

GENDER DIMENSIONS IN RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN INDIA: POLICY IMPERATIVES

Introduction:

A gender perspective on migration attempts to overcome the limited attention paid to the presence of women in the migration stock and their contribution. While many women accompany or join family members, of late, more and more women are migrating on their own. Though research studies on migration claim that they are gender-neutral, in fact they are not. Often they end up utilizing models of migration based on the experience of men. Women even if considered are treated as dependents and their contributions are ignored. (U.N.2005). In many poor migrant households women are the principal wage earners. In such a context a gender perspective on migration examines the gender specific causes of migration, the vulnerability as well as the potential for empowerment of migrant women and the consequences of internal/international migration. Though globalisation has opened up a range of new opportunities for women still women predominate and tend to work in female occupations including domestic work, garment industry, nursing and teaching. Whether they are in traditional or modern job, migration itself can be an empowering experience for women since they move away from situations where they were under traditional patriarchal authority to situations in which they can exercise greater autonomy over their own lives. (Hugo 2000 p-299) When women get empowered they benefit themselves and the larger community. 'The expansion of women's capabilities not only enhances women's own freedom and well-being but also has many other effects on the lives of all. An enhancement of women's active agency can in many circumstances contribute substantially to the lives of all people. –men as well as women, children as well as adults'. (Sen 2001 p-100) In the Indian context women in the migrant households do play an important role in family survival but unfortunately they remain invisible in the official data because of the way the concepts are defined and data is collected. This research piece tries to have a gender perspective to rural-rural, rural-urban migration and analyse the labour force participation of women in migrant households. Through indirect indicators, it tries to arrive at the extent of and inter-state

variations in independent (autonomous) female migration. Section I deals with trends in urbanization in India and male female composition in inter state and intra state migration. Section II deals with household level data to assess the extent of women’s participation in the labour force in the case of associational migration for Tamil Nadu , a southern state in India where female migration is quite high. This study concludes that females do play an active role in family maintenance in the destination area and since independent migration of females is on the increase ,policy planners should be pro-active in addressing the multifarious problems faced by them and also in molding public opinion in favour of female migration.

Section I

Urbanisation and Migration in India:

Urbanisation is a by-product of economic development. Industries get concentrated in cities and towns where infra-structural facilities are available, and this in turn causes rural-urban migration.

Table 1 – Urbanisation in India.

Census year	% of urban popu. To total population	Urban Population (million)	Difference over the previous decade	Decadal urban growth rate(%)	No of Towns/Uas
1901	10.85	25.8			1827
1911	10.29	25.9	0.1	0.4	1815
1921	11.18	28.1	2.2	8.3	1949
1931	11.99	33.5	5.4	19.1	2072
1941	13.86	44.1	10.6	32	2250
1951	17.29	62.4	18.3	41.4	2843
1961	17.97	78.9	16.5	26.4	2365
1971	19.91	109.1	30.2	38.2	2590
1981	23.34	159.4	50.3	46.1	3378
1991	25.71	217.6	58.2	36.4	3768
2001	27.78	285.4	67.8	—	

Source: Urban Statistics Handbook 2000 National Institute of Urban Affairs , New Delhi.

The contribution of urban sector to India’s GDP went up from 29% in 1950-51 went up to 60% by the turn of the century. The urban population of India increased by

more than eight times from 25.8 million in 1901 to 285.4 million in 2001 (Table 1). The increment is much higher in the last four decades . Though rapid urbanization is welcomed for its positive effects, it has also imposed increasing pressures on the level of services in the urban centers.¹ But the process of urbanization in India is likely to persist atleast until 2030 A.D. when India will achieve a 50% level of urbanization . (Mathur 2004:14)

Table 2 indicates the composition of urban population growth . Except for the decade 1971-1981 , when rural-urban migration was of a very high order , the other two decades viz 1961-71 and 1981-91 exhibit 20-23% of population increase due to migration. For the decade 1971-81 while natural increase in the urban population was of 41.3% net migration contributed an equal addition the percentage being 39.9.

For the decade 1991-2001 it should have definitely gone up since the natural increase in initial urban population constitutes only 37.8 million . (Tim & Visaria 2004) .Micro level studies also indicate that in recent years more migration is in search of livelihoods for relatively longer period. (de Haan 2000, Rodgers & Rodgers 2000 Sharma et al 2000)

Table 2
Composition of Population Growth 1961-1991 (in million)

Composition	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001
Urban Population				
Out of which:	30.18	49.45	56.45	67.81
Natural Increase	19.68	20.4	33.87	
	65.20%	41.30%	60%	
Net Migration	5.91	19.73	12.76	
	19.60%	39.90%	22.60%	
Re classification	4.59	9.32	9.82	
	15.20%	18.80%	17.40%	

Source: Census of India 1991, Occasional Paper No 1 of 1993-Emerging Trends of Urbanisation in India

Table -3
Stream and Volume of Internal Migration 1981 and 1991 All duration of Residence

