

SESSION 7: CIRCULAR INTERNAL MIGRATION IN INDIA

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SESSION 7: CIRCULAR INTERNAL MIGRATION IN INDIA

Objectives

1. To understand the relationship between circular migration and development.
2. To discuss the typologies and dimensions of circular migration.
3. To develop an insight about the impact of policies on circular migrants.

Outline

- Circular Migration and Development
- Conceptual Definition of Circular Migration
- Typologies of Circular Internal Migration
- Coping and Accumulative Migration
- Dimensions of Circular Migration
- Policies impacting on circular migrants

Circular Migration and Development

- ▶ India is crisscrossed all over by thousands of circular migratory routes between villages within the same district, across districts, and across states sometimes at opposite ends of the country.
- ▶ Internal migration in India is more important than international migration in terms of the numbers of people involved and possibly even the volume of remittances.
- ▶ Temporary internal migration is more likely to involve the poor, lower caste, and less educated and it has large implications for poverty reduction and meeting the SDGs.
- ▶ Circular movement is a routine part of livelihood strategies for people living in marginal areas such as drought-prone villages and forested areas.

- According to Census 2011, there are 45.4 Crore domestic migrants in India.
- In other words, 37% of Indians are migrants.
- In comparison, migrants as a part of total population was only about 30.5% in 2001.

