

Internal Migration in India: Issues, Policies, and the Road Ahead

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Abstract

Large scale migration has increased in the modern era due to better connectivity and interdependence of various parts of the world. Internal migration is one of the unexplored categories in India. Despite the facts and evidence of large rural to rural and rural to urban migration, India does not have the proper mechanisms to control, execute, and manage these internal migrants. This paper aims to study the patterns, causes, and consequences of internal migration in India. It also discusses the different policies related to India's internal migrant workers and proposes strategy frameworks on migration. The paper suggests that migrant workers' problems are enormous and calls for the government and other social stakeholders, including trade unions, to collaborate and communicate to strengthen the policies for social security and sustainable growth of migrant workers.

Keywords

migration, missing women, policies

Introduction

India is the second-largest populous country in the world. The total population is 1.21 billion, of which 48.5 per cent is female (Census of India, 2011). It is expected to rise to more than 1.5 billion people by 2030 (UN, 2017). The people of India are mostly poor, and the majority of them live in rural areas. The International Organisation for Migration defines migration as the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border or within a State (IOM, 2008). Migration is a universal phenomenon and has been so since time immemorial. Migration

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is inevitable in the process of economic development. It triggers economic development, which in turn contributes to further migration. Migration plays a vital role as a coping mechanism in the absence of secure sources of income in the place of origin.

There are various reasons, meanings, and theories for the migration process and the factors that drive people to migrate. The economic benefits, higher living standards, stability, poverty alleviation, prejudice, education, and environmental changes are among the most evident reasons for migration. Migration emerged as a very significant trend and was the fundamental explanation for the urban transformation in relation to the demand and supply of labour and economic growth of the industry (Mckeown, 2004). Migration may be broadly categorised under two different headings. The first is 'internal migration' where people migrate inside a defined social structure. The second is 'external migration' where people cross globally recognised regional and political boundaries that separate one country from another (Peterson, 1978). The Indian economy has undergone a rapid transformation in the last few decades. Migrants support the Indian economy by moving people to where they are needed and allowing them to learn new skills and improve their livelihoods (Korra, 2011).

In India, out of the 1.21 billion population, nearly 453 million are migrants. The ratio of migrants to India's total population is more than 37.4 per cent (Census of India, 2011). The National Sample Survey (NSS) data from 2007-08 found that approximately 28.3 per cent of Indian workers are migrants. Rural-urban migration has also played an important role in urbanisation (Mitra and Murayama, 2011). According to the 2011 census, the rate at which urbanisation takes over has increased from 27.81 per cent in 2001 to 31.16 per cent in 2011, leading to the rise in rural to urban population and poverty (Census of India 2011). The patterns of internal migration have also seen a change in significance parallel to cultural and technological transformations in the Indian nation's recent history. Internal migration studies have shown a drop in population mobility until the 1990s (Bhagat, 2009). In comparison, the post-reform era indicates that the internal population movement is rising. With enhanced facilities in education, transportation, and communication, the workforce moves from agriculture to industry and then to tertiary activities. This change has affected mobility trends in India (Bhagat, 2011). The paper attempts to explore the trends and patterns and policy measures relating to migration in India.

Data and Methods

The paper is based on secondary data sources, predominantly from Census 2011 data, NSSO reports of India, and the working group's migration report. Several other articles and websites were also referred to. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. The sources were critically reviewed to highlight the challenges of migrant workers and possible solutions to progress towards building a fully inclusive society.

Results and Discussion

The Magnitude of Migration in India

According to the census, there were 167 million migrants in 1971, 213 million in the 1981 census, 232 million in the 1991 census, 315 million in the 2001 census, and 456 million in the 2011 census. India's migration pattern is more than one distorted count. In high-income States such as Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka, immigration rates are higher at the State level. The low-income States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Odisha have a relatively high out-migration rate. The number of women who migrate is 68 per cent, and males are 32 per cent. Sixty-nine per cent of all migrant women lived in rural areas, while 31 per cent lived in urban areas. 56 per cent of migrant males lived in urban areas, and 44 per cent lived in rural areas. Conversely, 56 per cent of the total migrated male populations lived in urban areas, and 44 per cent lived in rural areas.

