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# Internal Migration and Youth in India: Main Features, Trends and Emerging Challenges

## Discussion Paper

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2013

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# Internal Migration and Youth in India: Main Features, Trends and Emerging Challenges

2013

*Discussion Paper*

*Commissioned by UNESCO to Prof. S Irudaya Rajan,  
Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Kerala, India,  
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# Internal Migration and Youth in India: Main Features, Trends and Emerging Challenges

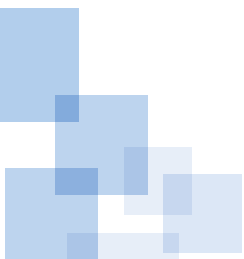
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## Abstract

This paper is part of a project that recognises that much like gender, 'age' is not simply a variable to be measured, but a framework that facilitates, constrains and ultimately contours migrant experiences. Through evidence-based research drawn from national and regional estimates, the paper attempts to outline the missing youth discourse and plug it into the labour and migration policies in the country. Overall it:

- Assesses the demographic profile of the youth for the last 50 years such as their education, employment and unemployment and marital status, and projects the social and economic characteristics of future youth populations in India (1951-2051);
- Presents a disaggregated analysis of youth migrants by streams of migration, educational status, occupational status of migration and motivations for migration based on the 2001 Census;
- Presents a disaggregated analysis of India's internal migration and its overall characteristics based on two rounds of the National Sample Surveys: 49<sup>th</sup> round (1993-94) and 64<sup>th</sup> round (2007-2008);
- Analyses youth migration streams (composition, volume and profiles) based on the four rounds of Kerala Migration Surveys conducted by the Centre for Development Studies in 1998, 2003, 2008 and, in particular, the 2011 round;
- Examines the linkages and gaps between migration and existing youth policies such as the proposed National Youth Policy 2012; and
- Summarises key research outputs and policy recommendations to enable better inclusion of youth migrants.

Where data is available, the paper examines patterns of internal migration among the youth, evidence of attainment of basic rights, access to employment opportunities and the labour market outcomes for migrant youth. The paper concludes by enumerating several key challenges faced by present and potential migrant youth, and briefly outlines policy measures that will enable India's policy makers to fully appreciate and take advantage of its burgeoning young workforce.



# 1. Introduction

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The characteristics and patterns of a country's internal migration are vital indicators of the pace and process of its development. Movement of people across administrative jurisdictions within a country has protracted social, economic and political implications, and may well be linked to the wider changes within and across regions. Such changes could be quantitative as well as qualitative. The quantitative aspect deals with the quantum and characteristics of migrants and their effect on population redistribution over time. The qualitative aspect relates to the structural changes that accompany these movements and their relationship with the overall process of transition within the community.

Given that migrants are key agents of change in both their home and host communities, a systematic analysis of their main features, trends and emerging challenges is imperative. Within this context, migrant youth are an especially important sub-category. They are both products and instruments of societal change. This paper is part of a larger project that recognises that, much like gender, 'age' is not simply a variable to be measured, but a framework that facilitates, constrains and ultimately contours migrant experiences. Through evidence-based research drawn from national and regional estimates, the paper attempts to outline the missing youth discourse and plug it into labour and migration policies in the country.

According to the 2001 Census<sup>1</sup>, the total population of India is 1,028 million consisting of 532 million males and 496 million females. The same 2001 Census reported 315 million persons as migrants based on the place of last residence, accounting for 31 per cent of the total population of India. Our analysis indicates about 30 per cent of these 315 million migrants in India are youth. With a high percentage of its population below the age of 30 and a projected labour force expansion of 95 million by 2020 (a 12 per cent gain from 2010), India is uniquely positioned to reap the benefits from its demographic dividend.

India experienced rapid urbanisation between 2001 and 2011, with an estimated 31.8 per cent decadal growth. Migration - one of the components of India's urban growth - is likely to steadily increase in the foreseeable future. As per our projections, India is expected to reach 400 million migrants in 2011, accounting for 33 per cent of the total population. This paper is essential to further our understanding of migrant youth as drivers of development and to assess how to prepare new labour market entrants for the workforce.

Where data is available, the paper examines patterns of internal migration among the youth, evidence of attainment of basic rights, access to employment opportunities and the labour market outcomes for migrant youth. The paper concludes by enumerating several key challenges faced by present and potential migrant youth and briefly outlines policy measures that will enable India's policy makers to fully appreciate and take advantage of its burgeoning young workforce.

For the purpose of this paper, the category of youth will be framed between 15-29 years of age. The paper proposes to analyse the following parameters of the youth in India:

- Assess the demographic profile of the youth for the last 50 years, such as their education, employment and unemployment and marital status, and project the social and economic characteristics of future youth populations in India (1951-2051);

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<sup>1</sup> India's total population, as recorded in Census 2011, stands at 1.21 billion. Data from Census of India, 2001 is cited since data on migration from Census 2011 is not yet available.

- Present a disaggregated analysis of youth migrants by streams of migration, educational status, occupational status of migration and motivations for migration based on the 2001 Census;
- Present a disaggregated analysis of India's internal migration and its overall characteristics based on two rounds of the National Sample Surveys: 49<sup>th</sup> round (1993-94) and 64<sup>th</sup> round (2007-2008);
- Special analysis of youth migration streams (composition, volume and profiles) based on the four rounds of Kerala Migration Surveys conducted by the Centre for Development Studies in 1998, 2003, 2008 and, in particular, the 2011 round;
- Examination of the linkages and gaps between migration and existing youth policies such as the proposed National Youth Policy 2012; and
- Summary of key research outputs and policy recommendations to enable better inclusion of youth migrants.



## 2. Demographic Profile of Indian Youth

It is widely recognised that the youth constitute a valuable human capital resource base for India. Their 'value' can be understood as embedded in their skill matrix, knowledge levels, experiences, health and other characteristics. This can be assessed through educational attainment, work experience and other similar indicators. In order to increase the employability of India's youth, it is essential to evaluate their current skill levels and demographic profiles. The socio-economic characteristics of India's youth have considerable bearing on their productive capacities and labour market outcomes. At present, we have little data available on the socio-economic and employment profile of youth based on the 2011 Census. Due to the non-availability of the 2011 Census at the time of writing this paper, we will assess the situation based on the 2001 Census.

According to the US Census Bureau estimates, the world population was about 6.9 billion in 2010 of which the world's youth (15-29 years) constituted about 1.8 billion persons, and the less developed countries (LDCs) accounted for 1.5 billion (86 per cent) of total youth. Asian youth, in particular, accounted for over 62 per cent of the world youth (1.1 billion).

In 1951, the number of youth in India was only around 79 million, increasing to 274 million in 2001 (see Table 1). These figures indicate a four-fold increase in youth over five decades. According to the projections made by the researcher, the number of youth in India is 351 million - or 29 per cent of 1.21 billion - and it is likely to increase marginally for the next 50 years (see Figure 1). In other words, the youth population may have reached its peak in 2011 and the numbers are likely to hover around 361 to 396 million.

**TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF YOUTH IN INDIA, 1951-2051**

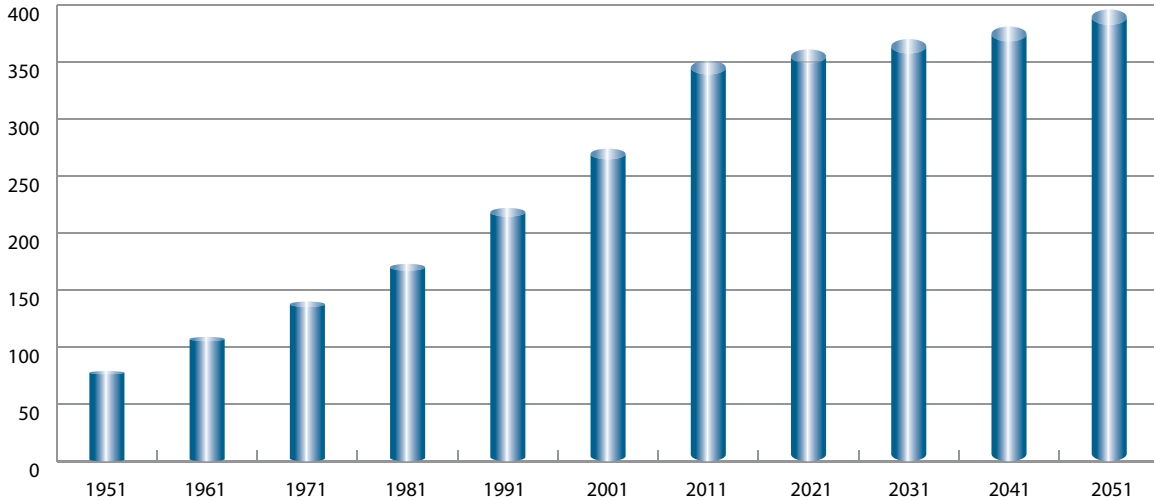
Year	Total population	Total youth population (15-29)	Proportion of youth to total population	Annual growth rate of population	Annual growth rate of 15-29 age group
1951	361,088,400	79,465,100	22.01		
1961	438,936,918	109,797,013	25.01	0.02	0.03
1971	548,159,652	140,596,710	25.65	2.22	2.47
1981	665,287,849	173,521,621	26.08	1.94	2.10
1991	838,567,936	222,746,891	26.56	2.31	2.50
2001	1,028,610,355	274,127,401	26.65	2.04	2.08
2011	1,210,193,422	351,425,601	29.04	1.63	2.48
2021	1,367,784,037	361,241,846	26.41	1.22	0.28
2031	1,524,125,379	370,560,210	24.31	1.08	0.25
2041	1,668,085,791	381,611,341	22.88	0.90	0.29
2051	1,797,057,126	396,349,011	22.06	0.74	0.38

Source: Compiled from the Indian Census data for the periods 1951-2001 and projected by the author for the periods 2011-2051.

Let us now consider the population growth rate of youth with respect to the general population. Over the last 50 years, the growth rate of the youth was higher than the general population, although the difference between the two was not considerable. However, during the last decade (2001-2011) the annual growth rate of the population measured at just 1.63 per cent in comparison

with 2.48 per cent for the youth: an 0.85 per cent faster annual growth rate. This exceptional growth experience among the youth segment is not likely to sustain itself over the next 50 years because the general population is expected to decrease steadily, whereas the youth will grow only marginally. The demographic dividend of India can only be reaped if we prepare the youth for this emerging economic eventuality.

**FIGURE 1: YOUTH POPULATION IN INDIA (IN MILLIONS), 1951-2051**



Source: Compiled from the Indian Census data for the periods 1951-2001 and projected by the author for the periods 2011-2051.

According to the 2001 Census, 26 per cent of India's youth (72 million) were illiterate. This indicates that over one quarter of the Indian population did not possess the educational capability to plan their future or gainfully contribute to the country's future. Among the 74 per cent literates, only 22 per cent completed the secondary level of education or 10 years of schooling (Table 2). In other words, only one in five youths in India completed 10 years of schooling and one in 10 completed 12 years of schooling. Only seven per cent of literate youth completed graduate education in India. In short, only 15 million out of a total 273 million youth completed graduate education in India. These alarming statistics point to the critical shortage of educational qualifications among Indian youth as an indicator of underlying inequality.

**TABLE 2: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF YOUTH (15-29 AGE GROUP), 2001 CENSUS**

Educational level	Total population			15-29 age group		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Illiterate	45.5	36.8	54.8	26.4	17.3	36.3
Literate	54.5	63.2	45.2	73.6	82.7	63.7
<b>Of the total literates</b>						
Literate without educational level	3.6	3.4	3.9	3.3	2.9	3.7
Below primary	25.8	24.1	28.4	9.7	8.9	10.9
Primary	26.2	24.8	28.2	21.8	20.5	23.7
Middle	16.1	16.6	15.3	22.8	23.7	21.5
Metric/secondary	14.1	15.2	12.5	22.3	22.9	21.5
Higher secondary/intermediate	6.7	7.3	5.9	11.9	12.3	11.2
pre-university/ senior secondary						
Non-technical diploma or certificate	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
not equal to degree						

Educational level	Total population			15-29 age group		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree	0.7	0.9	0.3	0.8	1.2	0.4
Graduate & above	6.7	7.6	5.4	7.3	7.5	7.0
Unclassified	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Compiled from 2001 Census by the author.

**TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS OF THE YOUTH, 2001 CENSUS**

Marital status	All ages			15-29 age group		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Never married	49.8	54.4	44.9	51.1	65.4	35.8
Married	45.6	43.6	47.7	48.0	34.1	62.9
Widowed	4.3	1.8	6.9	0.5	0.3	0.8
Divorced/separated	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.5

Source: Compiled from 2001 Census by the author.

With regards to other socio-economic indicators such as employment and marital status, 48 per cent of youth (63 per cent of females and 34 per cent of males) were married, and the remaining 51 per cent were unmarried (Table 3). Around one per cent of the youth were either widowed, divorced or separated. As per the 2001 Census, 36 per cent of the youth were main workers (worked more than 183 days in a year) and 13 per cent of them were marginal workers (worked fewer than 183 days in a year). In other words, one in two youths was a non-worker or not employed. This indicates that despite India's unique demographic advantage, half of the country's youth are unable to contribute positively to India's development path. The Census also enquired about the unemployment status (seeking work or available to take up employment) among both marginal workers and non-workers. According to available information, 36 per cent of the marginal workers and 23 per cent of the non-workers were actively seeking employment, i.e. they were unemployed and seeking employment. In absolute terms, 45 million out of 273 million were unemployed in India.

**TABLE 4: EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE YOUTH, 2001 CENSUS**

Classification of work	Total population			15-29 age group		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Main workers	30.4	45.1	14.6	36.0	52.6	18.1
Marginal workers	8.7	6.6	11.0	13.3	11.3	15.5
Non-workers	60.9	48.3	74.4	50.7	36.1	66.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Marginal workers seeking employment	27.9	44.5	17.3	36.0	53.9	22.0
Non-workers seeking employment	7.2	8.3	6.5	22.7	32.6	16.9
Unemployed	35.1	52.8	23.8	58.7	86.5	38.9

Source: Compiled from 2001 Census by the author.

Against this backdrop of vast unemployment, labour mobility offers an important livelihood opportunity for India's youth. Over the past five to six decades, it is widely apparent that migrants have been overcoming skill and demand mismatch through rural-rural, rural-urban and urban-urban movements to further their life chances.

### 3. Migration and Youth: Evidence from the 2001 Census

This section highlights some key insights on migration and youth from the 2001 Census and interrogates the implications of these findings for India’s future progress. The 2001 Census enumerated 315 million internal migrants based on the criterion of place of last residence. Among them, as many as 29 per cent were youth and the percentages were 27 and 30 respectively for males and females (Table 5). In absolute numbers, 92 million youth were migrants, representing 34 per cent of the youth population. In other words, one in three Indian youths is an internal migrant and lives in a place that is not his/her last place of residence. From these figures, it is apparent that migration is a widely employed survival strategy among the country’s youth and an attractive alternate route to engaging in the market and economy.

**TABLE 5: YOUTH MIGRATION IN INDIA BY SEX, 2001 CENSUS**

	Total (millions)	Male (millions)	Female (millions)
Total migrants in India	315	93	221
Youth migrants in India	92	25	66
Percentage of youth migrants to total migrants in India	29	27	30

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census

In addition, the direction and volume of these migratory flows are reflections of the real and apparent economic prospects associated with migration hot-spots or corridors. From our assessment of youth migrants by inter-state migrant streams, the highest proportion (31 per cent) was found among the urban to rural stream, followed by both rural to rural and rural to urban, and the lowest was reported among the urban to urban stream (Table 6). Such an analysis enables us to map the trajectories of migrant youth within and across states in India and to evaluate areas with an ‘enabling environment’ for migrant youth.

**TABLE 6: SHARE OF YOUTH MIGRANTS BY SEX IN THE INTER-STATE MIGRATION STREAMS, 2001 CENSUS**

Migration streams	Total	Male	Female
Rural-rural	30	25	31
Rural-urban	30	30	30
Urban-rural	31	27	32
Urban-urban	28	27	29

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census.

The age-wise distribution of migrants shows that the largest proportion of migrants is in the 15-29 age group. However, one could also see a concentration of migrants in the 40-59 working age group. If we group it into five-year categories for analysis, the highest number of migrants reported is for the age group 25-29, and the same is true for both men and women as well as for rural and urban areas. No major difference in this trend exists between rural and urban areas. In other words, nearly one-thirds of the migrants are youth, indicating that most men migrate for employment whereas women seem to migrate for reasons of marriage or family movement,

as is further discussed below. The concentration of migrants among children (0-14 age group) may be due to the inclusion of children who moved immediately after birth or moved along with family members. The age-wise distribution of motivations, reasons and aspirations for migration presented later in the section will clarify this point.

**TABLE 7: AGE COMPOSITION OF MIGRANTS BY RESIDENCE AND SEX IN INDIA, 2001 (IN PER CENT)**

Age	Total migrants			Rural migrants			Urban migrants		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
0-14	12.66	22.31	8.59	11.22	27.81	6.86	15.57	17.44	13.88
15-19	6.49	8.85	5.50	5.95	9.07	5.12	7.59	8.66	6.63
20-24	10.93	9.22	11.64	11.23	8.30	12.01	10.30	10.04	10.54
25-29	11.93	9.17	13.10	12.29	8.31	13.33	11.21	9.94	12.37
30-34	11.13	8.90	12.07	11.44	8.12	12.32	10.48	9.58	11.30
35-39	10.58	9.08	11.22	10.65	8.33	11.26	10.46	9.74	11.10
40+	36.07	32.20	37.70	37.02	29.78	38.93	34.15	33.34	33.97
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
15-29	29.35	27.24	30.24	29.47	25.68	30.46	29.10	28.64	29.54

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D4 Series (based on POLR criteria).

Table 8 shows the marital status of migrants by gender based on the 2001 Census. It is apparent that more than half of the total migrants (67.1 per cent) have a 'currently married' status. Never-married migrants constitute around 30.7 per cent of the total migrants. The share of male migrants with 'never married' status is much higher than those with 'currently married' status. In the case of women, more than three-quarters of the total migrants have a 'currently married' status. The share of currently married migrants goes up with age, reaches a maximum in the 30-39 age group, and then declines as age increases. The share of widowed migrants also increases as age increases. The share of migrants with 'divorced/separated' status is much lower than migrants in other categories.

**TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY SEX AND MARITAL STATUS IN INDIA**

Marital status	Never married	Currently married	Widowed	Divorced/separated
Persons	30.72	67.11	1.88	0.29
Male	54.67	44.23	0.93	0.17
Female	18.67	78.61	2.36	0.36

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D2 Series (based on POLR criteria with duration of residence 0-9 years).

The age composition of migrants with reference to their marital status divulges that migrants in the younger age group (10-19 years) are mostly never-married, confirming that they migrate mainly when they accompany parents or family members, or for educational purposes (Table 9). The migrants with 'currently married' status are largely concentrated in prime working-age groups (20-49), which includes the top tier of the youth bracket (20-29). For instance, nine out of ten migrants between the ages of 20 and 29 were married.

**TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY MARITAL STATUS AND AGE IN INDIA**

Status	Never married	Currently married	Widowed	Divorced or separated
All ages	30.72	67.11	1.88	0.29
0-9	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10-19	60.75	39.03	0.13	0.09
20-29	9.76	89.39	0.59	0.26
30-39	2.95	94.74	1.64	0.67
40-49	1.66	92.95	4.63	0.76
50-59	1.76	85.09	12.47	0.68
60-69	2.64	67.22	29.47	0.67
70-79	3.60	54.02	41.84	0.54
80+	6.34	45.20	47.97	0.49

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D10 Series (based on POLR criteria for the duration of residence from 0-9 years).

The educational profile of migrants reveals the ways in which educational attainment configures migration trends. Table 10 shows the educational status of migrants. It is clear that the proportion of illiterates among migrants in India is very high. More than half of the female migrants (57.8 per cent) and 25.8 per cent of the male migrants were found to be illiterate. The second largest share of migrants, both male and female, has the educational level 'literate but below matric/secondary'. The share of migrants with the educational level 'matric/secondary but below graduate', was 12.7 per cent in 2001, with male migrants having a larger share of 21 per cent. The gender aspect reveals that the proportion of migrants with a higher educational level is very low, particularly among females. This less than optimal track record reveals a compelling area of future state support and policy action. Increased investment in education and ensuring access to education for all is necessary to bolster the skill level and employability of India's young workforce. Current figures show that migration in India is predominantly characterised by the illiterate working class who migrate primarily in search of employment. A sustained emphasis on raising literacy levels will go a long way toward enhancing migrants' job opportunities and productivity.

**TABLE 10: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND SEX IN INDIA**

Educational level	Persons	Males	Females
Illiterate	48.25	25.76	57.75
Literate without educational level	1.94	2.02	1.91
Literate but below matric/secondary	31.24	39.27	27.85
Matric/secondary but below graduate	12.69	21.04	9.17
Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree	0.54	1.32	0.21
Graduate and above other than technical degree	4.48	8.63	2.73
Technical degree/diploma equal to degree/post-graduate degree	0.86	1.97	0.39

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D4 Series.

The rural-urban distribution of migrants by educational level shows that migrants in the urban areas are better educated than those in rural areas. In other words, the share of illiterates is very low in the urban areas. Migrants with the educational level 'literate but below matric/secondary'

form 35.5 per cent of the total urban migrants in India. Those with 'matric/secondary but below graduate' education constitute 22.7 per cent of migrants in urban areas. The corresponding figures for men and women in rural areas are 29 per cent and 7.7 per cent respectively. The urban migrants with graduate-level education and above (other than technical degrees) form 10.5 per cent of the total urban migrants, whereas the proportion is only 1.4 per cent in rural areas.

The pattern of rural-urban distribution is the same for both male and female migrants in the country. Rural female migrants have the largest share of illiterates in India, at 65.5 per cent. Educational opportunities are yet to be made available to women and girls in remote areas and villages. In other words, the educated youth in the rural areas migrate to urban areas for better education and employment opportunities.

Education systems have been changing over time and this has had significant effects on the current and intending migrant profiles. The age-wise distribution of migrants by levels of education is given in Table 11. It is interesting to note that the majority of the illiterates belong to the 60+ age group. 'Literates without formal education' and 'educational levels not classifiable' largely belong to the 30-34 age group. Children belonging to the 0-14 age group have the largest share of migrants with 'literate but below matric/secondary' level education. Likewise, those in the 15-19 age group have the largest share of migrants with a 'matric/secondary but below graduate' level of education. These two groups constitute the major chunk of the population migrating for education. Thus it is clear that Indian youth move in search of further education opportunities. Such education-led migration may be temporary or lead to more permanent settlement, or sometimes even facilitate further national or international migration.

**TABLE 11: AGE-SPECIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, 2001**

Educational level	Illiterate	Literates without formal education	Below matric/secondary	Below graduate	Technical diploma	Graduate & above	Technical degree
All ages	48.25	1.94	31.24	12.69	0.54	4.48	0.86
0-14	49.38	0.48	50.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
15-19	25.49	1.63	41.81	30.65	0.42	0.00	0.00
20-24	36.10	2.16	32.69	21.53	0.85	5.53	1.14
25-29	40.90	2.29	30.73	16.88	0.68	7.25	1.27
30-34	45.90	2.40	28.89	14.29	0.67	6.65	1.21
35-39	48.50	2.30	28.97	12.64	0.59	5.97	1.03
40-59	53.76	2.05	25.79	11.15	0.63	5.53	1.09
60+	70.02	1.94	19.45	5.42	0.34	2.27	0.56

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D4 Series.