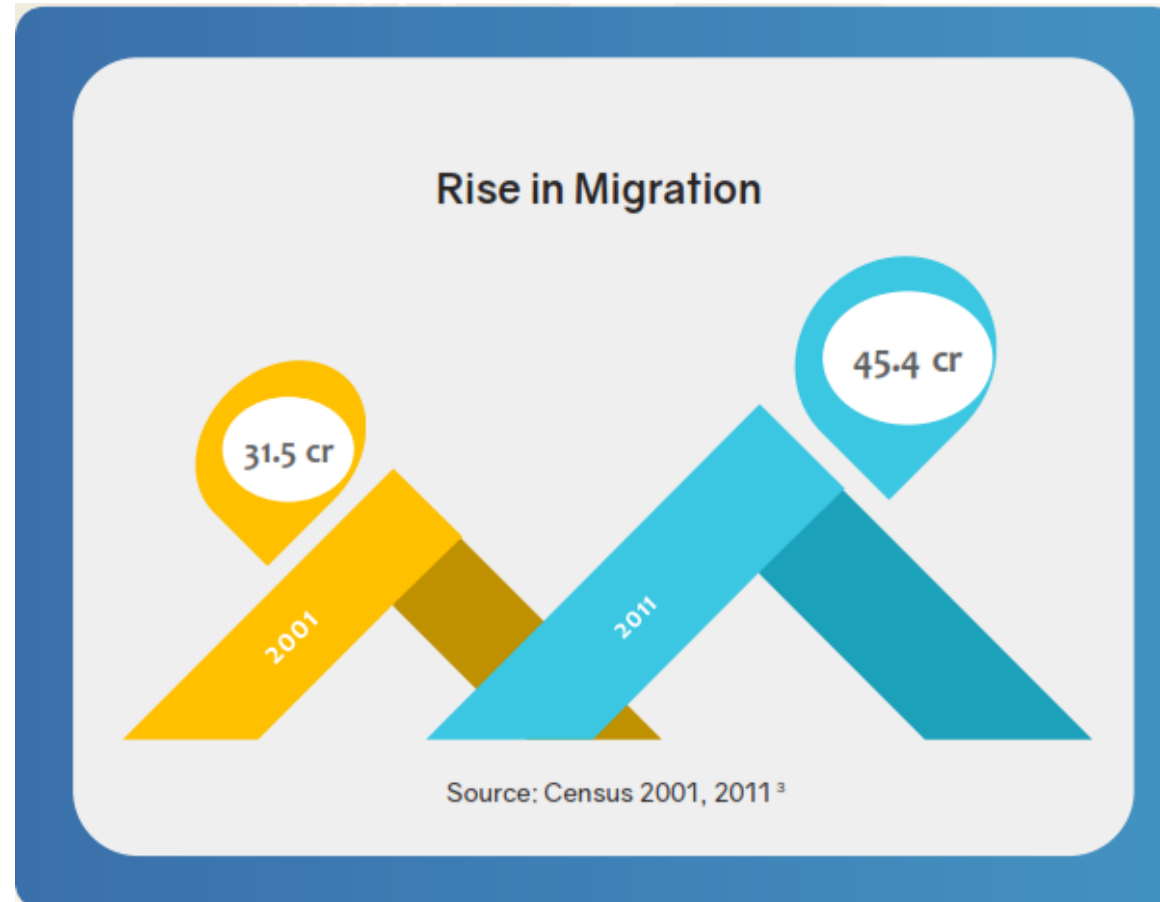


Table 1. Workforce and Migration for Economic reasons, Census 1991-2011

| | | | | Growth % | | |
|---|--------|-----|------|----------|------|------|
| | | | | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
| | | | | 2001 | 2001 | 2011 |
| | | | | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
| Workforce (million) | Total | 317 | 402 | 482 | 2.4 | 1.8 |
| | Male | 227 | 275 | 332 | 2.0 | 1.9 |
| | Female | 90 | 127 | 150 | 3.5 | 1.7 |
| Migrants stating economic reasons for migration (million) | Total | 26 | 33 | 51 | 2.4 | 4.5 |
| | Male | 22 | 29 | 42 | 2.7 | 4.0 |
| | Female | 4 | 4 | 9 | 0.4 | 7.5 |
| Migrants stating economic reasons for migration as a share of workforce, % | Total | 8.1 | 8.1 | 10.5 | | |
| | Male | 9.6 | 10.4 | 12.7 | | |
| | Female | 4.4 | 3.2 | 5.7 | | |
| Migrants who moved within last one year, stating economic reasons for migration (million) | Total | 1.4 | 2.2 | 3.5 | 57 | 59 |
| | Male | 1.1 | 1.7 | 2.8 | 55 | 65 |
| | Female | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 67 | 40 |
| Flow/Stock Ratio (%) among migrants who moved for economic reasons | Total | 5.4 | 6.7 | 6.9 | | |
| | Male | 5.0 | 5.9 | 6.6 | | |
| | Female | 7.6 | 12.1 | 8.2 | | |

