

## Chapter - V

### MIGRATION

#### 5.1 Meaning and concepts

Migration is a form of geographical mobility across specified boundaries generally involving a change of residence from the place of origin. It is a basic process of social change involving place, people and duration of stay. Internal migration was traditionally viewed as a socially beneficent process. Workers were shifted from low productivity labour surplus regions to high productivity labour scarce area.<sup>1</sup>

To a neo-classical theorist, it is the poorest in the social hierarchy of the village who have the greatest reason to leave the village and try their luck elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Migrants are dynamic, risk bearing persons, who respond favourably to economic stimuli and have high capacity to detach themselves from traditional surroundings and adapt themselves to unfamiliar environments. Migrants typically do not represent a random sample of the overall population. On the contrary, they tend to be disproportionately young, better educated, less risk averse and more achievement oriented. While many migrants, especially in Asia,<sup>3</sup> are unskilled landless peasants, many others possess job transferable skills, have increasingly

more years of schooling and have some regular source of financial support for the period immediately following migration.

Migration is primarily motivated <sup>by</sup> economic considerations which are finding a job <sup>and/or</sup> higher wages. There may be non-economic factors also for migration, but they are generally secondary factors.

In Indian Census, the status of migrant is identified on the basis of either by their birth place or the place of last residence, and the types of movements are studied under the following heads:

- a) Rural to rural or rural turn-over
- b) Rural to urban or rural push
- c) Urban to rural (reverse migration)
- d) Urban to urban or urban turn-over.

Migration can be distinguished generally in terms of duration, distance and destination. People migrate seasonally to neighbouring areas for a short duration in the busy season, where their skills are in great demand. This happens more in particular during harvesting time. There are some instances of people migrating to distant centres also seasonally for short duration. This happens in the case of agricultural labourers of Bihar and Orissa who go over to Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in busy season. They go for mostly harvesting operations.

Seasonal migration from the villages takes place in the slack season also. Labourers in the village as they do not have adequate job opportunities within the village during off-season, they migrate to do odd jobs. For example Christian Nadar families of Ramanathapuram district in Tamil Nadu migrate to neighbouring Tanjore district to carry out toddy tapping operations. Similarly some migrate even to urban centres to engage in such operations like road laying, building construction etc., As these migrants move, they may leave behind their families in their native villages. This is mostly true when they go over to urban centres at long distances. While they go over to nearby places, especially rural regions, they prefer to take their families also with them. This is because other members of the household can get some odd jobs at the place of migration and substantiate the income of the household. Hence seasonal migration cannot strictly be considered as a short distance rural migration.

The other one is a migration for a long duration. In a way it can be called as permanent migration to urban centres. People migrate to cities in search of jobs. This again need not strictly be considered in terms of distance. Irrespective of the distance people migrate to urban centres in search of livelihood. If they stay for a long duration at the place of migration, then the type of migration becomes more of a permanent nature. Some times people migrate to even foreign countries.

Mostly this kind of long duration (permanent) migration is resorted to by the villagers as single individual movements rather than whole family migration. Discouraged by the difficulties of transport and higher cost of housing and living, they prefer to leave behind their families in their native villages. They visit their families once in a while for a short stay. Then they go back to their urban jobs. However they make periodical remittances to their families. At the outset, it can be said that migration cannot be distinguished strictly in terms of distance and destination. But it can be classified in terms of the nature and the durations of the job i.e., seasonal or perennial.

Migrants unaccompanied by other members of the family and moving singly, may be termed as independent migrants. Women and children in the family take to migration, mostly due to their economic and social dependency with the head of the household, and they can be termed as linked migrants.

## 5.2 Theories of Migration

Until recently, research on internal migration in developed countries has been dominated largely by the work of geographers, and demographers and sociologists. Numerous theoretical models of migration have been developed. They can be grouped into social models and economic models. The

different social models which are relevant can be incorporated into one general theory of migration.

