

# State-level Analysis of Migration in India: Evidence from NSSO and PLFS Survey

Pradeep Kumar Panda

Economic Sector Lead, SDG PMU, Planning and Convergence Department, Government of Odisha

## Abstract

Migration is an integral part of the process of urbanization and economic growth. In order to understand this driver of economic growth, this paper attempts a study of migration at a dis-aggregated level. Specifically, the study analyses the differences in the pattern and nature of migration across states in India and their relationship with level of social and economic development of these states. There are regional differences in the nature of migration flows. The reasons for migration are not similar across regions; and the pattern of migration flows is essentially linked to the social and economic infrastructure of the states. As per PLFS, Migration rate for female is way higher than male in both rural and urban areas. Inter-state migration is prominent among female than male and majorly observed in rural areas compared to urban areas. Prominent reasons for migration are in search of employment/ better employment, for employment/ work, migration of parents/ earning member of the family, marriage among others. For male, employment is major reason for migration while for female marriage is major reason. Skill development will be a driver of productivity and in turn will be beneficial for all sections of population particularly marginalised and poor with poor education level. Improving the education level of the Indian labour force, improving access to quality training, better co-ordination among stakeholders, strengthening skill development schemes, determining KPI, strengthening private sector participation, availability of financial resources and systemic reforms are some of the policy solutions to tackle migration problem in India.

**Keywords:** Migration, Economic Development, NSSO, PLFS, HDI, Labour, India

## Introduction

*“Labor is the only prayer that Nature answers: It is the only prayer that deserves an answer—good, honest, noble work.”*

— **Robert G. Ingersoll**

Migration is an important link in the process of urbanization and economic development. This fact was well recognized by the earlier dual-economy growth models of Lewis (1954), Ranis and Fei (1961). While the growth models of the 1950s and 60s purported a beneficial role of migration in economic development, the Todarian models of 1970s and 80s linked migration to increased rates of urban unemployment. Theoretical models in recent times seem to have outgrown from the critiques of the famous Harris-Todaro model and look at newer aspects of migration like migration selectivity,

job-search and the role of migration in development of the place of origin and destination (Lall, Shelod and Shalizi, 2006).

When looking at the question of migration in India, it is important to consider the variation in internal migration across states. This is important for various reasons. A state-level comparison will enable us to pin down the differential causes of migration. The evidence of variation in migration patterns across states can help guide policy for ensuring more balanced socio-economic development in future.

## I. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To underline the variation and trends in migration across states in India.

- ii. To understand the behavior of migrants and the nature of migration in these states.
- iii. To relate the pattern observed in migration to health, education, infrastructure and human development of the states.
- iv. To understand reasons of migration
- v. To understand several aspects of temporary visitors

## **II. Research Methodology**

This study undertakes a descriptive analysis of the migration data on Indian states collected by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) during its 64<sup>th</sup> Round Survey on Employment & Unemployment and Migration Particulars. The NSSO definition of migrant is based on the last usual place of residence. A migrant is defined as an individual whose place of residence at the time of enumeration is different from his usual place of residence. The survey covered a sample of around 1.25 lakh households and over 5 lakh persons. Out of these, close to 80,000 comprised rural households and the remaining were urban households. The research methodology involves a synthesis of the NSS data and UNDP data on health, education and infrastructure rankings for various states. The study also covers analysis based on Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). The sample design of PLFS is not specifically focused to capture information on migration particulars and temporary visitors. However, in the PLFS canvassed during 2020-21, some additional information was collected on the following aspects: information on migration particulars of the household members and information on the temporary visitors in the household who arrived after March 2020 and stayed in the household continuously for a period of 15 days or more but less than 6 months. The report, Migration in India, 2020-2021 contains estimates of the indicators based on information collected in PLFS during July 2020-June 2021 on these aspects. Sample Size for First Visit during July 2020- June 2021 in rural and urban areas for the Annual Report: Out of the total number of 12,800 FSUs (7,024 villages and 5,776 UFS blocks) allotted for the survey at the all-India level during July 2020- June 2021, a total of 12,562 FSUs (6,930 villages and 5,632 urban blocks) were surveyed for canvassing the PLFS schedule. The number of households surveyed was 1,00,344 (55,389 in rural areas and 44,955 in urban areas) and number of persons surveyed was 4,10,818 (2,36,279 in rural areas and 1,74,539 in urban areas).