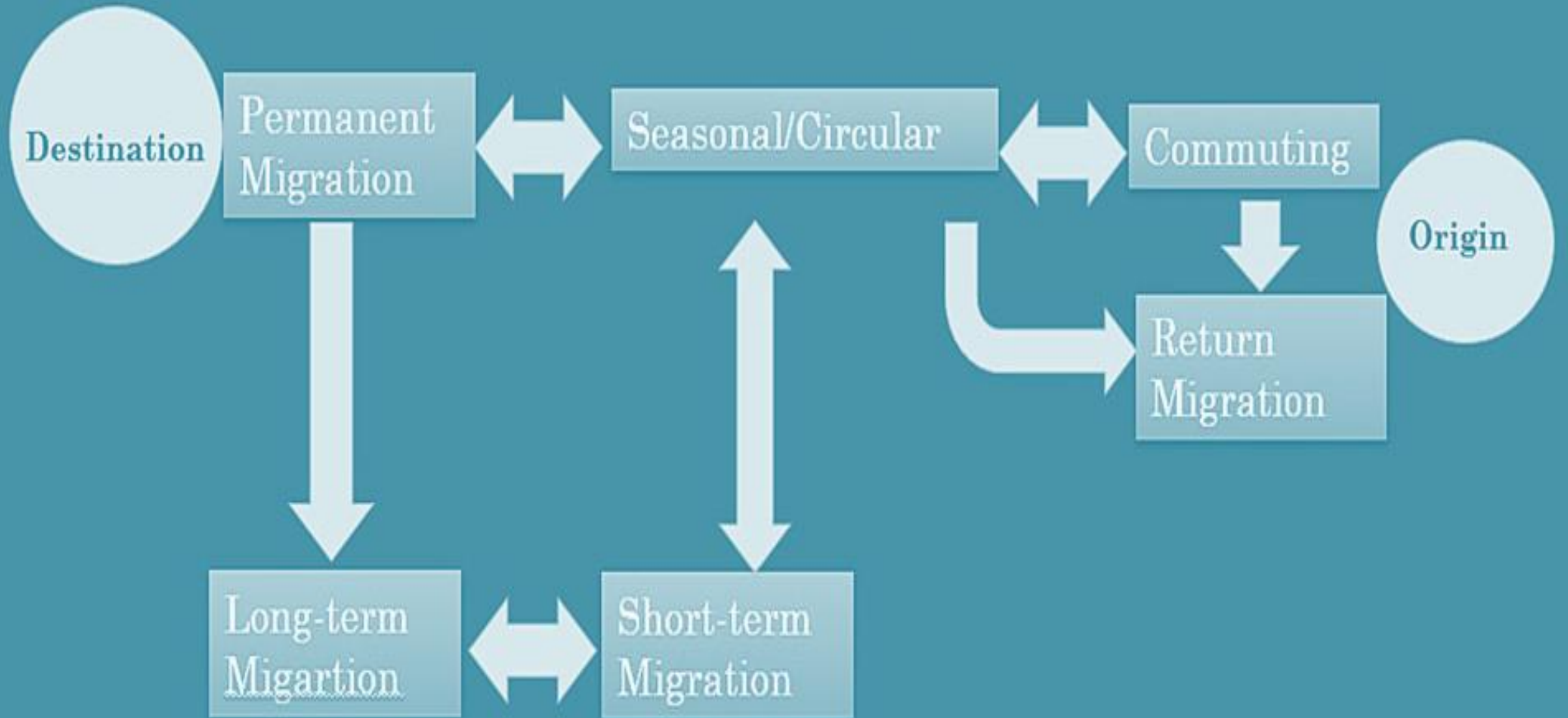
Source: Census 1991, 2001 and 2011. Figures for 1991 adjusted for Census absence in J&K in 1991. Migration data for 2011 are taken from provisional D-5 tables. Economic reasons include work, employment and business. Flow/Stock ratio is migration for duration less than a year divided by total stock of migrants. Compound annual growth rates taken for stocks and simple growth rate used for annual flows.

Conceptual Definition of Circular Migration

| Author | Definition used for circular migration |
|-----------------------|--|
| W.Zelinsky(1971) | Circular migration refers to a great variety of movements, usually short-term, repetitive or cyclical in nature, but all having in common the lack of any declared intention of a permanent or long-lasting change in residence. |
| J.A. Bustamante(2000) | A process through which a migrant, legally or not, alternates his/her place of residence between origin or destination country, until eventually settling down in either of them due to age or family reunion. “Based on the notion of a migrants migration career(history)” defined as a sequence of loops, complete or not |

Conceptual Definition of Circular Migration

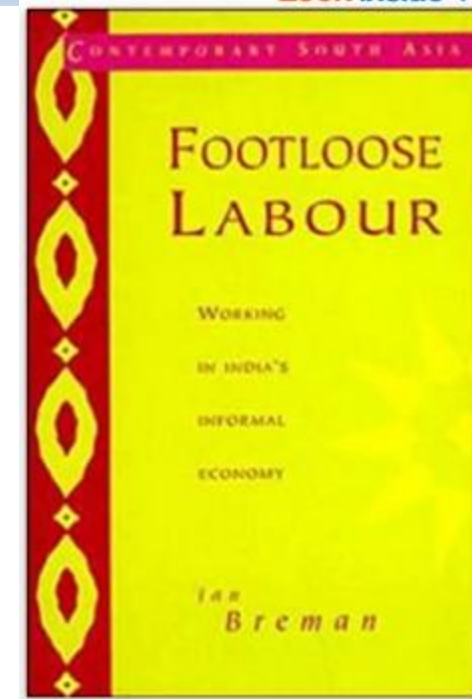
- Desingkar & Farrington(2009) opined that Circular internal migration is a multi-locational livelihood strategy adopted in the rural India, a triple win situation for origin, destination area and migrant.
- It is a self sustainable voluntarily adopted process where government need not to reinforce too much governance machinery and resources.
- Circular internal migration at its optimum level not only fulfill the labour requirement at destination but also alleviate the poverty at origin and improve the life of the migrant.



