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A Study of Rural Migration in India

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ABSTRACT: Migration is the movement of people away from their usual place of residence, either within the country or across countries' borders. Some states like Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat and Haryana attract migrants from other states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, etc. Migration is one of the ways in which population change occurs in a location, state, or country.

Census 2011 provides the latest information regarding migration in India.

As per the Census data, India had 31.5 crore migrants in 2001 which constituted 31% of the population of India, but in 2011, 38% of the country's population were migrants and the number of the migrant population stood at 45.6 crores.

The number of migrants in India increased by 45% between 2001 and 2011, although the population increased by 18% in the same time period.

In 2011, the number of international migrants i.e. immigrants constituted 1% of the total migration.

In 2011, internal migration i.e. within the country constituted 99% of the total migration.

KEYWORDS- rural,migration,India,states, population,states

I. INTRODUCTION

Internal Migration and External Migration are the two types of migration. When migration takes place within a country, or within a state it is known as internal migration. When a person enters a new country, it is known as immigration. When a person leaves a country, it is known as emigration.

One type of migration can be classified as Inter-state migration and Intra-state migration.

- Almost 88% of all internal migration was intra-state migration, as per Census 2011. It numbered upto 39.6 crore persons.
- There were 5.4 crore inter-state migrants as per the 2011 census.[1,2,3]
- As per the same census, the largest receiver states were Maharashtra and Delhi.
- As per census 2011, the largest sources of inter-state migration was Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- By 2011, Maharashtra received around 60 lakh migrants from across India.
- Around 63 lakh residents of Bihar had moved either permanently or temporarily to other states.
- Around 83 lakh residents of Uttar Pradesh had moved either permanently or temporarily to other states.

Based on origin and destination, internal migration can be further classified into 4 different types of migration.[4,5,6]

1. Urban-Urban
2. Urban-Rural
3. Rural-Rural,
4. Rural-Urban

As per the 2011 census, the Urban-Rural migrants comprised 3 crore migrants. Urban-Urban movement and Rural-Urban movement accounted for around 8 crore migrants each. 54% of classifiable internal migration came under the category of rural-rural migrants which numbered up to 21 crores.

Causes of Human Migration in India – Internal Migration

- Education, health care, for other basic infrastructure facilities, pressure on land due to high population, and poverty are some of the main reasons behind the migration of people in India.
- Migration is also caused by other factors like local conflicts, wars, natural disasters like tsunami, earthquakes, cyclones, floods, droughts.
- The most important pull factors which lead to the migration of people from rural areas to cities are relatively better incomes, better availability of regular work, and other better opportunities.
- Among 50% of the male and 5% of female inter-state migrants, the cause of migration was work.[7,8,9]
- Marriage and family were the primary reasons behind intra-state migration. This was the cause recorded among 70% of the intra-state migrants, as per figures given in Census 2011.

- Only 2% of female migrants and 21% of male migrants (overall 8%) moved within a state in search of work.
- 39% of male migrants and 83% of female migrants had undertaken intra-state migration due to reasons such as family and marriage.

Consequences of Migration

The various consequences of migration are given below:

- Environmental consequences
- Social consequences
- Demographic consequences
- Economic consequences[10,11,12]

Human Migration in India – Issues Faced by Migrant Labourers

Lack of affordable housing, transportation, access to nutritious food etc are some of the issues faced by migrant labourers.

II. DISCUSSION

In India, policies and programmes have largely been ineffective in providing any form of legal or social protection to internal migrants. Regulations and administrative procedures exclude migrants from accessing social protection and portability of entitlements is limited. Internal migrants lack political representation; adequate housing and basic infrastructure; proper wages and job security; integration with urban mainstream labour market; access to health and education facilities and are vulnerable to exploitation and crime. Limited data on nature and scale of internal migration at regular interval constrains designing of effective policies and programme. Census does not capture details of short-term migrants. Migrant women and adolescent girls are more vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse. They are less paid and their economic contribution is not recognised. Children are the most unrecognized and vulnerable groups among internal migrants. Migration delays school entry, increases the dropout rate and forces early entry into labour market[13,14,15]

