

Navigating the Trajectories of Female Migration in India

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Abstract

This paper examines determinants of female out migration for education and employment and explores trajectories of female migrants in India. The paper reveals that most of the northeastern states of the country show higher female out migration for education and employment compared to other states. Mizoram has the highest female out migration for employment followed by Nagaland whereas, Nagaland has the highest female out migration for education. Intra-state and intra-district out migration for education and employment is found to be high but inter-state out migration has been found to be low. The female out migration for education and employment is found to be associated with female mean age at marriage and female work participation rate. The paper concludes that increasing female age at marriage can act as a tool to pursue females for higher studies and contribute to economic activity rather than just as migrating as an associate of their husband.

Introduction

Migration is one of the most important components of population change, as it can lead to a dramatic increase or decrease in the population of any region or country. There are many reasons for migration, including economic, social, political, and climatic conditions etc., but most people migrate for economic reasons. According to the United Nations, India had the largest diaspora in the year 2020, with 18 million Indians living outside the country (United Nations, 2020). India also has a large number of internal migrants, and this was reflected during the COVID-19 pandemic as it created a severe mobility crisis due to large number of return migrants (Rajan et al, 2020). There is evidence to suggest that movement of the people within the country is increasing over the decades. According to the 1991 population census, there were 220 million internal migrants in India which increased to 315 million at the 2001 population census and 454 million according to the 2011 population census (Government of India, 2017a). The latest estimates suggest that the migration rate – the proportion of migrant population in the total population - was almost 29 per cent in the country – around 27 per cent in the rural areas and almost 35 per cent in the urban areas (Government of India, 2022). The migration rate was higher in

females (47.9 per cent) compared to males (15 per cent). The female migration rate was nearly the same in rural and urban areas, but the male migration rate was substantially lower in rural areas as compared to urban areas (Government of India, 2022). The higher migration rate in female has primarily been due to marriage-migration. Between 1991 and 2001, an increase in marriage and family-migration accounted for around 72 per cent of the increase in the number of female migrants in this country. This proportion increased to almost 75 per cent between 2001 and 2011. Between the marriage-related migration and family-related migration, however, the share of marriage-related migration has decreased but the share of family-related migration has increased (Government of India, 2017a).

In the national context, female migrants are generally classified into three distinct categories. The first category comprises of autonomous female migrants. These migrants usually move out from their native place for better education and employment opportunities and belong primarily to middle and upper middle-class families. The second category of female migrants are those female migrants who move out of their native place to work as domestic help to augment family income. Finally, the third category of female internal migrants are those female migrants who move with their husband who migrated in search of employment and livelihood opportunities (Fawcett et al, 1984).

Female migrants are generally termed as the vulnerable group of population as they are often faced with low wages, discrimination, and exploitation at their place of destination, threatening their health and health of their children (Bhan et al, 2020). Female migrants are also at higher risk of sexual harassment and exploitation (Saradamoni, 1995; Teerink, 1995). The vulnerability of female migrants is reflected in the post pandemic situations where there has been an increase in household responsibilities and caring of children (Chauhan, 2022) which resulted in a disproportionate increase in the burden on women, leading to worsening of mental health and well-being (Bau et al, 2022). It is in the above context that this paper attempts to analyse the pattern and the trend in female internal migration in India and examines social and economic factors that contribute to female internal migration in the country.

Female Internal Migration in India

The Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2020-21 has estimated that the migration rate for females was 47.9 per cent. The main reason for female migration was marriage (Government of India, 2022). The survey revealed that around 91 per cent of rural female migrants and 61 per cent of urban female migrants migrated because of marriage. Other studies have also found that marriage is the dominant reason for female migration in India (UNICEF, 2020; Bhagat and Kesari, 2020). The Economic Survey of India, 2017, on the other hand, estimated that inter-state migration in the country was around 9 million annually during the period 2011-2016 (Government of India, 2017b). According to the 2011 population census, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are the leading states for out-migration, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, and West Bengal. The major destination states are Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala (Sharma, 2017).

The trend and pattern of internal migration in India during the period 1971-2001 show that women dominate both short- and long-distance migration. There is an increasing trend in the number of women migrating due to marriages or moving with their family/household members. It has also been observed that the rate of migration is higher among better-off sections of the society compared to the poor and the disadvantaged population groups (Bhagat, 2009). Education and age have also been found to be major factors in migration, as educated females and younger women become an asset for the economy and the family (Das, 2018). The migration rate peaks at age 20 years for females and at age 25 years for males (Bhagat and Kesari, 2020). It has also been observed that female migration rate for work/employment is increasing over time, although migration for work/employment in females remains substantially lower than male migration rate (Vivek, 2017). It is observed that females are migrating for work/job even after they have migrated due to marriage (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the country witnessed very heavy return migration. However, after the pandemic, female out migration was slower than male out migration. It is argued that the slower female out migration has resulted lower economic benefits to women compared to men, which has impacted their well-being and making them more vulnerable (Allard et al, 2022).

