



punjab geographer

A JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
PUNJAB GEOGRAPHERS, INDIA

VOLUME 5

OCTOBER 2009



PATTERNS OF MIGRATION TO, FROM AND WITHIN PUNJAB: A SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE

Doctoral Dissertation Abstract (2009)

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Punjab has a very long history of migration. Many civilisations and dynasties came, flourished and ultimately vanished to the vagaries of time. The proportion of migrant population to Punjab's total population has been changing consistently from 36.88 per cent in 1971, to 35.19 per cent in 1981 to 34.32 per cent in 1991 and to 37.73 per cent in 2001.

It is important to mention that studies done on the geographical aspects of migration in the country as a whole have been few and far between. The paucity of such studies looks all the more conspicuous in view of the detailed census data on migration. The accomplished doctoral dissertation had intended to fill some such gaps based largely on 1991 and 2001 migration tables of Punjab and other states produced by the Census of India. District has been taken as the basic spatial unit of the study area. The study has been organised in five sections which have been further divided into a total of eleven chapters, each chapter dealing with a definite aspect of migrant population and ultimately leading to the understanding of the migrational patterns and processes in Punjab.

After independence many Punjabi farmers, businessmen, industrialists and many others moved to other parts of Punjab as well as to other parts of the country and the world in pursuit of greener pastures. This out-migration

was not because of depressive conditions but for better opportunities which were available at other places. The vacuum which was created due to out-migration was filled by in-migration of people from other states after the Green Revolution.

The magnitude of inter-state migration was large in case of agriculturally and industrially developed districts and vice-versa. On an average, six out of ten in-migrants to the state moved towards an urban destination in contrast to only four migrants moving to rural destination. It came out that a bulk of in-migrants (37.27 per cent) in Punjab in 2001 was constituted by rural-urban migration, while in 1991 this stream of migration had only 24.58 per cent of migrants in this stream. This sort of revelation was not expected from an agriculturally developed state like Punjab. In Punjab, as many as 34 per cent of the total migrants, recorded at the time of 1991 census and 33 per cent in 2001, had moved from one rural area to another rural area. Migrations to urban destinations in Punjab had comparatively higher element of economic motivation than the migrations to rural destinations which were dominated by socially-rooted marriage migration. Both the rural 'push' and the urban 'pull' in the former case provided the economic motivation. Considered in this context, rural to

urban migration formed a vital segment of the migration process.

The four neighbouring states namely Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan are the major contributors of inter-state in-migrants to Punjab. From these four states the absolute number of in-migrants has increased consistently within 1991-2001. The share of migrants from other states has also gone up during this period. Bihar is one such example from where in-migrants to Punjab have increased significantly. The trend mainly reveals that the in-migration to the state of Punjab has been primarily confined to the states in the northwestern region. This re-substantiates the fact that the volume of migration is largely related to the distance.

The in-migration to Punjab from distant states has been predominantly male selective, the proportion of male in-migrants has been increasing. Whereas, from neighbouring states namely Haryana, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh the share of females has almost remained static during 1991 to 2001.

The main points of arrival of migrants were along the main railway line and Grand Trunk Road. Those districts through which these two passed had the highest number of in-migrants. Large number of in-migrants were going to Ludhiana, Patiala and Rupnagar districts. Migrants were concentrated in areas of agricultural development and those urban centres which were experiencing rapid development in industry, commerce and service activities whereas migrants were least concentrated in areas with very large land-holdings.

The socio-economic profile of the in-migrants to Punjab has provided an insight in the demographic profile as well as the quality of in-migrants which the state has been receiving. The analysis of sex ratio of the in-migrant population revealed that more female in-

migrants were coming to Punjab than males, but this pattern changed in 2001, the proportion of male migrants increased and that of female in-migrants decreased. The examination of the age structure of the migrants revealed that majority of the migrants belonged to 19-29 age groups.

A major proportion of the migrant labour force working in the industrial and agricultural sectors of Punjab hailed from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. They were attracted to Punjab because of better employment opportunities and higher wages than in their native states. Migrants are not only employed in agriculture and the industrial sector, but in other occupations too, such as building and road construction, brick making, rickshaw pulling, etc. Most of these migrants are males. It needs special mention that a large number of these migrants are permanent settlers in Punjab as a part of urban and rural settlements.

The large numbers of out-migrants from Punjab were going to the neighbouring states and union territories of Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh, and majority of them were females and the reason for their migration was marriage and moved with family or the associational reasons. The maximum number of migrants was going to the neighbouring states, particularly to those states where there were very old predefined streams of out-migration from Punjab. Majority of the out-migrations took place more than 20 years ago. The out-migration to the other states has been almost negligible.

The large number of out-migrants from Punjab had been moving in urban to urban stream and the other important stream of out-migration from Punjab is the rural to rural stream. The rural to rural stream gained more numbers during 1991-2001 inter-censal period.

The change was more in the number of females than the males, thus it can be deduced that during the decade of 1991-2001 more females from the rural areas of Punjab were married to the Punjabi males settled in other states and union territories of India. There was a decline in the urban to urban stream indicating that employment opportunities for Punjabi people in the urban areas declined during the intercensal decade of 1991-2001. The migration from Punjab to other states and union territories of India is not individual migration it is family migration a fact which was established by the study of out-migrants by age.

The inter-district stream of migration was dominated by females during both the censuses of 1991 and 2001 and the proportion of female migrants has been increasing from 1971 to 2001 whereas that of male migrants has been declining. The outstanding reason for migration is marriage migration and it usually takes place between the rural or urban areas near the boundaries of the districts, seldom is

there a marriage migration between two extremes of the districts.

The number of intra-district migrants in Punjab was much higher than the inter-district migrants during both the censuses under study. The intra-district migration was again dominated by females, interestingly, quite contrary to the intra-district migration stream the proportion of females declined from 1971 to 2001 in inter-district migration stream. More than 70 per cent of the intra-district migration was confined to the rural to rural stream of migration.

To a large extent, migration is a beneficial process, not only for individuals, but also for communities and nations. While new economic opportunities meet the livelihood needs of migrating individuals and their families, their remittances play a crucial role in strengthening the economy of their states. Migrant remittances are indeed a major source of income for the states from where migrants arrive.