



IMPACT OF INTERNAL MIGRATION IN INDIA

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1.1 Trends and Patterns of Internal Migration in India

The decennial population Census and the quinquennial rounds of the National Sample Surveys (NSS) provide macro-data on internal migration, in India. Both these sources report data on population mobility and not worker mobility and the trends on the latter have to be disentangled carefully from population characteristics. It also needs to be noted that both due to the conceptual framework adopted in these surveys, and due to empirical difficulties, the Census and the NSS mainly identify long duration migration, chiefly covering permanent or long duration circular migrants. These surveys fail to adequately capture seasonal migration, the magnitude of which is both large and growing (Srivastava and Sasikumar 2005, Srivastava 2005a) and also probably underestimate circular migration.

Data available up to 1999-00 has been analysed in detail earlier in several studies (Srivastava 1998, Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2003, Srivastava and Sasikumar 2005). This paper will dwell here more on the recent trends in population and worker mobility as revealed by the 2001 Census and the 2007-08 NSS.

According to the Census, about 309.5 million persons or 30.1 percent of the Indian population could be described as internal migrants in 2001 using the change in Usual Place of Residence (UPR) definition. The National Sample Survey estimates that in 2007-08, 326 m people or 28.6 % of people were migrants by the UPR definition. However, the bulk of the migrants in India are women who migrate out of their villages due to exogamous marriages. According to the 64th Round of the NSS, of the total of 326.1 m migrants by change in UPR status, 67.6 m were male migrants and 258.4 m (79.3 %) were female migrants (census adjusted figures). Of these female migrants, 82.8 % migrated due to marriage.

Table 1: Census Based Internal Migration Rates

Total	R-R	U-R	Rural	R-U	U-U	Urban	Total
1981	25.8	2.4	28.3	21.2	15.5	36.7	30.2
1991	23.3	2.2	25.5	18.5	12.2	30.7	26.8
2001	23.1	1.8	28.0	18.1	12.8	35.5	30.1
Decadal							
1981	9.1	1.3	10.4	10.0	7.9	17.9	12.2
1991	7.4	1.0	8.4	7.8	5.4	13.1	9.6
2001	7.2	0.8	8.3	7.2	5.0	12.6	9.5

Source: Census Rounds. Migration Tables

Note: The stream-wise migration figures i.e. R-R & U-R, and R-U and U-U do not add up to total Rural and Urban migration in 2001 due to non-reporting of source sector by a number of households.

The census estimates show declining internal migration rates between 1981 and 1991 but a rise between 1991 and 2001 (Table 1) Census estimates, however, show that inter-censal migration

rates have declined consistently since 1981. Although total inter-censal migration increased from 80.7 m in 1991 to 94.6 m in 2001, as percentage of the population inter-censal migration rate declined marginally from 12.2 % in 1981 to 9.6 % in 1991 and further to 9.5 % in 2001.

The NSS rounds (1983 to 2007-08), however, show a consistent increase in migration rates over five rounds between 1983 and 2007-08, except for one round in 1993, with urban migration rate increasing from 31.6 % to 35.4 % between 1983 and 2007-08, and rural migration rate increasing from 20.9 % to 26.1 % over the corresponding period (Table 2). However, the 1993 survey followed a different survey design from the other four rounds as it was carried out with a housing survey over a half year period, and is, therefore, not strictly comparable to the other rounds.

Table 2: Migration per 1000 persons (NSS Rounds)

NSS Rounds	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
1983 (Jan-Dec)	72	351	209	270	366	316
1987-88 (Jul-Jun)	74	398	232	268	396	329
1993 (Jan-Jun)	65	401	228	239	382	307
1999-00 (Jul-Jun)	69	426	224	257	418	334
2007-08 (Jul-Jun)	54	477	261	259	456	354

NSS, Various Rounds

Although it has been noted that data on migration are problematic, it has been argued that the slowdown in overall inter-censal migration rates, may be suggestive of higher costs of migration or other barriers to migration (Kundu, 2009). Decadal migration rates are indeed even more problematic than overall migration rates. Census data show that the percentage of people not reporting the duration over which the change in UPR has occurred has systematically increased between 1981 and 2001, with proportions of non-reporting almost doubling for males in every census since 1981. The percentage of male migrants not duration of migration increased from 6.7 percent in 1981 to 14.1 percent in 1991 and further to 26.1 percent in 2001 while the corresponding figures for females were 3.6 percent, 6.3 percent and 9.9 percent respectively (Bhagat 2009). The increase in non-reporting is also more significant for urban migrants, with 13.24 percent rural and 17.54 percent urban migrants not reporting duration of migration. Among urban migrants, 23.02 percent males and 7.84 percent females did not report duration of migration. However, among the three migration streams (intra-district, inter-district and inter-state). The proportion of migrants not reporting duration is higher among shorter distance migrants.

If the non-reporting of migration was due to greater insecurity, then one would expect interstate migrants and shorter duration migrants not reporting duration. The Census figures do not confirm the former hypothesis and we have no way of confirming the latter. Census data further show that the male-female ratio among certain categories of migrants, notably interstate, and in rural urban has gone up between 1991 and 2001. Among interstate migrants, males per thousand migrants increased from 803 to 865 between the two censuses and among rural-urban migrants, from 841 to 902. These figures may indicate that the cost and difficulties

of associational migration has gone up in recent years. These issues require detailed exploration.

At the same time, however, both the census and the NSS show migration for economic reasons has gone up in recent years, and rural-urban as well as total urban economic migration has also increased. As per the Census, the total number of economic migrants increased from 19.85 m in 1991 (2.4 % of population) to 28.9 m in 2001 (2.8 % of population, Table 3)). The total number of migrants who migrated for economic reasons in the ten years preceding the census increased from 9.76 m (1.16 % of population) in 1991 to 13.67 m (1.33 % of population) in 2001. Rural-urban economic migrants were 37.7 % of total economic migrants in 1991 and 41.9 % of such migrants in 2001. Thus, despite the data problems, and non-reporting discussed earlier, migration for economic reasons still shows an increase in the recent decade. The two somewhat disparate trends (between overall migration and economic migration) again suggest that associational migration has not increased *pari passu*, again possibly suggestive of higher costs of associational migration.