## **III. Study Findings**

### **A. NSSO Study Findings**

The NSS 64<sup>th</sup> round survey reveals that there is much mobility of persons in Northern India with the UT of Chandigarh having the highest migration rate of 549

over 1000 persons, followed by Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Haryana. The rate of migration is also high for states of Maharashtra and Kerala. It is interesting to see that the north-Eastern states of India exhibit low rates of migration with the lowest being that of Manipur (9 per 1000 persons). Moreover, while migration rates are driven largely by female population in almost all Indian states, UTs of Chandigarh and Lakshadweep are exceptions.

In contrast to the popular belief that migration primarily occurs from rural to urban areas, we find that at the all India level, bulk of the migration is taking place between rural areas (700 per 1000 internal migrants), followed by rural to urban area migration (148 per 1000) which is much lower. The urban to rural area migration is even lesser (about 49 per 1000).

Most rural-rural migration takes place in states of Himachal Pradesh (864), Assam (836), Bihar (835), Orissa (830), Jammu and Kashmir (800), Chhattisgarh (798) and Jharkhand (790). On the other hand, rural to urban migration is most witnessed by UTs of Delhi (539), Chandigarh (454) and Puducherry (398) and the states of Manipur (376), Goa (363) and Mizoram (336).

As highlighted above, the rates of migration for most Indian states are driven by females whose primary reason for migrating is post-marriage movement. This is particularly true for states of Bihar (863), J&K (841), UP (829), Jharkhand (818) and Madhya Pradesh (808) where marriage is stated as the primary reason for migration.

On the contrary, marriage is the least important stated reason for the North-Eastern states where people migrate either for employment purposes (Arunachal Pradesh (533) and Nagaland (338)), studies (Manipur (242)) or due to the movement of parents (Mizoram (450) and Manipur (412)).

Interestingly, about 190 per 1000 persons in Tripura and 60 per 1000 persons in Assam report forced migration. This should not be surprising given the problem of insurgency and continuous struggle for power and economic spaces in these states. At times, natural calamities too play an important role in migration.

For UTs of Chandigarh and Delhi, employment is stated as an important reason for migration along with parental movement.

The nature of migration is usually permanent for most persons from West Bengal (942 per 1000 migrants), Madhya Pradesh (942), Haryana (941), Bihar (941), Rajasthan (931), Uttar Pradesh (931), Gujarat (924), J&K (921), Punjab (909) and Tamil Nadu (900). But for the North-Eastern states except Assam (918), the movement of persons is typically temporary, in most cases the duration of stay being over a year. It is not astonishing

then to see that the number of return migrants per 1000 is significantly large for the North-Eastern states of India with Manipur (486) in the lead, followed by Arunachal Pradesh (379) and Nagaland (362).

The data on short term migrants with migration duration between 30 days to less than 6 months captures not only seasonal character of employment but also cases of job search. The number of short term migrants is highest for Nagaland (34), followed by Bihar (28), Gujarat (23), Jharkhand (22), Madhya Pradesh (21) and West Bengal (20).

The NSSO also collected data on out-migrants in a household and the reasons for migration for out-migrants. An out-migrant is a living member of the household who left the household at any time in the past for stay outside the village or town. Information was also sought on the frequency of remittances, their amount and use.

The number of out-migrants per 1000 persons is maximum for Kerala (260) and Himachal Pradesh (258), with Haryana (169), Rajasthan (161) and Uttrakhand (161) being little behind. The number is much less for Delhi (23) and the North-Eastern states. While the low count for the national capital is on account of it being one of the most developed cities, the latter's trail could be historical and cultural.

The UT of Chandigarh runs ahead of all in terms of its out-migrant population residing in not just other states of the country (626 per 1000) but also in other countries (325). Goa (303) and Kerala (204) are other important states with their out-migrants residing in other parts of the world. The states of Bihar (618), Jharkhand (548) and Uttrakhand (455) reportedly have out-migrants living in other states of the country. On the other hand, same state out-migration is most significant for Gujarat (904), Maharashtra (904) and the North-Eastern states of Nagaland (864) and Mizoram (841). In fact, the number of daily commuters is also substantially high for Maharashtra and Gujarat (Chandrasekhar and Sharma, 2011).

Same state same district out-migration is prominent for J&K (622), Arunachal Pradesh (536), Madhya Pradesh (527), Gujarat (526) and Himachal Pradesh (524).

