

## **Facets of India's Migration**

### *Unveiled the trends and attributes of migration in India*

There is a fundamental distinction in migration processes between developing and developed countries. In developing nations such as India, migration primarily occurs not due to the attractive pull factors of destination locations, as is commonly observed in developed countries, but as a response to poverty, unemployment, and overall underdevelopment in the areas of origin. Both poverty and prosperity serve as catalysts for migration; however, the former is predominantly relevant in developing countries, while the latter is more characteristic of migration patterns in developed nations. The interplay between migration and development is an increasingly important area of scholarly inquiry, generating considerable debate regarding the negative consequences of migration on development and vice versa. Some argue that underdevelopment is a primary driver of migration, while others contend that economic prosperity can lead to increased migration. The history of migration reflects the struggles of individuals and communities seeking to survive and thrive by escaping insecurity and poverty while pursuing new opportunities.

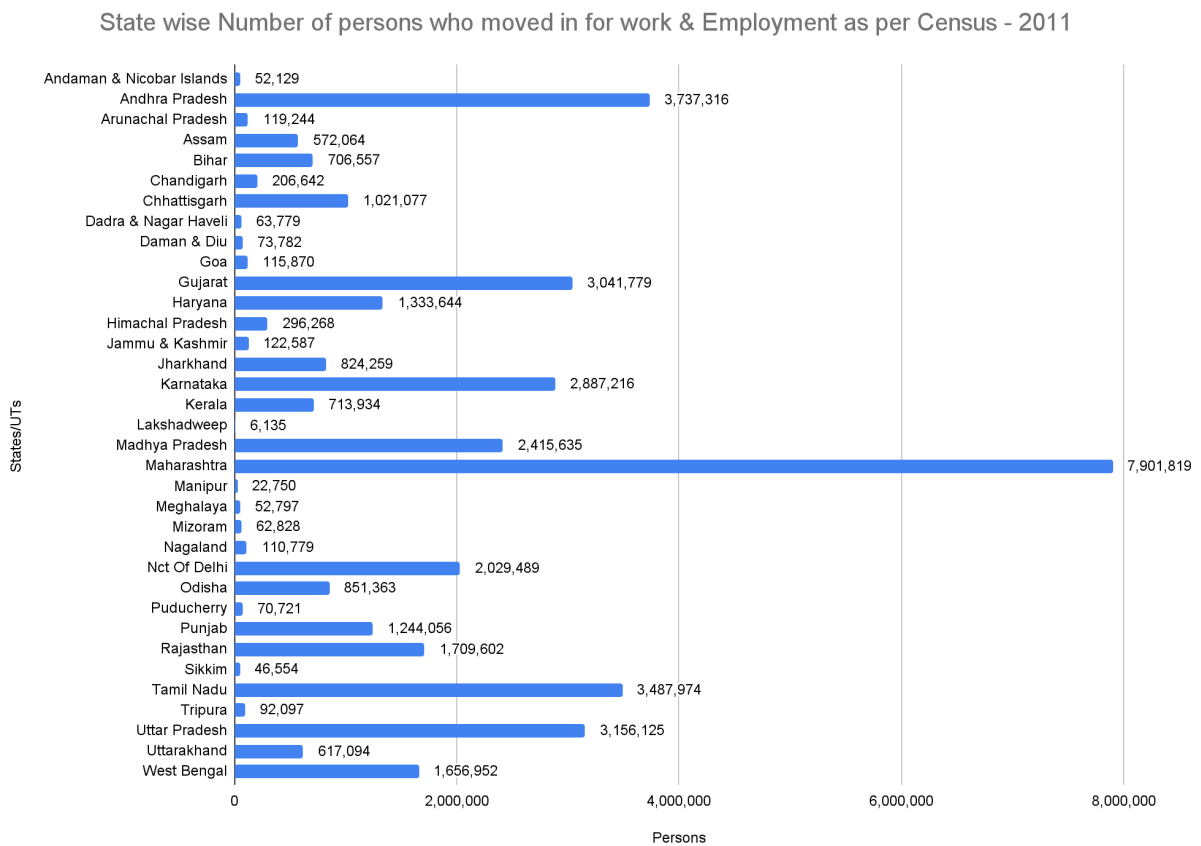
Economist Sir John Hicks posited that "differences in net economic advantages, chiefly differences in wages, are the main causes of migration." Migration often results from regional disparities in development, prompting individuals to relocate from underdeveloped areas to more prosperous regions in search of enhanced living conditions. This phenomenon is observed in both international and internal migration patterns. Within the context of developing countries, particularly India, interstate migration should be analyzed against the backdrop of regional disparities and inequalities in development.

