

Changing Pattern of Migration in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT: : This paper has tried to analyze the changing pattern of migration in West Bengal during the period 1991-2011 focusing on inter-state migration. The paper finds that, although still a net in-migrating state, the net migration rate of West Bengal has gone down over the years. Whereas employment and business remain the main cause of male out-migration, marriage to the neighbouring states appears to be the main cause of female out-migration. In case of out-migration for men, the 'urban to urban' stream is the dominating one while the 'rural to rural' stream is dominating among the female out-migrants. The study also finds that the flow of male out-migrants from West Bengal to other states is directed to the relatively developed states like Maharashtra, Delhi, and Haryana in search of work/employment and the share of the neighbouring states has considerably decreased over time. However, in case of female out-migrants, the neighbouring states still hold the lion's share.

Key Words:

I. Introduction

It is now well recognized in the social science literature that there exists a two-way causation between migration and economic development. On the one hand, migration contributes to economic development while on the other, economic development induces migration. Internal migration refers to inter-state or inter-district migration within the geographical boundary of the country. There are four types of internal migration – rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to rural and urban to urban. One of the important aspects of the study of migration is to find out the underlying factors that induce such migration. The reasons for migration can be divided into two main categories – the "push" factors and the "pull" factors (Lee, 1966). Push factors are those which force people to move out of their original place. War, political or religious oppression, climate change, lack of employment, poverty, etc. are some examples of push factors. The factors of attraction or the "pull" factors are those factors in the destination country that encourage people to relocate to these areas. They include peace and security, the possibility of better employment, better education, social security, a better standard of living in general, as well as political and religious freedom.

In India, there exist large scale regional disparities across the states. So the flow of people from one state to another is an obvious factor. However, the pattern of inter-state migration has changed a lot over the time. According to Kundu (2006), the less developed states had a high percentage of net out-migrants at the time of independence. The developed states, on the other hand, were in-migrating in character. But over time the developed states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have shown decline in in-migration rates. The state of West Bengal, though still a net in-migrating state, recorded lower net migration rate in the 2001 census compared to the 1991 census.

Several studies have tried to analyze the important causes and impacts of migration. Bala (2017) in her paper highlights the factors responsible for migration. The paper reveals that migration from rural sector to the urban sector can take place for getting the benefits of more employment opportunities, better wages, better standard of living, etc. Bhagat (2010) also shows the existence of a positive relationship of migration rate with per capita income, employment rate and share of non agricultural sector in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Bala (2017) has also highlighted the negative consequences of migration such as proliferation of slums and the consequent health and environmental problems, brain drain, evolution of a composite culture etc. Mohanty et al (2015), using unit-level data from the 64th round of the National Sample Survey (2007-08), have estimated the level, depth, and severity of poverty among non-migrants, intra-state migrants, inter-state migrants, and emigrants in India. Their study finds that the level, depth, and severity of poverty among migrant households is lower than that among non-migrant households; however,

it varies across migrant categories. Two broad patterns emerge from the state level analyses carried out in the paper. Barring Kerala and Punjab that have a relatively high percentage of out-migrants, in general, it is the less developed states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha that have a larger percentage of out-migrants (mainly employment-related migration); while the developed states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu have a larger share of in-migrants. Second, the level, depth, and severity of poverty for inter-state migrants from less developed states is higher than that of intra-state migrants and non-migrants. However, migrants from developed states exhibit lower poverty levels compared to of intra-state migrants and non-migrants. The study argues that migration and remittances in India are not the solution to structural development constraints and that poor long-distance migrants need to be integrated in poverty alleviation programs.

The present study mainly focuses on the inter-state migrants. The primary objective of this paper is to analyse the causes and patterns of migration (both in-migration and out-migration) in West Bengal. The study is based entirely on secondary sources of data which have been gathered from the official site of the Census of India. For the purpose of the study, data have been collected from three census years, 1991, 2001 and 2011. The paper is organized as follows. Section II takes a quick look at the nature of inter-state migration in the states of India. Section III analyzes the causes and patterns of migration in West Bengal. Finally, section IV concludes the paper.

II. Pattern of Inter-State Migration in India

Given the spatial heterogeneity in the level of development across the states of India, one can expect migration rates to vary significantly across states. Earlier studies have shown that inter-state mobility is generally low in states with high levels of poverty, illiteracy etc. (Kadi, 1988). However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the outflow of people from backward states reflecting migration of unskilled and less educated people.

