Migration: In Search of Utopia

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Abstract

Migration has been studied over and over by many scholars who wish to break down the human behavior. The following article focuses on how the tendency of a person to migrate is triggered by intrinsic desire for something better rather than any other external push and pull factor which later become the reason for migrating. Humans migrate to obtain the near perfect state of Utopia, whether it is possible or not.

Introduction

Human migration is movement by humans from one area to another, sometimes over long distances or in large groups. Historically this movement was nomadic, often causing significant conflict with the indigenous population and their displacement or cultural assimilation. Only a few nomadic people have retained this form of lifestyle in modern times.

Migration has continued under the form of both voluntary migration within one's region, country, or beyond and involuntary migration (which includes the slave trade, trafficking in human beings and ethnic cleansing). People who migrate into a territory are called immigrants, while at the departure point they are called emigrants. Small populations migrating to develop a territory considered void of settlement depending on historical setting, circumstances and perspective are referred to as settlers or colonists, while populations displaced by immigration and colonization are called refugees.

Patterns of Migration have always fascinated demographers. Elaborate theories have been formulated on the subject and policy interventions designed to reduce or take care of the effects of migration. But is such a step necessary? What convinces a large population of a place to leave his home and hearth to go for a completely new place instead of searching for a viable solution where he lives.

The innate desire of humans is to try to lead a better life. Migrating population do not see the difficulties in which they will put themselves and sometimes others in. But with some confirmation that life can be better, they will leave a lot on faith. As it is, a large population of Egypt migrated with Prophet Moses on nothing but faith and hope of a better life!

The research proposal looks forward to study and detail out some aspects of migration which is linked with human psychology. Questions like 'why do people migrate?' or 'what does one achieve by migrating?' are considered along with studying the driving factors for a person's change on postal address.

Usually migration in the modern context is due to job opportunities, education or family conditions (whether marriage, child, parents or any other reason). Another reason for migration is completely different, being due to some natural disaster or calamity. Also conflict and war see people leaving everything and starting anew.

In other words we can say people migrate for many different reasons. These reasons can be classified as **economic, social, political or environmental**.

Economic migration is when people move to find work or follow a particular career path. S**ocial migration** deals with people moving somewhere for a better quality of life or to be closer to family or friends while **political migration** deals with moving to escape political persecution or war. E**nvironmental** causes of migration include natural disasters such as flooding

Some people **choose** to migrate, e.g. someone who moves to another country to enhance their career opportunities. Some people are **forced** to migrate, e.g. someone who moves due to war or famine.

A **refugee** is someone who has left their home and does not have a new home to go to. Often refugees do not carry many

possessions with them and do not have a clear idea of where they may finally settle.

Push and pull factors

Push factors are the reasons why people leave an area. They include:

- lack of services

- lack of safety

- high crime

- crop failure

- drought

- flooding

- poverty

- war

Pull factors are the reasons why people move to a particular area. They include:

- higher employment

- more wealth

- better services

- good climate

- safer, less crime

- political stability

- more fertile land

- lower risk from natural hazards

Migration usually happens as a result of a combination of these push and pull factors.

Analysis and Discussion

Pre-historical migration of human populations began with the movement of

Homo erectus out of Africa across Eurasia about a million years ago. *Homo sapiens* appears to have colonized all of Africa about 150 millennia ago, moved out of Africa some 80 millennia ago, and spread across Eurasia and to Australia before 40 millennia ago.

Migration to the Americas took place about 20 to 15 millennia ago, and by 1 millennium ago, all the Pacific Islands were colonized. Later population movements notably include the Neolithic revolution and Indo-European expansion, part of which emerges in the earliest historic records.

Before the modern era, migrations are often confusing in the written record because the history is written by societies on the periphery of the migrating peoples, or by their descendants who have given up the nomadic way of life. This is true of the era that follows the collapse of classical civilization in Europe, including the Early Medieval Great Migrations, and the related Turkic expansion. Much better understood are the Age of Exploration and European Colonialism, which led to an accelerated pace of migration over vast distances as new means of transportation emerged.

Mass migration refers to the migration of a large group of people from one geographical area to another. Mass migration is distinguished from individual or small scale migration; it is also different from seasonal migration, which occurs on a regular basis. A specific mass migration that is seen as especially influential to the course of history may be referred to as a 'great migration'. Examples of great migrations include the Barbarian Invasions during the Roman Empire, the Great Migration from England of the 1630s, the

California Gold Rush from 1848–1850, and the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural American south to the industrial north during 1920–1950.

Mass migration is not always voluntary, sometimes including forced migration, such as the Atlantic slave trade. Religious persecution can lead to mass migrations, such as the biblical Exodus and migration through the upper Himalayan route from the east by Purohits of Aryan and non-Aryan descent. Similarly, mass migrations may take place in the form of deportation; for example, Japanese internment in the United States and imprisonment in Nazi concentration camps during World War II, deportations to Gulag camps in the Soviet Union, and coolie-labour in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean.

The 1981, Census of India elicited for the first time why people were migrating in India. Majorly the inferences drawn were in all categories of migrants the proportion of migration for employment is highest, especially in case of inter-state migration. 63.33% of the total migration for employment was to urban areas of which 65.58% were male. The other major reasons to migrate were education and marriage.

