

Socio-demographic profile of socioeconomically disadvantaged internal migrants in Delhi

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Abstract: Macro studies reveal that internal migration is of considerable extent in India, however disaggregated studies on specific migrant groups are lacking from India. The present study is based on a scientifically drawn sample of 10,428 migrant households living in Delhi and the objective is to present socio-economic profile of the socioeconomically disadvantaged migrants living in Delhi. Migration is predominantly male in character and is dominated by younger ages. Migrants form a considerable proportion of the city's population and are indispensable for the city's growth. The other characteristics of migrants reveal that migrants are marginalized in the city and have denied access to basic amenities and compromise to live in such conditions in order to earn a livelihood and better incomes. Since migrants are an indispensable population in the cities, they should be recognized as a specific vulnerable group for the provision of basic services and there is a need for policy formulation ensuring rights of the migrants.

Keywords: Internal migration; Socio-economic disadvantage; poverty; Delhi; India

Introduction

Migration is a key feature throughout human history and at present represents an important livelihood strategy, mainly for the poor in many of the world's poorest countries. The Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimated that there are approximately 740 million internal migrants and 214 million international migrants (United Nations Development Program, 2009). 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. UNDP defined internal migrants as those individuals who move within the borders of a country, usually measured across regional, district, or municipal boundaries, resulting in a change of usual place of



residence. In India, internal migration is a common phenomenon with the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) of India estimated that in 2007-08 there were 326 million internal migrants (i.e., 28.5% of the population) (National Sample Survey Organization, 2010). The provisional results for Census of India 2011 show that urban population in India has touched 377 million and 31.16% of the total population are living in urban area against 27.78% in 2001. Several causes for this population natural urban growth include growth, reclassification/urban reconfiguration and migration. Bhagat and Mohanty (2009) estimated that there is 20.8% of internal migration and this has contributed to 9.2% of urban growth in the decade 1991-2001.

The benefits of internal migration are often not recognized despite the fact that migrants are a necessity for developmental activities in cities. In India, rural-urban migration is on the rise due to rural impoverishment, rapid industrialization, a strong desire for upward economic mobility and an attraction towards the cities. However, it appears that migrants are having difficulty coping with urban living and are becoming vulnerable in the new environment. On one hand, rapid urban development attracts many people, particularly the poor in the background of rural impoverishment livelihood insecurity.

India has embarked upon the new economic policy in the year 1991-popularly known as liberalization of the Indian economy. This economic policy believed that economic reforms would increase internal migration. Thus, migration has become an important phenomenon from economic, political and public health points of view (Bhagat, 2008). Interestingly, Bhagat (2008) highlighted that it is not just the poor and disadvantaged who are migrating, but a larger proportion of migrants belong to better off sections of Indian society and also the trends reveal that inter-state migration has drastically increased from 24% in 1971-81 to 54% in 1991-2001 Census and it coincides with economic liberalization Indian economy since 1991. In the last two decades or so, capital has become hugely more mobile. 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, both nationally and internationally (Srivastava, 2011).

Despite its importance, migration has received less attention by the scientific community. Bhagat (2008) criticized that migration research finds low priority among Indian Demographers, and attributed it to that a paradigm shift in the demographic research tilting to the issues of reproductive health that has occurred since the early 1990s. He further criticized that demographic health surveys (known as National Family Health Surveys- NFHS) did not consider migration as an important variable affecting the health status in general and



reproductive health in particular. However, it may also be noted here that in third round of NFHS, one question was introduced to classify one as a migrant or non-migrant and Bhagat (2008) expressed this as a new hope that this would spur migration research focusing on migrant, non-migrant differentials in fertility, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and child mortality, etc. in future. Bose (2003) criticized that migration is grossly neglected by Indian demographers who are busy with data collection exercises funded by external agencies (Bose 2003), as a result of which there were very few recent demographic studies on India's internal migration and its causes and consequences.

Data on internal migration in India is principally drawn from two main sources in India – the decennial population Census and the quinquennial migration surveys carried out by the National Sample Survey Organisation. 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 Census as well as the National Sample Survey, defines a resident as one who has been staying in a location for six months or more. However, at present, Census results for migration are available only till 2001. The data on migration by last residence in India as per Census 2001 shows that the total number of migrants was 31.4 crore. In the decade 1991-2001, about 9.8 crore persons migrated to a new place from their place of last residence. Out of these migrants by last residence, 8.1 crore were intra-state migrants, 1.7 crore inter-state migrants and 7 lakh international migrants. The largest volume is confined to migration from one part of the State to another.