Table 1: In-migrants, Out-migrants, Net Migrants and Net Migration Rate for the Indian states (2001)

Place of Enumeration	In-Migrants	Out-Migrants	Net Migrants	Population	NMR
Jammu and Kashmir	1,58,003	2,49,450	-91447	10143700	-0.90%
Himachal Pradesh	3,50,834	4,35,883	-85049	6077900	-1.40%
Punjab	17,49,122	16,32,410	116712	24358999	0.48%
Uttaranchal	8,59,598	8,93,572	-33974	8489349	-0.40%
Haryana	26,75,920	17,38,559	937361	21144564	4.43%
Delhi	53,24,052	9,27,593	4396459	13850507	31.74%
Rajasthan	17,41,411	26,09,555	-868144	56507188	-1.54%
Uttar Pradesh	28,24,746	92,55,257	-6430511	166197921	-3.87%
Bihar	16,19,031	52,60,659	-3641628	82998509	-4.39%
Sikkim	46,033	14,819	31214	540851	5.77%
Arunachal Pradesh	1,36,050	22,803	113247	1097968	10.31%
Nagaland	81,577	1,59,281	-77704	1990036	-3.90%
Manipur	14,783	51,903	-37120	2166788	-1.71%
Mizoram	35,293	37,993	-2700	888573	-0.30%
Tripura	63,778	65,655	-1877	3199203	-0.06%
Meghalaya	83,082	50,852	32230	2318822	1.39%
Assam	4,07,141	7,08,374	-301233	26655528	-1.13%
West Bengal	24,57,162	16,87,690	769472	80176197	0.96%
Jharkhand	17,30,938	14,73,434	257504	26945829	0.96%
Orissa	6,62,800	9,37,148	-274348	36804660	-0.75%

Chhattisgarh	9,36,415	8,62,447	73968	20833803	0.36%
Madhya Pradesh	21,69,350	20,11,922	157428	60348023	0.26%
Gujarat	21,82,741	13,46,817	835924	50671017	1.65%
Maharashtra	73,13,139	21,45,868	5167271	96878627	5.33%
Andhra Pradesh	10,32,753	15,64,768	-532015	76210007	-0.70%
Karnataka	20,74,471	18,62,289	212182	52850562	0.40%
Goa	2,28,869	91,323	137546	1347668	10.21%
Kerala	4,54,259	10,53,407	-599148	31841374	-1.88%
Tamil Nadu	7,27,172	16,68,200	-941028	62405679	-1.51%

Source: Census of India, 2001

The volume of inter-state net migration for the states of India for the year 2001 is shown in Table 1. The table shows the number of in-migrants and out-migrants in the different states of India. The net migration rate (NMR) is calculated by using the formula

$$\text{NMR} = (\text{In-migrants} - \text{Out-migrants}) / \text{Total Population}$$

From Table 1, states like Maharashtra, Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Haryana have positive and relatively high NMR whereas Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu are net out-migrating states. The heavy inflow of people to the developed states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Haryana and Punjab can be explained in terms of industrialization, availability of employment opportunities and the level of social development of these states. On the contrary, due to large concentration of population, inequality and poverty etc. states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan and the north-eastern states experienced large scale out-migration. These findings go in line with the observation drawn from various micro level studies pertaining to interstate migration. The village-level studies carried out by Rao (2001) and Karan (2003) show high level of out migration from the poor and drought prone areas of backward states like Andhra, Orissa, Bihar and Rajasthan to developed states in response to employment opportunities in the informal sector. Bhagat (2010) has also shown that migration rates (both in- and out-) increase with increasing levels of development of the states.

III. Causes and Patterns of Migration in West Bengal

This section tries to analyze the changing causes and patterns of in- and out- migration rates in West Bengal during the period 1991-2011. Table 2 presents the sex-wise distribution of the reasons for in-migration in West Bengal for the years 1991, 2001 and 2011. The reasons for migration have been classified into seven broad categories - 'work/employment', 'business', 'education', 'marriage', 'moved after birth', 'moved with household' and 'others'.

Table 2: Reasons for In-migration in WB from other states/Union Territory (2001-2011)

Reasons for Migration	Migration % (1991)		Migration % (2001)		Migration % (2011)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Work/Employment	6.85%	0.98%	6.03%	0.84%	4.95%	0.84%
Business	1.20%	0.17%	1.07%	0.13%	1.11%	0.22%
Education	0.96%	0.36%	0.55%	0.14%	0.55%	0.28%
Marriage	0.98%	51.85%	0.69%	48.70%	1.15%	51.83%
Moved after birth	0.41%	0.21%	2.70%	1.88%	5.58%	3.82%
Moved with household	8.82%	7.65%	7.62%	8.46%	6.79%	6.61%
Others	11.44%	8.13%	11.77%	9.43%	8.74%	7.53%

Source: Census of India, 1991, 2001 & 2011

Table 2 reveals that in all the three census years, 'marriage' remains the dominant reason for migration in case of females. The other two important reasons are 'moved with household' and 'others'. In case of males, 'work/employment', 'moved with household' and 'others' are the major causes of migration. It is interesting

to note that, in case of males, in-migration due to all these three factors has gone down during the period 1991-2011; but migration due to the factor 'moved after birth' has increased during the period for both males and females.

