

Author: Kunal Keshri¹ & Kirti Gaur²

Introduction

Migration is one of the important components of demographic change along with fertility and mortality. It has a unique ability to transform the size, distribution and composition of national population (Charles-Edwards et al 2020). In the post globalisation decades, there has been an increase in the volume of international as well as internal migrants due to enhancement of transport and communication facilities. Interestingly, the volume of internal migrants is four times than that of the international migrants (Human Development Report 2009), still this realm of migration has received lesser attention by policy makers until recently. It is for the very first time after the COVID-19 outbreak that the issue of migration has occupied a centre-stage and has grasped the attention of policy makers.

There have been arguments that Indian population is less mobile compared to other countries (Davis, 1951). Recent studies also support this contention as Aggregate Crude Migration Intensity (ACMI) of India is the lowest (5.2 per cent) among Asian countries (Charle-Edwards et.al. 2019) which is highest (52.8) in South Korea. Bhagat and Keshri (2020) have found a slight ascent to 6.6 per cent in ACMI using Census 2011 data. There has been an increase of 10 percent in migration rate (as per the place of last residence information) during the last three censuses (Table 1). However, it is to be noted that the census data is deficient in capturing temporary labour migration which consists of a larger proportion of labour migrants in India. For instance, a study based on National Sample Survey data found that annual temporary labour migration is seven times larger than permanent labour migration (Keshri and Bhagat 2013). Therefore, arguments of lower mobility in India are deceptive.

Level and volume of migration may be contentious, but it profoundly affects all the spheres of life including health, ageing and gender roles. Migration in India is characterized by a common pattern of leaving wives and children behind at the place of origin and men migrating alone. This phenomenon is mostly prevalent in long distance migration (Desai & Banerji, 2008). Despite its significance, this feature of Indian migration remains sparingly studied. Two recent case studies from north India have found that migration of men improves the autonomy of the left behind women (Choithany 2019; Singh 2018). However, these are the micro-level studies which do not qualify to be generalized for the country. Ganguly and Negi (2011) also tried to compare the autonomy of wives of migrant and non-migrant husbands in rural India using National Family Health Survey data (2005-2006) and inferred that women not living with their husbands have

¹ Assistant Professor, G. B. Pant Social Science Institute, Prayagraj, India, Email: kunalkeshri.lrd@gmail.com

² ICSSR Post-Doctoral Fellow, G. B. Pant Social Science Institute, Prayagraj, India, Email: gaurk.iips@gmail.com

more autonomy than their counterparts. There are no studies to the best of our knowledge which have done spatial analysis of the migrant husbands. Therefore, this section tries to fill the gap in the available literature by studying the migration status of husbands of women aged 15-49 years (hereafter referred as migrant husbands) utilizing the data from the fourth round of National Family Health Survey (2015-2016). Unlike other data sources, this data provides a unique opportunity to explore the migration rate at district level. Spatial analysis of the migrant husbands has also been done to understand the geographical clustering of high out-migrating districts in this section.

[Table 1]

Data and Measurement

Though migration is not the focus of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), some of the earlier studies have utilized the NFHS 3 (2005-2006) to establish association between migration and different domains of maternal and child health (Keshri and Bhagat 2011; Singh et al 2012; Prusty and Keshri 2015). In the NFHS 4 (2015-2016), we have the information pertaining to the change in the usual place of residence (UPR) of the migrant husbands but whether the husband has crossed the administrative boundary or has made a local move remains unknown. However, it is worth noting that despite of this shortcoming it is the only latest data available in India which gives the district level estimates of husbands' migration. All the currently married women age 15-49 years have been asked: "Is your husband living with you, or is he staying elsewhere? The response has been categorized into two categories (a) living with her and (b) living elsewhere. Women whose husbands were living elsewhere were asked another question, "For how long (years/month) have you and your husband not been living together (IIPS and ICF, 2017)?" There might be chances that husbands are staying elsewhere with other women and hence are not staying with wife. Therefore, to exclude them, only those currently married women whose husbands have no other wives are considered for the analysis. These three questions have been used to work out migration status of husbands of women aged 15-49 years. The migration status of the husband is categorized into two categories (i) Non-migrant husband refers to women whose husband have no other wives and are living with them or are away for less than a month, (ii) Migrant husband refers to women whose husbands have no other wives and are away for more than a month. We have prepared Geographic Information System based maps using QGIS package to show the pattern of migrant husbands across the districts in India. The geostatistical analysis has been done using GeoDa package to confirm the spatial clustering of the districts with respect to migrant husbands.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 shows that proportion of migrant husbands is 7.5 percent in India. It is more than two times in rural (9.3%) than urban (4%) areas. We find an inverse relationship between migration of husbands and income of household as it is 13.0 percent among the first decile and declines to

