

**INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS IN INDIA:**  
**A STUDY ON DOMESTIC MIGRATION AND ISSUES IN**  
**ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION**

Submitted by:  
**Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai**

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## Abbreviations

ACE: Administration and Cost of Elections

CSDS: Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

ECI: Election Commission of India

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

IHDS: India Human Development Survey

IHSN: International Household Survey Network

IIPS: International Institute of Population Studies

ISMW: Inter State Migrant Workmen Act

MPCE: Monthly Per Capita Expenditure

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NRI: Non-Resident Indian

NSSO: National Sample Survey Organization

OBC: Other Backward Classes

RPA: Representation of People Act

SC: Scheduled Caste

ST: Scheduled Tribe

SVEEP: Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UPR: Usual Place of Residence

## Preface

A democracy is not only about the conduct of free and fair elections but its success is also measured by making it more inclusive and participatory. Therefore, the Election Commission of India's interest in analyzing problems relating to registration of domestic migrants in the electoral rolls and discussing possible options for facilitating the political inclusion of domestic migrants in elections in India has the potential to further broaden and deepen the base of democratic governance in the country. In pursuance of this, we at Tata Institute of Social Sciences are happy to record our appreciation to the Election Commission of India for assigning us the task of researching the study on 'Domestic Migration and Issues of Electoral participation'. As per the directive of the Election Commission of India, letter dated 8/9/2015, we submitted a preliminary report on 10/9/2015 and are now submitting our final report. We thank Prof. S. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and key officials of TISS for supporting us in executing the research project and enabling us to present the initial findings of the research study in a timely and optimal manner.

The composition of the team that worked on this study is:

1. Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Project Director, Professor and Chairperson, Center for Public Policy, Habitat & Human Development, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai)
2. Aaditya Dar, Lead Researcher & Doctoral Candidate at George Washington University (Washington DC)
3. Souradeep Banerjee, Research Associate, MA in Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai)
4. Shashwat Dhar, Research Associate, MA in Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai)
5. Sudhansu Sekhar Behera, Project Officer, Doctoral Candidate at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai)

Ashwani Kumar, Project Director, Professor & Chairperson, Center for Public Policy, Habitat & Human Development

School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

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## Executive Summary

Facilitating the participation of domestic migrants in the country is of utmost importance if elections are to become truly inclusive. According to Census of India 2001 and National Sample Survey Organization 2007-08, three out of ten Indians can be classified as migrants. Much of the migration is permanent in nature and the same data suggests that the number of short term migrants – a category of migrants that are salient for the ECI – is around 8-10 million (this figure includes people below 18 years who are ineligible to vote). Scholars argue that government data tends to underestimate the flows of seasonal/circular migration, a stream dominated by people belonging to socio-economically deprived groups with an extremely low asset base and poor educational attainments and skill sets. It is this floating segment of the migrant population, which comprises of people working seasonally in brick kilns, construction, plantations, mines and factories that is most vulnerable to exploitation by labour contractors and faces relatively greater hurdles in participating in elections.

While there is a vast literature on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of domestic migrants in India, there is little information about their participation in elections. Testing for correlation between migration and turnout at the state level, we find that that states with higher rates of migration are associated with lower voter turnouts. A few small scale studies also corroborate this evidence. However, in the absence of any large-scale survey it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions. In order to truly understand the barriers faced by migrants in registration and participation as well as to elicit their preferences on whether they would like to vote at the source or destination, we recommend that the ECI conduct a nationally-representative sample survey on the same. The findings of a detailed empirical investigation can then be used to inform policy.

If international experience is to guide policy then it should be pointed out that some countries have experimented with absentee voting and registering six months before every elections. Other measures adopted across the world are: early voting, postal ballot, proxy voting and electronic voting. These provisions may or may not be adaptable to India (given the magnitude and logistical challenges of managing an election) and therefore it is imperative that ECI starts a national conversation on this issue, beginning with a consultation with political parties. In the past, ECI has made special provisions during elections for Kashmiri migrants, the Reang voters of Mizoram and the Talwara migrants of Jammu. To continue this on a sustained and regular basis implies that ECI should consider extending these approaches and utilizing them in other states.

Other strategies to improve political participation of migrants are: identifying short-term/seasonal migrants in the electoral rolls, linking Aadhar biometric system with voter ID cards, creating awareness among domestic migrants through the special campaign of Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) for registration at the place of destination etc. Nonetheless, this is fraught with challenges (privacy concerns, huge administrative cost of creating a database of domestic migrants, identification issues and possible electoral frauds and malpractices) and ECI should take these into consideration. Economic pursuits lead migrants to shift to other places in search of better livelihoods, better education etc. As both the native and migrant population begin to ascertain their ethnic identity, one cannot rule out the political and social ramifications. The rapid pace of urbanization in India implies that migration is likely to increase and it is imperative that ECI responds with a more inclusive national policy.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Context

Indian democracy is dynamic and a continuously evolving project that is being reinvented both by its people and its institutions. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has been at the forefront of advocating electoral reforms in order to make elections more inclusive in the country. Lately, it has begun the process of registering transgenders as a separate category, which has contributed to facilitating their electoral participation. Additionally, ECI has also introduced disability-friendly initiatives like ramps at polling stations and electronic voting machines with Braille for the visually challenged voters.

Recently, in response to a petition in the Supreme Court regarding the extension of voting rights to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), ECI recommended an e-postal ballot system so that NRIs can vote from abroad. Given this proposed amendment to the Representation of People Act (PRA), 1951 there is demand from some quarters that a similar system also be made available for domestic migrants. In the wake of the above, ECI engaged Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai to conduct a study on understanding the character and structure of internal migration in the country and to make recommendations on improving their participation during elections.



## 1.2 Research Objectives

The primary objective of the research is to review the historical trends, extent, patterns and types of domestic migration in India. This study aims to summarize the existing literature on domestic migration in India and to identify the barriers/obstacles faced by the domestic migrants in exercising their voting rights. The following aspects are covered:

- Conceptualization of domestic migration
- State wise migration patterns
- District wise migration rates (to focus on intra-state migration)
- Migration among males and females
- Migration rate in rural and urban India
- Types of migration: short term/seasonal vs long term
- Correlation between migration and turnout rates
- Barriers/obstacles faced by the domestic/internal migrants in exercising voting rights
- International experiences in tackling political inclusion of domestic migrants

## 1.3 Methodology

The study compiled information from academic papers, government and non-government reports on the subject of domestic migration, with a specific emphasis on their political inclusion. In order to conduct a comprehensive literature review, the study searched reference databases such as Google Scholar and EconLit, carefully looking through journals on migration studies, to ensure that key works on this subject were not missed out. The study also checked websites of international organizations such as The World Bank Group, International Monetary Fund and International Labour Organization. It also reviewed old ECI publications and constituent assembly debates to identify if there were any examples from history where special provisions were made for domestic migrants. In addition, the research studied legal issues to gain a better understanding of the scope of “ordinary residents” in the RPA. Findings from more than 150 papers/reports/news articles are synthesized in Chapter 2.

While there is a vast literature on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of domestic migration in the country, scant attention has been paid to their political participation; there are only a handful of studies that deal with this topic and they have been summarized in Chapter 3. The research team also reviewed questionnaires of the major nationally representative surveys like those conducted by Census of India, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) and the India Human Development Survey (IHDS). To ascertain that the study included all relevant secondary data, the team also searched the International Household Survey Network (IHSN) and Dataverse.org to find if there were any publically available micro data that could be used for the present study. However, owing to data availability limitations, only the following secondary data were utilized in this study: (a) Census of India 2001 was used to report migration rates across districts, and (b) Voter turnout data from ECI's statistical reports of elections to state legislative assemblies.

Finally, the study also invited suggestions from a select group of experts, which included academicians, policy practitioners and representatives of civil society who have been working on the issue of domestic migration in the country. The consultation exercise was conducted with over 20 such people and their feedback has been presented in Chapter 4.

## 1.4 Limitations of the Study

It is important to note that migration data is dated: the D-Series (tables that reports data on migration) of the 2011 Census has not been released as of November 1, 2015 and therefore, the study relied on the Census 2001 figures. Over the last 15 years, the country has urbanized significantly and it is likely that the patterns and structure of migration have also changed accordingly. Furthermore, there is only limited information on political participation (registration and turnout) of domestic migrants and the attempt to understand the relationship between state-wise domestic migration rates and turnout levels are only indicative of correlations. The findings in the following chapters should be read with these caveats in mind.

## 2. Domestic Migration in India: Conceptualization and Characteristics

*This chapter reviews the literature to identify the definition, patterns and structure of domestic migration in India.*

### 2.1 Definition and Theories of Domestic Migration

We increasingly live in an era of globalized migration: migration of goods, services, capital, banking, technology, culture, ideas and most importantly people. Migration is a process rather than an event; there is great diversity in characterizing migration with respect to reasons for departure, length of migration, frequency of return to place of origin and ties to home communities (Desai and Banerji, 2008). Migration is, thus, a complex phenomenon and involves the movement of individuals or groups into new geographical areas (Srivastava, 2012). Internal migrants are those who change their residence within a country's national borders (Dang, 2005). Various sociological and economic theories of migration point to rural and urban differences in opportunities or differences within a region that motivate people to move out for better opportunities to improve their conditions for well-being. Since migration necessarily involves separation from a place of origin and because it is fluid, by its very definition, this implies that the measurement of this phenomenon is less precise when compared with other demographic processes.

Earlier theories of migration rooted in neo-classical theory viewed migrants as rational individuals (Todaro, 1976). However, recent economic theories have broadened this analysis by factoring in transaction costs, incomplete information as well as imperfections in rural markets (Stark, 1980; Stark, 1991). These studies also recognized the household as the decision-making unit according to the incentives and constraints it faces. On the other hand, Marxist theories of migration (Bremner, 1996) focus on how wider structures have perpetuated the exploitation of migrants by capitalists and intermediaries. Thus, migrants are considered no more than bonded laborers - powerless and poor and perpetually in debt. Olsen & Murthy's (2000) study of the legendary Palamuuru laborers from Mahubnagar district in Andhra Pradesh is a classic example of Marxian analysis of migration. However, we must recognize de Haan's caution against viewing migration as a phenomenon predicated on a 'sedentaristic assumption' that populations were historically immobile; and that migration was not a free choice for poor people, but always an option of the last resort; a response to economic and environmental distress (de Haan, 1999). Thus, we understand that voluntary migration is a 'fundamental component of human freedom' and a key feature of human history, which has the potential to improve other dimensions

of human development but we also recognize and highlight exclusionary aspects of forced or induced migration. (UNDP, 2009) Migrants in their habitat of enumeration or identification are often excluded from the economic, cultural, social and political lives of society and are often treated as second-class citizens in their place of destination or temporary residence. The constraints faced by migrants especially short-termed/seasonal migrants – the so-called un-domiciled migrants – are many and range from lack of formal residency rights; lack of identity proof; lack of political representation; inadequate housing; low-paid, insecure or hazardous work; to limited or no access to state-provided welfare services and discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, class or gender (UNESCO, 2012).