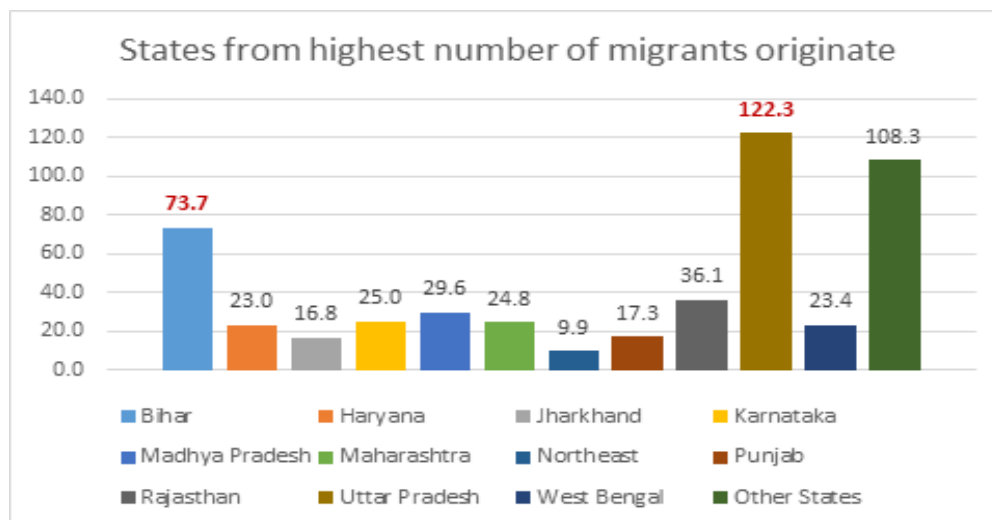
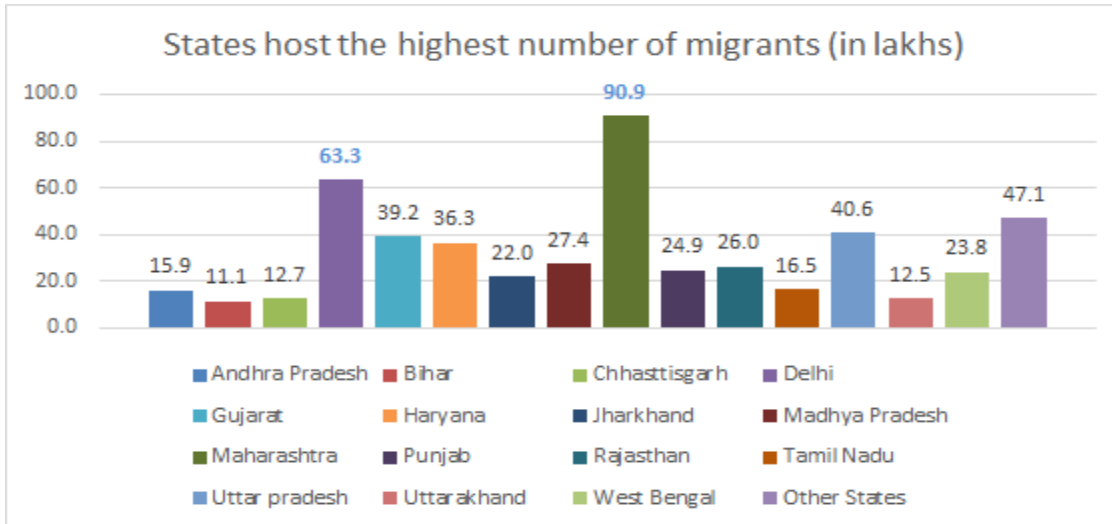
The Indian Constitution affords its citizens the fundamental right to move freely within the country, enabling them to reside and pursue livelihoods at their discretion. A multitude of economic, social, cultural, and political factors influence the decision to migrate, and the consequences of these factors can differ across periods and geographical locations. As the most unpredictable component of population growth, migration presents complexities that necessitate a thorough understanding of determinants of migration, which can be population density, labour force, employment rates, income levels, education levels, wage differentials between rural and urban, geographical trends and of course urban development trends. The census of India, a primary source of migration data, classifies individuals according to their migration status based on parameters such as place of birth, last residence, and duration of stay at the enumeration site. These classifications are delineated according to administrative units, including districts and statuses within India. This approach facilitates

understanding the distance factor associated with four distinct categories of migrants - Intra-district, Inter-district, Inter-state and International migrants.

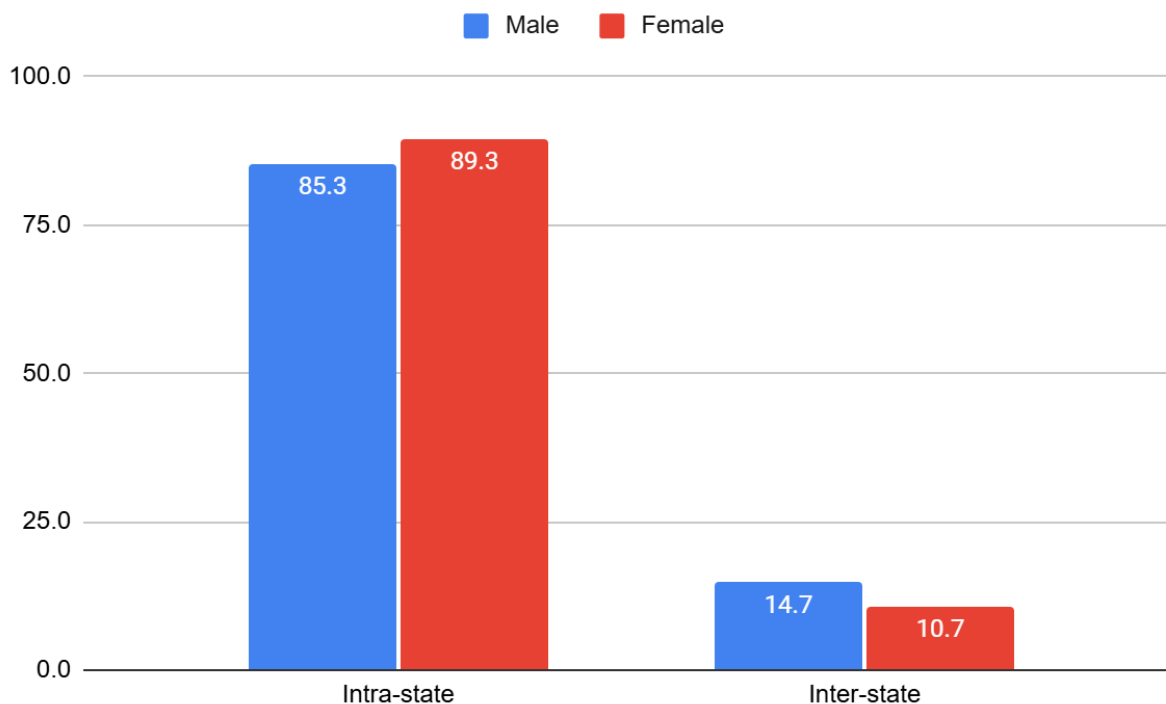
**Where India Moves:**

According to the 2011 census, India recorded 45.5 crore migrants, based on their last residence, accounting for approximately 37% of the nation's total population. This figure signifies an increase of 46% since the 2001 census, accounting for 31 crore (Table 1). Approximately 21 crore individuals (8.4 crore Male and 12.8 Females) migrated within India during the preceding decade.