Source: Zelinsky, 1971; Bustamante, 2002, Singh and Sarkar, undated.

Footloose labour

- An important voice in the debate on circular migration has been that of Jan Breman, a sociologist who saw labour migration as the only survival option for people who were alienated from their land in the transition to capitalism.
- He found that on account of slow growth and stagnation in job creation in agriculture, rural workers were moving towards the urban economy.
- Much of what he talked about in his book –seasonal migrants and footloose labour- has become extremely relevant today in the context of understanding the mobility of India's workforce.



Understanding the Dimensions of Circular Migration

Five dimensions of circular migration(UNECE, 2016):

(a) **Repetition of move**(frequency)

One of the questions concerning circular migration in the context of repetition is: How to distinguish circular migration from return migration?

Circular migration is a form of return migration; however, return migration is not necessarily circular.

(b) **Directionality**(related to the direction of moves)- rural to rural, semi-urban & urban)

- (c) **Time**(refers to both duration of stay of the circular migrants and to the time period over which the circulatory is addressed).
- (d) **Purpose or reason for move**(e.g. for work, study, training or for other purposes)
- (e) **Developmental impact**(Circular internal migration not only fulfill the labour requirement at destination but alleviates poverty at origin and improve the life of migrants)

Source & Destination of Migration

- **Lead source states:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu.
- **Key destination states:** Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Karnataka.
- Migrants are mostly employed in construction, domestic work, textile, brick-kilns, transportation, mines, and agriculture (Deshingkar and Akter 2009).

- Most short-term migrants belong to socio-economically deprived groups, such as- SCs or STs, having negligible educational attainment, limited assets and resource deficits;
- Migrants face denial of basic entitlements including access to subsidized food, housing, drinking water, sanitation and public health facilities, education and banking services and often work in poor conditions devoid of social security and legal protection.

Coping and Accumulative Migration

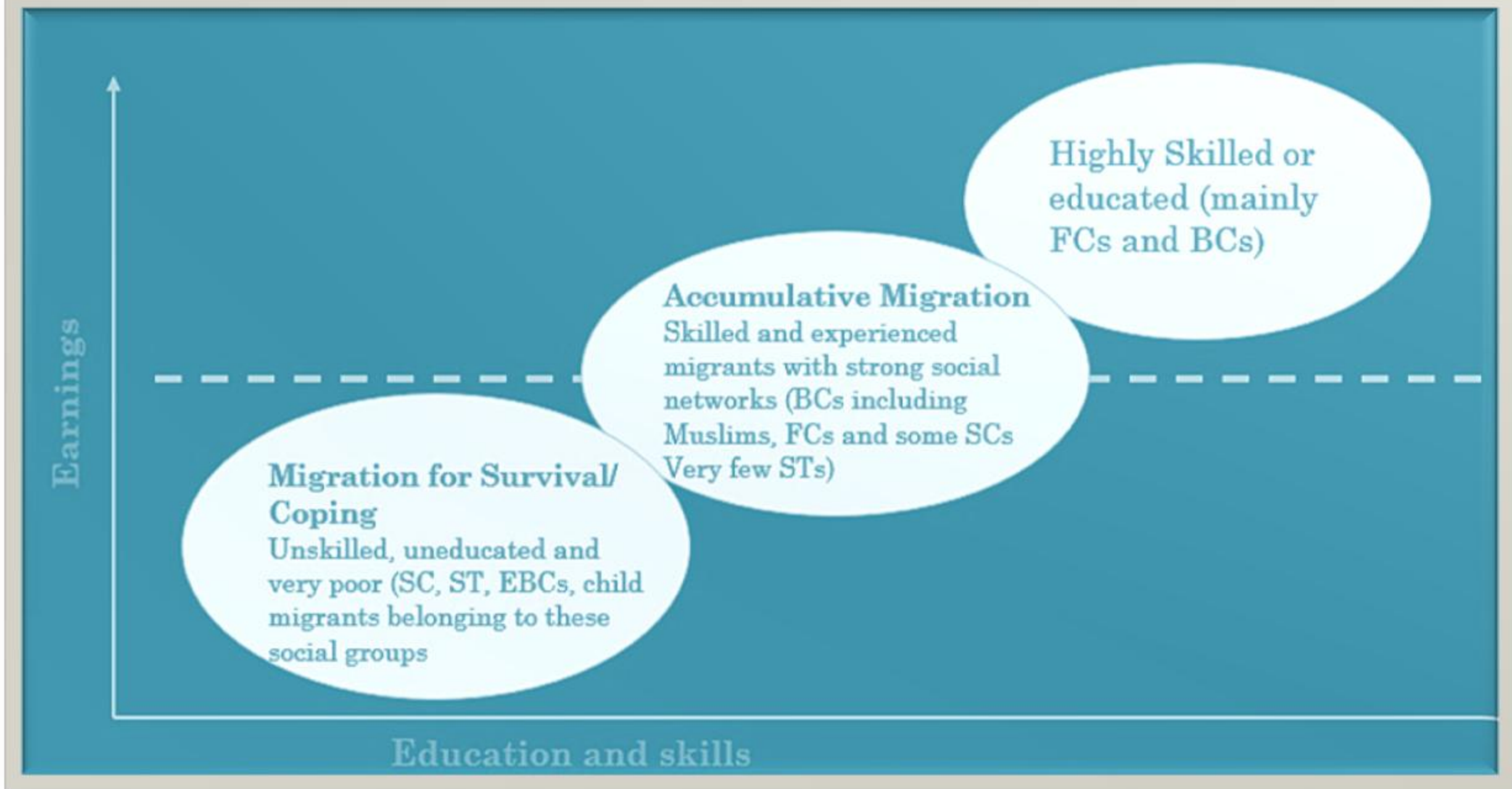
- Two kind of circular migration:

