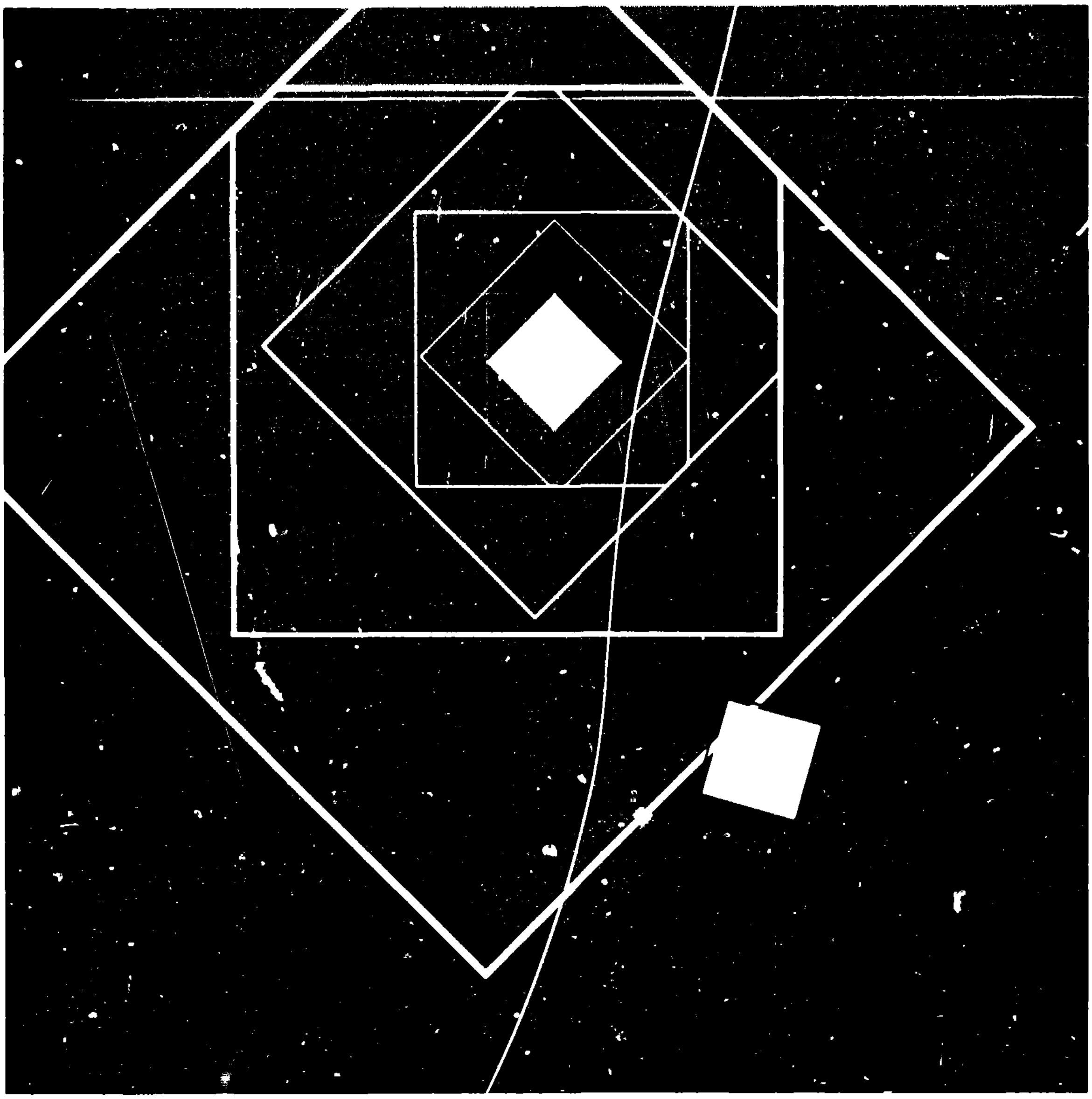
No. 52

Selected studies on the dynamics, patterns and consequences of migration, III

Migration and development: major features of migratory movement in India

Reports and papers in the social sciences



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Selected studies on the dynamics, patterns and consequences of migration, III

Migration and development: major features of migratory movement in India

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Migration and Development: Major Features of Migratory Movements in India

by Biplab Dasgupta[1]

Preface

The *Selected Studies on the Dynamics, Patterns and Consequences of Migration* presents the findings of a number of country case studies, carried out within the Population Division's Programme on 'Development and Promotion of Research on Population Dynamics'. Migration research has been increasingly linked to the broader perspectives of national development, and within these a better understanding of the pervasive phenomenon of migratory movements is of considerable importance. The principal aim of the research programme on migration is to investigate variations in migratory patterns together with their causes and consequences in selected countries from different regions of the world. Attempts were made to put migration research within the context of rural-urban interactions in a manner that takes into account those aspects which are particular to the specific development process of each country.

This report on India is the third of these selected studies to appear in *Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences* and follows two previous studies, one on Mexico City and the other on France, published in Issues Nos. 46 and 51.

This study on migration and development in India has been prepared by Professor Biplab Dasgupta. It analyses the major trends in population movements in India and attempts to relate these to key issues on rural and urban development.

The most striking feature of the phenomenon of migration in India is its range and diversity and the significance of rural-rural migration as opposed to rural-urban shifts in population. The study demonstrates the impossibility of associating migratory movements with specific migrant characteristics since these will inevitably vary according to the type of movement. The main categories established are female migration associated with marriage, rural-rural short distance seasonal migration, migration organized by employers and that induced by disasters such as drought.

Contrary to expectation, this study shows that migration does not operate as an equilibratory mechanism but instead tends to encourage further migration and promotes rather than alleviates inequalities. Movements are not therefore directly correlated with income or status. The conclusions to be derived from this study imply that policies intending to influence migratory patterns should aim at eliminating the inequalities which are the primary cause of such movements. It should be of particular interest to development planners, as it makes practical recommendations in arguing for more cost-effective rural technologies which are neither energy nor capital-intensive but are based on local resources.

The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Unesco.

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Table of Contents

Chapter I–Introduction 5

Three key assumptions 5

Chapter II–Characteristics 7

2.1 Level of migration 7
2.2 Female migration a major characteristic 7
2.3 Rural-rural migration 9
2.4 Rural-urban migration 12
2.5 Urban-urban migration 14
2.6 Urban-rural migration 14
2.7 Distance covered by migrants 15

Chapter III–Causes 17

3.1 Introduction 17
3.2 Historical roots 17
3.3 Population growth and agro-climatic conditions 19
3.4 Land relations and labour use 20
3.5 Pattern of urbanization 22
3.6 Disasters 24

Chapter IV–Consequences 27

4.1 Introduction 27
4.2 Impact on rural life 27
4.3 Impact on urban life 30

Chapter V–Conclusions 35

Bibliography 38

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Three key assumptions

A great deal of the literature on migration is based on the following three assumptions:

first, it is the individual who decides about migration;

secondly, the decision is largely based on the expected economic return for migration; and

thirdly, the move is usually from rural to urban areas.

A number of theories on migration decisions have been built around the assumption that the individual carefully weighs the costs and benefits of migration before deciding to move. The costs of migration include transport cost, cost of subsistence in the destination (fully in case of the students and other non-workers, and in case of the working migrants until a job is found in the destination), psychic costs of adjustment to the new environment and the income forgone in the rural areas (Sjaastad, 1962). The benefit of migration is the present value of the expected stream of annual earnings (at a given discount rate) during the period of stay in the town. If the present value of return from migration exceeds the aggregate cost, this provides the economic rationale for moving. The expected earnings in the destination would vary according to the probability of finding a job in the urban labour market–the greater the proportion of unemployment in the urban labour market the less would be the income *expected* at the time of migration (Todaro, 1969; Harris and Todaro 1970). This is the general theme of some of the most popular theories of migrant behaviour. Within this analytical framework a number of variations can be introduced according to specific situations–for example the degree of labour turnover, or the need to share the urban income with the family back in the rural areas–without altering the basic premises of these models (Johnson, 1971; Fields, 1975).

The age-specificity of rural-urban migration can be easily explained in terms of this analytical framework. The younger the person, the less the psychic cost of adjustment to the new environment and the greater the expected return from migration over a longer working period in the destination. The rural-urban income differential is seen, according to these models, as a powerful instrument for transferring labour from labour surplus areas to labour-deficit areas and, therefore, for the equalization of earning opportunities in the long run between areas (Lewis, 1954). Each individual is assumed to possess complete information on expected returns net of costs from alternative migration destinations. This is necessary in order to decide whether to migrate and which destination to choose.[1]

The present case study on migration in India clearly demonstrates the inadequacies of this highly simplified analytical framework, and in particular, of the three assumptions on which it rests. In the first place, it is not always the migrant who decides. This is particularly true in cases of children and dependents who migrate for schooling or to accompany the earning members of the family. Even in cases of working migrants the decision is often a part of the family strategy to diversify and supplement family earnings; and the migration is financed from the family fund. In many cases migration decisions are taken by units larger than the individual or family, such as tribes. Seasonal migration by a group of families of landless labourers for harvesting in a distant village is an example where the direction of the movement at least is influenced by the bigger units. The same is the case with government officials or company employees under transfer where both the decision to migrate and the direction of the movement are chosen by the employers. In cases of organized migration towards plantations, mines and factories (or even the oil-rich Gulf countries and North Africa in recent years) the movement is often initiated and organized by the employers; the vast majority of Indian contract labourers working in Libya would not have contemplated migration had the opportunity not been presented to them by the agents of the construction companies. In all these cases the decision to move is essentially being taken by entities other than the individual concerned.

Secondly, the economic motive for migration, while undoubtedly a very important one, is not the sole factor prompting migratory movements. An interesting feature of the migration statistics in India is the overwhelming dominance of women in population movements, the vast majority of whom leave their native village for marriage. There are also cases of individuals leaving their villages to escape family control over their lives or as a consequence of factional struggles within the village. Victims of flood, storm, drought, epidemics and communal conflict are prompted to leave their native place for reasons other than the economic ones. Such movements are discrete and large-scale, and quantitively very significant over a long period of time.

Thirdly, rural-urban migration is only one of several types of migratory movements, and is, quantitively, of much less importance than movements which remain confined within the rural areas. In fact the vast majority of movements are intra-rural, short term, and cover a short distance. Failure to realize the importance of rural-rural migration led in the past to a disproportionate amount of emphasis on rural-urban migration in the literature.

The individual-economic-urban oriented studies on migration also have several other weaknesses. First, they fail to take into account the range and diversity of migratory movements and as a consequence the characteristics which these studies associate with migration are specific to a given type of migration and social context As will be seen later, it is as easy to find individual migrants who are poor, illiterate, from lower castes and backward villages, as to find those who are better off, educated, from higher caste groups and from advanced villages. Similarly, the age-sex characteristics of migrants vary according to migratory movements under consideration.

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[1] For critical analyses of these models, *see* J.Gaude, 1976; John Connell, *et al.*, 1977; H. Rempel and R.A. Lobdell, 1976.

Secondly, these tend to treat the aggregate flow of migration as a simple summation of numerous individual decisions, while ignoring the influence of environment natural as well as socio-economic on such decisions. As the present study will show, migration propensity is closely associated with agro-climatic conditions and the prevailing agrarian structure, factors which are beyond the control of individuals and families and even bigger units of population such as tribes. Migration decisions, in these cases, should be seen, primarily, as a response to the environment and changes in the environment.

Thirdly, a major weakness of these theoretical models is that these seek behaviouristic explanations of migration decisions at a given point of time or over a period of future time, but not as a product of various influences which were at work on the environment and the individual in the past. As a consequence, such analysis is ahistorical in scope and limited in its explanatory power.

The present study of migration movements in India attempts to examine this phenomenon on a broad canvas, taking full account of its complex, multi-dimensional nature and the historical perspective. It covers a wide range of migratory movements which can be classified by origin-destination relationship (rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural, and rural-urban), by duration (short-term, long-term, seasonal, circular), by motive (to achieve a target in terms of education, experience, saving, or contacts, or to escape from the native place to obtain temporary relief or shelter, or to enjoy the life in the destination permanently), and so on. An important way of classifying migratory movements is on the basis of whether such movements have been 'organized' by the employers, whether these have been induced by disasters, and the residual category where migration is 'voluntary'. It is assumed that each type of movement draws on different sections of the population, and hence is associated with a separate, identifiable set of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants.

The study is limited in scope to internal migration only. Migration from other parts of the world into India, and out-migration to other countries, excepting for a few references, is not covered largely because of limitations of time and space. This is in a sense unfortunate, because, such migratory movements have always been an integral part of the history of the South-Asian subcontinent. Over thousands of years, Aryans, Greeks under Alexander, as well as numerous tribes from Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan entered India from the north-west and settled down in the Indo-Gangetic plains. The mozaic of castes, tribes, nationalities, linguistic and ethnic groupings one finds in India today has largely resulted from such waves of migration over the years. These migratory movements in their turn pushed the local population towards the east and south, which in their turn caused further internal migration: Dravidians pushed out of the north by the Aryans forced the aborigine population in the south and central India to move to the mountainous and forest areas. Traders and missionaries—both Arab and Christian—frequently migrated to the western and southern parts of the country. As for out-migration, this was much less important that in-migration, but there is evidence of strong trade and cultural links between India and South-East Asia which existed up to about the tenth century. Sri Lanka witnessed many waves of migration across the sea both from the northern part of India (the ancestors of the present day Singhalese population) as well as from the south of conquering armies of some of the South-Indian kingdoms (who were ancestors of Ceylon Tamils who now live in the northern part of the country). Some of the biggest out-migratory movements took place during the British period, to which reference will be made in the following chapter In recent years migration to Europe, Canada and the oil-rich states of West Asia and North Africa has become an important source of foreign earnings, particularly in cases of states like Punjab, Kerala and Gujarat.

The choice of India for a special study can be justified in a number of ways. First, the very size of India. It is not often realized that even if migration accounts for no more than one per cent of India's 700 million population the number would exceed the total population of many countries in Africa, the Carribean and the Pacific. Secondly, even in percentage terms the level of migration is indeed quite high - about one third of the Indians move away from the place where they were born. Thirdly, apart from the size of the migratory movement (and partly because of it) an important feature of the Indian population movement is its diversity. No matter what type of movement is under consideration it is more than likely that it would be witnessed in at least some parts of this vast country. Fourthly, the diversity has another advantage, that the conclusions from this study would be applicable at least in part to migratory conditions in many countries of the world, particularly to those located in South and South-East Asia. Lastly, the data base. The data from Indian censuses cover more than a hundred years beginning from 1872. Although there are many inadequacies in the coverage and in the method of collection, apart from the problems of year to year comparability of figures due to changes in definitions, there is no doubt that, compared with any other Third World country, the information base in India is quite rich. It can be said that the data collected so far have not been adequately processed, and the range of possibilities for data analysis opened up by the computer technology has not been fully explored. Besides, the effort given to data collection has seldom been matched by enthusiasm for a proper synthesis of the available information, which is what the present paper sets out to do.

One other point, before we complete this introductory chapter, refers to the pattern of urbanization in India. As in most other countries of South and South-East Asia, both the level of urbanization, and the rate of increase in the proportion of urban population over time are very low in India. At the same time, given the very large absolute size of the rural sector compared with the urban sector, even a low rate of urbanization often produces very large absolute increases in urban population. These result in all the familiar problems of urban growth such as overcrowding, declining supply of drinking water, problems of garbage disposal, power, transport and other facilities, increase in unemployment and crime, and a general decline in the quality of life in the cities, particularly the bigger ones. As in most other countries in the Third World, in India too there is a growing concentration of urban population in a small number of very big urban centres. All these features of the pattern of urbanization in India have their bearings on discussions of migration, and will be fully examined in a following chapter.

CHAPTER II

Characteristics

2.1 Level of migration

Until recently, the level of migration was considered to be very low in India compared with the countries of Africa and Latin America. Statistics derived from decennial census operations revealed that nearly 3 per cent of the population were living in states other than those in which they were born. The figures remained very close to 3 per cent throughout the period between 1891 and 1961, which helped to characterize Indian population as one of the least mobile in the world (Eanes, 1965). As is usually the case with western scholars working on Indian social and economic problems, their failure to explain this low figure for migration led them to attribute this lack of mobility to the static nature of the Indian villages and rural society, the dominance of agriculture in economic life which ties people to land, and also to social institutions like joint family, early marriage and the caste system. Even prominent experts on population movements like Kingsley Davies could not resist the temptation of taking refuge behind these stereotypes of the Indian society in explaining this feature of the country's population movements (Ghosal, 1968).

In practice, the level of migration in India is quite high despite the social constraints mentioned above. The failure of the population experts to measure the level of migration accurately stemmed from the lack of data on intra-state migration. States in India are very large entities, comparable in geographical size and population to the major countries in Europe and Africa. One state, Uttar Pradesh has a population of 80 million, which is more than that for any state in Europe except the Soviet Union. Movement between states in India is therefore comparable to movement across international frontiers in cases of countries of Europe and Africa. For this reason it is unfortunate that census data on movements within a state were not available until 1961; and when processed these data revealed that about 31 per cent of the population of India were not living in the place where they were born (UNECAFE, 1971; A. Bose, 1973). To characterize a population as immobile when about one-third of them move away from their place of birth during their life time would be very odd indeed.

Even this figure of 31 per cent is likely to be an underestimation of the actual proportion of population moving. This is for two reasons. First, the census operations are conducted only once in ten years; and, as a consequence, the inter-censal year movements are ignored by such statistics. Studies on labour force in the industries reveal a high rate of turnover, a great deal of movement of the migrant between his work place and the village, and the tendency for many villagers to return to their native villages at the end of a target period. Such movements, completed within the ten-year interval between two census years would not appear in census statistics (Mitra, 1967*b*).