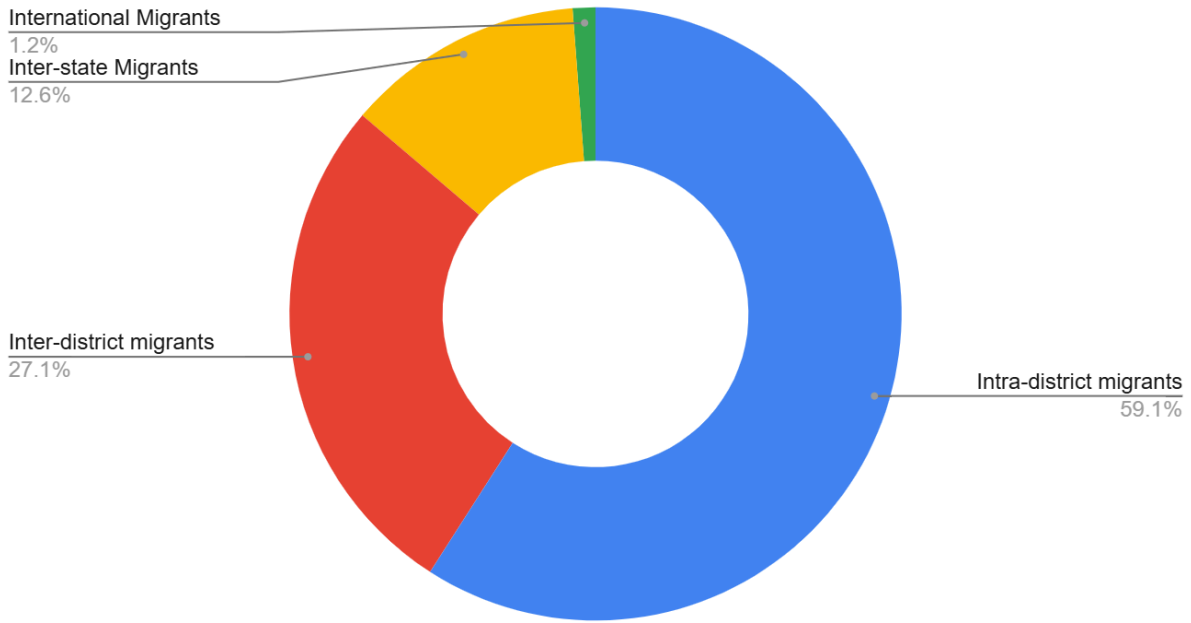
This migration was predominantly intra-state, with about 88% occurring within the same state, while inter-state migration constituted approximately 12% of the total. Gender analysis reveals that females represent the majority of the intra-state migrant population, while males predominantly make up the inter-state migrant demographic (Table 2).



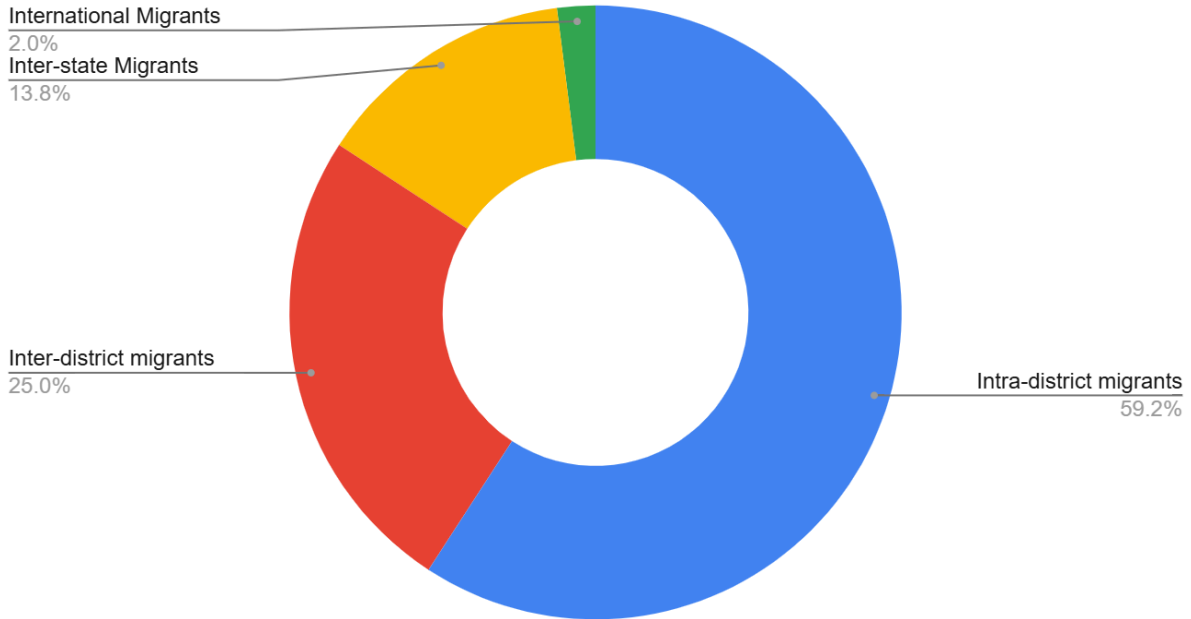
The rural population is the primary source of out-migration, accounting for 68% of total migrations, with this figure being approximately 58% for inter-state migration. Intra-state migration sees rural areas contributing to 59% of the in-migrant population, whereas urban areas comprise 72% of the in-migrant population in the context of inter-state migration. While intra-state migration accounts for a significant portion of overall migration in India, marriage is the principal reason for such movements. Marriage is estimated to be responsible for approximately 33% of intra-state migrations, rising to 51% among female intra-state migrants. Conversely, employment opportunities represent a critical motivating factor in inter-state migration, constituting a 25% share of the reasons cited for migration. Notably, 45% of inter-state male migrants identify work and employment as the rationale for their move.

The analysis of migration patterns within districts, between districts, across states, and internationally from 2001 to 2011 reveals that 22% of the population comprises intra-district migrants, 10% are inter-district migrants, 5% are interstate migrants, and 0.44% are international migrants, according to data from the 2011 census. Compared to the 2001 census, there has been an approximate increase of 4% in intra-district migration. Conversely, the percentage of international migrants has decreased in relation to the overall population, with the most pronounced decline observed in international migration, which constituted 0.8% in 1991, 0.6% in 2001, and 0.4% in 2011 (Table 3).

