SESSION 9: LABOUR MIGRATION IN INDIA: TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Dr. Gadadhara Mohapatra

Assistant Professor of Sociology, IIPA

M.A., M.Phil, & Ph.D. (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

Postdoc(Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany)

DTS & DoT, DoPT, GOI

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, NEW DELHI

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Objective:

1. To present a review of the trends and patterns of labour migration in India
2. To analyse trends and patterns of labour migration across regions.
3. To understand mobility among socio-religious groups in India.
4. To understand the level of education among migrants and non-migrant workers and their skill differences.
5. To analyse the characteristics of migrants and non-migrants in labour force in terms of type and nature of employment.

Outline

- Labour Migration: Trends and Patterns
- Labour Migration across Regions
- Labour Migration among Socio-religious Groups in India
- Migration and Educational Attainment
- Migration and Labour Market Outcomes

Labour Migration: Trends and Patterns

▶ The phenomenon of 'labour migration' is an integral part of the process of development and has been central to the theories of long-run economic growth and structural transformation(Khan, M. Imran, 2020).

▶As per the estimates of UNDP(2009) there are 740 million migrants migrating within countries, and the number is four times more than international migrants.

▶For India, the NSSO has in its 2007-08 survey, presented details of migration and migrants from various vantage points such as: in-migrants, migrating households, short-duration out-migration, households with one or more out-migrating members and return migrants.

▶One-third of India's population is defined as internal migrants, but not all internal migrants are labour migrants.

▶ In 2007-2008, there were 324 million internal migrants in India, of whom 140 million migrants were workers.

Definitional Issues

▶ The current literature defines labour migration only as male migration or depends on the initial reasons for migration which under-represents female labour migrants in rural areas who predominantly migrate for marriage.

▶While defining labour migration, studies have either focused on male migration or have defined labour migration as only those migrating for economic reasons(Srivastava, 2011).

▶The definition of labour migration underestimates the presence of labour migrants at the destination.

▶It overlooks those who have migrated for different reasons but are currently active in the labour market, particularly female labour migrants who may have migrated for marriage or have moved with their household.

▶NSS ask migrants to provide only one reason for migration from among many reasons, including for employment (Deshingkar & Akhter, 2009), and women may find it socially acceptable to give marriage as a reason (Krishnaraj, 2005).

▶ Few Studies have attempted to include 'female labour migrants' by incorporating those workers who had migrated for 'education' and 'other reasons' or had moved with their family (Mazumdar, Neetha, & Agnihotri, 2013).

▶ The definition of migration, thus far, is dependent on census data which mainly uses reasons for migration and does not take into account the current labour market status of the migrants.

▶NSSO data is flexible in considering the reasons of migration as well as the current labour market status of the migrants.

▶ For instance, while examining the initial reasons for migration and current labour market status of the migrant workers in the 64th round of NSS unit-level data, it is found that only 93% of those who migrated for economic reasons were active in the labour market at the time of the survey.

▶ Similarly, a significant proportion of migrants who migrated for non-economic reasons and are usually not counted as labour migrants were part of the labour force in the destination.

▶ Among those who migrated for education, 11% had entered into labour market, probably after completing their studies, and 40% of those who migrated for other reasons, such as moved with family or marriage, and were active in the labour market at the time of the survey.

New Definition of Labour Migration:

▶Labour migrants are defined as individuals who have reported their place of enumeration different from their place of last residence and are currently part of the labour force and 'non-migrant labour' as those individuals who have not experienced any kind of migration in their lifetime and are currently part of the labour force (M. Imran Khan, 2020).

▶ The new definition of labour migrants are those who are currently employed or searching jobs and have changed their last place of residence.

▶ With this new definition, it is found that in rural areas in 2007-2008, women who initially migrated for economic as well as non-economic reasons and were participating in labour market at the destination constituted 73% of the total female labour force.

▶Besides, there is a high incidence of female labour migrants in rural areas and male labour migrations in urban areas.

Labour Migration across Regions

▶ The five successive NSS unit-level data(1983 to 2007-08) shows that rural to rural migration is declining in total migration share, but within that, the decline is in short-distance intra-district rural migration and not in long distance inter-district and interstate rural to rural migration, which has shown an increase for both male and female labour migrants.

▶ This trend is shared across the states in India with few exceptions.

▶ States such as Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana and Assam shown an increase in the share of short-distance rural to rural migration to total migration, especially among male labour migrants.

▶ In urban areas, labour migrant streams are changing towards long distance rural-to-urban migration, and short-distance intra-district migration is declining.

▶ Similarly, urban-to-urban migration, which constitutes a major migration stream in urban areas but is moving towards long-distance urban-to-urban migrations.

Migration rate by Socio-Religious Groups

▶ The NSS unit-level data in the last three decades shows that of all migrants, rural females belonging to socially advantageous groups(SAG) have highest migration rate(80.25%), followed by rural females belonging to SC(75.24%) and the lowest rate belongs to rural males belonging to ST(4.38%).

▶ Among females, urban Muslim females have the lowest rate(45.06%).

▶ Among males, SAG urban males shows the highest migration rate(39.13%) in 2007-08.

▶The migration rate among rural females is higher than that in urban females, whereas urban males have higher migration rates than rural males across social groups.