Table 3: Census Based Employment Related Migration Rates

Total	R-R	U-R	Rural	R-U	U-U	Urban	Total
1981	1.3	0.3	1.6	5.4	4.0	9.4	3.4
1991	0.9	0.2	1.1	3.9	2.2	6.1	2.4
2001	1.0	0.2	1.2	4.7	2.2	7.0	2.8
Decadal							
1981	0.8	0.2	1.0	2.6	1.7	4.3	1.8
1991	0.5	0.1	0.6	1.7	1.0	2.7	1.2
2001	0.6	0.1	0.7	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.3
Inter-state							
1981	0.2	0.1	0.3	1.8	1.3	3.1	0.9
1991	0.1	0.0	0.2	1.3	0.9	2.1	0.7
2001	0.2	0.0	0.3	2.1	0.9	3.0	1.0

Source: Census Rounds. Migration Tables

The NSS provides detailed information on the characteristics of the migrants. The 2007-08 survey collected information on both in-migrants and out-migrants. The characteristics of both these groups clearly establish that migration rates are positively associated with educational attainment, social group status and per capita consumption. This had earlier also been shown using the NSS 1999-00 migration survey (Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2003, Kundu and Sarangi 2007).

The out-migrants' estimates from the 64th Round shows that 27.2 % households of an estimated 222.5 m households report at least one outmigrating person. The lowest quintile group accounts for 11.1 % migrants whereas the highest quintile accounts for 35 percent migrants (Table 4). SC/ST account for 23.9 % migrants, OBC for 43.3 % and others for 32.8 %.

Table 4: MPCE Quintile % of persons who have migrated out (long-term migrants) for economic reasons

MPCE Quintile	Rural			Urban			All		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	11.7	12.9	11.8	12.1	10.2	11.9	11.8	12.4	11.8
2	14.7	13.2	14.6	14.0	10.6	13.7	14.6	12.6	14.5
3	18.1	17.2	18.1	16.7	9.1	16.2	17.9	15.5	17.8
4	21.3	17.7	21.1	20.2	13.8	19.8	21.2	16.8	20.9
5	34.2	39.1	34.4	37.0	56.4	38.4	34.6	42.7	35.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Computed from unit data, NSS 64th Round

The in-migrant data from the survey shows that the migration rate was 11.4 among males, 46.9 among females and 28.6 % overall. In urban areas, male migration rates were higher in the higher consumption quintiles. Only 8.8 % male migrants were from the lowest quintile and 12.7 % from the next lowest quintile, compared to 25.5 % from the second highest quintile and 33.6 % in the highest quintile (Table 5). The progression is less steep among urban female migrants. But still overall, the lowest two quintiles account for 14.1 % and 16.3 % migrants whereas the highest quintile account from 26.7 % migrants. The migration rates improve with educational attainment levels. Education levels were comparatively better among urban migrants with 33.5 % urban male migrants with at least a secondary level of schooling.

Table 5: Percentage of Migrants for Economic Reasons or those engaged in economic activity by MPCE Quintile

MPCE Quintile	Migrating for Economic Reasons			Carrying out Economic Activity at Destination		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1	7.5	7.1	7.2	17.3	12.9	15.7
2	11.0	11.9	11.7	17.8	15.1	16.8
3	11.5	18.6	17.1	19.4	18.8	19.2
4	17.0	26.7	24.6	19.7	22.7	20.8
5	53.0	35.7	39.4	25.8	30.5	27.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Computed from unit data, NSS 64th Round

Analysis of out-migrants' destination shows that those who migrate for employment have a high propensity to migrate to urban areas. Among all outmigrants, female outmigrants usually migrate shorter distances - 61.4 % female outmigrants from rural areas and 42.5 % female outmigrants from urban areas were same district migrants compared to 17.3 % and 14.3 % male outmigrants, amongst whom 45.8 % from rural households and 33.3 % from urban households were inter-state migrants. Notably, 78.3 % males (32.6 m) and only 2.4 % (1.7 m) females migrated for economic reasons.

The percentage of interstate outmigrants among all outmigrants was very high in several of the poorer states- Bihar (61.8%), Jharkhand (54.8%), Uttarakhand (45.5%), Uttar Pradesh (35.1%) and Orissa (35.5%).

Among all in-migrants, the predominant stream was intra-district, followed by inter-district and inter-state. However, in the case of the male migrants, longer distance inter-state migration was more prominent, accounting for 27.5 percent male migrants compared to 8.4 % of female migrants. Among urban migrants, inter-district migration was the most important stream for both male and female migrants, accounting for 38.3 % of male migrants and 40.1 percent of female migrants (39.4 % of both taken together). However, inter-state migrants comprise the next most important category among male migrants (33.2 %) but the smallest stream among female migrants (19.2 %).

On the basis of a comparison between the 49th and 55th Round surveys (1992-93 and 1999-00) Srivastava and Bhattacharya (2003) have also shown that among urban migrants, the proportion of the regular employed and the self-employed went up while that of the casually employed went down. The percentage of migrants in the higher consumption classes also increased between the two surveys.¹

Overall it is apparent that the migration, registered by the Census and the NSS, shows greater bias towards the urban areas, the better-off groups/persons and more developed states,² which is consistent with the availability of greater employment opportunities in urban agglomerations, as well as the type of employment opportunities that have been thrown up under globalisation (cf. Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2003, Srivastava 2005).

1.2 Estimating vulnerable migrants from migration data

Although the better-off have a higher propensity to migrate, this does not mean that migration is confined to better-off individuals. We report below different estimates of poor and vulnerable migrant workers based on the NSS survey(s) and also micro-surveys.

a) NSS estimates of in-migrants and outmigrants

As we have discussed above, the NSS provides data from the vantage point of view of out-migrants as well as in-migrants. The out-migration data from the NSS 2007-08 survey shows that out of 34.8 m persons who migrated out for economic reasons, 15.3 m were in the bottom three consumption quintiles. Among the out-migrants, 48.4 m out-migrants were actually in the

¹ Confining attention only to male migrants, the bottom three deciles accounted for 22.3 % migrants in rural areas and 20.7 % migrants in urban areas in 1992-93, and 16.2 % and 14.9 % migrants respectively in 2007-08. The top three deciles accounted for 43.8 % male migrants in rural areas and 39.5 % such migrants in urban areas in 1999-00 whereas in 2007-08, the corresponding percentages were 54.9 % and 47 % respectively.