Table 3: Migration in West Bengal from other states (2001)

Last Residence	Percentage
Jammu & Kashmir	0.24%
Himachal Pradesh	0.08%
Punjab	0.89%
Chandigarh	0.07%
Uttaranchal	0.27%
Haryana	0.61%
Delhi	0.72%
Rajasthan	2.48%
Uttar Pradesh	12.15%
Bihar	45.76%
Sikkim	0.21%
Arunachal Pradesh	0.05%
Nagaland	0.07%
Manipur	0.08%
Mizoram	0.02%
Tripura	0.64%
Meghalaya	0.23%
Assam	5.91%
Jharkhand	17.96%
Orissa	6.45%
Chhattisgarh	0.59%
Madhya Pradesh	0.62%
Gujarat	0.83%
Maharashtra	0.89%
Andhra Pradesh	1.06%
Karnataka	0.24%
Goa	0.02%
Kerala	0.43%
Tamil Nadu	0.43%

Source: Census of India, 2001

Table 3 shows the inflow of migrants in West Bengal from different states for the year 2001. It is observed that West Bengal pulls nearly half of its migrants from Bihar followed by Jharkhand (17.96%) and Uttar Pradesh (12.15%). It is, thus, clear that the major chunk of in-migrants in West Bengal comes from the neighbouring states.

Table 4 shows the reasons for out-migration from West Bengal for the years 1991 and 2001. It is to be noted that the study of out-migration of West Bengal has been based on the years 1991 and 2001 only because the data on out-migration was not available for the year 2011. The table shows that 'work/employment' is the dominant reason for out-migration in case of males while 'marriage' once again is the dominant reason for migration of females. It is also observed that the movement of people from West Bengal to other states due to 'work/employment' has increased over the decade.

Table 4: Reasons for Out-Migration from West Bengal to other States by sex (1991, 2001)

Reasons for Migration	Migration % (1991)		Migration % (2001)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Work/Employment	42.77%	3%	55.33%	3.86%

Business	10.24%	0.84%	4.96%	0.35%
Education	4.12%	1.13%	2.41%	0.58%
Marriage	1.94%	68.79%	0.87%	59.41%
Moved with household	24.44%	19.72%	17.88%	24.27%
Others	15.36%	6.12%	15.82%	9.88%

Source: Census of India, 1991 and 2001

Table 5: Share of Out-Migrants from West Bengal (1991-2001)

Place of Enumeration	Place of Origin-West Bengal					
	1991			2001		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Punjab	1.61%	1.70%	1.56%	2.72%	3.48%	2.12%
Haryana	1.12%	1.33%	0.99%	3.41%	4.52%	2.52%
Delhi	7.11%	9.99%	5.33%	10.41%	13.30%	8.11%
Rajasthan	1.90%	2.50%	1.54%	2.76%	3.56%	2.11%
Uttar Pradesh**	9.35%	7.51%	10.48%	9.95%	7.08%	12.24%
Bihar*	36.76%	23.44%	44.98%	28.79%	15.78%	39.16%
Assam	7.97%	9.50%	7.03%	4.95%	4.77%	5.09%
Orissa	11.23%	11.51%	11.05%	8.53%	7.80%	9.12%
Madhya Pradesh***	6.22%	8.74%	4.66%	2.80%	3.24%	2.46%
Gujarat	1.98%	2.91%	1.40%	2.44%	3.40%	1.67%
Maharashtra	6.06%	8.91%	4.31%	12.66%	18.91%	7.67%
Andhra Pradesh	2.13%	2.68%	1.79%	1.81%	2.19%	1.50%
Karnataka	0.89%	1.27%	0.65%	1.89%	2.82%	1.15%
Kerala	0.33%	0.48%	0.24%	0.32%	0.45%	0.22%
Tamil Nadu	0.89%	1.18%	0.72%	0.73%	0.97%	0.54%

*Including Jharkhand **Including Uttaranchal ***Including Chhattisgarh.

Source: Census of India, 1991& 2001.

Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of migrants who moved to other states from West Bengal in 1991 and 2001. It shows that the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa were the most preferred states for the people of West Bengal to migrate. This is the 'neighbouring state' effect. The next sizeable percentage of migrants went to the states of Assam, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. The states of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu were the 'least migrated to' states from West Bengal. The sex-wise out-migration pattern is also very distinctive. Gender division of the migrants brings out that females dominate the short distance migration whereas males dominate the long distance migration. Male migration is very pronounced in the economically developed states like Maharashtra, Delhi and Haryana.