Category	1981					1991				
	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%
Rural-Rural	131095	26798	20.4	104298	79.5	145045	26452	18.2	118593	81.7
Rural-Urban	33441	16381	48.9	17061	51	39910	18237	45.7	21673	54.3
Urban-Rural	12321	4514	36.6	7807	63.4	13479	4547	33.7	8932	66.2
Urban Urban	24390	11390	46.7	13000	53.3	26420	11530	43.6	14890	56.4
Total	201247					224854				
% of rural rural	65.1					64.5				
% of rural urban	16.6					17.7				
% of urban rural	6.1					6				
% of urban urban	12.1					11.7				
Increase /decrease in 1991 over 1981										
rural rural						13950	-346		14295	
rural-urban						6469	1856		4612	
urban rural						1158	33		1125	
urban urban						2030	140		1890	

Source: Census of India 1981 Migration Tables Part V-A and B (I) Office of the RGI and Census Commissioner GOI New Delhi. Census of India 1991 Migration Tables Vol II Part I

From NIUA 2000 'Urban Statistics Handbook 2000' New Delhi pp15&16.

Category-wise migration and male-female break up are available in Table 3. In rural-rural migration females dominate. They constitute 80% both in 1981 and 1991 census. In rural-urban migration though males and females are almost equal in number a comparison between 1981 and 1991 census indicates an increase in female migration to urban areas. In the Indian context women get social status only through 'marriage'. A woman is identified as "so and so's 'wife'" and not for her intrinsic abilities and talent even if happen to have independent career and hold high profile job. This value orientation is changing but very slowly that too only in big towns and cities. So, in such a context for a woman, marrying a person in the urban area is one way of improving her prospects and another way is to make a move to the city/town and get employed in a factory or establish petty business so as to 'improve' her prospects in the marriage market. So even if the movement from rural to urban or rural to rural is in search of employment, since the ultimate goal is 'marriage' women's movement is always identified with marriage. The higher percentage of females in 1991 census in rural-urban migration is in tune with general economic development. Again in urban urban migration

women have improved their share in 1991 census over 1981. Urban-rural migration which occupies the last rank in terms of its magnitude in total migration, again witnesses a larger proportion for females mainly due to 'marriage' since majority women migrate only on marriage.

Table 4
Regional Variations in Development and Migration

Major states	Poverty rate	Rank	Popu. Growth (1991-2002)% per year	Rank	SDP per capita 1997-98 (Rs per year)	Rank	Net migration rate (per 1000 population)
Andhra Pradesh	18.8	6	1.21	3	10590	9	1
Assam	39.6	15	-	-	-	-	-5
Bihar	46.9	17	2.43	13	4654	15	-31
Gujarat	15.4	4	2.05	9	16251	4	19
Haryana	11.8	1	2.50	14	17626	2	79
Himachal Pradesh	17.5	5	1.63	6	10777	10	-
Karnataka	25.6	9	1.60	5	11693	7	-8
Kerala	14.5	3	1.01	1	11936	6	6
Madhya Pradesh	36.8	14	2.07	11	8114	12	10
Maharashtra	28.7	11	2.06	10	18365	3	44
Orissa	46.3	16	1.49	4	6767	14	6
Punjab	11.8	1	1.82	8	19500	1	25
Rajasthan	20.4	8	2.53	15	9356	11	7
Tamil Nadu	20.1	7	1.07	2	12989	5	-2
Uttar Pradesh	33.0	13	2.29	12	7263	13	-8
West Bengal	32.1	12	1.66	7	10636	8	27

Note: Net migration refers to the difference between in-migration and out-migration . If it is negative then it means out-migrants are larger and the state is losing to other states and vice versa.

Source: Migration in India 1999-2000 Report No 470 NSSO 55th Round July 1999-June 2000. Sep 2001 p-20

Poverty rate, Population growth rate and SDP percapita were taken from Cassen Robert and Kirsty McNay ' The Condition of the People' in ed Tim Dyson, Robert Cassen and Leela Visaria 2004 'Twenty First Century India: Population , Economy, Human Development and the Environment, OUP

Punjab , Haryana and Maharashtra which top the list in SDP percapita and where the poverty percentage is low attract migrants from other states whereas Bihar which has high population growth rate, high levels of poverty and poor SDP ,loses , outmigration exceeding in-migration by 31 for every 1000 persons' ² West Bengal is another state

which receives migrants from other states. It has porous borders and hence receives migrants from Bangladesh as well. In the case of Tamil Nadu, the high rate of unemployment could be the reason for outmigration exceeding in-migration. The educated unemployed is also high in Tamil Nadu. Other studies also indicate that Maharashtra attracts or pulls migrants from all over the country especially from U.P. and Karnataka. Gujarat is another state which attracts migrants. West Bengal initially attracted a lot of migrants but now the tempo has come down. Migrant streams out of U.P. and Bihar are of long standing. The inter-state migration is to be attributed to spatial unevenness in urban growth. There is wide variation in the level of urbanization and rate of urban population growth between states. Haryana, Punjab and Tamil Nadu whose level of urbanization is higher than the national average growth rate continue to experience higher than national average growth rate while states with low level of urbanization continue to remain in the same status. This has deepened the disparities among states.³ (Studies conclude that though in recent decades economic disparities between states has increased this has not generated a rise in out-migration rates from poor states or in-migration rates to better-off states. (Kundu & S.Gupta 2000).)