As we know that migration is diverse, and a higher proportion of migrant's attention has generally been focused on different groups of internal migrants and a great deal of analysis has focused on the poorest segments. In the Census of India, Migration on account of change of residence by women after marriage constitutes significant proportion of these migrants. However, in the present study migration due to marriage is not considered to define migration, and it is rather considered as a shift from one household (natal) to the other (conjugal). The migration of the head of the household is considered to define a household's migration status, with an exception of single member households.

Study Area

Delhi, the national capital of India is located at 28°61′ N and 77°23′ E. According to 2001 Census of India, the population of Delhi was 13,850507 and in 2011 it rose to 16, 753, 235 against the projected population of 18.4 million (Census



of India, 2011), and the National Sample Survey Organization estimated that 42% of the Delhi's population are migrants (NSSO, 2010). There was a declining trend in the decennial growth rate of Delhi from 47.02% during 1991-2001 to 20.96% during 2001-2011 and this decline has been attributed to the development of NCR priority towns viz., Gurgaon, Faridabad, Sonipat, Noida, Ghaziabad, Meerut etc., and also been attributed to implementation of various employment schemes lime Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA) and pension schemes (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, 2013). The 2011 revision of World Urbanization Prospects by the United Nations ranked Delhi as the second largest urban agglomeration with 23 million population (United Nations, 2013). The rapid developmental activities taking place across the Delhi agglomeration act as pulling factor for several people, particularly those from the low socioeconomic strata, whereas the poverty and lack of work to earn act as pushing factors in the rural villages. Estimated figures say that 200,000 to 300,000 people a year settle in Delhi permanently from other states in India as migrants. After Mumbai, Delhi has the second largest slum population in India. Nearly 1.8 million people lives in slums in Delhi. According to the 58th round of NSSO survey, there were 1867 slums in Delhi, out of which around 83% are non-notified slums. The Government of Delhi has been regularizing the unauthorized slums and upgrading the Juggi-Jopri (JJ) clusters and providing some basic amenities. Economic Survey of Delhi (2008-09) reported that there are about 1100 JJ Clusters with 6 lakh households. The Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has noted that about 35% of Delhi population is living in the JJ clusters and unauthorized colonies (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, 2009). The migrants often find a place to live in slums/JJ clusters/other deprived areas or live in informal migrant camps. Based on the NSSO data of 2007-08 on migration, around 20% of the migrants in Delhi are earning less than Indian Rupees (Rs.) 1500 (approximately US dollars 25) per week (National Sample Survey Organization, 2010).

The socio-economically disadvantaged mainly live in slums; temporary settlements nearer to work sites, in government lands, along with railway tracks, under the flyovers/foot over bridges, and on the foot paths; and even in open spaces. We describe these areas briefly hereunder. Resettlement colonies are mainly composed of low socioeconomic groups, and their residence is legal, and the government provides basic amenities to its residents. Many of the settled-migrants own their houses in resettlement colonies. Several resettlement colonies have been set up and sold at subsidized price by the government in order to provide better housing/living conditions to its residents, who have migrated and made their abode in Delhi. The residents of resettlement colonies are those who were able to bag this



opportunity and were able to afford for a house in these colonies. However, there are people living in substandard houses/huts in Delhi though they have migrated long back and are still confined to live in slums. Hence, the habitation in a resettlement colony is indicative of relatively better living conditions with better housing and other civic amenities within the low socioeconomic strata. Slums are semi legal squatter settlements and are mainly inhabited by those who are socially marginal and who have not been able to attain economic stability, despite having migrated long back. Generally, new migrants find a place to stay either by setting up huts with cheap/waste material or by paying minimal rents in these localities. The slums are semi legal in the sense that they do not have legal recognition, and the authorities can evacuate them; still, people living in these areas, own their houses and even sell to others while moving to another area of the city or elsewhere. Also, the government provides some basic amenities to residents of these areas. However, some slums are better off in terms of possession of basic amenities while others lack basic amenities and are usually characterized by open drainages, houses are not aligned in proper streets and often constructed in a haphazard manner, often single room hutments usually without a sanitary latrine. Whereas few slums are legal in character known as notified slums, and have better access to basic amenities. In the present study since we have very few notified slums, we have clubbed them with the slums with better amenities. It may also be mentioned here that the government of National Capital Territory of Delhi has started the process of recognizing and authorizing these slums in a phased manner and the process is under slow progress. Several of the present study slums with better access to basic amenities are in the process of getting notified by the government. The objective of the present study is to present a brief socio-economic profile of the disadvantaged migrants living in Delhi.

