

GLOBALISATION AND NORTH-EAST INDIA

Edited by

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Acknowledgment

This volume consists of fifteen papers selected from about thirty papers that were presented in a National Seminar held at North Eastern Hill University, Shillong in November 2002. The Seminar was organised by the Department of Economics with financial support from the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata. We are grateful to the Institute for providing financial support in the organisation of the Seminar. Several key functionaries of the sponsors and prominent academics and public servants participated in the deliberations of the seminar.

We are grateful to all the seminar participants in making the effort to present their papers and also engage in the discussion on the current status of Northeast economy. While it is not possible to acknowledge each one by name, however we are hopeful that this volume will provide the necessary framework and a guide for future work on the Northeast.

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— Editors

Foreword

There are a number of studies on the impact of globalisation upon India as a whole, but negligibly few about its impact upon States in northeast India. This book, with contributions from some eminent economists, carefully analyses the special features of development in northeast India, which normally elude the attention of scholars who do not live in the northeast region of India. For example, the rate of growth of the non-farm sector in India's northeastern States is higher than the all-India average. Nevertheless, this is less a sign of economic vitality and more of distress arising out of a dearth of cultivable lands and the prohibition of timber trade. Similarly, the growth of employment in the unorganized sector of India's northeastern States is not an indicator of economic rejuvenation. It is rather an outcome of the failure of Government sponsored industrialisation – especially of socially desirable public investment – to take off as also of the evident shortcomings of the small and medium private industries.

This study admirably shuns the prevalent fashion blaming all presentday ills on globalisation. For example, the weakness of small tea gardens in Assam cannot be attributed to globalisation. These gardens can generate employment to absorb the surplus labour in villages – provided the Government formulates appropriate regulations to support the struggling private entrepreneur. Nevertheless, Amaresh Dubey and others do not fail to stress one major impact of globalisation that is common to the whole of India, including the northeast region,

viz a sort of jobless growth in which gross domestic product rises, but not employment. There is one area in which northeastern States, all of them having international borders, can take advantage of economic liberalization and globalisation, i.e. cross-border trade and investment. But here the efforts of the governments in India and neighbouring countries leave much to be desired. This book deserves the attention of informed readers.

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Introduction

If globalisation is understood to be a “fundamental process of change that is transforming the world economy, reflected in widening and intensifying international linkages in trade and finance” (World Bank, 1996, p.1) then it is not a new phenomena. Cross-border trade and financial linkages have been intensifying since the mid-19th century. In recent years, the notion of globalisation has accelerated with the extremely strong ‘counter-revolution’ (Toye, 1987) in development economics, which placed orthodox economics with its emphasis on the price mechanism and limited government intervention firmly into the policy making saddle.

The process of globalisation appears inexorable in the present century. In a seminal article on globalisation and inequality, Lindert and Williamson (2001:19-20) note that globalisation was responsible for more than half of the rising inequality in rich countries and for little over a quarter of the falling inequality among the poorer ones. (Lindert and Williamson, 2001) Therefore the question is will the world economy soon retreat from its commitment to globalisation just as it did a century ago? As seen by its extreme proponents, globalisation is a process that will not only be inevitable in the market-dominated twenty-first century, but one, which subsumes national autonomy to the common goal of global integration. On the other hand, opponents take issue with globalisation on two points. They claim that the spread of western cultural ideals and beliefs is damaging indigenous

society in the developing countries. Second, they dispute the argument that the state is becoming irrelevant to economic policy. Indeed, some scholars question whether globalisation is not a misnomer for greater internationalisation of the world economy (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). The OECD (1996) definition of globalisation as: “the growth or more precisely the accelerated growth, of economic activity across national and regional political boundaries. It finds expression in the increased movement of tangible and intangible goods and services, including ownership rights, via trade and investment and often people via migration. It can be and often is facilitated by a lowering of government impediments to that movement, and /or by technological progress, notably in transport and communications. Globalisation is thus a centrifugal process, a process of economic outreach, and microeconomic phenomena” (p.6). The ease with which capital can be transferred across space due to massive technological advances has made globalisation a reality. The era of information technology this has made the financial world virtually seamless and borderless promises to keep the pace of globalisation rapid. Associated with this phenomenon is the way in which there are increased linkages of investment and sales by giant MNCs.

The 1991 economic reforms were far more comprehensive and helped in liberalising the Indian economy and thereby integrating to the world economy. The positive effects of this new economic policy were the notable acceleration in the growth of GDP and per capita income. The reforms have secured much needed changes in the industrial, trading and financial regimes of accumulation. The negative effects are equally evident. The economic reforms were highly uneven in spatial terms reflecting higher levels of regional disparity.

The growth of Indian economy since 1991 may appear to have taken off for all practical purposes, but the fact is how far this is sustainable particularly in the face of the last East Asian

economic crisis. Employment elasticity in agricultural and Industrial sector has been insufficient in absorbing surplus labour force. There is increasing casualisation and de-skilling of the workforce. Poverty has increased and the poorer states show higher incidence of poverty during the post-reform period. Lack of investment in the social sectors like education, health, drinking water and sanitation has a major impact on the human resource capabilities. The main issue bothering Indian economy pundits today is how to reduce Central government deficit and also State government debts, which according to the World Bank, is one of the world's largest *Second generation* institutional reforms are being fiercely debated or are they? At the same time it is important to recognise that competitiveness among States has also increased, vying to garner the elusive FDI. Here again the poorer States remain untouched by all this frenzy, namely the North Eastern region.

