

# Family Migration in India

## 'Push' or 'Pull' or Both or What?

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In this paper an attempt has been made to provide an account of family migration which is a relatively under-researched phenomenon, in India. The analysis, while suggesting the importance of factors related to both growth theory ("pull") and Third World urbanisation ("push") versions in explaining family migration, also brings out the importance of evolving a framework that incorporates the complex interplay of social, political, environmental and development-related factors for a more comprehensive understanding of family migration in India and in other parts of the developing world.

### 1 Introduction

Family migration appears to have been neglected by both academics and policymakers (M P Shields and G M Sheilds 1993; World Migration Report 2008). Indeed, the World Migration Report (p 151) citing Bailey and Boyle (2004) states, "Family migrations remain under-theorized... and have been relatively neglected by academics and policymakers. In part, this has been due to their conceptualisation as a feminised and dependent form of movement with little relevance for labour force participation." In this connection, an attempt, is made here, in the nature of a first cut at the issue, to fill the gap in research on family migration in India.

A study of family migration also assumes importance as it entails forgoing all benefits arising from social networks created by long years of association with the society in which the family had been living (Shields and Shields 1989). It may take considerable time for a migrant family to get assimilated into the new village/urban society into which it moves. The migrant families, especially long-distance migrant families, live in constant fear of insecurity of life. This feeling of insecurity was reflected in the mass return migration of people from north-eastern states of India from cities such as Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad in mid-August 2012, when rumours which claimed that people from the north-east had been targeted spread through emails and the internet. Moreover, it may be hard for a migrant family to claim equal access to common property resources and infrastructural facilities created by the local administration in the new location. Children of a migrant family are likely to face problems in the process of socialisation. These problems/risks are probably known to the heads of families when they make the decision to migrate. Also, in the case of individual migration, the family is rooted in its original home. The individual has the option of returning to his/her family if the situation is hostile in the new place of residence/work. Such an option here is not easily available to a migrant family because, if not for other reasons, the monetary cost of moving the family as a unit back to the place of origin is expected to be high.

This study attempts to fill the gap in research on family migration in India at the national level. To this end, an attempt is made to: (1) identify the strands of reasoning on migration; (2) delineate, employing hypothetical examples, conditions under which "push", "pull" and both push and pull (henceforth "push-pull") family migration occurs; (3) introduce a data set

This paper is dedicated to S Subramanian, my friend, philosopher, and guide for the last two-and-a-half decades on his 60th birthday. I am certain that but for his guidance and inspiration I would not be what I am today.

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on family migration in India which hitherto has not been exploited; (4) identify the spatial patterns and the relative importance of labour and non-labour market-related family migration in India; and (5) assess the relative importance of push, pull and push-pull migration in India. To this end, the rest of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 discusses the explanatory frameworks on migration. Section 3 identifies the condition under which push, pull and push-pull migration occurs. Section 4 is devoted to a description and a critical assessment of the data sources on family migration in India. The spatial patterns and magnitudes of labour and non-labour market family migration are assessed in Section 5. Section 6 is devoted to an assessment of the relative importance of push, push-pull and pull migration in India. Concluding observations are made in Section 7.

## 2 Strands of Reasoning on Migration

One can deduce two strands of reasoning on migration: one that emerges from economic growth theory and the other that emerges from (1) a bird's eye view of work on Third World urbanisation, and (2) extremely limited empirical studies, which are based on small sample surveys on family migration in India. Growth theories consider two types of mobility of labour and population as inevitable or as a normal process of economic growth (Kuznets 1955; Rostow 1967; Davis 1968). For example, Kuznets (1955: 7), while discussing the growth experiences of developed countries, states, "An invariable accompaniment of growth in developed countries is the shift away from agriculture, a process usually referred to as industrialisation and urbanisation". Such movements are seen to be induced by the prosperity of the recipient sector: industries located in urban centres. Technological innovations improve productivity in the industrial sector and lead to expansion in employment opportunities and an increase in wages in that sector. Simultaneously, mechanisation that takes place in agriculture, which is labour-saving, creates a surplus labour and also improves productivity in that sector. Labour "pushed" out of the agricultural sector due to labour-saving technological transformation gets absorbed in the industrial sector. In the next stage, the increase in prosperity of the industrial and agricultural sectors triggers off the demand for services and consequently the tertiary sector (often located in urban areas) and expands to attract labour from the rural areas. Thus, migration in this scheme is pull or prosperity induced.

Theoretical works on family migration within the neo-classical/human capital framework consider family migration as an investment (Da Vanzo 1976; Sandell 1977; Mincer 1978 and Nivalainen 2004). In this scheme, families decide to make the investment (incur the costs of migration) if and only if the expected returns exceed the costs of such investment. It needs to be noted that in this scheme family migration is induced only by a better earnings potential in destination locations, and hence is pull induced.

McGee (1971), on the other hand, while analysing the Third World urbanisation process, concludes that migration from rural areas in these countries reflects lack of employment

expansion in agriculture. Labour pushed out of rural areas as a result of stagnation in agriculture does not get absorbed in manufacturing industries which are also stagnant, and end up in the tertiary sector. To quote, McGee (1971, [reprinted 1975] p 79), "The inability of the agricultural sector to absorb increasing labour forces this labour into towns, but employment is not available in manufacturing; consequently, it flows into the tertiary sector". In this scheme, the tertiary sector functions as a "residual employer" (see, in this connection, Hauser 1957 and McGee 1971) and the growth of this sector is often associated with growing underemployment and unemployment. Thus, migration, which results in tertiarisation of the urban economy, is push or distress induced, and is hardly the desired form of labour mobility.