Perhaps the first attempt to develop a theory of migration was Ravenstein's presentation<sup>4</sup> of laws of migration in the late nineteenth century, generalisations which largely have withstood the test of time. Working from the so-called "laws" and additional empirical generalizations, Everett S. Lee<sup>5</sup> presented his theory of migration in 1966. He attempted to develop a truly general theory which explained internal and inter-national migration in and between both developed and developing areas over a long period of history. Lee's conceptual framework is sufficiently broad to incorporate other social models. The framework focussed on migration decision-making and presents four general factors which influence migration decisions: origin factors, destination factors, intervening obstacles and personal factors. Factor characteristics of the sending region are high unemployment, low wages, poor climate, topology, and lack of recreational, educational and community facilities. Factors associated with the area of destination are high wages, low unemployment, good climate and so forth. Intervening variables include the distance and the cost of moving. Various researchers have added intervening opportunities between origin and destination, as determinants of the flow between these two points.

A major alteration of the individual model of migration decision-making is Todaro's postulate that migration responds to differences in expected rather than actual earnings.<sup>6</sup> Expected gains are measured by the difference in real incomes between work opportunities in sending and receiving regions and the probability of the new migrants obtaining a job in the area of destination. At the regional level, this would imply that emphasis needs to be given to both unemployment and wage or income levels. The exact specification of the interaction of these two variables would depend on how expectations are formed by different individuals and how such individuals are distributed in these two populations.

The primary importance given to economic factors is common to most theories of migration. The major exception is the role of cities per se in attracting migrants. It has been hypothesized that this effect is important, independent of the economic opportunities offered by cities. This is referred to as the "city lights" hypothesis. The importance of the "bright lights" hypothesis is stressed, for example, in Ray and Skeldon.<sup>7</sup>

These theoretical models do not provide a clear-cut answer concerning the migration decisions. However, an attempt has been made to interpret the incidence of migration in this study in the light of above mentioned theoretical framework.

With the mounting pressure of population on land in rural areas, particularly those areas where land holdings in general are small and land productivity is poor, seasonal migration for work outside the village and to far off places has become quite significant.

### 5.3 Methodology of the present study

For the purposes of this study, we have defined migrant as an individual who is living away from the nuclear family, does not share the roof for the night or partake food from the same kitchen, but maintains his connection with the family by contributing to the consumption expenditure of the family through periodical remittances, unlike the married away daughters or sons holding independent households, who have severed their links with the main family. Only 'job migrants' were considered here and commuters were excluded.

Those who went for work in nearby places within the district or to the adjacent districts, and came back after short duration or season were termed as seasonal migrants. Such migrants usually move to earn some additional income during the period when their services are not required within the village. Such moves are, in general, not distress or overt specific moves, but reflection of the income maximising motives of the individuals concerned. This is mostly rural to rural

migration in the off-season, when their talent is found to be surplus, locally.

Long term migrants were those who went to urban centres for a greater duration. Some of them went even overseas. Their remittances were periodical and their visits to the family were only once in a year or two. They would be mostly engaged in non-agricultural occupations at their destinations.

The details about migrants and migration were collected in the first survey for the present study, mostly from the non-migrants of the household who were present at the time of enquiry and not necessarily from the migrants themselves directly. No question on migration were asked in the second survey.

#### 5.4 Incidence of migration

Upto 1961, the Census data in India, on migration was collected through the particulars of the birth place. A significant feature of 1971 Census was that besides particulars on birth place, information about the place of the last residence was also collected and in the case of difference between the place of Census enumeration and place of last residence or place of birth, or both, the person was treated as a migrant.

The Census figures of 1961 and 1971 indicated that total migration had in fact decreased by 2 per cent: from 31 per cent to 29 per cent. The decrease may be attributed to rural development programmes taking place under the Five Year Plans. This may also be due to the cities reach near saturation point in their capacity to absorb additional labour force from rural areas. However rural-to-rural migrations was still quite large in both the decades (1951-61 and 1961-71), being around 77% of the total migration. This had dispelled the popular notion held about the rural-urban influx.<sup>5</sup>

As per the Census of India 1971, migrants accounted for 29% of the total population. Among them 25 per cent were recorded as migrants within the state boundaries. The migrants from other states formed only 3 per cent. Similarly for the state of Tamil Nadu also migrants accounted for 29 per cent of the population, out of which only 2 per cent were migrants from other states to Tamil Nadu. Thus, intra-state migration seems to be a dominant feature.

Within the state of Tamil Nadu, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli districts showed greater outmigratory trends.<sup>9</sup> Ramanathapuram is one of the districts where outmigratory tendencies from rural tracts are found to be of importance.<sup>10</sup> As is well known, this district is noted for its severe droughts and hence is a backward pocket of Tamil Nadu especially in terms of agricultural productivity. Hence emigration for job

opportunities outside the region is important for this area.