The Sample

The present data were collected as a part of two major research projects carried out for assessing migrants' access to government healthcare services and access to health insurance. Initially, several slums/resettlement colonies and other probable areas where migrants reside were identified by visiting and enquiring from the local community and community leaders. Only those slums, where considerable proportions (15-20%) of new migrants live were considered for inclusion. Temporary settlements nearer to work sites were included as a higher proportion of newer migrants tend to live in these settlements. Thus, a total of 330 clusters (Eighteen resettlement colonies, 55 slums with better basic amenities, 162 slums with poor basic amenities, 70 temporary settlements nearer to work sites and 26



open spaces) were selected. Random selection procedure was followed to include households in to the sample. Thus, a total of 10,530 households were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. However, 63 households refused to participate and 39 schedules were of incomplete information. Finally, complete data were available for on 10,428 households. Socio-demographic details of the selected households were collected through face-to-face interview using a pre-tested questionnaire. Information pertaining to various socio, demographic details namely, age and gender of the respondent, educational details of the respondent, total family income, occupation of the head of the household, ethnicity, religion and their place of origin were collected. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and their consent obtained before data collection. Permissions and co-operation were sought from the community members and leaders and worksite managers for conducting these surveys. The institutional ethics committee approved the study protocol. We categorized migrants into three groups based on the duration of migration viz., (i) those who have migrated within the last 5 years (here onwards referred to recent-migrants), (ii) those who have migrated for more than 5 years but not more than 10 years (here onwards referred to as settling-migrants), and (iii) those who have migrated and staying in Delhi at least for a minimum of 10 years (here onwards referred to as settled-migrants).

Analysis

Out of 10,530 households, 63 households refused to participate and 39 schedules were of incomplete information and finally complete data were available for 10,428 households. The respondents were 5249 men and 5179 women.

Age and sex composition of the respondents:

Table 1 describes age and gender wise details of the respondents. A majority of the respondents are younger. A majority of the respondents of the recent migrants are constituted by men (71.6%) and this owes to the fact that migration for livelihood reasons is mainly male in character, leaving their family at the origin in the initial period of migration.

Educational attainment

Table 2 describes the details of educational attainment of the respondents by gender. A considerable proportion of migrant women (53%) and men (33%) did not receive any formal education. Around 40% of men and 23 to 28% of women received secondary level of education (6 to 10 years of education) and 15 % of the respondents were educated only up to primary level of education. It appears that if



people have had the chance of getting into the school, they are more likely to enter into secondary level of education. While gender disparities in educational attainment are conspicuous, there was not much conspicuous variation between various migrants groups. This obviously owes to the rural origin of the respondents, and people usually migrated to the cities during their teenage and early twenties and thirties, with an exception of few settled-migrants who have migrated in their childhood along with their parents. However, a considerable proportion of settled-migrant men (17%) and women (9%) attained higher secondary and graduate level of education compared to the other two groups Slightly higher proportion of literates among settled-migrants may be attributed to the urban advantage.

Type of residential area

Table 3 presents the details of type of residential area, social class, religion, occupation of the head of the household, household income per month and state of origin by migration duration. A quick glance at the table reveals that the recentmigrants tend to live in temporary settlements nearer to the work sites (46%) and in unauthorized slum colonies (44%). Those who have migrated between 5-10 years mainly lived in unauthorized slum colonies (63%), while a considerable proportion of settled-migrants live in resettlement colonies (24%) or in slums with better amenities (35%). It may also be noted here that around 6% of the migrants are living in open spaces. It reveals a trend that as they habituate to the city; they tend to set up their permanent/semi-permanent residence either by erecting their own hut or by paying little rents. The residents of resettlement colonies are those who were able to bag this opportunity and were able to afford for a house in these colonies. However, there are people living in substandard houses/huts in Delhi though they have migrated long back and are still confined to live in poor slums (35%). Hence, the habitation in a resettlement colony is indicative of relatively better living conditions with better housing and other civic amenities within the low socioeconomic strata. Few the better of slums are authorized by the government and are thus legal in character while a majority of slums are semi-legal in character. Semi-legal in the sense that they do not have legal recognition and the authorities can evacuate them; still, these slums have been existing for long and even expanding; people living in these areas own their houses and even sell to others while moving to another area of the city or elsewhere. Also, the government provides some basic amenities to residents of these areas. However, it may also be noted here that the government of National Capital Territory of Delhi has started the process of recognizing and authorizing these slums in a phased manner and the process is under slow progress.