There are studies that have investigated the linkages between husband migration and autonomy of left-behind women, educational qualification and the effect of their age on the decision to migrate, and trends and patterns of internal migration (Das, 2018; Shattuck et al, 2019; Bhagat, 2009; Rajan and Sumeetha, 2019). However, studies related to the social and economic determinants of female migration and the place of destination of female migrants are sparse.

Data and Methods

The paper is based on the data available from 2011 population census and Periodic Labour Force Survey 2020-2021. The population census in India has been collecting data on migration since 1872, but it was only after 1961 population census that data on the rural and urban status of the place of birth and the duration of stay at the place of enumeration were collected. In the 1971 population census, additional information on the place of last residence in relation to the place of birth was also collected while a question on the reason for migration was asked for the first time at the 1981 population census. Since then, the data on migration collected at the decennial population censuses have remained the same with the exception of the 2001 population census in which rural-urban status of the place of birth was not collected and natural calamities as one of the reasons for migration was not asked whereas moved at birth was included as the reason for migration. The migration status of an individual in the decennial population census is asserted on the basis of the place of last residence and the place of enumeration and the place of birth and place of enumeration. When a person is enumerated at a place different from the place of birth, that person is classified as a migrant by the place of birth. A person is also classified as a migrant if the place of the last residence of the person is different from the place of enumeration. In the present study, an individual is classified as a migrant if the place of enumeration of the individual is different from the place of last residence of the individual.

Findings

The total population of India at the 2011 census was enumerated to be 1210 million out of which 456 million or about 38 per cent of the population was classified as migrant in the sense that the place of enumeration of was different from the place of the last residence. Among females, the proportion of the migrant population was almost 53 per cent. The sex ratio of the migrant population was heavily favourable to females, as there were 212 female migrants for every 100 male migrants during the 2011 census. On the other hand, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the Government of India during 2020-2021 has estimated that there were around 318 million migrants in the country out of which 256 million or more than 81 per cent were females (Government of India, 2022).

The share of the female migrants in the total migrant population has, however, decreased over time. At the 1991 population census female migrants constituted more than 72 per cent of the total migrant population. This proportion decreased to around 70 per cent at the 2001 population census and to less than 68 per cent at the 2011 population census. According to the PLFS 2020-2021, female migrants accounted for more than 78 per cent of the total migrants surveyed. The growth of female migrants has also been slower than the growth of male migrants, according to the data available from population censuses. Between 1991 and 2001, female migrants in the country increased at an average annual rate of around 2.8 per cent per year, whereas male migrants increased at an average annual rate of 3.7 per cent per year. Between 2001 and 2011, female migrants increased, on average, at 3.4 per cent per year whereas male migrants increased at an average annual rate of almost 4.5 per cent per year. There has been no population census in the country since 2011 to estimate the growth of female migrants as compared to the growth of male migrants.

Table 1: Migrants in India by reason of migration, 2011

Reason for migration	Number		Per cent	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Work/Employment	3,50,16,700	64,06,217	24.0	2.1
Business	26,83,144	9,07,343	1.8	0.3
Education	32,96,340	21,61,216	2.3	0.7
Marriage	53,46,733	20,58,39,698	3.7	66.5
Moved after birth	2,00,78,947	1,37,76,918	13.7	4.4
Moved with HH	2,96,79,662	3,62,80,253	20.3	11.7
Other	5,00,44,441	4,42,70,009	34.2	14.3
Total migrants	14,61,45,967	30,96,41,654	100.0	100.0
Migrant rate (per cent)	12.07	25.57		

Source: Census of India 2011

The reasons for migration are contrastingly different in females as compared to males. The PLFS 2020-2021 suggests that for almost 87 per cent of female migrants, the reason for migration was marriage, whereas for almost half of the male migrants, the reason for migration was livelihood-related factors. Only about 1.7 per cent of the female migrants reported at the time of PLFS 2020-2021 that they migrated for livelihood-related factors, whereas around 7 per cent reported that they migrated because the family migrated. On

the other hand, data available from the 2011 population census suggests that the reason for migration for more than two-third of the female migrants was marriage. The 2011 population census also reveals that only around 2 per cent of the female migrants migrated because of livelihood related factors.

Migration of female because of marriage may be termed as trivial as this migration is not governed by the push and pull theory of migration. If marriage migration of females is excluded, then the number of female migrants in the country decreases sharply. The 2011 population census suggests that when marriage migration is excluded, there were 737 female migrants for every 1000 male migrants in the country, whereas PLFS 2020-2021 suggests 562 female migrants for every 1000 male migrants. However, when marriage migration is included, there were almost 2119 female migrants for every 1000 male migrants according to 2011 population census and 3580 female migrants for every 1000 male migrants according to PLFS 2020-2021.

