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A meta-analysis on the push-pull factors for migration in India

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Abstract

Migration, as the word implies, is a temporary or permanent relocation from one place to another. There are ample evidences in human history which shows that people always had migrated to different parts of the world; humans always had a penchant for a migratory lifestyle. This paper 'A meta-analysis of the push pull factors for migration in India uses a meta-analysis approach using secondary data sources. By analysing the trends for the past couple of decades, we can see that internal migration in India is on the increase every year. This could be attributed to the development of basic infrastructure - like transportation, industrial growth, communication – that has been on the increase in the country in the past few decades. Push factors forces a person to leave their native place and migrate to another place with a relatively better living prospect. Such factors include, but not limited to, lack of enough job opportunities, low wages or salaries, impoverished community, social or racial discrimination, unfavourable environmental conditions and natural calamities. Pull factors are opposites of push factors. They attract people to come to a particular place. One of the most prominent pull factors is the presence of job opportunities and there by the prospect of a better life. The decision for migration is influenced by different factors; be it a push or a pull factor. It should also be noted that the perception of a factor being a push one or a pull one depends on an individual's perspective. There is clearly a gradient between different regions in various parameters like job opportunities, living conditions, social discrimination and basic amenities. That being the case, what forces the migration is the width of this gradient between the native place and the place of migration. If a factor or a combination of factors that are important to a person are better in another area, that person would then be inclined to migrate.

Keywords: Migration, push-pull factors, internal migration

Introduction

Migration, as the word implies, is a temporary or permanent relocation from one place to another. There are ample evidences in human history which shows that people always had migrated to different parts of the world; humans always had a penchant for a migratory lifestyle.

Human migration can be categorized into two kinds of migration – internal and international (or external). An internal migration is more common one between the two; it is where persons or families move to another part of the same country. A classic example of this would be people moving from the rural areas to the cities. An international migration, as the name suggests, is the movement to a different country.

Another categorization is based on the circumstances which triggers a migration – voluntary, and involuntary (or forced). The main motivating factor behind a voluntary migration is the desire for a relatively nicer life. This would mean different things for different people – better education, better job, better living surroundings. On the other hand, a forced migration is a different scenario; you are compelled to move from your native place. A few of the common reasons for a forced migration are natural disasters, civil unrest, famines, etc. It is a bit difficult to draw the line between a voluntary and an involuntary migration as the factors are often inter-related (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Yet another categorization can put a migration, or rather the reason for a migration, in to context – a 'push factor' based migration, and a 'pull factor' based migration. A push factor is an unfavourable attribute that drives you to move away from an area while a pull factor attracts you to another. This article focuses on the push and the pull factors associated with the human migration in the Indian context.

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Materials and Methods

This paper uses a meta-analysis approach using secondary data sources. A detailed review of many relevant studies after the year 2000 were done through systematic electronic literature search in indexed journals. The search engines used were Google Scholar, Research Gate, Infilbnet and Pub Med.

Results

Internal Migration in India

By analysing the trends for the past couple of decades, we can

see that internal migration in India is on the increase every year. This could be attributed to the development of basic infrastructure - like transportation, industrial growth, communication – that has been on the increase in the country in the past few decades. It can be observed that from the second half of the twentieth century, due to the availability of plenty of job opportunities in the urban centres there has been an increase in the migration of unskilled labourers from the rural to the urban areas.

Here are some of the observations from the Census data.