These movements might be more accurately covered by micro-level studies of villages, towns and migrant groups, as well as by sample surveys at a particular point of time, subject to one major exception: where the whole family has outmigrated on a permanent basis. In the latter situation, in a vast majority of cases these families would not even be a part of the sampling frame to be captured by the surveys, unless these are specifically kept in mind when designing such surveys or the researcher moves with the migrant group. A sub-set of such family migration are migrants who move across international frontiers–the Indians who went to Kenya to construct the Mombasa-Nairobi railway line, those who went to the Carribean for work in sugar plantation, and those ending up in Malaysian rubber plantations, and Sri Lankan tea plantations (as well as the Indians who are presently migrating to the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Arabian Gulf countries) whose number was large enough to make those of Indian origin an important component of life in those countries. In their case, backward as they were in terms of literacy and contact with the more sophisticated urban life, these social constraints did not appear to stand in the way of migratory movements over a very long distance, nor could they be accused of lacking economic motives, or being apathetic and indifferent to their present life, and being 'other-worldly' in their attitude towards life in general.

Having established that the size of migration is not negligible, and is in fact quite substantial, let us examine some of the major characteristics of the migratory movements in India.

2.2 Female migration—a major characteristic

Females predominate in almost every type of migratory movement as classified by origin and destination (Table 1). In both 1961 and 1971, the number of female migrants was more than double the figure for male migrants.[1] However, unlike the female migration in Latin America, where a tradition of female participation in some specialized activities in towns and other destinations exist, the vast majority of females who move away from their place of origin do so to accompany their husbands and other relations, and very few of them move for economic reasons–that is in search

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[1] The number of female migrants was 93 million in 1961 and 109.6 million in 1971. The comparable figures for male migrants were 41.4 million and 49.1 million, respectively (Premi, 1980).

Table 1. Percentage distribution of migrants by type and sex–1961, 1971

	1961				1971			
Type	Total	Male	Female	Sex-ratio	Total	Male	Female	Sex-ratio
Rural-rural	73.7	56.7	81.3	3,215	69.1	51.4	77.0	3,351
Rural-urban	14.6	25.7	9.7	851	14.6	24.2	10.3	947
Urban-urban	8.1	13.0	5.8	1,000	10.4	16.8	7.5	1,000
Urban-rural	3.6	4.6	3.2	1,554	5.9	7.6	5.2	1,515

Source: Census of India.

Table 2. Female work participation ratio–1971

	Distance covered			
Type	**Short (intra-district)**	**Medium (inter-district)**	**Long (inter-state)**	**Overall**
Rural-rural	19.2	16.5	16.1	18.6
Rural-urban	11.4	9.0	8.2	10.1
Urban-urban	7.5	6.9	6.9	7.0
Urban-rural	14.9	13.4	12.7	14.2

Source: Census of India, 1971.

of a job for themselves. An analysis of census data for female migration shows, that in 1971, slightly more than 3 per cent of female migrants moved for economic reasons while 24-30 per cent moved because of marriage and the rest were simply 'associated' with migratory movement undertaken by their family members. [1]

The national sample survey (fourteenth and fifteenth rounds) explored the question of motivation of the migrants of both sexes, and found that whereas 47.9 per cent of males moved for 'sequential reasons', the corresponding figure for the females was 78.3 per cent, out of which 61.4 per cent migrated as 'associates' and 10.8 per cent as 'wives'. Among the 12.5 per cent of female migrants who moved 'voluntarily', 3.8 per cent did so for studies, 3.5 per cent for various economic reasons, and the rest for other non-economic reasons. 85.3 per cent of female migrants left their village after marriage, as associates or wives in most cases. The twenty-eighth round of national sample survey (1973-74) shows that 38 per cent of female rural immigrants and 20 per cent of female urban immigrants migrate because of marriage; 4 and 5 per cent, respectively for studies, and 15 and 11 per cent, respectively in search of work. In comparison, 35 per cent of male rural immigrants and 31 per cent of male urban immigrants gave 'in search of work' as their reason for migration. Another study, based on fifteen randomly selected villages of South Maharastra, showed that marriage accounted for 92 per cent of female out-migrants from the village, while the corresponding figure for males was 0.4 per cent. In the case of males, lack of jobs accounted for 60 per cent of migrants, another 8 per cent had jobs fixed in the destination, 11 per cent moved with relatives and for 13 per cent education in the towns was the main motivation. It is also significant that 71 per cent of female out-migrants were below the age of fourteen, and 94 per cent below the age of nineteen, while the corresponding figures for males were 24 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively. While 36 per cent of males were married at the time of migration, the corresponding figure for females was 61 cent (Narain, 1972).

Marriage-migration, despite its tremendous quantitative weight is not a very important phenomenon from the point of view of an understanding of the migratory process. In the case of an individual village the net migration due to marriage is likely to be zero or near-zero, since as many girls are likely to be marrying out as those marrying in. The 'associated' migrants are as likely to be male as female. The proportion of women migrants working is not high–and the proportion falls as they move away from rural areas and cover a longer distance. (Table 2.) A very high proportion of women migrants working in urban areas are concentrated in the 'services' (other than trade, commerce, and transport) –such as domestic service, teaching, and nursing.[2] In Calcutta, where only 5 per cent of women work, about one-third of women work as 'domestic servants', while the next activity in importance is prostitution (Sen, 1960). Such statistics about female participation in work can be misleading at times, given the tendency of the male respondents to surveys to underplay the work done by women, particularly in agriculture, in the informal sector in the city and in the handicrafts production. But even in those cases where the female migrants work–whether such work is recognized by statistics or not–their movement to a new

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1. Marriage-associated migration tends to fall with the distance covered by the female migrant. See, Premi, 1980. The tendency of female migrants to move over a short distance is also confirmed in Eanes, 1965, in case of migrants from U.P. while 51 per cent of male migrants from U.P. go to Calcutta and Bombay, only 23 per cent of female migrants go that far.
2. For example, in 1971, 40.6 per cent of working female migrants were busy in this sector. However, this figure closely corresponds to 38.1 per cent for all workers including both migrants and locals. The distribution of female migrants among various types of work closely corresponds to that for all workers, in both urban and rural areas. See Premi, 1980; *National Sample Survey*, fourteenth round (July 1958-June 1959) and fifteenth round (July 1959-June 1960). Also, S.R. Mukherjee and Banerjee, 1978

destination is more often than not linked with such work. The proportion of married among the female migrants is very high, and it increases with the age of the migrant and duration in the destination (Premi, 1980). Only 8-9 per cent of the female migrants in 1971 remained unmarried after ten years of being in the destination, and all but a few of them were younger than nineteen (Premi, 1980). In other words, even the female children who accompanied parents and relations were married off soon and became tied to their husbands.

Female migration is, however, not without its interesting features. It is very often a good indication of the decision-making process behind migratory movements and the intended duration of stay of the adult male migrants. Generally speaking, the longer the distance covered the greater the possibility that the adult male would leave his family behind and consider his stay in the destination as temporary.[1] As the figures show, the female-male ratio declines sharply as one moves from intra-district rural-oriented movements towards inter-state urban-oriented movements. (Table 3.) Bringing the wife and family offers a strong indication that the migrant sees the present residence as one of long, possibly permanent duration. In a city, it is often found that some migrant groups are more keen to bring over their families than others. Those who went from Pakistan to West Bengal and Punjab took their families with them to the destination and consequently, were more successful in integrating culturally with the city population than migrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to Calcutta and Delhi who generally considered their stay in the city as temporary.[2]

As in many other parts of the world, cityward migration often begins with a single adult male migrating. He brings over his family after he has found a suitable job and has adapted himself to the new environment.[3] The decision to bring the family depends crucially upon the relative weight of his links with the place of origin and the destination. Having his wife and children in the village could be seen as a strong indication that the migrant continues as a member of the rural household, retains his share of the family property, and is prepared to meet the family obligations by sending remittances, and making occasional visits to the village. The bringing over of the wife and children marks the beginning of a process of dissociation of the migrant from the place of origin and his growing incorporation into life in the destination—which often leads to a decline in the amount of remittance-payments and in the frequency of visits. The longer he stays in the destination the greater is the likelihood of his sending for the family and making the destination his permanent residence; while the greater the distance covered (the more likely it is to be an urban area) the greater is the likely cultural distance between the origin and the destination and his ability to adjust to the new environment. For these reasons it is not surprising that the female-male ratio declines with distance and urban-oriented movement, (Table 4) but increases with duration in the destination [4]

2.3 Rural-rural migration

Taking all types of migratory movements into account, rural-rural migration emerges as quantitatively by far the most dominant movement; a fact which remained unknown until the mid-sixties.[5] In contrast the rural-urban migration,

Table 3. Female-male sex ratios with distance and migration type

1961	Short (intra-district)	Medium (inter-district)	Long (inter-state)
Rural-rural	3,660	2,474	1,425
Urban-rural	1,783	1,457	1,057
Urban-urban	1,248	1,056	790
Rural-urban	1,198	903	504
1971			
Rural-rural	3,691	2,830	1,687
Urban-rural	1,821	1,434	930
Urban-urban	1,264	1,049	841
Rural-urban	1,196	879	582

Source: Census of India.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of migrants by origin–destination, distance and sex–1971

Origin–destination	Total				Male				Female			
Distance	R-R	R-U	U-U	U-R	R-R	R-U	U-U	U-R	R-R	R-U	U-U	U-R
Short	57.7	6.1	2.0	2.0	40.1	9.0	3.0	2.3	65.5	4.8	1.7	1.8
Medium	12.1	4.9	3.3	1.1	11.3	8.8	5.2	1.5	14.1	3.2	2.4	1.0
Long	4.0	3.6	2.7	0.5	5.3	7.8	4.9	0.8	3.4	1.8	1.7	0.3

Source: A. Bose, *Studies in Urbanization in India*, New Delhi 1973.

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1. In the case of South Maharastra, 71 per cent of female migration (as opposed to 37 per cent among males) was confined within the same district. See V. Narain, 1972.
2. In Calcutta the male-female ratio for non-migrants is 1,179, whereas those for Biharis, Orias, South Indians, and Bengali migrants are 3,976, 5,690, 1,880 and 1,751, respectively. See, S. Chakrabarty, 1972. In Bombay, 44 per cent of married Hindustani migrants left their wives behind, compared to 22 per cent in the case of Tamil immigrants. See Gore, 1970.
3. In Delhi, 54 per cent of family members of migrants stay outside Delhi; of those who are with the migrant 16 per cent come within a year, but 41.8 per cent took five or more years to come. See Rao and Desai, 1966.
4. For example, the proportion of unmarried among men declines from 54.6 per cent in the first year of migration to 25.2 per cent in case of migration of ten or more years of duration. For female migrants the proportions are 14.5 and 7.9, respectively. See *Premi*, 1980. In South Maharastra, 83 per cent of female migrants move to other villages, and only 8 per cent to cities, while the corresponding figures for males are 28 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively. See Narain, 1972.
5. Even in 1961 some experts thought that rural-rural migration was 'slight' in quantitative terms. See Ghosal, 1968.

which usually commands a greater share of attention of the social scientists is not only less important, but its importance is actually declining over time. Furthermore, while the volume of rural-urban migration exceeds that of urban-rural movement, it is noticeable that in terms of the proportion of the base population the latter shows a somewhat higher figure.[1] In other words, migration towards urban areas is not as important in India as it is in the countries of Africa and Latin America, most of the migratory movements in India remain confined within the vast rural areas of the country.[2]

Rural-rural migration is usually temporary and seasonal and attracts the poorer sections of the rural society the poor peasants and agricultural labourers who move from village to village for work during harvesting and transplanting. Such migration often takes place in groups and follows a traditional route across villages where people have been accustomed to their visit at a particular time in the year. It is not unusual for the same group of seasonal rural migrants to work for the same farming family year after year. The movement, as is to be expected, is usually from the drought-prone poor regions to the prosperous agricultural regions for example, the migration of tribal groups from Chota Nagpur plateau towards the western districts of West Bengal, particularly Burdwan, or the migration of the labourers from the dry Kahndesh region towards the sugar cane plantations of Bardoloi of Gujarat (Breman, 1978).[3]

It can be said that such seasonal migration has increased with the introduction and large scale application of the high yielding seed varieties since the mid-sixties, and for a number of reasons (Dasgupta, 1980) First, the increase in the volume of work following a more intensive application of inputs, a higher cropping intensity, and much greater output Secondly, the serious time bottleneck which arises between the harvesting of one crop and the land preparation of another- which requires the mobilization of a large volume of labour within a short time. Thirdly, the very process of the commercialization of agriculture and a shift away from family labour and the social obligation to absorb the local labour force. Many landowners now find it more convenient to hire a group of contract labourers from outside to complete harvesting against fixed wages or share of crop rather than entering into complications about the traditional share of local labour in harvesting and the problems of supervision. Outside labour, which has no social roots with the village is generally easier to manipulate than the local workers, and its presence usually keeps the wage level relatively depressed compared with what it could have become without competition from the migrant labour force. This is more or less an universal phenomenon which has been noticed in many countries of the world, particularly in the countries of south and south-east Asia (Dasgupta, 1980).

Such migration often takes place under the auspices of the large-scale plantations--sugar, coffee etc., which recruit through a network of agents and sub-agents, pay the migrants an advance and arrange their transport and lodging. The pattern roughly follows that established by the tea plantations under the British ownership in the last century --although the distance covered by the migrants is not usually that great and the duration is for a specific operation. As the account by Breman of the seasonal migrants to sugar factories of Bardoloi shows, they are paid a very low wage and exploited at all levels--by the recruiting agents as well as by the factories--and they are preferred to the local agricultural labourers partly because of their traditional skill in this work and partly due to the fact that their employment is flexible according to the need in a particular operation, and that they can be hired and fired at will! (Brenan, 1978.)

Sometimes, for at least some individuals and families, what begins as a seasonal and temporary movement develops into a more or less permanent stay in the developed regions. Groups comprising parents and children build their huts in the periphery of the village, squat on a piece of public or grazing land or are given a certain amount of land by a landowner in order to obtain a secure supply of labour, and eventually become a part of the village life while maintaining their segregated residence [4] In fact, this is how a prosperous village grows by assimilating new groups of people from a variety of castes, tribes, and communal roots. Studies on Indian villages show that the larger villages are usually agriculturally more prosperous, and contain a more diversified social life the proportion of population belonging to the largest social group falling with the size of the village (Dasgupta, 1977).

Not all rural-rural migration is temporary and seasonal. Historically, recruitments to tea plantations in Assam were made on a contract basis for a period of five years, from the semi-arid districts of Bihar and Orissa, but the vast majority of those who came for work eventually stayed on. Migration from outside was the key factor in a rapid growth in the population of Assam Valley--which trebled from 800,000 in 1835 to 2.6 million in 1901, and trebled again between 1901 and 1951 to reach a figure of 6.7 million. The major explanation for migration was of course tea plantations which were first established in 1840, and which passed through a period of accelerated growth between 1872 and 1901 registering a 2,200 per cent growth. Between 1911 and 1921, about 729,000 labourers were recruited, mostly from Bihar through agents who not only brought them over from the villages in remote areas but kept them under very strict discipline almost as prisoners. The establishment of the oil industry in Digboi was another, although somewhat less important, source of employment of migrant labour. Migration of such a scale required the improvement of infrastructure, particularly the setting up of a steamer service on Brahmaputra river. It also necessitated the stepping up of the food production in the state which, despite having vast unutilized land areas, was actually importing rice from outside to feed the local population and the migrants. A fresh flow of migration therefore became necessary in order to clear the woods and bushes and to prepare the land and cultivate (Rasmussen, 1960)

The second wave of migration came from the adjoining areas of East Bengal (now Bangladesh), and it was made up of professional agriculturalists, who were concentrated in the Goalpukur, Sibsagar and Nawgaon districts of Assam Valley. In Goalpukur alone, between 1911 and 1931 more

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1. The rate of urban-urban migration is 18.3 per cent, compared to 6.8 per cent of rural-urba . migration, with the population in origin as the base. See A Bose, 1973.
2. To take an extreme example, in Bihar 87 per cent of migrants move within the rural areas, compared to 9 per cent rural-urban migrants, and 2.7 per cent and 1.2 per cent urban-urban and urban-rural migrants See Pandey, 1972.
3. As many as 4 per cent of the seasonal migrants to Raburi sugar factory of Ahmednagar district of Maharastra were illiterate, the vast majority were small farmers. See P. Pathare, *et al*, 1972.
4. N.S.S. data for 1958-59 show that 58 5 per cent of the immigrants in rural areas severed connections with their native places ten years back or earlier. See *National Sample Survey*, fourteen round, 1958059.

than 400,000 people came from East Bengal. In all more than one million came to Assam over this twenty year period. Unlike the migrations to the tea gardens these were not organized and did not attract workers from distant districts or states, and the migrants came in family groups not as individuals.[1] In the words of the Superintendent of Census Operations in Assam, 'In fact the way in which they have seized upon the vacant areas in the Assam Valley seems almost uncanny. Without fuss, without due trouble to the district revenue staff, a population which must amount to over a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to the Assam Valley during the last twenty years' (Rasmussen, 1960). They migrated in response to the demand created for their service as food producers, and to the opportunities which existed for cultivation in Assam compared with the overcrowded areas of Bengal from which they came.