4.7 percent among the tenth decile women. A similar pattern has been observed for the women's age. Also, non-nuclear families have higher percentage of migrant husbands than nuclear families. Interestingly, social status and religious affinity do not show a clear pattern with the migration of husbands (Table 2).

[Table 2]

The map (Figure 1) illustrates the district level prevalence of the migrant husbands in detail. Around 192 districts exhibit higher percent of migration than national average of 7.5 percent.

A stark geographical variation is clearly visible. Beginning from north we find some pockets in the middle and lower Himalayas which consist of the districts from two hill states Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh with relatively higher prevalence of husband's migration. For instance, the eastern parts of Uttarakhand, which is well known for its male out-migration for decades (Tumbe 2018), represented by a very high prevalence (more than 30 per cent) of husbands' migration in Almora and Rudraprayag districts. In western parts of Himachal Pradesh, the leading out-migrating districts are Hamirpur and Kangra.

Moving towards south-east, we find that a very high prevalence of migrant husbands in the *Terai* region near the Nepal border and middle and lower Ganga Plain, which consists of the areas of northern and eastern region of Uttar Pradesh and north Bihar. Most districts in these regions have comparatively higher prevalence of migrants. It may be explained by the recurrent floods in the Himalayan Rivers which makes them one of the poorest regions in India in terms of economic development leading to the distress driven migration of husbands. To elaborate, the districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh (Keshri 2019) viz. Azamgarh, Basti and Deoria which have very poor level of economic development reported a higher husband's out-migration (more than 30 per cent). Similarly, the *Terai* districts and districts situated on the northern bank of Ganges river namely, Madhubani, Shohar, Madhepura, Siwan and Saran have also a very high percentage of migrant husbands. Saran is dubbed as a male out-migrating district for decades (Choithani 2017; Tumbe 2018). Furthermore, some of the districts of Bihar falling south of River Ganga have also very high percentage of migrant husbands with Nawada as a leading district.

The eastern edge of Deccan Plateau geographically known as Chhotanagpur plateau a hilly and forested region is characterized by extreme economic backwardness and plagued by the naxalism has a comparatively higher (more than 20 percent) prevalence of migrant husbands in most of the districts. Some of the leading districts are Deoghar, Koderma and Giridih. Further south in central India, the proportion of migrant husbands is almost negligible with some exceptions in the Vindhyan region of Madya Pradesh and Northern Telangana.

Moving towards north west, it is observed that some pockets of northern region of Rajasthan have higher proportion of migrant husbands (more than 20 per cent), the district of Jhunjhunu and Sikar tops the list. Southern region of Rajasthan along with the south-eastern Gujarat, have

moderate prevalence (more than 10 percent) of migrant husbands the leading districts are Panchmahal and Dungarpur. This is mostly a hilly and tribal belt with a history of seasonal migration (Breman, 1994; Haberfeld 1999). South of Gujarat along the Konkan coast has very low prevalence of migration except Ratnagiri in the Konkan Maharashtra and Udupi in the coastal Karnataka which have moderate prevalence of migrant husbands (more than 10 per cent). These districts seem to stand alone among the neighbouring districts which have a negligible instance of migration. Tumbe (2018) has also observed a similar pattern in this region.