Legal Provisions for Migrants Direct • The Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979 Indirect • The Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 • The Contract Labour Regulation and Abolition Act, 1970 • The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 • Codes of Wages, 2017 • The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 • Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 • Domestic Workers Welfare and Social Security Act, 2010 Facts • Every fifth person in Urban India is a migrant from rural areas • Every seventh migrant (rural-urban) is in Maharashtra • Arunachal Pradesh has the highest percentage of rural migrants • Every second male migrated to urban areas for employment • Every second female migrated to urban areas due to marriage • Every third rural-urban migrant has migrated in the last 10 years • Every fourth rural-urban migrant is illiterate • Three in every four rural-urban migrants are of working age (15-59 years)

Some of the prominent migrant recipient states are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana, West Bengal. The migrants sending states are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Odisha. The significant migration corridors that emerge at the national level for rural –urban migration are – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Karnataka ® Maharashtra Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha. Madhya Pradesh ® Gujarat Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Uttarakhand ® Delhi[16,17,18]

Some Regional Initiatives Labornet: A social enterprise in Bangalore established an interface between informal workers and employers. The enterprise has till now developed a database of 45,000 workers, and provide services on financial inclusion, linkage with social security and welfare schemes to informal workers. Ration Kruti Samiti: A network of civil society organisations of Maharashtra was instrumental in passing of the government resolution which helped both inter and intrastate migrants in accessing public distribution system. Aajeevika Bureau: Works with migrant communities at both source and destination. Few initiatives taken are Shramik Sahayata evam Sandarbha Kendras, a network of walk-in resource centres for migrant workers; Labour Line, a phone-based help line for workers; Issuance of ID proof; Skill Development; Legal aid etc

III. RESULTS

The majority of internal migrants in India are short-distance, intra- and inter-district migrants (figure 1). Kone et al. (2018) note that the proportions of long-distance inter-state migration is considerably less than other developing

countries such as Brazil and China, notwithstanding the fact that there are no legal restrictions to inter-state migration in India. One of the main barriers is the non-portability of social welfare schemes such as subsidized grain and the requirement of state domicile for government jobs. Munshi and Rosenzweig (2016) similarly theorize that low migration rates among male migrants in India are due to the lack of a formal insurance system that would help them hedge the risks of migration costs, coupled with relatively well-functioning rural informal insurance mechanisms. Among major geographical streams, the most prevalent stream of migration is rural to rural, accounting for 62 percent, followed by the rural to urban stream at 20 percent, then the urban to urban at 13 percent, and urban to rural migration at 5 percent (Government of India 2010). According to the 2011 Census, 68 percent of all migrants were females. Over the years, it has been seen that the main reason cited for the migration of females has been marriage, followed by employment (Rajan and Neetha 2018). On the other hand, males mainly migrate for employment and education (Rajan and Sivakumar 2018).[19,20,21] However, an underreported fact is that women, while primarily migrating for marriage, do enter the labor market at their destinations; this underreporting as well as a strongly male-centric view of migration leaves the issues of women migrants too often invisible (Rajan, Sivakumar and Srinivasan 2020). Another aspect to note is that rural areas still depend on employment in agriculture. With agriculture heavily dependent on seasonal factors, this seasonal cycle also shapes the rural-urban migration stream. The rate of temporary and seasonal migration is seven times larger when permanent and semipermanent migration is considered. An estimated 21 out of every 1,000 migrants in India are temporary and seasonal migrants, which amounts to approximately 14 million persons circulating annually. Despite newer evidence from a number of developing countries that seasonal migration is not necessarily a response to destitution (Lucas 2021), in India, there is a preponderance of economically and socially marginalized communities in seasonal migration (Keshri and Bhagat 2013). The Link between Urbanization and Migration: A Picture of Exclusion Urbanization has been a growing phenomenon in South Asia, including India. As of 2011, the population living in urban areas in India was about 31 percent (about 377 million persons), still below the global average of 55 percent.