Areas that merit serious research relate to the proportion of youth migrating for higher education and returning after completing their education, and the proportion that continue to stay in the urban areas in search of employment. Migrants with a technical diploma or certificate-level qualifications not equal to a degree largely belong to the 20-24 age group. Those with the qualifications of 'graduate and above other than technical degree' and 'technical degree or diploma equal to degree or post-graduate degree' largely belong to the 25-29 age group. This distribution is the same for both male and female migrants. India's migrant population in the prime working-age group is primarily illiterate, which means that the migrants are largely concentrated in the informal employment market with unskilled labour power and inadequate social security.

Though youth migrants account for 29 per cent of total migrants, their educational profile reveals a slightly different story. Among illiterate migrants in India, youth accounts for 22 per cent, and illiteracy is higher for females at 23 per cent than for males at 14 per cent. Similarly, youth contributes 50 per cent of migrants with below graduate qualifications, and in this higher range of education, females account for 55 per cent in comparison with 45 per cent for males. The same story of a higher proportion of female graduate migrants accounts for 42 per cent in comparison with 26 among male migrants. In other words, female youth migrants are more qualified in comparison with male migrants (Table 12). When we disaggregate the level of education among youth migrants into three broad age groups, there is an improvement in the levels of education between the younger cohort of ages 15-19 compared to the older cohort of 25-29 years. However, progress is very slow. For instance, 15 per cent of the 15-19 year-old migrants were illiterate, compared to 38 per cent among the 20-24 year-olds, and 47 per cent among the 25-29 year-olds.

The economic activity status of migrants along with the general population is given in Table 13. In India, main workers form 56.8 per cent of the total male migrants and 21.5 per cent of the total female migrants respectively. In addition, 16.7 per cent of the female migrants and 5.5 per cent of the male migrants are reported to be marginal workers. Conversely, 61.8 per cent of female migrants are non-workers: 54 per cent in rural areas and 85 per cent in urban areas. What is the proportion of educated females who moved after marriage from rural to urban areas and then entered the employment market? How many of them are immediately engaged in the informal sector of the urban economy? These are other interesting research questions that need further research.

**TABLE 12: PROPORTION OF YOUTH MIGRANTS TO TOTAL MIGRANTS BY LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND THEIR DISAGGREGATION BY AGE, 2001 CENSUS**

Total	Total migrants	Illiterate	Literate	Below secondary	Below graduate	Technical diploma	Graduate and above	Technical degree
All ages	314,541,350	151,776,080	162,765,270	98,248,107	39,927,808	1,684,269	14,103,987	2,689,986
Youth %	29	22	36	32	50	38	33	32
Among youth	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	22	15	26	27	31	14	0	0
20-24 years	37	38	37	36	37	46	41	45
25-29 years	41	47	37	37	32	40	59	55
<b>Male</b>								
All ages	93,361,809	24,050,716	69,311,093	36,660,180	19,641,650	1,230,629	8,059,291	1,836,439
Youth %	27	14	32	26	45	38	26	29
Among youth	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	32	27	33	40	37	14	0	0
20-24 years	34	33	34	30	35	47	41	47
25-29 years	34	40	33	30	28	39	59	53
<b>Female</b>								
All ages	221,179,541	127,725,364	93,454,177	61,587,927	20,286,158	453,640	6,044,696	853,547
Youth %	30	23	40	35	55	37	42	39
Among youth	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	18	15	21	21	27	12	0	0
20-24 years	39	38	39	39	39	45	41	42
25-29 years	43	47	40	40	34	43	59	58

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D4 Series.



However, as far as the employment situation is concerned, the migrants seem better off than the total population. The share of non-workers among migrants is low compared to that among the total population. The rural-urban distribution of migrants by activity status also shows that for men the proportion of main workers is highest in the urban areas (60.9 per cent of the total urban male migrants). For female migrants the proportion of main workers is highest in the rural areas, namely 24.8 per cent. In general, in urban areas three in five male migrants participate as main workers compared to just one-tenth of female migrants. No such differences exist in the gender aspect in the case of marginal workers in the urban areas.

**TABLE 13: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY ACTIVITY STATUS AND SEX IN INDIA, 2001**

Activity	Main worker			Marginal worker			Non-worker		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Total	31.99 (30.43)	56.79 (45.13)	21.52 (14.68)	13.38 (8.67)	5.51 (6.55)	16.70 (10.95)	54.64 (60.90)	37.70 (48.32)	61.79 (74.37)
Rural	30.50 (30.87)	52.19 (44.31)	24.79 (16.65)	18.38 (10.88)	7.96 (7.79)	21.13 (14.14)	51.12 (58.25)	39.85 (47.89)	54.08 (69.21)
Urban	34.99 (29.29)	60.86 (47.19)	11.54 (9.42)	3.26 (2.96)	3.34 (3.41)	3.19 (2.46)	61.75 (67.75)	35.80 (49.40)	85.27 (88.12)

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D6 Series and B1 Series. Figures in parentheses provide the activity status distribution of the total population.

The age-wise distribution of migrants by economic activity status is presented in Table 14, which shows that about two per cent of the migrant children in the age group of 0-14 years, both male and female, are reported as main workers and marginal workers. In the 15-19 age group, 20.9 per cent of the total migrants are main workers and 12.1 per cent are marginal workers. Across all age groups, the proportion of main workers is high in the case of male migrants, whereas among marginal workers the proportion of female migrants is reported to be high. The share of main workers is highest in the 35-39 age group. Hence the participation of migrants in economic activity increases as the age of the migrants increases, peaking at 35-39 for main workers and slightly earlier for marginal workers. Main and marginal workers account for 33 per cent of 15-19 year-olds, which increases to 53 per cent among 25-29 year-olds.

Youth account for 28 per cent among migrant main workers, 35 per cent among migrant marginal workers and 29 per cent among non-workers in India. No vast gender differential exists in activity status by sex. However, 44 per cent of the youth among the marginal migrant workers and 61 per cent among non-workers remain unemployed (seeking or available for work). Unemployment coupled with low levels of education among the youth in general and the migrant youth in particular is a cause for concern, and it is a formidable challenge for the policy makers in India. When we break down unemployment between different youth age groups, 44 per cent of the youth aged 25-29 remain unemployed among the marginal workers and 32 per cent among the non-workers.

**TABLE 14: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, AGE AND SEX IN INDIA**

Age-group	Main workers			Marginal workers			Non-workers		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
All ages	31.99	56.78	21.52	13.38	5.51	16.7	54.64	37.7	61.78
0-14	2.13	2.33	1.91	1.70	1.37	2.06	96.17	96.3	96.03
15-19	20.9	28.15	15.97	12.13	7.25	15.47	66.96	64.6	68.57
20-24	30.29	58.90	20.73	16.68	8.53	19.42	53.02	32.57	59.86
25-29	36.70	80.51	23.75	17.08	8.05	19.75	46.22	11.44	56.5
30-34	41.38	88.31	26.78	17.25	6.96	20.46	41.36	4.74	52.76
35-39	44.57	90.46	28.89	16.56	6.45	20.02	38.87	3.09	51.09
40-59	44.31	88.61	27.2	15.18	5.51	18.91	40.51	5.88	53.89
60+	19.85	45.28	12.08	9.16	5.95	10.15	70.98	48.77	77.78

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D6 Series.

Table 16 shows the reasons for migration according to the 2001 Census. Marriage is reported as the most important reason for migration in India. Of the total number of migrants, 49.6 per cent cite 'marriage' as the reason for migration. Those who reported 'moved with household' form 13.7 per cent of the total migrants. Employment and business together form 10.4 per cent. In the case of 30.6 per cent of the male migrants, work (employment and business) was reported as the reason for migration; only 19.4 per cent gave family movement as the reason. Of the total number of women migrants, 69.6 per cent reported marriage as the reason for migration and another 11.3 per cent reported family movement. Those who gave other reasons formed 13.9 per cent, and only 1.9 per cent of the total number of women migrants reported work as the reason for migration. The rural-urban distribution of the migrants according to reasons for migration conforms to the all-India pattern, but with urban migrants having a much larger share of work-related migration.

**TABLE 15: EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT STATUS OF YOUTH MIGRANTS, 2001 CENSUS**

Total	Total migrants	Main workers	Total marginal workers	Marginal workers seeking/available for work	Total non-workers	Non-workers seeking/available for work
All ages	314,541,350	100,612,258	42,070,198	8,096,708	171,858,894	14,544,014
Youth share %	29	28	35	44	29	61
Among youth	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	22	15	17	18	28	27
20-24 years	37	37	39	40	37	41
25-29 years	41	48	44	42	35	32
<b>Male</b>						
All ages	93,361,809	53,020,013	5,143,468	2,359,622	35,198,328	3,979,265
Youth share %	27	27	39	47	26	77
Among Youth	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	32	16	30	24	59	39
20-24 years	34	35	36	39	31	43
25-29 years	34	49	34	37	10	18

Total	Total migrants	Main workers	Total marginal workers	Marginal workers seeking/ available for work	Total non-workers	Non-workers seeking/ available for work
<b>Female</b>						
All ages	221,179,541	47,592,245	36,926,730	5,737,086	136,660,566	10,564,749
Youth share %	30	30	34	43	29	55
Among Youth	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	18	14	15	15	21	20
20-24 years	39	37	40	40	38	40
25-29 Years	43	49	45	45	41	40

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D6 Series.

**TABLE 16: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY REASONS FOR MIGRATION AND SEX, 2001 CENSUS**

Area/location Reasons	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Employment	9.51	28.09	1.66	4.44	16.86	1.17	19.74	38.04	3.17
Business	0.90	2.55	0.20	0.44	1.51	0.15	1.83	3.47	0.35
Education	1.07	2.55	0.44	0.62	2.07	0.24	1.98	2.97	1.08
Marriage	49.64	2.33	69.61	62.53	4.02	77.94	23.60	0.84	44.23
Moved after birth	5.02	9.94	2.94	4.76	13.53	2.45	5.54	6.76	4.44
Moved with household	13.68	19.39	11.27	8.63	17.94	6.18	23.88	20.67	26.78
Other	20.19	35.15	13.87	18.59	44.07	11.88	23.43	27.25	19.96
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D3 Series.

In the 2001 Census, the reasons for migration are classified into seven broad groups, namely work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved at birth, moved with family and other. Out of these broad groups, education, employment and marriage occupy a prominent role in migration, and it is young people who move out for education, employment and marriage. According to the reason to migrate given by respondents, it appears that employment among young males and marriage among young females are the main reasons given for internal migration of youth in India. Data from Census of India 2001 shows that about 42.4 million out of a total 65.4 million female migrants cite marriage as the reason to migrate and 12.3 million out of a total 32.8 million male migrants cite work/employment as the reason to migrate. However, it should be noted that the actual design of the Census – allowing respondents to give only one reason for migration – could seriously underestimate the fact that an undetermined number of women are also migrating for employment (Agnihotri et al, 2012).

The age-wise distribution of migrants according to reasons for migration is given in Table 17. Migrants belonging to the age groups 0-14 and 15-19 gave 'other' as the major reason for migration. Among children aged 0-14 years, family movement was reported as the second most prominent reason, whereas those in the 15-19 age group reported marriage as the main reason for migration. Migrants in all other age groups reported 'marriage' followed by 'other' as the

two main reasons for migration. It shows that employment-related migration is highest among migrants in the 40-59 age group, followed by migrants in the 35-39 age group. Migration for education is highest among the migrants in the 15-19 age group. It is interesting to note that marriage migration is highest among the age groups 25-29 and 30-34. Migrants belonging to the age groups 0-14 and 15-19 have the largest share of people reporting 'moved after birth', 'moved with family' and 'other' as reasons for migration. The age-wise distribution of both rural and urban migrants is similar to that for the total number of migrants.