Progressing further south wards, we observe that in coastal and interior Kerala districts viz. Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kozhikode and Kasaragod have a moderate prevalence of migrant husband (more than 10 percent). In the Coromandel coast some pockets of moderate level of migration (more than 10 percent) were observed in Tamil Nadu, with Sivaganga, Thiruvarur and Ramanathapuram as leading districts. It is almost non-existent in Andhra Pradesh. Further north in the eastern coast of India we find a moderate migration (more than 10 percent) of husbands in some belts of the southern and eastern Coastal Odisha, with Ganjam and Bhadrak as leading districts. These districts are known for the destruction of livelihood by recurrent cyclones where out-migration is the only option for poor villagers (Tumbe 2018). Further north in the eastern and northern India we find moderate to low level of migration of husbands in West Bengal and North Eastern States.

[Figure 1]

The spatial analysis using the district-wise prevalence of migrant husbands in India shows a higher level of spatial autocorrelation with Moran's I value at 0.802. We find apparent spatial clustering of districts with higher migration of husbands in northern and eastern regions of India. The main hotspots have been found in the lower and middle Himalayan regions of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Further south east wards the largest clustering of districts with high percent of migrant husbands has been found in the *Terai* region near the Nepal border along with middle and lower Ganga Plain. These regions are characterized by the recurrent floods by the Himalayan Rivers and adjoining districts have very poor development indicators which may be the cause of the distress driven migration of husbands. Most of the Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Northern Bihar are part of this hotspot. One small cluster is found in the southern part of Konkan coast.

[Figure 2]

Conclusions

The present section aimed to explore the spatial variation of migrant husbands of women aged 15-49 comes with important findings. Income has negative association with the husband's migration. However, this relationship is not linear with social status of women. The women living in non-nuclear households are more likely to have a migrant husband. It is considered

unusual for women to live alone and husbands' migration may be feasible only if women is living with other family members (de Haan, 2006). Compared to rural women, the husbands of women residing in urban areas are more mobile. Most of northern and eastern states have higher prevalence of out-migrating husbands, however intra-state variation exists. Also, middle and lower Ganga Plain, Terai regions of Himalaya followed by southern Konkan coastal region has more prevalence of migrant husbands. These results have been confirmed by the highly significant spatial autocorrelation. India's migration is governed by the differentials in demographic transition and level of economic development of the states (Srivastava et al., 2020). To conclude, we observed that most of the out-migrating regions are economic backward which in turn leads to the out migration of husbands to the urban growth centres of the economically developed regions.

References:

Bhagat & Keshri 2020. "Internal Migration in India" in Bell, M., Bernard, A. Charles-Edwards, E., & Zhu, Y. Ed., *Comparing Internal Migration across the Countries of Asia*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

Charles-Edwards, E., Bell, M., Bernard, A. & Zhu, Y. (2019). Internal migration in the countries of Asia: levels, ages and spatial impacts. *Asian Population Studies*, 15(2), pp.150–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730.2019.1619256>.

Choithani, Chetan 2019. Gendered livelihoods: migrating men, left-behind women and household food security in India, *Gender, Place & Culture*, DOI: [10.1080/0966369X.2019.1681366](https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2019.1681366)

Davis, K. 1951. *The Population of India and Pakistan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Desai, S., & Banerji, M. 2008. Negotiated Identities: Impact of Male Migration on Women. *Journal of Population Research*, 25(3), pp. 337-355.

Ganguly S, N S Negi 2010. The Extent of Association between Husband's Out-Migration and Decision Making Power among Left Behind Wives' in Rural India. Working Paper Series No 147 . Singapore: Asian Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

Registrar General of India. 1991. D-Series Migration Tables (Compact Disc). New Delhi: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

Registrar General of India. 1991. D-Series Migration Tables (Compact Disc). New Delhi: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

Registrar General of India. 2011. D-Series: Migration Tables. New Delhi: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner. Accessed 12 May 2020. <https://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/migration.html>.