[22,23,24] In fact, India has one of the lowest urbanization rates in the world. Even in the South Asia region, where India is a regional power, only Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan have lower rates of urbanization (United Nations 2018). Although net rural to urban migration contributes about one-fifth of urban population growth, the net annual outflow from rural to urban areas is about 2 million (Bhagat 2012). Another main issue that influences migration to urban areas is the primacy of urban employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector. However, employment in manufacturing has been stagnant in India for a number of years, with low labor absorption (Iyer 2013). Research has shown that formal employment in labor-intensive industries such as manufacturing is actually moving out of urban areas to rural areas, leaving workers in urban areas with few options beyond informal employment (Ghani, Goswami, and Kerr 2012). Migrants take up significant space in India's large urban centers, with the Census of 2011 indicating that almost 46 percent of India's urban population is migrants. They work in both formal and informal sectors, such as in manufacturing and construction, as well as occupation such as brick making and textiles (Srivastava and Sutradhar 2016; Deshingkar and Akter 2009). A number of urban policies have been undertaken over the decades to ensure that increasingly large urban centers turn into engines of growth. The contribution of urban centers to India's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise from 47 percent in 1980–81 to an expected 75 percent in 2030, provided that urban infrastructure development keeps pace with its potential (Gupta 2019). Some of the recent schemes claimed to have a holistic urban renewal program are the Smart Cities Mission and Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Transformation (AMRUT), launched in 2015. However, ample research has noted how migrants have been excluded from most benefits in cities, including access to social security programs, with many living in cramped slums (Chandrasekhar and Mitra 2019). The invisibility of migrants is also reflected in inadequate statistics. For instance, migration data as a part of employment and unemployment data were last collected by the National Sample Survey in 2007–08. In order to link migrants with urban development, much needs to be done by way of public policy. Recent announcements by the central government during the COVID-19 pandemic on the portability of ration cards and rental housing for migrant workers are some important steps in this direction (Rajan 2020). Toward a Policy for Integrating Migrants with Development The urban exclusion of internal migrants was flagged by a UNESCO (2012) policy brief which found that migrants were denied access to rights in the cities where they lived, often working in informal jobs with inadequate social, economic, and health security or education for their children. In view of this, the Government of India, through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA), constituted the "Working Group on Migration" in 2015 and submitted a report in 2017. The report made a number of recommendations and provides a roadmap for the better inclusion of migrants at their destinations (Government of India 2017b). Social and Economic Protection To date, there has been only one piece of legislation governing the conditions of migrant workers in India—the Interstate Migrant Workmen's Act, 1979. However, migrant workers have been governed by various labor laws with no focus on migration status such as the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970; Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996; and the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008. In 2020, different labor laws