The view about poverty and ‘immiserization’ not being a factor in migration has been contested by others who have conducted local level studies. Explaining whether migration can be a survival or accumulation strategy, Deshingkar and Start (2005) argue that migration studies have often overemphasized the ‘impoverishing effects of migration’ and rarely posed the question of mitigating effects of migration. They write, “In Indian writings, the term distress migration and migration for survival have often been used; explaining migration by the poor as a response to natural calamities and other shocks (Murthy, 1991; Reddy, 1990; Rao, 1994; Mukherjee, 2001 who calls it “distressed” migration). However, there is now compelling evidence showing that the returns from migration can improve over time as migrants acquire more knowledge, confidence and skills; when they can cut out exploitative middlemen and contractors. Rogaly (2003) in his study recounts stories of migrants, especially poor Bengali migrants who have used migration as a strategy to improve their status back home. In addition to widening their choices, he argues migration has also enhanced their dignity and self-worth. A recurrent theme in this study also emphasizes the point that financial proceeds from migration have gone beyond creating something symbolic.

Arjan de Haan underlines the macro-micro paradox in migration: “On the one hand, national-level data highlight that migration is selective with opportunities biased against the poorer, a process that might be reinforced with technological change. On the other hand, micro studies often show very high rates of migration amongst poorest and socially marginalized groups, and over- representation of migrants—including bonded and child labor, with Adivasis and Dalits over-represented—amongst the bottom layer of the working class (Rajan, 2012).

However, data collected by the government does not distinguish between voluntary and involuntary forms of migration. Government data on internal migration in India is mainly drawn from two main

sources: (a) the decennial population data of Census of India, and (b) the migration surveys carried out by the NSSO, a division within the Ministry of Statistics and Planning Implementation.

### **Census of India**

Firstly, consider the definition adopted by the Census of India. Migrants can be classified either by place of birth (those who are enumerated at a village/town at the time of census other than their place of birth) or by place of last residence (those who are enumerated at a place other than their place of immediate last residence). The Census of India 2001 estimated that there are around 307 million internal migrants in India, which account for 30 percent of India's total population (see Table 1). This represented a significant increase from the 1991 Census, when the proportion of internal migrants was around 27 percent.

*Table 2.1: Magnitude of Migration (by place of birth), 1991-2001*

Migrants by Place of Birth	2001 Census (including J&K)	1991 Census (excluding J&K)	Variation (%) (1991-2001)
Total Population	1028.6	838.5	21.5
Total Migrants			
Persons	307.1	229.8	32.9
Males	90.4		
Females	216.7		
Intra-District	181.7	136.2	32.6
Inter-District	76.8	59.1	29.5
Inter-State	42.3	27.2	54.5
From Abroad	6.1	6.9	-11.6

Source: Census of India (2001)

Using the definition of place of last residence, there were 315 million migrants in India and they (excluding J&K) grew by 34.7 percent between 1991-2001. Data on migration are provided as change in residence within district, from one district to another within the state (inter-district), and from one state to another state (interstate). Lusome and Bhagat (2006) note that there is a substantial decline in the proportion of intra-district migrants and a corresponding increase in inter-district and inter-state migrants (but warn that the creation of three new states in 2000 may have inflated the proportion of interstate migrants in 2001).

It should also be pointed out that the Census definition casts a very wide net as it includes people who migrate over very short distances within a district. It also tends to miss a significant number of seasonal migrants who have an equal chance of being counted in their place of birth/last residence as they do in their place of destination (Abbas and Varma, 2014).

## NSSO

Secondly, consider the NSSO that uses an individual's Usual Place of Residence (UPR) to identify whether a person is a migrant or not. The UPR is defined as the place (village or town) where the migrant had stayed continuously for a period of six months or more (except newly born infants) before moving to the place of enumeration (Srivastava, 2012). A permanent migrant is a household member whose last UPR is different from the present place of enumeration. (A labour migrant is a person who has stated any one of the employment related reasons as the reason for his/her migration.) Unlike the Census of India, NSSO does not put any duration limit in defining the place of last residence. The last available survey round (64<sup>th</sup> round) conducted in 2007-08 estimates India's migrant population to be around 326 million, which is some 29 percent of India's population, and thus closely matches up the figures from the Census. The NSSO survey also notes that migration rates have been gradually increasing during the period 1983 to 2007-08, except for a marginal fall in migration rate in 1993 (NSSO 49<sup>th</sup> round).

The official data has some obvious shortcomings. One, they tend to grossly underestimate the scale of short-term migration and thus our estimates about the size of seasonal and circular migration are weak (Srivastava, 2011). Short-term migrants are defined by the NSSO as those who have stayed away from UPR for a period of one month or more but less than six months during the last 365 days of employment or search of employment. Lucas (1997) notes that short-term movements go undetected in macro-surveys because the extent of such type of migration can only be detected in specialized surveys and this is particularly true for estimating flows of circular migrants, since initial residence and place of enumeration do not differ. Consequently, the extent of circular migration, in the developing world or elsewhere, is not always appreciated as few statistical surveys are designed to disentangle full migration histories of return or step migration. Currently, NSS estimates for seasonal/circular migration restrict it to only movement that is less than 6 months (even though it is likely that the cycle is longer than that time period). Two, the data does not adequately capture women's migration because the surveys ask for only one reason for migration to be stated and this is usually stated as marriage. Three, migration rates among children is not considered of good quality (but this does not present an issue for the present study because only those older than 18 years can vote).



## 2.2 Composition

Understanding the socio-economic and demographic composition of domestic migration is essential for a robust analysis of migration patterns. Composition of migration is studied in terms of the age, sex, caste and class of migrants, in addition to place of residence and reasons for migration. A detailed comparison of three rounds of NSSO reports is presented in Annexure A; the following section presents only the key highlights:

### **Disaggregation by state and district**

The major migration flows are depicted in Figure 2.1 and Table 2.2. The top 5 states with the highest out-migration rates (or negative net migration) are Bihar, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur and Assam (other lead source states are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu). On the other hand, the 5 states with the highest in-migration rates (or positive net migration) are Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Chattisgarh and Tripura. Other important destination states are Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Karnataka (Bhagat and Mohanty, 2009).

Table 2.2: Net Migration Rate, 2000 and 2007-08

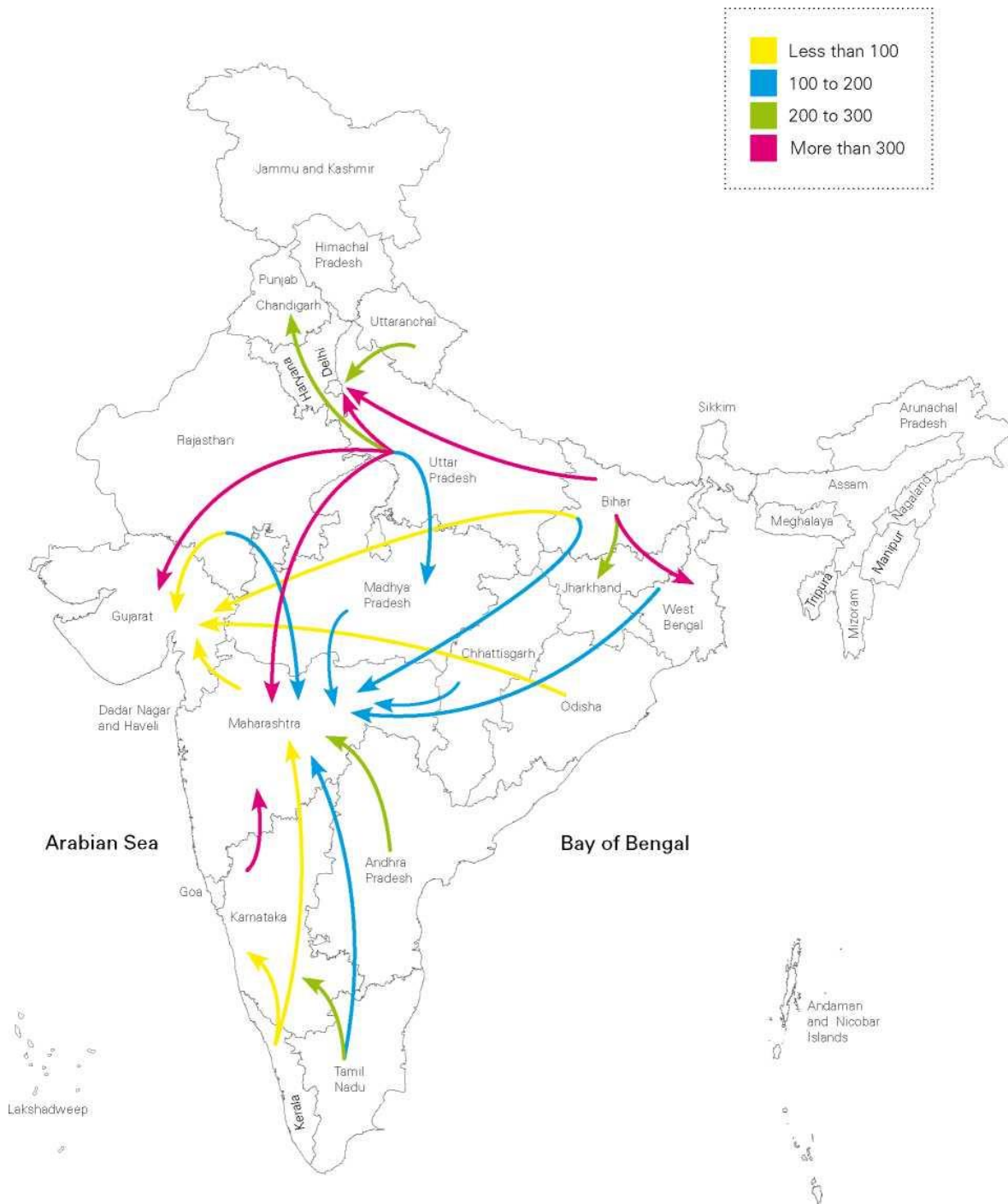
State	2000 (55 <sup>th</sup> round)	2007-08 (64 <sup>th</sup> round)
Andhra Pradesh	1	-9
Assam	-5	-20
Arunachal Pradesh	NA	-5
Bihar	-31	-56
Chhattisgarh	NA	28
Gujarat	19	16
Haryana	79	35
Himachal Pradesh	NA	-9
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	-12
Jharkhand	NA	-18
Karnataka	-8	10
Kerala	6	-44
Madhya Pradesh	10	-7
Maharashtra	44	41
Manipur	NA	-30
Meghalaya	NA	-7
Mizoram	NA	-1
Nagaland	NA	-5
Odisha	6	-13
Punjab	25	13
Rajasthan	7	-9
Sikkim	NA	16

Tamil Nadu	-2	-14
Tripura	NA	17
Uttarakhand	NA	38
Uttar Pradesh	-8	-31
West Bengal	27	13

Note: The net migrant rate is the total number of migrations per 1000 population which are calculated by as the difference between the number of return migrants and the number of out-migrants.

Source: NSSO reports

Figure 2.1: Major Net Migration Flow in India (Duration 0-9 years, 2001) (Population in thousand)



Source: UNESCO-UNICEF Policy Brief (2012)

District wise migration rates (according to the Census of India 2001) are depicted in Annexure D. Relevant findings from the reports shared by the State EC are presented in Annexure B.