Singh, N., Keshri, K. & Bhagat, R. B. 2015. "Gender dimension of migration in urban India" in Rajan, S. I. Ed., *India Migration Report 2015*. Routledge, New Delhi, pp 176-190.

Singh, Ruchi 2018. Impact of male out-migration on women left-behind: a study of two villages in Uttar Pradesh, *Remittances Review*, 3(1), pp. 75-92.

Srivastava, R. and Sasikumar, S. K. 2003. An Overview of Migration in India, its Impacts and Key Issues, Paper presented at Regional Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia, at Dhaka.

Srivastava, R., Keshri, K., Gaur, K. Padhi, B. and Jha, A: (2020). *Internal migration in India and the Impact of Uneven Regional Development and Demographic Transition across States: A Study for Evidence-Based Policy Recommendations*. A Study Report prepared for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Delhi: Institute of Human Development

Tumbe, C. (2018). *India moving: A history of migration*. Viking, Penguin India.

Bhagat, R. B. and Keshri, K. (2020). "Internal Migration in India", In Martin Bell, Aude Bernard, Charles-Edward, and Yu Zhu (Eds.) *Internal Migration in the Countries of Asia: A cross-national comparison*. Springer International Publishing: Basel.

Keshri, K. (2019). "Temporary Labour Migration", In S. Irudaya Rajan and M. Sumeetha (Ed.) *Handbook of Internal Migration in India*. SAGE India: New Delhi.

Tables and Figures

Table 1 Trends of Internal Migration in India, Census 1991-2011

Year	Population (in millions)	Internal Migrants (in millions)	Inter-censal Migrants (in millions)	Percentage of Migrants	Percentage of Inter-censal Migrants
1991	838.5	225.8	8.1	26.9	9.7
2001	1018.5(1028.6)	307.6(309.4)	9.7(9.7)	30.2(30.1)	9.5(9.5)
2011	1198.3(1210.8)	447.1(449.9)	13.9(14.1)	37.3(37.2)	11.7(11.6)

Source: Authors' calculation using D-Series Census tables for the years 1991, 2001 and 2011.

Note: Figures in the parentheses show numbers and percentage including Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) for 2001 and 2011. There was no census in 1991 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 2: Percentage of women aged 15-49 years according to husband's migration status by different background characteristics, India, 2015-16

Background characteristics	Migrant husband	N
Age-group		
15-19	13.4	16,722
20-24	10.7	76,404
25-29	9.0	98,682
30-34	7.2	88,464
35-39	6.1	81,682
40-44	5.3	67,312
45-49	4.3	61,385
Place of residence		
Urban	4.0	137,281
Rural	9.3	353,370
Caste		
Schedule caste	6.9	88,171
Schedule tribe	4.6	84,038
OBCs	8.9	196,275
None of them	6.8	122,167
Religion		
Hindu	7.2	373,594
Muslim	10.6	62,491
Others	4.5	54,566
Education		
No education	8.6	168,138
Incomplete primary	6.2	32,768
Complete primary	7.2	38,435
Incomplete secondary	6.5	170,063

Complete secondary	8.3	36,773
Higher	8.1	44,474
Household structure		
Nuclear	5.6	235,563
Non-nuclear	9.3	255,088
Household structure		
Male	4.4	442,289
Female	36.2	48,362
Wealth deciles		
1 st	13.0	54,547
2 nd	11.2	54,500
3 rd	9.5	54,380
4 th	7.9	52,601
5 th	6.6	49,960
6 th	5.9	47,545
7 th	5.8	45,413
8 th	5.6	44,446
9 th	4.8	42,801
10 th	4.7	44,458
Number of children		
Less than 2	7.6	299,025
2-3 children	7.0	101,539
More than 3	8.0	90,087
Total	7.5	490,651