Another wave of rural-rural migration, on a vast scale took place after the partition of India in 1947, when many people left the Pakistan areas and moved to what remained of India after independence. Most of these movements were towards West Bengal, Punjab, Assam and Tripura which led to a rapid increase in the population of those states between 1941 and 1951. A part of such rural-rural migration was routed through urban areas where they came first and then dispersed to rural areas; but many cultivators also moved across the border directly legally or otherwise without passing through the cities and towns in India. In the case of West Bengal the number of such refugees was 4.2 million, while in the small state of Tripura the refugees soon became the majority of the population pushing out the indigenous tribal population (who at present constitute a fifth of the population) (Bengal Chamber of Commerce, 1970). Refugee cultivators brought with them skills in farming new crops (e.g. jute as in West Bengal), or new methods of farming and enterprise (as in the Punjab). Whereas before the partition West Bengal's jute mills procured their supply of raw jute from East Bengal (East Pakistan-Bangladesh), within a decade or so the refugees made the state self-sufficient in raw jute production (Bengal Chamber of Commerce, 1970). And whereas Punjab (East --which formed a part of India) was a food-deficit area at the time of partition, it was mainly the refugees from the doab-area of Western Punjab (now in Pakistan) who not only brought about self-sufficiency in food production, but actually made Punjab a food surplus area of the country, which took a pioneering role in introducing the so called 'green revolution' technology in the country (Dasgupta, 1980). Again, as in the case of settlers in Assam who came from East Bengal, (now Bangladesh) the refugees came in family groups with the intention of making the destination their permanent home.

Rural settlements are often based on industrial trading activities in areas with sparse population. An example is Danweli, a settlement of 3,110 at the time of the study in 1955-56, a part of the North Kanara district of Karnataka. The settlement began with the setting up of a government forest depot in 1916, but gradually other activities were sponsored such as a saw mill, a plywood factory, a ferro-manganese factory and a paper-pulp factory. Rich in manganese ore and forest resources, this area has attracted two types of migrants seasonal workers who are engaged in mining and lumbering work, and the settled population. About half of the workers among the settlers were non-agricultural workers before migrating, more than one-fourth of them were weavers. All but 17 per cent of them were engaged in manual operations before migrating, and all but 92 per cent are continuing with manual work. In contrast, the proportion of cultivators among the seasonal workers is higher at 38 per cent but most of them were operating small, uneconomic holdings, and 53 per cent were non-agricultural labourers in their native village (Souza). This observation is consistent with Breman's study of Bardoloi in South Gujurat where a significant proportion of seasonal migrants are small farmers, (Breman, 1978) as also the study of seasonal migrants to sugar factories of Ahmednagar in Maharastra (Pathare, *et al*, 1972).

The success of the 'green revolution' technology in Punjab, Harayana, and Western Uttar Pradesh over the last fifteen years has led to a new wave of permanent migration that is of farm servants who are recruited from the poor areas of Bihar, Nepal and Western Uttar Pradesh, who are paid a low wage and are made to work both in the field and at home. In conditions of labour shortage, particularly at the time of harvesting or land preparation, such a supply of farm labourers enables the landowners to maintain a secured supply of labour force which would not have been possible otherwise. As a consequence, given the specific situation of these areas, one finds a strange combination of highly capitalist farming along with semi-feudal practices like having labourers attached to a family for year-round work. The supply of such migrant labour has been one of the main reasons why the real wage of the Punjab agricultural labourers has not risen as much as one would expect given a sizeable increase in production and prosperity in the area (Bardhen, 1974; Dasgupta, 1980, Chapter VI). This kind of permanent migration has not occurred in many other enclaves of rural prosperity where, despite an increase in the demand for labour the demand-supply situation continues to favour the landowners, who have the option of hiring casual labourers according to the needs of farming.[2]

Discussion on rural-rural migration would not be complete without a brief reference to rural resettlement programmes, which have been sponsored by the government. Two most well known of such resettlement programmes are located in Dandakaranya, an area which covers several districts of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra, and Andaman and Nicobar Island on the Bay of Bengal, in addition to many smaller resettlement programmes all over the country. Such programmes have not generally been successful partly because of lack of administrative preparation before such migration took place--irrigational and transport facilities were lacking, and land was either not suitable or not developed to make it usable by colonists--and also because of the general lack of sympathy and understanding on the part of the government officials running the programme, the hostility of the local population and home-sickness on the part of the migrants. Here also the experience of India is not much different from those of most other countries of the world which have attempted to resettle a large population from land-deficit areas in land-surplus areas, e.g. in Sumatra or the Amazonian region of Brazil.

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1. *Census of India, 1931*, Vol 3, Part I, p 2.
2. A study on villages in Kota, Rajasthan which have been influenced by the new technology, showed that in the survey area eighty-five families came from outside - of whom twenty-seven were cultivator families, sixteen agricultural labour families, thirty-two service families, four artisan families and six trader families in five years under High Yield Varieties (HYV), of these twenty eventually left (Bapna, 1973).

2.4 Rural-urban migration

As Table 1 shows, the rural-urban migration accounts for less than 15 per cent of the migrants in the country, compared to 69-74 per cent in the case of rural-rural migration. Again, whereas the rural-rural migration is heavily weighted in favour of female migrants the vast majority of whom move because of marriage, and some also for work as a part of a group work force (although seasonal migrants are not likely to be covered by these census figures)–rural-urban migration tends to be biased in favour of adult males. About one-quarter of men and one-tenth of women migrants are accounted for by this kind of migration, while the age selectivity has been amply confirmed a large number of studies of urban migrants (Connel, *et al*, 1977). We have already noted that the female-male ratio tends to decline with urban-oriented movements and distance. Such migration is likely to be of a more permanent nature than rural-rural migration; studies among urban migrants show that a substantial proportion of them have been in the urban areas for longer than ten years (Rao and Desai, 1966).

A national sample survey in 1958, covering the whole country, revealed that 25 per cent of rural-urban migrants come to town in search of their first job (Indian Statistical Institute, 1962). An important explanation for the age-selectivity of rural-urban migration is that, given the monetary and psychic costs of migration, the net return from migration is likely to be higher for those who are capable of spending a good part of their working life in the towns (Sjaastad, 1962). In contrast, the cost of migration could be prohibitive for those who have fewer years of working life in the town. However, it is not easy to produce a cost-benefit analysis based on the costs of migration and the income foregone in the countryside on the one hand, and the discounted present value of income over the whole period in the destination, that is to examine the economic rationale of migration from the point of view of potential migrants, because of lack of data (Speare, 1971). Another reason for the migration of the young is for schooling. In a vast majority of the villages the educational facilities–both in terms of quality and the range of courses–are inadequate and ranked low by the prospective employers; this induces the better-off families to send their children to towns for schooling (Wyon and Gordon, 1971). Conflicts within the family and factional struggles within the village is yet another factor inducing the migration of the young (Singh, 1958).

Unlike rural-rural migration which tends to attract the poorer section of the rural society, rural-urban migration attracts many different streams of rural population. It is possible to classify such movement into various sub-types according to migrant characteristics. 'Organized migration' to the factories and establishments through agents usually brings the poorer sections–e.g. the workers of the jute industry of Calcutta and the cotton textile industry of Bombay–and from remote areas, such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in these two cases. The potential migrants are paid an advance and their transport, accommodation, etc., are arranged by the factories.

Migrants who come to the towns as victims of natural disasters–flood (Gangetic Valley), storm (Andhra and Tamilnadu), drought, and so on–also tend to be the poorest in the countryside, who are least capable of recovering from the losses inflicted by such disasters, and are often left with virtually nothing to survive.[1] They move to the towns with the expectation of drawing the attention of the government and various relief agencies They usually migrate in family groups, and many of them stay on in the destination even after the drought, storm or flood has ended. A very high proportion of the beggars and pavement dwellers of Calcutta (numbering more than 100,000 according to various estimates) originally came because of such disasters or were born of parents who came to Calcutta in the wake of such a disaster.[2]

In contrast, migrants who are victims of 'political disaster' tend to come from somewhat better-off background. During the pre-independence riots and in the early years of independence the refugees who came to the towns were usually those who had contacts with the urban areas before (some of their relations or fellow villagers were living there and were prepared to help them in finding jobs, accommodation etc.) and whose qualifications and education made them suitable for urban jobs.[3] Only on the subsequent rounds were the poorer sections involved in migration–those for whom life outside the village was unknown and uncertain, whose qualifications were not suitable for jobs in urban areas, and who, therefore despite the threat to their lives persisted in living in their own villages rather than leaping into an uncertain future in a distant place. Furthermore, a great majority of them, when they eventually migrated, moved directly to rural areas across the border.

Apart from those who came to the towns as a part of the organized population movements or during natural or political disasters, there were others who could be loosely described as 'voluntary' migrants. Unlike the victims of disasters and organized migrants who tended to come in clusters or groups, 'voluntary' migration is usually a continuous process and is based on individual or family decisions. Generally speaking, it is not usually the poorest who have been pushed out of their land, and for whom the rural-urban income differential is likely to be very high, who come 'voluntarily' to the urban areas. Whether in terms of literacy, occupation or family background, such migrants tend to come from better-off families.[4] One can identify several reasons why 'voluntary migration' is likely to be biased in favour of the better-off. First, migration decisions involve knowledge about the destination and the income opportunities which exist there–the richer sections in the village, who are more likely to be more literate and socially more advanced, would generally have a better access to such knowledge. Secondly, migration involves costs such as transport and subsistence during the first phase of migration without a job, and might even make the migrant dependent on remittance from the village of origin for a period. Reverse

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1. In the case of the Madras state (now Tamilnadu) the failure of the north-east monsoon often brought the victims to Madras city, where arrangements for feeding and sheltering them was made. See S. Chandrasekhar, 1964.
2. See *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8.1, 1963.
3. See A. Ghosh, 1971. A survey on refugees showed that 55 per cent of them belonged to high caste groups. See N.C. Chakrabarty.
4. See Dasgupta-Laishley, 1975. In fifteen South Maharastra villages, the level of illiteracy was 66 per cent, but among outmigrants the figure was 48 per cent. The outmigrants tend to come from two opposite ends of the social scale–Brahmins (34 per cent) and neo-Buddhists (who were previously scheduled castes), while the migration propensity is lowest among the peasant-based middle-castes, Marathis. (See Narain, 1972.) A similar conclusion is drawn by Sovani in his study of Bihar (see Sovani, 1965). See also Wyon and Gordon, 1971 (for confirmation in case of Punjab) and Yasawant, 1962. (confirmation in case of Tamilnadu).

remittance is not unusual as we shall see in Chapter IV. It goes without saying that richer families with savings are better equipped to support such costs of migration. Thirdly, 'voluntary migration' is heavily dependent on contacts in the towns; relatives or friends who would receive the migrant, provide for accommodation, find jobs for him, and even lend money during the initial weeks without job in addition to helping him to adjust to the new social environment. Richer families with better contacts outside the village are more likely to have such friends and relations in the towns who play a crucial role in decisions to migrate.[1]

A study by Dasgupta-Laishley on individual migrants to Delhi from villages in Punjab, Harayana and Uttar Pradesh shows that such migrants came from two ends of the literary scale – those with a very low level of literacy and those with higher education. However, the average level of literacy of these migrants was considerably higher than that for the villages from which they came (Dasgupta, Laishley, 1975). A study by Rao-Desai on Delhi also shows that the literacy level is the highest among the refugees, followed by other migrants and the local residents.[2] One study of Bombay shows that the proportion of illiterates was 8 per cent among immigrants compared to the national average of around 70 per cent,[3] and another study shows that the migrants were educationally more advanced than their fellow villagers. In Calcutta, the level of literacy is highest among the refugees, as in Delhi, but between the other migrants and the local residents the figure is lower for the former; but even in the case of other migrants – mainly those from Bihar, Orissa and eastern Uttar Pradesh – their literacy rate is much higher than that for their native states (Sen, 1960). Furthermore in 1961, for the country as a whole, the proportion of literates among immigrants to cities and towns was 58.8 per cent, almost double the national literacy rate (Dhas, 1972).

Similarly, taking castes as an indicator of economic and social standing, it is found that the proportion of lower castes among the migrants is much lower than their share in the country's population. In Calcutta, the majority of the population belong to the top three castes (Brahman, Baidya, Kayastha) while the rest of the migrants generally come from intermediate castes and not the lower ones (Dhar, 1972). A similar picture is found in the case of Delhi (Dasgupta, Laishley, 1975).

A study by Dasgupta-Laishley also finds that villages with a relatively high migration propensity are those with a relatively developed agriculture, a higher productivity and bigger investment in agricultural implements. These villages are larger than the average in population size and are located near urban centres. These are also villages with a high level of concentration of income and landlessness (Dasgupta, Laishely, 1975). O.P. Gupta's study of migration to Delhi also finds that the propensity to migrate is higher among those districts near Delhi where the level of literacy is high, a higher proportion of people live in urban areas, and a high proportion of workers are engaged in tertiary sector activities. Gupta's study also found a high, positive correlation between per capita income in districts and migration propensity – but the strength of correlation declined with distance (Gupta, 1972). Evidently, the weight of 'organized' and 'disaster-induced' migration increases with distance. Although it is not possible to relate directly the relationship found at the aggregative level to that existing at the individual level – e.g. migration from richer districts does not imply that only the rich in those districts migrate; statistically speaking, it is equally possible that the poor in the richer districts migrate the overall weight of evidence seems to be in favour of the view that it is generally the better-off who migrate from the rural areas to the towns, excepting those involved in organized or disaster-induced migration.

Lest the term 'better-off' might create some misunderstanding, it should be stated that it is a relative statement specific to the rural context. Those who are considered 'better-off' in the rural areas might not be considered so in comparison with the income levels in the towns. The 'poor' in the big cities could, in many instances, be quite favourably compared with the lower end of the middle peasantry in the villages. The 'proletariat' of the jute industry of Calcutta is a privileged person in the village of Uttar Pradesh from where he comes, and might even play an exploitative social role in relation to his own sharecroppers and landless labourers. More often than not a member of a higher or intermediate caste group who is unwilling to perform 'dirty' or physically-taxing jobs in the rural areas will be less inhibited about undertaking the job of a porter, *peon* or sweeper in the town where he is unknown.[4] This discussion incidentally, illustrates the wide gulf which exists between the rural and the urban sector in terms of level of living and job opportunities.

For the better-off, migration often begins as the movement of a single adult male who leaves his family behind[5] and remains an integral part of the joint family back in the village (Rao-Desai, 1966). In many cases, it is not the individual migrating who takes the decision, but the family head, and the family decisions are often based on the need to supplement agricultural earnings or to diversify the earning base, or even to help with the agricultural and trading activities in the village through contacts in the towns (Epstein, 1973). Remittances sent by the migrant back home are seen as a part of the understanding which prompted the family to incur the cost of migration. A study on Delhi shows that the individual migrant continues to remain as an integral part of the joint family, and makes frequent visits (Rao-Desai, 1966).

Families maintaining two households – one in the town and another in the village – are an important feature of life in the smaller towns and cities. The composition of the urban household changes from time to time, family members taking their turn to work in agriculture and looking after business interests in the towns. One major objective of maintaining an urban base is to train and educate the younger members in the urban areas which helps to strengthen the link between the family in the village and the town, and paves the way for further migration.[1] It is this phenomenon of the better-off rural families maintaining households in the urban areas–which integrates the ruling élite in the two areas and brings about a community of interest. However, the bigger a city and the longer the connection with the city, the greater usually the link with the urban areas compared with those in the rural areas. For this reason the degree of urban-rural linkage one finds in the case of a city like Ludhiana with a population of say around 300,000 does not exist in case of a metropolitan centre like Calcutta with a population exceeding seven million.

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[1] A study of Bombay shows that the existence of host groups is an important condition of migration, particularly of the age group 13-20 who come without parents and who constitute 36-41 per cent of the total migrants. See Gore, 1970.

[2] The rates are 60.1, 51.2 and 39.5, respectively. This is true of higher education as well. See, Rao-Desai, 1966 (and also Gupta, 1972 for confirmation – in his case the proportion of illiteracy among migrants and non-migrants are 36 per cent and 44 per cent respectively).

[3] A little over a third of migrants are college-educated. Among various linguistic groups there are more of both illiterates and college-educated among Hindustanis than among the Marathis and Tamils. See Gore, 1970.

[4] In Rampura, four of the Brahmin out-migrants work as peons in the town, something which they would be unlikely to do in their own village. See, Srivastava, 1968.

[5] In Rampura only 6 per cent of women migrated to towns in 1966, compared to 24.1 per cent of men. See, Srivastava, 1968.

A phenomenon comparable to the maintenance of two households is found in the case of the industrial workers in the big cities like Calcutta or Bombay, where, by tradition, an employee is permitted to leave a substitute (a *badli),* usually a brother or a relative, in his place while going on leave for a long period; on the understanding that when he returns to the factory the substitute worker will withdraw from the factory. This is a legacy of the time when the supply of labour to the factories was uncertain, and the turnover was high–and the system was mutually beneficial to both the worker and the employer.

2.5 Urban-urban migration

Urban-urban migration accounts for about one-tenth of the aggregate migratory flow; and as in the case of rural-urban migration it is sex-selective, that is accounting for a much larger proportion of male migrants than of female migrants. In absolute numbers, the migratory movements are more or less equal–which explains the sex ratio close to one–given the higher proportion of females in the aggregate migratory flow.

It is possible to identify a number of sub-types of urban-urban migration. The most popular one is the so-called 'step migration', where a migrant moves from smaller to bigger settlements–sometimes over generations. This is confirmed by the figures of a substantial proportion of those from other urban areas among the immigrants to the big cities like Calcutta or Bombay.[2] Another sub-type is the migration in the reverse direction–from the bigger to the smaller settlements. Some of them are return migrants who go back to their native towns at the end of their working life or after completing education, training or work under a time-bound contract. Many of the refugees who came to India after the partition of the country in 1947 first moved to the metropolitan centres or bigger cities–mainly because these are better known and better connected by the railroad network than the smaller ones–but were then dispersed to the rural areas. In the case of the refugees coming to West Bengal, the Sealdah railway terminal in Calcutta was for many of them the transit camp where they remained for seven or eight years before being transferred to camps in other parts of the state. Furthermore, many migrants from rural areas prefer, at the end of their stay in a big urban settlement, returning to an urban area near their native village to actually living in that village–partly because of problems of readjustment to the village social environment, and partly because of the attractions of better economic opportunities in the towns where the skill and experience they acquired in the big cities could be more fruitfully applied. Thirdly, horizontal movements between towns and cities of comparable size are linked with business and employment interests, and transfers of employees of government, banking, and commercial establishments. Unfortunately, not enough disaggregated data exist to explore the relative quantitative significance of these sub-types within the more general category or urban-urban migration.