But the fact to be remembered here is, majority migration is within the state. While rural-rural migration is mostly in response to development initiatives (such as irrigation or public works programmes) and are of shorter duration and for reasons of seasonal employment, urban to urban migration is mostly identified with seekers of permanent employment or for higher education. The migration trend indicates that rural to rural and urban to rural flows are becoming less important while urban to urban and rural to urban migration are becoming more prominent.

The NSSO 55th Round provides estimated number of persons whose place of enumeration was their usual place of Residence but who stayed away from their villages/towns for 60 days or more for employment or in search of employment. This may include circular migration and permanent migration. This we treat as employment oriented migration.

The following table shows the percentage of males and females in rural and urban migration for the respective states.

Table 5
Rural-Urban and Male –Female composition in intra-state Migration

State	Rural Male (00)	Rural Female (00)	Rural Total (00)	Male – female Ratio	Urban Male (00)	Urban Female (00)	Urban Total (00)	Male Female Ratio
Andhra Pradesh	3106	2886	5992	52:48	1578	1598	3176	50:50
Assam	1494	999	2493	60:40	297	144	441	67:33
Bihar	6071	1897	7968	76:24	698	338	1036	67:33
Gurjarat	3675	1940	5615	65:35	249	153	402	62:38
Haryana	1010	688	1698	59:41	689	109	798	86:24
Karnataka	2841	2505	5346	53:47	764	539	1303	59:41
Kerala	2065	1531	3596	57:43	677	519	1196	57:43
Madhya Pradesh	8103	5615	13718	59:41	905	509	1414	64:36
Maharashtra	3897	2614	6511	60:40	1876	791	2667	70:30
Orissa	2277	1065	3342	68:32	177	40	217	81:19
Punjab	1294	1127	2421	53:47	587	356	943	62:38
Rajasthan	2624	710	3334	79:21	520	397	917	57:43
Tamil Nadu	2169	1382	3551	61:39	1079	618	1697	64:36
Uttar Pradesh	7815	3307	11122	70:30	3781	2245	6026	63:37
West Bengal	4732	1837	6569	72:28	683	583	1266	54:46

Source: NSSO 55 th Round Report 470

In Andhra Pradesh female migration is on par with male migration both for rural and urban. In Assam urban female migration is seven percentage point less than that of rural female migration. In Bihar one finds higher female migration in the urban area than in the rural area though female migration is by and large less than what we get for majority states. In Gurjarat urban female migration is three percentage point higher than rural female migration. In Haryana one finds very poor urban female migration. In Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu female migration both rural and urban are comparatively high. In U.P., West Bengal and Rajasthan urban female migration is comparatively high when compared to rural female migration. Orissa exhibits least mobility among its urban females. So the broad conclusions arrived at are as follows:

- (a) In Southern states males and females are almost equal in number (50:50) in both rural and urban migration except for Tamil Nadu where the ratio is 60:40 and urban female migration is slightly lower than rural female migration. But when compared to the rest of the states in India southern states in general exhibit higher rural and urban migration among females.
- (b) The predominantly male migration states as far as rural migration is concerned are Rajasthan (79:21) and Bihar (76:24). Such predominant male migration is witnessed in the case of Orissa in urban migration (81:19).
- (c) In Rajasthan females are almost in equal number (only slightly less) in urban migration (57:43) while they constitute only 21% in rural migration. Among the less developed states Orissa is on the other extreme with least female participation in urban migration (81:19)
- (d) In West Bengal urban female migrants are one and half times higher than rural female migrants the ratio being 54:46 while it is only 72:28 for rural migrants. U.P also joins this list.
- (e) In the rest of the states females dominate in rural migration.

The overall conclusion is female migrants are more in number in rural migration in the least developed states while they are more in number in southern region both in rural and urban migration.

On rural –urban migration for both males and females other research studies have come to the conclusion that in the developed states of Maharashtra and Gujarat rural to urban movers are higher than rural to rural movers. Except Kerala urban bound movement is important in the southern states reflecting generally their higher levels of urbanization (Tim Dyson & Visaria :p115) Punjab and Haryana show high urban to urban migration because of its proximity to Delhi. Because of low levels of urbanization states like Bihar , U.P, and Orissa witness high rural to rural when compared to urban to urban migration. The migration streams from Bihar , U.P and Orissa are predominantly male and this is attributed to cultural or economic reasons. But in Maharashtra and Gujarat the migrants move with their families including the womenfolk. (Srivastava 1998).