**TABLE 17: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY AGE AND REASONS FOR MIGRATION IN INDIA, 2001**

Age group	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with family	Other	Total
All ages	9.51	0.90	1.07	49.64	5.02	13.68	20.19	100.00
0-14	0.42	0.03	2.04	0.34	25.35	29.11	42.70	100.00
15-19	5.07	0.34	5.42	27.70	10.82	21.59	29.05	100.00
20-24	7.23	0.55	2.12	57.25	3.69	11.64	17.52	100.00
25-29	9.58	0.81	0.55	61.99	1.80	10.18	15.08	100.00
30-34	11.53	1.09	0.27	61.87	1.24	9.95	14.04	100.00
35-39	13.02	1.29	0.24	59.86	0.93	10.25	14.41	100.00
40-59	14.30	1.36	0.29	57.44	0.74	10.25	15.63	100.00
60-79	8.63	1.05	0.23	59.05	0.59	11.75	18.70	100.00
80+	6.49	0.94	0.24	54.93	0.53	14.67	22.21	100.00

Source: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D5 Series.

According to the reason for migration, the sex ratio of migrants (number of females per 1000 males) for different ages shows a pattern similar to that of the total migrants. In the category of migration due to marriage, females outnumber males in all age groups, particularly in the 15-19 age group. Likewise, for migrants moving with family, the number of women is greater than that of men except in the 0-14 and 15-19 age groups. This suggests that female migrants in India could be primarily defined as associational migrants accompanying their husbands or family. The ratio of women to men is lowest among migrants moving for employment and business, followed by those migrating for education and moving after birth. The sex ratio of migrants in rural and urban areas also follows the pattern of total migrants in India. However, it is important to note that the proportion of women migrating for employment-related reasons is much lower in urban areas and in all age groups. Only 92 females for every 1000 males migrate for employment reasons in urban areas across all age groups.

**TABLE 18: SEX RATIO OF MIGRANTS BY REASON AND AGE (FEMALES PER 1000 MALES)**

Age group	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Moved with family	Other
All ages	140	186	413	70,760	701	1,377	935
0-14	634	520	448	152,688	923	949	900
15-19	226	300	475	231,230	802	875	968
20-24	179	296	368	144,450	402	1,029	1,140
25-29	159	225	272	91,334	196	1,567	1,062
30-34	142	178	365	71,322	143	1,995	936
35-39	132	165	419	61,441	139	2,285	851
40-59	113	154	338	55,419	142	2,049	818
60-79	149	198	338	59,891	178	1,863	1,017
80+	173	234	447	62,255	262	1,816	1,134

Note: Computed by the author based on the 2001 Census, D5 Series.

The motivations for migration among youth in India appear to be a mixed bag. There are a variety of contributing factors that influence the relative mobility and immobility of Indian youth. When we examine the reasons for migration among youth migrants with respect to all migrants in India, it also indicates a mixed picture (Table 19).

A quarter of the employment-led or work-related migrants are youth, and the same proportion is reported for both migrants who moved after birth and who move with households. Interestingly, among business migrants, one-fifth of migrants are youth. However, about 60 per cent of youth migrants of both sexes reported education as the main reason for migration. This poses some interesting questions: do the youth migrate to cities and urban areas due to an inadequacy of education facilities in the rural areas? What proportion of youth return to their place of origin after their move as students? Some of these issues warrant further research.

**TABLE 19: REASONS FOR MIGRATION AMONG THE YOUTH IN INDIA, 2001 CENSUS**

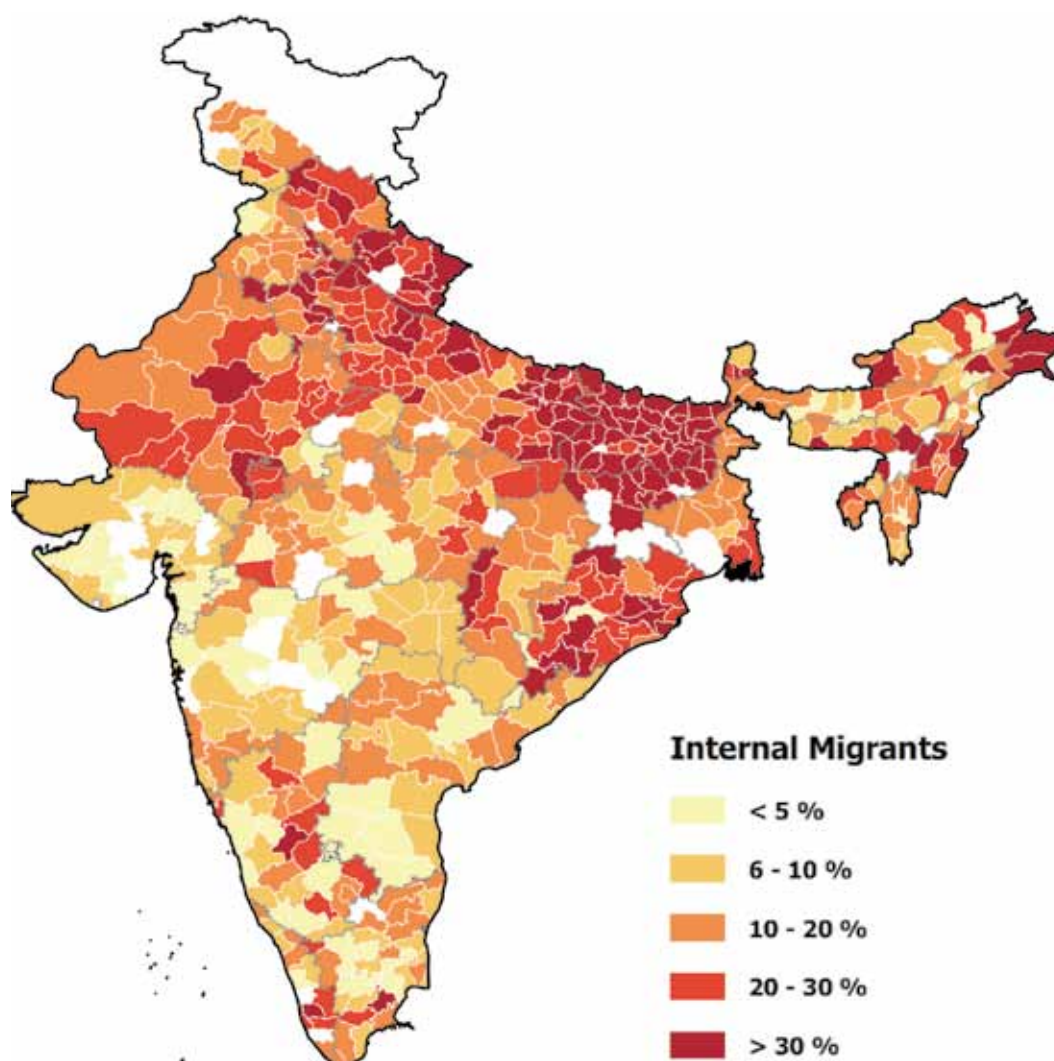
Total	Migrants	Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved at birth	Moved with household	Others
All ages	314,541,350	29,904,442	2,826,874	3,360,135	156,136,523	15,779,679	43,030,768	63,502,929
Youth %	29	24	20	61	31	26	28	28
Among youth	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	22	15	12	54	12	53	36	34
20-24 years	37	35	34	36	40	31	33	34
25-29 years	41	50	54	10	48	16	31	32
<b>Male</b>								
All ages	93,361,809	26,229,666	2,382,559	2,378,451	2,175,827	9,277,898	18,100,242	32,817,166
Youth %	27	23	19	61	19	29	32	26
Among youth	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	32	14	12	52	6	46	40	35
20-24 years	34	35	33	37	33	34	34	33
25-29 years	34	51	55	11	61	20	26	32
<b>Female</b>								
All ages	221,179,541	3,674,776	444,315	981,684	153,960,696	6,501,781	24,930,526	30,685,763
Youth %	30	29	26	61	31	22	26	29
Among youth	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19 years	18	18	13	60	12	67	32	32
20-24 years	39	36	37	33	40	25	32	36
25-29 years	43	46	50	7	48	8	36	32

## 4. Migration and Youth: Evidence from the National Sample Survey Data

In an earlier section we examined migration and youth based on the 2001 Census data. In this section we assess internal migration using the two rounds of National Sample Surveys (NSS) conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, and compare the data over the period of the last 15 years.

The NSS 49<sup>th</sup> round was conducted between January and June 1993, covering 5,112 sample villages in rural areas and 2,928 sample blocks in urban areas at the all-India level. The number of households actually surveyed was 119,403. The most recent survey (64<sup>th</sup> Round) was conducted between July 2007 and June 2008. This round covered a sample of 125,578 households (79,091 in rural areas and 46,487 in urban areas) and a sample 572,254 persons (374,294 in rural areas and 197,960 in urban areas). We have used the raw data for some of the analysis presented in this section (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS PER 100 HOUSEHOLDS IN INDIA, NSS-64TH ROUND, 2007-08**



**TABLE 20: INTERNAL YOUTH MIGRANTS IN INDIA BASED ON THE 49<sup>TH</sup> ROUND OF THE NSS, 1993-94**

	HH with at least one internal migrant (%)	Proportion of male internal migrants	Internal migrants per 1000 households	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group
Andhra Pradesh	0.87	87.4	10.46	62.1
Bihar & Jharkhand	11.41	94.3	141.95	62.8
Delhi	1.01	63.0	10.12	72.7
Goa	4.77	20.2	49.53	93.5
Gujarat	0.98	82.0	14.44	57.2
Haryana	4.20	81.5	59.89	53.7
Himachal Pradesh	6.04	90.3	69.97	80.0
Jammu and Kashmir	5.12	95.4	56.54	70.4
Karnataka	2.35	81.1	32.85	68.9
Kerala	6.50	81.0	73.70	77.1
Maharashtra	0.45	78.6	6.22	72.9
MP & Chhattisgarh	1.00	70.6	17.43	54.4
North-East	1.74	83.2	22.00	58.1
Odisha	1.86	87.4	24.75	61.3
Punjab	2.69	88.7	31.60	62.4
Rajasthan	3.99	94.8	53.64	68.6
Tamil Nadu	1.80	88.1	23.00	70.0
Union Territories	3.26	78.1	35.55	76.8
UP & Uttaranchal	5.40	92.3	69.88	71.9
West Bengal	1.73	95.0	21.48	72.5
All India	3.21	89.7	41.05	67.3

Note: Computed by the author.

At the all-India level, 90 per cent of the internal migrants were reported as males in 1993, which reduced to 82 per cent in 2007-08. Over the last 15 years, internal migration among females has increased (Tables 20 and 21). Similarly, 67 per cent of internal migrants were youth in 1993, which increased to 75 per cent in 2007-08. In other words, three out of four internal migrants are youth belonging to the 15-29 age group, and four out of five among them are males. What do we know about the living and working conditions of young male migrants in the destination states? What are the social and economic impacts of youth migration at the place of origin? These questions require further macro and micro research at the states of both origin and destination.

In the rural areas of India, households with at least one internal migrant have increased from 4 in 100 households in 1993 to 9 in 100 households in 2007-08, whereas households in urban areas have increased from two to five in 100 during the same period (Tables 26 and 27). In other words, 81 per cent of the internal migrants originate from rural areas rather than urban areas. What is the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on slowing down distress rural migration among the rural youth in India? Again, this requires further research.