### Migration Pattern based on 2011 Census



### Migration Pattern based on 2001 Census



Examination of the census data from 2001 to 2011 indicates that female migrants outnumber their male counterparts in all four migration streams. This disparity is primarily due to marriage-related migration, wherein women typically relocate from their

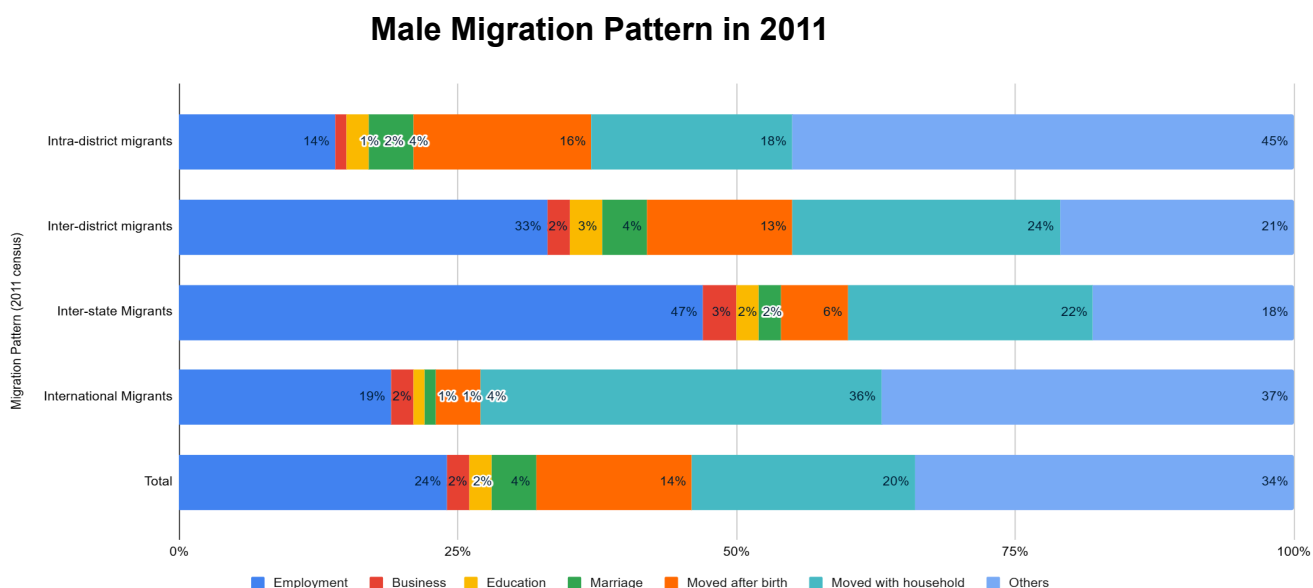
ancestral homes to the residences of their husbands, often situated in different locations. In 2011, approximately 38 out of every 100 individuals enumerated in the census were identified as migrants, indicating they had relocated from their place of origin to the enumeration area. Among these migrants, approximately 25 were women, suggesting that around one-quarter of India's population comprised women who had moved away from their birthplaces. Census data reveals that roughly two-thirds of women migrants relocated primarily for marital reasons. The 2011 census data indicates that women engaged in intra-district accounted for 32%, while those involved in inter-district comprised 14%, interstate represented 5%, and international migration constituted 0.5%. In comparison, the percentages for male migrants in these categories were 12% for intra-district migration, 6% for inter-district migration, 4% for interstate migration, and 0.4% for international migration. The observed increase in the percentage of within-state migrants may be partially attributed to the growth in the number of districts, which increased from 593 in 2001 to 640 in 2011.

Information regarding migration reasons was not collected in Indian censuses before 1981. Beginning with that year, the census initiated the collection of data from individuals who reported a different place of last residence compared to their location of enumeration. The reasons for migration, such as employment, education, family movement, marriage, and others, were considered in the subsequent censuses. Furthermore, the scope of this data broadened by including business and natural calamities, such as floods and droughts. Movements arising from displacement and retirement were categorized as "others." Subsequent censuses in 2001 and 2011 introduced the "moved after birth" category while consolidating natural disasters into the "others" category. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of migration patterns and their underlying causes.

In 2011, approximately 45% of male migrants from rural to urban areas indicated that their primary motivation for migration was related to employment or business opportunities, a decrease from 51% reported in 2001. Furthermore, migration from urban to urban areas comprised 28% in 2011, a decline from 35% in 2001. Rural-to-rural migration was predominantly influenced by marriage among females, as evidenced by 84% of female migrants citing marriage as their reason in both the 2011 and 2001 censuses. Among urban-to-rural migrants, approximately 54% of males reported moving due to childbirth and typically relocated with household members. In comparison, 29% of females migrating from urban to rural areas indicated similar motivations (Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7).

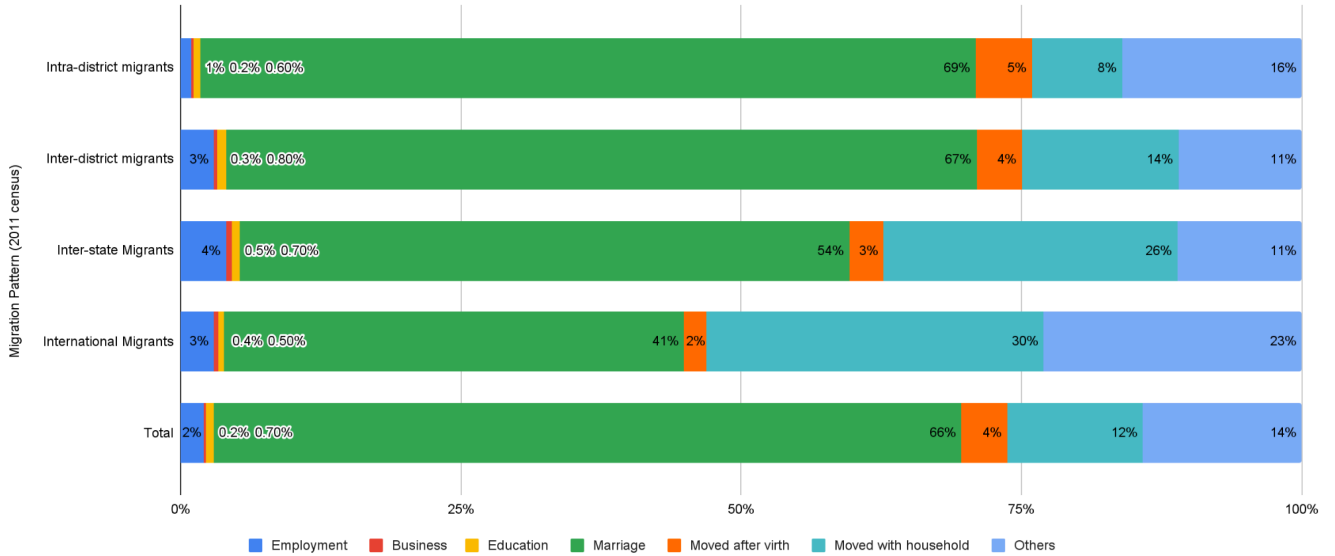
## Why India Moves:

According to the 2011 census, the primary motivations for migration among males were employment and business opportunities, accounting for 26%, while marriage was the predominant reason for females, comprising 66%. The second most significant motivation for male and female migrants was associational reasons, encompassing movements related to accompanying parents or other family members, reported at 20% for males and 12% for females. Furthermore, a notable proportion cited "other" reasons for migration, with this category representing 34% of male migrants and 12% of female migrants. The "other" category was particularly prevalent among male intra-district migrants, who reported it at a rate of 45%, and inter-district migrants, with a rate of 21.4%. Similarly, 16% are female intra and 11% are inter-district and inter-state migrants (Tables 8 and 9).