Section II Gender Dimensions in Labour Migration

The Objective of this section is to throw light on labour force participation of women after migration using household level data of NSSO 55 th Round for the state of Tamil Nadu which is one among the few urbanized states in India and where female mobility is high. Though it is difficult to capture ‘autonomous migration’ i.e. independent migration of females we have attempted to use indirect indicators to capture this reality. In the case of ‘associational migration’ the data clearly indicates that though majority women move on account of marriage, their labour force participation increases steeply after migration. Among the unemployed women, the percentage who have ‘sought work’ is quite high indicating that they need a job but are unable to find one. Issues relating to female labour migration which have lot of policy implications are raised in Section III for purposes of debate and dissemination.

Studies on Female Migration: An Over-view:

Over the years the literature on migration has grown in volume and variety in response to the unfolding complexities of migratory processes. Though women’s employment oriented migration is on the increase, only few studies discuss the movement of women in detail especially in relation to poverty. The work of Connell et al (1976) the earliest of the studies in migration contains a detailed discussion on women’s migration. Fernandez-Kelly (1983) and Khoo (1984) concentrate on women and work both migrant and non-migrant in the world’s labour force. They discuss the problem in the wider context of problem of feminisation of the work force, de-skilling and devaluation of manufacturing work.

In recent literature female migration is linked to gender specific patterns of labour demand in cities. In both South East Asian and Latin American cities plenty of opportunities are available to women in the services and industrial sectors especially with the rise of export processing in these regions. (Fernandez –Kelly 1983, Hayzer 1982, Khoo 1984 and studies on South East Asian Labour migration) It has been established that women are no longer mere passive movers who followed the household head (Fawcett et al 1984, Rao 1986). In fact daughters are sent to towns to work as domestic servants (Arizpe 1981). From an early age girls become economically independent living

on their own in the cities and sending remittances home. This kind of move has been characterised by Veena Thadani and Michael Todaro (1984) as 'autonomous female migration' and has resulted in Thadani-Todaro model of migration⁴ However studies indicate that the independent movement of young women in South Asia and Middle East as labour migrants is very rare and associated with derogatory status connotations. (Connell et al 1976, Fawcett et al 1984).

But with trade liberalization and new economic policies, gender specific labour demand has motivated many young Asian women to join the migration streams in groups or with their families to "cash-in" the opportunity⁵ Kabeer (2000) in her study finds Bangladeshi women (with a long tradition of female seclusion) taking up jobs in garment factories and joining the labour markets of Middle East and South East Asian Countries. A study of 387 female labour migrants from South East Asia, Thailand, the Philippines and China finds positive impacts on women. (Chantavanich 2001). Another research (Gamburd 2000) concludes that despite some unpleasant situations, none of the women she interviewed felt that the risks of going abroad outweighed the benefits. Recent migration research shows that female migrants constitute roughly half of all internal migrants in developing countries. In some regions they even predominate men. (Hugo 1993)

In India with the entry of more and more young women in the export processing zones, market segmentation is being accentuated, female dominant jobs are being devalued, degraded and least paid. Though this does not augur well with women development it has not deterred women from contributing to family survival and studies are not wanting which highlight that it is women who settle down in the labour market as flower/fruit vendors, domestic servants and allow the men to find a suitable job leisurely or improve their skill. (Shanthi .K.1993)

Case studies indicate that it is the males who were 'associational migrants' and not the women. Families had migrated in response to female economic opportunity (as domestic servants, as vegetable vendors, flower vendors in front of the temple etc etc) and they are the primary or equal earners, male employment often being irregular and uncertain⁶ While entry barriers are many in male jobs (in the form of 'informal

property rights) and the waiting period is long, it is not so in the case of female jobs where they have easy entry and exit in domestic service and personalized services. (Premi 2001, Meher 1994, Shanthi.K. 1993 1991)Their earnings may be low but crucial for family survival. They get paid in 'kind' as well, which help to combat malnutrition especially among infants.

Causes for invisibility of women in National Surveys:

But it is a pity that national level large scale surveys are unable to capture the above reality. With the result women are treated still as secondary earners, invisible in the official data system, and consequently no policy measures are directed to alleviate the sufferings of these migrant women who lack even basic amenities in the destination area. Why large scale national surveys underscore female migration is attributed to certain reasons. The respondents are required to give only one reason for migration and in the case of women invariably the reason for migration is identified with marriage. The woman may be working prior to marriage and intend to get married with an urbanite to enhance her potential for employment but it does not get captured . Moreover in the Indian cultural setting it is inappropriate for a woman to emphasise her economic role especially if the interviewer is a stranger and a male. When male members answer the question, women's employment is underplayed. Moreover the emphasis on primary and full time work and longer reference period often lead to underestimation of female employment. If women's jobs are extensions of domestic jobs then they are not even acknowledged as 'jobs'. Depending on the respondent's and enumerator's perception and gender sensitivity, women's work force participation and economic contribution get captured or not. Questions as to who migrated first, whether the male or the female and in associational migration whether women's employment opportunity was reckoned or not at the time of migration etc are not posed to the sample population and hence it is difficult to identify 'autonomous female migrants'. Despite these shortcomings ,in the absence of any other data on migration, one has to necessarily depend on the Census and the NSSO the two sources of data for migration. The 2001 Census data on Migration is yet to be published and so NSSO 55th Round data is the latest that is available for purposes of research.