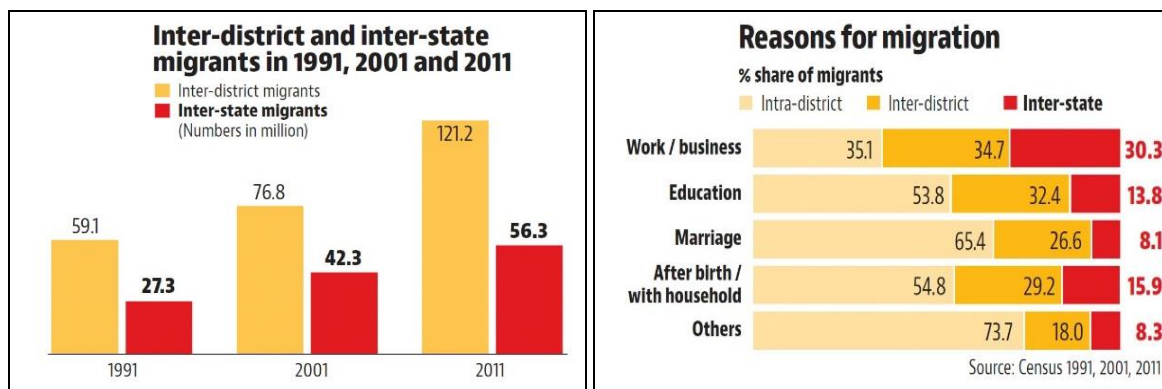
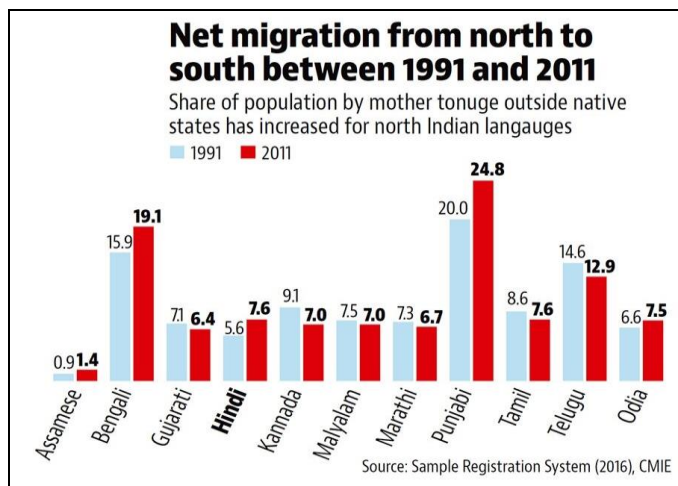


Fig 1: Graphics published in the Hindustan Times (online) dt. Jul 26, 2019

Another interesting trend in the recent decade is that the migration of unskilled labourers from the northern states of the India to the southern states is on the increase. This can be observed by the linguistic trail left by the migrants.



Push and Pull factors of migration

Push factors forces a person to leave their native place and migrate to another place with a relatively better living prospect. Such factors include, but not limited to, lack of enough job opportunities, low wages or salaries, impoverished community, social or racial discrimination, unfavourable environmental conditions and natural calamities. According to a study by N Ajith Kumar related to the inter-state unskilled migrant workers in Kerala, it was noticed that all the migrants unanimously mentioned the lack of job opportunities as the most important factor for their migration. Even though many of them had their own land, it was of a small size and cultivation would not give them the benefit they needed to sustain. Also, there would be elder family members with a bigger right-of-claim to the land. Another common complaint was the low wages they get; they cannot earn enough in their own villages It was also mentioned that

there would not be a year-round employment opportunity for many of them (Kumar, 2016) [5].

Ellen M. Hoffmann and group conducted a study which explored the factors that contributed to the migration of the subjects from the rural areas in Uttarakhand to urban area. The study indicated that the major drivers for migration were the lack of education and the facilities in the rural area. These were closely followed by other factors like unemployment, natural disasters and low productivity in agriculture (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2019) [3].

The study by Dr. Gursharan Singh Kaint looked into the reasons for migration of the workers in the brick kilns in Punjab. The sample for the study included migrants from Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Bihar. The push factors observed by the study were a) the lack of development – many of the migrants moved to mitigate the impact of the drought that had hit their native place. b) social tensions – a large percentage of the migrant workers belonged to large-sized joint families; such joint co-existence causes frequent discord among members. c) perceived lower status of the castes that they belonged to in their native place. d) no land of their own or land unviable for agriculture. The lands which the other subjects had were barren. (Kainth, 2010) [4]

Pull factors are opposites of push factors. They attract people to come to a particular place. One of the most prominent pull factors is the presence of job opportunities and there by the prospect of a better life.

The study by Kumar (2016) [5] highlighted that the main reasons for migration to Kerala were better wages and ample job opportunities, both of which were absent in their own lands.

The analysis of the pull factors, in the study based on the migration of the subjects from the rural areas in Uttarakhand to the urban area, by Ellen M. Hoffmann and group shows that the facilities present and the availability of better education in the urban areas lured migrants from the rural areas (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2019) [3]

The study by Dr. Gursharan Singh Kaint (2010) [4] elicited the pull factors for migrating to Punjab were a) better

employment opportunities – industrial development, better job opportunities and high wages b) to fulfil aspirations – many people moved out of their large joint families to feel liberated from the pressure of such a living and also to pay off the family debts. c) better living conditions – urban areas provided better living conditions; a relatively better home, healthcare system, etc. (Kainth, 2010) ^[4].

Conclusion

The decision for migration is influenced by different factors; be it a push or a pull factor. It should also be noted that the perception of a factor being a push one or a pull one depends on an individual's perspective. There is clearly a gradient between different regions in various parameters like job opportunities, living conditions, social discrimination and basic amenities. That being the case, what forces the migration is the width of this gradient between the native place and the place of migration. If a factor or a combination of factors that are important to a person are better in another area, that person would then be inclined to migrate.

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