Marriage is the most reported reason of migration for out-migrants from Delhi (905), Haryana (796), West Bengal (682) and Madhya Pradesh (667).

The out-migrants from North-Eastern states of Manipur (629), Arunachal Pradesh (607), Mizoram (592) and Jharkhand (576) and Bihar (565) cite employment related reasons for migration. Movement for study related purposes is significantly high in case of North-Eastern

states of Meghalaya (398), Sikkim (298), Arunachal Pradesh (219) and Manipur (206).

While the number of these out-migrants sending remittances back to their families is highest in case of Bihar (524 per 1000 out-migrants) and Jharkhand (486), the frequency of sending is much low for these states (2 and 3 respectively). The frequency of remittance is higher for North-Eastern states and Goa and Puducherry. It seems that differences in literacy levels may have a role to play here. In addition, the out-migrants have to worry about finding a safe way of sending the remittances back home.

The amount of remittance per out-migrant is highest for Chandigarh (INR 213500), followed by Goa (INR 148800) and Delhi (INR 72600). This again is reflective of the higher level of education for these states as also the fact that many of their out-migrants reside outside India. The actual reasons and the relative significance of these require further investigation.

The remittances are largely utilized for consumption purposes, the most important being food items, followed by children education and health care. Besides, bulk of the households in UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and J&K use remittances for improving housing conditions (like repairs and purchase of land and buildings) and for debt-repayment. On the other hand, most remittance-receiving households in Goa, Gujarat, Haryana and Chandigarh report using these for savings and investments.

Lastly we look at the net migration rate across states. Net migration rate is the difference between in-migration and out-migration. We find that Chandigarh, Delhi, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Uttrakhand, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal are net recipients of migrants. The list of top senders of migrants includes Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and the North-Eastern states.

Theoretically, there typically exist certain push and pull factors that govern these rates and flows of migration. The push factors include impoverishment, socio-economic inequality, political instability, natural calamities, lack of basic infrastructural facilities etc. at the home place. On the other hand, the destination or the host place may pull people towards itself by providing a promise of better life, greater work opportunities, improved social structure and superior infrastructure.

A glance at the state-level facilities of health, education and infrastructure lends justification to the net migrant status of the above states explaining why certain states acquire the status of a destination state. This is further corroborated by an analysis of the UNDP's Human



Development Index for Indian states. Combining data on Indian states from Bhandari (2012) and Suryanarayana et al (2011), we find that the best performing states in terms of health, education, income and infrastructure (banking, electricity, transport, communication) are Kerala, Goa, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Gujarat which also happen to be the destination states attracting migrants. The worst-performing states on these parameters include Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam and Madhya Pradesh. The reasons that necessitate migration from these states are thus evident.

**B. PLFS Study Findings**

The sample design of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is not specifically focused to capture information on migration particulars and temporary visitors. However, in the PLFS canvassed during 2020-21, some additional information was collected on the following aspects: information on migration particulars of the household members and information on the temporary visitors in the household who arrived after March 2020 and stayed in the household continuously for a period of 15 days or more but less than 6 months. The report, Migration in India, 2020-2021 contains estimates of the indicators based on information collected in PLFS during July 2020- June 2021 on these aspects.

Sample Size for First Visit during July 2020- June 2021 in rural and urban areas for the Annual Report: Out of the total number of 12,800 FSUs (7,024 villages and 5,776 UFS blocks) allotted for the survey at the all-India level during July 2020- June 2021, a total of 12,562 FSUs (6,930 villages and 5,632 urban blocks) were surveyed for canvassing the PLFS schedule. The number of households surveyed was 1,00,344 (55,389 in rural areas and 44,955 in urban areas) and number of persons surveyed was 4,10,818 (2,36,279 in rural areas and 1,74,539 in urban areas).

Total number of migrants surveyed during July 2020 - June 2021 in PLFS are presented in Table 1 along with surveyed number of temporary visitors for whom the present place of residence differed from their usual place of residence.

**Table 1: Surveyed number of migrants and temporary visitors residing temporarily in a place different from usual place of residence**

Category	Rural	Urban	Total (Rural +Urban)
Migrants	59,019	54,979	1,13,998
Temporary Visitors	1550	851	2401

Source: Migration in India, 2020-2021, Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2020- June 2021

Migration rate for any category of person (say, for rural or urban, male or female), is the percentage of migrants belonging to that category of persons. Migration rate for female is way higher than male in both rural and urban areas.