The National Sample Survey Organisation of Government of India carried out an all-India survey on the situation of employment and unemployment in India during the period July 1999-June 2000. This 55th Round Data was published in August 2001. In this survey, data was collected on Migrants as well and the results of the same had been published as Report 470. This report defines migrants as 'a member of the sample household if he/she had stayed continuously for atleast six months or more in a place (village/town) other than the village/town where he/she was enumerated'. These long term migrants were identified through Column 13 of Block 4 of Schedule 10 of the Household Slips if the answer is 'yes' for the question 'whether the place of enumeration differs from last usual place of residence'. Once the migrant households had been identified based on the reasons for migration the percentage of employment oriented migration was calculated. For purposes of analysis we restricted our sample size to those falling in the age group 15-60 (both years inclusive) so that the dependents can be eliminated and the working age group can be effectively studied.

Total number of sample who fall in the age group 15-60 for the state of Tamil Nadu is 27764. Women and men are on equal proportion the percentage being 49.7 for males and 50.3 for females. Migrants constitute 38% and the rest are non-migrants. But among the migrants the sex ratio is in favour of women (70.9%) while males are only one third. This should be attributed to the custom of women moving out from their natal home on marriage. This is evident from the NSSO data where 90% of female mobility is 'associational' either as 'spouse' or as 'dependent daughter'.

Since the NSSO asks for only one reason to be stated and there is no provision to state more than one reason in order of priority women's employment oriented migration is under-estimated in national surveys. Here the fact that is often forgotten is females do work at the place of origin either as family workers in their own land/enterprise or as agricultural labourers and also work at the place of destination. Migration tends to increase the labour force participation of women especially if the destination area offers scope for self employment or wage work and also due to the fact that the restrictions on unmarried girls are more in the village. Once these women are in the town/city now they are in the status of 'married' on whom the restrictions for outside work are less. Irregular

nature of work of the males further encourages the women to opt for wage work to supplement family income. To verify whether this reasoning holds good or not in the empirical world we have classified the female migrants on the basis of reasons for migration as stated by them and then on the basis of labour force participation. For all-India as well as for the state of Tamil Nadu we find an increase in the labour force participation of women in the post migration status though ninety percent of the females have migrated as 'associational migrants'.

Table 6

Reason for migration as specified by the respondents of Tamil Nadu Sample

Reason	Males (No)	% to total	Females (No)	% in total
In search of employment	364	11.9	42	0.56
In search of better employment	524	17.1	52	0.69
To take up employment	368	12.0	44	0.59
On transfer	288	09.4	34	0.45
Proximity to work	70	02.3	14	0.18
		52.7		2.47
Studies	83	02.7	45	0.60
Acquisition of house	127	04.1	45	0.60
Housing problem	107	03.5	72	0.96
Social/Political Problem	58	01.9	50	0.66
Health	32	01.0	9	0.12
		13.2		2.94
Marriage	134	04.4	5497	73.5
Migration of parents	616	20.1	1310	17.5
		24.5		91.0
Others	295	09.6	265	03.5
Total	3031	100.0	7474	100.0

Source: Computed from Household Level Data of NSSO 55th Round

Table –7
Activity Status before and after migration for Tamil Nadu female migrant samples
(in percentage)

Activity Status	Before Migration	After Migration	Change	Non-migrant
Own account worker	2.39	6.38	3.99	6.49
Employer	0.17	0.44	0.27	0.13
Worker in household Enterprise	4.52	10.63	6.11	9.79
Salaried/Regular Employed	3.85	6.86	3.01	8.67
Casual labour in Public works	0.04	0.02	-0.02	-
Other types of Casual work	16.28	16.22	-0.06	16.74
Available for work	0.46	1.27	0.81	1.99
Studying	5.15	1.57	-3.58	9.05
Domestic Duties only	60.67	45.87	-14.80	38.57
Both	4.38	9.04	4.66	6.38
Others				

*"Both" This category refers to women who combine domestic work and wage work –the example being home based workers like pickle makers, beedi rollers, agarbathi makers, plastic wire bag makers etc etc.

Source: Computed from Household Level Data of NSSO 55th Round.

It is very unfortunate that the migrants are not asked to state more than one reason in order of priority. If that choice is given perhaps many women would have given employment as one of the reasons for migration. Again for Tamil Nadu data though 'marriage' is the main reason for migration women's work force participation data reveals that women are more active after migration . Table 7 is illustrative of this fact. The usual principal activity status at the time of migration and after migration in the destination area

for females reveal that ‘attending domestic duties only’ was the main occupation for 60.7% of females . But after migration this has fallen to 45.8% .