Internal migrant flows can be classified on the basis of origin and destination. Internal migrants were 309 million in the 2001 census and 450 million in India in the 2011 census (Census of India, 2011). The number of migrants rose by 45 per cent between 2001 and 2011, while the population grew by 18 per cent. Internal migrants as a percentage of the population increased from 30 per cent in 2001 to 37 per cent in 2011. The nature of movement remains relatively unchanged since 2001, although internal migration increased significantly in 2011. The majority (62%) of the movement is in the same district. Around 26 per cent were in the same State between districts, and 12 per cent inter-state migration (Table 1). In 2011, inter-state migrants accounted for just 4 per cent of the population, which is virtually unchanged since 2001.

Table 1: Distribution of Internal migrants by type of movements

| | 2001 | 2011 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Internal migration | 309 million | 450 million |
| Intra-district migration | 63 % | 62% |
| Inter-district migration | 24% | 26% |
| Inter-state migration | 13% | 12% |

Source: Census of India, 2011.

There were four channels of migration, such as rural to urban, rural to rural, urban to rural, and urban to urban. Rural-rural migration also dominates amongst migration sources, comprising 69.1 million migrants in the 2011 census, and it was about 53.3 million in the 2001 census. Thus, the rural-rural migration growth rate was 29.6 per cent during the decade. The second most dominant source is urban-urban, with 32.94 million migrants. The 2001 census of urban and metropolitan migration was the third most critical source of migration after rural and non-urban migration. However, during the 2011 Census, the urban-urban trend emerged as India's second-largest migration source, with over 18 million migrants completely on the rise (Table 2).

Table 2: Migration streams in India

| Streams of migration | In million | | Growth rate (in %) |
|----------------------|------------|------|--------------------|
| | 2011 | 2001 | |
| Rural-Rural | 69.1 | 53.3 | 29.6 |
| Urban-Rural | 11.4 | 6.2 | 84.6 |
| Rural -Urban | 32.1 | 20.5 | 56.8 |
| Urban-Urban | 32.9 | 14.3 | 130.3 |

Source: Census of India, 2011.

The NSSO stated in its 64th round (2007-2008) that rural-rural migration is the dominant migrant route accounting for almost 62 per cent of internal migrants, followed by rural-urban migrants, which account for almost 20 per cent of the total domestic migrants. There was 13 per cent of urban-urban migration, while urban-rural migration was just 6 per cent of the overall domestic migrants (NSSO, 2010).

Stated Reasons for Migration

Marriage and employment are the major reasons for migration. Marriage is

the main cause of migration recorded as 50.26 per cent in the 2011 census, which consists of 70.1 per cent for females and 2.4 per cent for males. In the rural and urban areas, marriage is the primary explanation for women's migration because India is a patriarchal culture in which brides after marriage have to move to their husbands' houses. The main reason behind male migration is employment in rural and urban areas in India. As per the 2001 census for work/employment, 14.17 per cent migrated from one village or city to another, whereas their number declined to 9.52 per cent in the 2011 census. The States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha have a shortage of higher education institutions therefore a number of youths migrated to different cities for their education. In 2001 their number was 3 per cent, which declined to 1.07 per cent in 2011. As per India's census, business is distinct from employment or jobs, where wages and salaries are paid in terms of cash or kind. Business means an economic activity that involves risks either taken by the concerned individual or by collaboration with others. When an individual migrates to the location of their own or their company, this is called migration for business. The number of migrations for business purposes also declined from 1.20 per cent in 2001 to 0.89 per cent in 2011. The reason for moving after birth includes children born at some place other than their parental house like a hospital or the maternal grandparents' house. Migration at birth has decreased from 6.7 per cent in 2001 to 5.09 per cent in 2011. Migration with households declined from 21 per cent in 2001 to 15.39 per cent in 2011. Due to other reasons, the number of migrations have risen from 9.7 per cent in 2001 to 11.74 per cent in 2011 (Table 3).

Table 3: Reasons for migration in India, 2011(in %)

| Reason for migrations | 2001 | | | 2011 | | |
|-----------------------|--------|------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| | Person | Male | Female | Person | Male | Female |
| Work/ Employment | 14.17 | 37.6 | 3.2 | 9.52 | 28.5 | 1.7 |
| Business | 1.20 | 2.9 | 0.3 | 0.89 | 2.6 | 0.2 |
| Education | 3.00 | 6.2 | 1.3 | 1.07 | 2.6 | 0.4 |
| Marriage | 43.80 | 2.1 | 64.9 | 50.26 | 2.4 | 70.1 |
| Moved after birth | 6.70 | 10.4 | 4.8 | 5.09 | 10.2 | 3.0 |
| Moved with households | 21.00 | 25.1 | 18.9 | 13.24 | 18.9 | 10.9 |
| Others | 9.70 | 15.7 | 6.7 | 11.74 | 34.9 | 13.7 |