**Table 2: Migration rate (in %) from PLFS July 2020- June 2021**

Category of Persons	Rural	Urban	Total (Rural +Urban)
Male	5.9	22.5	10.7
Female	48.0	47.8	47.9
Total (Male+Female)	26.5	34.9	28.9

Source: Migration in India, 2020-2021, Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2020- June 2021

Usual Place of Residence (UPR) of a person is the place (village/town) where the person has been staying continuously for at least six months. Even if a person was not staying in the village/town continuously for six but was found to be staying there during the survey with intention to stay there continuously for six months or more then that place was as his/her UPR. A household member whose last usual place of residence, any time in the past, was different from the present place of enumeration was considered as migrant member in a household.

**Table 3: Migration by location of last usual place of residence**

Category of Migrants	Last usual place of residence in			
	Rural Areas	Urban Areas	Other Countries	All
<b>Rural</b>				
Male	44.6	51.6	3.9	100
Female	88.8	11.0	0.2	100
Person	83.8	15.6	0.6	100
<b>Urban</b>				

Male	53.7	44.1	2.3	100
Female	54.0	45.6	0.4	100
Person	53.8	45.0	1.0	100
<b>Total (Rural+Urban)</b>				
Male	50.0	47.0	2.9	100
Female	78.8	21.0	0.2	100
Person	73.4	25.9	0.9	100

Source: Migration in India, 2020-2021, Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2020- June 2021

Inter-state migration is prominent among female than male and majorly observed in rural areas compared to urban areas. However, it is negligible in other countries in terms of last usual place of residence.

**Table 4: Inter-state Migration**

Category of Migrants	Last usual place of residence in			
	Rural Areas	Urban Areas	Other Countries	All
<b>Rural</b>				
Male	62.5	33.7	3.9	100
Female	95.8	4.0	0.2	100
Person	92.1	7.3	0.6	100
<b>Urban</b>				
Male	67.9	29.9	2.3	100
Female	84.7	14.9	0.4	100
Person	79.0	19.8	1.0	100
<b>Total (Rural+Urban)</b>				
Male	65.6	31.4	2.9	100
Female	92.6	7.2	0.2	100
Person	87.5	11.8	0.7	100

Source: Migration in India, 2020-2021, Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2020- June 2021

As per the survey, there are several reasons for migration. Prominent reasons for migration are in search of employment/ better employment, for employment/work, migration of parents/ earning member of the family, marriage among others. For male, employment is major reason for migration while for female marriage is major reason.

**Table 5: Reason for Migration**

Reason	Male	Female	Person
In search of employment/ better employment	22.8	0.6	4.8
For employment/ work	20.1	0.7	4.4
Loss of job/ closure of unit/ lack of employment opportunities	6.7	0.4	1.6
Migration of parent/ earning member of the family	17.5	7.3	9.2

To Pursue Studies	4.7	0.6	1.4
Marriage	6.2	86.8	71.6
Natural Disaster	0.6	0.1	0.2
Social / Political Problems	0.6	0.1	0.2
Displacement by development project	0.4	0.1	0.2
Health related reasons	2.5	0.3	0.7
Acquisition of own house/ flat	3.2	0.5	1.0
Housing problems	4.8	0.8	1.5
Post retirement	1.6	0.1	0.4
Others	8.4	1.7	3.0
All	100	100	100

Source: Migration in India, 2020-2021, Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2020- June 2021

For the purpose of this PLFS survey, temporary visitors in the household are those persons who arrived after March 2020 and stayed in the household continuously for a period of 15 days or more but less than 6 months. Estimates relating to the temporary visitors pertain to those for whom the present place of residence where he/she was residing temporarily differed from their usual place of residence (UPR).

**Table 6: Percentage of temporary visitors residing temporarily in a place different from usual place of residence (UPR)**

Category of Temporary Visitors	Rural	Urban	Total (Rural +Urban)
Male	0.9	0.6	0.8
Female	0.5	0.6	0.5
Total (Male+Female)	0.7	0.6	0.7

Source: Migration in India, 2020-2021, Periodic Labour Force Survey July 2020- June 2021

**V. Conclusion and Suggestions**

According to the Census of India 2011, internal migration in India constitutes a large population of over 309 million, which is roughly 30% of the total population. As revealed in the analysis above, there is much variation across states in terms of the nature and pattern of migration.