Finally, we take a look at the nature of out-migration in terms of rural and urban areas of West Bengal. Figure-I reveals that among the four migration streams, urban-urban migration is the most dominating one followed by rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-rural in both the census years of 1991 and 2001. Moreover, rural-urban migration has increased by 7 percent over the decade. This may be due to the creation of jobs in the modern sector in major metropolises and big cities (Premi, 1990).

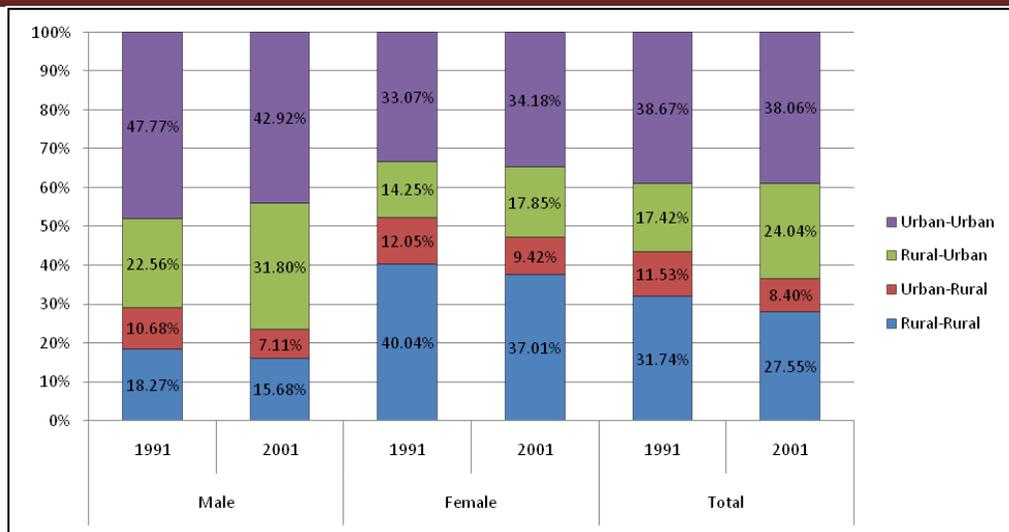


Figure I: Percent distribution of lifetime out- migrants from the state of West Bengal to other States/Union territories of India of each sex by migration streams (1991 & 2001)

Source: Census of India, 1991 & 2001

The sex-wise difference is also very distinctive. From Figure-I it can be observed that, in case of male out-migrants, the urban-urban stream was the dominating one while the rural-rural stream was dominating among the female out-migrants in both the census years. It is also observed that the percentage share of male out-migrants in rural-urban stream has increased from 22.56% in 1991 to 31.80% in 2001. This sharp increase in rural-urban migration indicates that more young men are travelling to work in construction and other services in the expanding urban informal sector (Srivastava and Bhattacharyya, 2003). Another interesting aspect is that the percentage share of out-migrants in the rural-rural stream has decreased for both males and females.

IV. Conclusion

The study has concentrated on the issue of changing patterns of migration and their characteristics in West Bengal. It is noted that the net migration rate of West Bengal has decreased from 2.44% per cent in 1991 to 0.96% per cent in 2001 as per census data. Whereas employment and business remain the main cause of male out-migration, marriage to the neighbouring state appears to be the main cause of female out-migration. In case of out-migration for men, the urban-urban stream was the dominating one while the rural-rural stream was dominating among the female out-migrants in the census years 1991 and 2001.

The study also finds that the flow of migrants to West Bengal from other states is more from the relatively less developed states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Orissa. Whereas the flow of out-migrants, particularly the male out-migrants, from West Bengal to other states is directed to the relatively developed states like Maharashtra, Delhi, and Haryana in search of work/employment and the share of the neighbouring states in inter-state out-migration had considerably decreased over the time. However, in case of female out-migrants, the neighbouring states still hold the lion’s share. Another important fact is that the southern states namely Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu were least migrating states. As urban areas offer more job opportunities than the rural areas, the maximum percentage of migrants migrated to the urban areas of these states.

In terms of the development of West Bengal, it can be said that it is very much centred around Kolkata. As a result, the city has reached a saturation level in terms of congestion and associated phenomena while other parts of the state still remained unattractive for business investment. Inter-state migration has further accentuated this problem. So other parts of the state need to be developed to act as new nodes of migration. Moreover, the government should adopt appropriate policies to mitigate the rural-urban imbalance created as a result of migration.

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