² Among high income large states, net migration rates in 2007-08 were high for Maharashtra (4.1%), Haryana (3.5%), Punjab (1.5%), Gujarat (1.6%) and Karnataka (1.0%) but not for Tamil Nadu. They were also high for Delhi (24.2 %), Goa (9.2 %) and Chandigarh (39.9%). Among low income large states, net migration rates were negative for Bihar (-5.6%), Uttar Pradesh (-3.1%), Jharkhand (-1.8%), Orissa (-1.3%), Rajasthan (0.9%) and Madhya Pradesh (-0.7%) but not for Chhatisgarh.

workforce, of whom 21.7 m were from households in the bottom 3 consumption quintiles. Thus from the out-migrant perspective, 15 to 22 m migrants were poor and vulnerable.³ Of these, in both cases, about 14.5 m were male migrant workers. Further, 13.1 m of those who had migrated out for economic reasons, and 18.7 m of those outmigrants who were economically active after migration, were from rural areas.

The NSS results on in-migration also provide separate estimates for poor and vulnerable migrants. Of the total in-migrants, 34.7 m stated that they had migrated for economic reasons, but a much larger number - 75.2 m migrants were actually in the workforce. Of the first category, 12.5 million were in the lowest three consumption quintiles, while of the second category, 38.9 million were in the lowest three quintiles. Of the latter, 26.3 m were urban migrants.

Although out-migration data could cover floating migrants who may otherwise escape enumeration, it only covers migrants who are part of the “parent” households. Hence, in-migration data provides better coverage (although the two may not be overlapping). Thus, from a consumption point of view, the NSS gives an estimate of about 39 million poor and vulnerable migrant workers.

b) Short Duration Migration

Estimates of short duration in-migration could be treated as proxy estimates for seasonal migration but clearly in-migration data, if it at all captures such migration will mix both seasonal/circular and more permanent streams.

Both the Census and the NSS indicate a continuing decline in short duration in-migration rates.⁴ However, the NSS 55th Round separately estimated for the first time, the number of short duration *outmigrants* in 1999-00 (those who stayed away for a period between 2 and 6 months for work or seeking work). This represents a better attempt at estimating seasonal migration directly, although under-estimation remains likely as in a substantial possibility since seasonal household migration as well as seasonal migration of more than six month duration (which is the case in many seasonal industries) may not be covered adequately. The NSS round estimated that a total of nearly 10.87 m people stayed away from their UPR for work / seeking work for a period between 2 and 6 months. Of these 8.45 m were resident in rural areas and 2.42 m in urban areas. Among the former, 3.06 m were females and 5.39 m were males. Short-duration

³ NCEUS (2007) has argued that the band of vulnerability extends to about 77 % of the population. For our present purposes, we have focused attention on migrants in the bottom 3 quintiles and have treated them as poor/vulnerable.

⁴ The Census of India 1991 estimated 7.07 million or 3.04% of the migrants as short duration (less than one year's duration) of whom 1.37 m migrated for economic reasons. In 2001, the short duration migration rate fell to 2.8%. However, as noted earlier, there has been a very significant increase in non-reporting of duration of migration. The NSS 49th Round survey (1993) estimated the number of short duration migrants at 16.75 m. However, the NSS survey of 1999-00 estimated that there was 8.64 m short duration (less than one year) (in)-migrants in 1999-00 out of whom 3.24 m had migrated for economic reasons, suggesting a sharp decline in the intervening years. In 2007-08, the NSS 64th Round estimated the total number of short duration (in)migrants at 8.47 m and a corresponding migration rate of 0.8 percent, indicating a continued decline in less than one year migration rates.

out-migrants constituted 1,2 % of the rural population and 1 percent of the urban population, and 2.1 % of rural employed persons and 1.3 % of urban employed persons respectively. Casual labourers among them formed 3.1 % and 1.5 % of the casual labour force in rural and urban areas respectively.

The NSS 64th Round shows an *increase* in short duration outmigration although there is a slight change in the concept.⁵ There were an estimated 15.2 m short duration outmigrants, of whom 12.9 m were male, and 13.9 m were rural outmigrants (census adjusted figures. The overall outmigration rate was 1.33 (1.72 for rural areas and 0.4 for urban areas).

The socio-economic profile of the short duration / seasonal outmigrants is very different from the other migrants. These migrants are much more likely to be from socially deprived and poorer groups, have low levels of education, and more likely to be engaged in casual work.⁶ More than two-third short duration outmigrants migrated to urban areas. 45.1 % of these migrants went to other states (8.6 % to rural areas and 36.5 to urban areas of the destination states). But inter-state migration was more among males (47.9%) compared to females (27.5%). In the modal duration of work as a migrant was the highest percentage worked in the construction industry (36.2%), followed by agriculture related sectors (20.4 %) and then manufacturing (15.9%).

Given that, as we have discussed earlier, many seasonal migrants may not be included in the concept of short duration outmigrants used by the NSS 64th Round, the survey sets a lower bound of about 15 m seasonally migrant workers

c) Other estimates of seasonal and circular migrants

There are varying estimates of seasonal and circular estimates available in the literature, including some which put these estimates as high as 129 million (Deshingkar and Akter 2009). As we have discussed above, there is no hard data to establish increase in seasonal and circulatory migration, but this is borne out by a number of detailed empirical studies which show both a high incidence of such migration as well as its growth. In outmigration endemic rural areas of Central and tribal regions, Andhra Pradesh, North Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh etc. the incidence of families with at least one outmigrant ranges from 30 percent to 70 percent. An industry or sector-wise picture also reveals a very high incidence of seasonal and circulatory migration in many industries/sectors. Seasonally migratory labour is concentrated in a large number of industries but the largest sectors are agriculture, construction, brick kilns, textiles, mines and quarries, large-scale and plantation agriculture, sericulture, headloaders and coolies, rice mills and other agro-processing, salt pans, rickshaws and other types of land transportation, leather manufacture, diamond cutting and polishing and other unorganised

⁵ The 64th Round considered people stayed away from their UPR for work / seeking work for a period between 1 and 6 months as short duration outmigrants, provided further that they had stayed away for more than 15 days in any one spell.

⁶ 18.6% of these outmigrants were ST, 23.1% were SC, 39.9 % OBC and 18.4% from other castes. There was an Inverse relation with consumption quintile – 29.9% from lowest quintile, 23.9 % from next lowest and 10.8 % from the highest. 78.1 % of these migrants illiterate or below primary education and as per UPSS status, 55.4 % were labourers.

industries which have a seasonal nature, while circulatory labour is concentrated in many other industries including textiles (powerlooms and garments), manufacturing, domestic and other support services, land transport, head loaders and others.