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Most of the migration among males is for work or employment. In the 2011 census, the intra-state migration for work/employment is 21 per cent for males and 2 per cent for females and the inter-state migration for work/employment is 50 per cent for males and 5 per cent for females. Both in inter-state and intra-state, 2 per cent of males and 1 per cent of females migrated for education purposes. For marriage, 68 per cent female and 4 per cent male intra-state migration took place, whereas in inter-state, this is 54 per cent for females and 2 per cent for males. In total, for marriage purposes, 49 per cent of intra-state migration and 31 per cent of inter-state migration took place in India. Intra-state migration moving with households included 35 per cent males and 15 per cent females totalling 21 per cent. Similarly, due to households' move, inter-state migration for males is 28 per cent and for females 29 per cent, totalling 29 per cent. Due to other reasons, the inter-state migration among males is 37 per cent, for females 15 per cent, and for persons, it is 21 per cent. Inter-state migration due to different reasons among males is 18 per cent, females 11 per cent, and persons 14 per cent (Table 4).

Table 4: Reasons for intra-state and inter-state migration, 2011 (in %)

| Reason for migrations | Intra-state migration | | | Inter-state migration | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|---------|-----------------------|--------|---------|
| | Male | Female | Persons | Male | Female | Persons |
| Work/ Employment | 21 | 2 | 8 | 50 | 5 | 25 |
| Education | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Marriage | 4 | 68 | 49 | 2 | 54 | 31 |
| Moved with households | 35 | 15 | 21 | 28 | 29 | 29 |
| Others | 37 | 15 | 21 | 18 | 11 | 14 |

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Causes of Migration

People are normally deeply tied to their birthplace. Each year, millions of people in India depart their rural areas to migrate to cities with ambitions and dreams of greater work prospects and a better quality of life. The reasons can be grouped into two categories: push factors that cause people to leave their families or residences, and pull factors that attract people from different places. The processes of industrialisation, marketisation, and urbanisation and liberalisation have triggered the classic 'push' and 'pull' factors (Table 5). The literature on migration economics gave due emphasis to the 'push' factors as operated at the place of origin and 'pull' factors of the destination for the processes and outcomes of migration (Bhagat, 2018). Poverty, massive unemployment, lack of opportunities, depletion of natural resources,

natural disasters, overcrowding of agriculture in rural areas on the one hand, and expectation of employment with higher wages, facilities and better working conditions in cities or urban areas on the other hand are significant reasons for which rural-urban migration of workers takes place in India. Landless agricultural labourers in rural areas belonging to a particular class and caste would experience mobility to meet the household's expenditure (Choudhary, 1991) in comparison to those who are economically well-off.

The main reasons for migration are seasonality and low employment, small landholdings, low incomes, and indebtedness in villages (Saha et al., 2018). In India, people migrate from rural to urban areas mainly because of agriculture, insufficient land, and a shortage of basic amenities such as healthcare and schooling. In addition, natural disasters such as floods, droughts, cyclonic storms, earthquakes, tsunamis, wars and political conflicts provide an added impetus for migration. On the other hand, pull factors draw people to cities from rural areas. Many rural migrants in urban areas benefit primarily from better jobs, daily access to work, and comparatively higher wages. Better schooling options, improved health services, and entertainment outlets are all very significant pull factors. The large movement of migrant workers from rural to urban areas leads to overcrowding and creates pressure on cities' resources. This causes the random growth of slums lacking basic facilities such as safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, electricity connection, and a healthy and safe environment. Interaction of various factors in the course of development can accentuate the pace of mobility and lead to the emergence of new migration patterns.

Table 5: Pull and push factors of migration

| Pull factors | Push factors |
|--|---|
| Availability of job at destination | Lack of continuous work at origin |
| The hope of getting a job at the destination | Low wages at the origin |
| The higher wage at the destination | Mechanisation of agriculture |
| Information about employment | The economic status of the family |
| Flexible hours of work at the destination | Decline in per capita land availability |
| Skill development | Population pressure |
| Ambitions | Social differentiation |
| City connections and relatives | Poor infrastructure |
| The glamour of city life | Crop failure |
| Urban comforts | Flooding, drought |

Source: Sundaravaradarajan et al., 2011.