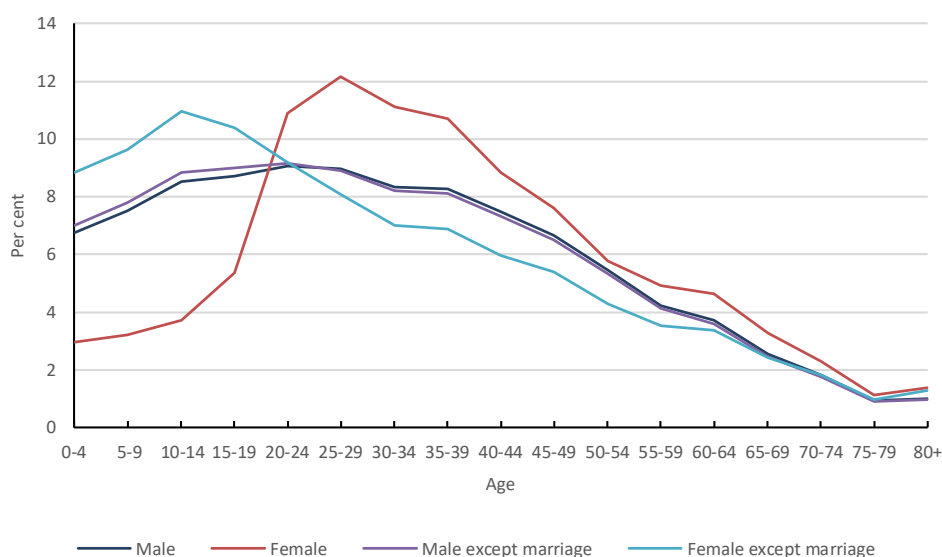


Figure 1: Age composition of male and female migrants in India as compared to that of male migrants and female migrants migrated except marriage.

Source: Authors, based on data from the 2011 population census.

Characteristics of Female Migrants. Since migration of females due to marriage may be termed as trivial, which is not governed by the push and pull theory of migration, it should have been more appropriate that females who migrated due to marriage are excluded from the analysis. However, limited data are available for carrying out such an analysis. As such, the analysis is carried out for all female migrants, including females who migrated due to marriage when data by reasons of marriage are not available.

Figure 1 shows the age composition of all female migrants and female migrants who migrated because of reasons other than marriage, along with all male migrants and male migrants who migrated for reasons other than marriage, as obtained from the 2011

population census. There is little change in the age-composition of male migrants when marriage migration is excluded but the age composition of female migrants changes drastically when marriage migration is excluded. Since marriage migration is not associated with push-pull factors of migration, excluding marriage migration gives the correct picture of the age composition of female migrants.

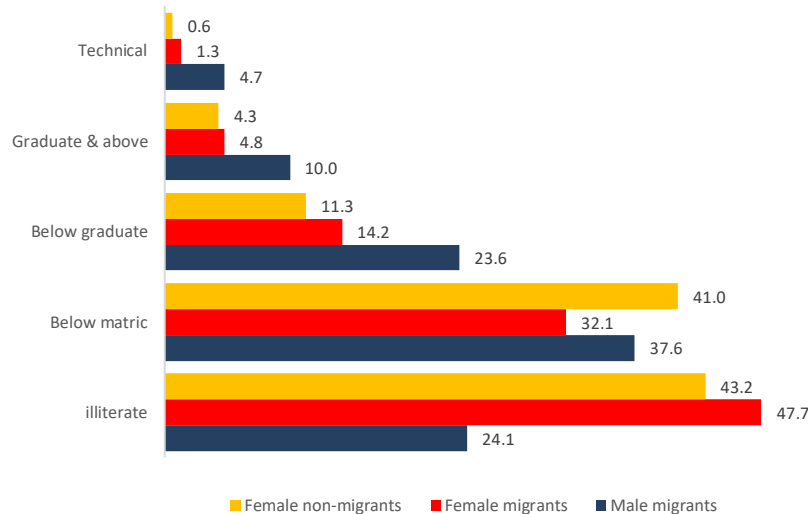


Figure 2: Educational status of female migrants as compared to that of male migrants and female non-migrants in India.

Source: Authors based on 2011 population census.

The educational status of female migrants has also been found to be different from that of male migrants. The primary reason for the migration of males is for livelihood opportunities, and the level of education plays an important role in the quest for better living opportunities. This is not the case with female migrants, as the primary reason for female migration is marriage in which the level of education of the female plays no role in marriage migration. According to the 2011 population census, almost half of the female migrants were illiterate, whereas the proportion of male migrants who were illiterate was only 24 per cent. Because education has little relevance for most of female migrants, the level of education is always lower than the level of education of male migrants as may be seen from the figure 2.