- (i) Circular migration by the poor, and the least educated, mainly for survival (coping migration)

- (ii) Better-off households with some education, assets, skills and social networks migrating for portfolio diversification which often allows the accumulation of assets, savings, and investment(accumulative migration).

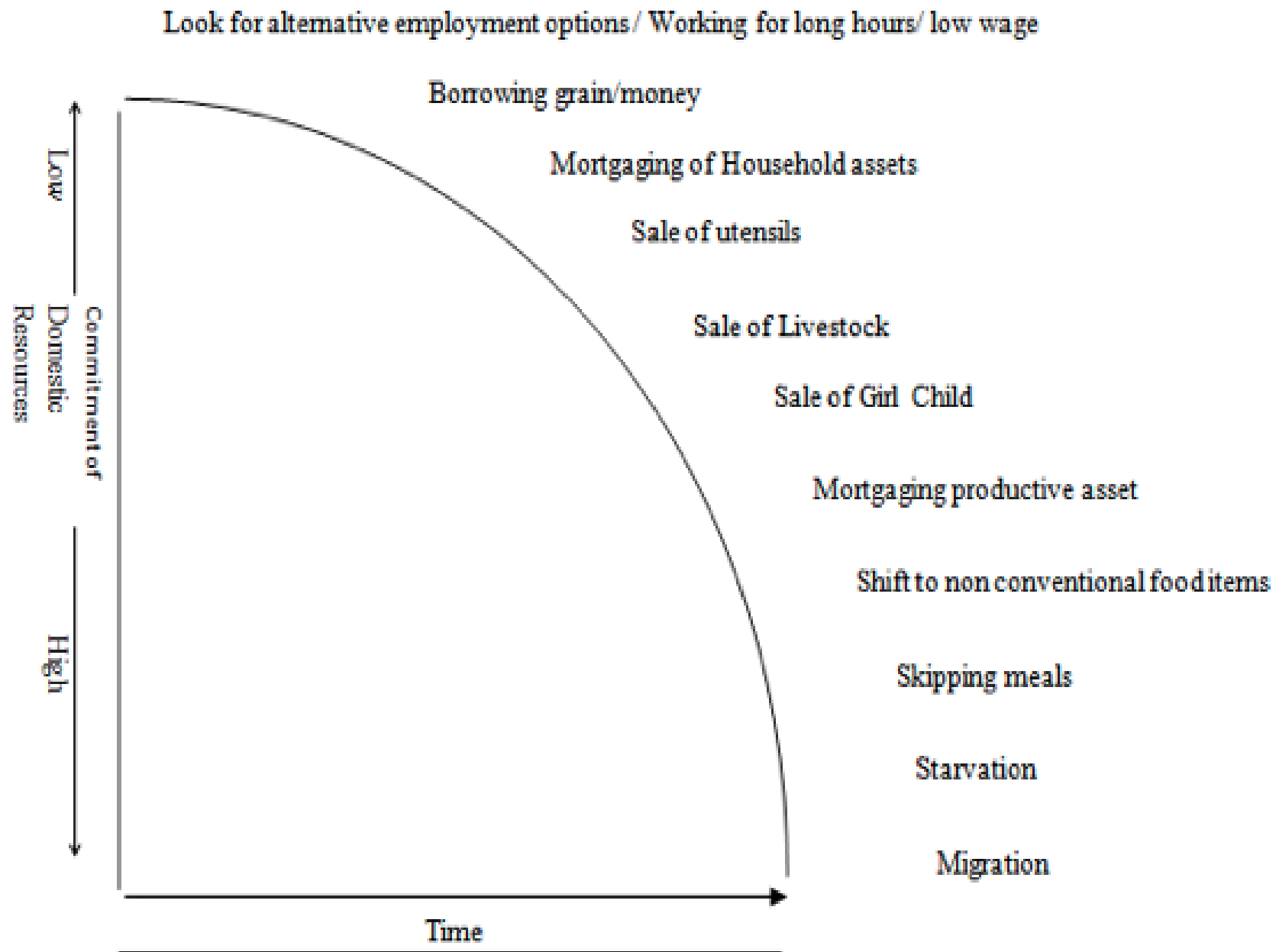
(Deshingkar & Farrington, 2009)

- ▶ Fig.1 contains a schematic presentation of the types of circular migration.
- ▶ The vertical axis represents earnings and the horizontal axis represents skills and education.
- ▶ Migration for survival usually involves those who belong to historically disadvantaged groups such as SCs and STs as well as BCs, known as EBCs in states like Bihar.



Type of Circular migration(Deshingkar, 2009:20)

- ▶ These migrants travel short distances for the lowest paid manual work including harvesting or brick-kiln work.
- ▶ Examples, include the migration of the Musahar in Bihar for brick-kiln work, migration of STs in MP for crop harvesting in the Haveli area and the migration of SCs in AP(undivided) for construction work in the capital city of Hyderabad.



Source: DFID- Praxis in WFP (2000: Chapter 5). Participatory Poverty Profile Study in Balangiri District, Odisha

▶ The better-off migrants with skills, education and social networks manage to get jobs in large cities such as Delhi and Mumbai in the rapidly expanding industrial, manufacturing, and service sector.

▶ Work in small units that make bags, footwear, embroidered fabrics, and cloths as well as plastic processing units, and vehicle workshops.

▶ Work in restaurants and hotels as well as security firms is also rapidly growing for migrants who have at least secondary schooling and having contacts in the city.

- ▶ This kind of migration is usually open to those who belong to the vast category of BCs with some land.
- ▶ The migration is long distance and long term and migrants return during festive occasions or family events.
- ▶ They send remittances to family through formal(post office account, postal money order, bank account) and informal channels.

- ▶ The money is invested in the farm or in buying/upgrading other assets.
- ▶ Examples include: the BCs in Bihar, the Vaddis(also BCs) in AP and skilled masons from MP(again mainly BCs) who work in urban centres in Gujarat.
- ▶ In almost all cases,(whether coping or accumulative), employment conditions frequently contravene labour regulations especially in relation to safety, exposure to toxic chemicals, and hygiene.

- ▶ The degree of illegality is more severe if the migrant is socially and politically powerless.
- ▶ SC and ST migrants frequently occupy jobs at lower end which are often in the category of dirty, dangerous and degrading (the so-called 3-D jobs).