The two villages chosen for analysis in the present study broadly reflect the general characteristics of Mandupuram district in which they are located, such as frequent droughts, dry farming, high degree of underemployment and low income. In the first village, out of 77 households, 28 households reported migration, whereas in the second village, 20 households out of 72 reported migration. In the first village 42 out of 421 persons migrated for jobs, while in the second village, 43 persons out of 360 reported to be migrants. In the first village 223 persons, and in the second village, 191 persons were in the labour force. Thus, 10 per cent and 12 per cent of population and 19 per cent and 23 per cent of the labour force from the first and the second village respectively were reported to be the migrants, as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.2 shows the distribution of migrants for these two villages on the basis of their destinations and distances. While in the first village long distance urban oriented migration is dominant, in the second village, short distance seasonal migration for agricultural operations was more significant.

Table 5.1

Number of households, population, persons in labourforce, migrants and their percentage.

Village	No. of house- holds	Popula- tion (per- sons)	Labour force (per- sons)	No. of miga- nts (per- sons)	% of mi- grant house- holds to total house holds	% of migrants to total popula- tion	% of migrants to persons in labour- force
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Silanda- gudi	77	421	223	42	36.36	9.38	10.83
2. Siriyur	72	360	191	43	27.78	11.04	22.51

Source: The household survey 1981-82.

Table 5.2

Distribution of Migrants based on distance and destination

Village	Rural migrants (persons)	Urban migrants (persons)	Overseas migrants (persons)	Total migrants (persons)
1	2	3	4	5
1. Silandagudi	16	19	7	42
2. Siriyur	41	2	0	43

Source: The household Survey 1981-82

### 5.5 Factors affecting migration

Family size and migration. Table 5.3 presents the number of migrants per family for all the households in the two villages. Number of migrants per household appear to be large for larger families in the size group of 6-9 in the first village and 6-7 in the second village. For very large families i.e., families with 9 members and beyond, the proportion of migrant is small, but then the number of such families are also very small in our sample.

Table 5.3  
Family size, and migration

Village	Family size (groups, persons)	Average size (persons)	No. of households	No. of persons	No. of migrants (persons)	Average No. of migrants per household (persons)
1	2	3	4	5	6	
<u>1. Ellanadudi</u>						
1-3	2.1	12	25	0	0.00	
4-5	4.6	27	123	11	0.41	
6-7	6.3	24	152	16	0.67	
8-9	8.2	11	90	14	1.27	
10 & +	10.3	3	51	1	0.35	
All	5.5	77	421	42	0.95	
<u>2. Siriyur</u>						
1-3	2.6	17	44	10	0.55	
4-5	4.3	26	113	12	0.46	
6-7	6.4	21	135	19	0.90	
8-9	8.0	6	48	2	0.33	
10 & +	10.0	2	20	0	0.00	
All	5.0	72	360	43	0.60	

Source: The household survey 1981-82.

Table 5.4

Distribution of migrants by age and sex

Village Age-group in years	No. of migrants (persons)			Percentage of migrants to persons in labourforce in respective groups		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>1. Silandagudi</u>						
Less than 14*	1	0	1	100.00	00.00	20.00
15-25	17	1	18	36.96	3.13	25.03
26-35	14	2	16	35.00	7.40	24.24
36-45	5	0	5	25.00	-	14.71
46-59	1	0	1	5.56	-	4.17
60 & above	1	0	1	25.00	-	14.29
All	39	3	42	30.47	3.45	10.53
<u>2. Siriyur</u>						
Less than 14*	0	1	1	-	50.00	33.33
15-25	10	7	17	32.26	22.93	27.42
26-35	8	5	13	33.33	18.52	25.49
36-45	5	3	8	20.00	23.03	21.05
46-59	2	1	3	15.38	14.29	15.00
60 & above	1	0	1	33.33	-	25.00
All	26	17	43	26.90	20.99	22.51

Source: The household survey, 1981-82.

\* This is based only on one observation.

Distribution of migrants by age and sex: This is shown in Table 5.4. It is seen that from the first village male migration is predominant. Migration in this village is urban oriented long distance migration, in which case, the migrants prefer to keep their families in their native village. In the second village short distance rural-rural migration is predominant and in this case we find that males and females both take part in migration, though the number of migrant males has slight edge over the number of migrant females. In both the villages the age-group 15-45 is predominant among the migrants.