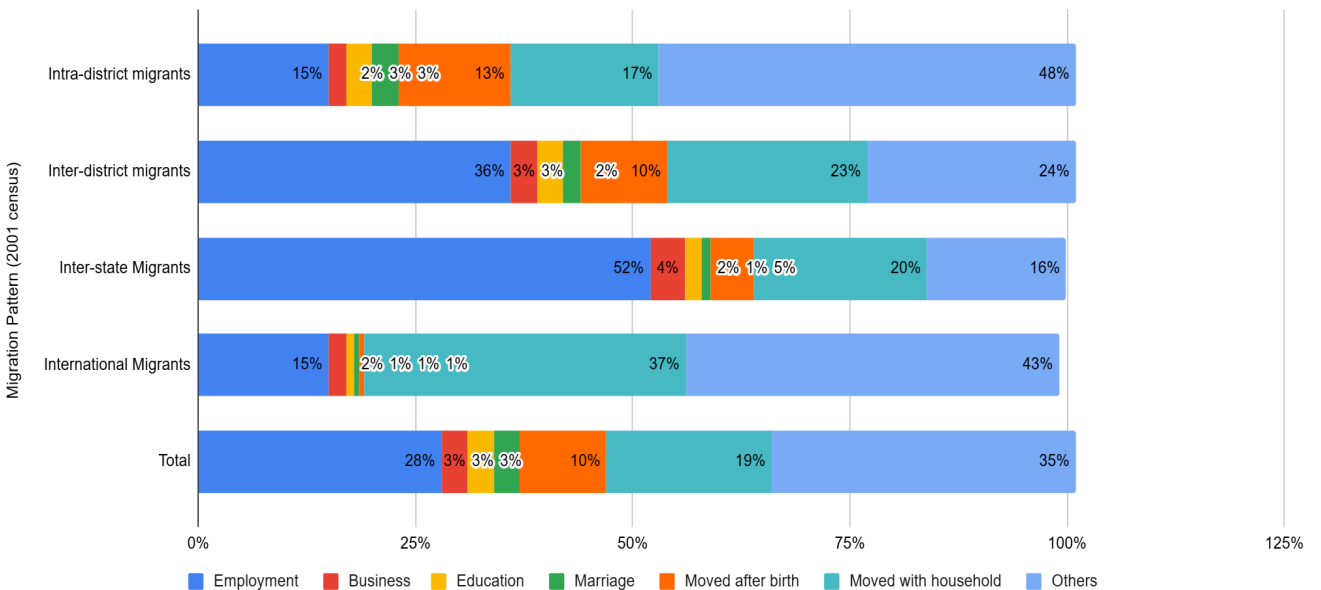
In the 2001 census, the motivations for migration exhibited notable differences between males and females. For males, the primary driver of migration was employment and business opportunities, which accounted for 31%. Conversely, only 2% of females identified employment as a reason for migration. The predominant motivation for female migrants was marriage, which constituted 70% of the total. The second most significant factor influencing both male and female migrants was moving with a household, with 19% of males and 11% of females reporting this reason.

## Female Migration Pattern in 2011



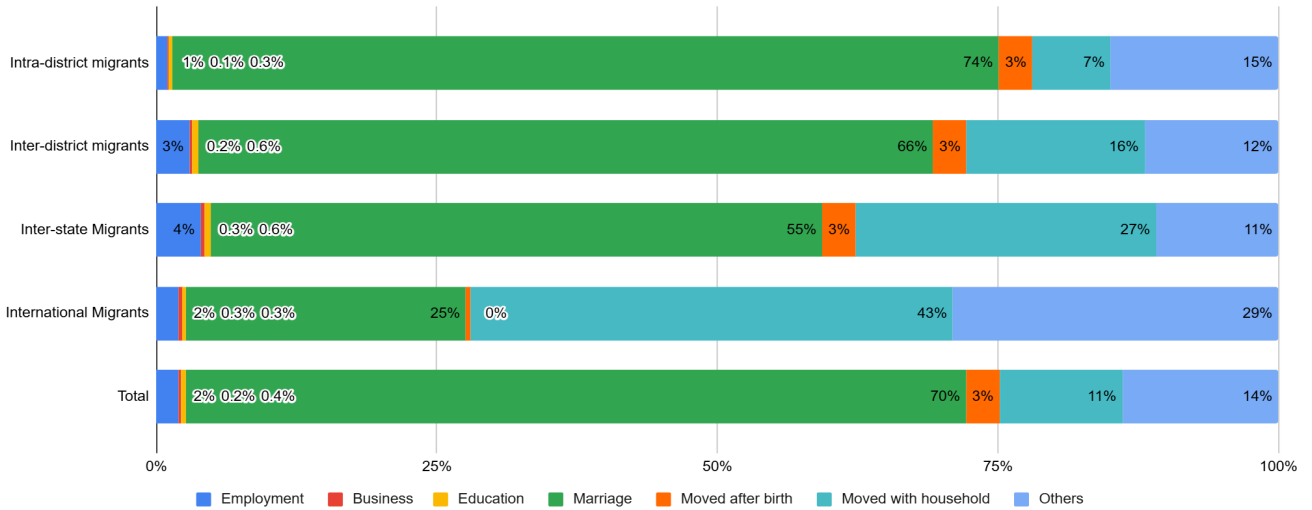
Furthermore, 35% of male and 14% of female migrants reported "other" reasons for migration. It is important to highlight that the percentage of male migration attributed to employment and business-related reasons declined from 31% in 2001 to 26% in 2011. Similarly, female migration attributed to marriage decreased from 70% in 2001 to 66% in the 2011 census (Tables 10 and 11).