were amalgamated into four labor codes, but with little concern for migrant workers. Because many establishments are excluded, and also because many labor migrants are not registered, the benefits of labor laws do not reach most migrant workers. HealthCare and Housing It is important to ensure access to healthcare developed through portable insurance systems and easy access to public healthcare systems at destination. Moreover, the provision of temporary or rentalbased housing culminating in ownership may be helpful in many urban contexts.[24,25] This would also pave the way for migrants to acquire an identity, encouraging them to avail themselves of the right to vote and participate in local development. Urbanization and rural empowerment policies at national and subnational levels need to harmonize, with a view to making the benefits of migration available to all. Skills and Education Programs must be set up in order to upskill migrant workers to better their conditions in terms of both work and wages. Programs to provide education for migrant children will also engender more long-term and robust migration to urban centers. Financial Inclusion It is important to ensure that migrants get access to formal channels of banking and credit systems, to not only increase their assets, but also to ensure legal channels for migrant remittance transfers. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that these measures are of the utmost importance. The tragic scenes of migrant workers walking India's roads on their way home could have been avoided if basic safety nets had been in place. Larger urbanization policies have to dovetail with rural empowerment programs, which seems to be absent in most discussions on urbanization policies, including the recent "Smart Cities Mission." More importantly, responsibility toward migrants should be clearly defined and adequate policies need to be formulated with unambiguous operational feasibility. A holistic rethinking of welfare measures, both legislatively and operationally, would ensure that internal migrants are not left vulnerable and excluded in the future. Conclusion A unique identification project known as Aadhaar has been quite successful, and it is now easier to implement the policy of inclusion. Over the years, a push to use better mobile facilities along with the use of the Aadhaar system to ensure greater financial coverage have occurred through governmental programs like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), which oversaw a massive increase in the opening of bank accounts. However, issues still remain. For example, despite the opening of bank accounts, access to credit facilities is still limited, especially in rural areas (Sinha and Azad 2018). This is an area that needs to be developed. Further, the increase in digital coverage should make access to food security, housing, health, and education of migrants' children a top priority. While state and local governments are the implementing authorities, the central government is required to create favorable legislative and policy frameworks with respect to all internal migrants, including inter-state migrants. It is often argued that migrants from rural areas form only a small part of current developing countries' urban population growth. Still, they constitute a significant group for the cities' economies, and, possibly, for poverty reduction policies. And urbanisation is expected to accelerate in countries like India and China, and migration is likely to increase. Moreover, the total number of migrants is much larger than urbanisation and net migration figures suggest. In many developing countries, migration has a 'circular character'; rural-urban migrants do not settle permanently in cities but continue to maintain close links with their areas of origin. They return regularly and after retiring, and remit substantial parts of their income. Migrants, particularly the ones who continue to move between rural and urban areas, are a difficult group to analyse and to formulate policies for. Although there is a large amount of literature on the background of migrants, conclusions differ. There is agreement that migration is a selective process, that - as in Europe in the nineteenth century - growing cities in Third World countries are full of young male adults (Williamson 1988: 430 ff.). But this apart, contrasting pictures of migrants exist. For example, some of the literature on migration, and popular opinion, portray migrants in Third World cities as destitutes and their migration as a last resort - a forced move from the countryside where they had no alternatives.¹ Other authors see migrants as rational actors, as individuals responding to income incentives in their decisions to migrate.² Yet another strand in the literature argues that the poorest cannot migrate.³ Some authors have concluded that better-off villagers tend to be pulled, and worse-off villagers pushed, and that therefore town-ward migration increases. inequality⁴ Finally, there is no consensus about why and which women migrate, and whether their migration responses differ from men's (Williams 1990). Partly because of these disagreements about migrants' characteristics, it is unclear how migration influences urban and rural poverty If the poor are well-informed and urbanise and do not greatly drive down the urban wage-rate or employment prospect by so doing, the process would reduce poverty But there are doubts about whether and how much migration contributes to poverty reduction. In a recent paper, Ravallion and Datt argue that in India the process of rural-urban migration has not contributed to poverty reduction. According to their analysis, agricultural growth has been the main cause.⁵ This article looks at the relation between ruralurban migration and poverty: who migrates, from which areas and income groups, how do the migrants compare to non-migrating urban groups, and how do the migrants fare over time? This shows that there is no simple correlation between the two, that different socioeconomic groups migrate for different reasons and that these factors change over time. The analysis focuses on India. It draws on field-work and interviews in an industrial area of Calcutta in the state of West Bengal, mainly amongst migrants from other states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa) who in many cases had moved 600 km. or more to come and work in the jute and paper industries (de Haan 1994a). Migrants had been attracted to the unskilled work in these industries in earlier parts of this

