining power in terms of wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act of 1979:

- It is enacted to regulate the condition of service of inter-state labourers in Indian labour law.
- The Act's purpose is to protect workers whose services are requisitioned outside their native states in India.

Provisions:

Rights of interstate workers: In addition to the general labour laws applicable to all workers, the interstate workers are entitled with-

- equal or better wages for the similar nature & duration of work applicable for the local workmen or stipulated minimum wages under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 whichever is more.
- to displacement allowance, home journey allowance, suitable residential accommodation and medical facilities free of charge on mandatory basis.
- termination of employment after the contract period without any liability.
- Right to lodge complaint with the authorities within three months of any incident, accident, etc.

Role of contractors:

- Registration of all contractors who employ five or more Inter State Migrant Workmen on any day of the preceding 12 months.
- Furnish the details of workmen periodically
- Maintain the registers indicating the details of interstate workers

- Issue of passbook affixed with a passport-sized photograph of the workman indicating the name and the place of the establishment where the worker is employed, the period of employment, rates of wages, etc...
- Liable for the prescribed punishments for violations committed under this Act.

Role of principal employers:

- Registration of all principal employers who employ or directly or indirectly five or more Inter State Migrant Workmen on any day of the preceding 12 months.
- Maintain the registers indicating the details of interstate workers
- Every principal employer shall nominate a representative duly authorized by him to be present at the time of disbursement of wages by the contractor.

Role of state governments:

- Appointment of inspectors to oversee implementation of this act.
- Appointment of registration officers to grant and revoke registration of contractors/ principal employers/ establishments.
- Appointment of licensing officers to grant, suspend and revoke licenses to contractors/ principal employers/ establishments.
- Entertaining appeals from the aggrieved parties and disposal of the same as per this Act

The Interstate Migrant Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2011 proposed to make this Act gender neutral by amending its title and replacing the word 'workman and workmen' by the words 'worker and workers' respectively.

Internal migrant statistics census 2001 and 2011:

- The number of internal migrants in India was **450 million** as per the most recent 2011 census.
- This is an **increase of 45%** over the 309 million recorded in 2001.
- Internal migrants as a percentage of population increased from 30% in 2001 to 37% in 2011.



- However, the nature of movement has remained relatively unchanged since 2001.
- **Bulk of the movement (62%) is within the same district.**
- Another 26% is between districts within the same state.
- **Only 12% of movement is inter-state.**



- Inter-state migrants represented only 4% of the population in India in 2011, a rate almost unchanged since 2001.
- According to a research paper, **India has the lowest rate of internal migration in a sample of 80 countries.**
- A World Bank paper, using 2001 census data, attributes the low rate of internal migration to:
 - Non-portability of entitlements (such as the Public Distribution System)
 - Preferential norms in educational institutions
 - Domicile requirements for state government jobs

Trends and patterns of internal migration:

WEF's report on 'Migration and Cities':

- India's in-migration is growing at 4.5 per cent annually.
- **Pune and Surat** are the cities most affected by in-migration in Asia.
- **Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka account for a third of interstate migrants**, while those from northern states

account for another 20 per cent.

Census 2011 data on migration:

- It showed that over **45.58 crore Indians were found to be “migrants”** for various reasons.
- The socio-economic development of the southern states is considerably higher and has attracted more people.
- While marriage remains the primary reason for women to migrate, the Census data shows that Indian women are also migrating for work and education.
- The **number of Indian women who are economic migrants has grown by 129 per cent.**

Economic Survey of India 2017:

- It estimates that the magnitude of inter-state migration in India was close to 9 million annually between 2011 and 2016.
- **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are the biggest source states**, followed closely by Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan.
- The **major destination states are** Maharashtra, UP, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

Covid crisis and internal Migrants:

- According to the World bank report **‘COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens’**, nationwide lockdown in India due to COVID-19 has impacted nearly **40 million internal migrants**.
- Around 60,000 moved from urban centers to rural areas of origin in the span of a few days.
- The **magnitude of internal migration is about two-and-a-half times that of international migration.**
- Internal migrants have faced **issues in** health services, food, cash transfer and other social programmes.
- They are **vulnerable to** the loss of employment and wages during an economic crisis.

- Lockdowns in labour camps and dormitories would **increase the risk of contagion** among migrant workers.
- The state boundaries became the sites of **violent migrant-police encounters**, as police resorted to beating migrants for having violated the lockdown orders.
- Thousands of them, without any means of transport **left to their villages back on foot, dying of starvation, fatigue, and road accidents.**
- Though, on May 1, 2020, the Central government introduced special **Shramik trains** to take urban migrants back to their villages, due to train cancellations and exorbitant fares, these special trains brought little relief to urban migrants.

Mould: What is the trend of internal migration in India? How has the nationwide lockdown impacted the lives of internal migrants?