Our admittedly rough estimates show that about 30 to 35 million labourers – almost half the number of casual labourers outside agriculture and 10 percent of agricultural labourers (about 9 m) could be seasonal migrants. A similar (30 to 35 m) or higher number of circulatory migrants work either as self-employed in the informal sector or as informal regular workers on piece rates or wages. These workers may migrate as families (in which case, men, women and children all work) or as single male, female or child migrants.

d) Poor and Vulnerable Migrant Workers – Estimate Ranges

Thus while the NSS based estimates sets a lower bound for the poor and vulnerable segment among migrant labourers – almost all being circular/seasonal migrants – at about 55 m, these alternative estimates suggest that there could be about 70 -80 m such workers and these are largely in the non-agricultural sector. These numbers are still smaller than the recent estimates of labour migration in China, but nonetheless constitute a very large segment of workers, and a large proportion of waged and self-employed workers in the non-agricultural informal economy.⁷

1.3 Impact of migration

Given the heterogeneity among migrants in terms of individual and household characteristics and the nature of participation in migration, there are gradation of issues that face migrant workers and these are quite distinct between migrants in the urban informal economy and other seasonal and short term circulatory migrants. In the rest of this paper, we focus on the vulnerable sections of migrant workers and principally on seasonal migrants, not only for purposes of empirical and analytical clarity, but also because these migrants are severely undercounted in data, face the most severe disadvantages, and are invisible in policy discourses.

It is important to state at the outset that in most cases, as a result of migration, migrants are either able to maintain subsistence, even if under very adverse conditions, or even to improve their living somewhat.

Remittances and savings are a primary channel through which migrant workers are able to stabilize or improve their conditions of living, and which also impact on intra and inter-household relations, and the pattern of growth and development in the source areas. The study of remittances has been the focus of several studies recently, especially by the World Bank. The NSS 2007 survey provides some recent data on who remits, the amount of remittances, the use

⁷ Rural-urban migration in China was estimated at 147 m in 2005 (one percent survey) of whom 70 percent could be economic migrants. However, these figures could well underestimate circular migrants, as in the case of India. It is also difficult to estimate the precise characteristics of the Chinese migrant workers, but a large proportion appear to be in the vulnerable segment and are either absorbed in the informal sector, or work as informal workers in larger establishments.

to which remittances are put, and the proportion of remittances to monthly per capita consumption expenditures. This data is confined to households who report that one or more of their members is an outmigrant and is separately analysed below.

The other important channel through which migration affects workers and impacts on the source and destination areas, is the labour market. We briefly also describe below the labour market conditions and their implications.

Migration also impacts through changes in workers' tastes, perceptions and attitudes. These changes are less tangible but nonetheless of great significance.

Finally, the pattern of migration is clearly interconnected with the pattern of growth and development and we mention some of the interlinkages and consequences in this paper.

1,3,1 Living Condition of Migrant Workers and their Families

The workers, whether in agricultural or non-agricultural activity, live in unsatisfactory conditions. There is no provision of safe drinking water facility, the sanitary condition are unhygienic and most live in open spaces or makeshift shelters (NCRL 1991, GVT 2002, Rani and Shylendra 2001). In spite of the Contract Labour Act which stipulates that the contractor or employer should provide suitable accommodation to the labourers, they still continue to live in sub-human conditions. Apart from the seasonal workers, workers who migrate to the cities for job live in parks and pavements, and the slum dwellers, who are mostly migrants, stay in deplorable conditions, with inadequate supply of water and bad drainage facilities. Food expenses are higher for migrant workers, as they can not avail of the PDS since they are not provided with temporary ration card as they are not legally registered.

Working conditions of seasonally migrant labourers are seriously inadequate. Wages, working hours, safety standards do not conform to any minimum norm and where advances have been given, there is no notion of a standard wage. Existing labour laws, including those specifically meant for them, are observed generally in their breach.

Health and Education

Labourers working in harsh circumstances and living in unhygienic conditions, suffer from serious occupational health problems and are vulnerable to diseases. Those working in quarries, construction sites and mines suffer from various health hazards, mostly lung diseases. As the employer does not follow any safety measures, accidents are quite frequent. Migrants cannot access various health and family care programmes due to their temporary status. Free public health care facilities and programmes like Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) are not accessible to the migrants. For women workers, there is no provision of maternity leave forcing them to resume work almost immediately after childbirth. Workers, particularly those working in tile factories and, brick kilns suffer from occupational health hazards such as body ache, sunstroke and skin irritation.:

Family migrants are mostly accompanied by their children to the workplace, as there is no facility of crèche. As a result, the children suffer from various health problem due to exposure of dust in the work site. They cannot also pursue education as the schooling system at home does not take into account their migration pattern and their temporary status in the destination areas does not provide access to schooling in those areas (Rogaly et, al 2001, 2002; Smita xxxx). It is also common for younger siblings and older children to accompany their parents and to work alongside them, drastically reducing their chances of getting any formal education (Srivastava and Dasgupta 2010).

Where men migrate alone, the impact on the family unit and on women, children and the elderly left behind can be quite significant. Family migration also usually implies the migration of the younger members of the family and leaving the elderly behind, who then have to cope with additional responsibilities, while at the same time fend for their subsistence and other basic requirements. The absence of men adds to material and psychological insecurity of women, causing pressures and requiring negotiations with the extended family members (Rogaly et. al. 2001. 2002). On the other hand, male migration has also been seen to influence the direct participation of women in the economy as workers and decision-makers and increased the degree of their interaction with the world beyond the family and kin. But given the patriarchal tradition, women may have to cope with a number of problems that are further exacerbated by the uncertainty of the timing and size of remittances on which the precarious household economy ultimately depends. This, in turn, pushes women and children from poor labouring households to participate in the labour market under adverse conditions. Thus, the impact of migration on women can be twofold, but the strong influence of patriarchy restricts the scope of women's autonomy (cf. Teerink, 1995; Menon, 1995, et. al. 2001). The impact of male migration can be especially adverse for girls, who often have to bear the additional domestic responsibilities and take care of younger siblings (Mosse et, al 1997).

1.3.2 The Migrant Labour Market

Migrants at the lower ends of the labour market comprise mostly unskilled casual labourers or those who own or hire small means of livelihood such as carts or rickshaws and are self-employed. We focus in this section primarily on migrants who work as casual labourers although several of the conditions discussed below are also common to other categories of migrants.