### **Migration Patterns**

Around two thirds of domestic migrants are concentrated in rural areas while around one third are concentrated in urban areas. Further, based on the place of residence of the migrants at origin and destination, migration rates can be calculated for (a) rural to rural, (b) rural to urban, (c) urban to rural and (d) urban to urban. At the national level, rural to rural migration is most dominant stream, but its importance declined over time for both males and females in all the three distance categories between 1999-00 and 2007-08. We see a similar trend for urban to rural migration. However, rural to urban and urban to urban migration streams have witnessed a marginal increase over the same period, more pronounced for males than for females.

### **Disaggregation by sex**

Srivastava (2012) points out that female migrants outnumber their male counterparts in both rural and urban India. Male migrants are more likely to be concentrated in urban India and are predominant in more distant streams of migration. Males dominate the inter-state and inter-district streams of migration while females dominate the intra-district stream of migration. Additionally, Paul, Datta and Krishna (2011) note that the recent increase in migration rate is primarily due to the increase in migration rates for females. In fact, between 1983 and 2007, migration rates were consistently higher for females than males (while male migration rates have shown a downward trend in the same period).

### **Disaggregation by age**

Rajan (2013) analyzing the 2001 census data finds that out of the 315 million internal migrants, 92 million (29 percent) are youth (those in the age group 15-29) and out of these, 66 million (72 percent) are females and 25 million (28%) are males. The largest proportion of migrants is found in the 15-29 age groups, and there is a concentration of migrants in the 40-59 working age groups as well. Srivastava (2012) also confirms this finding.

### **Disaggregation by class**

The 2007 NSSO results (64<sup>th</sup> round) reported that the migration rate was directly proportional to an individual's Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) i.e. it was lowest for bottom MPCE decile class

(in both rural and urban areas) and increases with the standard of living, attaining a peak for the top decile class. Srivastava (2012) argues that the relationship between migration and MPCE is more nuanced: migrants cluster both at low and high levels. The migration rates of those in the lowest economic quintiles have been subject to intense debate. Various studies, including those conducted by De Hann (1997), Deshingkar and Akter (2009) and Singh (2009) argue that migration largely takes place from better off groups and unprivileged people are less likely to migrate. On the other hand, Mahapatro (2010), based on her analysis of NSSO data for the 55<sup>th</sup> (1999) and 64<sup>th</sup> (2007-08) rounds argues that migration has, in fact, increased for the poorest where as it has declined for other economic classes. While there is clearly a lack of consensus on the nature of the association between poverty and migration, there is nevertheless a growing view among scholars that the poor are indeed participating extensively in migration as a livelihood strategy. However, the ultra poor or the very poor often do not migrate (Skeldon, 2002).

### **Disaggregation by caste**

The NSSO data shows that the migration rate in the rural areas was the lowest among the scheduled tribes (STs), nearly 24 percent, and it was the highest among those classified in the social group as 'others', nearly 28 percent. In urban areas, on the other hand, the migration rate was lowest among other backward classes (OBCs) nearly 33 percent, and it was highest among those classified in the social group 'others', nearly 38 percent. It is important to note though that caste could be a confounding factor and masking the underlying relationship with MPCE.

### **Disaggregation by reasons for migration**

Males and females express different reasons for migration. According to the NSSO, the main reason for the migration of females in rural and urban areas was marriage and this is consistent with findings from the census (see Annexure A). For males, the most important reason for migration was 'employment related reasons'. Based on the analysis of Census data, Srivastava (2011) gives us a deeper insight into the economic reasons for internal migration He claims that the proportion migrating for economic reasons is greater among long-distance migrants; most male migrants moving between states did so for economic reasons. According to Gramener (2012), education is also found to be a significant driver of migration and this typically happens for men and women until the age of around 23 years. Mahapatro (2010) has also pointed out the growing importance of education as a reason cited by migrants regardless of sex.

## 2.3 Structure

Apart from the demographic characteristics, a key aspect of migration is its duration and this implicitly defines two types of migration: (a) long-term migration, resulting in the relocation of an individual or household; and (b) short-term or seasonal/circular migration, involving back and forth movement between a source and destination.

### **Long-term migration**

The 2007-08 NSSO (64<sup>th</sup> round) estimated that for nearly 91 percent of the migrants, the movements were permanent in nature.<sup>1</sup> However, there were stark rural-urban differences here. A much higher proportion of the rural migrants moved permanently (nearly 95 per cent) compared to urban migrants (nearly 83 per cent of the urban migrants were permanent). The nature of movement was likely to be permanent in most cases of female migrants compared to male migrants in both the rural and urban areas. However, this pattern was not true for all female migrants. Agnihotri et al (2012) find that circular movement among workers is more pronounced in females (52 percent) than in males (28 percent).

### **Short-term migration**

The 1999-2000 NSSO report (55<sup>th</sup> round) recorded around 10 million people in India migrated outside their villages/towns for 60 days or more for employment reasons. In 2007-08 (64<sup>th</sup> round), after NSSO changed its definition of short-term migrants (to those who stayed away from the village/town for a period of 1 month or more but less than 6 months during the last 365 days for employment or in search of employment), the number of such migrants went up to 30 million. At the all India level, the rate of short-term migration is 1.7 percent in the rural areas and almost negligible (less than 1 per cent) in the urban areas.

It's important to reiterate though that the short-term migration flows are not adequately captured by NSSO. Abbas and Varma (2014) have estimated 15 million short-term migrants from NSSO data, whereas Agrawal and Chandrasekhar (2015) estimate that there are 12.58 million short term migrant workers residing in rural India alone. The latter estimate is similar to the estimates of the National Commission on Rural Labor (1991), which estimated that there were around 10 million circular migrants

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<sup>1</sup> The migration was treated as temporary, if the migrant intended to move again to the last usual place of residence or to any other place. If the migrant, in the normal course, was likely to stay at the place of enumeration and did not plan to move out of the place of enumeration, it was treated as a permanent migration.

in rural areas (these include an estimated 4.5 million inter-state migrants and six million intra-state migrants). Recent micro-studies documenting large and increasing numbers of internal migrants suggest that a reasonable estimate is around 30 million and rising (Deshingkar, 2006b).

Most short-term migrants belong to socio-economically deprived groups, such as Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, having negligible educational attainment, limited assets and resource deficits (Deshingkar, 2006). Short term migrants are engaged mostly as casual labour and mostly remain invisible and often face exploitative labour practices. Such migrants are mostly employed in the sub-sectors of: construction, domestic work, textile, brick-kilns, transportation, mines, quarries and agriculture (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009). Furthermore, this type of migration involves members of disadvantaged social groups such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from regions with poor livelihood opportunities (UNESCO-UNICEF, 2012).

### **Reasons for short-term seasonal and circular migration**

There is a wealth of theoretical and empirical literature on the reasons behind short-term seasonal migratory flows in India. Breman (1996) has written at length about seasonal migration in South Gujarat (India) since 1970. He argues that the main reason for increased seasonal migration is the decline in agricultural employment and landless tribal households in this region. Mosse (2005) argued that seasonal migration has become an “irreversible part of the livelihoods of rural adivasi communities in western India”. Haberfeld et al. (1999) based on a micro study in southern Rajasthan, find that seasonal migration is a coping and risk reducing strategy. Coffy, Papp and Spears (2011) in their illuminating study of migratory movements in the three states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh show how rural, agricultural households in India take advantage of urban, non-agricultural employment opportunities through short-term migration, anywhere from a few days to a few months. They argue that the bulk of the migration is seasonal, driven by the annual cycle of agricultural productivity. Repeated short-term migration during agriculturally unproductive times of the year is part of the households’ long-term economic strategy.

In the case of circular migration, there are a combination of push and pull factors that drive it (Deshingkar and Bird, 2009). Income is one important driver, with people migrating in search of paid employment. Demands for labour in both rural and urban areas and anticipated better wages and working conditions are also major incentives to migrate (Deshingkar, 2003). But, migrants might also be pushed to migrate because of debt, poor access to credit, declining access to common property resources or commodity



price crashes (Deshingkar, 2003). A significant portion of India's rural population increasingly uses seasonal or circular migration as a livelihood strategy (Srivastava, 2012) Agricultural pressures and rural unemployment also drive migration, which is driven by the scarcity of cultivable land, inequitable land distribution, low agricultural productivity, land degradation (particularly in arid and semi-arid areas), reduced access to common property resources, high population density and few opportunities for diversification away from agriculture (Deshingkar, 2003).

## 2.4 Domestic Migrants salient for the ECI

In light of the above discussion on the various types and patterns of migration, the following sub-section considers the various categories of domestic migration that are salient for the ECI.

### **Migrants staying at place of residence for duration less than 1 year**

According to the Census of India 2001, there are 8,885,724 whose place of enumeration was different from their place of residence for less than 1 year and if one subtracts the people who are in the age-group 0-14 years (because they are not eligible to vote) there are 5,803,868 migrants left whose duration of residence is less than 1 year, forming 0.6 percent of the total population. It is this segment that plausibly faces relatively greater hurdles in participating in elections and one that the ECI might consider making special provisions for. Research suggests that short term migrants face denial of basic entitlements including access to subsidized food, housing, drinking water, sanitation and public health facilities, and education and banking services and often work in poor conditions devoid of social security and legal protection (UNICEF-UNESCO Report, 2012). In the face of such adversity, it becomes all the more imperative to facilitate the political participation of such a group.

### **Vulnerable Domestic Migrants and Situation of Bonded Labour practices**

Article 23(1) in Part III of the Indian Constitution, relating to Fundamental Rights, states that “Traffic in human beings and beggars and other forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of the provision shall be an offense, punishable by law”. The informal practices of bondage have emerged as one of the biggest obstacles in the efforts to facilitate political inclusion of domestic migrants especially poor and disadvantaged ones. Described as ‘footloose workers’ in migration studies, millions of laborers circulate from place to place never with the intention to settle down, but to return to their native villages and towns once a job is completed or when a working season comes to an end. In between migration and settlement for employment and livelihoods, this footloose army of migrants’ is often denied voting rights in their destination place and imposed debilitating transaction costs in case they decided to vote in their place of origin

Studies suggest that new forms of bonded or partial labour-bonded migrant laborers have emerged in the recent past. Jan Breman, tracking bonded labour in India for many decades, finds that new forms of hidden debt bondage have appeared, with intermediary labour contractors mediating between large

formal industry and impoverished, unprotected, often desperate workers in India's vast poor rural hinterlands (Breman, 1996). As it is well known that in many states in India, the system of employment of Inter-State migrant labour known as 'Dadan Labour' continues to be in vogue despite the abolition of bonded labor in the law and regulation of Interstate Migrant Workmen. The Study Group on Bonded Labour for the National Commission on Rural Labour reported a high incidence of bonded labour in stone quarries and crushers, sandstone, marble and slate mines in a number of states including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu (Ministry of Labor) 1991. Labour bondage among domestic migrants has been reported in handlooms and power looms in different parts of the country, especially from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Studies in domestic migration suggest that domestic migrant labour in large public works and construction sites is often organized through middlemen and contractors, leading to well-entrenched systems of advances and resulting in bondage. The case of contract labour from areas around Mahboobnagar district in Andhra Pradesh (often called Palamuuru labour) has drawn the attention of a number of scholars, who surmise that nearly 150,000 labourers seasonally migrate from this district, of whom nearly 50,000 are bonded (Olsen and Murthy, 2000). There have also been reports of bonded labour in commercial agricultural systems such as plantations and floriculture. The Tamil Nadu Commissioners' Report (1995) found that migratory labour in cardamom plantations was often bonded. In some of the other plantations (rubber, pepper and nutmeg) the condition of bonded labour, numbering several thousand, was found to be acute.

