

*Research Article*

# Migration of Rural Women in India: Trends, Streams and Motivation

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**Abstract**

**The study suggests that the stream of women migration is not favorable for the social structure in general and rural area in particular for India. So, the Indian policy makers should concentrate on rural development to surge the sex ratio in general and rural areas in particular to save the social structure, rural culture and as well as an optimum development of urban areas of the country.**

**Key Words: Sex-ratio, Migration Stream, Women, social structure**

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**Introduction**

Migration is a universal phenomenon and it is the third component of population change, while two other important components of population change are fertility and mortality rate. Further, migration is the most observable and impressive fact in the growth of cities and it is also considered as an essence of urbanization in the globe. In India, major cities have noticed an increase of around 75 per cent population due to migration. Moreover, the number of temporary stay is also larger in India as compared to the World's average. Therefore, the study of migration is important not only for making of the population policy, but also for making and implementing the urbanization policy of India.

**Meaning and Characteristic of Migration**

The United Nation (UN) defined migration as a form of geographical or spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another. It involves a change in residence from the place of origin or departure to the place of destination or arrival'. Further, National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) (2008) defined migration as "A household member whose last Usual Place of Residence (UPR) any time in the past was different from the present place of enumeration was considered as a migrant member in a household." While, population studies defines: "migration implies a permanent or at least a semi-permanent change in the place of residence of an individual from one location to another." Moreover, Census of India (2001) considered "A person is considered as a migrant by place of last residence, if the place in which he is enumerated during the census is other than his place of immediate last residence." On the basis of above said definitions we can say that migration is related to long term phenomenon and is different from the mobility of populations. Thus, the term population mobility is broader than migration, because, in measurement of mobility, both (i.e., short and long) time period is considered, while migration is related to only long term mobility of the population/individual. In nutshell, permanent or semi-permanent change in the place of residence of an individual is a basic characteristic of the migration.

**Types of Migration**

Generally, there are two types of migration. First is International Migration and second is 'Internal Migration'. International migration implies that when the national boundary of a country is involved in migration, while, when migration takes place within the national boundary of a country it is called internal migration. Further, the internal migration is also classified into two types (i.e., Migration Streams and Distance Categories). Further, migration streams and Distance Categories of migration include the other types of migrations (see table 1). Moreover, in regard to international migration, the departure of an individual or group from a country is termed as emigration (or

Out-Migration), while arrival or entry into a country is known as immigration (or In-Migration). In addition, migration, can be either Voluntary or Forced. Voluntary migration includes the choice of a person, while forced migration involves a perception of compulsion against the will or choice of a concerned individual. Individuals forced to move are usually compelled by political factors whereas, voluntary migration is usually for economic reasons (Rubenstein and Bacon: 1990). For Example: In 1947, a large number of Muslim were migrated from India to Pakistan, while Hindu came into India in large numbers from Pakistan is an example of forced migration, while the most important example of voluntary international migration in the history of mankind is the large-scale exodus of Europeans during the last one-and-half century. A total of at least 50 to 60 million people are estimated to have emigrated from Europe (Beaujeu and Garnier: 1978).

**Table 1: Types of Internal Migration**

Migration Streams		Distance Categories	
1	Rural to Rural	1	Intra-State
2	Rural to Rural	2	Intra-District
3	Urban to Urban	3	Inter-District
4	Urban to Rural	4	Inter-State

**Source:** Chakarborty and Kuri (2008)

### Measurement of Migration

There are two measurements of migration. First is, Gross Migration and second is Net Migration.

#### Gross Migration:

Gross migration refers to the total number of migrants moving into and moving out of a place, region or country.

#### Net Migration:

Net migration is the difference between the number of migrants coming and moving out of a place, region or country. In other words, net migration is the gain or loss in the total population of an area as a result of migration.

### Determinants of Migration

A variety of reasons lead to the migration phenomenon and all these factors are classified into two broad groups (i.e., Push and Pull factors). Further, push factors include all the events and conditions which force individual to move for other locations, while pull factors comprise of all those conditions that attract individual to move for a particular new location. On the basis of literature we found that the following major causes of voluntary migration.