2.6 Urban-rural migration

Urban-rural migration is quantitatively the least important of the four types of migratory movement being discussed here–accounting for between 4 and 6 per cent of the total migratory flow, and around 9 million people. However, considering the low population base from which such migration is taking place–urban population accounting for only one-fifth of the total population–the rate of such migration compared with its population base exceeds that for rural-urban population (Todaro, 1969; Harris, Todaro, 1970). Again, as in the case of urban-urban migration, this kind of migration can be classified into a variety of sub-types. One way of sub-classification would be to separate the 'successful' returnees from the 'unsuccessful' ones. The successful return migrants are those who return at the end of their working period: target migrants, children returning after schooling in the towns, and those who return to make use of the opportunities available in the village. Many people return to villages for nostalgic reasons when economic considerations would not favour such return. The wish to 'die in my own village' is very strong with the first generation migrants–although their children are less likely to be strongly attached to the villages. Target migrants are those whose original decision to migrate was linked to the attainment of a specific target–to accumulate saving for buying a piece of agricultural machinery, to look after the education of younger members of the family in the towns, to work in the army or to work on a contract as a part of the organized migratory movement sponsored by employers. Then there are those who, through their experience in the towns, have come to identify new opportunities in the rural areas of which they were not aware, or of which they could not take advantage because of lack of resources, contact or experience, before migrating to the towns. Finally, there are those who went to town for education or training–members of better-off families or families of first generation migrants–and return at the end of the period of schooling.

In many cases, return migration is not permanent, although the individual concerned might have intended it to be permanent. Long stay in the urban areas–particularly in distant places in a new social environment–often poses serious problems of adjustment to life back in the village. Social norms and institutions prevailing in the village might easily come in conflict with values acquired in the towns, and relations with fellow villagers with whom he had a certain type of relationship before migrating might prove exceedingly difficult. These conflicts are likely to be more serious for children who have been educated in the towns and whose qualifications might make them unsuitable for life and work opportunities in the villages. For all these reasons, the migratory process once initiated cannot be easily terminated; individuals returning 'permanently' may find themselves returning to urban areas from time to time.

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[1] Wyon and Gordon's study of Punjab villages concluded, 'younger sons were often given some education with the direct intent of preparing them for life outside village' (Wyon and Gordon, 1971). Education, by reducing the psychic cost of migration, helps to pave the way for further education, apart from the fact that education plus migration widely expands earning opportunities. See, Richard Layrad, Marc Bloug and Maureen Woodhall, *The Causes of Graduate Unemployment in India.* London, 1969.

[2] In the case of Delhi about half the migrants (other than refugees) come from other urban areas, whereas in case of the refugees, about three-fifths come from other urban areas. (See Rao-Desai, 1966). In Calcutta more than three-fourths (76.66 per cent) of immigrants were born in rural areas. (See Chakravarty, 1972.)

'Unsuccessful' return migrants are those who return earlier than planned, and also those who wanted to make the urban areas their permanent home but had to return. An important explanation is the failure to adjust to the urban environment, its social and cultural norms, or at any rate the norms of people with whom one has to stay and work. Some return because they fail to find a job or a suitable job. Whereas a local resident, supported by his family, is able to remain unemployed and spend a good part of his time in search for a job, a migrant, lacking such support, has to find some work very soon or is forced to return home. This lack of family support in the urban areas is one explanation of the relatively higher rate of employment among the migrants compared to the local residents. There are also those who went to the urban area on an assignment, but whose services were terminated sooner than expected and the family members of low-earning workers who are unable to maintain them in the city.

The data on migrants seldom provide a detailed breakdown of migrants returning home to indicate the quantitative significance of these various types of return migrants. A study on Bombay shows that about one-third of the male migrants and one-fifth of female migrants return within three to four years of arriving in the city. The proportion of returning migrants is higher among the new migrants and those over 35 years of age. This turnover is, as we have already noted, not reflected in the census data which tends to show a high proportion of migrants having been in the city for a long period. One might put forward the hypothesis that the proportion of return migrants is likely to be positively related with the size of the urban area—the smaller urban centres being more successful in retaining the migrants.

One sub-type of urban-rural migration not covered by the above classification is the movement of skilled urban salaried workers—teachers, government officers, personnel connected with business and industrial concerns. The NSS (fourteenth round) for 1958-59 estimates that about 3.2 per cent of male immigrants to rural areas come under transfer on service contract. The eighteenth round of National Sample Survey covering the period 1963-64 estimates that among the rural immigrants 5.8 per cent were teachers, 2.8 per cent were professionals, technicians and related workers, 4.9 per cent were administrative, executive, clerical, and related workers, and 3.6 per cent were sales workers—17 per cent in aggregate, compared to their share of 4 per cent among all the workers in rural areas. This kind of migration is not likely to be covered by decennial census data despite their quantitative and qualitative importance in village life. It should be noted though, that the figures cover all rural immigrants including those from other rural areas.[1]

2.7 Distance covered by migrants

Table 5. Percentage distribution of migrants by distance covered—typewise and sexwise—1971

Type	Total	Male	Female
Intra-district (short)	67.8	54.4	73.8
Inter-district (medium)	21.4	26.8	19.0
Inter-state (long)	10.8	18.8	7.2

Source: A. Bose, *Studies in Urbanization in India*, New Delhi, 1973

So far we have analysed migration in India in terms of the origin-destination relationship. Another, among many other possible ways of examining this multi-dimensional phenomenon is in terms of the distance covered. Table 5 provides a detailed breakdown of migratory movements in terms of distance on the basis of the census data for 1971. The table shows that more than two-thirds of migration is confined within the district, and movements between districts account for another one-fifth, but the movements across state frontiers involves only slightly more than one-tenth of the migrants. This is very much in line with one of Ravenstein's 'laws' of migration that the migrants tend to minimize distance; between two places with equal opportunities they prefer the nearer one. The longer the distance between two points in space the greater is the attraction of intervening opportunities and the cost of migration in both monetary and psychic terms. In India's case, we have already established, most of the migration is intra-rural—within twenty kilometres according to one study (Libbee-Sopher, 1972)—and or associated with marriage. The movements of the females are likely to cover shorter distance than those of males.

It is possible to identify three types of movements over long distances: those induced by disaster which force people to go to bigger urban centres where relief is expected to be better organized; those 'organized' by employers, and which usually attract the poorest, but would also include officials of government and private sector companies who are transferred; and the 'voluntary' migration of the members of better-off families.

The preference for migration over a short distance is common to movements towards both the urban and the rural areas, except for the three types mentioned above.[2] However, commuting could be seen as alternative to migration in the case of the areas on the periphery of the urban centres which could be reached by the transport facilities within a reasonably short time. The larger the urban centre the better is its road-rail link over a longer distance, and the greater is the incentive to commute to avoid the high cost of living and environmental problems of the cities. The rapid increase in commuter traffic in cities like Calcutta and Bombay is an indication of the fact that, compared with the living conditions in the suburbs the life in the metropolis is losing its attraction. In fact one might argue that, one of the reasons why commuting is not more widespread is because the suburban transport system is still very unreliable and slow and this forces many people to live near the city against their own preferences. Unlike the cities in the western world where one notices a marked tendency for the better-off to move away from the city centre towards more space and comfort in the suburban towns and villages, in India the civil servants and company executives cannot afford to live too far away from the city because of the low level of development of transport and communication facilities.

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1. *The National Sample Survey*, eighteenth round (February, 1963-February 1964).
2. See Agro-economic Research Centre for Padhya Pradesh, 1969.

CHAPTER III

Causes

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed some of the major characteristics of the migratory movements in India–their overall size, distribution according to origin and destination, the role of female migration, and the age-sex-educational-economic-social characteristics associated with those movements. It should be clear from the above account that migrais not prompted by one variable or another, it is rather a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon resulting from the interaction of a variety of social, economic and political forces. For this reason, attempts to attribute to one factor or another the causal explanation for such migratory movements based on the results of micro-level studies, would be partial and grossly misleading.

Here migration is seen as a phenomenon with an historical root, and as being caused by three major types of changes in the social environment–changes in the agrarian structure, changes in the settlement patterns, and distasters–in the context of a given social system. We also see migration here as a particular form of labour use–the others being work in the family farm, work as hired agricultural labour, work outside agriculture, and non-work–and then consider under what social and economic conditions migration could be viewed as a chosen option by a large number of people. Here we also assign an important role to the state, as a considerable influence on the pattern of urban settlement and the agrarian strucuture, and as having power to control by regulations, incentives and disincentives–the movement of people from point A to point B.

3.2 Historical roots

The history of India provides two contrasting pictures of the population movements in the country. First, some of the biggest population movements in the world to places across the snows and the barren rocks of the Hindukush mountains into the vast Indo-Gangetic plains (for example the Aryans, Greeks led by Alexander, Mughals led by Babar, as also Huns, Saks. Pathans, Turks, and many other nationalities of central Asia); which in their turn pushed the local population towards the fringes of the inaccessible mountains; secondly, leaving aside those episodic events, the village life in the country generally maintained a remarkable degree of calm, self-sufficiency and aloofness from the world at large.[1] For the vast majority of the people, migration was hazardous and pointless, and the agriculture prosperous enough to make them content to stay at home. Except in periods of severe drought when it became a question of life and death, most of the migratory movements were associated with pilgrimage, movements of the army, and trade. Village life was highly organized with detailed job specialization and the production of a vast range of articles of consumption which could be acquired from the travelling merchants who passed through the villages. The link of the village with the distant Emperor or his local representative was maintained by the village headman who collected the revenue and, when necessary, supplied able-bodied men for work in the army; but, for all practical purposes, the internal administration was self-contained with the minimum of interference from outside forces; the makings and breakings of empires had little effect on the life and work of the villagers.

The coming to power of the British in the middle of the eighteenth century brought about a qualitative change in the self-contained village system which existed from time immemorial. It is possible to identify several major kinds of impact. First, the development of railways, roads and the telegraphic network, which broke the isolation of the villages and linked them with the cities and other villages. Furthermore, the British administration, with a unified legal system, a developed and standardized tax structure and a desire to transfer resources from the subjugated country to the metropolitan centre, was many times more effective than the loose, inefficient, feudal administration of the Mughals which preceded it, in penetrating the countryside. It was no longer possible for the villages to remain isolated and self-contained.

The group in the village to be hardest hit by the collapse of the traditional social system were the artisans–the weavers, blacksmiths, potters, tailors and so on–who until then possessed a captive, protected market for their products and services within the village. In the case of the weavers (who were known for the quality of their work) they also lost the patronage they traditionally received from the Indian rulers and faced stiff competition from the cheap imported British goods manufactured on a large scale which enjoyed tariff-advantage over the Indian products. The unequal competition transformed the village artisans into destitutes, many of whom now found a new livelihood in the construction of railways and roads; activities which were primarily responsible for their displacement from the village economy. The colonial system therefore helped their process of proletarianization in both ways–by removing them from their livelihood in the villages, and then by finding work for them outside the village in non-traditional activities.

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[1] A critical assessment of the Marxist view on pre-colonial 'Asiatic mode of production', see Nagri, 1975 and Guha, 1975.

New jobs were also created in the army and in the industries and mines which were set up by the British. The Indians working for the British army played a major role in the wars in Asia and Africa through which most of the British Empire was built. They fought for the British right up to the second world war: against the Japanese in Burma and other parts of South and South-East Asia and against the Italians in the deserts of North Africa. The two major industries sponsored by the British were jute and cotton textile industries located in Calcutta and Bombay - to which migration was organized by the employers through jobbers. Most of the migrants to these metropolitan cities came from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, two of the poorest areas in the country. Mines - mainly coal, later on iron, oil, manganese, zinc and many other minerals sponsored by the British companies constituted another type of growth centres which attracted migrants. Apart from the discovery of oil in Digboi, Assam in the 1880s most of the mines were located in the region covered by Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. In order to induce them to participate in mining operations, the local workers were offered land in the vicinity of the mines where they, not detached from their village, could produce their own food; this arrangement also had the advantage, from the point of view of the mining companies, of obviating the need to find food for their workers. Sometimes agreements were made with the local *zamindars* to supply a certain number of people from their villages for such arduous work. Those recruited through agents—called *sirdars*—from distant areas were provided with lodging (usually for single males) and were kept under strict discipline (Seth, 1940; R. Mukherjee, 1945; A. Dasgupta, 1975).

The British rule brought about some significant changes in the organization of agricultural production. In place of producing for family subsistence, the emphasis was now placed on market, and on raw materials and crops which were in demand outside India—for example, jute, indigo, coffee, tea, rubber and cotton. The cultivators in Bengal were encouraged to produce jute crop in summer, in addition to the rice they produced during the monsoon season. In the case of indigo, which was then in heavy demand in Europe, the farmers were forced to take an advance from the *nilkar sahebs* (the British indigo planters) and to plant indigo on their land; those who did not were subjected to torture, while the price paid for indigo, net of the loan repayment and interest, was fixed arbitrarily at a level which was barely sufficient to meet the subsistence needs of the farmers. A consequence of this vigorous effort towards indigo cultivation was that many farmers left their villages in order to escape farming this unremunerative crop. The tea plantations were usually organized on a bigger scale, by companies set up for this purpose which made sizeable investments, often in sparsely populated areas to which 'indentured labourers' had to be brought from distant places. These activities, though not comparable to the extent of commercialization of agriculture in Africa or Latin America (or even in Malaysia), helped the process of commercialization of the rural life, its gradual incorporation into the economy of the whole country and of the entire colonial system, and the movement of population over both short and long distances to meet the commercial objectives of the colonial economy.

A distinctive feature of the colonial period until the early twenties, was the frequent occurrence of famines which were caused by natural factors, but aggravated by the heavy burden imposed by the land tax system which weakened the rural economy's ability to handle such disasters. The account of the period by the economic-historian Ramesh Chandra Dutta shows both the degree of exploitation of the countryside in normal times—which was at a much higher level than that for the preceding period under the Mughals and the insensitivity of the rulers to the desperate conditions of the subjugated population at times of famine. For example, the famine of 1770, which accounted for 10 million deaths—about one-third of the population of Bengal-Bihar at that time—did not prevent the colonial administration of the East India Company from maintaining their level of transfer of annual profit from 'Indian activities' to their headquarters in London. Famines forced the destitutes to leave the villages, via the well-developed transport system which took them to the towns where relief was more readily available (Dutt).

The colonial system also gave birth to many new centres of commerce, industries and government, including the three leading cities of the country of today: Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Many of these were located on or near the sea, which emphasized the role of trade in the colonial economic system. The new urban centres—growing from virtually nowhere—became as large as they are by attracting a considerable flow of migrants from all over the country.

Lastly, the colonial system encouraged population movements across the seas and the continents in order to meet the manpower needs of the mines, plantations, and construction works, as well as of the army as mentioned already, in other parts of the British empire. These workers were recruited through agents controlled by the central offices in Calcutta and several other major urban centres, and transported by boat, under a time-bound contract with the option to return to India at the end of the contractual period. As in the case of the recruits to plantations, the 'indentured labourers' were subjected to rigorous discipline, and forced to work for very long hours at a low wage under poor working conditions. Those with a low performance record and deserters were treated as criminals and severely punished. The vast majority of these workers stayed on in their destination at the end of the contractual period, and formed a significant proportion—and even majority in some cases—in the population of those countries. In subsequent periods, these settled populations attracted further waves of 'voluntary' migration of traders and other job-seekers from India (Tinker, 1973).

The disintegration of the self-contained village socio-economic system, displacement of the artisans, commercialization of agriculture, setting up of mines, plantations, factories and major urban areas both in India and in other parts of the empire, as well as periodic natural disasters—all these combined to effect significant transfers of populations during the British period. This trend continued until the very last decade of the British rule over India, the 1940s, which witnessed four major population movements: (i) movement towards the countryside from Calcutta during the Second World War, particularly when the fighting was going on near the border with Burma (Chandrasekhar, 1964); (ii) the rural exodus resulting from the famine of 1943 which took a toll of 6 million lives, (iii) the communal riot of 1946-48, which forced members of each community to move to areas where their communities were in majority, and (iv) the refugee movement following the partition of the country in 1947 towards West Bengal, Tripura and Assam in the east, and Punjab and Delhi in the west. Each of these movements involved millions of people who transferred their place of residence within a short time; and each had a profound influence, not only on the economics and the politics of the country, but also on the social life of the people for whom it was not merely a change of residence but a change in their occupations, life style, environmental context, and attitudes.

3.3 Population growth and agro-climatic conditions

One of the major areas of out-migration is those where the natural environment is harsh, land fertility is low and water is scarce, and where, with population increase, even the minimum survival needs of the population cannot be met. These are the areas which are most exposed to drought, and where out-migration can be seen as a necessity in order to maintain the fragile balance between human settlements and the very low carrying capacity of the eco-system.[1] These are usually areas with a low level of urbanization and a narrow economic base. The Himalayan region, Eastern Assam hills, and a large part of peninsular India, as also of the north-west would be covered by this description.[2] Here the population movements are usually seasonal, short-distance, intra-rural, and undertaken in groups; while, at the same time, some of the long-distance, across frontier, organized movements have also drawn their recruits from these. In these areas, as one would expect, very little 'voluntary' rural-urban migration takes place for the reasons already mentioned–lack of education, access to knowledge about opportunities elsewhere, and economic standing to bear the costs of migration, and friends and relatives outside their rural areas.

Another area of heavy out-migration is the highly-populated tracts of east and west coast and of gangetic plain where land is fertile but, through migrations and a high rate of natural growth over the years, the land-man ratio has reached impossibly low figures. Here again, out-migration–permanently or temporarily–is a necessity in order to reduce pressure on family land and to supplement family earnings from land. The plains of Uttar Pradesh and a good part of Bihar and Malabar coastal area would come under this category (1968). As in the previous case, here too the rate of urbanization is low; the exception being Tamilnadu and Andhra coastal areas.