Estimates on the Size of the Migrant Workforce in India

- Labour migration in India tends to be circular in nature in both short and long-term migration streams.
- Using sectoral workforce data, Desingkar and Akter(2009) argue that the number of migrant workers exceeds 100 million.
- Similarly, using NSSO data of 2007-08 that captures short-term migration, Mazumdar et.al.(2013) document nearly 70 million migrant workers in India comprising 17% of the workforce of the survey year.

Size of the Migrant Workforce in India

- Female migration for work is concealed in ‘reason-for-migration’ statistics because the principal reason given to the enumerator is ‘marriage’ or ‘moved’ with household’.
- Using NSS 2007-08 data separately on migration and worker status, it can be shown that migrants comprise 29% of the workforce(GoI 2017, Srivastava 2011).

Size of the Migrant Workforce in India

- Alternatively, nearly 20% of the rural households had at least one out-migrant for work in 2007-08(Tumbe 2015).
- Commuters migration for work across the rural-urban divide is also substantial in India, exceeding 10 million people in 2009-10(Chandrasekhar 2011).
- The slow pace of Indian urbanisation is rooted in the demographic divergence between rural and urban natural growth rates and not necessarily in low or stagnant rates of migration (Tumbe, 2016).

Size of the Migrant Workforce in India

- Census data is useful to understand certain aspects of migration, it has its limitation in capturing circular migration and female migration for work.
- Alternative estimates noted the share of migrants in the workforce to lie between 17% and 29%.
- As per Census 2011, the size of the workforce was 482 million people and based on extrapolation, this figure will exceed 500 million in 2016.
- If the share of migrants to the workforce is estimated to be even 20%, the size of the migrant workforce can be estimated to be over 100 million in 2016 in absolute terms.

Policies impacting on circular migrants

- The overall policy environment in India is far from migration-friendly.
- This is manifested in numerous rural development programmes which try to offer alternatives to migration.
- Migrants live and work in poor conditions and have no access to pro-poor schemes, such as the PDS and health care.

- There is an enormous gap in service provision because poor circular migrants are among the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the country.
- If Government fails to reach them, it will affect India's prospects of reaching the SDGs.
- Circular migration in India has grown significantly and in the policy front, the government need to develop a protective and promotive migrant sensitive policy framework.

Policies impacting on migrants in India

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Urban development projects | The Master Plans of major metropolises openly aim to keep migrants out |
| Rural employment projects | The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment guarantee Scheme aims to reduce rural-urban migration by creating jobs in rural areas |
| Natural resource management projects | Watershed development projects aim to improve the natural resource base and its capacity to sustain rural livelihoods and thus reduce outmigration |

Source: Deshingkar & Farrington, 2009: 24

- With this I come to an end of the session on Circular Internal Migration in India and leave you with few questions which you will find easy.
- Thanks for watching the video.

Quiz Question

Q.1. Who coined the concept 'footloose labour'?

- (a) Felix Padel
- (b) Jan Breman
- (c) Andre Beteille
- (d) M.N. Srinivas

Q.2 Who defined circular migration as “a great variety of movements, usually short-term, repetitive or cyclical in nature, but all having in common the lack of any declared intention of a permanent or long-lasting change in residence”.

- (a) W. Zelinsky
- (b) J.A. Bustamante
- (c) Priya Deshingkar
- (d) John Farrington

Q.3. Which one of the following states receives maximum number of immigrants?

- (a) Uttar Pradesh
- (b) Maharashtra
- (c) Delhi
- (d) Bihar

Readings

- Breman, Jan. (1996) *Footloose Labour Working in India's Informal Economy*, Contemporary South Asia. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Deshingkar, Priya and John Farrington (2009) 'A Framework for Understanding Circular Migration', Chapter 1, p. 1-36. In *Circular Migration and Locational and Livelihood Strategies in Rural India* (eds). New Delhi: OUP.
- GoI(2017). Economic Survey 2016-17: Chapter 12: India on the Move and Churning: New Evidence, p. 264-277.



Thank you