Studies have reported that rice mills have also become infected with informal bonded migrant labour practices as in the case of mills in and around the Red Hills area near Perambur in Tamil Nadu (Ramya, 2001). The rice mills of Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh also chiefly employ poor tribals from Bastar district. The labourers are paid a small wage, work for 12 to 13 hours, and are kept confined to the premises of the mill and denied all welfare benefits including rights to participate in the elections (CEC 2004).

More importantly, the conditions of domestic migrants, especially seasonal labourers in brick kilns are pathetic. Acting on a recent news report, the National Human Rights Commission of India has directed the states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where large numbers of Odiya migrant labourers are engaged in brick making, to ensure that these people go back to their respective states to vote (Daniel, 2014). There are varying estimates of the number of workers in the industry. The National Commission on Rural Labour estimated that there were about one million workers but according to the

All India Brick Kiln Manufacturer's Association, its membership extends to 22,000 units with about 3 million workers. There could be as many as 50,000 brick kilns in all, employing about 100 workers each as per the muster rolls (Ghosh, 2004). The brick kiln workers are often the most exploited lot facing almost serfdom not covered by any of the Inter State Migrant Workmen (ISMW) Act provisions.

Note: Most studies are either silent or have under-reported the issue of political participation of domestic migrant labour especially their inability to exercise voting rights. We discuss this issue in the subsequent chapter.

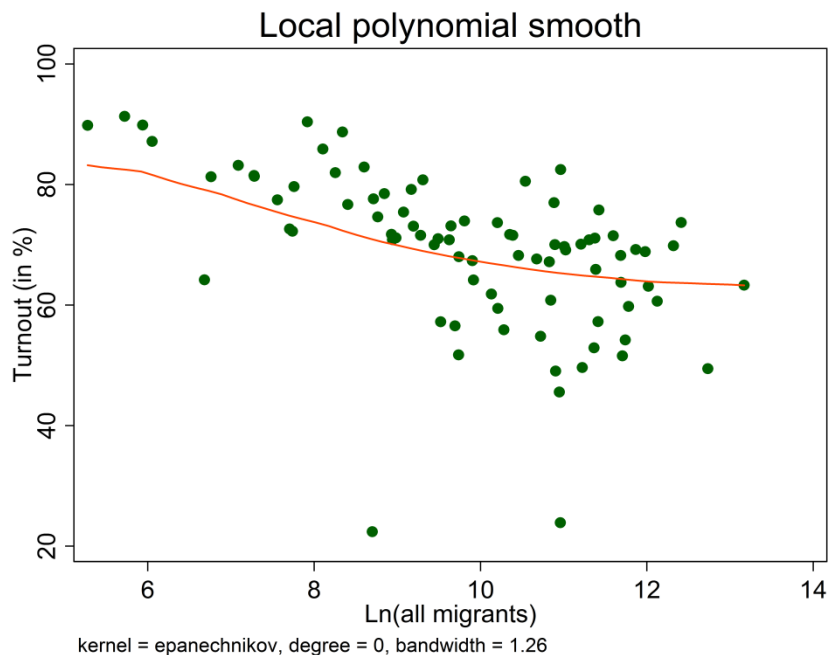
### 3. Participation of Domestic Migrants in Elections

*This chapter discusses issues that arise in the registration and turnout of domestic migrants during elections.*

#### 3.1 Link between Migration and Voter Turnout Rates

In our review of the literature, we could not find any nationally representative empirical study that empirically analyzed the political participation of domestic migration. Therefore, in order to motivate the discussion, we analyze the correlation between the in-migration in a state and the average voter turnout in the election. We adopt the strategy in Bhavnani and Lacina (2015) who have used the 1991 and 2001 Census to build a panel dataset describing the number of in-migrants in 26 Indian states for 6 time-periods (1982-86, 1987-89, 1990, 1992-96, 1997-99 and 2000). To this, we add the state voter turnout and the following graph plots the relationship between average voter turnout and in-migration.

*Figure 3.1: Correlation between in-migration and voter turnout, 1982-86 to 2000*



Note: Following Bhavnani and Lacina (2015) the dependent variable is logged to make it approximately normal.

### Negative association between migration and voter turnout

It is evident that, pooling all the data, there is a strong negative relationship between total in-migration in a state and the voter turnout. The correlation coefficient is -0.5. We also regress the turnout rate on the natural log of the total migrants in a state and the results are presented in the table below.

*Table 3.1: Association between in-migration and voter turnout, 1982-86 to 2000*

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Turnout (in %)	Turnout (in %)	Turnout (in %)
Ln(All Migrants)	-3.922***	-3.738***	-0.422
	(0.660)	(1.244)	(3.056)
Observations	84	84	84
R-squared	0.269	0.480	0.737
Controls	No	Yes	Yes
State fixed effects	No	No	Yes

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ; Control variables are same as in Bhavnani and Lacina (2015), p. 18: “abnormal monsoon rainfall, land degradation, income per capita, unemployment among secondary-school educated male natives, trade flows from other states, population, urbanization among the native population, native male children’s school enrollment rates, and the share of the native male population aged 15–19.”

Col (1) presents the results of the most basic regression and it suggests that a 10 percent increase in migrants in a state is associated with a reduction in voter turnout by 0.4 percentage points. The coefficient is statistically significant at the 99 percent level. Adding state-level controls does not qualitatively change the nature of the cross-sectional relationship and the coefficient continues to be statistically significant. We also present results of including state fixed effects in Col (3). It can be noted that the coefficient of interest sharply drops and is no longer significant. This could be because we have limited temporal variation to exploit as nearly half of the states in the sample have three or less time-periods.

The objective of this empirical exercise was not to claim any cause-effect relationship between the two variables, but merely to demonstrate that there is suggestive evidence that states, which have high immigration, also appear to have lower voter turnouts.

## 3.2 Registration and Electoral Participation of Domestic Migrants

There are a handful of small-scale studies that attempt to document the problems faced by migrants in exercising their voting rights and this sub-section summarizes findings from these:

### **Enrollment**

A recent survey conducted by Janaagraha, a Bangalore based NGO, revealed that as many as 41 per cent of entries in the voter details of the electoral roll of Delhi have some error. The study reports that most errors were found in the addresses in the list (46.2 per cent) followed by errors in the names of voters (29 per cent). Moreover, 11 percent of the addresses could not be located on the ground and 21 percent of sampled citizens had shifted to another location. Such errors are likely to have been caused by a mobile population and this underscores the need for de-duplicating electoral rolls. As India continues to urbanize at a rapid pace, her cities and towns are going to continuously be changing, presenting a challenge to election management.

### **Electoral participation**

According to a study conducted by Aajevika Bureau (Udaipur) in collaboration with five other NGOs, 78 percent of domestic migrants possess a voter ID card or are registered as voters in India and out of them 60 percent of migrants were reported to have failed to cast their votes in at least one election – local, state or national because they were away from their homes to eke out a living and returning back to their constituencies at the time of elections, was considered an expensive affair.<sup>2</sup> When adjusted for short-distance movements, the percentage of migrants who missed voting is as high as 83 percent (Sharma, Poonia, Babar, Singh, Singh, and Jha, undated).

However, there was a discernible variation in participation across the levels of elections. It was found that voters are less likely to return and vote in the national and state elections vis-a-vis local (panchayat) elections. Two out of three migrants (65 percent) reported voting in the panchayat elections compared to only out of two (48 percent) in national elections. There was a significant drop in participation rates from panchayat to Lok Sabha elections. In fact, as one moves from panchayat to Vidhan Sabha to Lok Sabha elections, the participation rate comes down by 10.5 percent points at each step. The difference became

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<sup>2</sup> The study was carried out in 15 locations spanning over 5 states – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat



more pronounced, rising to 14 percent points, when adjusted for short distance movements. In case of long distance movement, participation in election ranges from 59 percent in the case of Panchayat election to 31 per cent in Lok Sabha elections.

The explanation behind this observation is social pressure and the incentive structure for migrants. Social pressure meant that a community member or a family member was contesting the elections, it was considered obligatory for the migrant to return back and vote. On the other hand, the incentive working for the migrant is in the form of travel expenses or kickbacks in terms of alcohol or cash. About 50 percent who returned to vote revealed of their travel expenses being funded by the local candidates. Candidates reached out, especially, to the migrants in cities in cases of short-distance movement.

### **Need for a national survey**

As noted earlier, there are no nationally representative studies that estimate the enrollment or voter turnout rates for domestic migrants. It is therefore imperative that such a study be conducted in order to better understand the issues affecting domestic migrants in the country.

## 4. Way Forward: Opportunities and Challenges in Political Inclusion

*This chapter reviews international practices and keeping in mind the peculiarities of the Indian experience suggests the way forward to facilitate the inclusion of domestic migrants in elections.*

### 4.1 International Practices

#### **Internal migrants**

In order to get an idea of how the Electoral Management Bodies of different countries deal with the issues of electoral participation of domestic migrants, the team sought suggestions from the Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Practitioners: The Electoral Knowledge Network for their suggestions on this matter. So far, we have received responses from three members. Suggestions were provided by Iraq, Madagascar, and Bosnia & Herzegovina. Bosnia & Herzegovina introduced the right to vote in absentee but they also entailed significant organizational challenges for the electoral administration as different political parties exercised strong pressure on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in order to make them choose one or the other voting options and eventually directed supporters to vote strategically in important areas. While in Bulgarian local elections, in order to be eligible to vote at the current address, one must be registered in that municipality, town or village at least six months before Election Day. Although, data from the last local elections held in Bulgaria (25 October 2015) is still being analyzed, it appears from initial statistical research and observations in the field that many voters registered a new address without having actually moved to the new place.

#### **External migrants**

Since we received only a few comments on the issue of integrating domestic migrants into the political process, we also looked into the practices of the different countries with regards to external migrants (to learn if some of those ideas could be adapted to the Indian context). The right of migrants to exercise their franchise has been discussed and debated on several occasions in the past. The first important change to the long pending political rights of the migrant workers came from the member countries of the Council of Europe in 1977 when they passed the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers to recognize the political rights of migrant workers including their right to vote and contest elections in their country of origin. The United Nations General Assembly in 1990 achieved a landmark

feet on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Several countries have put in place mechanisms to enable their citizens living abroad to cast their vote in the country of their origin. It is therefore imperative that we study these mechanisms and draw lessons from their experiences in our endeavor to find ways and means to facilitate the inclusion of migrants in the electoral process. The four main voting methods commonly being practiced in different parts of the world are voting in person; voting by proxy; postal voting and electronic voting.