Migrant labourers are exposed to large uncertainties in the potential job market. To begin with, they have very little knowledge about the markets and risk high job search costs. The perceived risks and costs tend to be higher, the higher is the distance from the likely destination. There are several ways in which migrants minimize risks and costs. For a number of industries, recruitment is often done through middlemen, who carry the assurance of employment. In many cases, these middlemen are known to the job seekers and may belong to the source area. In many cases, migrants move to the destination areas on their own. This is generally the case where 'bridgeheads' have been established, lowering potential risks and costs. The movement of migrants in groups, often sharing kinship ties, also provides some protection in the context of the harsh environment in which migrants travel, seek jobs and work. Mosse et. al. (2002) have

shown how workers are incorporated in the labour market in different ways, depending upon their initial status, with somewhat better-off migrants having superior social net-works and thus better able to exploit 'bridgeheads' in urban locations. Although labourers' bargaining power tends to improve with improved information and networks, they are still often underpaid (Deshingkar et. al. 2008). As with other types of interlocked relationships, the poorer migrants trade their freedom of making individual contracts with employers to the relative comfort of securing advances and promises of secure employment from contractors.

In the agricultural sector two patterns of recruitment processes have been prevalent: one where the labourers are directly recruited by the employer (in Punjab and West Bengal, the recruitment place is mostly at the railway station). Contractors, who often belong to same caste and community, are another medium for recruitment (agricultural workers in Punjab, coffee plantations in Karnataka, sugarcane plantations in Gujarat, quarry works around Delhi) In parts of Punjab, agents or traders are also active in the process. Labourers migrate as a group (migrants are not unionised but class, caste and religion act as binding force and provide some protection). Sometime they are hired by contractors in their village, or by their relatives and friends who have already migrated. In West Bengal, employers often go to the source area and recruit labourers (unlike in other parts of India role of middleman is absent in this region). Migrant labourers often have a harrowing time in reaching their destination (Sidhu and Grewal 1980, Rogaly et, al. 2001).

In the urban informal sector, friends and relatives act as network and the job market is highly segmented based around people of same caste, religion and kinship. (Mitra and Gupta, 2002). Social networks provide initial income support, information, accommodation, and access to jobs. However, parts of the urban unorganised sector may be characterised by a high degree of organized migration, as in the rural areas discussed above (Mazumdar, 1983; Dasgupta, 1987; Mehta, 1987; see also Piore, 1983). In the construction industry 90-96 percent of the workers are recruited through contractors. They generally settle the wages for the labourers, retain part of the labourers wages and are also paid by employer and sometimes also play supervisory roles. Under the Contract Labour Act, 1979 and Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, a contractor is required to be registered, but due to high security deposit and drawbacks in implementation of these Acts, very few contractors obtain licenses. In fish processing industry in Kerala, recruitment takes place through contractors, who often use older women as network to recruit women. The contractor receives a lump some money per month, which includes salary, medical, and other expanses of the women they have recruited. . They have the overall responsibility of production, supervision and wage distribution. In case of domestic maid servants there are number of voluntary organization that are involved in the recruitment process. In Delhi, most of the maids are from the tribal belts of Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. While a new genre of private recruitment agencies has sprung up (which continue to recruit through informal channels and make unspecified deductions from due wage payments), the church also plays an active and more benign role in bringing potential employers and employees together (Neetha, 2002). Another, less studied feature of the urban labour market for migrants is that it is often characterised by barriers and restrictions to immigration.

The labour process in the places of employment overlaps with, but is distinct from, the process of job search and recruitment. Workers who seek jobs independently might still find the labour

processes in the destination dominated by contracting and sub-contracting relationships (in construction, studies report 90-96 percent of labourers employed with contractors).

Workers have to depend upon advances and irregular wage payment schedules. Migrant labourers get less wages than local labourers. Migrants in the urban informal sector often receive lower wages compared to non-migrants. The migrant status of the labourers account for 38-56 percent of the wage differential in Madras city when other characteristics are accounted for (Duraismy and Narsimhan, 1997). They work for long and odd hours. Moreover the payments are not paid on time. Piece rates are mostly prevalent which provide greater flexibility to employers. Of course, migrants may also prefer these wage systems as they can maximise returns to migrant labour on a per day basis, raising the possibility of their saving part of wages. But in many cases organised migration results in credit-labour interlocking, such that the net return to labour may have no relation to wages in destination areas (Singh and Iyer, 1985; Das, 1993; Krishnaiah, 1997, Mosse et. al. 2002).

Employers prefer migrant labourers to local labourers, as they are cheaper; they work for short duration in an alien environment so they can't develop any social relationship with the place of destination. Women migrants are the worst sufferers, in spite of equal enumeration act they are paid less than the male migrants (Pandey, 1998). In the construction industry they are viewed as assistants to their husbands, and confined to unskilled jobs. The consequential segmentation is used as a justification for low payments. Besides women face greater insecurity compared to male workers (Vaijanyanta, 1998). In the fish processing industry, they are badly exploited in terms of working condition, wages, living condition and sometimes sexually harassed (Sarodamoni, 1995). Wage structure in the public sector also varies from project to project. As most of the contracts are given to private contractors, they flout all labour laws and minimum wage legislations. The low wage structure of the seasonal workers are the result of instability of demand, segmented labour markets, unregulated nature and dominance of labour contractors and vulnerability of workers (Study Group on Migrant Labour, 1991).

Breman (1996) has argued that the continued existence of a large mass of unorganised workers belies expectations that workers would eventually shift from the traditional to the modern sector. An examination of the major informal sector industries in the informal sector shows a steady replacement of local workers by migrant workers. He also finds that rural-urban migration shares a number of features in common with rural-to-rural migration. The urban and rural informal sector markets are increasingly linked through horizontal circulation as migrants may move from one to the other in search of jobs (Gill, 1984; Chopra, 1995; Breman, 1996). Despite the growing linkages between the urban and rural labour markets, the markets are not generalised but instead segmented in various ways. Breman (ibid.) shows that for locals as well as migrants, horizontal stratifications are generally preserved as workers move from rural to urban milieus. Women migrant workers in urban milieus are preponderantly concentrated in the lower segments, in household or non-household based jobs in manufacturing, construction or personal services (Meher, 1994). According to Das (1994) the entry into the labour market through chain migration also has the impact of fragmenting this market along ethnic and regional lines. In the construction sector, migrant workers are fragmented through the contracting arrangements through which they work. In focussing on the characteristics of the migrant labourers Breman (1996), Das (1994) and Meher (1994) show how the division of

specific forms of labour in informal industries is segmented along ethnic and communal lines which is promoted by the modes of recruitment. Schooling and resources act as two important barriers in the poorer social groups obtaining on-job training and skills which could lead to the semi-permanent jobs (Breman, *ibid.*; Das, *ibid.*). The overall tendency of the labour market is to be broken into “circuits” of labour (Breman, *ibid.*).