In neither of these two types of areas is it possible for the area under cultivation to be substantially increased in order to allow for the absorption of a larger population. In case of areas with low fertility of land, while the gross land-man ratio might appear to be on the high side, any extension of cultivation to marginal land through deforestation might, after a few years of cultivation, lead to rapid soil erosion and even desertification. In the highly-populated plains on the other hand, the proportion of land under fallow or forest is low compared to the acceptable minimum; and here again, the extension of cultivated land at the cost of fallow land and forestry might cause a serious ecological imbalance in the long run.

Family planning could be a means of maintaining the balance between population and natural resources in these environments; but the record of post-Independence India in this field has not been particularly noteworthy. While the death rate has sharply declined since 1921 with the development of preventative health measures against many of the epidemics like cholera, small pox, tuberculosis and malaria, the rate of success has been anything but spectacular in inducing a decline in the birth rate. The major explanation for the failure lies in the fact that, to an average Indian, sons provide security in old age; for this reason it is important for him to continue giving birth to children until the family size is large enough to ensure the survival of at least one of his sons during his old age. While the decline in the death rate over the last few decades now ensures the survival of the son during old age with a smaller family size, the social and religious institutions, beliefs and values are still geared to high death rate conditions; and the absence of state sponsored social security system continues to remain an important factor in his decisions regarding family size. The absence of universal education (with only a third of the population being able to barely read and write in their own mother language), a low level of living of the population (70 per cent of whom live below the 'poverty line') and a very low level of urbanization (with more than four-fifths of the population living in the countryside) are other contributory factors which help to keep the birth rate at a very high level (Cassen, *et al.*, 1976; B. Dasgupta, 1976).

Even assuming the eventual success of the intensive campaign for family planning and of the declining death rate in reorienting the attitude towards family size, the problem created by the imbalance between population growth and the supply of land would continue to be with us for quite some time to come. The land-man ratio is rapidly worsening in many states, and in some it has reached the alarming level of no more than 0.10 to 0.20 hectares of cultivated land per head with the prospect of further, more severe, reductions in the coming decades.

The introduction of the high-yielding wheat and rice seed varieties developed in Mexico and Manila since the mid-sixties has considerably helped to offset the problem created by population growth by growing more–sometimes three or four times the output with the traditional technology–per unit of land, and given its quick-maturing property, by enabling the raising of two crops in the year from the same land. The technology associated with the new seeds has been highly successful in areas like Punjab, Harayana, western Uttar Pradesh, and the delta region of Andhra where there are extensive irrigation facilities and also viable rural institutions such as co-operatives and banks which enable such technology to be employed. However, such technology cannot be fruitfully employed in areas which lack such facilities–particularly the drought-prone areas and the heavily crowded areas of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh–apart from the fact that given its capital-energy-import intensity the prospect for its widespread use in the country is limited even in the other areas which do not suffer from these disadvantages. The availability of High Yield Variety (HYV) technology, therefore, does not provide any immediate solution to the problems of imbalance between population growth and land resources in these areas, and would not radically change their high out-migration propensity (B. Dasgupta, 1980 and "India's Green Revolution", 1976).

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[1] In the case of two out of four hill districts of Assam–Khasia and Jayantia Hills and Garo Hills–the rate of population increase was very low compared with the average for the state, largely because of poor soil conditions and a high death rate. While the rate of population growth in Assam between 1901 and 1961 was 219.79 per cent, for these two districts, the figures were 128.51 per cent and 122.19 per cent, respectively. See Dey, 1972. See also Agro-Economic Research Council for North-East India, 1962.

[2] In these areas less than 8 per cent of the population are involved in movement outside their district, and the rate of urbanization is around 7-8 per cent. See Ghosal.

3.4 Land relation and labour use

Another important factor influencing migration propensity is the pattern of ownership of land and use, and its implications for the level and pattern of labour use in the rural areas. During the British period two major types of land tenure system emerged - the *zamindari* system and the *ryotwari* system, ignoring the *mahalwari* system which was also prevalent in some areas. The basic difference between the two systems was that while the former was a system with the landlord at the apex, in the latter peasant-proprietorship dominated. In the *zamindari* system between the landlord and the actual cultivator many intermediate tenures existed, each paying rent to the tenant with a superior right over the land and exacting a rent from the tenants below him (Joshi, 1975; Institute of Economic Growth, 1961). Many of the big landlords lived in the towns and cities and maintained an extravagant life style based on the surplus extracted from the villages; they became a major instrument for the transfer of surplus from the rural to the urban areas, while the actual day to day running of the estates was done by paid employees who lived in the village. Apart from the landlords, sub-landlords, various categories of tenants and the peasant tenant-cultivator, there were those at the bottom of the pyramid, the agricultural labourers—some of whom were permanent farm servants tied to the landlord, and some of whom were hired on a yearly, seasonal or daily basis to perform some specific activities. The hierarchy in terms of rights over land closely corresponded to the social hierarchy—the landlords were mostly Brahmins or other upper castes, while the poorer tenants and agricultural labourers were from lower castes or untouchable groups. The social rank of a family also closely corresponded to their educational status as did the nature and degree of contact with the world outside the village (Joshi, 1975; Institute of Economic Growth, 1961).

In the *ryotwari* areas the land distribution was more egalitarian, with fewer landlords and agricultural labourers, most of the peasants both owning and operating land and producing mainly for family subsistence. Even in these areas a variant of landlordism emerged in due course, through the operation of market forces—unlike the *zamindars* who were originally tax-collectors for the Mughals, but were given land ownership by the British rulers—when mortgaged land of defaulting debtors accumulated in the hands of the moneylenders and traders, who became large landowners (Joshi, 1975; Institute of Economic Growth, 1961). With the big landowners and tenants the landless labourers arrived on the scene, but not to the same extent as in the *zamindari* areas of eastern India.

The land reform measures enacted in most of the states of India during the 1950s were successful in eliminating the big, absentee landlords, and the princes of the native states, and in establishing a direct relationship between the state and the cultivators. The landlords were paid generous compensation and were helped to become entrepreneurs and industrialists. However, the ceiling on land ownership was not properly implemented (B. Dasgupta, 1980; Section 1, 4). Apart from many exemptions (e.g. of plantations and religious trusts) from the operation of such ceiling laws, a major loophole was that these were based on individuals and not families, and many families took advantage of this to evade the ceiling by redistributing land among the family members. Another method of evasion of the ceiling was to transfer land to non existent persons, to persons who were not aware that such transfer had been made in their favour, and to distribute land over many administrative units, maintaining the land ownership in each below ceiling limit, thereby avoiding the detection of surplus land holding. All these evasions, exemptions etc., enabled the richer section of the peasantry—erstwhile bigger tenants—to own more land than was legally permissable, although the very existence of ceilings had the effect of reducing the scale of such ownership compared to the pre-reform situation. In the latter years, the scale of ownership was further reduced by fragmentation through inheritance, detection of surplus land, and the appropriation of land transferred illegally in the name of friends and relatives to evade ceiling laws.

The most unsuccessful of the land reform measures was the attempt to safeguard the interests of the tenants, and to provide them with security against evictions. This had the opposite effect of inducing large scale evictions of tenants by landlords who denied the existence of any tenancy or agreement, or terminated the agreement on the ground of resumption of self-cultivation with the help of agricultural labourers - something which they were legally entitled to do. As a consequence, between 1951 and 1961, according to the figures released by the Census Commission, there was a sharp increase in the number of landless and an equally sharp decline in the number and proportion of tenants (Khusro, 1961; Chattapadhyay, 1975; Desai-Menta, 1962).

Large scale eviction of tenants was not the only factor contributing to an increase in landlessness during this period. A study on labour utilization in 126 Indian villages —based on village level data collected during the late 1950s and the early 1960s and conducted as a part of the World Employment Programme of ILO by the author—showed that the commercialization of agriculture in the village unavoidably leads to (i) concentration of land ownership and operation, (ii) landlessness of a large section of the peasantry, and (iii) a decline in the rate of participation in work largely at the costs of women, the old and children who were likely to be in the workforce in a traditional agricultural setting (B. Dasgupta, 1975 and "Typology of Village Socio-Economic Systems", 1975). Table 6 illustrates the significant difference between Village Type A (a commercialized village with a large proportion of produce being sold outside, a greater proportion of land under cash crops, reliance on modern inputs, higher productivity, as well as larger size in population, greater accessibility to the urban areas, higher rates of literacy and so on) and Village Type B (with contrasting characteristics) in terms of land ownership, landlessness, as well as participation rates. In the study the fall in the participation rate in the Type A villages was explained in terms of the difficulties, on the part of the women workers, to combine work in the field as hired workers (as opposed to the situation where they worked as family workers in their own field according to their own convenience) with their domestic duties and child care; as also by the fact that, unlike family farms where the participation of a family labourer in work was a part of the social obligation, the employers of hired labourers are under no obligation to absorb every one in the village in the workforce.

While commercialization of agriculture is a continuous process, with the introduction of HYV technology, the tendencies associated with commercialization have been

Table 6. List of significant socio-economic variables influencing migration, in forty A.C.R.C. village studies

Variable	Average values in: High migration villages	Low migration villages	F-ratio	Confidence level
1. Proportion of women of 15-19 age group	25.14	26.62	2.89	0.09
2. Proportion of old aged (60+)	6.14	6.95	4.67	0.04
3. Children of 0-4 age group as proportion of women of 15-59 age group	60.50	53.35	2.79	0.10
4. Proportion of agricultural labourers in population	11.02	16.09	3.46	0.07
5. Proportion of land owned by the poorest 25 per cent households	1.07	0.00	3.20	0.08
6. Proportion of village produce sold	39.34	50.15	2.83	0.10
7. Crude literacy rate for women	32.29	42.80	3.20	0.08

Source: B. Dasgupta and R. Laishley, "Migration from Villages", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18 October 1975.

accelerated. Studies conducted on Punjab, Harayana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and the deltaic areas of Andhra show that a major consequence of the introduction of the new agrarian technology is to increase land and asset concentration, to widen inequality in the village, and to increase substantially the proportion of landless in the population. This happens, partly because the very profitability of cultivation with HYV technology which prompts the landowner to dismiss his tenant rather than sharing the fruits of higher productivity; and also because often the small landholder, lacking resources, access to administration and banks, and having a low capacity to absorb risk, finds it more profitable to transfer the operation of land to a better-off farmer and to engage himseif in other activities including hired labour (B. Dasgupta, 1980). No less important is the negative influence of commercialization on village artisans and non-agricultural workers. The introduction of tractors has displaced operators of animal-drawn carts in many cases (B. Dasgupta, 1980), while in one village, the wide-spread use of irrigation pumps has reduced the demand for workers who used to make leather-baskets (Yashwanto, 1962). Many of them too are also joining the ranks of agricultural labourers because of commercialization.

The study of forty Indian villages by Dasgupta-Laishley made an attempt to relate migration propensity in a village to the agrarian structure. The villages were divided into those with high and low migration propensity, and then the data of variables on land distribution were subjected to discriminant analysis. Various statistical tests carried out on the results showed that the villages with high and low migration propensity were significantly different from one another in terms of inequality in land distribution and landlessness. The data were then used to work out a linear regression equation with migration propensity as the dependent variable, and land-man ratio, land concentration (measured by the proportion of land owned by the top quarter of households), land productivity, and literacy rates as explanatory variables. While not all the regression coefficients were found to be statistically significant—this could be largely because of the presence of multi-collinearity among the explanatory variables—the overall explanatory power of the variables included in the equation was as high as 69 per cent. Another regression equation was worked out, with migration propensity as the dependent variable, and percentage of village produce sold, extent of double cropping, extent of irrigation facility, and literacy rate as explanatory variables—these were described as 'urban-related factors' compared to the 'village-related factors' of the previous equation—and here too the explanatory power of the variables was found to be very high, at 76 per cent (B. Dasgupta-Laishley, 1975).

Both of these equations illustrate the close relationship between migration propensity and the agrarian structure; the latter is represented by variables indicating land-scarcity, land-productivity and land concentration, in the first equation, and by commercialization variables in the second equation. Literacy is included in both and its coefficients are high and statistically significant in both equations. The exercise with Type A and Type B villages mentioned earlier also shows that migration propensity is higher in the Type A villages which are also characterized by commercialization of agriculture, high literacy rate, low land-man ratio, a high level of inequality in land distribution and a high land productivity (B. Dasgupta, 1977).

This exercise is of considerable significance for yet another reason. Individual village studies relating migration to socio-economic characteristics often find good correlation between migration propensity and one of the following variables—village size, communication with the external world, proportion of literates in the village population, per capita village income and the proportion of village income from non-agricultural activities (Connell, *et al.*, 1977). What the above exercise with type A and type B villages shows is that these characteristics are interrelated. Larger villages have become larger because they are more prosperous and more people have migrated towards them; and the very size of the village market, along with its proximity to urban areas (Adelman and Dalton, 1971), makes it possible for the village economy to support non-agricultural activities on a large scale.

The association of migration propensity with landlessness at the village level does not imply that, at the individual level, the migration propensity is higher among the landless. It is equally possible that the very opposite is the case; inequality might be instrumental in helping the better-off to accumulate surplus, and in enabling the members of those families to go to the towns for schooling and for supplementing family earnings from agriculture, a point already made in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, the very high level of landlessness in the Type A villages is at least partly caused by—in addition to eviction of tenants and the proletarization of small farmers—immigration of landless destitutes from the poorer, Type B villages. In other words, it is possible for the villages with a highly skewed land distribution and a higher level of productivity to generate two kinds of migratory movement—one from the better-off sections in the village itself to the towns, and another from the destitutes in the more backward villages to this one (B. Dasgupta-Laishley, 1975; Yashwant, 1962).

3.5 Pattern of urbanization

Immigration is without doubt the major factor contributing to the process of urbanization. To give a few examples, Calcutta, a city of 8 million people in the seventies, consisted of three small villages with a population of 10,000 towards the end of the seventeenth century. A century later the population was about 140,000, and it took another 100 years before the 1 million mark was passed. In the first seven decades of this century the population of Calcutta has registered an eight-fold increase, largely due to continuous flow of immigrants from various states of India (Chakravarty, 1972). In the case of Delhi, even in 1941 its population was about 700,000, but by 1956 it became 1.8 million, largely because of the influx of refugees; by 1961, the population reached the figure of 2.4 million, mainly through migration from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Harayan. Between the natural growth rate and immigration, the former played a relatively less important role in the expansion of the city.[1]

Generally speaking, the larger an urban area, the greater the proportion of immigrants in its population, and the longer the average distance covered by the immigrants. For example, the inter-state migrants tend to concentrate in bigger urban centres where the job opportunities are greater and cultural diversity is tolerated.[2] A great proportion of victims of various kinds of disaster also tend to move towards the bigger urban centres because of their being more widely known and better connected by transport.

It can also be added that the larger the city the higher the level of literacy, and of per capita income of the immigrants before migration. In the case of Delhi, as we have already noted, an analysis of the data on migrants shows that the majority of them came from districts with a high level of literacy, a higher level of urbanization, and a relatively high proportion of workers engaged in tertiary sector activities. However, the correlation between per capita income and migration propensity is high only in case of migrants from districts within 70 miles radius of Delhi (r = 0.85), but the correlation is weaker in case of districts at a distance between 70 and 150 miles (r = 0.65) and those beyond 150 miles (r = 0.44), presumably because of the impact of organized migration from distant areas.[3]

A study based on data for the whole country derived from census statistics shows that the concentration of migrants in the cities tends to be higher in cases of states with very large urban centres and a higher level of urbanization. For example, in the cases of both Maharastra and West Bengal 67 per cent of immigrants to urban areas are concentrated in the metropolitan areas, largely because of the two biggest metropolitan centres—Bombay and Calcutta—being located within these states. In contrast, in states with a low level of urbanization and without very large urban centres the concentration of urban population is low, for example in Uttar Pradesh where only 24.63 per cent of the immigrants live in Kanpur (Dhar, 1972). The close correlation between the degree of urbanization and the concentration of migrants in largest urban centres is an important indicator of the way the process of urbanization is likely to influence the movement of population and of the tendency towards the formation of a megalopolis. As the data for 1961-71 show, there is growing evidence of such concentration of urban population in India over the last two decades—the category I cities with more than 1 million population claiming an increasing share of urban population over time.[4]

Most of this growth in urban population, and the concentration or urban population in big centres, is paradoxically combined with a very low level of urbanization in the country. In 1951, 82 per cent of the population lived in the countryside. Over the past three decades the relative share of the countryside in the country's population has declined by less than 2 per cent, and even now, more than four-fifths of the population live in the villages (A. Bose, 1973). This rate of growth of the share of the urban population is one of the slowest in the world; during 1950-60 and 1960-70, the urban-rural ratio for the world as a whole underwent percentage changes of the order of 27 per cent and 17 per cent, while the corresponding proportions for the third world countries were 43 per cent and 26 per cent (ESCAP, 1977).

This apparent paradox results from the vast difference in the relative size of the two sectors. Let us assume that in 1951 the population of the country was 1,000, which was split 820 : 180 between the two sectors. Let us further assume that between 1951 and 1961 the population grew by 20 per cent while the share of the rural population fell to 80 per cent, a 2 per cent decline. The rural-urban split was now 960 : 240. In this case a 2 per cent increase in the relative share of the urban population is combined with a 33 per cent increase in urban population which is very high and much higher than the rate of growth of population.