## Male Migration Pattern in 2001



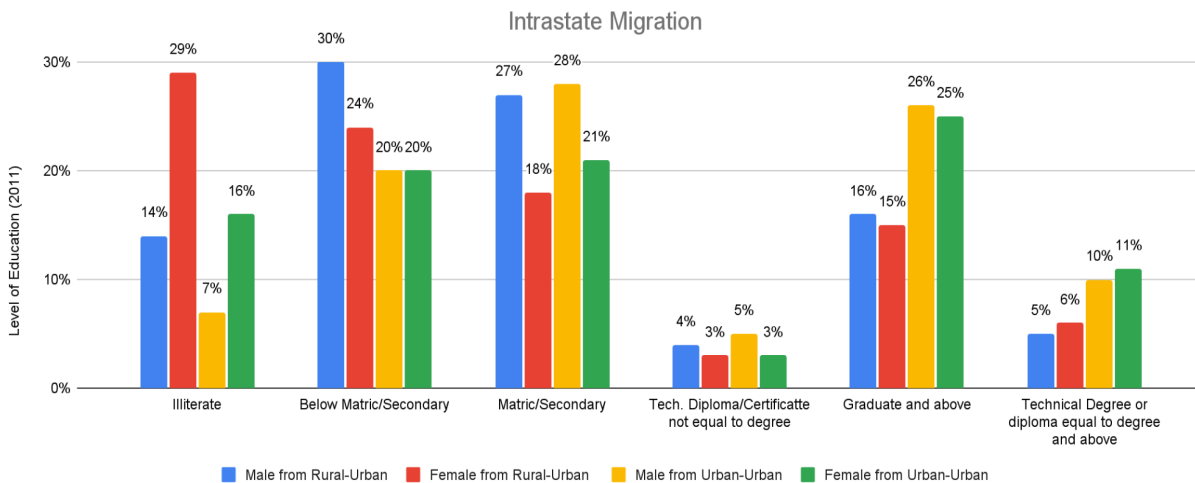


## Female Migration Pattern in 2001



## Who India Moves

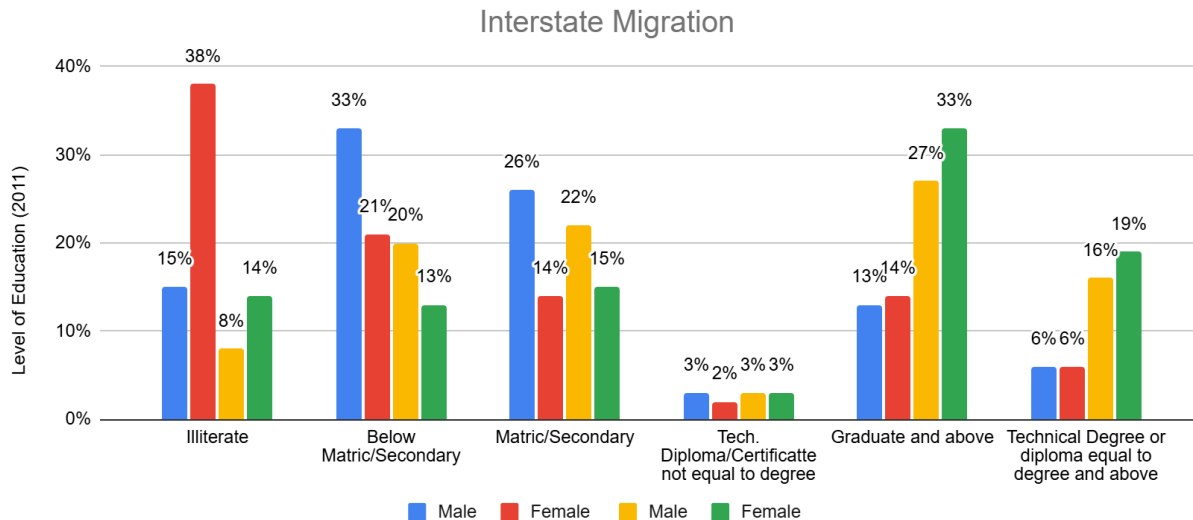
Census data provides valuable insights into the educational background of migrants, categorized by age and sex. The Intrastate analysis indicates that approximately 10-15% of male migrants and around 30% of female migrants within the age brackets of 15-29 and 30-59 are illiterate.



Furthermore, one-third of the migrant population possesses educational qualifications below matriculation for both genders. A more significant proportion of males, which is 30%, migrating from rural areas to urban centers for employment, hold below matric/secondary education, in contrast to 24% of females in the same category. Additionally, 27% of male and 18% of female migrants with below matric/secondary education are transitioning from rural to urban locations. Conversely, among those

migrating from urban to urban areas, a considerable number of males and females possess educational qualifications at the matric/secondary level and Graduate and above. This includes 28% of males and 21% of females with matric/secondary education, 27% of males and 25% of females holding graduate qualifications or higher.

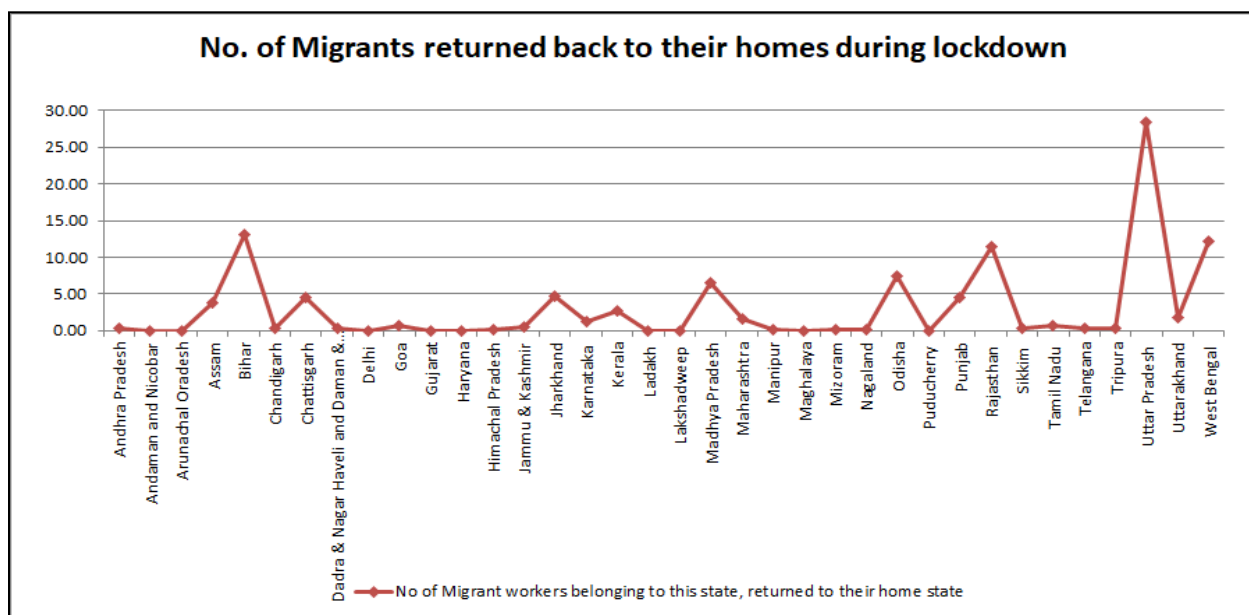
An Interstate analysis of the educational backgrounds of migrants reveals that approximately 33% of males with below-matric or secondary education relocated from rural to urban areas for employment opportunities.