Figure 1
Prevalence of migrant husbands by districts, NFHS 2015-16

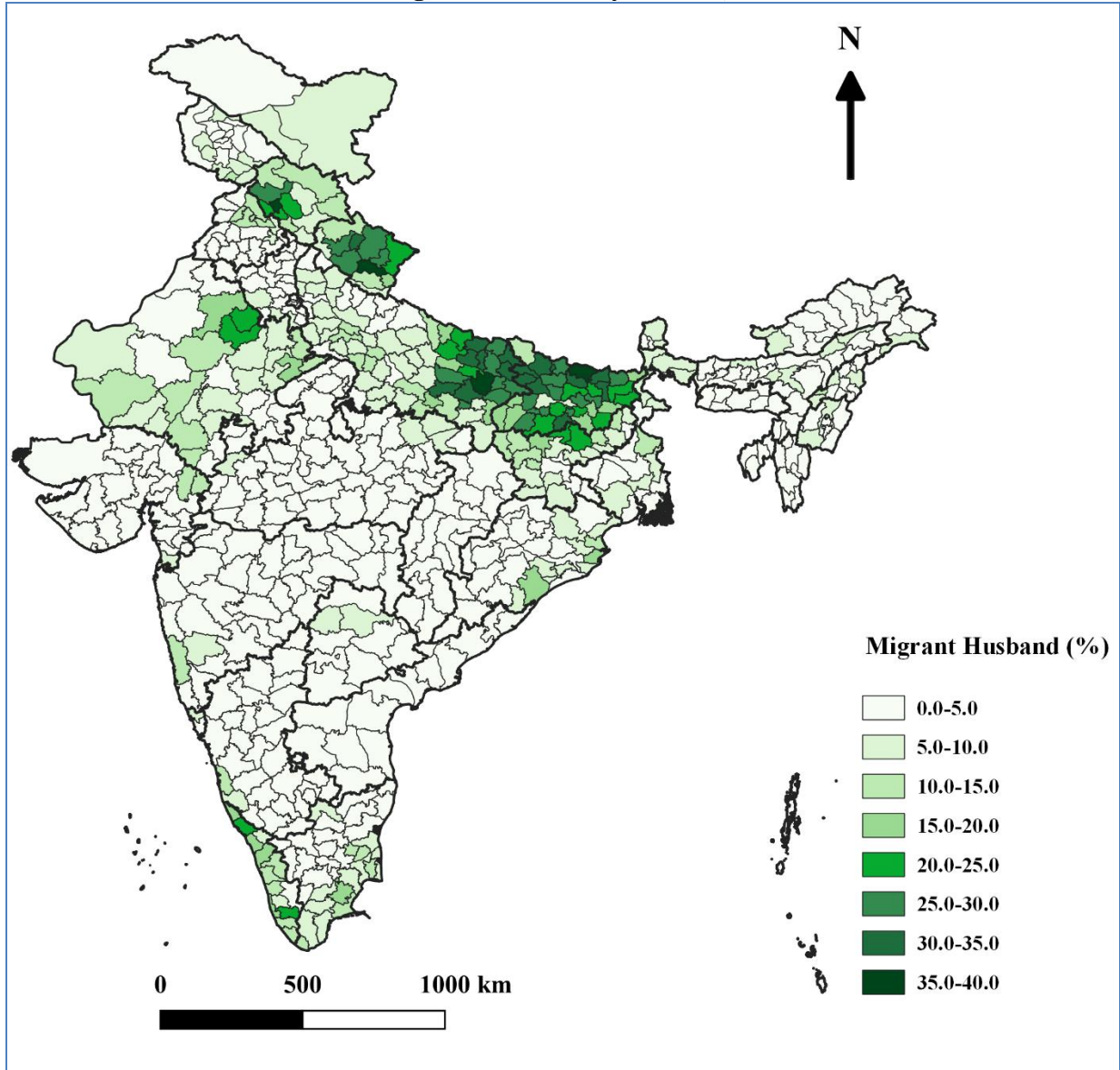


Figure 2
LISA Cluster Map for the migrant husband by districts, 2015-16