Challenges of Migration

Internal migrants dominate the informal urban economy market with high poverty and vulnerabilities. Migrants face different challenges in a new place. The most critical issues are identification and identity, lack of public portability, lack of social security and health services, insufficient compliance with minimum safety requirements, and poor access to affordable housing and necessary urban facilities. Proof of identity for the poor migrants who arrive in a new place is a big problem. State validated identity documentation guarantees a stable citizenry and the rights and safeguards of the State. The basic identity issue leads to a lack of access to rights and social services. In specific, this refers to access to Public Distribution Systems (PDS) permits. This scheme removes PDS migrants because they do not give up their home States' cards and receive a new host State passport. Low-income ownership and rental housing choices are insufficient. This causes informal settlements and slums to spread. The demand for work in towns and the resulting migration from rural to urban generates increased pressure for more urban people.

Migrants are forced to live in slums because of a lack of affordable housing in Indian cities. Many seasonal migrants cannot afford to pay rents in slums that enable them to live at their workplaces such as building sites or hotel dining rooms. This preserves their susceptibility to abuse by the police and other local authorities. The enforcement and lack of security of the Inter-State Migrant Workers Act of 1979 are weak. Migrants have no voting rights because they do not have elector IDs or have their names on electoral lists in cities. Migration flows are mediated by a complex chain of contractors and intermediaries that play a critical role in the supply and recruitment of workers. The intermediaries misuse them and have little negotiating leverage in salaries, benefits and working conditions. As migrants do not have any approved identity or home evidence, they cannot open bank accounts in cities which impacts on the actions of migrant workers.

Invisible Women Migrants

Female migrants make up 67.9 per cent of the overall migrant population in India. The number of migrant women worldwide is 49 per cent or nearly half (UN, 2010). Internal female migrants have a considerable effect on the scale and success of their socio-economic growth because they have a more significant potential to reduce poverty, bring about social reforms, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Migratory women are primarily considered daughters, wives, or mothers of the household's chief

male migrants. Women are mostly invisible in official records as migrant workers. The lack of research into women's migration is due to several factors. These include reliance on existing economic migration theories, in which migration is seen as motivated by socio-economic opportunities such as men's migration on economic grounds and women's migration on social and family grounds rather than economic grounds. Several scholars have concluded that the movement of women is largely due to marriage or as dependents. The 2011 census reveals that marriage accounts for 46 per cent of all migration in India, of which 97 per cent are women. This gender inequality is also explained in the context of India's historical, structural, and social perceptions that classify women as secondary to the social and economic roles of men. The dynamics of female migration are not addressed because of this male-centred orientation. Migration literature is androcentric. Despite the recognition by various enumerating agencies on the growing feminisation of migration, migration narratives and discourses are still masculine. These do not consider women as primary migrants. Even if traces of studies on gender dimensions in migration can be located from the 1970s, insights developed on female migrants have been found to have little impact on the migration theory in general (Kofman, 1999; Mahler, 1999).

Among the scanty number of available studies on women migrants, the majority attest to the sacrifice and suffering theory of migration describing women migrants' experience of migration as one of the realities of despair and drudgery (Battistella and Paganoni, 1996). Women migrant labourers' narratives illustrate the story of their deprivations and disadvantages. It is established by the existing studies that women migrant workers face several hardships and problems such as low wages, health hazards, sexual exploitation and the denial of fundamental rights. Policies and programmes have been designed by the government to insulate them from such hazards. Irrespective of such legal protective measures, the plight of the women migrants has not improved much. This compels the policymakers to delve into the feminist notion of migration, where the demand is to constitute the establishment of a regulatory body for tackling the issues concerning the unorganised women workers such as gender-neutral remuneration for their labour, health and educational facilities for their children, safe and hygienic sanitation facilities, and tackling sexual assault. Female migration is also a major concern since the trajectory of women migrants moves from marriage to work and education. There is still a significant gap in the research

and policy related to migration and gender, and further research is therefore required to understand migration in a gender-based context. Internal migration in India has increased considerably, and much remains to be done in the sense of its dynamism.