1.3.3 Impact on source areas

The impact of outmigration on source areas is many-dimensional. As pointed out earlier, outmigration contributes to the income of migrant workers, and depending upon the condition of the migrants and the nature of migration could also contribute to savings and accumulation. Our brief discussion in the earlier sections has emphasized that the pattern of migration is closely related to the diverse economic and social endowments of the migrant workers and this diversity persists even among the poorer migrant workers and labourers. At one end of the migration spectrum workers could be locked into a debt-migration cycle through some form of labour bondage, where earnings from migration are used to repay debts incurred at home or in the destination areas, thereby cementing the migration cycle and resulting in conditions of neo-bondage (Srivastava 2005b, 2009a). At the other end, however, migration could be largely voluntary, although shaped by limited choices which increase if the migrants’ initial endowments are more favourable.

The major impacts of migration on source areas occur through changes in the labour market, income and assets, changes in the pattern of expenditure and investment.

Although seasonal outmigration would have the effect of smoothing out employment of labourers over the annual cycle, rural out-migration may cause a tightening of the labour market in some circumstances. However, empirical evidence from out-migrant areas does not often attest to a general tightening of the labour market (Connell et al, 1976, Srivastava 1999). While outmigration often takes place in labour surplus situations, there is also evidence of the replacement of outmigrant male labour by female and even child labour. Even if labour tightening is not an outcome, labour outmigration may still speed up qualitative changes in extant labour relationships in rural areas, and thereby affect the pace of change. This may occur in several ways. First, there is the well-documented impact of migration on attitudes and awareness as migrant labourers and return migrants are more reluctant to accept adverse employment conditions and low wages. Second, outmigration leads to a more diversified livelihood strategy. Combined with some increase in the income and employment portfolio of poor households, this may tend to push up reservation wages in rural areas and may make certain forms of labour relationships (as for example, those involving personalised dependency) more unacceptable (Srivastava, *ibid.*; cf. also Rogaly et. al. 2001.).

Outmigration as a result of debt or debt-interlocking involving the employers in the destination areas or their middlemen is quite common. Such outmigration may or may not lead to the elimination of the causes of debt. On the other hand, the reduction of personalised dependencies or interlocked relationships may accelerate labour mobility and migration (Srivastava, 1987; Breman, 1974, 1985; Mosse et. al. 1997).

A major issue, linked to the above issues, is the role of rural outmigration in the material and social reproduction of rural households and the extant relationships in which they are placed. Standing (1985) had argued that circulatory migration in particular contributes to the stability of rural production relations. He argues that circulatory labour migrations has 'safety valve' features and "has often been a mechanism preserving a social mode of production or at least reducing the pressures on it" (ibid.' p. 8). Temporary migration may allow households to relieve underemployment and meet debt and other obligations without having to sell assets or make other similar adjustments. 'Relay migration' can also be seen as a part of the household survival strategy. Indeed the long history of rural outmigration in some of the source areas in India combined with agricultural and rural stagnancy seems to corroborate the stabilising role of outmigration. But labour circulation as well as other forms of rural outmigration can also be disruptive of extant production relations (Standing, ibid.).

Remittances and Impact

Remittances play an important role in bringing financial resources to the migrant households and to the source areas. Although we have limited direct evidence of the amount of remittance brought in by migrants, evidence can be adduced from the NSS surveys on migration and consumption and employment/unemployment. These surveys give the percentage of out-migrants making remittances and households receiving remittances and depending upon remittances as their major source of livelihood.

The former estimates depend upon the definition of out-migrants used in the survey design which has been varying. The NSS 49th Round estimated that in 1992-93, 89 percent of permanent outmigrants sent remittances. The NSS consumption surveys show that the percentage of all rural households receiving remittance income is also fairly high – in some regions of the country, one-quarter to one-third of the households receive remittances. Remittances are only one form in which resource- flows occur as a result of migration, the other forms being savings brought home by migrants in cash or kind. Field studies show that a majority of seasonal migrants remit or bring home savings out of migrant income. In many cases, a substantial proportion of household cash income is attributed to migrant earnings (Haberfeld 1999, Rogaly, 2001, Mosse et. al 2002).

The NSS 64th Round provides estimates of remittances received by households in which one or more person is an outmigrant. The survey further provides estimates of the frequency of remittances and the use to which they are put.

Of the 27 % of households that report outmigrants in 2007-08, 33.9 % households (or 9.2 % of all households) received remittances. A very large proportion of outmigrants engaged in any economic activity reported remittances. The proportion of all households receiving remittances and the average amount of remittance received increased in the higher consumption quintiles. The percentage of rural households receiving remittances increased from 8.1 % in the lowest quintile to 14.3 % in the highest quintile (11.1 % overall, Table 6). Among urban households, the percentage of households receiving remittances increases from 3.6 % in the lowest quintile to 12 % in the highest quintile. Rural households in the lowest quintile received an annual

remittance of Rs 10,439 whereas urban households in the lowest quintile received an average remittance of Rs. 13,836 . On average, 8 % of households in the lowest three quintiles received an average remittance of Rs 14.720 (including non-classifiable households).

Table 6: Percentage of all households reporting domestic or international remittances

MPCE Quintile	Rural			Urban			Total		
	domestic	international	Total	domestic	International	Total	domestic	international	Total
1	7.8	0.3	8.1	3.3	0.3	3.6	6.6	0.3	6.9
2	9.2	0.5	9.7	3.4	0.7	4.2	8.3	0.6	8.9
3	10.0	0.6	10.6	4.0	1.2	5.2	9.7	0.8	10.5
4	10.0	1.0	11.1	5.0	1.6	6.5	10.9	1.3	12.2
5	11.5	2.8	14.3	8.0	3.9	12.0	15.2	4.2	19.4
Total	9.9	1.2	11.1	3.5	1.1	4.6	8.1	1.2	9.3
1-3 (Sub-total)	9.1	0.5	9.6	3.1	0.6	3.7	7.4	0.5	7.9

Source: Computed from unit data, NSS 64th Round

Table 7: Numbers of Households Reporting Remittances and Total Remittance Reported (in million & INR) by type of migration

	Domestic	International	Total
Total households reporting remittances (m)	18.0	2.6	20.6
Total remittances reported (Rs. M)	325399	167060	493511
Remittance per reporting household (Rs.)	18122	64546	23989

Source: Computed from unit data, NSS 64th Round

Table 7 shows that total remittances by outmigrants amounted to Rs. 493.5 billion in 2007-08 of which internal migrants contributed the lion's share - about two-third while the remaining came from international outmigrants.⁸ A regional disaggregation of remittances by internal migrants shows that these are higher in some of the poorer and heavily outmigrating states (such as Bihar and UP and Orissa). The percentage of all rural households receiving remittances in these states is 18.6, 16.3 and 14.6 respectively. These states also constitute a sizeable proportion of households receiving remittances from internal migrants (Table 8).