In contrast, only about 21% of females in the same educational category migrated. Among individuals possessing matric or secondary education, approximately 26% of males and 14% of females are moving from rural to urban settings. In the context of migration from urban to urban areas, male and female graduates represent 27% and 33%, respectively. This trend highlights the increasing participation of more educated women in the workforce. A similar pattern is observed among women with technical degrees or diplomas, accounting for nearly 19% compared to 16% of their male counterparts. Furthermore, approximately 38% of illiterate females migrated from rural to urban areas in search of employment prospects.

### ***Pertinent Challenges Involved in Migration***

The challenges faced by millions of migrant workers during the lockdown have prompted governments to implement measures aimed at alleviating their circumstances. Economically vulnerable and socially marginalized populations, often engaged in informal and exploitative employment conditions, experience significant difficulties due to the precarious nature of their work. The lack of adequate bargaining power severely hampers the ability of migrant workers to demand fair wages and satisfactory working conditions.



Source: Response Answer to the Loksabha Question from Shri Manickaam Tagore from the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, 8.2.2021

The impacts of the pandemic, coupled with issues such as wage manipulation, non-payment of salaries, excessive working hours, substandard working conditions, and exploitative amendments to labor laws, have adversely affected their lives and livelihoods. Historical practices, including police abuses, further exacerbate their challenges. The absence of social protection mechanisms and effective institutional grievance redressal systems increases the obstacles faced by migrant workers during the pandemic.

In response to inquiries raised in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Labour and Employment provided data regarding the number of migrant workers who returned to their home states during the initial lockdown in March 2020. This information indicates that a total of 11430968 migrant workers returned. Uttar Pradesh ranked first, with 197128 migrants (28.43%), followed by Bihar with 1500612 migrants (13.13%). The analysis suggests that the primary reasons for internal migration are work and employment opportunities, alongside marriage for female migrants. Temporary migration is prevalent in India, and various sources indicate that the estimated number of temporary migrants may be significantly higher than previously recognized. It is crucial to acknowledge that the circumstances for temporary or short-term migrants differ; they are frequently overrepresented among disadvantaged groups in urban areas and face challenges related to skill development and access to social protection networks. A principal concern is that India's labor protection framework does not

adequately address the specific challenges confronting migrants, which poses a severe risk of marginalization and violations of migrant rights.

### ***Roadmap for inclusive migrant policies***

1. The pandemic has highlighted significant deficiencies in the basic infrastructure and safety nets available for the labor force, resulting in widespread distrust due to the unanticipated and forced migration from urban centers. Addressing these challenges will require prioritizing restoring trust among workers, facilitating their reintegration into destination states, and establishing a comprehensive social security framework for migrants.
2. It is essential to implement a Migration Tracking System at the panchayat level to register migrant workers and monitor their identity, contact information, destination, and purpose of migration. This initiative can draw on the successful model of the Bihar Migration Tracking System, where registrations are supported by community vigilance committees at the village level. Effective collaboration among panchayati raj institutions, civil society organizations, and labor departments at the district level is crucial for accurate data collection and the welfare of migrant workers. A similar mechanism should be considered to implement the registration recommendations proposed by Niti Aayog.
3. The portability of the Public Distribution System (PDS) possesses the potential to benefit migrant workers significantly. This system allows migrant workers to receive ration provisions either in their home state or at their destination, which could further enhance the One Nation, One Card initiative. However, achieving inter-state portability of rations necessitates a high level of commitment and cooperation among state governments, the central government, and the migrants. Realizing this goal will require substantial efforts to maintain comprehensive and precise data on migrants tailored to each state's needs and challenges rather than relying on a centralized approach.
4. The provisions outlined in the Social Security Code create a dichotomy between formal and informal sectors. For instance, organized workers are entitled to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave and access to crèche facilities under the Maternity Benefit Act. However, such benefits apply only to registered factories, mines, and other establishments with a threshold of 10 workers. Consequently, migrant workers in smaller units and worksites lack protections against arbitrary dismissal and access to paid leave.
5. Migration is a necessary survival strategy for many individuals, as basic needs are often unmet in their places of origin. Enhancing job opportunities that offer meaningful returns represents a primary challenge in mitigating interstate migration. There is a critical need for increased investment in rural development

programs to bolster livelihood options. Revitalizing rural economies is essential to meet the needs and aspirations of individuals across various socio-economic brackets, thereby allowing potential migrants to negotiate more effectively with employers and contractors.

6. A robust grievance redressal mechanism should be established to address labor rights violations concerning migrant workers, including instances of non-payment of wages, excessive working hours, and exploitation.
7. As the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) recommended, a labor budget ought to be allocated for the capacity building of migrant workers.
8. It is imperative to restructure industrial policy to support micro-enterprises, which serve as the largest employers of vulnerable migrant workers. Providing special incentives and support mechanisms to meet labor standards, including occupational safety and health (OSH) infrastructure and fair wages, is essential. Additionally, assistance with crucial amenities such as electricity and rent will help ensure that these enterprises can offer decent employment outcomes for migrant workers.
9. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs must take the initiative to involve migrant workers in developing housing and urban policies, as urban planning should account for the changes brought about by migration flows. Urban programs, such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), and the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), must adopt multi-faceted livelihood strategies specifically designed for the needs of migrant workers.
10. States are encouraged to identify priority areas characterized by seasonal distress-driven migration. These blocks or sub-blocks will be designated as clusters, warranting targeted attention in developing and implementing specialized programs for migrant workers. This approach can be integrated into a proposed database, which will serve as a valuable resource for states in formulating effective policies for regions experiencing significant out-migration. Mapping these areas is crucial for directing efforts toward enhancing the enrollment, retention, and educational outcomes of children in areas with high rates of out-migration. Furthermore, establishing skill development and vocational training programs for youth, alongside creating employment opportunities aligned with market demands in these out-migration areas, represents a viable strategy. The government must prioritize the uninterrupted education of children of migrant workers to mitigate the risk of child labor. In accordance with the recommendations outlined in NEP 2020, it is imperative to establish alternative educational centers in collaboration with civil society organizations to ensure that no child is excluded from educational opportunities.