Migration and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Sustainable Development Plan acknowledges migration's contribution to sustainable development. Migration affects many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and successful management of migration would also allow poverty reduction and economic development, education, health, and gender targets to be achieved. Of the 17 sustainable Development Goals, 11 include targets and indicators relevant to migration or mobility. In the SDG target, the most relevant targets on labour migration are Target 8.8 on decent work for all, including migrant workers; 10.7 on safe and regular migration; and 10c on remittance costs. While there is an established methodology for measuring progress under Target 8.8, more work is needed on the indicators for 10.7 which are recruitment costs and effective migration policies (UN, 2016).

Laws Dealing with Migrant Workers

In the 7th Schedule of India's constitution, labour law in India is part of the Union List and the Concurrent List. That means that the Parliament of India has the right to make and enact labour laws. There are different fundamental liberties and regulations to protect migrant workers. The Indian Constitution ensures that all people have free movement. Free migration is enshrined in Article 19(1) (d) and (e) of the constitution, which guarantees the right of all people to move freely and reside and live in any part of Indian territory. Article 15 prevents discrimination based on place of birth, while Article 16 provides equal opportunities for all people in public employment matters. The statutory enactments of various legislations and policies designed exclusively for workers include the Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008, the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (amended in 2017), the Trade Union Act, 1926, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 and The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.

Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act of 1979

The Act is intended to discourage contractors from exploiting inter-state migrants and ensuring equal and decent employment terms. The law requires registration of each agency employing inter-state migrants and the licensing of contractors recruiting such workers. Contractors must supply the appropriate authority with all workers' data. Migrant workers are entitled to salaries equal to other employees, travel expenses, and loss of wages during travel. Contractors will have to ensure regular payment, non-discrimination, provide suitable accommodation, free medical facilities, and protective clothing for the workmen.

The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996

The Government of India adopted the Building and Other Construction Workers Act of 1996, known as the BOCW Act. The BOCW Act is social welfare legislation intended to help workers employed in building and construction work throughout the country. Building employees are most frequently denied minimum salaries, fair pay, overtime, water, sanitation, crèche, first aid, and temporary housing. This law intends to address the problems of the workers.

Workers Compensation Act, 1923

The Workman's Compensation Act of 1923 provides for the compensation of accidents "arising out of and in the course of employment," resulting in death or total or partial disablement of the workers. This Act has an extremely limited application and does not apply to all agricultural labour.

Employers State Insurance Act, 1948

The Act is one of the pioneering measures in the area of insurance for workers. It provides for (a) sickness benefit (b) maternity benefit (c) disablement benefit (d) dependents (e) medical benefit and (f) funeral benefit. However, these benefits, if at all, are available to a negligible section of agricultural labourers because of the legal, administrative and other problems.

The Trade Union Act, 1926

The formation of unions or associations received attention at the international level as early as 1921 when the ILO adopted the right to organise and collective bargaining conventions in 1948. These conventions

inter alia affirm all workers' rights, including rural workers, to establish a free and independent organisation and call upon the member States to implement the provision through legislation. Article (19c) of the constitution guarantees the right to "form associations or unions," which does not include the right to strike. There is no specific legislation like the Trade Union Act, 1926, for agricultural workers who are being registered. These unions appear in operations covered by the term "Industry" under IDA 1947.

Maternity Benefits Act, 1961

Like the Employee's State Insurance Act, the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, empowers the State Government to extend the provisions of the Act to an establishment or class of establishment, including agriculture. It could not be implemented in the agricultural sector in most of the sectors.

Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008

Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act 2008 is an Act to ensure the social protection and welfare of unorganised workers. This Act provides social security schemes like life and disability cover, health and maternal benefits, and old age protection to unorganised workers. The Act stipulates equality based on payment of wages, wage rates, holidays, leave, hours of work, and other service conditions. This Act also provides for displacements allowance and journey allowance.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA), later renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, MGNREGA represents one notable enactment of the 'right to work and to counter seasonal migration. The objective of this Act is to reinforce living security in rural areas by giving every household whose adult members volunteer to perform unskilled manual work at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment during a financial year. It is successfully implemented in only a few places, which is a minuscule response.

The provisions in accordance with various labour laws are not clear to most workers. The migrant workers' bargaining power is very low as most are not affiliated to any trade unions. There is also a substantial variation in labour laws between the States. Labour brings a subject matter of the Concurrent List; both central and State lists supplement the implementation of the laws. The government is competent to legislate, and therefore State

to State practices may also be different. Most of the Acts only occur on paper and not in fact. There is almost no record of litigation or resolution of disputes. Further difficulties and limitations exist for migrant workers because they are both workers and migrants. The working and living conditions of migrant workers also have not changed. The Indian judiciary seldom comes to rescue of the migrant labour issues with recommendations for filling the justice system gap.