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1. See Rao-Desai, 1966. Between 1941 and 1965 migration was responsible for 53-60 per cent of population growth in Delhi. The rates of growth in the 1940s and 1950s were 107 per cent and 64 per cent, respectively, much higher than the national growth rates in those decades. Of the migrants, refugees accounted for 504,000, while inter-state migrants and those from other countries contributed 982,000 and 110,000, respectively. Forty-four per cent of the inter-state migrants were from U.P., 34 per cent from Punjab, and 10 per cent from Rajasthan, while the rest of India accounted for another 12 per cent. See Gupta, 1972; 1961-1951, migration accounted for 22.5 per cent, 29.1 per cent and 55.3 per cent of population growth; but its concentration dropped to 5.5 per cent in 1951-1961. See, S. Chandrasekhar.
2. The fact that 23.73 per cent of inter-state migrants are located in Maharastra and 15.32 per cent in West Bengal could be explained largely by the presence of Bombay and Calcutta, the two largest metropolitan regions in the country. See Dhar, 1972.
3. Gupta, 1972. This study also reveals the age-selectivity of migrants to Delhi: while 51 per cent of migrants belong to the 15-24 age group, and only 16 per cent to the 0-14 age group, the corresponding figures for the local population are 37 per cent, and 40 per cent, respectively
4. Between 1901 and 1961 the percentage of urban population living in class I urban areas (i.e. those with more than 100,000 in the population) monotonically increased from 22.9 per cent to 48.4 per cent. See A. Bose, 1973.

Furthermore, such urbanization has not been at the cost of the existing rural population—in fact the growth in urban population takes place along with a sizeable growth in rural population: what this shift in the urban-rural ratio implies is no more than a part of the annual increase in the rural population being skimmed off to the urban areas. To take the above example, in order to keep the rural population (in absolute numbers) to its 1951 level, the rate of growth in urban population (in absolute numbers) should be five times greater than the natural rate of population growth. In other words, unlike Mexico and several other countries in Latin America where it is possible to visualize a reduction in the absolute size of the rural sector within the next two decades, given the gross imbalance in the size between the two sectors in India, it would require a fantastically high rate of growth in urban population to set such a process of depopulation of the countryside in motion in this country.

Again, urbanization in India, as in many other Third World countries, is not coterminous with industrialization, as was the case in the early phase of industrialization. The rate of growth of population in the urban sector now far exceeds the rate at which the industries and job opportunities are expanding. Leaving aside the 1950s when several major steel plants, oil refineries and engineering industries were set up and an ambitious programme of industrialization was launched, during most of the past two decades very little progress has been achieved in terms of industrial development. In particular, in the middle of the 1960s a period of industrial recession began, from which the economy of the country has not yet recovered. The output of a large number of major industries—including cotton textiles—suffered a decline over this period, and the vast majority of industrial units are presently operating 20-40 per cent below their capacity—including the steel plants, collieries, textile mills and power plants. A part of the explanation for this recession lies in bad planning and management, and lack of co-ordination between units (for example between coal production, power supply, and the availability of wagons for carrying coal from the pitheads to the consumption centres), and the recession is partly due to lack of spare parts, power, and import capacity for raw materials, but a major reason for the stagnation in industrial development could be found in the lack of effective demand for the industrial products, given the poverty and low purchasing power of the population, particularly the four-fifths who are condemned to live in the villages.

Table 7. Comparison of migrants with non-migrants in terms of age and education—Delhi AERC villages

Age	Adult migrants %	Adult village population %
15-24	59.94	30.24
25-34	25.96	24.05
35 plus	14.10	45.71
Total	100.00	100.00
Education		
Illiterate	42.31	79.89
Read and write	8.66	6.22
Primary education	15.06	6.12
Middle education	7.69	3.91
Secondary education	26.28	3.86
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: B. Dasgupta and R. Laishley, "Migration from Villages", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18 October 1975.

The presence of a large, elastic informal sector in the bigger urban centres is an important feature of urban life in India. According to various estimates, the informal sector accounts for between two-fifths and half of the earners in the major industrial centres of the country. Compared with the size of this sector, its contribution to the national product is marginal: the vast majority of coolies, domestic servants, street peddlars and traders, magicians, car-minders and so on are undertaking those activities, not because they are remunerative, but because the alternatives to these are unemployment and no income. The informal sector is usually dominated by migrants, especially the more recent ones who do not see any immediate prospect of a regular job, and who, for various reasons, are unwilling to return to their villages. The ease of entry, small need of capital and skill, and the flexibility of operation attract them to a wide range of informal sector activities (B. Dasgupta, 1973).

One might ask if the rate of industrialization is low and the capacity of the urban economy to provide jobs is limited, what is it that brings fresh flows of immigrants to the cities? The answer lies partly in the fact that an informal sector job is often seen by an immigrant as a first step towards a job in a factory or office, as a necessary phase in one's working life in the city. Another reason, which is not always openly acknowledged, is the fact that the earnings in the informal sector—low though they are compared with

Table 8. Shift in occupation pattern due to migration—241 migrants in Delhi AERC villages (% given in parentheses)

Present occupation	Previous occupation			
	Self-employed agriculturalist	Agricultural labour	Non-agriculturalists	Total
Self-employed agriculturalist	3 (2.31)	0	0	3
Agricultural labour	3 (2.31)	1 (7.69)	0	4
Artisan	1 (0.77)	0	6 (6.12)	7
Trade	6 (4.62)	1 (7.69)	18 (18.37)	25
Service	51 (39.23)	5 (38.46)	39 (39.79)	95
Others	66 (50.77)	6 (46.15)	35 (35.71)	107
Total	130 (100.00)	13 (100.00)	128 (100.00)	241

Source: B. Dasgupta and R. Laishley, "Migration from Villages", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18 October 1975.

income from others, specially middle class and organized working class activities in the towns are adequately in excess of their expected earnings in the rural sector net of costs of migration. The immigrants in the cities show an amazing capacity to survive and work under the most difficult conditions - in cheap slum huts or pavements or staircases of public buildings and even to mobilize a certain amount of savings to be remitted to their family back in the village.[1] Besides, migration to the towns and cities is not solely motivated by economic considerations --the vast differences in civic amenities and prospects for a better, more varied, less orthodox life also lure many people to make the towns and cities their home.

There is of course a limit to the expansion of the population of a given urban area and of the number of workers in the informal sector when the job opportunities are falling. The very slow growth rate of Calcutta, at 7.8 per cent per decade, far below the national growth rate of population, at 20-21 per cent, indicates that out-migration from the city exceeded immigration during 1951-71. The proportion of inter-state migrants among the migrants is falling very rapidly—and this is for the simple reason that without some earning opportunities, stay in the city would be too costly for them to maintain; while not being culturally integrated with the life [illegible] city, it is not so hard for them to return to their native villages in Bihar, Orissa or Uttar Pradesh.[2] Not only are the job prospects in the jute and other manufacturing industries diminishing, but also the inter-state migrants are facing severe competition from the local unemployed in the informal sector activities as well. Migration from the rural areas of West Bengal to the city is also declining for the same reason, but not to the same extent. It should be noted though that, while immigration into Calcutta city proper has halted, the growth rate in the peripheries, particularly in the rest of the urban area (as well as rural areas) within the Calcutta Metropolitan District shows no sign of abating.[3] This probably shows that, not only declining job opportunities, but factors such as overcrowding, lack of housing facilities and other amenities etc., are important explanations behind the decline in the flow of migration towards Calcutta (Premi, 1972).

Calcutta is not the only urban centre in the country showing an excess of out-migration over in-migration. In 1961, it was found that out of 2,462 towns in the country 134, accounting for 2.1 per cent of the urban population, showed an actual decline in population size between 1951 and 1961. Adding to those the towns with a rate of growth of less than 10 per cent (which was less than half the natural growth rate of population for the whole country) the total number of out-migrating towns was 423, which accounted for 12.1 per cent of the total urban population of the country. About three-fifths of these towns—248 or 58.6 per cent of the total—have been in existence since the beginning of this century, and there were eleven others which were first listed as towns from 1901 or earlier but were subsequently declassified and classified again in 1951; and forty-six of these were classified for the first time in 1951. Twenty-nine of these towns which were also classified as towns in 1951 showed a population figure in 1961 which was lower than that for 1901. A study by Premi attempted to test the hypotheses that these towns are suffering from the 'umbrella effect' of the nearby urban centres, or that their population are being drawn away by other urban centres in a highly urbanized district, or that these are the towns with a weak economic base being largely dependent on agriculture or service activities. The 'umbrella effect' was to some extent statistically confirmed, but only when the comparison was made between the areas inside and outside a thirty kilometre limit of the large (with a population of 50,000 or more) urban centres. This effect was not discernible when comparison was made between towns located at different distances within the thirty kilometre limit from the major urban centres. The figures also confirmed the relationship between the number of towns and the number of 'out-migrating towns' in a district. The hypotheses regarding weak economic base in terms of more than 40 per cent of the population being engaged in agriculture -was confirmed in the case of 32 per cent of the 'out-migrating towns'. In terms of various socio-economic characteristics it was found that the 'out-migrating towns' were relatively speaking, educationally more backward (41 per cent literacy rate compared to 47 per cent for all towns), and had a higher female-male ratio (956 compared to 845 per 1,000 males for all towns) and a higher participation rate for women (16 per cent compared to 11 per cent for all towns) - features which bring those closer to the rural areas (Premi, 1972).

Such out-migration is however rare. More important, from our point of view are the attractions of urban life —both in terms of earning opportunities and of the civic facilities—compared to the lack of diversity, and low income opportunities in rural life. However, much depends also on the pattern of urbanization, whether the urban population is concentrated in some key centres or dispersed over many towns and cities. The pattern of rural development in these two types of situation is not likely to be identical -a point to which we will return in the following chapter.

3.6 Disasters

Disasters, as we have already noted, tend to draw away a large number of people from their native areas towards areas which are less prone to such disasters or where temporary relief could be obtained pending eventual return to their native villages. We have already distinguished between two major types of disasters, political and natural, which prompt discreet, large-scale movement of population.

Communal and caste strifes are an unfortunate feature of the political life in the country. The incidence of communal violence is generally closely correlated with the economic conditions at a given point of time. For example, the frequency of such riots was very high during the first half of the 1960s when, after a series of bad harvests, the per capita income and food availability declined. The same phenomenon has also been witnessed over the past two years, and again for the same reasons—high inflation, widespread unemployment, and the sense of frustration of a vast section of the population. When the economic conditions deteriorate, the discontent is as likely to be expressed through class-based revolutionary struggles for the seizure of power as through sporadic violence or communal outbursts—the presence of an alien social group being seen as

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1. In the case of Calcutta only the inter-state migrants remitted Rs. 400 million per year in small amounts to their native villages. See A. Mitra, 1967*a*; S. Chakrabarty, 1960.
2. The number of inter-state migrants to West Bengal declined from 1,509,898 in 1961 to 1,449,990 in 1971. Census of India, 1971, *West Bengal and Sikkim*, Vol. XVI, Part II (c) (ii), Delhi, 1974; see also Memoria, 1974.
3. Census of India, *Provisional Population Totals*, Delhi, 1974.

the explanation for the lack of jobs, income, and various facilities. When such outbursts do not remain localized, and spread like an epidemic over a large area, the panic-stricken members of the minority communities are forced to move--either to areas where their own communities are in majority or to bigger urban centres (provided these remain unaffected by such disturbances) which are better linked by transport.

The biggest immigration of victims of political disaster took place at the time of the partition of the country, from 1946 until the early 1950s. The growth of Calcutta and Delhi during the forties and the fifties was to a considerable extent the result of such a refugee movement.

As for the natural disasters--flood, storm, or drought--apart from the movements which are induced by such events practically every year, in some part of the country or another, in recent years the two biggest natural disasters took place in 1943 and in 1966-67, in the second case because of drought for two or three years in succession, and in the first case the impact of the drought being magnified many times by the collapse of the distribution system following the British policy of seizing country boats during the war. A more recent example in West Bengal--during a flood in 1978 which affected one-third of the population and damaged an equal proportion of cultivated land--shows that the exodus from rural areas can be prevented through a well organized relief system, conducted by the local village leaders with political will.

CHAPTER IV

Consequences

4.1 Introduction

Having discussed the major features of the migratory movements and the factors which explain those, in the previous two chapters, here we will examine some of the major consequences of migratory movements. The discussion here will be divided into two parts. In the first, attempts will be made to examine the impact of migration on rural life – on output, distribution, demographic features, development possibilities, and also on social and cultural aspects of life. In the second part, we will examine the spatial and occupational distribution of the migrants in the towns, and their implications for the life in the urban area in general – e.g. with respect to employment, housing, civic facilities, and social relations between various groups.

4.2 Impact on rural life

We begin this section with a discussion on the demographic consequences of out-migration–would migration lead to a decline in fertility rate and population size, and change in age-sex structure and dependency rate?

As for fertility rate, much depends on the age-sex selectivity of migration and the nature of migration. The very fact of a very high proportion of adult males going to urban areas would not by itself reduce fertility rate if the migrants regularly return to their villages, at least once a year (Dandekar, 1959). However, the data from the villages around Delhi show that a statistically significant difference exists in the fertility rate between villages with high and low migration propensity (B. Dasgupta-Laishley, 1975). The impact on fertility is less important in cases where migration is seasonal, or very temporary, and the whole family moves together.

The decline in fertility because of migration indicated by the village studies referred to above, along with the process of migration itself, keep the population in the villages with a high migration propensity at a lower level than would otherwise have been the case; but very seldom, a point made in the previous chapter, would these lead to an actual decline in the population of a village. Generally speaking, population in the villages continues to grow despite a relatively low fertility rate and despite out-migration.

How does migration affect agricultural output in the village? If the migration is temporary or seasonal, and is synchronized with the agricultural needs in the village, the impact would be zero. But if migration causes a shortage in manpower during peak seasons in the year–during harvesting or land preparation–its impact on agricultural output is likely to be negative, unless one or more of the following measures are adopted: recruitment of hired labourers from other areas, greater participation of women in agricultural work, a shift in the cropping pattern towards less labour-intensive ones, and mechanization of agriculture. In fact, it is possible to identify one or more of these tendencies in most of the high-migration villages. A higher level of participation of women in agricultural work is the most typical response, which is helped by a lower dependency rate (that is the ratio of babies to women of child bearing age) resulting from a decline in fertility rate in such villages (Dasgupta-Laishley, 1975). Even in orthodox religious families women are seen to take a greater interest in agriculture than is usual in Asia as compared with Africa where production of subsistence crop is the responsibility of women in many countries.

Participation of women is, however, not possible in every type of agricultural operation. While transplanting, weeding and harvesting are usually operations in which women take part (and where their participation is often understated by the male respondents to interviewers in cases of village surveys), ploughing, transporting by bullock cart, threshing etc., are usually undertaken by male labour. In the absence of male family members these activities are often conducted with the help of hired gangs of workers from outside the village–seasonal out-migrants from other villages. It is for this reason one finds a close correspondence between migration propensity and the level of employment of hired workers in a village (excepting in cases where landlessness was a major cause of out-migration from the villages) (B. Dasgupta, 1977).

A shift in the cropping pattern towards less-intensive crops is not very common, but mechanization is. Migration provides both the justification for and the means to introduce mechanization. The absence of the necessary amount of labour power in the village, particularly during the intervening period between two crops, makes the villagers look for ways of getting agricultural work done with the available labour force--and mechanization comes as a solution to their problem, while the remittances of migrants provides them with savings which can be used for buying machinery needed as agricultural inputs. Agricultural machinery which is not likely to be popular in conditions of widespread rural unemployment and might meet with stiff social resistance, become more acceptable when a condition of scarcity of manpower is created through migration (Srivastava, 1968). This is as much true of the high-migration villages of Punjab and Rajasthan, as of those in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan.

However, in a great majority of Indian villages the need for adopting such measures does not take place on such a scale as to reduce drastically the supply of manpower within the village, a point repeatedly made in this report.[1] The impact of migration on agricultural output, is, for this reason, not negative.

How does the age-sex selectivity of migration affect the life in the village? The age-sex selectivity is an important feature of one particular kind of migration rural/urban and it might be argued that such a transfer of manpower denies to the rural sector the contribution of those who are younger, more enterprising and more educated than others. The answer to this question largely depends on the kind of qualification acquired by the migrants concerned (Rempel and Lobdell, 1976). If such qualifications had been acquired through schooling in the towns, and are specific to the urban conditions e.g. nuclear physicists or transport engineers their presence in the villages might not have been as useful as those qualified as doctors, or even as technicians or mechanics would be, if it is a question of the availability of a number of young adults with a certain level of education, in many villages there is no shortage of such manpower, largely because their education has orientated them away from agriculture towards non-manual, desk jobs with security and regular salary. Besides there is no guarantee that those who left the village as migrants, no matter how skilled and enterprising they were and how adaptable their qualifications would have been to the local situation, would have been permitted to play a leading role in their own villages by the traditional leadership. However, whether such transfer of skilled manpower to the towns could be described as 'brain-drain' or not, if the education of the migrants had been financed by remittance from the village or if the migration decision leads to the partition and sale of family property and transfer of money to the town along with the migrant, such transfers could be described as 'capital drain' from the countryside (Rempel and Lobdell, 1976).

We have already noted the important role played by remittance from the out-migrants to the village.[2] The amount remitted depends on the amount earned by the migrant in the town on the one hand, and the nature of the relationship of the migrant with his family on the other. If the migration decision was taken by the family (and not by the migrant himself individually) as a part of its strategy to augment and diversify earnings and the cost of migration was borne by the family as an investment, the migrant might see it as his responsibility to send regular remittances to the family. Leaving family behind, paying regular social visits to the village, maintaining family members during their short visits to the town or for schooling and otherwise helping with information and procurement of inputs for family agriculture–all these could be seen as indications that the migrant considers himself as a part of the family.[3] But the longer the migrant stays in the town and the longer, the distance between the village and the town where he lives, the greater the likelihood of his bringing his wife and children to join him and reducing his contribution to the rest of the joint family in the village.