The work participation rate (WPR) has been found to be higher in female migrants (39.6 per cent) as compared to female non-migrants (33.0 per cent) according to the 2011 population census (Figure 3). The difference between WPR of migrant and non-migrant females, however, is not large as majority of females migrate due to marriage and not for livelihood opportunities and other factors. The composition of migrant female workers has, however been found to be radically different from the composition of non-migrant female workers. Among the migrant female workers, more than 50 per cent were main workers, or they worked for at least 6 months during the year prior to the 2011 population census

whereas this proportion was less than 30 per cent for female non-migrant workers. The proportion of migrant female workers who worked for less than 3 months during the year prior to the 2011 population census was substantially lower than that among non-migrant workers.

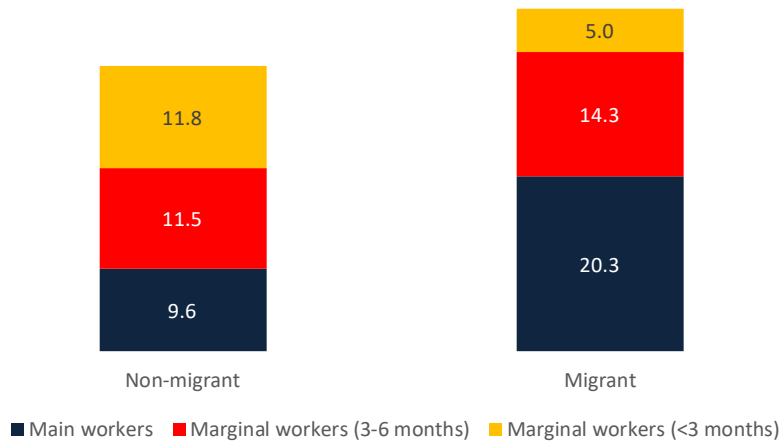


Figure 3: Work participation rate in migrant and non-migrant females in India.

Source: Authors, based on data from 2011 population census.

Regional pattern of female migrants for education and livelihood opportunities.

In India, only about 0.7 per cent of female migrants reported at the 2011 population census that they migrated for education, while less than 2.4 per cent reported that they migrated for livelihood opportunities. This proportion, however, varies widely across states and Union Territories, as may be seen from the figure 4. More than 7 per cent of female migrants in Nagaland reported that they migrated for education. This proportion was only about 0.2 per cent in Bihar and West Bengal. In most of the states and Union Territories, less than 1 per cent of the female migrants reported that they migrated for education. There are only two states and Union Territories – Arunachal Pradesh and Puducherry – in addition to Nagaland where more than 4 per cent of the female migrants migrated for education.

As regards migration for livelihood, more than 10 per cent of the female migrants in Mizoram reported that they migrated for livelihood opportunities. This proportion was less than 1 per cent in Bihar. There are six states/Union Territories, in addition to Mizoram, where more than 5 per cent of the female migrants reported that they migrated in search of livelihood opportunities. In contrast, there are 7 states/Union Territories, in addition to Bihar, where less than 2 per cent of the female migrants reported that the search for better livelihood opportunities was the reason for migration. A higher proportion of female migrants reporting migration in search of livelihood opportunities implies that there were limited livelihood opportunities for females at the place from where they had migrated any time before the 2011 population census. Regional pattern in the migration of females for education and for livelihood opportunities may also be seen from the figure.