We now briefly discuss a few case studies that describe country's experiences of different voting method at the international level:

### **Australia**

Australia uses the following ways to enable its citizens to vote in the national election:

- Ordinary vote- cast by an elector at a polling place or at an early voting centre within the division for which they are enrolled.
- Absent vote- an absent vote is a vote cast by an elector out of their home division, but still within their home state or territory on Election Day.
- Early vote- one can vote early either in person or by post if he/she is not present during the election
- In person- one can vote in person at an early voting center or any AEC divisional office in the weeks leading to an election.
- Postal vote- one can apply for a postal vote online, or complete a postal vote application form.
- Interstate vote on election day- one can cast on Election Day at interstate voting centres by those who are not in their home state or territory.
- Overseas- in federal elections, electors who are overseas can vote in person at an overseas voting centre (most Australian embassies or missions) or by post.
- Provisional vote- a provisional vote is cast in circumstances where an elector's name cannot be found on the roll or the name has already been marked off the roll. The vote cannot be counted until a careful check of enrollment records and entitlements has been made.
- Electors making an absent, postal, early (not in own division), interstate or provisional vote must complete a declaration envelope giving their personal details. Divisional staff will check this before the votes are counted.

- Mobile polling- AEC mobile polling teams visit many electors who are not able to get to a polling place. Mobile polling is carried out around Australia prior to Election Day and on Election Day.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, absentee voting procedures were given great importance so as to enable the Internally Displaced Persons to exercise their voting rights. It stipulates that no person shall be required to produce official identity documents for purposes other than voting. Here voting could be done in person or by absentee ballot.

### **UK and Northern Ireland**

In UK different voting methods are used for different elections. In the election, one can vote in person at a polling station or by post or by proxy. Anyone can apply for a postal voter for which he need not have to give any reason, whether one lives in UK or is voting from abroad. While for voting by Proxy one has to give reasons why one is applying for a proxy vote. The voter needs someone to sign the application form to confirm the reasons for wanting proxy vote

### **USA**

Most US states have a method for any eligible voter to cast a ballot before Election Day, either during the early voting period ranging from as early as 45 days before the election, or as late as the Friday before the election or by requesting an absentee ballot. In 14 states, early voting is not available and an excuse is required to request an absentee ballot. While early voting in person is allowed with no excuse required in thirty-three US states and the District of Columbia. However twenty-two states require voters to provide an excuse for voting by absentee ballot while twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia offer no excuse absentee voting. Three states i.e. Oregon, Washington and Colorado out of twenty-two states hold all elections entirely by mail.

### **Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe gained political independence in 1980 and since then allowed external voting by post to the electors who are absent from Zimbabwe while in the service of the government, such as diplomats, civil servants and members of the armed forces and the police. However, the country has imposed some

restrictions on internal migrants. For example, they are required to have utility bills in their name in order to be registered. This disenfranchises many people who are migrants.

## 4.2 Indian scenario

There is no gainsaying that managing elections in the world's largest democracy is a difficult exercise. Before we consider the pros and cons of all possible measures that the ECI can adopt, it is worthwhile to consider how the framers of the constitution discussed issues of citizenship and political participation.

### **Constitutional Assembly Debates: The Question of Citizenship**

In official terminology, an Indian citizen was defined as “every person residing in India who is born of Indian parents or naturalized under the law of naturalization.” This definition was challenged on the ground that it makes the idea of ‘Indian citizenship’ quite open-ended and cheap. Domicile in the Indian territory was put forth as a prerequisite for Indian citizenship; every person, whoever is domiciled in this territory of India, it was claimed shall be entitled to be called a citizen of India.

Merely, birth within the Indian territory or being born to Indian parents does not represent the ‘domicile status’ and thus cannot be defined as citizenship. ‘Domicile’ status is conferred upon those persons who have stayed or has been an ordinary resident for at least 5 years in the Indian territory. As far as migrants are concerned, it was discussed that they will be required to declare their intention of permanent stay within India, which will grant them their domicile status. However, this clause was relaxed in the case of migrants from Pakistan as they were claimed to be natural citizens of India, mandated by the Government of India Act, 1935. Though suspicion was cast upon migrants from Pakistan, especially on the grounds of religion; such apprehensions were removed with counter-arguments. It was asserted by some prominent members that Indian citizenship is not cheap and easy, as institutional procedures were in place – application for citizenship, residence in India for six months and an evaluation mechanism by local authorities to grant citizenship rights. It was also agreed upon by all the members that there is no connection between property rights and citizenship.

### **Citizens & Political Participation**

The qualifications for registering voters as a part of an electoral constituency were that the person must have resided in that constituency for a period of not less than 180 days and if a person has migrated into another province on account of disturbances or fear of disturbances he can be included in the electoral roll of the new constituency if he files a declaration of his intention to reside permanently (domicile).

Objections were raised to these qualifications, especially on the second one and also whether 180 days should really be considered as a measure of domicile.

But, it was argued that some sort of declaration is necessary for migrants, as enrolling a person without his intention of permanent residence would prove to be futile. With further discussion on the issue of domicile it was agreed upon that the domicile clause would be relaxed for refugees residing in refugee camps, and not for other migrants. In addition to this, it was also agreed upon that for migrants the declaration process rather than becoming cumbersome, would be made as facilitative as possible with the cancellation of stamp duty of registration and oral declarations in case of illiterate persons.

### **Constitutional and Legal Provisions relating to the registration of voters and management of elections in India**

The constitution of India has vested several powers on the Election Commission of India to carry out the management of all elections to Parliament and state legislatures smoothly. According to article 324(1) of the constitution, the election commission has been vested with the power of superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for all elections to Parliament and State Legislatures. The Article 325 says the ECI should prepare one general electoral roll for every territorial constitution and no person shall be ineligible based on the grounds only of religion, race, caste or sex. The Article 326 says no person above the age of 18 years shall be ineligible to be registered as a voter based on the grounds of non-residence, unsoundness of mind, crime or corrupt of illegal practice. PRA 1951 says to register as a voter; a citizen should be ordinarily resident of a constituency. The section 20 of the PRA, 1951 says mere ownership or possession of a building or immovable property in a constituency cannot be treated as ordinarily resident until and unless he uses it for sleeping. On the other hand, even persons living in sheds and persons living on pavements without any roof are eligible for enrollment provided they are ordinarily resident in the sheds or on pavements in a particular area, do not change the place of residence and are otherwise identifiable. (Source: Handbook for Electoral Registration Officers, Election Commission of India, 2008, pp 14-15.)

However the RPA also contains a number of exemptions to the personnel belonging to the armed forces para military, armed police forces serving outside and officials posted on foreign mission for the term “ordinarily resident” who despite being physically present in their ordinary resident are allowed to vote. The Representation of People (Amendment Bill) 2006 expanded definition of “ordinarily resident” to

include citizens who are away from their residence for employment, education or any other purpose, and enable them to vote and stand for elections. The last Representation of People (Amendment) Bill 2010 permits registration in electoral rolls without defining as such has extended the benefit of registration to the NRIs. Therefore, internal migrants/domestic migrant's especially seasonal or temporary migrants can be allowed to be registered for voting at the location/habitat away from 'ordinary place of residence' and given a postal vote in their constituency.

### **ECI's past initiatives**

In the 1996 Lok Sabha Elections, a new concept of elections by means of postal ballots was introduced for those voters of Jammu & Kashmir who had migrated from their homes in the Kashmir valley and were residing in transit camps in Jammu, Delhi & elsewhere. This initiative was introduced with a special amendment to the law. This was also repeated for the 1998 and 1999 elections, in which special postal ballots were set up in Delhi along with five gazetted officers at these locations for necessary certification of identity documents.

In the 1999 elections, special arrangements were made for Reang voters registered in Mizoram but living temporarily in camps in Tripura due to ethnic problems. In this case, special polling stations were set up on the Tripura-Mizoram border areas.

In the 2014 General elections, the EC made special arrangements for Talwara migrants to vote after a gap of 16 yrs. Polling booths were specially erected for the migrants at the villages from where the migrants had migrated more than a decade and half ago.



### 4.3 Conclusion

Though the Constitution of India does not restrict free mobility within the country, it is obvious from the analysis presented in the preliminary research report that domestic migrants or internal migrants, in the absence of proofs of identity and residence, are unable to claim social protection entitlements and also remain excluded from voting rights. In other words, the domestic migrants, especially irregular ones have not yet realized the full potential of their 'right to migrate' within constitutional provisions. As is clear in the preceding discussion that migrant workers, especially seasonal/ temporary are usually travelling around the country looking for work, they cannot vote from their home state due to the restrictive application of the term 'ordinarily resident' contained in the Section 20 of the RPA Under the current law, migrant labour will have to travel back to their homes without paid leave or any sort of incentive, just to vote. They are not only the most disadvantaged group; they are also the most under represented.

The RPA contains a number of exemptions to the term “ordinarily resident”. There are various categories of voters who may not be physically present (armed forces, para-military forces, armed police force serving outside and officials posted on foreign missions, election duties and NRIs) in their 'ordinary residence' but are allowed to vote away from their constituency' in which they are registered. Thus, the government of India and Election Commission of India need to urgently generate reliable data on the numerous barriers/obstacles/disincentives internal/domestic migrants face in accessing voting rights away from their place of residence and also convene a national consultation with political parties to consider the proposal of amending Section 20(A) of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act of 2010 to remove an unreasonable restriction imposed by requiring internal/domestic migrants/ electors to be physically present in their constituencies to cast their votes.

In other words, the Election Commission of India and political parties may consider treating “ordinarily resident” as multi-local identity for domestic/internal migrants. Since domestic migration is a complex phenomenon, central ministries, state departments, key destination states and lead source states for inclusion of migrants in elections and society need multiple synergized policy interventions. Also, as discussed in the preceding chapters, the national consultation should debate the suitability of multiple voting mechanisms like postal, proxy absentee, early and e-voting present in countries like Australia, USA etc. for facilitating electoral participation of domestic migrants. ECI might consider conducting a

few pilot studies drawing from international experiences and its own past initiatives. The following long-term strategies may be outlined to ensure better inclusion of internal/domestic migrants in Indian society:

- Identification of short-term/seasonal migrants, especially among poor and disadvantaged construction workers, brick kiln workers, auto drivers, rickshaw pullers, sex workers, private security guards, household help, cab drivers, dabbawalas, presswalas, courier workers, beauty-parlor workers, plantation workers etc.
- To ensure a better deal for the migrant workers, the Contract Labour and The Inter-state Migrant Workmen (regulation Of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 needs serious reconsideration for effective implementation and amendments should be carried out in the act from the gender justice perspective as well.
- A particularly vulnerable group of domestic migrants - whose lives are often not captured in the official statistics are girls and women who are exposed to the danger of sexual harassment and violence and often remain invisible when it comes to voting for domestic migrants. Thus, a gender-centric migratory approach needs to be developed for their safe and secure partition in elections away from their usual place of residence.
- Though the new scheme of biometric identification called Aadhar is not well suited to seasonal labour migrants, as it is associated with a specific residential location, a pro-active implementation of merger of voter ID and Unique ID (Aadhar) for developing portability of voting rights with benefits in all government social protection schemes and public services;
- Election Commission of India setting up common single point one-time voluntary registration system in the place of destination for domestic migrants;
- Providing electoral support services for migrants at the source and destination areas and increasing representation of migrants in decision-making processes;
- Election Commission of India raising awareness about voter's rights among domestic migrants through special campaign of Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP).
- Helpline for domestic migrants in their place of destination staffed by people speaking different languages.
- Enlisting the support of civil society organizations and Non-governmental organizations in ensuring domestic migrants' participation in elections.