The two micro-level studies suggest that family migration from rural areas in India occurs largely as a survival option. The studies by Connell, Dasgupta, Laishley and Lipton (1976) and Roy, Tisdell and Alaudin (1992) had attempted to study the causes of family migration in India. The first study analysed data collected through the Village Studies Programme initiated in the 1950s by establishing Agro-Economic Research Centres throughout the country – on family migration available from five West Bengal villages. The study concluded that the poor agricultural labour households which bear the burden of adjustment for survival in the rural economy largely migrate as a unit (see also Lipton 1980). Roy, Tisdell and Alaudin (1992) report their findings based on interviews conducted in 1990 of 16 migrant families who migrated into the Dattabad slum in Calcutta (now known as Kolkata). Of the 16 families, around 69% were from the rural areas of West Bengal and the rest were from rural Bangladesh. The families, irrespective of their place of origin, had reported deteriorating livelihood conditions in the place of origin as the reason for migrating to the urban slum. Thus, these micro-level studies offer a limited amount of evidence which suggest that family migration is largely push induced movement (induced by a deterioration in living conditions in the place of origin). However, casual empiricism suggests that family migration of the push, pull, and push-pull types occur in India. In what follows, stylised hypothetical examples are provided to delineate the conditions under which different types of family migration are expected to occur.

## 3 Identifying the Conditions of Push, Pull, and Push-Pull Induced Migration

### 3.1 Basic Condition for Family Migration

Theoretical works, as indicated earlier, postulate that migration, whether it is by an individual or by a family, is an investment. The investment is made by a family if and only if the expected returns exceed the costs of such investment. This condition is formally stated (Mincer 1978) in the following equation:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n (R_i - C_i) > 0 \quad \dots (1),$$

where  $n$  stands for the total number of individuals in a family;  $R_i$  stands for the expected returns from migration for individual  $i$ ; and  $C_i$  stands for costs of migration for individual  $i$ . Costs of

migration  $C_i$  include direct costs of mobility (the person's travel cost and the costs of transporting the person's belongings), and the indirect costs (the person's forgone labour market earnings/income and the social benefits).<sup>1</sup> Social benefits from long association with society are, to name a few, easy access to credit from friends and relatives<sup>2</sup> when in distress (say, arising from ill health or failure of the crop), child and elderly care assistance, and access to common property resources.

For easy reference, let me denote:  $\sum_{i=1}^n R_i$  as  $R_p$  returns from migration for the family, and  $\sum_{i=1}^n C_i$  as  $C_j$  the total costs of migration. The basic condition as stated above will be satisfied under vastly different situations which need to be distinguished.

**3.2 Pull, Push and Pull-Push-Induced Family Migration Delineated**

In this subsection, through simple hypothetical examples, it is sought to be demonstrated that family migration could be induced by push, or pull or a combination of push and pull factors. To this end, the following are assumed: (1) there are two locations j and k; (2) location j is more prosperous than location k; (3) survival income required by a family, denoted as  $x_j^*$ , is at Rs 6.50; (4) social costs ( $C_p^s$ ) of migration are assumed to be Rs 3; and (5) the direct costs of moving the family ( $C_p^m$ ) are assumed to be Rs 2. Notice here that costs of family migration,  $C_p$  include  $C_p^s$ ,  $C_p^m$  and the family earnings/income forgone which is equal to the expected earnings (EE) in the place of origin. Aided with these assumptions, the requisite data to infer on the conditions under which the three types of family migration occur are generated and presented in Table 1. Data presented in Table 1 on the net return from migration is calculated as  $R_j - C_j$ ; where  $R_j$  is equal to the expected family earnings in the place of destination, and  $C_j$  is the total cost of family migration. Net return should be positive for families to migrate from a less prosperous to a more prosperous location. It may be added here that the hypothetical examples provided are simple minded and may abstract from complex real world situations. Nevertheless, the examples, in my view, do help to understand the basic conditions under which family migration is distress or push, prosperity or pull, and push-pull induced.

**Table 1: Illustrative Examples of Push, Pull and Push- and Pull-Induced Family Migration**

Scenario	Expected Family Earnings From Place (EE, in Rs)		Direct Costs of Migration ( $C_p^m + C_p^s$ ) (in Rs)	Net Returns from Migration (NR, in Rs)	Type of Migration
	J	K			
I	11	7	5	-1.0	No Migration
II	13	7	5	1	Pull
III	11	4	5	2.0	Push
IV	12.5	5.5	5	2/0	pull and push

Data provided in Table 1 relate to four scenarios (regimes). In Scenario I, considered to be the initial period or initial regime, expected earnings in place k at Rs 7 are lower than earnings in j at Rs 11. But net return from migration ( $R_j - C_j$ ) is less than 0, and hence there will be no family migration from location k to j.

Now let us suppose that in Scenario II, the EE in location j go up to Rs 13, while the earnings in location k remain at Rs 7.