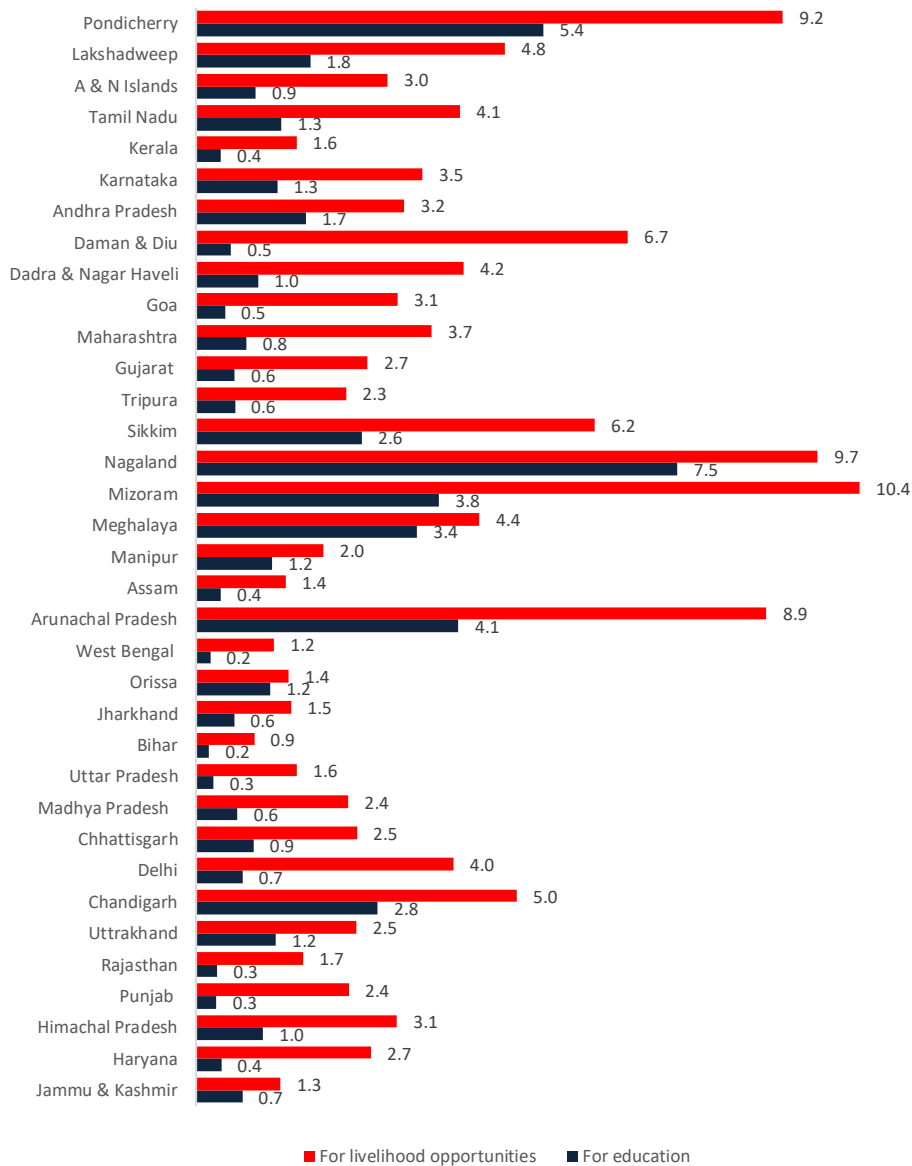


Figure 4: Variation across states/Union Territories in the proportion of female migrants reporting education and livelihood opportunities as reason for migration.

Source: Authors based on data from 2011 population census

Streams of female migration. The movement of the population can be classified as movement within the same district, movement across districts within the same state, and movement across states. In each of the three types of movement, migration can be further

classified as movement from rural to rural areas (rural-to-rural), movement from rural to urban areas (rural-to-urban), movement from urban to rural areas (urban-to-rural), and movement from urban to urban areas (urban-to-urban). Table 2 provides the two-way classification of female migrants in the country as revealed through the 2011 population census. It may be seen from the table that within-district migration was the most common among female migrants, while inter-state migration was the least common. Almost two-third of the female migrants migrated within the same district while around 28 per cent migrated across districts within the same state. On the other hand, only about 10 per cent of the female migrants migrated across states/Union Territories of the country. In case of within-district and between-district movement of females, rural-to-rural migration was the most common, but in case of inter-state movement, rural-to-rural, rural-to-urban, and urban-to-urban movement of females was found to be almost equally important. The dominance of rural-to-rural migration among females is because marriage is the main reason for migration.

Table 2: Streams of female migration in India, 2011.

Stream		Intra-district		Inter-district		Inter-state	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Rural	Rural	12,76,09,690	73.40	4,02,76,694	52.43	90,31,125	31.36
Rural	Urban	1,98,98,698	11.44	1,40,78,484	18.33	88,51,526	30.73
Urban	Rural	95,83,261	5.51	54,60,684	7.11	17,93,554	6.23
Urban	Urban	1,67,73,385	9.65	1,70,04,954	22.14	91,25,243	31.68
Total		173865034		76820816		28801448	

Source: Authors based on data from 2011 population census.

Flow of Female Migrants

Table 3 and figure 4 shows the number of female in-migrants in a state/Union Territory at the 2011 population census along with the state/Union Territory accounting for the largest share of female in-migrants. In all states/Union Territories, majority of female in-migration were from the adjacent states/Union Territories. This is expected as marriage is the main reason for female migration females, and cross-border marriages are quite common in. Almost 88 per cent of female in-migrants in Puducherry were from Tamil Nadu only. Similarly, more than 81 per cent of the female in-migrants in Daman and Diu were from Gujarat only while almost two-third of female in-migrants in Sikkim were from West Bengal. On the other hand, the largest proportion of in-migrants in Manipur were from Nagaland but the proportion of in-migrants from Nagaland constituted less than 20 per cent of the total in-grants in Manipur which means that in-migration in Manipur has not been dominated by any single state/Union Territory. Similar scenario prevails in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar where the state/Union Territory accounting for the largest share of the in-migrants in the state/Union Territory accounted for less than 25 per cent of the total in-migrants in the state.