The increase is almost double for the own account worker, worker in household enterprises and salaried/Regular employment category. This again shows that women put up their own business however small it is like fruit or vegetable or flower vending and breakfast selling. They also accept wage employment. The percentage of women who combine productive activity with domestic work (the category of ‘both’) goes up from 4.4% to 9.0%. This means migration definitely makes a difference in the lives of women. Their work may be intermittent , due to child birth and other reasons, but it always comes ‘handy’ whenever male unemployment is high due to the seasonality of the job (like construction , agriculture) or in cases of irresponsibility of males of the household.

Table –8
Working in Subsidiary Capacity

Category	Migrants				Non-Migrants			
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%
Own account worker	102	44.7	135	27.43	684	51.38	93	26.72
Employer	22	9.64	8	01.62	64	04.80	7	02.01
Helper in household								
Enterprise	34	14.91	229	46.54	239	17.95	161	46.26
Regular salaries wage								
Employee	10	04.38	21	04.26	32	02.40	7	02.01
Casual wage labour in								
Public Works	-		1	0.20	5	01.62	1	0.28
In other types of work	60		98		307		79	
Total	228		492		1331		348	
% to their respective								
population	7.4		6.6		12.4		5.3	
Male female ratio	32:68				79:21			

Source: Computed from Household Level data of NSSO 55th Round.

Women in the subsidiary category are more among migrants than among non migrants. They dominate in the ‘Helper in the Household enterprise’ category followed by ‘Own

Account Worker' category. Though their percentage is very small (6.6) in the female sample population the male female ratio reveals that females dominate in the subsidiary category in tune with their secondary status.

Table –9
Men and Women who sought work:

Category	Migrants		Non –Migrants	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
For less than one				
Month	137 (46.9)	303 (47.6)	804 (56.6)	250 (46.0)
1-3 months	75 (25.7)	177 (27.8)	350 (24.6)	178 (32.7)
3-6 months	80 (27.4)	156 (24.5)	267 (18.8)	116 (21.3)
Total	292	636	1421	544
% to their respective				
population	9.5	8.5	13.2	8.3
Male female ratio	31:69		72:28	

Source: Computed from Household Level data of NSSO 55th Round.

Women who sought work are almost twice the number for men. The figure is equally good for the non migrant females as well, but the male female ratio here is less than what we get for migrants.

From the foregoing analysis it becomes clear that women's labour force participation not only increases steeply after migration but also the number of women who sought work is high for the migrant women and who are in the subsidiary category is also high. Case studies indicate that the employment potential of women is reckoned at the time of migration. (Shanthi 1993). This explains 'family migration' in 1990s over 'male selective migration' in 1980s. At the individual level women foresee an opportunity to supplement family income and at the structural level they have been 'pushed out' due to shrinking employment opportunity in the rural areas. It is 'push' as well as 'pull' which cause female migration unlike the dominance of 'pull factor' in the

case of male migration. With trade liberalization and export oriented economic development in India there is greater demand for female labour and hence the 'pull factor' is causing independent movement of young women which is being termed as 'autonomous female migration' by Thadani and Todaro. But how 'autonomous' is this migration is not clear since in India women are not allowed to take decisions independently and also hardly have any control over the income they earn. But of late young girls do migrate either with peer groups and resort to group living or they are accompanied by elderly relatives who control their movement and activities. Such women invariably are subjected to long hours of work under undesirable working conditions for low wages. (Swaminathan 2002,2004). Micro level case studies indicate an increasing trend in such autonomous female migration but national level surveys do not capture them since no questions are posed as to who migrated first (whether the male or the female) or migrated alone. But one can have an indirect estimate by using proxies such as 'headship' and 'marital status'.

Unattached or independent female migrants:

The marital status of the women in the age group 15-59 for the major fourteen states in India reveals that both for high income and low income states 90-94% of the women are married. (Table 10) .The middle income states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh , Karnataka, Kerala and West Bengal exhibit a lower figure. The unmarried women constitute an insignificant percentage among the target group in low income states.