**TABLE 21: INTERNAL YOUTH MIGRANTS IN INDIA BASED ON THE 64<sup>TH</sup> ROUND OF THE NSS, 2007-08**

State	HH with at least one internal migrant (%)	Proportion of male internal migrants	Internal migrants per 1000 households	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group
Andhra Pradesh	3.31	77.4	46.33	80.4
Bihar & Jharkhand	15.77	91.1	222.70	70.9
Delhi	4.16	51.4	55.29	99.0
Goa	2.84	90.2	45.63	56.8
Gujarat	2.15	59.8	29.72	83.6
Haryana	16.52	77.5	275.31	85.1
Himachal Pradesh	19.58	65.3	305.80	80.7
Jammu and Kashmir	5.01	69.2	69.70	84.9
Karnataka	3.67	74.3	54.55	77.0
Kerala	11.11	86.5	156.70	80.1
Maharashtra	3.18	64.5	43.57	79.5
MP & Chhattisgarh	3.36	52.4	54.05	73.5
North-East	3.13	79.1	37.32	78.0
Odisha	11.38	79.4	163.54	82.5
Punjab	4.89	76.6	68.32	85.1
Rajasthan	11.19	91.8	186.47	77.1
Tamil Nadu	3.40	93.4	43.69	78.8
Union Territories	6.99	86.1	88.52	77.1
UP & Uttarakhand	15.44	79.6	265.50	69.5
West Bengal	7.39	64.1	94.09	80.7
All India	7.98	81.7	121.39	75.1

Note: Computed by the author.

There are several measures to assess the intensity of internal migration, such as households with at least one internal migrant and the number of internal migrants per 1000 households. In 1993 households with at least one internal migrant were reported at three per cent in India, which increased to eight per cent in 2007-08. According to the latest round of the NSS, approximately one in 10 households reported an internal migrant. The highest proportion of households with internal migrants was reported for Himachal Pradesh (20 per cent), Haryana (17 per cent), Bihar and Jharkhand (16 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (15 per cent) and 11 per cent each for Kerala, Rajasthan and Odisha.

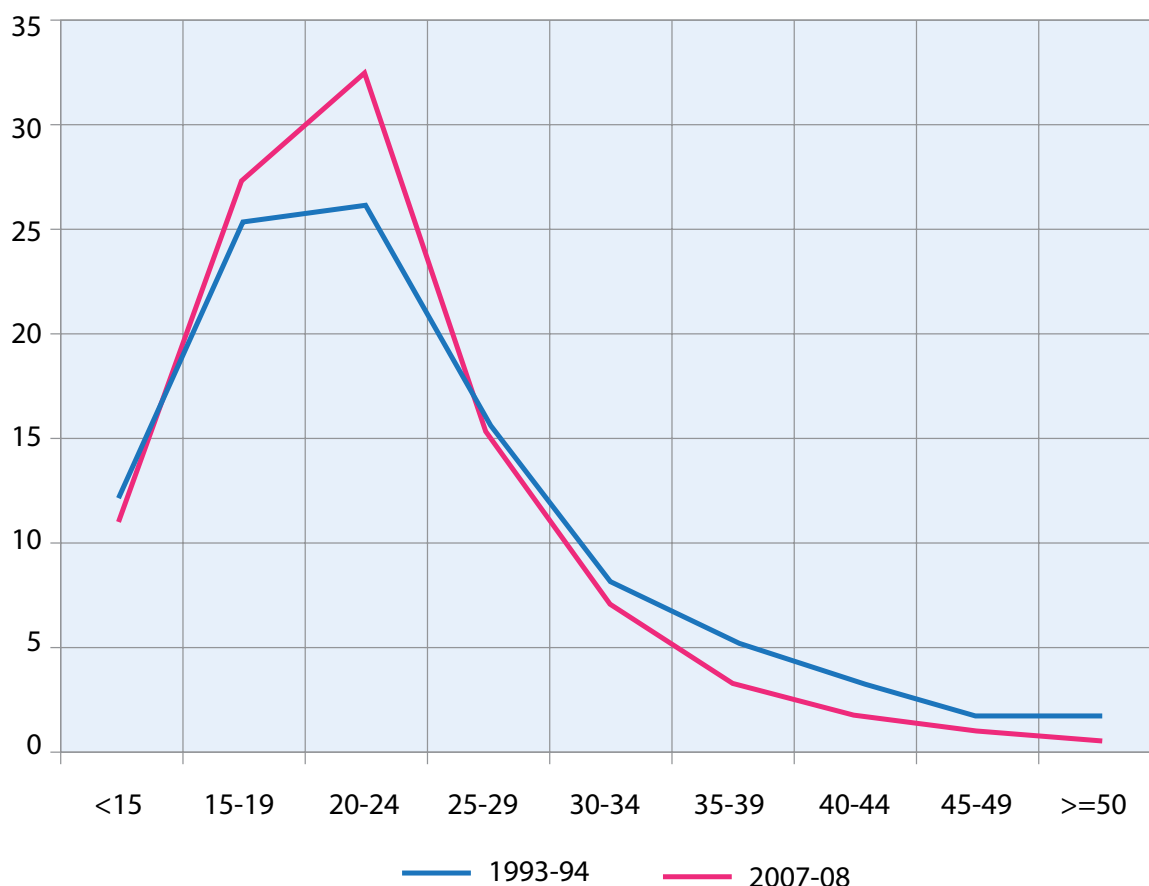
The number of internal migrants per 1000 households was reported as 41 persons in 1993, which increased to 122 persons in 2007-08, indicating the pace at which internal migration is growing in India. Much like the earlier measures among the states, 306 persons per 1000 households were reported for Himachal Pradesh, followed by Haryana (275 persons), Uttar Pradesh (266 persons) and Bihar and Jharkhand (223 persons).



**TABLE 22: AGE PROFILE OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS IN INDIA BY STATES, 1993-94**

State/Age	<14	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-29	30-49	≥ 50
Andhra Pradesh	14.8	34.3	19.1	8.7	62.1	20.5	2.7
Bihar & Jharkhand	11.7	26.1	21.8	14.9	62.8	22.9	2.7
Delhi	7.4	68.9	0.2	3.7	72.8	9.3	10.4
Goa	0	69.7	15.4	8.4	93.5	6.6	0
Gujarat	31	9.1	24.2	23.8	57.1	8.1	3.7
Haryana	26.5	20.1	24.1	9.4	53.6	19.6	0.2
Himachal Pradesh	8.9	24.7	42.4	12.9	80	10.1	1
Jammu and Kashmir	3.5	22.7	32.2	15.5	70.4	24.3	1.8
Karnataka	16.8	38.9	19.1	10.8	68.8	14.1	0.2
Kerala	5.5	19.5	39.6	17.9	77	15.4	1.9
Maharashtra	14.9	25.4	28	19.6	73	9.2	3
MP & Chhattisgarh	22.1	17.8	22.2	14.4	54.4	23.2	0.3
North-East	17.9	18.4	21.5	18.2	58.1	23.4	0.7
Odisha	25.2	19	30.6	11.7	61.3	11.7	1.8
Punjab	10.4	19.4	28.1	15	62.5	26.4	0.9
Rajasthan	14.2	31.2	25.1	12.3	68.6	16.5	0.7
Tamil Nadu	8.7	27.7	27.8	14.5	70	20.8	0.6
Union Territories	10.8	41.8	23.4	11.6	76.8	10	2.4
UP & Uttaranchal	9.2	24.4	29.6	18	72	17.2	1.6
West Bengal	6.8	27.4	24.6	20.5	72.5	18.7	2
All India	12.1	25.4	26.2	15.7	67.3	18.8	1.8

Note: Computed by the author

**FIGURE 3: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS, 1993-94 AND 2007-08**

**TABLE 23: AGE PROFILE OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS IN INDIA BY STATE, 2007-08**

State/Age	<14	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-29	30-49	≥ 50
Andhra Pradesh	10	29	40.5	10.9	80.4	9.2	0.3
Bihar & Jharkhand	8.7	23.6	29.7	17.6	70.9	19.5	0.7
Delhi	0.1	42.2	43.8	13	99	0.7	0.2
Goa	18.2	14.2	32.4	10.2	56.8	22.8	2.2
Gujarat	10	31.8	41.2	10.5	83.5	6.1	0.3
Haryana	10.8	42.1	32.1	11	85.2	3.5	0.6
Himachal Pradesh	9.1	16.8	41.9	22	80.7	9.8	0.4
Jammu and Kashmir	5.3	22.2	39.5	23.2	84.9	9.4	0.5
Karnataka	8.6	33	27.9	16.1	77	14.2	0.2
Kerala	5.8	22.5	37.8	19.8	80.1	13.2	0.9
Maharashtra	9.7	33.6	34.3	11.6	79.5	10	0.8
MP & Chhattisgarh	11.9	32.1	29	12.3	73.4	14	0.6
North-East	3.2	19.5	36.8	21.7	78	18.3	0.5
Odisha	6.6	26.3	42.9	13.4	82.6	10.5	0.4
Punjab	7.1	29.1	41.2	14.8	85.1	7.1	0.6
Rajasthan	14.2	31.6	31.4	14	77	8.4	0.2
Tamil Nadu	6.7	20.1	39	19.6	78.7	13.5	0.8
Union Territories	9	19.7	38.5	18.9	77.1	10.6	3.4
UP & Uttaranchal	15.1	24.4	29.5	15.6	69.5	14.8	0.6
West Bengal	8.3	36.9	29.8	14	80.7	9.9	1.2
All India	11.1	27.3	32.4	15.4	75.1	13.2	0.6

Note: Computed by the author.

**TABLE 24: MEDIAN AGE OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS IN INDIA, 1993-94 AND 2007-08**

	1993-94			2007-08		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Andhra Pradesh	20.0	15.4	20.0	22.0	20.0	20.0
Bihar & Jharkhand	22.0	17.0	22.0	23.0	20.0	22.0
Delhi	18.4	17.0	18.0	28.0	20.0	20.0
Goa	22.0	16.0	15.7	23.0	22.0	22.0
Gujarat	24.0	7.8	21.0	20.0	20.0	20.0
Haryana	21.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	18.0	19.0
Himachal Pradesh	21.0	17.0	21.0	22.0	21.0	22.0
Jammu and Kashmir	23.0	21.8	22.8	22.0	22.0	22.0
Karnataka	19.0	17.0	19.0	23.0	19.0	20.0
Kerala	23.0	20.8	22.0	23.0	21.0	22.0
Maharashtra	20.3	21.0	21.0	21.0	19.0	20.0
MP & Chhattisgarh	22.9	19.0	21.0	22.0	18.0	20.0
North-East	23.0	22.6	23.0	24.0	21.0	23.0
Odisha	21.0	10.7	20.8	21.0	20.0	21.0
Punjab	23.0	20.0	23.0	21.0	20.0	20.0
Rajasthan	20.0	20.0	20.0	21.0	19.0	20.0
Tamil Nadu	22.0	18.0	21.6	23.0	20.0	22.0
Union Territories	19.0	19.0	19.0	23.0	21.0	22.0
UP & Uttaranchal	22.0	20.0	22.0	22.0	19.0	21.0
West Bengal	22.0	19.5	22.0	21.0	19.0	20.0
All India	22.0	18.0	22.0	21.0	19.0	20.0

Note: Computed by the author

The median age of male internal migrants in India has decreased from 22 years in 1993 to 21 years in 2007-08. This means that not only do the male youth move in large numbers but they are also moving at younger ages. Though the median age among male internal migrants decreased by one year, there was a one year increase in median age for female internal migrants.