In the case of a group of sixteen villages studied by the Agro-Economic Research Centre of Delhi and analysed by a team from the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, the proportion of income remitted by the out-migrants varied between 26 per cent and 69 per cent; and in the case of three villages among those, more than half the income of the migrants was remitted (Connell, *et al.*, 1977). In another study of a Maharastra village it was found that about two-thirds of the migrants regularly send their remittance.[4] A study of Senapur, a village of Uttar Pradesh, shows that while 31 per cent of the out-migrants were from landlord families, they contributed 57 per cent of total remittance, while those from agricultural labourer families constituting 33 per cent of the out-migrants accounted for only 10 per cent of remittance, thereby showing the correlation between earning capacity and remittance (Hopper, 1957). The flow of out-remittance is not insignificant, and in the case of four out of eight villages of Tamilnadu studied by the IDS team out-remittance exceeded in-remittance -presumably for supporting the education of student migrants and the costs in the initial phase of migration by working migrants (Connell, *et al.*, 1977). As one would expect, in case of forty-eight villages for which remittance data were studied by the IDS team, the ratio of out-remittance to in-remittance was closely correlated (negatively) with in-remittance level, and (positively) with the proportion of non-working out-migrants. On the other hand, the per capita in-remittance was closely correlated with a low proportion of adult males in the village population, a higher proportion of women, children and old people being in the workforce, shortage of draught animals, and education (Connell, *et al.*, 1977).

No less important is the way the money received as remittance is used.[5]. If the migrant comes from a poor family the usual tendency is for the remittance to be used first to repay debts, increase food consumption, improving and extending family residential building, and buying property.[6] Schooling of younger family members is also given a high priority by the migrants (Srivastara, 1968). Investment in storage structure, capital assets, and agricultural inputs does not always receive a high priority except in cases of families which are better-off and have already met their basic needs. In areas with a long tradition of migration for work in the towns and in the army, it is possible to find some association between migration and agricultural modernization; migration helps some of the poor families to improve their economic and social position, eventually to meet their needs of food, shelter, and schooling of children, and to enable them to make some investment in land out of remittance received from the towns.

Perhaps more important than remittance is 'return migration'–particularly the successful migrants–in influencing

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1. In Rampura village of eastern U.P. in only two cases agriculture suffered because of absence of adult males due to migration (Srivastava, 1968).
2. See Connell, *et al.*, 1977. In Delhi, 45 per cent of the immigrant households receive remittance, which amounted to an average of Rs 15.3 per month at 1956 prices. 55 per cent of the remittance was sent to parents, 33 per cent to spouses, and 4 per cent to children, while others accounted for 8 per cent. See Rao Desai, 1966
3. In Delhi, 30 per cent of multi-member families are parts of the joint family in their native village. 69 per cent of migrants visit their villages regularly, 90 per cent of them for social or family reasons. 54 per cent of spouses, children and parents of migrants stay outside Delhi, and 61.2 per cent had some property outside Delhi. See Rao-Desai, 1966.
4. Census of India, 1961, Vol. 10, Part 6, No. 1 *(Kunkeri)*.
5. In Rampura, a village in Eastern U.P. with 1,181 people, 15.6 per cent of whom out-migrated in 1966, the out-migrants send at least half of their income back to the village as remittance, and of this 25 per cent is spent in the improvement of agriculture. In the village only the out-migrating households owned improved ploughs or high breed bullocks and purchased agricultural land. See, Srivastava, 1968.
6. In Rampura, 7 emigrant families have built 'pucca' houses, 10 have built good quality tile houses, while 63 per cent have spent some money on house repair (which 13 per cent of non-migrating families could afford). See Srivastava, 1968.

the village life. The return migrants bring with them financial resources and skills acquired in the towns, mines and army and a new world perspective (Srivastava, 1968). One major reason for the successful implementation of the HYV technology in Punjab is the fact that, not only do the remittance sent by Punjabi migrants working in the army, transport in various cities in India and foundries in the United Kingdom, Canada and other places, provide their families with the means to buy expensive pieces of agricultural machineries, but the return migrants bring with them a technological awareness which helps them to transform the agriculture in that state. The changed world perspective is, manifested in their introduction of new crops, cropping practices, technology and institutions, as well as new attitudes towards joint family, caste system, patron-client relationship with village-rich, the age of marriage and the taste for urban consumption goods (such as watches, radios, cycles and various other articles) in their native villages.[1] The return migrants often act as intermediaries between the village and the outside world, and as leaders of the community. However, their success in playing a leadership role partly depends on the attitude of the existing village leadership. It is equally possible that a return migrant, at the end of a successful period in the towns would prefer to avoid confrontation with the existing élite and to buy a place in the social hierarchy by working with it; in such an event his role is likely to be a conservative one. Migrants and return immigrants often play a dual class role in the native village and in the place of destination. The long association of the jute industry of Calcutta with villages in Uttar Pradesh through migration has had very little ideological influence on the village life in the latter; largely because the proletariat in that politically conscious city is often regarded as a privileged with some land in the native village and access to the amenities in the towns.

The social and cultural influence of a city on the migrant population varies according to the occupations and conditions of living in a city; the greater the residential and occupational segregration of the migrants from the native population the less likely it is that the migrant would absorb the values and attitudes of the latter. It is even possible that the migrants would adopt a conservative, parochial approach as a defence against the infiltration of the values of an alien culture (N.K. Bose, 1958; 'Calcutta, a premature metropolis', 1965; 'Calcutta, a social survey', 1965). If the migrants from the same village live in a group–either in a town or in another village–maintain regular contact with their native village, and see their migration as a temporary phase in their life, not only are there mutual checks against 'improper' behaviour and attitude, but the migrants are unwilling to behave in a way of which their family and friends in the native village would not approve, and which would therefore make their return to village social life that much more difficult. In other words, it is not possible to say, on the basis of research results on migrants and return migrants, that their exposure to other value systems, food habits, life style etc., necessarily influences them positively. Even in the cases of those who adopt some of the norms and life styles of the destination during the period of migration, it is not unusual for them to discard those soon after their return.

What is the role of the rural-rural migrants in the destination? This depends to a great extent on the nature of the migratory process. In the case of group migration for seasonal work the migrants, like those going to the towns, stay away from the village social life in the destination, live in the outskirts of the village on waste land, and return to their villages at the end of the season. The fact that their migration is temporary and that they live in groups makes it possible for them to remain socially aloof from the village. When, with the increasing prosperity of the rural economy in the destination, more of the migrants who originally came for seasonal work opt for longer stay, they set up a colony of their own at what, at the time of their settlement, was the fringe. It is through the incorporation of such colonies, as well as natural growth, that a village grows–the larger the population in a village the more likely it is that its social life will be diversified and several such colonies set up at different points of time. To the extent that the newer groups are likely to be poorer and to belong to lower caste groups, such social segregation would correspond to segregation by economic standing. While social diversity in a village could enrich its culture and widen the perspective, it could as easily lead to tension and conflicts between caste-communal-linguistic groups within a village.

As in the case of the return migrants from the urban areas, rural-rural migrants can play an important role in introducing new crops, cropping practices, technologies and institutions in the destination. For example, one of the reasons why the tribals from Chota Nagpur are preferred to local workers in West Bengal is because they are known for their skill in transplanting. The migrants who came from Pakistan in the late 1940s and the early 1950s were instrumental in extending raw jute cultivation in West Bengal and in modernizing the agriculture of Punjab, a food-deficit state at the time of partition. The East Bengal cultivators who moved into Assam in the early part of this century, cleared the forest and created the base for a productive agriculture in that state. One can cite many such examples from the recent history of the country to illustrate the progressive influence of the migrants on the agriculture in the place of destination

In the areas adjoining the tea gardens one finds an interesting relationship between the migrant workers and the local peasants. The presence of the tea workers provides the local agricultural population with a market for food, vegetables, as well as the products of poultry and goat farming. In other words, through their presence they have brought about an important shift in the production pattern of the local agriculture, which has become more diversified than that of average villages. At the same time, the workers, with a much higher level of income than the average in the village can, and sometimes do, tend to dominate the rural economy in several other ways–e.g. as money-lenders and as landowners. To the extent that the tea garden workers are migrants, and are easily identifiable as being different from the local population, the inequality in the conditions of living between them might lead to conflict situations, e.g. on the distribution of available irrigation water between the tea garden and agriculture. When the tea gardens were initially set up the local population was indifferent to their prospects as well as their implications for the life in the villages, and backward as they were they did not oppose the construction of elaborate canal networks for watering the gardens. With growing political as well as agricultural consciousness, they are now demanding an increasingly higher share in the irrigation water—something which might have serious consequences for the employment of tea garden workers in the future.

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[1] In Rampura's case, many members of the out-migrant families from Lonia caste, which holds a low social rank, now describe themselves as 'chauhans' or 'singh' to indicate a superior caste, wear sacred thread, and emulate the social behaviour of upper castes, which shows unwillingness to follow the traditional attitude of respect towards the upper castes. 29 per cent of earning out-migrants have married their daughters at a relatively high age. The migrants are less superstitious than the non-migrants. A negative aspect of the cultural influence of the town on villages, is that films are replacing folk song and art. Srivastava, 1968. See also, *United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East,* 1971.

In the case of Tripura, the massive flow of refugees from East Pakistan after partition of the country turned the majority tribal population in that state into a hopeless minority with a mere one-fifth share of the total population. The violent outbreak of conflict between the refugees and the tribals which took place in 1980 and caused more than 500 deaths, despite the protection given to the tribals against further encroachment from non-tribals on their land and the acceptance their right of self-government by the Left Front government, was a reflection of the extent of distrust which existed between the two communities, and which could be nurtured and skillfully exploited by various ethnically-based opposition parties. Antagonism between various social groups, based on ethnic, caste, linguistic or some other primordial loyalties, is often an unfortunate outcome of the settlement or settlement programmes. The degree of antagonism varies according to the degree of cultural closeness of the migrants with the local population, as also with the overall economic situation in the area and the role of various political groups. While the tribal-refugee relationship has deteriorated sharply in Tripura, in most parts of Punjab and West Bengal the relatively easy incorporation of the refugees into village life became possible because of their cultural affinity with the local population.

In many cases migration—mostly of the seasonal variety—is encouraged by the landowners to obtain a docile workforce prepared to work for given wages and under conditions which would be unacceptable to the local workers. Here again a potentially explosive situation seems to exist; in fact, with the growth in the organization of the local agricultural labourers it becomes more and more difficult to bring such low wage labourers from other areas.

Does migration promote rural-urban or inter-rural equality? According to the Lewis model of unlimited supplies of labour, migration acts as an equilibriating mechanism by transferring manpower from labour-surplus areas to labour-deficit areas, by encouraging the mechanization of agriculture and by moving the terms of trade in favour of the rural sector through a shift in the population balance between the two sectors. However, empirical studies fail to reveal such tendencies except in isolated cases. In the case of rural-urban migration such equilibrating tendency does not even get the opportunity to work because very rarely does one find cases where the rural workforce transferred to the urban areas offsets the natural growth in population.

4.3 Impact on urban life

How does immigration influence town life? The first point to consider, would be its impact on urban employment. We have already noted the problem of surplus labour in the urban areas in most of the Third World countries, which is manifested in the growth of the informal sector, as well as in the sizeable presence of those who are openly unemployed. In this situation, migration does not help the urban economy by providing labour power, except in cases of new townships—such as the steel townships of Durgapore, Villai, and Rourkella which were set up in the 1950s—where in the initial phase such migration helps (Lewis, 1963; Rempel and Lobdell, 1976). We have also noted that, even under this condition of labour surplus, people continue to in-migrate to the towns, especially the big ones, and somehow manage to survive with the meagre, and fluctuating income, of the informal sector, while looking for more regular employment in the offices or industries. Their very presence in the towns, however, can have important implications for those employed in industries and offices, as they provide the employers with an optional source of manpower, and thereby help to keep wages and working conditions at a level which would have been unacceptable in other situations. The informal sector largely consisting of more recent migrants therefore acts as a kind of 'reserve army' which can be tapped as and when required by the employers, but which is maintained at a minimum cost to the economy (B. Dasgupta, 1973).

One particular kind of manpower continues to be in demand, despite the overall situation of labour surplus. This is the highly skilled manpower—e.g. doctors, engineers, managers and administrators—which can be more readily absorbed by the urban economy given its higher level of purchasing power. We have already noted the 'brain drain' which is caused by the migration process, and which leaves the very large rural population without some of the essential services; even when these are available, a vast quality-difference is created between the services offered in these two sectors (Rao-Desai, 1966). 'Brain drain' encourages two kinds of migration from the better-off rural families—first of those whose qualifications would draw much better remunerations in the towns than in the villages because of the very nature of their specialized knowledge; and secondly of others who would migrate to the towns to obtain a better quality service, such as students migrating for education, patients migrating for a better treatment, and others because of other amenities provided by the town life.

The labour force participation rate is usually higher for the migrants compared with that of the local residents.[1] This is not because it is easier for the migrants to obtain jobs in the local market—a point usually made by the political groups wanting to mobilize local opinion in their support against the migrants—but because of their economic and social position. Migrants often undertake functions which are avoided by the local work force—some of the dirtiest and hardest jobs, such as cleaning the streets, carrying loads, manual work in the factories, markets and ports, and so on. In many cases the migration process began because the local labour was unwilling to undertake such functions. But once having established themselves as a major component of the workforce in various factories, establishments and offices, the migrant workers tend to draw other migrants from their villages or regions to those activities—a channel of recruitment established through contacts is thereby set up in favour of those potential migrants. Secondly, whereas the local labourers normally live with their joint family and are supported by their relations during the period of unemployment, they are able to look for better jobs and risk unemployment; the migrant workers, without such family support, are often forced to take on whatever job comes their way, or to join the elastic informal sector rather than facing open unemployment and starvation. The very fact that their employment rate is higher than that for the local labourers is very often a reflection of their inferior bargaining position in the job market. Besides, whereas the local labourers have to remain in the town, whether employed or not because this is their homes, (unless they expect better opportunities elsewhere, that is, become migrants themselves) the migrant workers facing prolonged unemployment would prefer to return home where they would be likely to receive some support from their relatives.

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[1] Pandey, 1972. The participation rate of rural-born migrants is higher than that for urban-born migrants. (See also Sen, 1960.)

The studies on migration reveal significant shifts in the occupational pattern after migration to the towns. While a majority of rural-born migrants were in agriculture–as cultivators or labourers–before migrating, in the urban areas they are forced to look for other types of jobs, except for some of the skilled artisans and craftsmen who might find it possible to continue with their traditional work. The shift usually takes place in two directions–the skilled and educated migrants become absorbed in administrative, professional and clerical jobs, while the less educated and the less fortunate ones opt for manual work in factories or ports or services of various sorts including work in the informal sector (porters, peddlars, salesmen etc.) and domestic services. An analysis of census data for the towns and cities shows that 34.6 per cent of inter-state migrants went for work in administration, executive, professional, managerial and allied jobs, 27.6 per cent took up work in various crafts, and manufacturing and processing activities, while 8.5 per cent became clerks, 9.6 per cent became salesmen, and 9.3 per cent joined services of various sorts (Dhar, 1972). In Delhi 31 per cent became absorbed as craftsmen, workers and labourers, 14 per cent in various services, 15 per cent as sales workers, 20 per cent in clerical work, and 13 per cent in professional, managerial and administrative activities (Gupta, 1972). Similar figures could be quoted for the other major cities, but such figures would not be easy to compare because of differences in definitions and classifications–researchers do not allow a standardized definition of what is a 'service', or who are 'salesmen', and the occupations included also tend to vary. Generally speaking, the occupation pattern which emerges is based on the following–the economic base of the urban area, the skill and experience of the migrants, and the nature of contact between the migrant and the job market.

Migrants are usually poorer than the local residents. In most cases, it is the differential in earning opportunities between their native place and the towns from which they come which motivates migration. The migrants, at the beginning at any rate, therefore take up jobs with low wages and are conducted under difficult working conditions; over his life time, as he becomes aware of alternative job opportunities and comes to know more and more people with influence and contacts, a migrant can move up the income ladder, with the target of eventually landing a job with steady and relatively high wages. Sometimes it takes generations before a migrant family is properly settled in the destination. A part of the reason for their low income lies in their weak bargaining position–being less educated and socially less advanced (although at the same time they are usually more educationally and socially advanced than their fellow villagers), being a 'foreigner' with roots elsewhere, and being used to a low level of living. Since a vast majority of them work in the informal sector, the task of organizing them for industrial action is not easy. As a consequence, their very poor housing conditions, income level and lack of security in their jobs are ignored by the local press and political groups, while the open unemployment of the educated local youth is more emphatically advertised (B. Dasgupta, 1973).

While the above picture is generally true, there are interesting and important exceptions. In Delhi, the immigrants –being more educated than the local population and a large proportion of them coming from other, advanced urban centres–show a higher average income and monthly expenditure figures than the local residents (Rao-Desai, 1966). Again, both in Calcutta and in Delhi, as also in many other urban centres, some of the immigrant groups tend to perform better than others, e.g. the Marwaris or the Punjabis, who also receive a great deal of support from other members of the community living in the destination. Hindustanis from Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, and Orias from the east among the migrants generally perform less well than the other migrant groups–mainly because of a high level of illiteracy among them and also because many of them originally came from backward rural areas (Gore, 1970).

A major feature of life in the urban areas is the low female-male ratio. The larger the urban area the less favourable such ratio is to the female population. This arises from the sex-selectivity of migration, particularly voluntary migration, to urban areas, and also the concentration in those areas of long-distance migrants who prefer to leave their wives behind. An important factor in their preference to live alone is their intention to return to the village and also to accumulate savings from their low incomes in the towns, but no less important are the factors such as the high cost of living and the problems of finding accommodation. Many of the migrants live in their work place–schools, offices, or shops–or in overcrowded slums or on pavements. Another practice is to hire a room jointly, to house their belongings, while sleeping on the verandas or on the pavement (S. Chakrabarty, 1960). However, not all the migrant groups live in such conditions. The better-off, those coming from nearer villages, migrants from other urban areas and refugees who have lost their homes, are more likely to take their families with them. Moreover, as noted above, the longer the stay of a migrant in the towns the greater the likelihood that he will marry and eventually bring the family to live with him in the town. In the case of the Indian towns and cities the trend is for the imbalance in the sex ratio to be corrected over time (Rao-Desai, 1966).