century; during the last decennia few new job have been created. The article also draws on analysis of survey data, particularly the 43rd NSS round of 1987, referring to India as a whole. The rest of this article is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the rate of urbanisation in India. Section 3 describes the process of circular migration and the reasons for this form of migration. The following sections look at five issues in the relationship between migration and poverty Section 4 looks at the role of inequality in migration and workers' personal motivations to migrate. Section 5 discusses the migrants' districts of origin, and Section 6 the background of the migrants, mainly in terms of land ownership. Section 7 raises the question: how does the income of the migrant compare to the non-migrating population, both in their rural area of origin and in the urban environment? Section 8 discusses how migrants fare over time: are they able to improve their income? Section 9 concludes.

[22,23] 2 Rate of Urbanisation and Migration in India In a study on population and food prospects, Dyson expects the 'long anticipated great shaking loose' of the Indian rural peasantry from the villages towards the towns to be pronounced during the next decades.6 Indeed India is today still largely a rural society In 1992, 74 per cent of the total population still lived in rural areas, and 62 per cent of the labour force worked in agriculture.7 Urbanisation has progressed, but at a moderate pace. In 1901 almost 26 million people, or 11 per cent of the Indian population lived in urban areas. In 1991 more than 217 million lived in cities - still only 26, per cent of the total population, On average, during this century the Indian population growth rate was about 15 per cent per decade, and the growth of the urban population 26 per cent. Historical explanations of urbanisation in India often point to the decline of old industrial towns like Murshidabad as a result of Imperial import policies, although new urban centres like Bombay and Calcutta emerged. After Independence, urban growth remained slow. During the 1960s and 1970s, India's urbanisation rates were lower than in other, comparable developing countries.8 According to NSS data, rural-to-urban migration as a proportion of total migration declined between 1963-64 and 1973-74 (Mukherjee and Banerjee 1978: 31). Population growth in Calcutta illustrates India's slow urbanisation. During this century, Calcutta Metropolitan Corporation, the central part of Calcutta, has grown at less than 20 per cent per decade, i.e. only marginally above India's natural population growth rate and slightly below the rate of urbanisation as a whole. Calcutta Urban Agglomeration, the greater Calcutta area, has grown at 25 per cent per decade. The growth rate for both areas has declined since the 1950s. Analysis of the population growth rates of a specific industrial area within Calcutta shows that immigration followed the cycles of the industry, including periods of substantial net outmigration (de Haan 1994a: 140-2). But slow urbanisation is not the result of lack of migration, of rural dwellers being tied to their, villages, as the quote from Dyson seems to imply, and as much of the older (colonial) literature had argued.9 Historical evidence indicates that most of the South Asian rural population has been highly mobile.'0 Studies on the early colonial period show that large groups of people moved over large distances. In the nineteenth century large numbers of people moved to work in seasonal agricultural activities.1' Although migration towards West Bengal is likely to have declined during the latter part of the twentieth century following the relative economic decline of the state, in 1971 and 1981 still more than 2 million people had migrated from other parts of India (Census figures). Rates of urbanisation underestimate the number of migrants. So does Census migration data, since it registers only the number of migrants present at a particular date. Both under-report the total flow of migrants to and from the city, This movement has been, and remains, significant, as the following section describes. 3 Circular Migration Rural-urban migration, in India as in many other developing countries, has been, and remains 'circular': generally single male migrants go out for work, they maintain close links with their villages of origin, they return when they can or when forced to, and they aspire to return after retirement. In the case of Calcutta, most migrants came from 'upcountry', from eastern Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar, an area about 600 km. to the west of, Calcutta. They have not settled permanently in Calcutta, but continue to maintain close links with their villages, and they continue to speak Hindi rather than adopt Bengali. This pattern has changed surprisingly little during this century, contradicting many expectations. Patterns of circular migration are expected to be 'dependent on the availability of short-term cash earning opportunities, either in towns or on plantations. This dependence on a particular type of outside employment had led Zelinsky to place circular migration patterns at an early stage of modernization. Certainly, evidence from Africa shows an increasing stabilisation in migration flows. Both Caidwell for West Africa and Gugler in East Africa show a reduced rate of return migration...' (Corinell et al. 1976: 9). The change in Calcutta's sex ratio does indeed show signs of stabilisation,'2 but in my opinion this does not indicate a break in the pattern of circular migration. As with rates of urbanisation, the sex ratio only reflects net rates of migration, and under-estimates total flows. Net migration towards Calcutta has declined (as a result of declining employment opportunities) but this is partly due to increasing numbers returning to their villages, or moving to other places within India. This pattern of circular migration has been stimulated by various factors (de Haan 1994a). First, transport and communication are well developed, and they were so already at the turn of the century" Migrants travel over long distances, but the areas were relatively well connected. Most of the recruiting areas for Calcutta's industries are situated along the main west-east and north-south rail connections. This implies that, compared to migration in earlier rural Europe for example, migration in rural India from 1880 onwards was probably less costly and less time consuming. During this century transport facilities have further improved. A second contributing factor is the