Families may move from place k to j, and such moves satisfy the condition  $R_j - C_j > 0$ . Migration in this regime is *not* resorted to as a survival option (earnings in location k at Rs 7 exceed the survival income required at Rs 6.50), but to improve the earnings potential. This type of migration is pull-induced – attracted only by a better earnings potential in the destination.

Scenario III is constructed on the assumption that earnings in location j remain at the same level at Rs 11 as assumed in Scenario I, but the earnings in location k decline to Rs 4 and are lower than the survival income required at Rs 6.50. Families will certainly move from location k to j, and such moves will satisfy the basic requirement  $R_j - C_j > 0$ . Family migration of the type described in this regime is survival motivated – induced by deterioration in (or very low) earnings potential in the place of origin – and is distress or push induced. It may also be noted that though the net return in this case is positive, net earnings (expected earnings in the destination j at Rs 11 minus only the costs of migration ( $C_j^s + C_j^m = 5$ ) at Rs 6 are still lower than the income required for survival at Rs 6.50. Simply put, in the case of push-induced migration, it is possible that while there is improvement in the living standard of migrant families post-migration, the net family income/earnings in the destination may still be inadequate for survival.

Scenario IV is constructed on the assumption that the earnings in place k decline to Rs 5.50, and are lower than the income required for survival at Rs 6.50. The EE in place j increase to Rs 12.50. Given the cost of migration at Rs 5, it is profitable for a family to migrate from place k to j as  $R_j - C_j > 0$ . Family migration in this regime is induced by both deterioration in (or low) earnings potential in the location of origin and an improvement in (high) earnings potential in the destination location. Such type of migration is push-pull induced.

In all the three regimes, where family migration occurs the condition  $R_j - C_j > 0$  is satisfied. However, the basic conditions motivating families to migrate vary a great deal across scenarios/regimes. Family migration in Scenario II is akin to investment induced by an improvement in earnings potential in the destination location; in Scenario III it is induced by push or distress arising from deterioration in the earnings potential in the place of origin; and, in Scenario IV it is push- and pull-induced arising from deterioration and improvement in earnings potential, respectively, in the location of origin and destination. Theoretical works do not distinguish between the three different types of family migration. There is a case in this context to state the conditions for family migration more comprehensively, so that the family migration of the three types explained above is distinguished for analytical clarity. Analytical clarity is likely to help planners and policymakers devise appropriate policy measures to ensure stability in the distribution of population across space, which would in turn help planners and policymakers in the allocation of scarce resources for the provision of basic amenities across space.

Aided by the numerical example provided in Table 1, an attempt is made to state the conditions for different types of migration. To state the conditions, I resort to the following

notations: expected earnings are denoted as  $EE$ ; Scenario I is assumed to be the base period/scenario which is compared, respectively, with each of the other periods/scenarios. The variables of the base period will not be superscripted. Scenario II to IV are hypothetical alternate periods compared with the initial period, and the variables pertaining to these periods will be superscripted. For example, in each comparison of initial and alternative scenarios  $EE'$  is used to denote expected earnings of an alternate period. Place or location  $j$  will be designated as destination location, and the variables of this location will be subscripted with  $d$ ; location or place  $k$  will be designated as location of origin, and the variables of this location will be subscripted with  $o$ ; net returns from migration ( $R_j - C_j$ ) are designated as  $NR$ .

#### Case I: Pull Migration

Family migration will be considered to be pull induced if the following conditions are satisfied:

$$\begin{aligned} EE_o \leq EE_d, EE_o \leq EE'_o, EE'_o < EE'_d &\& NR > 0; \\ \text{and} & \dots(2) \\ EE'_o, EE'_d, EE'_o, EE'_d \geq x_f^* \end{aligned}$$

In this case migration is induced by sufficiently large increases in expected earnings in destination location, similar to the regime described in Scenario II. Notice here that the family migration is clearly *not* survival motivated:  $EE'_o, EE'_d > x_f^*$ .

#### Case II: Push Migration

Family migration will be considered push induced if the following conditions are satisfied:

$$\begin{aligned} EE_o \leq EE_d, EE_o > EE'_o, EE'_o < EE'_d &\& NR > 0; \\ \text{and} & \dots(3) \\ EE'_d, EE'_d, EE'_o \geq x_f^* \text{ but } EE'_o < x_f^* \end{aligned}$$

In this case, migration is exercised as a survival option. Notice here that the  $EE$  in the location of origin decline (or are very low), similar to the regime described in Scenario III. The decline makes it impossible for the family to earn enough income for survival in the place of origin – the expected earnings  $EE'_o$  are less than  $x_f^*$ . In such a scenario, the family's decision to move is primarily motivated by a search for alternative survival options.

#### Case III: Push-Pull Migration

For push-pull migration the following condition will be satisfied:

$$\begin{aligned} EE_o \leq EE_d, EE_o > EE'_o, EE'_o < EE'_d &\& NR > 0; \\ \text{and} & \dots(4) \\ EE'_o, EE'_d, EE'_d \geq x_f^* \text{ but } EE'_o \leq x_f^* \end{aligned}$$

In this case family migration is both push and pull induced – a decline in (or low) earnings in the location of origin, and an increase in (or high) earnings potential in the destination. Having delineated the basic conditions under which family migration is push, pull and push-pull induced, in the rest of the paper an attempt is made to estimate the magnitude of the three types of family migration in India. As a prelude, in the

next section an attempt is made to provide a critical assessment of data availability on the issue in India.