**TABLE 25: SITUATION OF INTERNAL YOUTH MIGRANTS IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF INDIA, 1993-94**

	Rural households with at least one internal migrant (%)	% of male migrants in rural areas	Urban households with at least one internal migrant (%)	% of male migrants in urban areas	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group in rural areas	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group in urban areas
Andhra Pradesh	0.9	85.4	0.7	96.4	78.9	21.1
Bihar & Jharkhand	12.6	95.1	4.0	80.1	95.1	4.9
Delhi	5.4	50.0	0.8	66.3	20.4	79.6
Goa	1.3	84.0	8.4	9.0	14.0	86.0
Gujarat	1.2	81.0	0.4	94.6	89.8	10.2
Haryana	4.7	80.7	3.0	85.4	80.4	19.6
Himachal Pradesh	6.1	93.1	5.8	61.1	90.4	9.6
Jammu and Kashmir	5.3	97.5	4.3	85.8	82.8	17.2
Karnataka	1.9	72.6	3.4	98.3	55.8	44.2
Kerala	7.5	80.2	3.6	86.2	85.6	14.4
Maharashtra	0.5	87.4	0.4	64.5	63.9	36.1
MP & Chhattisgarh	1.1	69.0	0.7	86.4	84.6	15.4
North-East	1.8	82.9	1.5	86.0	89.6	10.4
Odisha	1.9	88.4	1.3	77.7	91.0	9.0
Punjab	3.1	93.1	2.1	79.6	68.3	31.7
Rajasthan	4.4	94.5	2.8	96.5	83.4	16.6
Tamil Nadu	2.3	88.4	0.8	86.5	83.7	16.3
Union Territories	2.6	69.1	3.7	81.9	29.8	70.2
UP & Uttaranchal	6.3	92.5	1.7	89.9	93.7	6.3
West Bengal	2.0	95.5	1.1	92.9	82.6	17.4
All India	3.8	90.2	1.5	86.1	87.9	12.1

Note: Computed by the author

**TABLE 26: SITUATION OF INTERNAL YOUTH MIGRANTS IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS OF INDIA, 2007-08**

	Rural households with at least one internal migrant (%)	% of male migrants in rural areas	Urban households with at least one internal migrant (%)	% of male migrants in urban areas	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group in rural areas	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group in urban areas
Andhra Pradesh	3.5	14.1	2.9	19.1	76.6	23.4
Bihar & Jharkhand	16.6	NA	9.5	NA	92.6	7.4
Delhi	8.7	60.5	3.8	33.7	13.4	86.6
Goa	2.8	30.2	2.9	31.0	43.3	56.7
Gujarat	1.9	6.3	2.5	19.5	54.6	45.4
Haryana	14.9	57.4	20.3	49.2	63.2	36.8
Himachal Pradesh	20.4	53.7	13.1	53.7	92.8	7.2
Jammu and Kashmir	5.2	42.8	4.2	38.2	84.8	15.2
Karnataka	4.0	17.9	3.0	20.7	71.8	28.2
Kerala	11.5	21.2	10.1	20.8	77.1	22.9

	Rural households with at least one internal migrant (%)	% of male migrants in rural areas	Urban households with at least one internal migrant (%)	% of male migrants in urban areas	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group in rural areas	% of internal migrants among 15-29 age group in urban areas
Maharashtra	3.1	9.1	3.3	17.3	56.4	43.6
MP & Chhattisgarh	3.0	NA	4.5	38.4	69.8	30.2
North-East	3.0	NA	4.0	37.1	80.7	19.3
Odisha	12.0	58.6	8.0	56.2	89.3	10.7
Punjab	5.1	24.9	4.5	28.9	64.2	35.8
Rajasthan	12.1	50.0	8.2	36.2	82.4	17.6
Tamil Nadu	3.6	19.5	3.1	21.3	60.1	39.9
Union Territories	6.3	28.1	7.8	43.5	47.5	52.5
UP & Uttaranchal	17.3	NA	9.1	NA	86.9	13.1
West Bengal	7.6	48.2	6.7	47.3	76.2	23.8
All India	9.0	NA	5.4	NA	80.7	19.3

Note: Computed by the author

**TABLE 27:** PROFILE OF INTERNAL YOUTH MIGRANTS AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES/TRIBES IN INDIA, 1993-94 AND 2007-08

	1993-94			2007-08		
	Scheduled Caste households with at least one internal migrant (%)	Scheduled Tribe households with at least one internal migrant (%)	Other caste households with at least one internal migrant (%)	Scheduled Caste households with at least one internal migrant (%)	Scheduled Tribe households with at least one internal migrant (%)	Other caste households with at least one internal migrant (%)
Andhra Pradesh	1.2	0.6	0.9	2.3	1.2	5.9
Bihar & Jharkhand	3.9	11.8	12.2	8.1	14	29.7
Delhi	0	0.1	1.3	0.5	5.7	9.2
Goa	1.5	1.6	4.8	1.3	1.8	4.1
Gujarat	0.8	1.1	1	2.3	0.7	4.1
Haryana	2.2	3.2	4.6	0	13.6	31.5
Himachal Pradesh	4.8	3.6	7	15.5	15.2	37.1
Jammu and Kashmir	7.1	4.7	5	12.4	4.8	10.2
Karnataka	0.6	2.3	2.5	4.5	6.2	8.1
Kerala	0.2	5.3	6.7	0.6	7.2	22.8
Maharashtra	0.1	0.6	0.5	2.7	2.7	6.2
MP & Chhattisgarh	0.4	1	1.3	1.7	2.4	5.9
North-East	2.1	0.8	1.8	2.3	1.8	5.7
Odisha	1.8	0.9	2.1	5.6	9.8	20.2
Punjab	4.2	2.2	2.9	0.4	4.2	9.4
Rajasthan	2	3.2	4.7	4.3	9	20.4
Tamil Nadu	0.5	2.3	1.7	0.9	3	6.6
Union Territories	2.9	1.9	3.4	9.7	4	13.8
UP & Uttaranchal	10.7	4.6	5.6	9.4	14.4	30.5
West Bengal	0.6	1.9	1.8	6.4	6	13.7
All India	1.4	3.1	3.5	3.7	7.4	15.2

Note: Computed by the author

**TABLE 28:** DISTRIBUTION (PER 1000) OF MIGRANTS' EMPLOYMENT/ UNEMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR BEFORE/ AFTER MIGRATION, 2007-08

Status	Before migration		After migration		Status	Before migration		After migration	
States	Employed	Un-employed	Employed	Un-employed	States	Employed	Un-employed	Employed	Un-employed
Andhra-Pradesh	427	18	522	5	Maharashtra	329	40	488	5
Arunachal Pradesh	491	49	585	38	Manipur	288	37	294	31
Assam	120	34	246	9	Meghalaya	487	61	626	9
Bihar	75	3	194	2	Mizoram	440	15	555	20
Chhattisgarh	374	11	602	1	Nagaland	318	100	421	84
Delhi	226	145	445	6	Odisha	193	19	286	6
Gujarat	265	18	364	3	Punjab	118	37	212	4
Haryana	128	19	277	3	Rajasthan	319	9	384	6
Himachal Pradesh	374	15	532	14	Sikkim	357	64	547	15
Jammu and Kashmir	94	7	137	0	Tamil Nadu	347	31	483	9
Jharkhand	180	14	378	3	Tripura	204	136	300	76
Karnataka	301	27	491	5	Uttaranchal	337	15	405	9
Kerala	270	74	327	49	Uttar Pradesh	91	6	202	2
Madhya Pradesh	203	6	405	2	West-Bengal	116	25	200	5
All-India	232	24	356	6	All-India	232	24	356	6

Note: Computed by the author

Migration brings livelihood opportunities for youth throughout the country. Most of the internal migrants are youth, and males occupy an important position. How "inclusive" is internal migration among Indian households? Or is internal migration distress migration, and are people belonging to lower castes - such as Scheduled Castes - overrepresented in the migration streams in India? For instance, eight out of 10 households in India displayed internal migration in 2007-08, whereas it was reported as four per cent among Scheduled Tribe households (underrepresented) and seven per cent among Scheduled Caste households (distress migration). We need to research both inclusiveness in migration and over representation of Scheduled Castes in migration streams.

## 5. Migration and Youth: Evidence from the Kerala Migration Survey

The Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Kerala, has been periodically conducting the Kerala Migration Survey (KMS) since 1998. Currently, this is the only state in India where large scale migration surveys are conducted, with the support of the Department of Non-Resident Keralite Affairs, the Government of India and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India. Over the last 15 years, the CDS has completed four rounds of migration surveys: 1998, 2003, 2008 and 2011 (Zachariah & Irudaya Rajan, 2012). This paper will use the raw data from these four surveys to further scrutinise migration and youth.

In 1998 and 2003 KMS covered 10,000 households, whereas in 2008 and 2011 the sample size was enhanced to 15,000 households to provide a reliable estimate of migration and remittances at the district- and taluk-level in Kerala. The youth proportion, which stood at 30 per cent in 1998, declined to 24 per cent in 2011, witnessing an absolute decline of six percentage points in 13 years. However, the proportion of households with at least one internal migrant hovers around seven to eight per cent for the same period (Table 29).

**TABLE 29: HOUSEHOLDS WITH INTERNAL MIGRANTS IN KERALA, 1998-2011**

Year	No. of households surveyed	Total members in the households	Proportion of population in 15-29 age group	Proportion of household with at least one internal migrant	Average household size
1998	9,995	49,297	29.6	7.7	4.9
2003	10,012	47,830	27.4	8.7	4.8
2008	15,000	67,457	25.0	6.8	4.5
2011	15,000	65,044	23.8	7.3	4.3

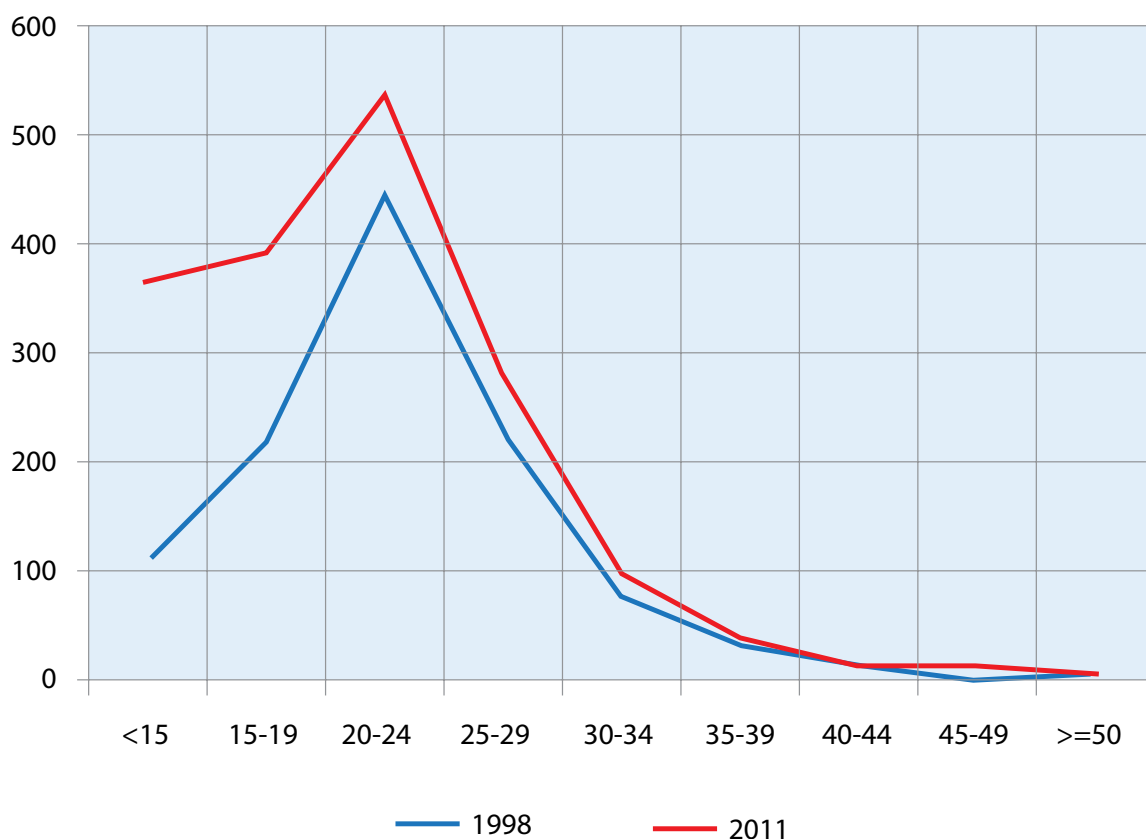
Among the internal migrants, youth accounted for 78 per cent in 1998, which increased marginally to 81 per cent in 2003 and hovered around 69-70 per cent between 2008 and 2011. Male and female youth migrate equally, and there is no noted sex differential among internal migrants from the Keralan youth. For both males and females the median age of internal migrants has dropped by two years between 1998 and 2011. In 2011 the median age for male out-migrants was 21, and it is apparent that females move two years earlier than males, at the age of 19.