Table 10 Marital Status and Relationship to Head of Women in Sample Migrant Households

Major States	Marital Status				Relationship to Head			
	Never Married	Married	Widowed	Divorced/ Separated	Self	Spouse of Head	Spouse of Married child	Others
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Central Region								
Madhya Pradesh	1.6	92.5	5.1	0.7	3	62.9	24.3	9.8
Uttar Pradesh	1.7	93.4	4.7	0.3	5.2	58.3	25.8	10.7
Northern Region								
Haryana	2.5	92.7	4.5	0.3	4.7	6.2	24.6	8.7
Punjab	2.2	92.9	4.7	0.2	5.4	61.9	25	7.7
Rajasthan	1.9	92.9	4.8	0.4	4.6	60.9	24.7	9.8
Western Region								
Gujarat	3.3	91	5	0.6	3.6	65.9	21.1	9.4
Maharashtra	4	89	5.8	1.2	4.7	67	16.8	11.5
Eastern Region								
Bihar	0.9	94	4.9	0	5.9	60.4	25.8	7.9
Orissa	2.8	91	5.5	0.8	5.9	68.4	16.2	9.5
West Bengal	3.0	89.6	6.8	0.7	5.1	68.9	16.0	10.0
Southern Region								
Andhra Pradesh	3.8	87.9	7.3	1.1	5.7	70.4	14	9.9
Karnataka	4	88	6.8	1.2	6.1	62.9	19	12
Kerala	6.2	87.7	5	1.1	9.4	52.2	25.7	12.7
Tamil Nadu	4.5	86.7	7.5	1.3	7.7	70.3	12.3	9.7

Source: (Computed from) Household Survey data of NSSO 55th Round.

The percentage is somewhat better for High Income states again Punjab and Haryana having a lower percentage when compared to the percentages of unmarried in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Unmarried women in the migration stream are of higher percentage in Southern states of Kerala , Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. This category of ‘never married’ indicates the incidence of ‘autonomous female migration’ in Southern states either for higher studies or employment. This conclusion is further reinforced when we consider Column 6 of the same Table 10 , where under the relationship to ‘head’ the percentage of ‘self’ is quite high for southern states. Young girls living alone as ‘single women’ or in ‘groups’ is on the increase in South India.

The distribution of women in the age group 15-59 on the basis of relationship to head indicates the following:

- Female headship is high in Southern states of Kerala (9.4%) , Tamil Nadu (7.7%), Karnataka (6.1%) and Andhra Pradesh (5.7%). By and large it is low in northern states ranging from 3% in Madhya Pradesh to 5.9% in Bihar. Due to cultural reasons the widows and separated forming a separate household is less in north India while it is accepted in South India. The second reason as cited already is the new trend of young unmarried girls migrating for reasons of higher studies and employment.
- About 80-85% of the women in migrant households through out India are either spouse of the head or spouse of the married child. Due to the custom of marrying the girls at a very young age in North India, in many north Indian states 'spouse of the married child' constitutes about 25%. It is low in South India ranging from 12-19% only. Orissa and Maharashtra from the north are included in this list.
- The 'others' category which includes dependent mother, sister, sister-in law and mother-in-law varies between 7-11% among the states in India.

From the foregoing analysis it is clear that both autonomous and associational migration of women is on the increase. If that is so, then it has lot of policy implications

Section III

Issues and Policy Imperatives

Migration is generally expected to have empowering impact on women in terms of increased labour force participation, decline in fertility, economic independence and higher self esteem. But this does not always happen. Female rural to urban migrants continue to be vulnerable to gender based discrimination in wages and labour market segmentation which reserve the most repetitive , unskilled, monotonous jobs for women. They mostly work in the informal sector and experience long working hours for a very low income, unhealthy and or dangerous working conditions, and psychological, physical and sexual aggression. While men normally work in groups women go for individualized work environments (eg. Domestic service) where there is greater isolation with the least possibility of establishing networks of information and social support . So measures designed to ‘protect’ migrants must be accompanied by measures that empower them.

In female labour migration the issues to be addressed are many

- (a) How safe are the autonomous female migrants ? Do they fall prey in the hands of traffickers ? Have they benefited due to migration ? Would they prefer to go back if employment opportunities cease to exist in the destination area ?
- (b) In the case of associational migrants , are they overburdened with work in the absence of traditional kith and kin support systems? Do the men share the household chores ? Do the women get toilet facility in the destination area ? How do they perceive their new role- empowering or disempowering ?
- (c) In the case of male migration and family left behind in the rural area how do the women cope with the farm /non farm work in the village ? Are the remittances adequate ? Do they work to supplement the meager remittances and if so how are they valued for their contribution ? How do they perceive the change ? What happens to those households where the males have severed their connections with the rural household and remarried in the destination area to form a new household ?

- (d) What happens to the elderly especially the female elderly who are left behind in the village of origin in majority of the above cases ?

Conclusion:

Micro level case studies indicate high levels of rural urban migration among females for reasons of employment. From the secondary data it is unable to prove it since autonomous and associational migration are clubbed and moreover the reason for migration is identified with marriage. But unlike in earlier years where male selective migration was predominant , the latest trend is one of family migration where both the male and female migrate in search of employment . This is ascertained through the labour force participation data for women before and after migration using the latest migration data of NSSO 55 th Round. Since 2001 Census data is yet to be made available there is no way of affirming our conclusions by rechecking with the broad trends of Census data. In view of rising urban -ward migration and increased labour force participation of women after migration, questions related to sanitation, water, housing. educational and infrastructural needs require greater attention at the level of policy planning and implementation. Since women are a highly heterogeneous group migration among females should not only be understood as a poverty reducing strategy but also as a strategy of economic diversification , upward mobility and desire for personal growth and autonomy.