#### 4 Source of Data: A Critical Assessment

Data on family migration was collected only in the 38th, 49th, 58th and 64th rounds of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) for the years 1983, 1993, 2002 and 2007-08, respectively. Such data were collected as part of: (1) the Employment and Unemployment Survey for 1983 and 2007-08, and (2) the surveys on Household Amenities and Other Characteristics for 1993 and 2002. It needs to be noted that the subject of migration continues to be treated as a secondary subject of the surveys on employment and unemployment and on household amenities and other characteristics. No attempt has been made to conduct a specially designed survey on migration. It is not possible to know from the available data: (1) whether family migration is complete (if the entire family has moved) or partial (if some members are left behind in the original home); (2) the average family earnings per day before and after migration (data required to assess the extent of push-pull migration); (3) whether a reported family move in the survey is return migration or a fresh move, and if the move is return migration, the reasons for the move; (4) the number of times a family has moved in the last one year (which helps to assess the extent of footloose migration); and, (5) the number of moves preceding that reported in the survey (which is data required for assessing the extent of prevalence of step migration). A specially designed migration survey is likely to collect data on the above-mentioned issues.

There appear to be some definitional issues which affect the estimate of family migration in India. The instruction to enumerators on definition of a household reads as: "A group of persons normally living together and taking food from a common kitchen will constitute a household. The members of a household may or may not be related by blood to one another". This definition appears to be unproblematic. However, the subsequent instruction says, "Each inmate (including residential staff) of a mess, hotel, boarding and lodging house, hostel, etc, will constitute a single-member household". By this instruction each individual migrant who stays in boarding and lodging houses, hostels, and employed as residential staff of a mess is counted as constituting a household by herself/himself. For this reason, the NSSO survey is likely to overestimate the number of migrant households or families. Data on the distribution of households by size of households, provided for 1993 and 2007-08 in Table 2 (p 48), somewhat confirm this apprehension. While 6.50% and 7.35% of all households in 1993 and 2008, respectively, were single-member households, 30.27% and 43.67% of migrant households, in 1993 and 2007-08, respectively, were single-member households. Further, a look at the reasons for migration by the single-member households indicates that around 47.5% and 53% in 1993 and 2007-08, respectively, had migrated for studies. These are likely to be students residing in hostels. Thus, the definition of a household adopted by the NSSO is likely to result in overestimation of the number of migrant households.

To correct for the overestimation, only families consisting of at least two members will be considered for estimation of migrant families.

**Table 2: Data on the Distribution of All and Migrant Households Classified by Household-Size**

Household Size	Percentage Distribution of All Households by Household Size		Percentage Distribution of Migrant Households by Household Size	
	1993	2007-08	1993	2007-08
1	6.50	7.35	30.27	43.67
2	9.03	10.38	9.56	9.52
3	12.37	14.29	11.56	11.55
4	17.73	21.51	12.29	13.85
5	18.75	18.97	11.23	9.58
6	14.20	12.13	7.67	5.24
7	8.59	6.77	4.18	2.77
8	5.06	3.69	4.35	1.67
9	2.73	2.01	2.87	0.68
10	1.78	1.20	1.17	0.41
11+	3.26	1.70	4.85	1.06
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Unit-level data made available by NSSO in CD-ROMs for the 49th and 64th rounds, for 1993 and 2008, respectively. The CD-ROMs for the respective years are numbered as: CC/CD/2812 and CC/NSS/5539.

While the definition of a household and the NSSO instruction to identify a household result in overestimation of the number of migrant households, another instruction to enumerate households, probably leads to under-enumeration, particularly of footloose migrant households. The relevant instruction to enumerators reads as:

Floating population, i.e., persons without any normal residence will not be listed. But households residing in open space, roadside shelter, under a bridge, etc., more or less regularly in the same place will be listed.

By this instruction only households which live/reside more or less regularly in a place will be eligible for being enumerated. Families that form groups of workers and engage in sugar cane harvesting, road construction, laying underground cables, etc., which do not reside for more than a few days in a place will not be enumerated. Thus, an important category of migrant households, constituted by “footloose” families that are likely to be the most deprived, do not get enumerated in the NSSO surveys. A specially designed survey that captures a clear identification of household movement, classified as partial or complete, which also accommodates enumeration of footloose migration is very much needed.

Further, the quality of data appears to vary over time because of missing information. While no attempt is made here to assess the quality of the NSSO survey data over time, an attempt is made to point to the extent of error arising from non-reporting/missing information in migration-related data in different survey years. For example, the reason for migration is recorded for all migrant households in the sample in 1983, whereas it is missing for 1.47%, 4.7% and 0.60% of the migrant households in the sample in 1993, 2002 and 2007-08, respectively. Similarly, information on the place of last residence is recorded for all migrant households in the sample in 1983, but such information is missing for 1.63%, 10.0% and 0.41%, of migrant households in the sample, in 1993, 2002 and

2007-08. It needs to be noted that such errors are fairly low in 1993 and 2007-08. These two years also happen to be normal agricultural years, and hence data for these years will be analysed in this paper.