**TABLE 30: AGE PROFILE AND MEDIAN AGE OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS FROM KERALA, 1998-2011**

Age group	1998	2003	2008	2011		
	Total	Total	Total	Male	Female	Total
< 15 years	9.8	6.4	19.6	17.9	27.1	20.9
15 to 29 years	77.6	81.1	69.7	69.7	68.2	69.2
> 30 years	12.5	12.5	10.6	12.4	4.7	9.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median age (in years)	22	22	20	21	19	20

Overall, internal migrants appear to be more educated than the general population. In 2011, degree holders accounted for eight per cent of the general population, whereas degree holders accounted for 31 per cent of internal migrants: four times higher than the general population. For instance, the proportion of degree holders among internal migrants has increased from 14 per cent in 1998 to 31 per cent in 2011: a 17 per cent increase in 13 years. Interestingly, 37 per cent of female internal migrants were degree holders in comparison with 28 per cent of males.

**FIGURE 4: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS IN VARIOUS ROUNDS OF KMS, 1998 AND 2011**



**TABLE 31: EDUCATION PROFILE OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS AT THE TIME OF MIGRATION, 1998-2011**

	1998	2003	2011		Total
	Total	Total	Male	Female	
Up to primary	5.0	2.6	0.6	1.6	0.9
Upper primary up to secondary	30.8	25.5	12.6	3.6	9.7
Secondary passed but without degree	50.2	49.5	58.2	56.6	57.7
Degree holders	13.6	22.1	27.9	37.4	31.1
Other/not reported	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.8	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Contrary to the standard Indian scenario, in 2011, 92 per cent of the male youth were not married at the time of migration, in comparison with 61 per cent of females. In other words, only seven per cent of males were married at the time of migration compared to 38 per cent of females.

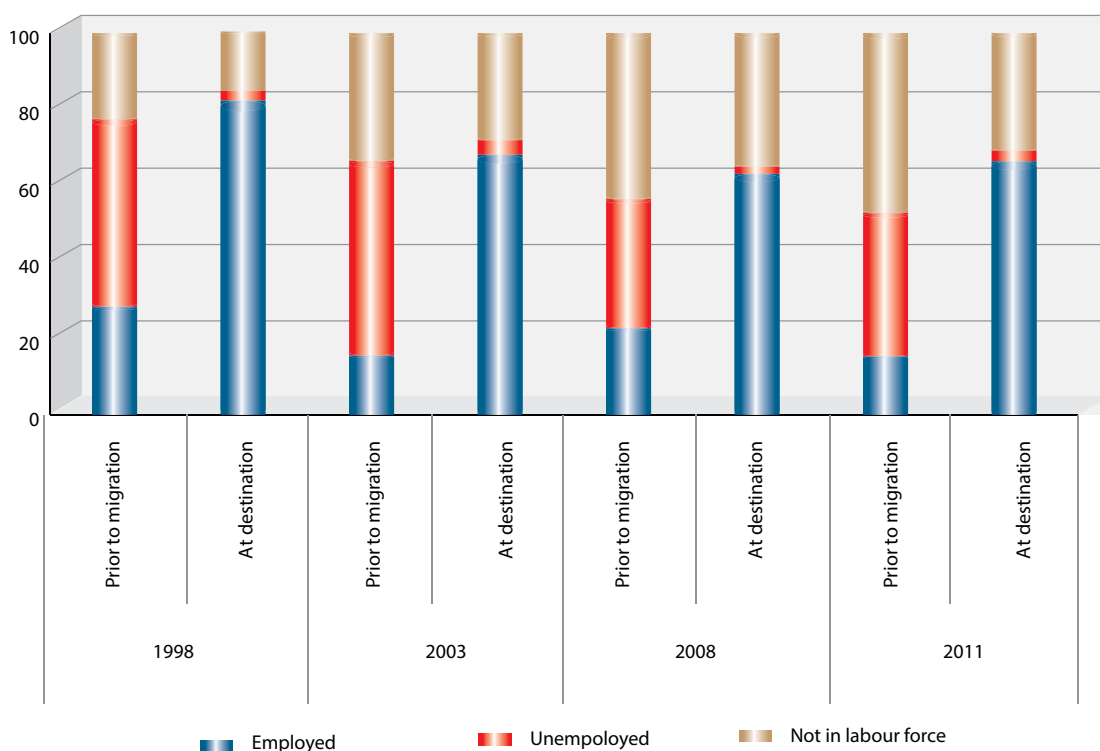
**TABLE 32: MARITAL STATUS OF YOUTH INTERNAL MIGRATION AT THE TIME OF MIGRATION, 1998-2011**

	1998	2003	2008	2011		Total
	Total	Total	Total	Male	Female	
Never married	82.9	77.6	76.7	92.1	61.2	82.1
Married	17.0	22.4	23.0	7.2	38.2	17.2
Widowhood	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.6
Divorced	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1
Separated	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Migration brings a lot of employment opportunities to the youth. In Kerala, about 49 per cent of migrants were unemployed prior to migration in 1998, whereas this percentage declined to just three per cent at the place of destination. In 2011 about 38 per cent of migrants were unemployed in the place of origin, whereas on reaching the destination only three per cent of them remained unemployed. Migration also indirectly reduces not only unemployment stress but also poverty in the states of origin and enhances the standard of living among migrant households.

**TABLE 33: ECONOMIC ACTIVITY PRIOR TO MIGRATION AND AT THE PLACE OF DESTINATION FOR KERALA INTERNAL MIGRATION, 1998-2011**

	1998		2003		2008		2011	
	Prior to migration	At destination	Prior to migration	At destination	Prior to migration	At destination	Prior to migration	At destination
Employed	28.3	82.3	15.5	68.1	22.7	63.1	15.3	66.4
Unemployed	49.1	2.6	51.0	3.9	33.8	1.9	37.6	2.8
Not in labour force	22.6	15.1	33.5	28.0	43.5	35.0	47.1	30.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**FIGURE 5: EMPLOYMENT STATUS PRIOR TO MIGRATION AT THE PLACE OF ORIGIN AND AFTER MIGRATION AT PLACE OF DESTINATION, 1998-2011**



Although it is acknowledged as a cause of migration in all of the KMS surveys, the 2007 survey is the first to take special note of student out-migration from Kerala. According to the KMS 2007 report, “students constituted the second largest proportion of out-migrants from Kerala (25.8 percent). Among them 47.5 percent were Christians, although, Christians constituted only less than 20 percent of the general population. Pathanamthitta district, one of the smallest in the state, sent out the largest number of students for studies outside the state”.

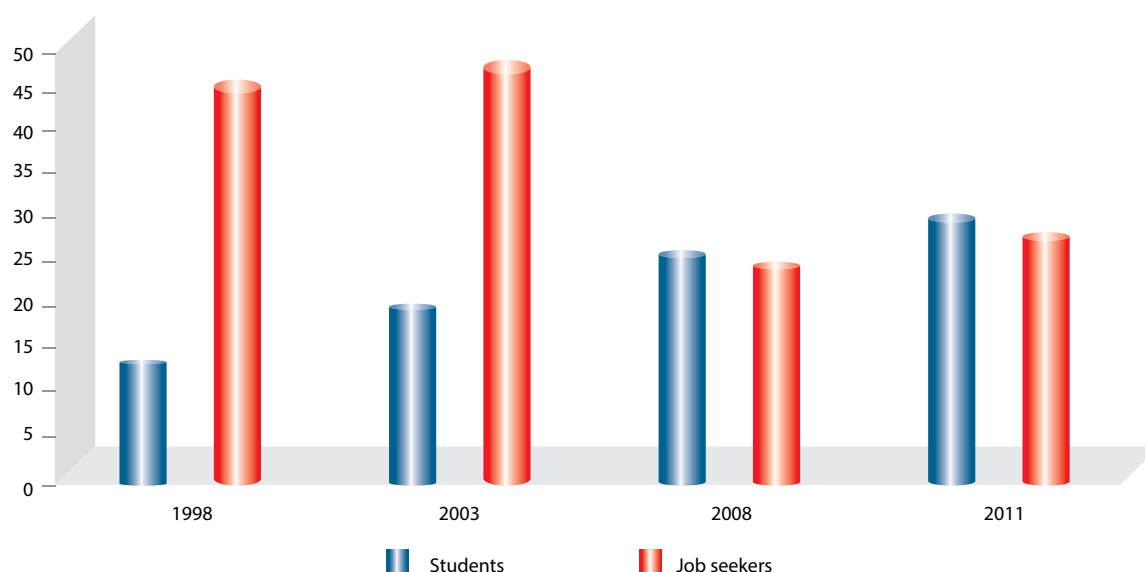
In 2008 students became the largest component of out-migrants from Kerala, making up 26.4 per cent of the total out-migrants, after having previously been the second-largest group in 2003 and 2007 and the third-largest component in 1998.

KMS 2011 enumerated 284,000 out-migrants aged 15 years and above as students. Their economic activity is referenced as ‘student’. The student category retained its first rank among the employment categories before out-migration. As in KMS 2008, in KMS 2011 the largest number of out-migrants by employment category was also for ‘students’. Compared to 284,000 student out-migrants, there were only 264,000 job seekers among the out-migrants. An increasingly large number of Keralan students are going out of the state for education.

**TABLE 34: STUDENTS AND JOB SEEKERS AMONG OUT-MIGRANTS (PER CENT)**

Year	Students	Job seekers
1998	14.1	45.5
2003	20.4	47.7
2008	26.4	25.1
2011	30.5	28.4

**FIGURE 6: STUDENTS AND JOB SEEKERS AMONG OUT-MIGRANTS (PER CENT) 1998-2011**



Out of the 284,000 student out-migrants, 112,000 (39.4 per cent) were females, and the remaining 60.6 per cent were males. Their age distribution indicates that the largest number are in the age group 20-24 years (37 per cent among males and 59 per cent among females). One surprising aspect of the 20-24 age group is that it includes more females than males (51 per cent). In the next age group (25-29 years), only 16 per cent of the migrants are females.

About half of the student out-migrants (50.5 per cent) were Hindus, 39.3 per cent were Christians and 10.3 per cent were Muslims. Thus, the Muslims are very much under-represented and the Christians are very much over-represented. While the Christians constitute only 19 per cent of the population, they make up 39 per cent of the student out-migrants.

**TABLE 35: STUDENT OUT-MIGRANTS BY AGE AND SEX, 2011**

Age	Per cent of the Total		
	Males	Females	Total
<14 years	5.3	3.3	4.5
15-19	17.3	16.1	16.8
20-24	37.0	59.2	45.8
25-29	22.5	15.6	19.8
15-29	76.8	90.9	82.4
30+	17.8	5.7	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Most (75 per cent) of the student out-migrants are the unmarried children of the head of the household. About nine per cent are married children. Altogether, nearly 85 per cent of the student out-migrants are children of the head of the household.

## 6. Migration and National Youth Policies

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Migration is a natural outcome when the distribution of resources and opportunities becomes unequal. The migration of young people became more frequent as a result of neo-liberal policies coupled with social, political, economic and demographic conditions. Young migrants face many challenges particular to their age, and yet little attention has been given to young people in the debate on migration. Youth migration is a challenging and neglected phenomenon. When a youth migrates, she/he is faced with multiple deprivations. In several cases this deprivation leads to conflicting situations.