development of rural society, as indicated by the quote from Dyson. The rural structure has continued to be dominated by small land holdings. Rather than being a 'proletariat' (in the Marxist sense), many migrant workers possessed small pieces of land in their villages of origin. Little research has been done on the interaction of urban and rural society, but the two clearly interact: income from work outside the village is used to invest in agricultural production - in the case of the labour migrants from Bihar probably without causing important changes in technology - and hence to counteract proletarianisation. The ownership of a plot of land, even if small, contributes to return migration.⁴ Third, living conditions in urban areas have not been conducive to the creation of a stable working class. There has been a shortage of housing, population density has been high, and few amenities have been provided. Bad living conditions are not only a cause of return migration; in my opinion the form of migration has also been partly responsible for the conditions in the town. If migrants can save, and most can, they invest their money in the village, not in the town. They have invested in improving their village house - as out-migrating areas testify - and improving or maintaining agriculture on their own land. Over time, living conditions have probably improved, but at the same time congestion has increased, and therefore factors pushing the workers back continue to exist. A fourth issue is whether the pattern of migration has been caused by irregularity of work. During the earlier part of this century working hours in largescale industries changed constantly Large numbers of workers were dismissed during crises⁵ and rates of labour turnover were high. But, as I have argued elsewhere, in general, the workers', A second contributing factor is the development of rural society, as indicated by the quote from Dyson. The rural structure has continued to be dominated by small land holdings. Rather than being a 'proletariat' (in the Marxist sense), many migrant workers possessed small pieces of land in their villages of origin. Little research has been done on the interaction of urban and rural society, but the two clearly interact: income from work outside the village is used to invest in agricultural production - in the case of the labour migrants from Bihar probably without causing important changes in technology - and hence to counteract proletarianisation. The ownership of a plot of land, even if small, contributes to return migration.⁴ Third, living conditions in urban areas have not been conducive to the creation of a stable working class. 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But, as I have argued elsewhere, in general, the workers' main cause behind this⁷ In any case, men left the women behind, and this provides, perhaps, the most important reason to return. The family has undergone little change during this century; there is no clear trend towards a nuclear family Thus, industrialisation and urbanisation in India have not broken the close links between rural and urban areas. Over a long period of time circular migration has continued to be the dominant mode of migration. When ample employment opportunities existed, workers found it easy to leave their job and return after some time. In the case of Calcutta finding a job has become increasingly difficult, but this has not broken the pattern of migration. Influenced by cultural norms regarding female mobility, the predominant pattern of migration has been circular, of single men leaving family and village to earn an income to maintain the family This aspect of the pattern of migration is crucial for the links between poverty and migration, as the following sections show 4 Poverty, Inequality and Migration Economic analyses show that inequality variously defined, rather than poverty may cause migration. 'Our analysis of data from forty Indian villages suggest that high emigration from a village is intimately associated with unequal distribution of resources (usually land)..¹⁸ Along similar lines, Stark (1991: 140 ff.) argues that relative deprivation plays an important role in migration decisions. His findings from Mexico show that, for international migration, relatively deprived households are more likely to engage in international migration than are better-off households. For internal migration the perceived risk of relative deprivation in the place of origin (the city) also plays a role. If this risk is perceived to be high, migration ceases to be an effective means for achieving gains with respect to relative deprivation.

IV. CONCLUSION

This link between inequality and migration does not, however, take into account the migrants personal reasons for migration. Further, for the migrants as for other people affected by it, 'poverty' is not an objective category Although the workers' personal accounts almost invariably pointed to poverty, lack of land and/or income as the main reason for migrating, this does not prove a direct link between absolute poverty and migration. Migrants who in absolute and relative terms were better off, owning more land for example, also mentioned poverty as their reason for migration.

Therefore, not only poverty, but also inequality, as well as the migrants' (and non-migrants') personal evaluations of these 'objective factors', are determinant causes of migration. 5 Poor Districts and Migration From which areas do the migrants come? Are these the most deprived districts? The evidence available shows quite convincingly that it is not necessarily the poorest districts from which people migrate. Colonial reports in the late nineteenth century show that the out-migrating districts were not necessarily the poorest. For example, Nolan wrote in 1888 that Bihar's inhabitants were more healthy and that agricultural resources had been developed at an earlier period 'so that the population increases without finding an outlet'.¹⁹ In this case, it was the earlier development of these districts, and not poverty or backwardness, that provided conditions for out-migration. As indicated above, the areas from which Calcutta attracted most of its migrants were well connected by railways quite early (and by water in earlier periods), and it is not very likely that these were the poorest districts.²⁰ The 'segmentation' of migration streams is important for understanding the link between poverty, and migration.¹¹ Usually, because of the personal contacts that are essential for successful migration, people from specific areas migrate to specific destinations ('chain migration'). In one jute mill in Calcutta 40 per cent of the workers came from the district Saran in Bihar. Migration from Bihar to Bengal around the turn of the century can be explained with reference to wage differentials between the two areas. But the patterns are more complex. Wage differentials cannot explain why people from Saran went to Calcutta, why people from South Bihar to coal mines or tea plantations, and why from some areas very few people migrated. The consequence of this is that, if migration is successful, it may provide cumulative advantages to certain areas, excluding others. 6 Who Migrates? Who migrates? For the earlier part of this century there is some information on the caste background of migrants in Bengal, since the Census of India collected such data (this was discontinued after Independence). Amongst unskilled industrial workers, most castes were represented. In the jute mills a variety of castes was employed, including Brahmins. Tinker, in his study of indentured migration, concludes: 'The emigration from North India represented an average sample of the rural population, excluding the trading, clerical and priestly castes - and also excluding many of the really downtrodden, the sweeper-folk, the lowest of the Untouchables.' Thus, in this case, it was a broad middle strata that migrated.[25]

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