For each household, information is available on caste, land-holding status, monthly per capita consumption expenditure, the reason for migration, nature of migration (temporary and permanent), sectors (rural and urban) of origin and sectors of destination are available for both 1993 and 2008. Data on occupation of each member of the household before and after migration in 1993, and household-type classification based on major occupation (source of survival) of the household in 2008 too are available. Thus, the migration data collected as part of either the employment and unemployment or household amenities and other characteristic surveys though inadequate, still serve as a fairly rich source of information on spatial family movement in India.

In the NSSO surveys, a household is classified as a migrant household, if it has moved into the place (village/town) of enumeration in the last 365 days preceding the date of survey. For each such household, the reasons for change of location have been recorded. In 1993 an 11-fold classification of reasons has been adopted for enumeration of the causes/reasons for family migration. They are: (1) in search of employment, (2) in search of better employment, (3) to take up employment/better employment, (4) transfer of service/contract, (5) proximity, to place of work, (6) studies, (7) acquisition of house/flat, (8) housing problems, (9) social/political problems, (10) health, and (11) others. In 2008, the last category (“others”) has been further disaggregated into six categories such as: (1) business, (2) natural disaster (drought, floods, tsunami, etc.) (3) displacement by development projects, (4) post-retirement, (5) marriage, and (6) others. Thus, the 2008 data on reasons for family migration is far more detailed compared to that for other survey years. While the availability of data on family migration is provided in some detail here, only data on sectors of origin and destination and reasons for migration will be analysed in this paper. Employing the data for 1993 and 2007-08, an attempt will be made to assess the extent of push, push-pull and pull family migration prevalent in India.

## 5 Spatial Patterns, and Labour Market and Non-Labour Market-Related Causes of Family Migration

Migration in Section 3 was treated as a response to economic or labour market-related conditions in the place of origin and destination. Such migration that takes place between rural and urban (rural-urban) has received considerable attention. However, an examination of the data on spatial movement suggests that four types of movements – rural-rural, urban-urban, rural-urban and urban-rural – occur in India. While the first two are within sector mobility, the second two are between sector mobility. Of between sector mobility, urban-rural movement indicates flow from the advanced (urban) sector to the traditional (rural) sector. It will be shown later that such movement from the advanced to traditional sectors is significant in India.

Often migration is thought to be influenced by labour market conditions in the origin and destination. An examination of data on reported reasons in the NSSO surveys suggests that a complex interaction of both labour and non-labour market-related causes induce family migration. Accordingly, as a prelude to the analysis of the nature – pull, push and push-pull – of family migration in India, the relative importance of (a) different types of spatial and (b) labour market and non-labour market-related family migration will be assessed here.

### 5.1 Types of Spatial Movements

Data on types of spatial movements are provided in Table 3. The numbers are largely self-explanatory and, hence, only the important features of the numbers will be highlighted here. In the literature on migration, as noted earlier, rural-urban migration has received considerable attention. However, the numbers in Table 3 suggest that, in both 1993 and 2008, all four types of family migration (rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural, urban-urban) were important in India. Indeed rural-urban which has received relatively more attention in the literature was the least important in 1993 and the second least important in 2008. It may also be noted that movement of families from the advanced sector to the traditional sector, which is not captured in the growth theory version of migration, accounted for a significant proportion (29% in 1993 and 19% in 2007-08) of total spatial movements of families in India.

**Table 3: Data on Different Types of Spatial Migration of Families in India (1993 and 2008)**

Year	Rural-Rural	Rural-Urban	Place of Origin Not Classified, Settled in Rural Areas	Urban-Rural	Urban-Urban	Place of Origin Not Classified, Settled in Urban Areas	Total
1993	5,48,354 (35.63)	2,40,591 (15.63)	11,579 (0.75)	4,48,125 (29.12)	2,80,118 (18.20)	10,313 (0.67)	15,39,080 (100.00)
2008	8,14,492 (34.63)	5,31,238 (22.59)	21,513 (0.92)	4,46,940 (19.00)	5,37,194 (22.84)	445 (0.02)	23,51,822 (100.00)

Figures in brackets are percentage of total migration in respective years.  
Source: As in Table 2.

Annual total family migration has gone up from 15.39 lakhs in 1993 to 23.51 lakhs in 2008 – an increase of nearly 53% in India. A simple computation based on numbers presented in Table 3 indicates that the two categories – rural-rural and rural-urban – which accounted for 51.26% of total family migration in 1993 – accounted for 57.22% of in 2008. This suggests a disproportionate increase in family migration of rural origin between 1993 and 2008. More importantly, it could be observed that rural-urban migration has more than doubled: from 2.40 lakhs in 1993 to 5.3 lakhs in 2008. It is possible that the agrarian crisis<sup>3</sup> has contributed to the doubling of the rural-urban migration stream.

Urban-urban family migration has almost doubled between 1993 and 2008, which is likely to have been caused by the casualisation<sup>4</sup> of the urban workforce. Notice here that Sundaram (2009) has observed the emergence of short-term contract employment even among regular wage/salaried workers, especially in urban India. Casualisation and the emergence of short-term contract employment probably contributes to uncertainty in the tenure of employment of the urban workforce,

which, in turn, may contribute to the phenomenal increase in urban-urban migration of families.

Having looked at the importance of different types of spatial family migration, the importance of labour market and non-labour market-related spatial movements of families in India is now examined.