## Challenges

We recognize the complex and multidimensional nature of domestic migration and emphasize a proactive approach towards facilitating political inclusion of domestic migrants. However, we also need to consider political and governance challenges that domestic migrants present to the policy makers, political parties, communities, and governments. In other words, we suggest that specific nature of spatial mobility and patterns of spatial flows of people could alter the existing political and electoral relations between the state and citizens. Thus, the government of India and the Election Commission of India along with the political parties need to consider following challenges and controversies in extending voting rights to domestic/internal migrants away from their usual place of residence (UPR):

- Do domestic migrants generate democratic deficit in their place of destination due to their continued nativist sub-national affiliation and primordial attachments to their place of origin? Does political participation of domestic migrants away from their usual place of residence exacerbate or moderate sub-nationalistic/communitarian impulses? In other words, extending voting rights to domestic migrants away from their place of usual residence has the potential of disturbing inter-communal relations, fanning prejudice, bias, and hatred leading to xenophobic violence against the domestic migrants especially poor and disadvantaged migrants. Already Assam, Manipur and several places in North East are engulfed in violent clashes between locals/natives and so-called illegal migrants or foreigners. Thus, it is important to assess the implications of spatial mobility of people for voter turnout in democratic elections and inter-communal relations.
- Domestic migrants often find themselves in economic and political competition for income, employment and habitat with local populations. In a multi-ethnic society like India, migration has more destabilizing effects and tends to arouse ethnic conflict over 'protection of space' and limited economic opportunities (Weiner, 1978). Thus, for politicians and political parties domestic migrants remain a controversial subject as it opens up a Pandora's –box of dire- political consequences for political parties in mobilizing and managing their constituency services. Micro-studies on domestic migrations suggest that while political parties in Delhi accept every new entrant or migrant in its folds, in Mumbai some politicians and political parties often resort to the discourse of 'outsider' in order to gain political advantage for the so-called 'sons of the soil'. In short, the registration of internal migrants for voting away from their native place has the potential of creating permanent fault-lines between the natives/permanent residents and domiciled or short-term domestic migrants.

- Given the fragile nature of the spirit of national integration in various parts of the country, extending voting rights to domestic migrants also needs to be examined in view of constitutional duties mentioned in the Article 51 A (e) that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to “promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities.”
- Domestic migration is quite a complex phenomenon involving low-skilled labour migration, high-skilled labour migration, irregular migration, short-term migration, internally displaced persons, human trafficking and smuggling, etc. Thus, protection of rights of domestic migrants across states/districts presents an administrative and logistical nightmare and will require envisaging a new 'migration governance framework' for multi-level cooperative federalism in India. Thus, it is important to identify key institutional, legal, and administrative and policy challenges in mitigating electoral disability for domestic migrants especially in the states of India.
- Though section 17 & 18 of the Representation of People Act (1951) says that “No person shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for more than one constituency and no person shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for any constituency more than once”, micro-studies and observations on domestic migrations present the evidence that many domestic migrants have made multiple voter IDs in both their place of origin and also place of destination. This raises the possibility of electoral identity frauds and related electoral malpractices. Thus, it is important that an e-technology enabled system of de-duplication for national voter ID database needs to be created.

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## Expert Consultation

- R.B. Bhagat, Professor and Head, Department of Migration & Urban Studies, International Institute of Population Studies (IIPS) - [http://iipsindia.org/faculty\\_d\\_02.htm](http://iipsindia.org/faculty_d_02.htm)
- Ellora Puri, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Jammu - [http://www.lokniti.org/people\\_lokniti\\_Ellora\\_Puri.php](http://www.lokniti.org/people_lokniti_Ellora_Puri.php)

## Annexure A – Highlights from the NSSO data

Table A.1: Comparison of NSSO reports

	49 <sup>th</sup> Round	55 <sup>th</sup> Round	64 <sup>th</sup> Round
Rural/Urban	Urban migration rate higher than rural migration rates Rural-22.74% Urban-30.65%	Urban migration rate higher than rural migration rates Rural-24.4% Urban-33.4%	Urban migration rate higher than rural migration rates Rural-26% Urban-35%
Gender	Migration rate among females higher than males	Migration rate among females higher than males	Migration rate among females higher than males
Caste	All caste groups tend to migrate to urban areas	Higher Migration rate among 'Others' (upper castes)	Higher Migration rate among 'Others' (upper castes)
MPCE	Migration rate is higher for the higher MPCE classes/ groups/ deciles.	Migration rate is higher for the higher MPCE classes/ groups/ deciles.	Migration rate is higher for the higher MPCE classes/ groups/ deciles.
Patterns of Migration	Urban-Urban is dominant	Rural-Rural is dominant	Rural-Rural is dominant
Nature of Movement	Rural, Intra-state, Intra-district dominant	Rural, Intra-state, intra-district dominant	Rural, Intra-state, intra-district dominant (except for urban areas)
Reasons for Migration	Males-Movement of Parents/Earning members & Females-Marriage is dominant	Males-Employment related factors & Females-Marriage is dominant	Males-Employment related reasons & Females-Marriage is dominant

Table A.2: Reasons for Migration (Migrants per 1000 Persons)

Reason for Migration	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
49 <sup>th</sup> Round				
Employment Related Reasons	477	83	415	49
Marriage	23	616	9	317
Movements of Parents/Earning Members	208	237	283	495
55 <sup>th</sup> Round				
Employment Related Reasons	303	10	519	30
Marriage	94	888	16	585
Movements of Parents/Earning Members	260	63	270	310
64 <sup>th</sup> Round				
Employment Related Reasons	286	7	557	27
Marriage	94	912	14	608
Movements of Parents/Earning Members	221	44	252	294

- In the 49<sup>th</sup> Round, In case of rural population the share of migrants is 22.74% whereas the corresponding share in urban population is 30.65%. In rural India, male migrants constitute 14.60% and female migrants 85.40%, whereas in urban India, male migrants constitute 41.12% and female migrants 58.88%. Among male migrants in the country, 44.90% are in rural India and 55.10% in urban India, whereas the corresponding distribution for female migrants is 77.94%. Male migrants in urban India have out-numbered their rural counterparts, whereas in the case of female migrants the trend is opposite.
- In the 55<sup>th</sup> Round, that the migration rate in rural areas (24.4) was substantially lower than the migration rate in urban areas (33.4%). In the rural areas nearly 43 per cent of the females were migrants while the male migration rate was only 7 per cent, and in the urban areas, the male migration was nearly 26 per cent compared to female migration rate of 42 per cent. Among females, about 43 per

cent in rural areas and about 42 per cent in urban areas were migrants whereas only about 7 per cent of rural males and about 26 per cent of urban males reported themselves as migrants. THE Low migration rate among rural males indicates that males neither from rural areas nor from urban areas have the tendency to migrate to rural areas.

- The 64<sup>th</sup> Round reveals that the migration rate in rural areas (26%) was substantially lower than the migration rate in urban areas (35%). In the rural areas nearly 48 per cent of the females were migrants while the male migration rate was only 5 per cent, and in the urban areas, the male migration was nearly 26 per cent compared to female migration rate of 46 per cent.

### **Caste**

- The 49<sup>th</sup> Round NSS reveals that across caste group the rate of migration is higher for urban population than the rural proportion. This simply shows that the tendency to migrate to urban India is stronger than the tendency to migrate to rural India across social groups.
- For the 55<sup>th</sup> Round, It can be observed that The proportion of migrants to the total population of the social group was the highest for the social group 'other' i.e. Upper castes, both in rural and urban areas compared to SCs, STs and other backward classes(OBCs).
- In the 64<sup>th</sup> Round, it can be noted that the migration was lowest among the scheduled tribes and was highest in the others category. In urban areas, the migration was lowest among other backward classes (OBCs) and highest in the others category. There were significant gender differences as well. In rural areas, male and female migration rates was lowest among the STs; highest among the others category. In urban areas, male migration was lowest among other backward classes (OBCs) and highest among ST and others. On the other hand, female migration was lowest among the ST and highest among others category.

### **MPCE/Class**

In all the three NSS Rounds, migration rate is higher for the higher MPCE classes/groups/deciles.

- In the 49<sup>th</sup> round, majority of migrants belong to upper half of MPCE groups but also the rate of migration is in general higher for this section in all cases including gender and locality. The highest MPCE class (Above Rs.385 in rural areas & above Rs.700 in urban areas) has the highest migration rate.
- In the 55<sup>th</sup> Round, it can be observed that in rural India as a whole, while about 24 per cent of the population were migrants, as high as 39 per cent of the persons belonging to the highest MPCE class (i.e. Rs. 950 & above) reported themselves as migrants. In urban India, whereas the percentage of migrants for the highest MPCE class (Rs. 1925 & above) was 46, it was 33 as a whole. Within higher MPCE Classes, migration rate was higher among men than women.
- In the 64<sup>th</sup> Round, the rate of migration was observed to be the lowest for the bottom MPCE decile class in both rural and urban areas and the rate of migration increases with an enhancement in the standard of living; the migration rate attains a peak in the top decile class.

#### **Nature of Movement (Urban/Rural; Inter-district/Intra-district; Inter-State/Intra-State)**

According to these characteristics, the following points can be observed:

- NSS 49<sup>th</sup> Round reveals that 81.26% migrants came from rural areas and 17.71% hail from urban areas. While within rural areas, 90.05% migrants come from rural India and only 9.05% from urban India, whereas in urban areas the contribution from rural India is 61.11% and that of urban India is 37.58%.
- In rural areas, nearly 93.5% of migrants migrated within the same state and 5.5% came from other states. From the same state, 74% migrated within the same district while 19% came from other districts within the same state. On the other hand, in urban areas, 76% of migrants were from the state while 22% came from other states of India. Within the same state, 42% were from the same district and 34% came from other districts.
- In the 55<sup>th</sup> NSS Round, in rural areas 90% of the migrants came from rural areas and 9% from urban areas. On the other hand, in urban areas 58.6% came from rural areas and 40.2% from urban areas.

- Among migrants in rural areas, 93% of migrants migrated within the same state and only 6% came from other states. Within the same state, 72% of the migrants migrated from the same district while, 21% migrated from other districts. Among migrants in urban areas, 79% of the migrants migrated from the same state while 20% came from other states of India. Within the same state, 40% came from the same district while 39% came from other districts.
- In the 64<sup>th</sup> NSS Round, among the migrants in the rural areas, nearly 91 per cent migrated from the rural areas and 8 per cent had migrated from the urban areas, whereas among the migrants in the urban areas, nearly 59 per cent migrated from the rural areas and 40 per cent migrated from urban areas.
- Among migrants in rural areas, 94% of migrants migrated within the state and 5.5% came from outside the state. Within the same state, 70% of the migrants were from the same district while 24% came from other districts. Among migrants in urban areas, 75% of the migrants were from within the state and 24% were from other states. Within the same state, 36% of the migrants were from the same district and 39.5% came from other districts.