#### Box 1: Major Causes of Voluntary Migration

- Basic Amenities in the Destination Towns
- Cost of Migration
- Easy Accessibility to Job
- State of Agriculture Performance
- Urban Informal Labour Market
- Lesser Employment in Rural Area
- Literacy Rate
- Urban Poverty
- Rural Poverty and
- Family Decision

**Source:** Various Studies on Migrations

## Trends of Women Migrations in India

In Table 2, we presented the trends of women's migration (women migration per 1000 people) in India from 1983 to 2008 along with rural and urban areas. It is clear from the data, in 1983 only 351 women (per 1000 persons) were migrated from the rural areas, and, further the ratio has increased from 398 in 1988, 401 in 1993, 426 in 2000 and finally stood at 477 in 2008, while in case of urban areas, the ratio of women migration per 1000 population has also increased over the years, with the exception of 1993. The table also reveals that an average of 410 and 403 women per 1000 persons have migrated from rural and urban areas respectively in India during the period of 25 years. In case of male migration, only 54, 69, 65, 74 and 72 male per 1000 persons have migrated from rural areas during the same period. In addition, the gap between male and female migration per 1000 peoples from 1983 to 2008 are illustrated in figure 1. The total number of migrated persons per 1000 persons has increased from 423 in 1983 to 531 in 2008 from rural areas. Moreover, the Average Compound Growth Rate (ACGR) of migrated persons per 1000 peoples from rural area has been 0.85 per cent, while the ACGR of female and male has been 1.23 and -1.14 per cent respectively in rural area from 1983 to 2008. In the case of urban areas, the ACGR of female, male and entire migrated people has been 0.88, -0.17 and 0.47 per cent respectively during the same period.

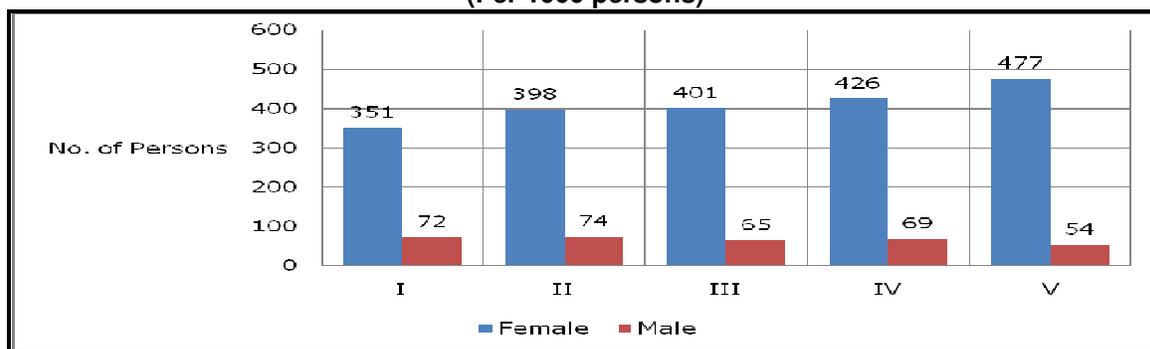
**Table 2: Trends of Women Migration in India (Women Migration per 1000 persons)**

Round Year	Rural	Urban
64 <sup>th</sup> (July, 2007 to January, 2008)	477	456
55 <sup>th</sup> (July, 1999 to January, 2000)	426	418
49 <sup>th</sup> (January to June, 1993)	401	382
43 <sup>rd</sup> (July, 1987 to June, 1988)	398	396
38 <sup>th</sup> (January to December, 1983)	351	366
<b>Average</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>403</b>

**Source:** National Sample Survey Organization (2008), Migration in India, July, 2007 to June, 2008, 64<sup>th</sup> Round, Government of India New Delhi.

**Note:** Cited from the 'Female Tribal Migrant as Domestic Workers: A Study of their Compulsions and Working Conditions', by Shree, Mega (2012) and figure in brackets is the per cent to total.