Table 3: Total number of female in-migrants from states/Union Territories in a state/Union Territory and states/Union Territories with the largest share of female in-migrants in the state/Union Territory, 2011.

State	Total female in-migrants from all states/UTs	State/UT which accounting for largest share of female in-migrants	Female migrants from the state	
			Number	Per cent
Jammu & Kashmir	163275	Punjab	47671	29.2
Himachal Pradesh	303789	Punjab	136453	44.9
Punjab	1066081	Haryana	376536	35.3
Chandigarh	136232	Punjab	74955	55.0
Uttarakhand	591149	Uttar Pradesh	296211	50.1
Haryana	1592214	Rajasthan	446005	28.0
NCT of Delhi	926839	Uttar Pradesh	337581	36.4
Rajasthan	2246796	Haryana	484513	21.6
Uttar Pradesh	6067612	Delhi	1338274	22.1
Bihar	3602243	Jharkhand	803314	22.3
Sikkim	13023	West Bengal	8542	65.6
Arunachal Pradesh	19871	Assam	12019	60.5
Nagaland	24689	Assam	13546	54.9
Manipur	38298	Nagaland	7402	19.3
Mizoram	15526	Tripura	9167	59.0
Tripura	46235	Assam	24611	53.2
Meghalaya	39849	Assam	24678	61.9
Assam	339293	West Bengal	97497	28.7
West Bengal	1451881	Jharkhand	388600	26.8
Jharkhand	1132846	Bihar	387878	34.2
Odisha	669621	Chhattisgarh	171516	25.6
Chhattisgarh	443445	Madhya Pradesh	112283	25.3
Madhya Pradesh	1981543	Uttar Pradesh	586859	29.6
Gujarat	886352	Maharashtra	528701	59.6
Daman and Diu	12076	Gujarat	9805	81.2
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	12267	Gujarat	8163	66.5
Maharashtra	1854139	Gujarat	521546	28.1
Andhra Pradesh	1195536	Karnataka	532446	44.5
Karnataka	1516952	Maharashtra	806985	53.2
Goa	61732	Maharashtra	40972	66.4
Lakshadweep	7114	Bihar	1831	25.7
Kerala	696031	Tamil Nadu	258993	37.2
Tamil Nadu	1061732	Karnataka	377345	35.5
Puducherry	167367	Tamil Nadu	146945	87.8
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	11289	Tamil Nadu	3335	29.5

Source: Authors based on the data from the 2011 population census.

