

MIGRATION AND OCCUPATION IN MUMBAI ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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Migration has historically played a major role in the growth and development of Mumbai, the commercial centre of India. During the initial period after independence (1951-61), migrants constituted about 50 per cent of the total growth of population in Mumbai. Subsequently, the rates of growth of migrants have declined but it still remains high. The latest census data (2001) show that migrants accounted for about 37 per cent of the decadal growth of population of Mumbai.

In Mumbai, the 'outsiders-insiders' issue has always been raised by nativist political groups from late 1960s onwards. The major plank in this nativist movement has been argument that the migrants have virtually cornered the gains of Mumbai's development. This has given rise to the political ideology of 'sons of the soil'. Such an ideology is based on the argument is that the native population of Mumbai is deprived of access to job opportunities and other related amenities. This perceived sense of relative deprivation among the native group has often gone to the extent of suggesting restriction on further influx of population to the city from other states.

In order the ascertain as to what extent this perception is real or imaginary, an attempt has been made in the present paper to examine the occupational status of migrants and non-migrants over the last two decades. The present analysis is based on the National Sample Survey (NSS) data collected during the last two decades. Results are based on nearly 2000 households of four rounds of the NSS conducted in 1983, 1987-88, 1993 and 1999-2000. These four rounds of the NSS data are on employment and unemployment based on principal usual activity and weekly activity.

According to the estimates based on the 1999-2000 NSS survey, migrants constitute about 37 per cent of Mumbai population. There has been an increase in female migration in the recent years compared to male migration. About 75 per cent of the migrants originate from the rural areas compared to 23 per cent from the urban areas. The migrants from Maharashtra state in which Mumbai is located constitute about 43 per cent of the cities population according to the survey. Migration from other states, mostly Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, has increased over the last two decades. The neighbouring state of Gujarat which once used to dominate the migration streams to Mumbai shows considerable decline in the rate of migration during the recent period due to the decline in the business of the Gujarati communities in the city. The influx of population from rural areas of other states to Mumbai shows an increase of about 10 per cent. The international migrants constitute about one per cent of the total migrants.

The economic factors have been the major reasons for migration to Mumbai among males. About 69 per cent of males stated that employment was the main motive behind their movement. The data show that the rate of migrants in search for better employment has been higher in the late 1990s. Social reasons such as marriage and accompanying the family constituted about 90 per cent of female migration.

The employment opportunities in Mumbai have shown fluctuating trends over the last two decades. About 86 per cent of the male migrants were reported as employed in early 1980s in comparison to 53 per cent of male non-migrants. During the late 1990s, the level of employment of male migrants showed a decline while that of the non-migrants increased. The unemployment level was about two times higher among non-migrants than migrants. The unemployment rates for migrants and non-migrants show that it increases with the higher level of education. Non-migrant females showed higher level of employment compared to migrant females.

Mumbai is considered the commercial capital of India. The city offers many opportunities of employment in the field of production, sales, administration and business. About half of the male migrants are engaged in production related activities in

comparison to 39 per cent of non-migrants. The non-migrants dominate the professional, administrative and clerical occupations. There were more male migrants than non migrants among the industrial workers in manufacturing sector. The other sectors such as wholesale, community and social services and construction both the migrants and non-migrants were equally represented. Female workers both migrants and non-migrants were largely engaged in community and social services sector. This occupational pattern for both migrants and non-migrants has remained largely same over the last two decades.

In the early 1980s, the occupational distribution of Mumbai showed that more non-migrants than migrants were working in professional, technical, administrative and clerical occupations while more migrants than non-migrants were found in production related occupations. The male migrants from Gujarat dominated the activities related to sales. The female non-migrants were occupied more in white collar jobs compared to female migrants who were largely engaged in blue collar jobs. The recent data of late nineties show that the migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar continue to be in larger proportion than non-migrants and also migrants from within the state ,i.e., migrants from Maharashtra, in production related activities.

It is difficult to know, based on NSS data, as to whether the gains of the migrants are higher than their non-migrant counterparts in terms of occupational differences. What the data suggest is that the occupational pattern for both migrants and non-migrants have largely remained unchanged over the last two decades. During this period, however, there has been rapid increase in Mumbai's population, much of which has been contributed by the natural growth itself. The increased population of both migrants and non-migrants can only be managed with the expansion of industrial, regional and rural development. It is not the migration per se that has caused the problem for an expanding metropolis like Mumbai, rather it is the lack of appropriate policy of integrated development which is a matter of concern.