Table 8: Percentage Contribution to migrant households and remittances – Selected States

State	% to total households reporting remittances	% to total remittances reported
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⁸ The latter constituted 3.8 % of all outmigrants. Average remittance was Rs. 37609 per international migrant and Rs. 2911 per within-country migrant.

	Domestic	International	Total	Domestic	International	Total
Andhra Pradesh	3.3	8.5	4.0	3.0	7.7	4.6
Bihar	15.0	3.0	13.5	12.4	2.6	9.1
Kerala	3.2	38.6	7.7	5.2	39.9	16.9
Maharashtra	6.5	3.0	6.1	5.1	3.7	4.6
Orissa	6.3	0.5	5.5	5.3	0.5	3.7
Punjab	0.8	7.6	1.7	2.2	12.7	5.7
Rajasthan	7.0	6.0	6.9	10.9	4.9	8.9
Tamilnadu	5.5	15.3	6.7	6.2	12.4	8.3
Uttar Pradesh	24.6	8.3	22.6	19.6	5.4	14.8
West Bengal	8.6	1.7	7.7	7.9	1.2	5.8
All India	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Computed from unit data, NSS 64th Round

Given that these figures do not include all savings, as well as savings/remittances made by seasonal migrants, the impact of migration on the living conditions of the poor migrant workers in these states could be quite considerable.

The impact of remittances on the household economy could be *via* changes in income, income distribution and the pattern of expenditure and investment. However, the cash incomes which accrue may not always add to the resource base of migrant households, since in some proportion of cases, they are used to adjust earlier debts (NCRL 1991, Mosse et. al 2002). Nonetheless, it does appear that the income and consumption level of migrant households is generally higher than that of similarly placed non-migrants (cf. Sharma, 1997, Krishnaiah, 1997, Deshingkar and Start 2003, Deshingkar et. Al. 2006, 2008). But this conclusion needs to be carefully verified as it is generally based on ex-post cross-sectional comparisons. As Mosse et. al (2002) have noted, and as other studies testify, migrants are not only differentially placed at the entry point, their differential status also leads to different trajectories, so that changes in post-migration average incomes may provide only a limited picture of the varied set of changes. One of the few careful ethnographical studies (Rogaly et. al 2001) provides some evidence of improvement in incomes of seasonal labour migrants as a result of migration, but these conclusions need to be supported by other studies.

The use of the remittances is diverse and they are usually deployed to address a hierarchy of needs (debts -> essential household consumption -> house or other consumer durables -> working capital in farm or non farm businesses -> land or other productive assets) (cf. Deshingkar et. al. 2006, 2008). This also results in stimulating the local economy to some extent and also affects it through changes in consumption patterns. The evidence on investment is, however, mixed. Investment by migrant households on consumer durables, housing and land occurs sometimes and migrant income may also sometimes used to finance working capital requirements in agriculture. Evidence of other productive farm or non-farm investment is generally scarce but a number of studies do report such investment by a small percentage of migrant and return migrant households (Oberai and Singh, 1983; Krishnaiah, 1997, Sharma, 1997).

The NSS 64th Round provides information on use of remittances. For all households, in rural and urban areas taken together, the highest percentage of households reported expenditure on food, followed by expenditure on other essential consumption items, health and education, household durables related expenditure. Expenditures on these categories of expenditures were undertaken by 75 percent, 45.1 percent, 37.4 percent, 31 percent, and 20.1 percent households respectively. Expenditure on *any* consumption related item was reported by 94.6 percent households receiving remittances. Expenditure on debt servicing and improvement in housing was undertaken by 10.2 and 8.7 percent households respectively. Saving/Investment and expenditure on working capital were reported only by 6.4 percent and 1.1 percent households respectively. Whereas expenditure on food, other consumption, and education was reported by a higher percentage of households in the lowest deciles, it was the other way around for expenditure on working capital and saving/investment. The last item was reported only by 1.8 percent of households receiving remittances in the lowest decile (NSS, 2007-08, Appendix Table 8).

Other Impacts

Thus, while studies do not fully discount for the impact of some factors such as the life cycle effect, rural outmigration appears to provide some, although weak evidence of an improvement in the productive potential of source areas, and the ability of some poor migrant households to acquire small surpluses and strengthen their productive base and bargaining strength in the rural economy (cf. Rogaly et. al. 2001). The question of social and economic mobility can also be examined both from the changes in worker occupations in the destination areas, as well as in the source areas. As shown earlier, a very large proportion of short duration migrants are unskilled.

The question of their mobility is linked to their circumstances of migration, its duration, and is highly gendered. On the whole, a very small proportion of *male* migrants achieve economic mobility in the destination areas (Haberfeld Y, 1999, Moss et. al 1997, Mitra 2010). The limited mobility occurs as migrants acquire a foothold in the destination areas, or acquire some skills, and are thus better positioned to exploit the labour market situation. In the source areas, there is a slightly greater impact on social and economic mobility, which, however, generally eludes the poorest, and in most cases, is not substantial for poor migrants (Rogaly et. al 2001).

Studies of the impact of migration on income and asset inequality are quite limited. The ethnographical study quoted above (Rogaly et. al 2001), find some evidence of reduced inequality, as incomes of labour households rise vis a vis non-labour households. On the other hand, Mosse et. al. 1997 suggest that these inequalities increased because the differentiated nature of the migration process led to the amplification of income and asset inequalities.

Changes in attitudes and awareness

The non-economic impact of outmigration on local areas is more difficult to assess. As mentioned earlier, migration has double sided impacts on women's work and autonomy. It also has impact on local power relations and politics as migrants who acquire wealth and consequent social status are keen to reflect this through participation in local politics.

