

Extended Abstract

A Story of Declining Labour Migration during Last One and Half Decades in India

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Historically India has witnessed large scale labour mobility. Notwithstanding, little attempt has been made to analyse the trends of internal labour migration in the country (Bhagat, 2010). Results from the last two decadal censuses and three rounds of Indian National Sample Surveys show an increasing trend of migration. Interestingly, as marriage has been a dominant reason of migration particularly among women in India (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003) there is a need to scrutinize the migration trends by considering only the employment related reasons of migration. Therefore, present study aims to answer the question whether labour migration (migration due to employment related reasons) has increased or not during last one and half decade since the introduction of new economic policy in 1991 in the country? Indian National Sample Survey (NSS) collects the migration related data after every six to seven years. We have utilized last three available migration related rounds of NSS which were carried out in 1993, 1999-2000 and 2007-2008. In the present study, we have focussed to study the trends and patterns of labour migration in India. The paper also endeavours to study the trends in labour migration among different social groups and monthly per capita expenditure classes and tries to assess the change in probability of labour migration among different socioeconomic factors using multivariate analysis.

Data and Methods

The present study utilized the Unit Level Data of the 49th (1993), 55th (1999-2000) and 64th (2007-08) rounds of National Sample Survey of India, which is a nationally representative, large-scale, multi round survey designed to collect the detailed socio-economic data from the country. The NSS covered sample of 119,403 households in 49th round, 120,578 households in 55th round and 125,578 households in the 64th round through its employment & unemployment schedules (NSSO, 1998, 2001, 2010). The definition of migration has been

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unchanged throughout these rounds. A household member, whose last usual place of residence³, anytime in the past, different from the present place of enumeration was considered a permanent migrant and if the person has stated any one of the employment related reasons⁴ as his reason for migration then he/she was considered a *labour migrant*.

We have included persons of working age-group (15-64 years) in the analysis considering them as part of labour force. Migration rates were calculated to study the intensity of migration. Migration rates for any specific category of persons of a State for a specified period of time since migration was estimated by dividing the number of persons migrating of that specific category in that region and during the specified period of time by 1000 persons of the specific category in that region. To examine the trends in labour migration we have estimated migration rates by sex and place of residence. We also considered some important social variables in the Indian context viz. educational attainment, caste/social group and in the absence of income related data we have taken the proxy of monthly per capita consumer expenditure (MPCE) to measure economic factors affecting migration. Data on consumer expenditure was collected through an abridged work sheet integrated with main schedules (employment and unemployment schedules). Based on the abridged work sheet, MPCE was worked out by dividing the total household expenditure from the household size. We construct variable MPCE quintile by distributing households into five equal percentile groups, which are defined as lowest, lower, medium, higher and highest quintiles respectively. Since MPCE vary according to place of residence and states, we have constructed MPCE quintiles adjusted for place of residence using appropriate sampling weights.

Preliminary Findings

Preliminary results suggest a declining trend of overall labour migration as migration rate declined from 47 per thousands in 1993 to 45 per thousand in 1999-2000 and 42 per thousand in 2007-2008 (Table 1). In rural areas similar trends are observed while in urban areas we observe a slight decline in migration rate from 1993 to 1999-2000 whereas it has increased in 2007-2008. We also observe a decline in labour migration in rural and urban areas with a small increase in male migration rate in urban areas during 1999-2000 to 2007-08.

³ Usual place of residence was defined in the NSS as a place (village/town) where the persons had stayed continuously for a period of six months or more.

⁴ Employment related reasons: In search of employment, in search of better employment, business, to take up employment/better employment, transfer of service/contract, proximity of work.

Results further suggest that among less educated working population there is a moderate decline in migration and there is a sharp decline in labour migration during last one and half decades with in the middle and higher educated class. Interestingly among socio-economically less influential social groups like scheduled tribes/castes labour migration has declined but we do not observe not so sharp decline as in the case of affluent social groups like other backward classes and others. During 1993 to 2007-08 there is a significant decline in the labour migration rate in rural areas among the poorest of the poor i.e. people belonging to lowest MPCE quintiles while with the increase in economic status decline in migration rate is not so sharp. In urban areas there is a decline in labour migration among poor in the last three decades whereas among middle income groups we find mixed results (Table 2 and 3).

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Tables

Table 1: Trends in Labour Migration by sex and place of residence in three Migration related rounds of National Sample Survey, India, (1993, 1999-2000, 2007-2008)

Year	Migration rate (migrants per thousand population)								
	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1993 (49th)	38.6	10.6	24.9	196.1	17.8	111.9	80.3	12.4	47.3
1999-2000 (55th)	34.0	6.5	20.3	194.0	17.3	109.9	78.9	9.4	44.8
2007-2008 (64th)	24.2	4.6	14.4	201.4	16.5	112.2	75.7	7.9	42.2

Note: Based on the sample of 15-64

Table 2: Trends in Labour Migration by Educational Attainment and Caste in three Migration related rounds of National Sample Survey, India, (1993, 1999-2000, 2007-2008)

Educational Attainment	Migration rate (migrants per thousand population)		
	1993 (49 th)	1999-2000 (55 th)	2007-2008 (64 th)
Below primary	31.7	27.8	24.8
Primary or middle	47.2	42.9	37.7
Secondary or higher	81.6	70.5	58.3
Graduate and above	161.7	138.3	126.4
Castes			
Scheduled Tribes/Castes	42.6	32.9	30.4
Others (Including OBCs and General)	49.1	49.3	46.8

Note: Based on the sample of 15-64

Table 3: Trends in Labour Migration by Monthly per Capita Expenditure and place of residence in three Migration related rounds of National Sample Survey, India, (1993, 1999-2000, 2007-2008)

MPCE Quintiles	Migration rate (migrants per thousand population)					
	Rural			Urban		
	1993 (49 th)	1999-2000 (55 th)	2007-2008 (64 th)	1993 (49 th)	1999-2000 (55 th)	2007-2008 (64 th)
Lowest	21.5	10.5	6.3	62.6	50.7	47.2
Lower	21.5	13.6	8.6	79.4	75.6	72.1
Medium	16.2	13.9	8.3	94.7	98.4	104.3
Higher	21.0	18.0	11.5	141.7	134.7	141.6
Highest	41.8	40.8	33.1	186.6	167.4	173.0
Total	24.9	20.3	14.4	111.9	109.9	112.2

Note: Based on the sample of 15-64