

# **SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF MIGRANTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WEAKER SECTION IN DELHI : A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS**

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Delhi, the capital of India, has been experiencing the growth of population day by day. Such a growth of population is not a natural growth rather the migrants from the surrounding/ neighbouring states pouring in huge numbers.

The people coming to Delhi do not belong to any particular group, region, or occupation rather they come from varied range of socio – economic background and wide geographical regions. Analysis shows that majority of them come from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pardesh, Orissa etc.

Though migration embraces many complex aspects of human aspirations but the role of economic & social factors has been overwhelming decisive to motivate a person for taking final decision of migration.

The migrants belong to weaker sections are generally labour, vendors, rickshaw – pullers, masons, hawkers, conductors, drivers, cobblers, black – smiths, self – employed etc. who have migrated to Delhi chiefly because of the reason that they were not able to earn their livelihood at their native places, in search of employment and better job opportunities.

The largest segment of the respondents i.e. 38.2 percent were engaged in some occupations before coming to Delhi. About 30.0 percent migrants in Najafgarh and 31.2 percent in Okhla were unemployed ; and 26.8 percent in Najafgarh and 20.4 percent in Okhla had different types of occupations like tailoring, carpentering, rickshaw pulling, weaving, hair cutting, fruits and vegetable selling etc.

Examining the regional composition of the places of origin of the migrants of weaker section, it was found that Bihar with 37.5 per cent dominated the migrant flow from all the various states or regions of the country and Uttar Pardesh with 32 percent is on the second number. Haryana, being 3<sup>rd</sup> in position contributed 12.1 percent (19.8 percent in Najafgarh and 4.4 percent in Okhla) Rajasthan and Orissa contributed 6.6 percent and 2.2 percent respectively.

As far as the nature of migration is concerned, it was observed that the permanent migrants exceeds the seasonal, temporary and occasional migrants.

Migrants had come to Delhi with the help of their villagers, Kinsmen, relatives and

people from one's own area.

Employment opportunity, better education, better medical treatment, better transport and freedom from caste prejudices are few pull factors attracting people from rural areas to the metropolis of Delhi.

Besides many factors, some compulsions also lead to migration. These include to meet the higher expectations of parents, to match the life style with upper status groups, dislike for the traditional manual jobs, to have the religious freedom, to follow their particular sect, to avoid confrontation and exploitation at the hands of upper caste and last but not the least marriage – compel the rural migrants to make a move elsewhere.

Among the migrants, the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backwards castes are dominating and constitute about 65 percent. The survey reveals that the remaining migrants of general category constituted about 29.4 percent in Okhla while in Najafgarh they accounted for about 38.6 percent.

Irrespective of their caste and creed, they live with communal harmony and show respect for religion of others and they celebrate all festivals & programmes together.

Being poverty stricken most of the parents push their children also in the pursuit of earning their livelihoods instead of sending them to schools for education. The migrants had a low income at their native villages before coming to Delhi. After coming to Delhi, the income had increased manifold.

It is to be noted that unskilled labours engaged in manual works are low paid in Najafgarh & Okhla while the earnings of the semi – skilled and skilled workers like private bus – conductors mechanics, electricians, plumbers and carpenters are more because of their skills. The family size and their habits play a vital role in their financial status.

Another notable factor in the series of the socio – economic condition of the rural migrants is the nature of residence. Initially the migrants stay with their friends, relatives, village males or caste people and gradually shift to some other jhuggi, occupy the nearby land or live on rent. Their preference is to stay near their place of work and with the people of same caste and village.

The migrants of weaker section in Delhi live in unkempt, airless, flimsy, unhygienic and chaotic conditions. The dirty water overflows and stagnates here and there. Insects, flies, mosquitoes breed on dirty water and spread communicable and infectious disease. The heaps of garbage in the narrow lanes with foul smell can be found everywhere.

Migration may also be looked upon from its positive side, it is argued that rural out migrants generally constitute a comparatively more resourceful and selective segment of human capital. In certain situations, the increased supply of migrant labour in the urban areas may also play a significant role in promoting labour intensive technologies and in de – emphasizing capital intensive industries.

It has also been noticed that economic conditions of the migrants have improved

considerably after they have migrated to Delhi. Despite a high rate of illiteracy, they are familiar with some of the government policies & programmes and demand for ration card, plots of lands & provision of other amenities like school, electricity, dispensary, drinking water etc.