Deshingkar and Start (2003) mention how outmigration enables individuals and households to overcome restrictive caste barriers and increase livelihood options,

Exposure to a different environment and the resulting emotional stress, affect the attitudes, habits and awareness levels of migrant workers, depending on the duration of migration and the destination. Such changes are more dramatic in the case of urban migrants, in whom migration develops a greater awareness regarding the conditions of work, reduces personalized dependence, and inculcates a change in their attitude towards personalized labour relations (Srivastava 1999). Such modified life styles and changes in personal awareness may affect other family members in a variety of ways, some of them being positive. For instance, the increased awareness which migrants gain, especially in urban areas, can help them realize the importance of their children's education.

1.3.4 Impact on Destination Areas

Migrant labour provides comparatively cheap and pliable labour to the rural and urban sectors in the destination areas. Virtually all available evidence shows that recruitment of immigrant labour is as much motivated by labour control and wage cost reduction strategies as by shortages of local labour. While in Punjab, rural immigration took place in a context of relative labour scarcity and considerable competition among employers to secure labour during agricultural peaks (Singh and Iyer 1985, 3 and Singh, 1980), the reverse case existed in Gujarat (Breman, 1985). In the case of Gujarat, employer strategies encourage migration to substitute surplus local labour for better labour control. Paradoxically, the Gujarat migration experience, for which important source areas are in neighbouring Maharashtra, also indicates parallel circuits of migration with source and destination areas being interchanged (Teerink, 1995; cf also Breman 1996). This is also the case in several other industries. Brick kilns in Haryana and Western U.P. often interchange source areas importing labour from different parts of the same district, and neighbouring districts and states (Chopra, 1982).

Migrants are preferred because of their specific role in the labour process. Their labour is easier to control and it is easier to extract labour from them under arduous conditions. Moreover, the supply of labour remains elastic and migrants can work for long and flexible hours. Flexibility of the migrant workforce is retained through the process of recruitment which as shown earlier, is often organised as well as the nature of its deployment at the workplace, which is again under the effective supervision of middlemen and contractors. The segmentation and the fragmentation of the labour market which also leads to greater control over both migrant and local labour is another outcome of the labour process.

The wage payment systems which grow around predominantly migrant labour based industries and operations are eminently suited to side-stepping minimum wage legislation. As shown earlier, wages to migrant labour are often below legislated minimum. Thus migration reduces variable labour cost to employers.

Employers rarely take up the responsibility of providing other than wage subsistence requirements of migrants. Migrant labourers have to fend for themselves to meet their health,

shelter and other basic requirements. Although the sub-human condition in which labourers subsist is a result of employers not internalising the legitimate costs of hiring labour (contravening numerous laws), to society the resulting urban congestion appears to be result of unplanned mobility. The costs of population mobility have been, as a result, considered in theory in the context of large external diseconomies imposed by population concentration in large cities. The social, political and other consequences of immigration, especially where such migration is by linguistically, ethnically or regionally distinct groups, has not been considered in the growing economic literature on internal migration, but figures prominently in the corpus of sociological and political literature (cf. Weiner, 1978).

There are no studies which directly link migration to the pattern of growth and accumulation in the destination areas. But the evidence just suggest that the conditions under which migration occurs, facilitates accumulation, although via a 'low' road to capitalism. According to Breman, the basic rationale for the growing informalisation, two-way mobility and segmentation is to be found in the nature of entrenched mercantile capitalism, just as international migration has been embedded in the structure of international capitalism (cf. Sassen, 1988; Piore, 1990). Capitalists operate in uncertain markets, under circumstances in which they are highly dependent on traders. Casualisation of labour is one of the strategies favoured by petty commodity entrepreneurs to shift both risk and cost of production on to workers. Another reason for continued informalisation is to keep their businesses away from state surveillance. Thus most enterprises in the informal sector escape regulation of any kind - the informal sector could well be dubbed the unregulated sector.

1.3.5 Aggregate impacts

An examination of recent patterns of regional growth has shown that state policies have encouraged agglomeration economies in and around pre-existing growth centres in advanced regions (Srivastava 2009b). The pattern of migration that we observe is associated with this pattern of growth, along with the emerging characteristics of the labour market in India. The recent period of rapid growth in India has increased the demand for both skilled and unskilled workers in the areas of concentrated growth and agglomeration. For over a decade and a half, elements of regional policy were abandoned and the state deliberately encouraged and supported a strategy of growth concentration, which in turn encouraged migration, Simultaneously, there has been a shift in labour regimes towards greater informalisation and flexibilisation, captured in detail in the two reports of the NCEUS (2007, 2009). As shown in this paper, employment related migration has definitely increased. Further, while documented migration flows show that migration propensity is higher among the better-off and the more skilled, this paper shows that is only part of the story, the other part being an increase in the numbers of poor labour migrants in numerous sectors, constituting the most flexible and poorly remunerated sections of labour.

While there are overall benefits of migration to households, and to the economy and society in terms of a large number of indicators, there are also significant and asymmetric costs that are borne by the poorer labour migrants and their families, which ultimately also translate into costs for the economy and society as a whole. These costs are exceptionally large for poor migrants in India because they arise out of a pattern of development in which both employers

and the state appear unwilling to subsidize the costs of migration either through appropriate labour and social policies or through investments in basic needs and infrastructure for migrants. On the other hand, there is an excessive focus in keeping labour completely flexible and labour costs low for employers. The conditions of labour migration and the manifest “race to the bottom” sustains, and is sustained by, what one may call a “low route to capitalism” which impedes a healthy productivity led growth of the economy.

The development policy discourse in India has not still grappled with the extent to which the nature of migration in India impacts on the key developmental goals adopted by the country as well as the international community. This is reflected in the lack of any systematic policy framework for internal labour migrants.

1.4 Conclusion and Key Research Gaps

As this paper shows, the study of internal migration in India is still in its infancy in several respects. Macro data sources do not fully capture different types of migration. Moreover, the nature and pattern of migration is also in a flux. Thus, there is a large gap in our understanding of the overall magnitude and pattern of migration. The large number of micro studies that exist only partially met this gap. Moreover, there a few studies that address the many-faceted impact of migration (economic, social, cultural and political) both in the areas of origin and destination, as well as in the economy as a whole (best studied in a general equilibrium framework). Given the emerging demographic and economic scenario, internal migration is likely to increase. But as we have argued above, policy makers have hardly begun to address this issue, although its development consequences can easily be visualized.

Some of the significant issues which research could address currently are the following:

1. Are barriers or costs of interstate or rural urban labour migration increasing in India?
2. Is labour circulation increasing and is it becoming a more important component of internal migration?
3. What is the impact of labour migration on source and destination areas through different channels?
4. How do social policy goals and migration interact?

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