Caste and social composition of migrants: Lee<sup>11</sup> points out that the volume of migration varies directly with the diversity of people. The impact of 'mobility force' on different communities is not the same. Marginal social groups have greater tendency to migrate. Yeshwant<sup>12</sup> identifies Muslims, Christians, Nadars as migration prone communities. Zachariah observes, "analysis of religious composition of migrants (in which demographic controls could not be adequately introduced) showed that propensities to migrate were relatively greater among minority religious groups".<sup>13</sup>

Migration in the first village is highly concentrated in a single caste group, viz., Velayars. They constitute 84 per cent of the population of the village. Thus, the majority of the migrants in the first village are from the dominant group.

The secondary caste group comprising of the Vellalas and the tertiary group of Antharaiyar, Mudaliar and Yadhavas come next in the order of ranking in respect of incidence of migration. The first village does not have any scheduled caste population.

In the second village, the dominant caste group is Maravars, and the members of this group show little migration. The Christian Nadars who constitute the secondary group, have the highest proportion of migrants to population. Asaris of tertiary group, being the village artisans, did not report any migration. The scheduled caste population shows greater intensity of migration as expected, being the marginal social group in the village (Table 5.5)

Table 5.5  
Caste-group-wise distribution of migrants and  
their percentages

Village Caste groups	Popula- tion (per- sons)	Labour force (per- sons)	No. of migra- nts (per- sons)	% of migrants to - Popula- tion	Labour- force
1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>1. Silenadagudi</u>					
Dominant	355	192	36	10.70	19.79
Secondary	39	19	3	7.69	15.79
Tertiary	27	12	1	3.70	8.33
Scheduled Caste					
All	421	223	42	9.98	18.83
<u>2. Sirikayur</u>					
Dominant	197	100	6	3.05	6.00
Secondary	30	46	24	30.00	52.17
Tertiary	33	16	0	0.00	0.00
Scheduled Caste	50	29	13	26.00	44.83
All	360	191	43	11.94	22.51

Source: The household survey 1981-82.

Educational attainments: The educational attainments of the migrants depends on the nature of migration. In general long distance urban migrants may have a higher educational composition than the population from which they are drawn. But rural to rural seasonal migration for agricultural and other unskilled jobs may even show the reverse tendencies. This is generally seen from the study of the two villages in our case. In the first village the migration is predominantly urban oriented and we see from the Table 5.6 that the educational composition of migrants is better than the educational status of the total labourforce in the village. In the second village migration is mostly seasonal and we see from the table referred to above that proportion of illiterates among the migrants is higher than the proportion of illiterates among the labourforce in the village.

Distribution of migrants by economic classes: The grouping of households in the two villages into distinct economic classes based on the size of land held and the primary occupation of the household (Table 5.7) shows that in the first village artisans are topping the list in incidence of migration followed by small, medium, and marginal farmers. The lowest incidence of migration was found in the case of 'others' and agricultural labour households. In the second village the trend is different. The non-cultivator households

Table 5.6

Educational attainments of migrants

Village	Educational attainments	No. of persons in labour-force by educational categories	Percentage of column 2	No. of migrant persons by educational categories	Percentage of column 4	Percentages of migrants to labourforce in respective educational categories
		2	3	4	5	6
<u>1. Bilandagudi</u>						
	Illiterate	144	64.57	21	50.00	47.73
	Primary level	51	22.87	9	21.43	17.65
	Middle level	22	9.87	8	19.05	36.36
	Secondary level and above	6	2.69	4	9.52	16.67
	All	223	100.00	42	100.00	18.83
<u>2. Siriyur</u>						
	Illiterate	116	61.78	29	67.44	24.56
	Primary level	47	24.61	3	13.60	17.02
	Middle level	20	10.47	5	11.63	25.00
	Secondary level and above	6	3.14	1	2.33	16.67
	All	191	100.00	43	100.00	22.51

Source: The household survey 1951-52.