### 5.2 Labour Market and Non-labour Market-Related Causes of Family Migration

The theoretical literature considers migration as a response to variations in labour market conditions, in particular, the variations in demand and supply of labour across locations. However, a cursory glance at the data provided in Table 4 on the magnitude of family migration caused by labour and non-labour market-related reasons indicates that non-labour market-related reasons also contribute significantly to family migration in India. Labour market conditions related family migration includes movement: (1) in search of employment, (2) in search of better employment, and (3) to take up employment. Non-labour market-related family migration includes movements for reasons such as transfer of service/contract, housing problems, proximity to place of work, social and political problems, acquisition of a house/flat, marriage, displacement by development projects, etc. While a detailed analysis of the importance of various reasons for family migration is not carried out here, as a first cut only the relative importance of labour market and non-labour market conditions related family migration is assessed here.

The numbers in Table 4 suggest that in both 1993 and 2007-08 (1) urban-rural family movement is caused largely (more than 66%) by labour market-related reasons; (2) urban-urban movement is caused largely (more than 63%) by non-labour market-related reasons; and (3) in the cases of rural-rural and rural-urban family movements, non-labour market-related reasons contribute to more than 42%.

A simple calculation based on the numbers presented in Table 4 suggests a marginal increase (from around 50% in

**Table 4: Data on Migration of Families Classified by Broad Causes in India (1993 and 2008)**

Broad Causes of Family Migration	Rural-Rural	Rural-Urban	Place of Origin Not Classified and Settled in Rural Areas	Urban-Rural	Urban-Urban	Place of Origin Not Classified and Settled in Urban Areas
1993						
Labour market related	2,62,485 (47.87)	1,22,804 (51.04)	1,537 (13.27)	3,14,094 (70.09)	75,038 (26.79)	3,504 (33.98)
Non-labour market related	2,85,869 (52.13)	1,17,787 (48.96)	10,042 (86.73)	1,34,031 (29.91)	2,05,080 (73.21)	6,809 (66.02)
Total	5,48,354 (100.00)	2,40,591 (100.00)	11,579 (100.00)	4,48,125 (100.00)	2,80,118 (100.00)	10,313 (100.00)
2008						
Labour market related	4,37,868 (53.76)	3,07,204 (57.83)	20,930 (97.29)	2,94,632 (65.92)	1,99,764 (37.19)	419 (94.16)
Non-labour market related	3,76,624 (46.24)	2,24,034 (42.17)	583 (2.71)	1,52,308 (34.08)	3,37,430 (62.81)	26 (5.84)
Total	8,14,492 (100.00)	5,31,238 (100.00)	21,513 (100.00)	4,46,940 (100.00)	5,37,194 (100.00)	445 (100.00)

Source: As in Table 2.

1993 to 53.6% in 2007-08) in the importance of labour market-related family migration in India between 1993 and 2007-08. However, it is important to note that as late as 2008, more than 46% of family migration in India occurs for non-labour market-related reasons. These results suggest that in India explanations of family migration which revolve around a framework that relies almost exclusively on variations in labour market conditions will only be partial and incomplete. For this reason, there is a case for an attempt to build more nuanced explanatory frameworks of family migration incorporating both labour and non-labour market causes.

## 6 Magnitude of Push, Pull and Both Push-Pull Induced Migration

### 6.1 Labour Market-Related Family Migration

The theoretical literature considers migration as a response to variations in labour market conditions, including of wages and the probability of finding employment across space. However, the discussion in the previous section suggests that there are at least two streams of migrant families: migrated for labour market or earnings related reasons, and non-labour market or non-earnings related reasons. Accordingly, in this section, an attempt will be made to classify family migration by nature as push, pull and push-pull movements separately for the two streams. To begin with, an attempt is made here to classify labour market-related family migration – for reasons such as in search of employment, in search of better employment and to take up employment/better employment.

From the discussion in Section 3, it is clear that to identify the nature (push, push-pull and pull) of family migration one requires data on earnings before and after migration, the minimum income required for survival, costs of moving a family, and social benefits forgone by a family. But such data are *not* available in the NSSO surveys. For this reason one is forced to resort to other indicators to classify labour market-related family migration into push, push-pull and pull induced. The reasons for migration serve as one such indicator. It is important to note here that usually a person gets married and begins a family when she/he is assured of a steady source of income to support a family. For this reason if, well after formation, a family as a unit, moves or migrates in search of employment/livelihood opportunities, such a move is likely to be distress or push induced (Da Vanzo 1976). Notice here that the family moves under considerable uncertainty of finding a livelihood.

On the other hand, the movement of a family in search of better employment suggests that the move is in search of an employment opportunity that is better than the one available in the place of origin. It is clear that (1) the employment opportunity available in the place of origin is not preferred by the family; and (2) the move is said to be in search of a better opportunity in the place of destination. It is likely that families that move in search of better employment have information on the availability of better opportunities in the destination. For these reasons, the movement in search of better employment

is classified as push-pull induced. When a family moves to take up employment or better employment, i.e., the move is induced by the availability of assured employment opportunities in the destination, the movement is considered as pull induced. This classification, though crude, appears to me to be the best that can be employed given the nature and extent of information available in the surveys.