**Figure 1**  
**Comparison of Male and Female Migration from Rural Areas**  
**(Per 1000 persons)**



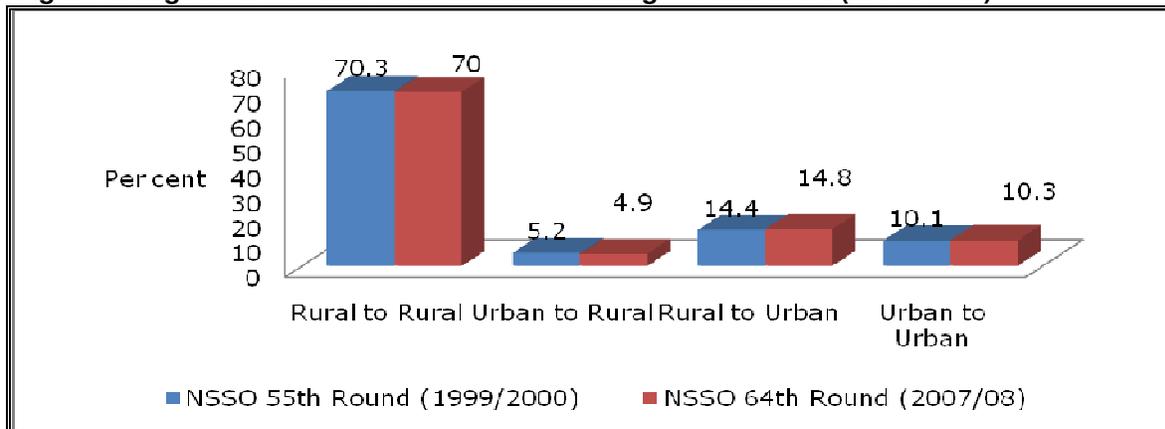
**Note:** I: 38<sup>th</sup> (January to December, 1983), II: 43<sup>rd</sup> (July, 1987 to June, 1988), III: 49<sup>th</sup> (January to June, 1993), IV: 55<sup>th</sup> (July, 1999 to January, 2000) and V: 64<sup>th</sup> (July, 2007 to January, 2008).

## Migration Streams (Direction of Flow) of Women Internal Migration in India

In the study of migration, migration streams have gained significant attention among researchers, scholars, policy makers, etc. over the years. So, without a discussion on migration streams, the study of migration will not be

complete. Therefore, first, we have discussed the general profile of migration streams in India. The Census of India data shows that 42.49 million people were migrated from Rural to Rural areas between the periods of 1961 to 1971 and it reached up to 53.30 million in 2001. Further, 10.98, 5.33 and 9.01 million people were migrated internally from Rural to Urban, Urban to Rural and Urban to Urban areas respectively between the period of 1961 to 1971 and it increased to 21.74, 6.58 and 15.16 million people respectively in 2001. Moreover, the ACGR of internal total migrated people of India has been 0.57, 1.57, 0.38, and 1.16 per cent in Rural to Rural, Rural to Urban, Urban to Rural and Urban to Urban areas respectively during the similar periods. In addition, we also found that the rate of net migration was positive in Gujarat (1.70), Haryana (4.10), Karnataka (0.30), Maharashtra (3.00), Punjab (1.70), and West Bengal (0.40), while it was negative in Andhra Pradesh (-0.30), Assam (-0.70), Bihar (-2.70), Kerala (-0.60), Madhya Pradesh (-0.04), Orissa (-0.70), Rajasthan (-0.60), Tamil Nadu (-0.70), and Uttar Pradesh (-2.00) between the period of 1991 to 2001. Besides that, we also noticed the migration rate was positive in developed States, while it was negative in under developed States.

**Figure 1: Migration Streams of Women Internal Migration in India (In Per cent)**



**Source:** Authors Calculations from the National Sample Survey Organization (2008), Migration in India, July, 2007 to June, 2008, 64<sup>th</sup> Round, Government of India New Delhi.

**Note:** Cited from the 'Female Tribal Migrant as Domestic Workers: A Study of their Compulsions and Working Conditions', by Shree, Mega (2012) and figure in brackets is the per cent to total.