Imbalance in sex ratio is one aspect of the social life of the migrant in the city, which indicates his exclusion from the cultural life in the place of destination. This is an important causal explanation of the scale of prostitution in the big cities. Generally speaking, various linguistic, religious, caste and ethnic communities do not mix very well in the cities, and maintain segregated existences. Each migrant group tends to become specialized in a set of jobs. In the case of Calcutta, the Hindustanis tend to be concentrated in manual jobs in factories, the Orias in catering, and work in ports and corporations, the Punjabis in transport, the South Indians in desk jobs, and the Marwaris in trade and commerce (Sen, 1960). The job specialization of a particular migrant group is not necessarily related to its traditional skills; it is usually a matter of coincidence that in the early phase of migration a group is recruited to perform a particular job–those who come subsequently, with the support of the migrants who are already in the towns and working in that occupation, tend to take up those jobs which are more easy to obtain through their contacts. In this way, various communities become specialized in different jobs. Furthermore, given the important role played by the 'contacts' in the destination, migrants from a particular area or belonging to a particular social group, tend to live together in the same city areas. This is partly influenced by the fact that it is easier to find accommodation there, while there might be difficulties in renting a room in areas inhabited by other socio-cultural groups. As the study by Nirmal Bose on Calcutta shows, it is possible to produce a socio-cultural map of the city, with different migrant groups living in different areas (N.K. Bose 1958). Added to this job specialization and residential segregation is the practice among various groups of setting up their own social clubs, organizing their own religious festivals, and sending their children to schools which are run by the community concerned or where the majority of the children belong to the same community. All these factors keep migrants away from the local population, and different migrant groups from one another. It is for this reason possible for a migrant to live his whole life in a city without having much contact with the local population, and without having the need to change the life style and habits he acquired in his native village or town. The more segregated they remain the greater becomes the tendency towards further segregation and the assertion of their traditional values and life style.

Here, it is important to distinguish between areas with settled migrant population and those where the population is mixed, and transitory and the rate of turnover is high. In the former case, despite their segregation from the local population the migrants feel relatively secure and maintain a community life–but in the latter case the sense of community is usually missing, and the individuals living there feel more lonely and out of place than those living in ghettoes. In the former case, migration tends to be recursive, leading to further migration, but in the latter the proportion of failed return migrants is likely to be high (Sinha, 1972).

Migration leads to overcrowding and a decline in the availability and quality of civic services such as water supply, garbage disposal and power. Some of the cities were originally planned for a smaller population; their infrastructure has now come under severe pressure from a population which is several times larger than the target one. Some of the urban areas of India–including the biggest, Calcutta–are facing the alarming prospect of a total breakdown of their overworked civic system. In response to this, there is often a tendency to make huge investments to build new infrastructures which would meet the new level of demand for those by a larger population. But such programmes–no matter how elegant and impressive these are from a planning and architectural viewpoint–often lead to further migration from the rural areas, thereby defeating the very objective of such activities.

In this section we have mainly discussed the problems and issues posed by the immigrants to big cities–because more research has been conducted on those and more data are available. It would have been equally important and interesting to examine the impact of migration on the smaller urban centres. Perhaps it is not wrong to suggest that many of the consequences of migration discussed here would also be witnessed in the case of the smaller towns, but on a smaller scale. The sex ratio would be less adverse to the female population, the problems of overcrowding and housing would be less, a lower proportion of the work force would be engaged in informal sector activities, a vast majority of the migrants would cover shorter distances, and their residential-occupation-cultural segregation from the local population would not be as great.

Another issue of interest would be why some urban towns grow over time and become larger cities, while in the case of some others the growth is stalled or takes place at a snail's pace even if there is no decline in the absolute level of population.[1] In the study by Premi mentioned in the previous chapter some of the characteristics of the low-growth towns were mentioned–the 'umbrella effect' of the bigger towns, the spread of urban population in a district over many towns, and the weak economic base–but perhaps there is more to know about why some areas attract migrants, but others do not (Premi, 1972).

We have already referred to the assertion of the Lewis model that migration acts as an equilibrating mechanism between the place of origin and the destination of the migrants, and concluded that at least in the rural areas of India such tendency is not in evidence. This is largely because of the selective process of migration. Migration to towns is not randomly spread over the entire hinterland of a town–some regions or cluster of villages tend to dominate the flow of migration. The fact that migrants tend to come from some areas and not others is, often at the beginning of the migratory process, largely coincidental. But once the migratory process begins, a network of contacts is established between a given town and a cluster of villages, which encourages migration from those villages to that particular town, and later on to other towns as the knowledge of the outside world widens. It is for this reason not surprising that the vast majority of migrants from Orissa to Calcutta come mainly from two districts, or that a high proportion of jute workers come from a cluster of villages in Uttar Pradesh.

As for voluntary migration, we have already noted that this particular type of movement tends to attract people from more advanced villages, with a higher level of productivity and application of modern inputs, as well as a low land-man ratio and a skewed land distribution. These villages are usually large and located near the urban centres. Migration from those villages to urban centres may often be associated with immigration, for work as hired workers, from other less privileged villages. The prosperity arising from rural-urban migration, in the case of these villages, leads to rural-rural migration in its direction. For both of these reasons migration is seen as performing the opposite role to that indicated in the Lewis model, that is, widening the disparity between rural areas at different levels of development, and encouraging a hierarchy of migration movements.

Migration not only promotes inter-village inequality. Within a village, whether it be an in-migrating or out-migrating one, the disparity between the richer and the poorer grows. In the case of the in-migrating villages, the out-migrants from other areas working as hired labourers add a new ring at the bottom of the occupational-social ladder–a phenomenon which is widely observed in the prosperous villages of Punjab. This migration is partly responsible for the increase in the proportion of landlessness in the villages with a high rural-urban migration propensity.

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[1] For example, the decline of Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad and Hoogly, and the growth of neighbouring towns of Siliguri, Krishnanagore and Chinsurah in West Bengal.

Migration provides the migrants with the opportunity to educate their children and to widen their range of activities both in the village and in the towns–thereby increasing both the propensity to migrate to the towns and the disparity between them and the non-migrant families. In the case of the rural-rural out-migrating villages too, one finds that (excepting in cases of disasters or organized migration) a good proportion of such migrants are small peasants (and a smaller number of landless labourers) who are migrating in order to supplement their family earnings from cultivation in the village (Pathare, *et al.*, 197?; Srivastava, 1968) and also that migration makes their economic situation better than those of non-migrants and provides them with the means to invest in more modern methods of agriculture back in the village (Srivastava, 1968). In the case of rural-urban migrants in the towns, no matter what social position they hold in the village and how advanced they are in terms of literacy and enterprise compared with their fellow villagers, the majority of them are consigned to the lowest position in the economic-social hierarchy of the towns, and their very presence widens the inequality within the urban sector.

To summarize this part of the discussion, migration is (a) to a great extent prompted by four types of inequality –intra-village, intra-rural, rural-urban and intra-urban; (b) migration tends to promote further migration from the same area, which in turn sets off other migratory movements at a lower level of hierarchy in terms of prosperity; and (c) the tendency inherent in the migratory process is to accentuate inequality. Migration, whether from Turkey to the Federal Republic of Germany, from Burdwan to Calcutta, from Kalna to Burdwan, or from the tribal areas of Bihar to Kalna, does not allow the out-migrating areas to match the in-migrating ones in terms of standard of living and job opportunities. On the other hand, migration, by importing tastes and consumption habits in the place of destination actually increases the demand for urban goods and articles even in the backward areas at the cost of the products of their own artisans and household producers –thereby further increasing the gap between the two.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

In the previous three chapters we have examined the characteristics, causes and consequences of various types of migratory movements. We have established that the level of migration in India is quite high and that it contains some interesting features. First, the very high level of rural-rural, short-distance female migration associated with marriage. Secondly, the importance of rural-rural migration in the aggregate flow, and the relatively minor role played by rural-urban migration. This is interesting, given the coverage which the latter usually gets in research in comparison with migratory movements within the rural areas. Thirdly, the role played by the employers in organizing recruitment particularly to mines, plantations and factories in the towns in the early phase of the colonial rule--and its implications for the job specialization by various social groups in the place of destination. Fourthly, the role of disasters -both natural and political--in forcing a large number of people to leave their villages.

A major conclusion of this study is that it is not possible to associate migratory movements with a given set of migrant characteristics. The age, sex, education, economic and social standing, and the nature of the movement (whether singly or in groups) as well as the decision-making process vary widely according to the type of migratory movement. Instead, in this report we have attempted to explain migration in terms of the following factors: historical context, agrarian structure, the pattern of urbanization, and disasters. We have examined how the establishment of British rule, on the one hand, led to the disintegration of the self-contained rural life and the displacement of artisans from the village economy, and on the other hand created opportunities for their absorption in a wide range of economic activities sponsored by British capital--e.g. mines, plantations, factories in the towns, new towns, army, and activities in other parts of the empire.

The agrarian structure, a mixed product of the British colonial rule and the land reform measures introduced by the independent government in the 1950s, shows a marked tendency towards increasing the commercialization of agriculture, which is in turn associated with increasing landlessness and land concentration, and a falling participation rate. These factors encourage two major types of migratory movements–of the better-off towards the towns, and of those from the less privileged rural areas towards areas of rural prosperity. The movement of the rural poor to the urban areas is usually associated with disaster or organized migration.

Both the level and the rate of progress of urbanization appear to be very low in the country. Paradoxically, these features of urbanization are associated with (a) a high rate of increase in the population of urban centres and (b) an unmistakeable trend towards increasing concentration of urban population in bigger cities. The paradox arises from the gross imbalance in the relative size of the two sectors, which enables even a small proportionate movement from the rural sector to account for a significant increase in the population in urban areas. Furthermore, the failure of the rate of industrialization to match the pace of urbanization, creates a condition of labour surplus in urban areas, which is manifested both in open unemployment and, more important, in the growth of the 'informal sector' with low and unstable earnings. Even this fails to arrest the growth of urban areas, given the large and growing rural-urban disparity in earning opportunities and civic amenities. Evidently, the low and unstable earnings in the towns are preferred by the migrants to the even more desperate conditions of life in the countryside.

Disasters continue to account for a high level of migration. Natural disasters–whether storm, flood, drought, or landslide–bring people to the towns because the rural economy is too weak to mount the necessary relief operations. In recent months developments in Assam, Tripura and some other areas in the north-east–where the 'local' population are demanding the expulsion of migrants–have reached an explosive stage which might trigger off a large scale migratory movement similar to that witnessed at the time of partition in 1947.

Migration, we have noted, instead of acting as a mechanism of equilibrium tends to encourage further migration and promote inequalities between rich and poor in the villages, between rural and urban areas, between two urban areas at different levels of development, and within an urban area between various social classes. These inequalities, in turn, tend to induce further migration and concentration of population and resources. Moreover, bigger and more resourceful areas containing more resourceful people, usually obtain a higher level of support from the public fund than their proportionate weight in the population would justify. All this helps to make the migratory process recursive and the inequality self-perpetuating.

Many of the conclusions drawn from the Indian study are confirmed by studies made on other countries in the Third World. The impact of land scarcity and harsh environment on the decision to migrate is confirmed by several other studies including the one by Arizpe on the *campesino* economy in two rural areas in Mexico (Arizpe, 1978) and that by Standing and Sukdeo in Guyana (Standing, Sukdeo, 1977). The labour-displacing, and consequently migration-promoting impact of the new technology–particularly in cases of high level mechanization, and the employment of contract labour in place of family labour–has been confirmed in studies on South-East Asia (Palmer, 1972), Guyana (Standing, Sukdeo, 1977) and Turkey (Uner, 1980), while the tendency towards concentration of land and landless has been confirmed by studies of agrarian structure of a large number of countries (Balan, 1978). The displacement of local artisans by the growing incorporation of the economic and social life in the village to the urban-commercial sector is also witnessed in a village study in Mexico where local fiddlers, decorators, teachers of traditional dances and peddlers are being pushed out of their traditional occupations by people from the towns or those who have learned their skills in the urban areas (Arizpe, 1978). Regional disparity induced by migration is also documented in detail in a number of studies on countries in the Third World.

From our conclusions that migratory process is recursive and the inequality promoting migration is self-perpetuating, it does not follow that migration should be discouraged, nor that a policy of discouraging migration through direct government intervention is likely to succeed. No policy of controlling population movements can be expected to work; the intending migrants would always find enough loopholes in the administration or gaps in the army cordon to evade such measures. Moreover, it would raise many awkward questions such as: how much control, and whose control over whom? Besides, it is questionable whether the inequality promoted by migration would be a worse alternative to a situation where the vast majority of the population are born and die in the same village. Discussions about controlling migration ignore the immense contribution which migration has made to human civilization—as indeed to the life and culture of the people of India. There is no doubt that without migration a community would lose its vitality and dynamism. The objective of a government policy should not be to control migration but to ensure that (a) such movement is not caused by human misery; (b) it proves beneficial to both the individuals and the communities concerned; and (c) it does not operate as a process which widens inequality. A policy towards migration should therefore aim at eliminating the inequalities which primarily cause such movements, and which through further migration tend to make the process of widening inequality a self-perpetuating one.

As for rural-urban migration, it is necessary to recognize that migration can no longer be seen as a solution to the problem of underutilization of labour in the countryside; the underemployed labour would have to find employment in the rural sector itself. However, creating job opportunities in the rural sector is easier said than done. Unlike several other parts of Asia—e.g. Sumatra or Malaysia—where land is relatively abundant and a policy of increasing the area under cultivation or encouraging migration to land-surplus areas would make sense—in India the scope for increasing areas under cultivation has been virtually exhausted. There is a risk that any further expansion of cultivation might set in a process of soil-erosion, apart from the fact that extension of cultivation to hitherto uncultivated but cultivable areas very often requires massive investments in clearing forests, levelling grounds and installing irrigation facilities. While multiple cropping and the introduction of new technology of cultivation associated with high yielding seed varieties should help in increasing land productivity, the very intensive exploitation of soil and the decline in the proportion of land left fallow, as well as the lack of nutrient-balance in the fertilisers applied are exposing the areas under this technology to the risk of rapidly becoming infertile; apart from becoming instrumental in increasing inequality in the countryside and therefore promoting tendencies towards migration. Besides, a major weakness of this technology is that it is based on capital-energy-import intensive inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, tractors, irrigation pumps, and diesel oil. Such a policy, while effective in small areas, can hardly be viewed as a solution on a large scale in view of the chronic shortage of these inputs in the country, and cannot be applied in areas lacking irrigation facilities, particularly drought-prone areas. The development of non-agricultural activities animal husbandry, fishery, and rural industries—are the fields which hold the key to the future of rural India, but to which very little attention has been given so far by scholars or policy-makers. Expansion of these activities would not only make the rural economy more viable and labour-absorbing, but also more diversified and interesting.

Another policy approach towards rural-urban migration would be to recognize the futility of investing large sums in constructing modern motorways, drainage facilities, etc., in urban areas in order to meet the problem of over-crowding and decline in the civic services. These architectural-engineering plans have the effect of further widening the disparity between the towns and the rural areas, along with the existing disparities in the provision of other facilities such as educational and medical ones, and would therefore encourage migration. A decentralized urbanization pattern, based on a large number of small towns, each with an independent economic base (and not a satellite of a bigger town) and each closely integrated with the rural hinterland, would have a better chance of promoting rural development, and thereby reducing disparity between the two sectors, than a policy of encouraging the concentration of urban population in the megalopolis. In India, although a great deal of discussion has taken place over the last two decades regarding the needs for such decentralized urban development, so far very little has been done by way of concrete programmes to implement such an approach.

Inequalities existing within a village are also an important cause of migration. A major administrative effort in reducing inequality would be in the direction of land reform—to reduce land ceilings further, to recover and distribute surplus land to the landless, to implement tenancy reforms which provide the tenants with security against eviction, to provide the tenant with the option to buy land and become a proprietor, and to provide the small farmers, tenants and labourers with access to administration and institutional credit (Walinski, 1977).

Intra-rural inequalities—between prosperous and less privileged regions—are becoming a major feature of rural life with the selective application of the technology associated with high yielding seed varieties in those areas which are endowed with irrigation resources, infrastructure and co-operative institutions, e.g. Punjab and Harayana. Such inequality cannot be reduced by spreading the application of modern inputs to the entire rural area because of the capital-energy-import intensity of the technology, and the fact that it is not applicable to areas lacking irrigation facilities. Here the alternative is to search for rural technologies which are not dependent on a high level of capital or energy and which are primarily based on local resources. They should be able to be implemented in a vast majority of rural areas but at the same time would help to raise land productivity. Recent research on fertilizer production from bio-gas and blue green algae, as well as on crop rotations which include nitrogen-fixing crops would, if successful, obviate the need for a large scale use of chemical fertilizers. Similarly, in view of the very high costs of construction and operation of energy-consuming tube wells, it is important to explore the possibilities of irrigation with pond water, bamboo tubewells, and so on, which are based on local material and which can be operated without much effort by local manpower. In other words, research priorities would have to be changed in favour of less demonstrative and more cost-effective technologies.

To conclude, problems associated with migration should not be treated in isolation, but as a part of an overall framework of development which is geared to meeting the needs of a large section of the population – both rural and urban – and to reducing inequalities in income opportunities and life style between villages and towns, between rich and poor villages and big and small urban areas, and between rich and poor in every settlement. An important contribution of the discussion on migration is that it provides an overall view of the problem of development, linking the issues of rural development with those of urbanization and the national economic and social perspective.

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[B] SS 82/XV52/A

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