Policies play an important role in the migration scenario. The absence of policies often results in discriminatory practices, which bring about maladjustment within the host society, poor quality of life, risk and vulnerability, human trafficking etc. With regard to migration policy, three aspects are vital - namely admission, treatment and enforcement - and no attempt has been made to analyse these three aspects of migration policies (Klugman & Pereira, 2009). Young migrants face high social risk as they are confronted with multiple pillars of inequality. Lack of adequate policies governing the process of migration will lead to a chaotic situation for the government as well as for migrants. In India, organised labour unions, employer organisations and civil society can play a significant role in lobbying for the effective formulation of public policies on migration. The enforcement of comprehensive migration policies will have a lasting impact on human development outcomes, not only for the individual migrants and their families but also for the communities at origin and destination.

The National Youth Policy 2003 of the Government of India (NYP 2003) points out that youth developments in India have been hampered because of a lack of adequate research on youth. Even though India is becoming one of the youngest nations in the world thanks to demographic dividend, there has been no effort to coordinate research based on youth. At the same time, the NYP 2003 failed to recognise youth migration and its different dimensions within the policy. NYP 2003 makes a passing remark that the migration of men to cities to seek employment often isolates the womenfolk, who are left to fend for themselves. There is no reference to issues of migration in general, or to youth migration in particular.

The exposure draft of the National Youth Policy (2012) recognises youth as a heterogeneous group and, most importantly, the draft policy proposes to reduce the target age group from 13-35 years to 16-30 years, and divide the age group into three sub-groups so that effective mechanisms for addressing the concerns can be identified. A major departure from the NYP 2003 is that the draft policy 2012 not only spells out the objectives but also elaborates the details of desirable interventions, and identifies partners to be held accountable for realising the objectives enshrined in the draft policy.

It also identifies migrant youth as a target group in the policy. The policy mentions that “due to migration and the subsequent loosening of family bonds, youth need guidance and support which is not easily available” (NYP 2012, Article 6.1.2b). But the policy is silent on the proactive measures to be taken to address the issues related to young migrants.

To change this paradigm in which migration is absent from policy documents or is depicted as a problematic issue, there is a need for sensitising government actors to address and integrate migration into national policy strategy. There is a need to build capacity among the government

actors most involved in the migration process (Hugo 2009). Greater institutional coherence is required in formulating and implementing migration policies. The linkages between different government departments are vital in this respect.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

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Today, youth have unmitigated access to cheap and easy means of transport and are more likely than ever to migrate for reasons of distress or better employment, or for educational or economic opportunities. Despite their increasing mobility and labour market agility, Indian youth are largely absent from migration policies and labour discourse in the country. While some information pertaining to India's migrant youth has been presented in this paper - drawing on evidence from Census, NSS and KMS data as well as personal tabulations of data from the author's own research - our knowledge is far from complete.

Available information on low levels of labour force participation, educational attainment and relatively high rates of unemployment demonstrate that the human capital of India's youth is severely underutilised. However, in order to fully harness the potential of the youth it is essential to gain a much greater understanding of their profiles, of trends and challenges across regions, and of gender and occupations. The analysis underscores the important (and insufficiently studied) role of education, marriage, gender roles and other social norms in countouring the migratory patterns of the youth. It also foregrounds the pressing need to equip the nation's youth with the skills necessary for successful integration into the labour market. Addressing the imbalances in the absorption of migrant youth into the labour force will require dedicated studies, labour market reforms and greater investment in education and skill-training, thereby boosting participation rates, reducing unemployment and raising productive capacities.

It is here that the Indian government must intervene and frame programmes to increase youth skill levels, access to information and knowledge of rights. This can be facilitated through setting up training and counselling initiatives, brokering partnerships with private sector companies to secure work placements, and the formation of youth networks across the nation. Such a comprehensive move will support and aid the aim of promoting the active participation of young people in the country's development trajectory.

## 8. Policy Brief: Internal Migration and Youth in India

### Key Message

It is widely recognised that the youth constitute a valuable human capital resource base for India. With a high percentage of its population below the age of 30, and a projected labour-force expansion of 95 million by 2020, India is uniquely positioned to reap the benefits from its demographic dividend. This profusion of young people also represents a potential demographic dividend that can be garnered by destination communities through human capital investments and strong integration policies.

Migration is a widely employed survival strategy among the country's youth. Much like gender, 'age' is a framework that facilitates, constrains and ultimately contours migrant experiences. Youth migration is a challenging and neglected phenomenon. Young migrants face many challenges particular to their age and yet little attention has been given to young migrants and young people affected by migration in the debate on migration.

### Challenges

- Unemployment coupled with low levels of education among the youth in general and migrant youth in particular is a cause for concern and it is a formidable challenge for policy makers in India. When we disaggregate unemployment among different age groups of youth, 44 per cent of the youth in the 25-29 age bracket remain unemployed in the marginal workers category and 32 per cent among the non-workers (based on data from the 2001 Census). Young migrants continue to face major disadvantages in education, employment and in the transition from education to employment. Rural youth are particularly disadvantaged with limited access to educational and training programmes. Low level of literacy creates a significant risk to migrant's labour market outcomes. There is a pressing need to equip the nation's youth with skills necessary for successful integration into the labour market.
- With over 350 million Indian youth, employment opportunities are insufficient. This poses additional pressure on young people to migrate in search of jobs. The push of poverty in rural areas results in overcrowding in cities and towns and overly competitive job markets. According to NSSO 64<sup>th</sup> Round, 81 per cent of the internal migrants originate from the rural areas compared to urban areas.
- Despite their increasing mobility and labour market agility, Indian youth are largely absent from migration policies and the labour discourse in the country. For instance, migrant youth was missing from the agenda of the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2003. However, the NYP 2012 exposure draft identifies migrant youth as a target group. The policy mentions that "due to migration and the subsequent loosening of family bonds, youth need guidance and support which is not easily available" (NYP 2012, Article 6.1.2b). But the policy is silent on the proactive measures to be taken to address the issues related to young migrants.

## Facts and Figures

### Census Data

- In 1951, the number of youth in India was around 79 million, increasing to 274 million in 2001 (Census data). These figures indicate a four-fold increase in migrant youth over five decades. According to the projections made by the researcher, the number of youth in India is 351 million or 29 per cent of 1.21 billion and it is likely to increase marginally for the next fifty years. In other words, the youth population may have reached its peak in 2011 and the numbers are likely to hover around 361 to 396 million.
- According to the 2001 Census, there are currently 315 million migrants in India (constituting 31% of total population). Our analysis indicates that about 30 per cent of these 315 million migrants in India belong to the youth category; these percentages were 27 and 30 respectively for males and females. In absolute numbers, 92 million youth were migrants, representing 34 per cent of the youth population. In other words, one out of three Indian youths is an internal migrant and lives in a place that is not his/her last place of residence.
- The age-wise distribution of migrants shows that the largest share of migrants is in the 15-29 years age group. However, one could also see the concentration of migrants in the 40-59 working age groups. If we group it into five-year categories for analysis, the highest number of migrants is reported for the age group 25-29, the same is true for both men and women as well as rural and urban areas.
- Additionally, nine out of ten migrants in this prime working age group between 20-29 years were married.
- Among illiterate migrants in India, youth accounts for 22 per cent and it is higher for females with 23 per cent and males with 14 per cent. 15 per cent of the 15-19 years migrants were illiterates, compared to 38 per cent among 20-24 years and 47 per cent among 25-29 years.
- The age-wise distribution of migrants by economic activity status shows that youth account for 28 per cent among migrant main workers, 35 per cent among migrant marginal workers and 29 per cent among non-workers in India. No vast gender differentials exist among activity status by sex. However, 44 per cent of the youth among the marginal migrants workers and 61 per cent among non-workers remain unemployed (seeking or available for work).
- It has been observed that employment among young males and marriage among young females are the main reasons cited for internal migration in India. Census of India 2001 shows that about 42.4 million migrants out of total 65.4 million female migrants cite marriage as the reason to migrate and 12.3 million out of 32.8 million total male migrants cite work/employment as the reason to migrate.

### National Sample Survey 64<sup>th</sup> Round

- The median age of internal migrants for males from India has decreased from 22 years in 1993 to 21 years in 2007-08. This means not only the male youth move in large numbers but also move at younger ages.
- Though median age among male internal migrants decreased by one year, one-year increase in median age was reported for female internal migrants (18 to 19).

## Kerala Migration Survey

- Among the internal migrants, youth accounted for 78 per cent in 1998, this increased marginally to 81 in 2003 and hovering around 70 per cent during 2008-2011. Both men and women youth migrate equally and there is no noted sex differential among internal migrants from the youth in Kerala.
- The median age of the internal migrants both males and females have declined by two years between 1998 and 2011. In 2011, the median age for male out-migrants was 21 years and it is apparent that the females begin the move two years earlier than males, at age of 19.
- Contrary to the standard Indian scenario, 92 per cent of the male youth were not married at the time of migration in 2011 as against 61 per cent among females. In other words, only 7 per cent of males were married at the time of migration compared to 38 per cent among women.
- According to the KMS 2007 report, “students constituted the second largest proportion of out-migrants from Kerala (25.8 percent). In 2008, students became the largest component among the out-migrants from Kerala, making up 26.4 percent of the total out-migrants. From the second position in 2003 and 2007, student out-migrants became the largest component in 2008”.

## Policy Recommendations

Addressing the imbalances in the incorporation of migrant youth into the labour force will require a three-pronged approach:

- (i) labour market reforms (ii) greater investment in education and (iii) skill-training

This will consequently boost participation rates, reduce unemployment rates and raise productive capacities.

### Education and Training:

The Indian Government must intervene and frame programmes to increase youth skill-levels, access to information and knowledge of rights. To ensure that young people with migration backgrounds acquire skills for managing risks, exercising their creative talents, and becoming productive citizens, investments in their social development and physical wellbeing are essential. This can be facilitated through setting up training and counselling initiatives, brokering partnerships with private sector companies to secure work placements and the formation of youth networks across the nation. Such a comprehensive move will support and aid the aim of promoting the active participation of young people in the country’s development trajectory.

### Employment Opportunities

Both state and national governments must actively pursue job creation initiatives that expand opportunities across all industries and sectors. Specific employment opportunities and policies must be framed for rural youth to address their particular needs and concerns.

### Policy re-framing

To change this paradigm where youth migration is absent from policy documents or is depicted as a problematized issue, there is a need for sensitising government actors to view and integrate youth migration into national policy strategy. Greater institutional coherence is required in formulating and implementing migration policies.

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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

## Internal Migration in India Initiative

The Internal Migration in India Initiative (IMII) was jointly launched by UNESCO and UNICEF in 2011, as a result of a two-day workshop on Internal Migration and Human Development in India (New Delhi, 6-7 December 2011), and in order to better respond to the many challenges raised by the internal migration phenomenon in India. Through the IMII, UNESCO and UNICEF wish to support the social inclusion of migrants in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the country, using a three-legged approach combining research, policy and advocacy.

The Internal Migration in India Initiative (IMII) is now an informal network of 200 researchers, NGOs, policy makers, UN agencies and key partners, such as UN Women, UN-HABITAT, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, determined to raise the profile of internal migration in India and to propose policy changes and creative practices.

## What are the objectives of the IMII?

- Raise awareness on the need to prioritize internal migration in policy-making
- Support the development of a coherent legal and policy framework on internal migration
- Advance knowledge on undocumented research areas on internal migration in India in order to support the design of better informed inclusive policies
- Promote existing policies and creative practices that increase inclusion of all sections of the internal migrant population in society, particularly children and women
- Contribute to changing the negative perception of internal migrants in society