Social class and religion

Regarding social class, a great majority of the migrants belong to scheduled castes and other backward castes. Composition of social class did not vary significantly by migration duration; however, there is slight increase in the migrants representing scheduled tribes among the recent migrants. Majority are Hindu by religion.

Occupation of the head of the household and monthly income

Regarding the occupational status of the head of the household, it was found that a great majority of the recent-migrants (66%) and those migrated between 5-10 years (74%) and around 50% of settled-migrants were engaged in unskilled work mainly working as daily wage labourers. Among settled-migrants around 13% are involved in small business, while 9% hold salaried jobs mainly in private companies and in state owned companies. The ability to secure a salaried job can be attributed to the fact that a higher proportion of settled-migrant men (17%) attained higher secondary and graduate level of education. Details on total household income per month are collected. The data reveals that a higher proportion of migrants (66% of recent-migrants, 68% of those migrated between 5-10 years, and 57% of settled-migrants) earn up to Rs. 5000 per month. Around 8% of settled migrants reported to earn between Rs. 8000-10000 per month and only 4% each of the recent- and settling-migrants reported to have a monthly income of Rs. 8,000-10,000.

Place of origin

Information on the place of origin is also collected and the data reveals that a greater proportion of migrants come from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar followed by Rajasthan, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand. About half of the settled-migrant households originally belong to the state of Uttar Pradesh followed by 21% of them originally belonging to the state of Bihar. The states of Uttar Pradesh (37%) and Bihar (36%) almost equally contributed to recent migration. The details on the place of origin indicate that there are increasing proportion of migrants from the states of West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand recently.

Discussion

Though macro studies (Census of India and National Sample Survey Organization surveys) provide some details about migrated and larger trends in the migration flows, however, disaggregated information on migrants is often not available from these surveys. The data clearly shows that the poorer states still



contribute to the migration flows to the cities. And it may be mentioned here that for a greater majority (around 98%), the sole main reason for migration is earning a livelihood followed by better earnings. Usually the decisions to migrate are diverse and a variety of factors influence the decisions regarding migration across various socio-economic strata. But for the poor the sole reason tends to be livelihood search coupled with a slightly better wages. It may also be mentioned here that a major proportion of the poor migrants are engaged as temporary wage/casual labour. The present study reveals that the poorer migrants are often engaged as casual labourers with low paid and low earning jobs in informal sector. The casual and contractual nature of work itself brings forth the vulnerability of the poorer migrants and Srivastava (2011) writes that they often suffer from various deprivations and handicaps which also have to do with the nature of urban policies and absence of employer support.

Data on the social class affiliation of these migrants revealed that the poorer migrants are largely represented by the deprived sections of the society such as the scheduled castes and backward classes. Thus, migration of the poor is compounded with lower levels of educational attainment low social class affiliation and lower economic status all of which are interrelated. A major proportion of the earning members of the family are found in temporary/ daily wage the poor to securing livelihood and at the same time cities need labour force in order to carry out the ongoing developmental activities. However, despite the fact that migrants are an essential part of the city, their needs are often ignored and present data clearly reveals their living conditions and the continuing low socioeconomic conditions. Migrants often lived in dilapidated, unhygienic living condition with gross lack of basic amenities (water supply, sanitation and access to social services). The poorer migrants are often represented by vulnerable social classes namely scheduled castes and other back ward castes. Also, there is an increasing trend of migration from the schedule tribes who constitute around 8% of the India's population. Thus, the migrants' vulnerability is multifaceted. Vulnerability here is defined as a state of being exposed to or susceptible to neglect or abuse. This vulnerability leads to less control over the resources that are meant for all communities including migrants. It is obvious that urban migrants are affected by livelihood insecurity, negligence and alienation in the new sociocultural environment. This situation impedes the integration of migrants into the local population. Since migrants form a considerable and essential group in cities, meeting their basic needs, including providing better access to other social services, is the responsibility of the state. It is a pre-requisite for the system to recognize migrants as a vulnerable group that needs targeted interventions for improving their living conditions and access to various



state sponsored services. Internal migrants face numerous constraints, including lack of political representation; inadequate housing and lack of formal residency rights; low-paid, insecure or hazardous work; limited access to state provided services such as health and education.

We were not able to capture the female migrant workers who mainly migrate for domestic work and stay with the employers families and are mainly recruited through some agencies meant for supplying domestic servants, and it is also difficult to include them in the study owing to the difficulties in identifying and getting consent them from the employer's households. Also, it is known that mainly these domestic workers are constituted by young girls, with their families in the native. Our data mainly constituted by the migrants working in various construction work sites, factories, living in slums and resettlement colonies.

