

Migration

Patterns of Migration have always fascinated demographers. Elaborate theories have been formulated on the subject and policy interventions designed to reduce or take care of the effects of migration. The results of Census 2011 will reveal the contours of migration in the last decade. Questions like whether the pace of migration to large urban centres in the country has slowed down or has continued unabated? Whether migration to certain States or from certain States has declined or has increased? What are the push – pull factors that affect migration?

Migration in the Census of India is of two types – Migration by Birth place and Migration by place of last residence. When a person is enumerated in Census at a place, i.e., village or town, different from her/his place of birth, she/he would be considered a migrant by place of birth. A person would be considered a migrant by place of last residence, if she/he had last resided at a place other than her/his place of enumeration.

The Census also captures the reasons for migration. The following reasons for migration from place of last residence are captured: Work/Employment, Business, Education, Marriage, Moved after birth, Moved with household and any other.

Historically, information on migration has been collected since 1872. It was confined to seeking information only on place of birth till 1961. The scope of collecting information on migration was enlarged by including the rural or urban status of the place of birth and duration of residence at the place of residence in 1961. Since the 1971 Census, data is being collected on the basis of place of last residence in addition to the question on birth place. Question on 'Reason for migration' was introduced in 1981. The pattern adopted in 1991 and 2001 Census remained same as in 1981 except that in 2001 Census the rural urban status of place of birth was not collected. Also the category 'Natural Calamities' as one of the reasons for migration was excluded and a new reason 'Moved at birth' added.

The data on migration by last residence in India as per Census 2001 shows that the total number of migrants was 31.4 crore. In the decade 1991-2001, about 9.8 crore persons migrated to a new place from their place of last residence. Out of these migrants by last residence, 8.1 crore were intra-state migrants, 1.7 crore inter-state migrants and 7 lakh international migrants. The largest volume is confined to migration from one part of the State to another. Migration on account of change of residence by women after marriage constitutes significant proportion of these migrants.

There are different streams of migration generally relating to the degree of economic and social development in the area of origin as well as area of destination. The most important component among the streams is the rural to rural migration. As per 2001

Census in 1991-2001, about 5.3 crore persons migrated from one village to another. The number of migrants from villages to towns was about 2.1 crore. Similarly, number of migrants from towns to villages was about 62 lakh and from one town to another about 1.4 crore.

The number of net migrants by last residence during the past decade, i.e., the difference between in-migrant and out-migrants for each State, showed Maharashtra at the top of the list with 23.8 lakh net migrants, followed by Delhi (17.6 lakh), Gujarat (6.8 lakh) and Haryana (6.7 lakh) as per Census 2001. Uttar Pradesh (-26.9 lakh) and Bihar (-17.2 lakh) were the two states with largest number of persons migrating out of the two states.

Migration into large metropolises were significant in 1991-2001 with Greater Mumbai UA drawing about 24.9 lakh migrants, Delhi UA about 21.1 lakh migrants, Chennai UA about 4.3 lakh migrants to name the largest three urban destinations in the country. As the trend in migration to large Urban Agglomerations continued, the Census 2011 is likely to show a spurt in population in these places.

Another aspect of interest is the volume of International migration to this country. Due to partition of the country in 1947 a large number of persons had migrated from both West Pakistan and East Pakistan. Later at the time of 1971 War a large influx of population was recorded from Bangladesh. The data on migration show that in 2001 Census among the total population about 51 lakh persons in the country were migrants from across the International border. About 97% of them were from the eight neighbouring countries (including Afghanistan). Of these migrants 30 lakh were from Bangladesh, 9 lakh from Pakistan, 5 lakh from Nepal and 1 lakh from Sri Lanka. The volume of total migration had declined considerably over the decades since 1971. Number of migrants from other countries reduced to only 7.4 lakh during the last ten years at the 2001 Census. In comparison to 1991, there is 31.6% decline in International migration to India (excluding J&K) in 2001. This is due to substantial decline in the number of recent migration and death of earlier migrants due to old age.

The trends indicated in Census 2011 would be valuable to tweak existing schemes and also to formulate new programmes to prevent rural-urban migration by creating economic opportunities close to their place of residence. It would also provide an empirical basis for better urban planning.

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