Appendix Table I
Composition of sample population in Tamil nadu

Category	Migrant		Non-Migrant	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rural	967	4018	5828	3098
Urban	2100	3458	4905	3390
Total	3067 (29.1)	7476 (70.9)	10733 (62.3)	6488 (37.7)
% of migrants & non migrants in total	38%		62%	

Total Sample in the age group 15-60 = 27764

Appendix Table II
Educational level of migrants and non -migrants

Educational level	Migrants		Non-migrants	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not literate	9.40	35.74	17.24	30.30
Less than primary (<5)	9.39	9.73	10.09	9.19
Primary	14.77	16.21	17.15	16.13
Middle	19.16	14.21	19.80	16.81
Secondary	21.80	10.99	18.50	12.57
Higher secondary	9.86	7.12	9.33	8.66
Graduation & above	15.14	5.74	7.74	6.17
Not accounted	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.10
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Footnotes

1. Census of India classifies an area as urban on the fulfillment of either of the two conditions (a) all settlements that are notified by the state government as a municipality, corporation, notified area committee etc and (b) all settlements that satisfy the following criteria (1) a minimum population of 5000 persons (2) atleast 75% of male working population engaged in non-agricultural economic pursuits and (3) a population density of atleast 400 persons per square kilometer. These settlements are called census town. This way of defining an area or settlement as urban has created two sets of urban areas in the country: municipal towns and Census towns. Municipal towns are statutory and governed by the state laws, while the Census towns are generally administered and regulated in accordance with the provisions of state laws applicable to Panchayats. But the size class distribution of urban population shows an increasing concentration of population in cities of over 100,000 population. In 1991 cities with over 100,000 population accounted for 56.68% of the total urban population. In 2001 this percentage had risen to 61.48% On the other hand the share of small towns is consistently on the decline. This has serious impact on the finances of municipalities.
2. Within a state both push and pull factors can operate depending on the reference group. In Bihar it is observed that members of underclass are migrating in large numbers in search of better employment. Not only the absolute number has gone up but also the rate of outmigration has almost doubled in the last two decades. It is also observed that migration is fairly distributed across all castes and classes in rural Bihar and large upper castes and Muslims and landlords, middle peasants and non –agricultural classes report more long term migration as compared to other social groups. Among the objectives for migration the foremost is not only the desire to earn more but also break the existing caste taboos. But at the same time for the upper castes who are prevented from doing manual wage work in their villages, migration has provided an opportunity to undertake any kind of work in the destination area. The Bihari Times reports that there are 10,5,6,3 lakh Bihari in Delhi, Punjab, Calcutta and Bombay respectively and the total amount that these 24 lakh estimated Bihari remit, equals the actual yearly plan expenditure of the state. In fact Bihar's future depends on the role to be played by return migrants. In view of the fact that Bihari migrant labour is subjected to very harsh working conditions in Punjab and Haryana these migrants return after few years and rescue the piece of mortgaged land or buy a tiny piece of land and also get the 'power to respond' and 'react' to upper caste/class hegemonic rules exercising their sense of self dignity. It is these returnees who are expected to change the social order and make a dent on poverty. It is also said that this male outmigration has resulted in 'feminisation of labour market' since late 1970s though wage rates for the female labour are still very low. (Indu B.Sinha ' Bihar is yet to reap the bonus of her Backwardness' undated www.bihartimes.com/poverty/indu-b-sinha.html)

3. Studies conclude that though in recent decades economic disparities between states has increased this has not generated a rise in out-migration rates from poor states or in-migration rates to better-off states. (Kundu & S.Gupta 2000).
4. The conceptual framework to analyse female migration behaviour as developed by Thadani and Todaro calls for judicious combination of quantitative as well as qualitative information. In their model, migration of women (both unattached and associational) irrespective of their education is assumed to be determined jointly by economic and social forces while being constrained by cultural , sex-role prescriptions.
5. The setting up of export processing zones not only changed the pattern of female migration but also increased the proportion of women in the labour force who are mainly in paid employment. The preference for woman employees was mainly because they accepted lower than reservation wage, were not unionised and do not protest much against unpleasant working conditions. All this has resulted in poorer health conditions and further worsening of work burden on women.
6. Case studies indicate that it is the males who were 'associational migrants' and not the women . Families had migrated in response to female economic opportunity (as domestic servants, as vegetable vendors, flower vendors A study on domestic workers by Neetha comes to the conclusion that migration for domestic service is largely a female driven phenomenon based on personal and social relationships. Social networking, largely female centered ,influences migration decisions , the process of migration and also the day to day lives of the migrants. Refer Neetha.N. 2002 'Migration Social Networking and Employment: A Study of Domestic Workers in Delhi'. NLI R.S.No 037/2002

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