The Way Forward

The rights of internal migrants must be protected. An important policy focus should be on ensuring the right of migrants to citizenship in the areas of destination, and access to basic facilities, public programmes, and social security schemes for migrant households. The possible eight measures are:

- The problem with the government is that it does not have reliable data on the migrant workforce. The figures available are entirely obsolete. At the panchayat level, a system should be created for the registration of every migrant worker. A data bank should be created for a better understanding of migration patterns and appropriate policy measures.
- Creation of employment in rural areas: It is important to understand that migration happens out of compulsion which is due mainly to the financial insecurity resulting from the unbalanced rural-urban development. This failure urges us to look at the reasons which lead to the unparallel development in the rural society. Rather than big industries, we need numerous sub-units in the multiple regions of our country, especially in the rural areas, which can be combined with agricultural and rural employment. The MGNREGA is a major entitlement-based initiative and employs rural masses. Therefore, we have to create more employment in MGNREGA to stop distress migration. There is a need to revive the rural market culture with more skill-based products that can be sold not just in rural markets but also in urban stores. Due to the poor product quality and inadequate training, many traditional occupations are dying and artists are left economically paralysed, compelling them to work as labourers or sometimes as 'bonded labour' in a big crowded city.
- A bottom-up approach to a policy integrating local experts and a task force will also create regular employment for the region's ambitious

literate youth. Policy think-tanks and research organisations, both private and public, can be set up in the region's rural areas to increase infrastructure and employment. Hence there is a great need to develop and improve these skilled artists.

- Appropriate skilling and on the job training programmes should be provided. Interventions to improve skills would facilitate access to the labour market. Training of migrant workers for the construction, hotel and factory sectors helps to increase wages, enables better placements, and improves self-esteem and dignity. The prime focus should be on developing the technical skills of the migrant workers, mainly concerning their rural problems such as animal husbandry, dairy farming, and agriculture, and urban tools such as technological and service sector skills.
- Networks of cooperatives working for and on agriculture and allied activities can work in harmony to pursue a community based integrated approach to development. Village-level agriculture is profitable and less cumbersome. Cooperatives can undertake milk collection and procurement, cultivation, horticulture, floriculture and fish farming. The feasibility of cottage industries can be explored. Incentives such as eco-tourism involving village-level homestays and adventure activities can be introduced, given the proximity of metropolitan cities facing adverse climatic conditions and pollution.
- Government interventions are required to ensure access for migrant labourers' children to schooling. The education of migrants' children is affected by migration. There is a need for both governmental and non-governmental support to bring the children into the educational system. Along with that, there is a need for systematic changes in the education system. These include the provision of free higher secondary education for female children of these sections of society. There should be trained consultants for these children who can attend to them whenever they need any assistance.
- Food security and credit support are necessary for migrant workers: Food insecurity has been prevalent in recent decades and is considered one of the most severe problems facing migrant labourers. For the past decade, this issue has been on the executive table for introducing

the pan India ration card so that migrants can avail themselves of the benefits of PDS anywhere in India. This seems to be a promising idea, but there should also be a financial assistance programme for people to access for their personal needs and to increase their purchasing power. Their minimum wage should be decided by the State in which they are working based on their labour time. This will also effectively reduce the poverty rate in India.

- The migration of households requires access to infrastructures such as housing, sanitation, insurance and healthcare.

Conclusion

Migrants are often imprisoned in insecurity and deprivation in an urban informal economy. There is an urgent need to develop strategies to strengthen the rural areas to accommodate sustainable means of livelihood options, such as to provide food security, easy access to credit, and the creation of employment opportunities. In addition, the emphasis should be put on improving rural infrastructures like health, education, and rural transportation and connectivity. The governance mechanism must be democratised, so that internal migrants are involved in decision-making and planning. There should be some provision of flexibility in education for migrants so that their communities are not neglected or overlooked by the system. There is an urgent need for internal migrants to obtain a nationally recognised and handy of identity by which they can claim socio-economic rights in any region of the country. Measures should be taken to promote social integration and to eliminate prejudice against the internal migrants. We should highlight how we can reverse this kind of situation and focus on an approach that enables these poor migrants to develop their capacity to live a healthy and respectable life in whichever place they are willing to live.

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