One thing that comes out clearly from this study is that we have to look at migration from a local perspective rather than a global one. The discrimination against migrants from UP, Bihar and North-East in metropolitan cities of Mumbai and Delhi is well documented. As there cannot be one medicine for all ills, problems related to migration also need to be addressed locally. Most importantly, as a first step, proper collection and maintenance of data on migrants is required. This can best be done at the grass-root levels by involving panchayats and NGOs (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003).

As per PLFS, Migration rate for female is way higher than male in both rural and urban areas. Inter-state migration is prominent among female than male and majorly observed in rural areas compared to urban areas. However, it is negligible in other countries in terms of last usual place of residence. Prominent reasons for migration are in search of employment/better employment, for employment/ work, migration of parents/ earning member of the family, marriage among others. For male, employment is major reason for migration while for female marriage is major reason.

Migration is a response to differential socio-economic development of regions in India. This brings the need for policies that could ensure balanced regional development.

India Skills Report 2022 by Wheebox, says only 48.7% of total youth in India is employable, the highest employable age group is 22 to 25 years. Barely one in five Indians in the labour force is “skilled” according to Human Development Report 2020. With the figure at 21.2%, India is 129<sup>th</sup> among 162 countries. Skill development will be a driver of productivity and in turn will be beneficial for all sections of population particularly marginalised and poor with poor education level.

Improving the education level of the Indian labour force, improving access to quality training, better co-ordination among stakeholders, strengthening skill development schemes, determining KPI, strengthening private sector participation, availability of financial resources and systemic reforms are some of the policy solutions to tackle migration problem in India.

**References**

Asian Development Bank (2008). Education and skills: Strategies for Accelerated Development in Asia and the Pacific. Manila: Asian Development Bank.

Bhandari, P. (2012). Refining State Level Comparisons in India. Planning Commission Working Paper Series.

Chandrasekhar, S., & Sharma A. (2012). On the Internal Mobility of Indians: Knowledge Gaps and Emerging Concerns. *IGIDR Working Paper No. 2012-023*.

Desai, S.B., et al (2010). Human Development in India: Challenges for a Society in Transition. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Government of India (2011). Census of India 2011: Provisional Population Totals, Paper 2, Volume 1 of 2011. Rural-Urban Distribution. Delhi: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, GOI.

Government of India (2015). National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Development Policy India 2015, Delhi: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Government of India (2022). Migration in India, 2020-2021, Periodic Labour Force Survey, National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, New Delhi.

International Labour Organisation. (2008). Skills for Improved Productivity, Employment Growth and Development, Geneva: ILO.

Lall, S., Selod, H., & Shalizi, Z. (2006). Rural-Urban Migration in Developing Countries: A Survey of Theoretical Predictions and Empirical Findings. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3915*.

National Sample Survey Report (2008). Migration in India. NSS 64th Round. GOI Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation.

NITI Aayog. (2015). Report of the Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Skill Development, New Delhi: NITI Aayog.

- Okada, A. (2004). Skills Development and Interfirm Learning Linkages under Globalization: Lessons from the Indian Automobile Industry, *World Development*, 32 (7): 1265-1288.
- Okada, A. (2006). Skills Formation for Economic Development in India: Fostering Institutional Linkages between Vocational Education and Industry, *Manpower Journal*. XXXXI (4): 71-95.
- Paul, B. (2011). Demographic Dividend or Deficit: Insights from Data on Indian Labor, 3rd Annual Conference of the Academic Network for Development in Asia (ANDA), Nagoya, March 3-6.
- Pratham. (2017). Annual Status of Education Report: Rural 2017. New Delhi.
- Srivastava, R., & Sasikumar, S.K. (2003). An overview of migration in India, its impact and key issues. Regional Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia.
- Suryanarayana, M.H., Agrawal, A., & Prabhu, K.S. (2011). Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index for India's states. UNDP India.
- Todaro, M.P. (2000). *Economic Development*. Addison Wesley Publishing Company. Boston, U.S.A.
- UNESCO. (2012). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012: Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work. Paris: UNESCO.
- World Bank (2007). Decent Work Agenda in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: Recent developments, Committee on Employment and Social Policy, Governing Body 300th Session Geneva, Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2017). Skills Development in India: The Vocational Education and Training System. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2017). South Asia Development Matters: More and Better Jobs in South Asia. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.