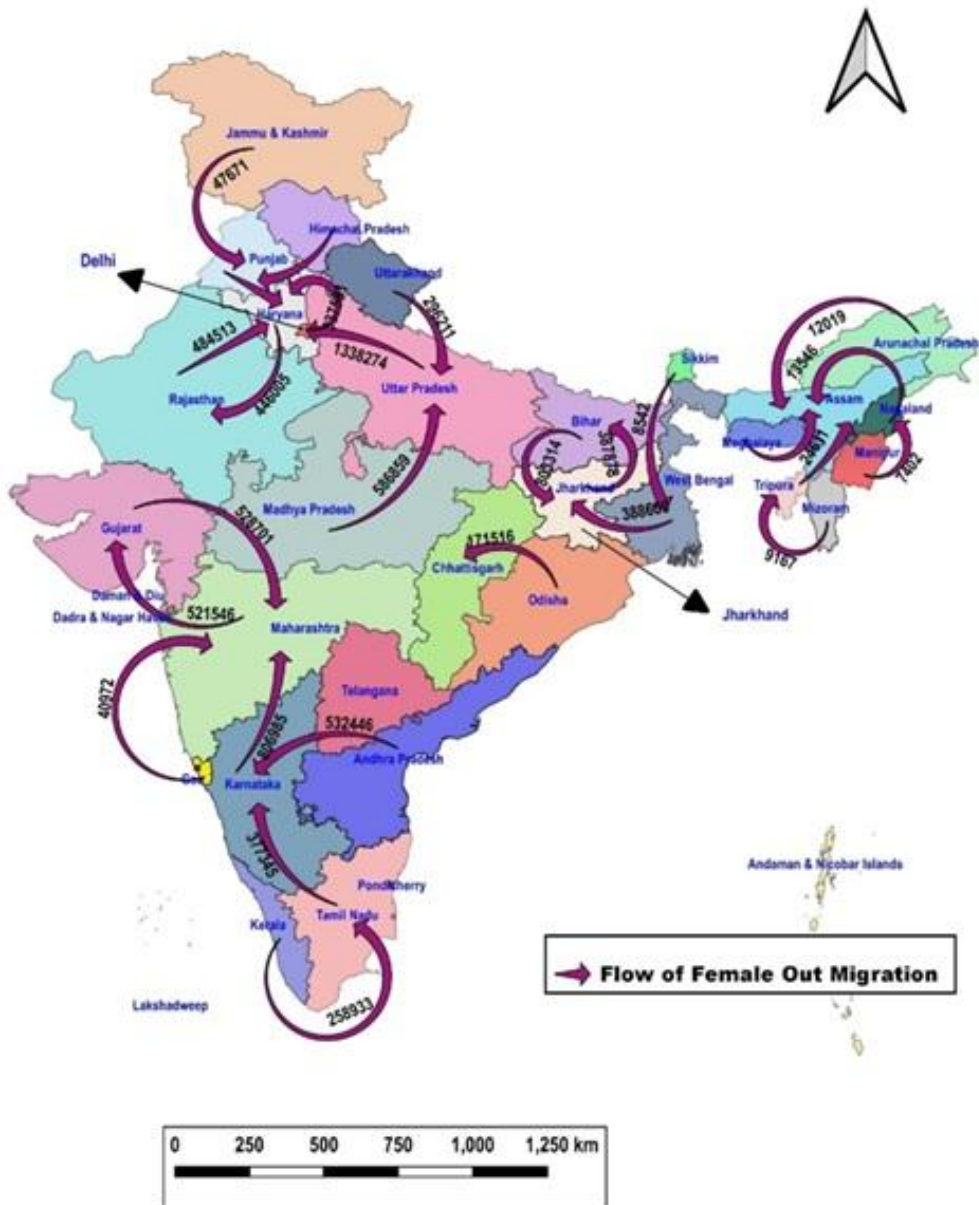


Figure 5: Outflow of females from different states/Union Territories to different states/Union Territories in India, 2011.

Source: Authors based on the data from 2011 population census.

Table 4: Total number of female out-migrants from different states/Union Territories and the state/Union Territory where the largest share of female out-migration moved.

State	Total females out-migrants from the state/UT	State/UT where the largest share of out-migrants moved	Female out-migrants from the state	
			Number	Per cent
Jammu & Kashmir	87678	Punjab	31620	36.1
Himachal Pradesh	207448	Punjab	91605	44.2
Punjab	1373637	Haryana	391365	28.5
Chandigarh	296905	Punjab	80170	27.0
Uttarakhand	700622	Uttar Pradesh	521277	74.4
Haryana	2234428	Uttar Pradesh	627065	28.1
NCT of Delhi	3022073	Uttar Pradesh	1338274	44.3
Rajasthan	1829343	Haryana	446005	24.4
Uttar Pradesh	2971302	Bihar	779471	26.2
Bihar	947626	Jharkhand	387878	40.9
Sikkim	29331	West Bengal	18658	63.6
Arunachal Pradesh	60106	Assam	41539	69.1
Nagaland	46342	Assam	22246	48.0
Manipur	10868	Assam	4974	45.8
Mizoram	17242	Manipur	5908	34.3
Tripura	46658	Assam	19719	42.3
Meghalaya	55418	Assam	33274	60.0
Assam	257360	West Bengal	61054	23.7
West Bengal	1288453	Bihar	525291	40.8
Jharkhand	1434794	Bihar	803314	56.0
Odisha	519521	Jharkhand	113777	21.9
Chhattisgarh	729044	Odisha	171516	23.5
Madhya Pradesh	1876743	Uttar Pradesh	776738	41.4
Gujarat	1725863	Maharashtra	521546	30.2
Daman and Diu	38513	Gujarat	13031	33.8
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	53778	Gujarat	18087	33.6
Maharashtra	4194564	Uttar Pradesh	995456	23.7
Andhra Pradesh	984021	Karnataka	345006	35.1
Karnataka	1749106	Andhra Pradesh	532446	30.4
Goa	129232	Karnataka	59765	46.2
Lakshadweep	1676	Kerala	1446	86.3
Kerala	313095	Tamil Nadu	158137	50.5
Tamil Nadu	921633	Kerala	258993	28.1
Puducherry	203739	Tamil Nadu	165616	81.3
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	36775	Tamil Nadu	8783	23.9

Source: Authors based on the data from the 2011 population census.

Figure 5 shows the magnitude of the outflow of females from a particular state/Union Territory to other states and Union Territories of the country as revealed through the 2011 population census. The majority of the females of Jammu and Kashmir who migrated out of the state moved to Punjab. Similarly, most of the females who migrated out of Himachal Pradesh also moved to Punjab for various reasons including migration due to marriage. Punjab has also been a favourable destination for females who migrated out of Chandigarh. On the other hand, majority of females who migrated out of Punjab moved to the adjacent Haryana. Most of this out-migration is because of the marriage of females. The proportion of females who migrated out of the state/Union Territory because of marriage, however, varies across states and Union Territories. Likewise, the majority of the female in-migrants in a state/Union Territory have been from the states/Union Territories adjacent to the state/Union Territory (Table 4).