11. Employers face significant challenges due to excessive laws and compliance requirements. While large companies may handle these with dedicated teams, small businesses struggle, often finding full compliance impractical. Consolidating 42 central labor laws into four labor codes was a step toward efficiency, though implementation remains pending. In the meantime, global changes have drawn manufacturing interest toward India despite only 11% of the workforce being in this sector. To better attract these opportunities and simplify regulations, merging the four labor codes into a single, streamlined code would create a more accessible and business-friendly environment. A unified labor code would reduce the complexity of compliance, making it easier for employers to hire and manage migrant workers. This would encourage more companies to expand operations, especially in sectors like manufacturing, which often rely on migrant labor. Simplifying labor regulations can encourage companies to bring more jobs into the formal economy, making it easier for migrant workers to access stable employment, social security benefits, and legal protections. This formalization could also attract international companies, creating further opportunities for skilled and unskilled migrant workers. Moreover, a unified code can streamline processes for interstate employment, as labor rights and employer obligations would be standardized. This would encourage workers to move freely to areas with better job prospects, contributing to a more efficient allocation of labor resources across India. Overall, the implementation of a single labor code could help create a more welcoming and stable environment for labor migration, which, in turn, would support economic growth and development across regions in India.

Table 1: Migrants and Non-Migrants

	2011 census			2001 census		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population	1,210,855,000	623,270,000	587,585,000	1,028,610,000	532,156,000	496,453,000
Total Migrants	447,289,837	142,791,157	304,486,547	307,142,946	90,413,304	216,751,380
Total Migrants (%)	37%	23%	52%	30%	17%	44%
Non-Migrants* (%)	63%	77%	48%	70%	83%	56%

Table 2: Intra- and Inter-state migration trends

	Persons	Male	Female
Intra-state	186697174	71760396	114936778
Inter-state	26069340	12361366	13707974
Total	212766514	84121762	128644752

Table 3: Analysis of migration patterns within districts, between districts, across states, and internationally from 2001 to 2011

	2011			2001		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Intra-district migrants	22%	12%	32%	18%	8%	28%
Inter-district migrants	10%	6%	14%	7%	5%	10%
Inter-state Migrants	5%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%
International Migrants	0.44%	0.41%	0.48%	0.60%	0.60%	0.60%
Unclassifiable	0.20%	0.02%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Table 4: Male Migration Pattern Rural Vs. Urban (2011 census)

Migration Pattern (2011 census)	Male						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Rural-Rural	17%	1%	3%	9%	23%	22%	25%
Urban-Urban	28%	3%	2%	2%	12%	26%	27%
Rural-Urban	45%	3%	3%	2%	7%	24%	15%
Urban-Rural	13%	1%	2%	3%	37%	17%	27%

Table 5: Female Migration Pattern Rural Vs. Urban (2011 census)

Migration Pattern (2011 census)	Female						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Rural-Rural	1%	0.1%	0.4%	84%	3%	5%	7%
Urban-Urban	4%	0.6%	1%	41%	7%	27%	18%
Rural-Urban	4%	0.4%	1%	52%	4%	28%	10%
Urban-Rural	2%	0.3%	0.7%	53%	17%	12%	14%

Table 6: Male Migration Pattern Rural Vs. Urban (2001 census)

Migration Pattern (2001 census)	Male						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Rural-Rural	23%	2%	3%	6%	17%	23%	25%
Urban-Urban	35%	4%	3%	0.8%	10%	26%	21%
Rural-Urban	51%	4%	4%	1%	6%	21%	13%
Urban-Rural	23%	3%	3%	2%	28%	23%	18%

Table 7: Female Migration Pattern Rural Vs. Urban (2001 census)

Migration Pattern (2001 census)	Female						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Rural-Rural	1%	0.1%	0.2%	84%	2%	6%	7%
Urban-Urban	3%	0.4%	1%	46%	6%	29%	14%
Rural-Urban	4%	0.3%	1%	53%	4%	29%	9%
Urban-Rural	2%	0.3%	0.7%	60%	12%	17%	9%



Table 8: Male Migration Pattern with Reasons for Migration (2011 census)

Migration Pattern (2011 census)	Male						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Intra-district migrants	14%	1%	2%	4%	16%	18%	45%
Inter-district migrants	33%	2%	3%	4%	13%	24%	21%
Inter-state Migrants	47%	3%	2%	2%	6%	22%	18%
International Migrants	19%	2%	1%	1%	4%	36%	37%
Total	24%	2%	2%	4%	14%	20%	34%

Table 9: Female Migration Pattern with Reasons for Migration (2011 census)

Migration Pattern (2011 census)	Female						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Intra-district migrants	1%	0.2%	0.6%	69%	5%	8%	16%
Inter-district migrants	3%	0.3%	0.8%	67%	4%	14%	11%
Inter-state Migrants	4%	0.5%	0.7%	54%	3%	26%	11%
International Migrants	3%	0.4%	0.5%	41%	2%	30%	23%
Total	2%	0.2%	0.7%	66%	4%	12%	14%

Table 10: Male Migration Pattern with Reasons for Migration (2001 census)

Migration Pattern (2001 census)	Male						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Intra-district migrants	15%	2%	3%	3%	13%	17%	48%
Inter-district migrants	36%	3%	3%	2%	10%	23%	24%
Inter-state Migrants	52%	4%	2%	0.9%	5%	20%	16%
International Migrants	15%	2%	1%	0.5%	0.6%	37%	43%
Total	28%	3%	3%	3%	10%	19%	35%

Table 11: Female Migration Pattern with Reasons for Migration (2001 census)

Migration Pattern (2001 census)	Female						
	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with household	Others
Intra-district migrants	1%	0.1%	0.3%	74%	3%	7%	15%
Inter-district migrants	3%	0.2%	0.6%	66%	3%	16%	12%
Inter-state Migrants	4%	0.3%	0.6%	55%	3%	27%	11%
International Migrants	2%	0.3%	0.3%	25%	0.4%	43%	29%
Total	2%	0.2%	0.4%	70%	3%	11%	14%

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