### **Patterns of Migration**

Four types of migration patterns are categorized as: rural-urban, urban-rural, rural-rural & urban-urban.

On that basis, the following points were noted:

- In the 49<sup>th</sup> Round, The Rate of Migration is highest for urban-urban stream and lowest from rural to rural. However, the differences between urban to rural, rural to rural & rural to urban are not significant.
- The 55<sup>th</sup> Round, points out that rural-rural migration is the most dominant accounting for 62% of all the total internal migrants. Migration to urban areas has increased from both rural and urban areas over the other two patterns of migration. However, urban to urban migration is higher in number than rural-urban migration.
- 64<sup>th</sup> Round, in the 64<sup>th</sup> round, rural-rural migration was the most dominant, accounting for 62% of the total internal migrants, followed by rural-urban migration stream which accounted for 20% of the total migrants. The share of urban-to-urban migration stream stood at 13 per cent, while urban-to-rural

migration stream shared merely 6 per cent of total internal migrants. However, the pattern displayed by male migrants is distinct from that of female migrants. For male migrants, rural-to-urban migration stream was the most dominant one which shared nearly 39 per cent of total male internal migrants, while for female rural-to-rural migration stream shared nearly 70 per cent of the total internal female migrants.

- Some changes, in the shares of the migrations streams for male migrants have been observed in 2007-08 compared to that in 1999-2000. It may be seen that the shares of rural-to rural migration for males has decreased and the shares of rural-to-urban migration has increased in 2007-08 from those of 1999-2000. In NSS 64th round, the share of rural-to-rural migration for males has decreased by nearly 5 percentage points from 32 per cent in 1999-2000 and the shares of rural-to-urban migration has increased by nearly 5 percentage points in 2007-08 from 34 per cent in 1999-2000.

### **Reasons for Migration**

As far as reasons for migration is concerned, the following observations have been made:-

- According to 49<sup>th</sup> Round, Leading reason for migration of male migrants is 'movement of parents/earning members' in both the sectors of rural and urban. On the average, the next most important reason is 'search of better employment' in both the sectors. In case of female migrants, movements in both the sectors are mainly due to the reasons 'movement of parents/earning members' and 'marriage'. In rural India, the latter has considerable lead over the former, whereas in urban India there is close contest between the two reasons.
- In the 55<sup>th</sup> Round, among the male migrants, 30 per cent in rural areas and 52 per cent in urban areas migrated due to the reasons relating to employment while among the female migrants, the corresponding proportions were only 1 per cent in rural areas and 3 per cent in urban areas. However, among the rural males, the percentage of migrants due to this reason was almost the same over the different periods of migration, but among the urban males, it decreased with decrease in time elapsed since migration. In case of rural females, migration occurred mainly due to marriage (about 89 per cent) ,whereas for urban females, the two main reasons for migration were 'marriage' (59 per cent) and Movements of parents/earning members (31 per cent)



- In the 64<sup>th</sup> Round, for females in both rural and urban areas, the reason for the bulk of the migrants was marriage: for 91 per cent of rural female migrants and 61 per cent of the urban female migrants the reason was marriage. For urban females, migration of parent/earning member of the family, was the next major reason for migration after marriage, accounting for nearly 29 per cent of total urban female migrants. The reason for migration for the male migrant, on the other hand, was dominated by employment related reasons, in both the rural and urban areas. Nearly 29 per cent of rural male migrants and 56 per cent of urban male migrants had migrated due to employment related reasons. The migration of parent/earning member of the family also significantly induced male migration in both the rural and urban areas: for, nearly 22 per cent of rural male migrants and 25 per cent of urban male migrants, migration of parent/earning member of the family was the reason for migration.
- Over the three NSS surveys, it can be observed that for female migrants the marriage as a reason to migrate has increased substantially over the three surveys with a decline in the reason for parents/earning members migrating. Females migrating due to marriage has increased from 62%, to 89% to 91% in the 49<sup>th</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup> & 64<sup>th</sup> rounds respectively. The reduction of the share of employment related reasons in total female migration is also visible during this three NSS rounds. In case of male migrants of rural and urban areas the reasons for migration obtained during the three NSS Surveys has shown distinct characteristics. It revealed the reduced importance of employment related reasons for rural male migration and increasing importance of employment related reasons for urban male migrants. The share of employment related reasons in total rural male migration had reduced from 48 per cent estimated in NSS49th round to 30 per cent in NSS 55th round which further dropped to 29 per cent in NSS 64thround, while for urban male migrants the trend reversed, with the share of employment related reasons increased from 42 per cent in NSS 49th round to 52 per cent in NSS 55th round which further increased to 56 per cent in NSS 64th round.

### Out-migrants<sup>3</sup>

Points of Comparison	49 <sup>th</sup> round (1993)	64 <sup>th</sup> Round (2007-08)
Rate of Migration	Males: 17% from rural India 8% from urban India Females: 2% from rural India and 1% from urban India	Males: 9% from rural India and 5% from urban India Females: 17% from rural India And 11 % from urban India
Reason for Out-migration	Males: Predominantly employment related in both rural and urban India Females: Movement of Parents/ Earning Members	Males: Predominantly employment related in both rural and urban India Females: Predominantly marriage
MPCE	Rural India: rate of outmigration is highest for the lowest MPCE class Urban India: rate of outmigration is highest for the highest MPCE class	Rural India: outmigration increases with increase in MPCE Urban India: Outmigration does not vary significantly with MPCE.

With the help of the two NSSO rounds, certain discernible patterns can be highlighted. Firstly, the rate of out-migration from rural India has remained higher than that from urban India. While the findings of the 49<sup>th</sup> round of the NSSO show that outmigration for males is higher than that for females, the 64<sup>th</sup> round of the NSSO shows that the situation is completely the opposite. The rate of out-migration for females is much higher than that for males in both urban and rural India. Secondly, the predominant reason for out-migration among males in both sectors has remained unchanged. Outmigration among males has been mainly employment-related. However, the predominant reason for females out-migrating has changed from movement of parents/ earning members to marriage across the rural-urban divide. Thirdly, the rate of outmigration in rural India shows a positive association with MPCE, a finding which is somewhat at odds with the finding of the earlier survey, in which the rate of outmigration was the

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<sup>3</sup> Any former member of a household who left the household, any time in the past, for stay outside the village/ town was considered as out-migrant provided he/ she was alive on the date of survey.

highest for the lowest MPCE class. For urban India, the rate of outmigration did not vary significantly with MPCE.

### **Return Migrants<sup>4</sup>**

According to the 49<sup>th</sup> NSS Round, the proportion of return migrants in rural India is 6.6% and the corresponding proportion in urban India is 5.4%. In case of rural male, this proportion is very high (19.7 %) in comparison to the corresponding proportion among rural female (4.3 %), while urban male it is 6.1% and for urban female it is 4.9%. Thus, the proportion of return migrants among females in both the sector is invariably less than the corresponding proportion among males

In rural India 46.9% return migrants come from the same district, 83.5% from the same state, and 15%. In urban India return-migrants, 39.5% return migrants comes from the same district, 76. %3 from the same state, 21.2% from other states. Thus, in rural India, 83.5% return-migrants are from the same state and in urban India the corresponding figure is 76.3%. Like migrants, return-migrants are also mainly from the same state. At an all India level, rural to urban return-migrants account for 44.8% of urban return-migrants, whereas 39.9% of rural return-migrants are accounted by urban to rural return migration.

### **Summary of NSS Reports (49<sup>th</sup> Round, 55<sup>th</sup> Round & 64<sup>th</sup> Round)**

#### **Migrant Households<sup>5</sup>**

Both the NSSO reports (49<sup>th</sup> round & 64<sup>th</sup> Round) document information on migrant households. In the 49<sup>th</sup> Round, in rural India, 1.1% households belong to migrant category, whereas the corresponding figure for urban India is 2.2%. In the 64<sup>th</sup> Round, 1.3 % households were reported as migrant in rural areas and 3.3% households in urban areas. Certain characteristics of migrant households have been noted as follows:-

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4 Migrants who return back to their earlier usual place of residence is termed as return migration. In NSS 64th round, the phenomenon of return migration was captured through a question, whether the place of enumeration was usual place of residence (UPR) any time in the past.

5 The households all whose members had moved to the place of enumeration in one go during the last 365 days were considered as migrant households. These apart, those households, whose members had moved to the place of enumeration in a phased manner but started and completed their journeys during the reference period were also considered as Migrant households.

## **Caste**

When migrants households are disaggregated by caste, both the NSS rounds reveal that Scheduled tribe households were reported to have a higher migration rate in both rural and urban settings than households in other social categories. However, it may be noted that the proportion of migrant household among ST in rural areas decreased from 3 per cent in 1993 to 2 per cent in 64th round. But it increased from 2.9% to 6.2% in urban areas. (Refer to Table1).

## **Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE)<sup>6</sup>**

The survey for both the rounds shows that the migration rate in both urban and rural areas, is higher for households belonging to the upper MPCE classes or MPCE decile classes. In 1993-94, 4.9% of the households in urban areas and 3.6% of the migrant households in rural areas were from the upper MPCE class. In 2007-08, 6.2% of the migrant households in urban areas were from the top decile class and 3.4% of the migrant households in rural areas were from the top decile class (Highest migration rate in both the rounds).

## **Pattern of Migration**

Migrant households were disaggregated on the basis of last usual place of residence. Both the NSSO Surveys point to the fact that migrations of households in India are confined within the states. In 1993-94, 85.5% of households migrated within rural areas and 77.5% within urban areas. Similarly, in 2007-08, 78% of households migrated within rural areas and 72% in urban areas.

Within states, in 1993-94, it is observed that within district movement accounts for 40.9% of the total migrant households in the urban India and 50.6% in the rural India. Movement from other districts of the state accounts for 36.6% of the total migrant households in urban India & 34.9% in rural India.

In both the rounds, the migration of households in both the rural and urban areas was dominated by the migration of households from rural areas. In 1993-94, in urban India, 51.32% of the migrant households comes from rural India and 47.12% from other parts of urban India. In rural India, the share of other parts of rural India is 60.42% and that of urban India is 37.68%. While in 2007-08, it may be seen that of all

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<sup>6</sup> 49<sup>th</sup> Round has categorised MPCE classes into Lower (MPCE < Rs.385 in urban area & < Rs 215 in rural area, Middle (MPCE between Rs.385 to Rs.700 in urban area & Rs.215 to Rs.385 in rural area) & Higher (rest of MPCE class); while the 64<sup>th</sup> Round divides the households into ten parts/decile classes based on MPCE.

the migrant households in the rural areas, nearly 70 per cent had migrated from rural areas and 29 per cent migrated from urban areas and of all the migrant households in urban areas nearly 57 per cent had migrated from rural areas and 43 per cent had migrated from urban areas.

### **Reasons for Migration**

Employment related reasons were the dominant factor inducing households to migrate. However, in the 49<sup>th</sup> Round, employment-related reasons account for 67.5% of the household migration to rural India & 60.2% to urban India. Another important reason of migration of households was 'Study' which accounts for 10.6% of the household migration to rural India and 24.6% of the household migration to urban India. While, in the 64<sup>th</sup> Round, in urban areas, for nearly 67 per cent of migrant households and for 55% migrant households in rural areas, the reason for migration was employment related factors. It was observed that studies were cited as the reason for migration by nearly 27 per cent of rural migrant household and 21 per cent of urban migrant households.