▶ Besides, SAG male migrants in both rural and urban areas have higher migration rates than male migrants of socially disadvantageous groups such as SC, ST or Muslims, which is consistent across all time points.

▶ This indicates a social hierarchy in migration wherein SAGs use networks to grab opportunities, whereas the socially disadvantageous groups lag behind in reaping the benefits of migration.

Migration and Education Attainment

▶ Education plays an important role in determining employment outcomes of workers in the labour markets.

▶ Workers with higher education are more likely to get decent and formal employment and experience increased earnings.

▶ Migrants, particularly male migrants, have higher employment rates as they are better educated, and therefore are more likely to get regular jobs in the non-agricultural sectors with higher daily wages the non-migrant workers.

▶ By contrast, female migrants, unlike non-migrant female workers, generally have lower education and are mostly employed in low-paid jobs in the agricultural sector.

Migration and Labour Market Outcomes

▶The workforce participation rate(WPR) of migrants is higher than those of non-migrant workers and is more prominent in urban than rural areas.

▶Unemployment rates of migrants have been consistently lower than those of non-migrant workers over the course of time from 1983 to 2007-2008, indicating a higher demand for migrants than for non-migrants at the destination.

▶ Moreover, even the pre-migration employment rates are lower than the current rates as as reported in several studies for both men and women both female migrants in rural areas(Srivastava, 2011).

▶ Over the course of time, WPR has been declining for both migrants and non-migrants, especially for female migrants in rural areas. There is also a sharper decline for rural non-migrant females than for migrant rural females.

▶ Male migrants are more likely to be employed in regular work and less likely to be employed in all other categories of work, such as causal employment or self employment workers, than non-migrant workers, in both rural and urban areas; whereas female migrants in both rural and urban areas are less likely to have regular wage salaried employment.

▶ For instance, in 2007-08, 24% of male migrants and 4% of female migrants in rural areas, and 56% of male migrants and 35% of female migrants in urban areas were employed as regular wage salaried workers.

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▶The figures for non-migrants show that 8% of rural non-migrants males, 6% of rural non-migrant females, 35% of urban non-migrant males and 40.96% of urban non-migrant females were employed as regular workers.

▶ The rate of regular employment overall has remained more or less stable at 9% for rural males over the course of time from 1983 onwards, and for urban males, the share of regular workers declined by 2 percentage points from 44% in 1987-88 to 42% in 2007-2008.

► Similar is the case with non-migrant male workers; the share of migrant workers in regular work declined from 1983 to 2007-08, but the rates showed an increase from 1999-2000 to 2007-2008 in rural areas.

► In urban areas, the share of regular workers among male migrants decleined from 59% in 1983 to 56% in 2007-08, and for urban non-migrants, the share remained more or less stable.

►On the other hand, migrants are less likely to be employed in unpaid family work or in causal employment than non-migrant workers.

▶ Female migrant's share in regular employment is lowere than their non-migrant counterparts.

▶ After migration, they are more likely to participate in unpaid family work than non-migrant workers in both rural and urban areas.

▶ Even though the share of females in regular employment is lower than males, their share in regular employment has been increasing over the course of time.

▶ In 2007-08, among rural female migrants, 4% were in regular employment, while the share among non-migrants was 6% in the same year.

▶In urban areas, 36% of migrant females and 41% of non-migrant female workers were in regular employment, which increased from 1983 for both groups.

▶ In 2007-2008, 45% of rural females were in unpaid work, which has increased over the course of time.

▶ However, for non-migrant females, the share of unpaid family work remained more or less than stable at 38% from 1983 to 2007-08, except for a decrease to 23% in the year 1987-1988.

- With this I come to an end of the session on Labour Migration in India: Trends and Patterns and leave you with few questions which you will find easy.

- Thanks for watching the video.

Quiz Question

Q.1 According to National Sample Survey estimates, how many internal migrants were there in India in 2007-2008?
(a)   324 million
(b)   350 million
(c)   450 million
(d)   None of the above

Q.2 Who defined labour migrants as individuals who have reported their place of enumeration different from their place of last residence and are currently part of the labour force and 'non-migrant labour' as those individuals who have not experienced any kind of migration in their lifetime and are currently part of the labour force?
(a) Rabi Srivastava
(b) M. Imran Khan
(c) S Irudaya Rajan
(d) Indrani Mazumdar

Q.3 Consider the following statements:
1.Labour force participation rate is defined as the selection of working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.
2.In recent years, the female labour force participation rate has been on the decline.
Which of the given statement is/are correct with respect to labour force participation rate in India?
(a) 1 Only
(b) 2 Only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Readings

•Khan, Imran, M.(2020) 'Labour Migration: trends and Characteristics'. In S. Irudaya Rajan, Sumeetha M. (2020) (eds.) *Handbook of Internal Migration in India*, Chapter 4, page no. 51-79. New Delhi: Sage Publishing India.

•Srivastava, Ravi(2011) 'Labour Migration in India: Recent Trends, Patterns and Policy Issues', The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol. 54, No. 3, p.411-440.

• de Haan, Arjan(2011) 'Inclusive Growth? Labour Migration and Poverty in India', The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol. 54, No. 3, p.387-409.

Thank you