In figure 1, we illustrated the migration streams of women migration from the period of 1999/2000 to 2007/2008 in terms of percentage (per cent to total women migration irrespective of stream). It can be seen from figure 1, 70.30 per cent women were migrated from rural to rural areas in 1999/2000 and it marginally decreased to 70.00 per cent in 2007/08. Further, 5.20 per cent women were migrated from urban to rural areas in 1999/2000 and it also decreased to 4.90 per cent in 2007/08. In the case of rural to urban and urban to urban stream of migration, 14.40 and 10.10 per cent women were migrated respectively in 1999/2000 and it slightly increased to 14.80 and 10.30 per cent respectively in 2007/08 in India. While, at the same time, the share of male migration (per cent to total male migration irrespective of stream) in same streams were only 32.30, 10.70, 34.40 and 22.60 per cent respectively in 1999/2000 and 27.20, 8.90, 39.00 and 24.80 per cent respectively in 2007/08 (see detailed NSSO: 55<sup>th</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Round). The data clearly indicates that a large number of women have been gathered in urban areas during the period under consideration.

**Table 3: Rural Women Migration (per 1000 persons) in India: According to the Social Group**

Social Group	STs	SCs	OBCs	Others
55 <sup>th</sup> Round (1999/2000)	357	434	428	443
64 <sup>th</sup> Round (2007/08)	440	482	468	506
<b>Average</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>474</b>

**Source:** Researcher Calculations from the NSSO, 2008, Migration in India, July, 2007 to June, 2008, 64<sup>th</sup> Round, Government of India.

**Note:** Cited from the 'Female Tribal Migrant as Domestic Workers: A Study of their Compulsions and Working Conditions', by Shree, Mega (2012) and figure in brackets is the per cent to total.

Table 3 shows the rural women migration (per 1000 persons) in India from 1999/2000 to 2007/2008 along with the social group of women. According to the NSSO 55<sup>th</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Round, 357 of STs, 434 of SCs, 428 of OBCs and 443 of other casts women were migrated from rural area in 1999/2000 and it increased to 440 in STs, 482 in SCs, 468 in OBCs and 506 in other casts in 2007/08. While, the share of women migrations per 1000 persons of each social groups were 35.70 per cent in STs, 43.40 in SCs, 46.80 in OBCs and 44.30 in other casts in 1999/2000 and it has increased to 44.00 per cent in STs, 48.20 in SCs, 46.80 in OBCs and 50.64 in other casts in 2007/08. In case of male, only 5.60 per cent of STs, 6.40 of SCs, 6.50 of OBCs and 8.10 of other casts of males were migrated per 1000 population of each social group in 1999/2000 and it decreased to 4.70 per cent of STs, 4.90 of SCs, 5.10 of OBCs and 6.80 of other casts in 2007/08 (see detailed NSSO: 55<sup>th</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Round). In addition, the ACGR of women migration among each social group has been 2.65 in STs, 1.32 in SCs, 1.12 in OBCs and 1.68 in other casts during the period under study.

**Table 4: Motives of the Women Migrations in India(In Per cent)**

Motives of Migration	49 <sup>th</sup>	55 <sup>th</sup>	64 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Rural Areas</b>			
Employment	08.30	10.00	07.00
Studies	11.00	04.00	05.00
Marriage	51.70	76.20	80.40
Movement of Parents or Earning Members	23.70	06.30	04.40
Others	05.30	03.50	03.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Urban Areas</b>			
Motives of Migration	49 <sup>th</sup>	55 <sup>th</sup>	64 <sup>th</sup>
Employment	04.90	03.00	02.70
Studies	07.0	01.30	02.20
Marriage	31.70	58.50	60.80
Movement of Parents or Earning Members	49.50	31.00	29.40
Others	06.9	06.20	04.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Researchers Calculation from the National Sample Survey Organization (2008), Migration in India, July, 2007 to June, 2008, 64<sup>th</sup> Round, Government of India New Delhi.

**Note:** Cited from the 'Female Tribal Migrant as Domestic Workers: A Study of their Compulsions and Working Conditions', by Shree, Mega (2012) and figure in brackets is the per cent to total.