### **Migrants<sup>7</sup>**

In 1993-94, migrants accounted for 24.68 % (49th Round) of the Indian population. It increased to 27% in 1999-2000 (55<sup>th</sup> Round) and then as per the latest estimate (64<sup>th</sup> Round) it is 29%.

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<sup>7</sup> Migrants have been defined as those, for whom the last usual place of residence (UPR) is different from the present place of enumeration. In this survey, usual place of residence (UPR) of a person was defined as a place (village/town) where the person had stayed continuously for a period of six months or more.

## Annexure B – Summary of State EC Reports

### **Assam**

The state EC report points out that no inter-state migrant workers are registered within the boundaries of the state. But intra-state migrants prefer to enroll as voters in their native village or district and return back to exercise their franchise.

### **Delhi**

The EC report notes that the number of net migrants (difference between in-migrants & out-migrants) has steadily increased from 6.34 lakh during 1961-71 to 17.64 lakh during 1999-2001. However, in relative terms, the contribution of migration to the net increase in population of NCT-Delhi has reduced. Out of the total migrants in NCT Delhi, 33% migrated from rural areas and 67% from urban areas. Of the total migrants from urban areas, 37.26% are main & marginal workers while the remainder are non-workers. Out of the total migrants from rural areas, 45.57% are main and marginal workers while the remaining are non-workers.

The report states that in-migrants to Delhi-NCT (National Capital Territory) largely hail from U.P. (45.16%) followed by Bihar (19.09%). During 1999-2001(2001 census) in-migration to the National Capital Territory of Delhi was 2172760,610107 from urban areas and 14,92,802 from rural areas. Migration to the rest of NCR including inter-district migration within rest of NCR is 2,44,55,154; 6,49,606 from urban areas and 18,05,548 from rural areas. In migration to rest of NCR excluding inter-district migration is 10,94,288; 2,71,121 from urban areas and 7,86,788 from rural areas.

It has been found that out of the 20 districts from which Delhi receives a significant chunk of its migrants, 11 of them are the ones in lying within a periphery of 100-200kms. In fact, the maximum flow of migrants to Delhi is from the neighboring districts of Ghaziabad, Bulandshahar, Meerut, Rohtak and Sonipat. Likewise, for inter-state migration, maximum migrants in Delhi & NCR hail from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan & Punjab, in a descending order.

As far as the reasons for migrating to Delhi-NCR is concerned, employment, family movement, marriage, education and business account for 37.65%, 36.78%, 13.8%, 2.68% and 0.54% of the migrants

respectively. Over time migration for education and persons moved with household has increased while for marriage it has decreased. Disaggregating by gender, the predominant reason among males is found to be employment while for females it is movement of family and marriage. The Report based on a study has forecasted that by 2021 the estimated number of migrants in NCTD would be 244.85 lakhs with a decadal population growth rate of 32.7%.

## **Gujarat**

The Gujarat State EC Report states that there is significant in & out migration among the tribal population from the tribal-dominated districts of Panchmahal and Dahod. Apart from these, the districts of Surat, Vapi, Valsad & Ahmedabad receive a huge inflow of migrants from Saurashtra and the tribal districts. The state has undertaken several initiatives such as SPEEV to address the gap in electoral registration and turnout caused by migration. The initiatives include the appointment of a nodal officer for migrants in every district who would work in close coordination with labour contractors and employers to ensure that both in-migrants and out-migrants are registered in their respective districts. A unique coordination system was developed wherein the nodal officers of source point of migrants coordinated with the nodal officers at destination points. Occasions like festivals have been utilised by volunteers to track down in & out migrants. These officers have systematically identified specific industries which receive a large inflow of migrants. For increasing electoral turnouts, migrant workers are granted a paid holiday so that they are motivated to vote. Besides these awareness programs have been conducted to educate migrant labourers on enrollment, registration, voting and the entire electoral process.

## **Haryana**

The EC report points out that there is lack of information about the quantum of migrants. However, as per the Census Report 2011, the total number of migrant workers was 15,10,526 whose stay period has been 3-6 months, mainly referred to as marginal workers. They are usually employed in the mining and poultry sectors. The report also provides statistics on marginal workers. In 2011, the number of marginal workers is found to be 19,01,225 compared to 2,03,795 in 2001. Out of which 15,67,307 are in rural areas and 3,33,918 are in urban areas (2001 Census). The largest numbers of migrants are found in the district of Bhiwani (1,77,331) followed by Jind (1,37,571), Mahendragarh etc. The number of male marginal workers has been found to be 9,46,036 and the number of female marginal workers was

9,55,189. The EC reports to have organized special camps for enrolment of migrant laborers in the electoral rolls.

### **Kerala**

Kerala has reported 49,021 domestic migrant labourers as of Feb, 2015 (Ministry of Labour & Rehabilitation, Govt. of Kerala) with the largest flow of migrants coming from West Bengal (22,191) followed by Assam (5244) etc. This workforce consists mainly of single males aged between 18 to 35 years and is quite mobile within the state. While 60% of them work in the construction sector, numerous others are also employed in the hospitality, manufacturing, trade and agricultural sectors. Another estimate puts the figure of domestic migrant labourers at 25 lakhs with an annual arrival rate of 2.35 lakhs. The study also reports that all domestic migrant labourers possess some kind of identification proof, only 5% are reported to not possess any ID card. Further, 83% of domestic migrant labourers possess Voter ID Card. The EC report also points out that few of them get registered in the state electoral list as most of these migrants prefer to preserve their regional identities and secondly, due to reservations expressed by Kerala's political parties. However, the state EC is facing problems even with the small number that have opted to register. The reasons can be attributed to the frequent movement of domestic migrants (intra-state & intra-district) in search of higher wages and working conditions, unavailability of documents to prove nationality, age, illiteracy and lack of awareness regarding election procedures.

### **Madhya Pradesh**

In Madhya Pradesh, a large percentage of migration occurs in the tribal districts of Jhabua, Alirajpur, Badwani & Dhar which also face enrolment issues. At an all-India level Madhya Pradesh houses 4.9% of total migrants. The state has undertaken to increase electoral participation of migrants. Special camps are organised in the aforementioned tribal districts. The EC has forged partnerships with NREGA, Health Department, and Women & Children Department personnel to incorporate migrants within the electoral process.



## **Meghalaya**

The total numbers of inter-state migrants in Meghalaya are 16,471. We can see from the table that the East Khasi Hills district contains the highest share of migrants followed by Jaintia Hills, Ri-bhoi etc.

Table: Inter-State Migrant Workers

<i>District</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
East Khasi Hills	7,454
Jaintia Hills	4,718
Ri-Bhoi	3,774
West Khasi Hills	525
West Garo Hills	0
East Garo Hills	0
South Garo Hills	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>16,471</i>

## **Punjab**

Punjab has reported no information on domestic migrants in their state.

## **Tamil Nadu**

The EC report states on the basis of a study conducted by the Department of Labour the number of seasonal migrants has been roughly estimated at 5 lakhs. Also, approximately 10 lakh inter-state migrants are moving into Tamil Nadu. A significant number of migrants are mainly from the states of Orissa (29.3%), Bihar (25.8%), West Bengal (8.5%) & Chhattisgarh (4.7%). The largest numbers of migrants were found in the district of Coimbatore (1,06,226), followed by Kanchipuram (1,06,071), Kris hangiri (75,978) & Madurai (16,695).

Majority of the migrants (96.39%) in the 20 districts of Tamil Nadu lived for a time period of two years. Reason associated with migration was mostly employment related- better wages (72.4%), better living conditions (13.5%), high employment opportunities (11.6%).

### **Telangana & Andhra Pradesh**

The state EC report states that there are 51,259 inter-state migrant workers registered in the state of Telangana. In Andhra Pradesh, the number of migrant workers is reported at 17,949. Out of them 11,161 are unskilled and semi-skilled. These migrants are mostly, employed in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, construction of projects and dams, brick kilns and steel industry, cotton and rice mills, jewelry industry etc. The districts that mainly absorb migrant workers are Karimnagar (17,175) followed by Meadak (10,745), Mahabubnagar (5,700), Nalgonda (5,072) etc. Most of the brick kiln workers are located in the district of Ranariddh with major inflows from the state of Orissa. In case of intra-state migrant workers, they originate from the districts of Ananthapur, Chittoor, Kadapa, Kurnool, Prakasham, and Srikakulam & Vijaynagaram. The number of out-migrants are estimated 2, 25,445 travelling to the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala & Maharashtra.

The EC report points out that a majority of the migrant workers were found to have their registered voter ID cards and they tend to return back to their native places for exercising their franchise. Apart from that many of the migrant workers have been covered under the state's registration process taking advantage of special registration camps and have cast their votes in the state itself (as of May,2014).

### **Uttar Pradesh**

The Uttar Pradesh state EC report reveals that the state has a total of 4,95,381 migrants. The highest numbers of migrants are in the district of Ballia (82,820) followed by G.B. Nagar (70,000), Siddharthnagar (63,836) etc.

The EC report has also recorded information on migrated electors on the basis of BLO (Block Level Officer) surveys. The Constituency of Jaunpur reported the highest number of migrated electors (46,206) followed by Hamirpur (33,131), Saharanpur (29,305) etc.

## Annexure C – Summary of Expert Consultation

The team sought counsel and suggestions from a variety of sources. Out of academics consulted, Prof. R.B Bhagat from the International Institute of Population Studies (IIPS) responded. Suggestions were also sought from think-tanks, out of which Lokniti Network; Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) provided constructive suggestions. NGOs such as Aajeevika Bureau, Sahbhagi Sikshan Trust (Lucknow) were consulted.

Due to space constraints, only a few comments from these sources have been recorded in this report. Professor R.B. Bhagat (See References) highlighted the fact that that many migrants do not have a voter's ID card primarily due to lack of residential proof particularly in metro cities. Also, there are many who despite having a voter's ID card are unable to vote owing to their being away from the constituency. Migration is a very complex process and there are various categories of migrants namely Long Term and Short Term migrants. Short Term migrants are also known as seasonal and temporary migrants and they are more likely to be excluded from the electoral process. People also move from urban to urban areas. Many such migrants although belong to skilled and semi-skilled categories miss their chance to cast their ballots even if they are included in the voters list. Another category is the intra-urban migrants particularly living in metros like Mumbai and others when moved from one ward to another, face problems in voting; Solutions suggested by him include portability of voting rights, online voting; this may require changes in the traditional way of looking at the electoral process and will also require electoral reforms.

Ellora Puri (See References), from the Lokniti Network admits that most political science literature that focuses on Indian elections might have cursorily addressed the question. She stressed on the need to increase awareness within the proper government channels (particularly the EC) regarding the importance of addressing the issue. Other suggestions include:

- Raising awareness within the domestic migrants regarding their right to exercise their franchise in the place they reside.
- Voter education about eligibility requirements and the process of registration (via different types of media, educational institutions, camps, home visits especially in the migrant colonies) and providing this information in the language of the migrants.

## Annexure D - Maps