The numbers presented in Table 5 are largely self-explanatory. Hence, an attempt will be made to discuss only the salient features of the numbers. Simple calculations, based on the numbers presented in Table 5, indicate that between 1993 and 2007-08 (1) annual employment-related family migration (the sum of the total migrant families in each category) went up from 7.8 lakhs to 12.6 lakhs; and (2) the increase in total employment-related family migration is largely accounted for by migration of rural origin. Similar calculations based on numbers presented in Table 5 show that, between 1993 and 2007-08, in total employment-related family migration the share of (1) push migration has gone up sharply from 21.7% to 37.1%; (2) push-pull migration has gone from 35.48% to 40.12%; and (3) pull migration registered a sharp decline from 42.82% to 22.81%. To sum up, family migration where distress plays a role (push and push-pull) accounts for a larger share – which has indeed increased over time (from around 57% in 1993 to 77% in 2007-08) – of total family migration for employment-related reasons. The increase in distress-related migration in a period of very high growth speaks of poor sharing of the benefits of such growth across sectors and regions.

The data provided in Table 5 also show that urban-rural migration which in 1993 was largely pull induced, in 2007-08 it was push-pull induced. The result, which is worth investigating further, is not investigated here in detail for want of data. However, it may be conjectured that the urban-rural migration is likely to be return migration. In 1993 those

**Table 5: Data on Labour Market-Related Migration of Families Classified by Nature, India (1993 and 2008)**

Nature of Family Migration	Rural-Rural	Rural-Urban	Place of Origin Not Classified and Settled in Rural Areas	Urban-Rural	Urban-Urban	Place of Origin Not Classified and Settled in Rural Areas
1993						
Push	88,709 (33.80)	39,270 (31.98)	0 (0.00)	24,038 (7.65)	14,915 (19.88)	2,210 (63.07)
Push-Pull	1,22,393 (46.63)	61,119 (49.77)	1,033 (67.21)	49,897 (15.89)	41,198 (54.90)	878 (25.06)
Pull	51,383 (19.57)	22,415 (18.25)	504 (32.79)	2,40,159 (76.46)	18,925 (25.22)	416 (11.87)
Total	2,62,485 (100.00)	1,22,804 (100.00)	1,537 (100.00)	3,14,094 (100.00)	75,038 (100.00)	3,504 (100.00)
2008						
Push	1,85,424 (42.35)	1,29,002 (41.99)	15,144 (72.36)	94,234 (31.98)	43,635 (21.84)	29 (6.92)
Push-Pull	1,51,903 (34.69)	1,14,025 (37.12)	5,786 (27.64)	1,45,130 (49.26)	88,575 (44.34)	390 (93.08)
Pull	1,00,541 (22.96)	64,177 (20.89)	0 (0.00)	55,267 (18.76)	67,554 (33.82)	0 (0.00)
Total	4,37,868 (100.00)	3,07,204 (100.00)	20,930 (100.00)	2,94,631 (100.00)	1,99,764 (100.00)	419 (100.00)

Source: As in Table 2.

families which returned to the rural areas, were probably assured of employment in the agricultural sector. Notice here that 1993 was a good agricultural year in a period of high growth. Families which returned in 2007-08, a year during the period of agrarian distress, were not sure of their employment in agriculture. Hence, it is possible that a larger proportion of migrant families in this category had reported to have migrated in search of better employment in 2007-08. This is left as a hypothesis for further investigation for want of data.

A simple calculation based on the numbers presented in Table 5 suggests that employment-related family migration of both rural and urban origin had increased, respectively, by 98% and 68% between 1993 and 2007-08. This shows that the increase is more pronounced for migration of rural origin than that of urban origin. The increases in magnitude (number) of employment-related migration, particularly push and push-pull, of rural origin while are likely to be related to agrarian distress,<sup>5</sup> that of push and push-pull migration of urban origins are likely to be related to casualisation<sup>6</sup> of the urban workforce.

## 6.2 Non-Labour Market-Related Family Migration

We now turn to non-labour market-related family migration. Factors such as caste atrocities, ostracism by caste panchayats and threats from political persons/bodies could act as a deterrent to live in the usual place of residence. The movement of families reported in the surveys due to social and political problems come under this category. Problems with homeowners and inadequate infrastructural facilities could also drive a family from its usual place of residence. Such movements are reported under the reason, housing problems.

Thus, living environment-related push migration includes movements due to social/political problems and housing problem. Living environment-related pull factors/reasons include proximity to the place of work, purchase of a flat/house, children's education, and health where the movement is induced by some features of the destination that are attractive. Since the predominant factor in such movements is some attractive features of the destination, family migration for these reasons are considered as pull induced.

Families move for various other reasons as well. They include transfer of service contract, business, natural disasters (like a drought, tsunami, floods, etc), marriage, retirement, displacement due to development projects, and "Others" (reasons not classified). Since data on movement of families for the reasons are clubbed together with the movement for "Other" reasons in 1993, to maintain consistency of the comparison between 1993 and 2007-08 they are treated as belonging to the "Other" category in 2007-08 as well. Family migration in the "Other" category, for want of information

cannot be classified (not classifiable) as either pull or push induced. Thus, non-labour market-related migration is classified into three categories: pull, push and "not classifiable". It may be added here that family migration, where the sector of origin is not known is also included in the category not classified.