Conclusion

Migrants form a considerable proportion of the city's population and are indispensable for the city's growth. The present study reveals that these migrants are characterized by younger age profile and lower social profile with lower levels of educational attainment and uncertain employment with a majority involved in unskilled work. They are marginalized in the city and have denied access to basic amenities and compromise to live in such conditions in order to earn a livelihood and better incomes. Since migrants are an indispensable population in the cities, they should be recognized as a specific vulnerable group for the provision of basic services and there is a need for policy formulation ensuring rights of the internal migrants.

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Table 1 *Age and gender wise composition of the participants by migration duration*

	Migration duration										Total sample		
Age	Within last 5 years			5-10 years			More than 10 years						
group	Men	Women	Both	Men	Women	Both	Men	Women	Both	Men	Women	Both	
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	
< 20	928	157	1085	171	100	271	110	310	420	1209	567	1776	
years	(33.3)	(14.2)	(27.8)	(13.6)	(10.6)	(12.3)	(5.0)	(9.9)	(9.7)	(23.0)	(10.9)	(17.0)	
20-30	1263	772	2035	724	644	1368	367	1186	1553	2354	2602	4956	
years	(45.3)	(69.7)	(52.2)	(57.7)	(68.2)	(62.2)	(16.7)	(37.9)	(35.8)	(44.8)	(50.2)	(47.5)	
30-40	405	137	542	240	174	414	397	974	1371	1042	1285	2327	
years	(14.5)	(12.4)	(13.9)	(19.1)	(18.4)	(18.8)	(18.1)	(31.1)	(31.6)	(19.9)	(24.8)	(22.3)	
40-50	136	35	171	92	18	110	206	417	623	434	470	904	
years	(4.9)	(3.2)	(4.4)	(7.3)	(1.9)	(5.0)	(9.4)	(13.3)	(14.4)	(10.2)	(9.1)	(8.7)	
> 50	58	7	65	27	8	35	125	240	365	210	255	465	
years	(2.1)	(0.6)	(1.7)	(2.2)	(0.8)	(1.6)	(5.7)	(7.7)	(8.4)	(4.0)	(4.9)	(4.5)	
Total	2790	1108	3898	1254	944	2198	1205	3127	4332	5249	5179	10428	
	(71.6)	(28.4)	(100.0)	(57.1)	(42.9)	(100.0)	(27.8)	(72.2)	(100.0)	(50.3)	(49.7)	(100.0)	

n = number

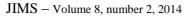
Table 2 *Educational attainment by the migrants by gender and duration of migration*

Educational attainment by the migrants by gender and duration of migration									uuon			
Variable			Total sample									
v at table	Within last 5 years			5-10 years			More than 10 years			1 otai sample		
Education al status	Men n (%)	Women n (%)	Both n (%)	Men n (%)	Women n (%)	Both n (%)	Men n (%)	Women n (%)	Both n (%)	Men n (%)	Women n (%)	Both n (%)
No formal education		654 (59.0)	1636 (42.0)	419 (33.4)	550 (58.3)	969 (44.1)	327 (27.1)	1523 (48.7)	1850 (42.7)	1728 (32.9)	2727 (52.6)	4455 (42.7)
Primary ed. (1-5 years)	436 (15.6)	153 (13.8)	589 (15.1)	228 (18.2)	129 (13.7)	357 (16.2)	184 (15.3)	419 (13.4)	603 (13.9)	848 (16.2)	701 (13.5)	1549 (14.8)
Secondary ed. (6-10 years)	1124 (40.3)	258 (23.3)	1382 (35.5)	503 940.1)	230 (24.4)	733 (33.3)	488 (40.5)	901 (28.8)	1389 (32.1)	2115 (40.3)	1389 (26.8)	3504 (33.6)
Higher secondary & above (10-12 years & above)	248 (8.9)	43 (3.9)	291 (7.5)	104 (8.3)	35 (3.7)	139 (6.3)	206 (17.1)	284 (9.1)	490 (11.3)	558 (10.6)	362 (7.0)	920 (8.8)
Total literates	1808 (64.8)	454 (41.0)	2262 (58.0)	835 (66.6)	394 (41.7	1229 (55.9)	878 (72.9)	1604 (51.3)	2482 (57.3)	3521 (67.1)	2452 (47.3)	5973 (57.3)

n=number

Table 3 *Other characteristics of the participants by migration duration*

	Mig			
	Within last 5	5-10 years	More than	Total sample
Variable	years	(n=2198)	10 years	(n=10428)
	(n=3898)		(n=4332)	





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