Table 5.7Distribution of migrants for different economic classes

Village Economic classes	Distribution of migrants on the basis of distance (persons)			No. of migrants (persons)	Labour force (per- sons)	Percentage of migra- nts to labour force
	short dis- tance	Long- dis- tance	Overseas			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<u>1. Silandagudi</u>						
i) Marginal farmers	5	5	3	13	73	17.91
ii) Small farmers	3	4	2	9	26	32.14
iii) Medium farmers	-	2	1	3	13	23.03
iv) Agricultural labourers	5	3	1	9	75	12.00
v) Artisans	3	2	-	5	11	45.45
vi) Others	-	3	-	3	23	13.04
All	16	19	7	42	223	18.83
<u>2. Siriyur</u>						
i) Marginal farmers	4	-	-	4	26	15.38
ii) Small farmers	2	-	-	2	36	5.56
iii) Medium farmers	1	1	-	2	51	3.92
iv) Agricultural labourers	10	-	-	10	30	33.33
v) Artisans	-	-	-	-	9	-
vi) Others	24	1	-	25	39	64.10
All	41	2	-	43	191	22.51

Source: The household survey 1931-32.

report greater migration. The residue category viz., 'others' shows highest proportion of migration followed by agricultural labour households and marginal farmers. In the case of small and medium farmer households, it is insignificantly small and with artisan households, it is totally nil. Thus, here also it is seen that the incidence of migration on different economic classes is related to the nature of migration which is very different in the two villages. Labourforce participation among migrants: Labourforce participation among migrant households is slightly higher in both the villages (Table 5.8)

Table 5.8

Labourforce Participation ratio and migration

Village	Labourforce participation ratio for all households	Labourforce participation ratio for migrant households	% of migrants to persons in migrant households
1	2	3	4
1.Silandagudi	52.97	54.49	23.60
2.Siriyur	53.06	53.40	41.75

Source: The household survey 1991-92.

Monthly per capita consumption expenditure levels and migration :

Table 5.9 shows the distribution of migrants for intervals of monthly <sup>per</sup> capita consumption expenditure. In the first

Table 5.2

Incidence of migration for different levels of monthly per capita consumption expenditure

Village M.P.C.S. in Rs.	Labour force (per- sons)	No. of migrants (persons)	% of mi- grants to labour force	Distribution of migrants based on distance			% of migrants to total migrants
				Short	Long (persons)	Very long	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<u>1. Silondarudi</u>							
Less than 16.32	12	3	25.00	2	1	0	7.14
33-49	52	4	7.69	0	4	0	9.52
40-64*	69	17	24.64	3	7	2	40.43
65-80	52	12	23.08	4	5	3	20.57
81-96	16	2	12.50	2	0	0	4.76
96-112	13	3	23.08	0	1	2	7.14
113 & above	9	1	11.11	0	1	0	2.33
All	223	42	18.83	16	19	7	100.00
<u>2. Biriya</u>							
Less than 32	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0.00
33-49	24	2	8.33	1	1	0	4.65
49-64*	37	11	29.73	10	1	0	25.53
65-80	37	4	10.81	4	0	0	9.30
81-96	41	0	19.51	0	0	0	10.00
97-112	20	4	20.00	4	0	0	9.30
113 & above	32	14	43.75	14	0	0	32.56
All	191	43	22.51	41	2	0	100.00

\* Poverty line

Source: The household survey 1981-82

village higher proportion of migrants (57.14%) are from the households whose monthly per capita consumption expenditure level is below the desirable minimum of Rs.64 (poverty line). In the second village, the proportion of migrants are found to be higher in the case of families whose monthly per capita consumption expenditure level is higher than this cut-off line of Rs.64.

### 5.6 Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing analysis :

- (1) Nearly one-fifth of the labourforce from the surveyed village do not find enough economic support on their homestead and they migrate to seek employment elsewhere.
- (2) Larger number of migrants are from families in the size group of 6-9 persons. Hence big families are more migration prone.
- (3) Most of the migrant labourers from the surveyed villages were found to be active youths in the age group of 15-45 years.
- (4) The marginal social groups such as scheduled caste population showed high incidence of migration.
- (5) The educational composition of the migrants is better than the educational status of total labourforce. Educational

attainments of the migrants found to vary with the type of migration.

(6) The destination and duration of migration is not similar for different economic classes and subsequently the incidence of migration varies for different economic classes.

(7) The labourforce participation ratio for the migrant households were slightly higher than the non-migrant households.

(8) Levels of living (indicated by the per capita consumption expenditure) do not seem to be associated with migration. The incidence of migration varies more significantly by the distance, duration and destination of migration.

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