### Motives/Inspirations of the Women Migrations in India

Table 4 expresses the motives of women migration in India from 1993 to 2007/08 along with rural as well as urban areas. It is clear from the data the motive of employment in women migration from rural areas was 8.30 per cent in 1993, further it increased to 10.0 per cent in 1999/2000 and it dropped to 7.00 percent in 2007/08. The motive of rural women migrations for purpose of studies, movement of parents or earning members and others continuously decreased, from 11.00, 23.70 and 5.30 per cent respectively in 1993 to 5.00, 4.40 and 3.20 per cent respectively in 2007/08, while rural women migration due to marriage has been on continuous increase from 51.70 per cent in 1993, 76.20 in 1999/2000 and 80.40 in 2007/08. In case of urban area, the trends of women migration are also similar to rural areas.

### Major Observations of the Study

1. The Average Compound Growth Rate (ACGR) of migrated persons per 1000 people from rural area was 0.85 percent; whiles the ACGR of female and male was 1.23 and -1.14 per cent respectively in rural area from 1983 to 2008. In the case of urban areas, the ACGR of female, male and entire migrated people was 0.88, -0.17 and 0.47 per cent respectively during the same period. Thus, we can say that the rate of women migration is much more than the male in India.

2. The ACGR of total internally migrated people of India was 0.57, 1.57, 0.38, and 1.16 per cent in Rural to Rural, Rural to Urban, Urban to Rural and Urban to Urban areas respectively from the period between 1961 to 2001. Thus, we conclude that Urban to Rural stream is major contributor in migration of people in India.
3. The study clearly indicates that a large number of women has been out from the rural area through the stream of Rural to Urban (positive trend), Urban to Rural (negative trend), and Rural to Rural (negative trend).
4. The ACGR of rural women migrations in STs was found very high (2.65 per cent), while minimum was 1.12 per cent in OBCs from 1999/2000 to 2007/08 in India.
5. The contribution of marriage in women migration is very high in both areas (i.e., rural and urban areas) and increased continually over the period under study. While, the contribution of studies, movement of parents or earning members and others, decreased in rural as well as urban areas over the period under consideration.

### Suggestions for the Healthy Migration

1. Both, Central and State governments, should create the basic facilities in rural areas through infrastructure development in general and sanitation facilities in particular, as for women the situation becomes complex in its absence and that is why a newly married woman in Uttar Pradesh recently committed suicide due to non-availability of latrine at home, another woman broke the marriage due to the same reason in Haryana.
2. The Central and States governments should create more livelihood opportunities for the rural people within rural areas, through honest implementation of the existing schemes for the purpose and remaining through adding more such schemes.
3. Both governments should immediately take measures to bring the sex-ratio to a rational level by promoting the required programs and crush the forces supporting the feticide in their petty interest, thereby causing heavy loss and imbalance in the demography of the nation in general and in rural areas in particular.
4. It is suggested that the eligibility conditions for availing benefits of various schemes meant for women upliftment should be eased wherever necessary, to ensure the maximum involvement of the half population and ensuring their development.

### Conclusion Remark

On the basis of the foregoing discussion we conclude that the stream of women migration is not favorable for the social structure in general and rural area in particular. Because, in long term, a vacuum of female population in rural will emerge due to the following basic reasons. (1) Mortality rate of girl is higher in rural area as compared to urban areas. (2) No. of involuntary unmarried person in rural areas has been increasing continuously in rural area due to unavailability of girls. (3) The rate of women migration from rural to rural and urban to rural areas has decreased, while rural to urban has been increasing significantly over the period under study and (4) The poor girls are migrated through 'marriage on sales basis' from poor States to rich States, who are not even well acquainted with the language and culture of the migrated areas/States and hence, they are punished for the crime not committed by them or paying the price for being poor; where there's no talk about the women empowerment since they are used as goods in the areas where the sex-ratio is adverse. Therefore, both levels of government, should concentrate on rural development through poverty alleviation and women empowerment schemes to surge the sex ratio to save the social structure, rural culture and an optimum development of urban areas of the country.

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