It is found that net migration rate is positive in developed states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Haryana and Punjab indicating inflow of people to these states. This can be explained in terms of industrialization, availability of employment and social development of the states. On the contrary due to large concentration of population, inequality and poverty etc. states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan and north-eastern states supplies large number of migrants to

economically developed state like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Delhi. (Sandhya Rani Mahapatro, 2012)

There are some interesting characteristics of migrants and migration, the highest concentration of migrants are young adults who are more mobile and have less reasons to hold back or think twice. These have a sense of adventure which often results in drastic decisions. Another aspect is *'chain migration'* the movement of people tends to be to places they have contacts and some form of kinship. It has been observed that "whatever the motivation of the initial migrants from a given geographical area or kin-group chain migration usually continues to move other members of the group by cooperative efforts which cut across economic factors" (United Nations, 1973)

These effects can be seen almost very under developed state or country for example there is no doubt that migration in Bihar has shown a marked increase within the previous decade. The reasons differ including the closure of local industrial units, the cessation of employment opportunities in nearby locations due to law and order problems or political unrest, and the emergence of new opportunities in industries where members of the village have contacts. Long distance migration rates do not appear to be affected by the level of connectedness of the village. For example there are very high rates from remote as well as well-connected villages. However, well connected villages have more commuters. Migrants are usually single men, in the age group of 15-45. However brick kiln migrants and intrastate rural-rural migrants often take their wives and children with them. Very little international migration was reported on

the whole, but that reported appears to exist among certain groups, particularly Muslims. Women, older children and the elderly get left behind. Often accounts were heard of entire villages where hardly any young men were seen. Although many women staying behind do not work outside the home, those belonging to poorer households work in farms locally or are engaged in home-based industry (incense stick making).

Only recently has there been a decline in migration due to the NREGA Scheme of the government which has been implemented in the state. The latest information on migration reveals a gloomy picture of recent migrants with a decline in male migration, increasing interstate mobility among male in urban area, steady increase of urban migrants in lower economic class and decline in labour force participation especially among females. Male migration especially in rural area shows a declining trend. Perhaps the stagnant employment growth may discourage labour mobility and also influence the LFPR. The decline in male migration also expected to be the outcome of successful implementation of NREGA or may be due to increasing seasonal migration which is not fully captured in the data. It is expected that short term employment opportunities created under NREGA in rural area reduces seasonal and distress related migration but it has not able to reduce rural to urban flow. This is evident from the steady increase in migration rate in low economic quintile in urban areas.

Although the push and pull elements of modernization theory still prevail to order discussions of why people migrate, the shortcomings of the equilibrium model of linear development with which

modernization theory has been associated have stimulated interest in a historical - structuralist approach. This approach shifts attention from the motivation and adaptations of individual migrants to the macro level processes that shape and sustain population movement. As Lessinger has phrased it, "Current Research sees the impetus to migration as more complex both for individuals and for entire groups of people. Often push and pull factors operate simultaneously ... and **there is no single profile of a typical migrant.**" (Brettel, Theorizing Migration in Anthropology-Migration Theory, 2008)

It is clear that trend in migration is changing in the period of rapid economic growth. The major change is noticed from rich to poor and the poorest are resorting to migration as a strategy for survival. It is against the expectation that poorest will not resorting to migration as it involves certain amount of investment in terms of transport and urban settlement. However, even with all these handicaps increasing trend of migration of poorest is perhaps an increasing vulnerability of poorest during the period of rapid economic growth. The "natural" factors which triggered migration from villages to cities have been valid in the earlier decades too when additions to the village population actually outstripped those to the cities. So why is the last decade throwing up a radically different result? Many say the jobs for work programme has checked migration. Mr Sainath (Journalist, BBC) believes that millions of Indians are trapped in "footloose" migrations - the poor drifting from place to place "without a clear final destination". He talks about a "despair-driven exodus" in the countryside. Many economists believe that it may be a little too early to conclude

that the rising migration from villages to cities is being triggered by economic distress at home.

Migration has an economic and social effect. It has demographic implications as well as effects the health condition of the people. Therefore the migration pattern reflects the changes in human desires and needs. Whatever the reasons for a change in location the individual would not migrate if not for a better situation, to reach a point in his life where he feels his situation in life is ideal.

Conclusion

Migration occurs because individuals search for food, sex and security outside their usual habitation. Idyorough is of the view that towns and cities are a creation of the human struggle to obtain food, sex and security. To produce food, security and reproduction, human beings must, out of necessity, move out of their usual habitation and enter into indispensable social relationships that are cooperative or antagonistic. Human beings also develop the tools and equipment to enable them to interact with nature to produce the desired food and security. The improved relationship (cooperative relationships) among human beings and improved technology further conditioned by the push and pull factors all interact together to cause or bring about migration and higher concentration of individuals into towns and cities. The higher the technology of production of food and security and the higher the cooperative relationship among human

beings in the production of food and security and in the reproduction of the human species, the higher would be the push and pull factors in the migration and concentration of human beings in towns and cities. Countryside, towns and cities do not just exist but they do so to meet the human basic needs of food, security and the reproduction of the human species. Therefore, migration occurs because individuals search for food, sex and security outside their usual habitation. Social services in the towns and cities are provided to meet these basic needs for human survival and pleasure.

While we can always follow this line of thought, one can also think of Maslow's pyramid of human needs. As the desires of the individual increase, he or she will take action to fulfil them. A better opportunity will always make the person to overcome his or her inertia to leave the place. Similar to the migratory birds and butterflies maybe it is possible for humans to also have a pre programmed, knowledge not necessarily of a place but of an ideal which he has developed throughout his or her life. An ideal which is similar to the concept of heaven. It is possible that his actions inadvertently are leading him closer towards his perception of that heaven, that utopia of existence.

Man knows that utopia may never be achieved, but who says it is wrong to try? Faith and hope have sustained mankind in the darkest of ages. Who is to say that it cannot help to cross oceans to fulfil a dream.

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