Discussion

Globally, efforts have been made to raise the status of women and empower them through education and gainful employment. The evidence available from the decennial population census and from the Periodic Labour Force Survey conducted by the Government of India suggests that the primary reason for the migration of females in the country is marriage, which may be termed as trivial as females in India move to their in-laws house after marriage, irrespective of any social, economic or other factors. The marriage migration of females cannot be attributed to either the push or the pull factors that have commonly been identified as responsible for the movement of population away from either the place of their birth or the place of their last residence. In any analysis of female migration, especially in India, it is therefore important that marriage migration is excluded.

The present analysis reveals that female migration in India is substantially higher than the male migration in the country. However, when marriage migration is excluded, female migration is substantially lower than the male migration. Excluding the marriage migration is necessary to understand the true dynamics of female migration in the context of social and economic development.

There are several issues and debates on the migration of females that focus on the context of development, both at the international and national level such as international laws and labour migration, as many females are either trafficked or exploited (Sil, 2008). The focus on women studies gained prominence after the United Nations declared the year 1975 as the 'International Women's Year', after which studies on female migration received global attention. The concept of 'feminisation of work' and 'feminisation of migration' evolved due to the increase in female migration for employment and increase in the mobility of females (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005). Our study revealed that there are regional variations in the pattern of movement of females for education and employment/business. Females migrating for education and livelihood is found to be higher in the north-eastern region of the country than females of other regions. The north-eastern region of the country is dominated by the tribal population. In the tribal communities, female work participation rates are higher than in other population groups.

The analysis also reveals that the age composition of female migrants is different when marriage migration is included and when marriage migration is excluded from the analysis. When marriage migration is included, the marriage migration is very high in the age group 20-30 years as nearly all marriages take place in this age group. However, when marriage migration is excluded from the analysis, the age composition changes.

The present analysis reveals that the level of education is lower in female migrants as compared to female non-migrants. However, the work participation rate is higher in female migrants. This may be because of higher educational levels and feminisation of the work force. The higher work participation rate in female non-migrants is because of higher proportion of marginal workers. The proportion of main workers in female migrants is substantially higher than that in female non-migrants.

Among different streams of migration, the rural-to-rural migration is found to be the most common one among intra-district and inter-district within-state female migrants, but not among inter-state female migrants. This difference may again be attributed to the dominance of marriage migration in the intra-district and inter-district movement of females. The present analysis corroborates with other similar studies (Singh and Biradar, 2022). Most of the seasonal female migrants are mainly engaged in brick-kiln industry, construction, crop-cutting, domestic help, and wage labour (Saraswati et al, 2015; Sil, 2008; Government of India, 2010). The analysis has also revealed that among the inter-state migration, the majority of females migrate to neighbouring states only, which refer as short distance migrants (Vijay, 2005). The cross-border marriages may be one of the reasons.

Understanding the context of female migration requires separating female migration from marriage from female migration due to economic, social, and other reasons. Other studies have observed that better availability of employment opportunities is the most important pull factor for migration (Saraswati et al, 2015). Many women, especially from the north-eastern region of the country migrate to other parts of the country as this reason is dominated by the tribal population and also development is quite low in this part of the country. Similar findings have been observed in other studies, which revealed that migrants from poorer villages migrate to richer or more urbanised areas (Rajan and Sumeetha, 2020; Kundu, 2003).

Conclusions

The study found that rural to rural migration is found to be dominant with short-distance migration. As majority of the female migrants were migrating to neighbouring states, only a small proportion of the female migrants were migrating to long distance migration. The intra-district and inter-district migrants of rural-to-rural area is found highest which could be due to marriage related reasons, while inter-state migration of rural to urban migration is found highest and this maybe for employment related reasons. There is a significant link between male and female migration patterns. Often, women migrate with their husbands or male partners after marriage, which can have economic implications. Notably, women who migrate tend to have high workforce participation rates, contributing to the economic dynamics of their destination locations. And if one looks at the economic

status among the female migrants, it is relatively higher compared to female non-migrants, both as a main worker or marginal worker. Moreover, the data also revealed that the educational level of female migrants was mostly matric, but the higher educational level were among the female migrant compared to female non-migrant.

Finally, although the data available from the population census and from other sources reveal that the most prominent reason for female migration in India is the marriage, yet the economic contribution of migrant females needs to be highlighted. Therefore, delaying the age at marriage of girls and encouraging girls to go for higher education may help in reducing migration of females either as a marginal worker or as an associational migrant.

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