Data on non-labour market-related push, pull and not classified family migration is provided in Table 6. A simple calculation based on numbers presented in Table 6 suggests that of living environment-related family migration, push migration which accounted for more than 45% in 1993, accounted for 28.79% in 2008 in India. A disaggregated analysis (not reported here but available on request) suggests that the entire decline is due to a fall in migration induced by social/political problems. The number of families migrating due to social/political problems declined from 77,174 to 19,146 in India between 1993 and 2008. In this connection, it is important to note that statistics in the publication, *Crime in India*,<sup>7</sup> an annual publication by the National Crimes Record Bureau, suggest a perceptible decline in the number of riots from 93,888 in 1993 to 66,018 in 2008 in India. It is possible that there had been changes in the sociopolitical sphere, the reasons for which cannot be probed further here for want of space and data. More importantly, the results in this paper suggest a complex interplay of social, political, environmental, developmental, and labour market-related forces in determining the extent and temporal trend of family migration in India. It is simplistic to reduce the explanation for family migration to variations in labour market earnings. There is a case for developing an analytical framework that explicitly takes into account the complex interplay of various factors.

**Table 6: Data Push, Pull and Not Classifiable Non-labour Market Migration of Families in India (1993 and 2008)**

Classification of Non-Labour Market-Related Family Migration	Sector of Origin: Rural				Sector of Origin: Urban			
	Push	Pull	Not Classifiable	Total	Push	Pull	Not Classifiable	Total
<b>1993</b>								
Living environment related	84,537 (46.17)	98,546 (53.83)	0 (0.00)	1,83,083 (100.00)	73,379 (45.23)	88,868 (54.77)	0 (0.00)	162,247 (100.00)
Others			2,30,615 (100.00)	2,30,615 (100.00)				
<b>2008</b>								
Living environment related	60,327 (33.09)	1,21,998 (66.91)	0 (0.00)	1,82,325 (100.00)	44,822 (24.50)	1,38,144 (75.50)	0 (0.00)	1,82,966 (100.00)
Others			4,18,916 (100.00)	4,18,916 (100.00)			3,06,798 (100.00)	3,06,798 (100.00)

Source: As in Table 2.

A calculation based on the numbers provided in Table 6 indicate that family migration "not classifiable" accounts for 55.74% and 69.68%, respectively, of total non-labour market-related family migration in India in 1993 and 2007-08. Notice here that data on family migration has been collected either as part of the NSS surveys on employment and unemployment or as part of the surveys on household amenities and other characteristics. A specialised survey on the subject is likely to help enumerate the causes of family migration in more detail, which, in turn, would help a better understanding of nature of non-labour market-related family migration.



## 7 Concluding Observations

In this paper an attempt has been made to provide an account of family migration in India, a relatively under-researched phenomenon. In this connection, growth theory and Third World urbanisation strands of reasoning on migration have been employed. While in the growth theory version, migration is seen as being induced by expanding opportunities in the urban areas, in the Third World urbanisation version migration is seen as being induced by the failure of the rural labour market to provide employment opportunities to the growing labour force. It may also be noted that both versions concentrate only on labour market-related migration/movement. In this connection, the analysis in this paper suggests that: (1) four types – rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban – of spatial mobility of families occur in India; and (2) a complex interplay of variations in the labour market (both expanding opportunities and failure of the

rural labour market), social and political reasons, the living environment (housing, sanitation, and access to basic infrastructure), natural disasters,<sup>8</sup> and development-related factors determine the decisions to migrate. Thus, there is a case for evolving a framework which incorporates ingredients of not only growth theory and the Third World urbanisation perspectives, but the complex interplay of various factors to analyse family migration.

The analysis in the paper also indicates that in a period of impressive growth of the economy, migration of families in search of livelihood had gone up. The increase was from around 1.7 in lakhs in 1993 to 3.5 lakhs in 2007-08. This suggests that assessment of the economy based on the overall growth of the economy may be misleading. The impact of such growth to provide secure livelihood options to families needs to be taken on board in assessing the overall performance of the economy.

### NOTES

- 1 See, on this Shields and Shields (1989).
- 2 The National Sample Survey (NSS) report on "Household Assets Holding, Indebtedness, Current Borrowings and Repayments of Social Groups in India", All-India Debt and Investment Survey, NSS 59th round, reports that of the total amount of debt outstanding as on 30 June 2002, borrowings from friends and relatives accounted for 7.1%, and 7.6%, respectively, in rural and urban India. The share of borrowings where personal relationship mattered (borrowings based on personal security and third party surety) accounted for as much 53.3% and 49.4%, respectively, in rural and urban India.
- 3 S Mishra (2007) provides an account of the impact of agrarian crisis on lives and livelihood of farmers in India.
- 4 For accounts of casualisation of workforce in India (Papola 2007; Pais 2002; Sundram 2009).
- 5 Note here that the annual growth rate of agriculture, as observed by Dev (2007) was more than 3% in the 1980s, and reached a high of 3.85% in the early to mid-1990s, since then had declined to 1.60%. This suggests that while the economy on the whole registered impressive growth after mid-1990s, growth in agriculture decelerated. As a result of distress in the agricultural sector, Mishra (2007) points out that more than 40% of farmers do not like to continue farming as a survival option.
- 6 See Pais (2002), Papola (2007) and Sundaram (2009) for discussions on casualisation of workforce in India.
- 7 Available on the internet at: <http://ncrb.nic.in/CD-CII2012/Home.asp>
- 8 Data, not provided but available on request, indicates that of the 0.73 million families categorised as non-classifiable in 2008: 4.17% migrated because of natural disaster; and, 5.61% migrated because of displacement by development projects.

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