Reforms have yet to deliver in the provision of infrastructure, employment generation and the food system. (Chandrashekar and Ghosh 2002:165) While integration to the global economy sounds exciting, yet we are more vulnerable to the vagaries of the global economy than ever before. The constant erosion of the foundations of the age-old production base in the name of disinvestments has made our economy far more fragile than ever before. At the same time, we need to recognise that unsustainable level of public debt and fiscal deficit are not effective means to bring sustained economic growth in this neoliberal era. An agenda, which ignores investment in employment generating schemes for the reduction of rural and urban poverty, is bound to have deleterious effect on the health of the economy and nation in the long run. As Patnaik (2006) notes, 'humbug of finance' has much to account for the perpetuation of poverty and unemployment in India. Indeed jobless growth is widely seen as a driver for efficiency of the markets.

The most important characteristic of the North-Eastern Region is that all the constituent units (States) are relatively closed ethnic groups. All the states in the region share porous international border. Consequently, both product and factor markets in these states have some international dimension. In the North East of India, in the last more than fifty years since Independence and despite the emergence of independent statehood and identity, State sponsored industrialisation has failed to take off in the region. In the post liberalised scenario, the mismatch between private and public investments is all the more pronounced with lack of regulatory controls to achieve socially desirable investments, particularly in the North Eastern states. Insurgency political uncertainty and lack of effective governance have created a situation whereby the step-motherly treatment of the North East has made radical changes impossible to conceive leave alone to implement them. Much of the resource mobilisation is non-existent and leading to an erosion of competitive advantage for the region to gain control over their developmental agenda. There is a decline in the reinvestment of private and public resources and a considerable flight of private capital from the North East is a reality, thereby leading to unsustainable growth regimes. Given the socioeconomic and geopolitical dimensions in the region, the prevailing pattern of development in these states has also culminated in the form of social unrest and degradation of economic values. This clearly implies that the development policies and programmes have fallen short of meeting the social and economic aspirations of the indigenous population in the region. In this context, the question that arises is how the forces of Globalization and economic growth could be combined together to address the implicit and most relevant questions associated with migration, unemployment and development of trading activities in the perspective of North-Eastern Region of India.

The book contains fourteen selected papers on various dimensions of Migration, Employment, Trade and Globalisation authored by some of the leading economists. These papers were selected out of those presented in a national seminar organised by the Department of Economics, North-Eastern Hill University Shillong in November 2002. The Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of South Asian Studies, Kolkata sponsored this seminar. The seminar facilitated a useful interaction among the experts on regional co-operation, academicians and policy makers from the constituent states and the rest of the country.

A. de Haan and Amaresh Dubey in their paper on the topic *Are Migrants Worse or Better-Off? Asking the Right Questions*, present an overall migration scenario and portray that 10 percent of the labour force is of a migrating character with a male predominance of 60 percent and mostly within the rural to rural migrating stream. Regarding the migration in North-Eastern region, the authors point out that it is much less than the all-India figure, i.e. only 3 percent and mostly found within this region. Migrants are found to be more educated and less poor, generally white collar workers. Migrations among socially deprived classes are less prevalent. The authors conclude that migration should not be considered as a problem and government should think of some supportive policies in this regard.

Amaresh Dubey, Smita Das and Veronica Pala in their paper on the topic *Migration in North-East Region of India: Some Issues*, observe that migration in North-East region is less than the rest of India. Migration in urban areas is largely due to economic reason whereas in rural areas marriage is the main cause for migration among women. Empirical evidences, suggest the dominance of rural to urban migration stream in urban areas. Some other dimensions like increase of migrants in white collar jobs, decline of the gap in the educational level of white collar workers and manual workers, increase of poverty of migrants in manual job sector are additional features of the paper.

Globalisation, Trade and Issues of Employment in the form of a case study about the small-scale tea plantations in Assam, is discussed in-depth by Kalyan Das. This includes the scenario of employment and the marketing of tea in India during the globalisation regime. It is pointed out that since international trade is presently being governed by global market mechanism therefore the price of Indian tea has to be competitive with the prevailing prices in the international market. It is concluded that in the context of small-scale plantations in Assam, globalisation is not to be blamed for its feeble conditions. The small tea gardens are potential employment generator in the labour surplus rural sector of Assam. The entrepreneurial efforts of local growers need supportive regulations from the state. The author believes that it is possible for transforming global presence into global competitive advantage and ensuring labour standards in small-scale plantations sector of Assam.

Smita Das, Amaresh Dubey and Veronica Pala review *The Employment Situation in the North-Eastern Region of India: A Gender Perspective*. The paper focuses on the nature of gender bias in societies of North-East. It is pointed out that the proportion of female-headed household is very less in the region except in Meghalaya. Majority of the females among the female-headed household are widows. The incidence of female child labour in urban areas of the North-East is found to be higher than the national average. The paper makes an urgent plea for the remedy of acute gender bias from which the societies in North-East suffer in the urban areas.

The Non-Farm Sector in the Rural North-Eastern Region of India: Some Correlates and Determinants by Veronica Pala, Smita Das and Amaresh Dubey, discusses the evolution of non-farm (NF) sector in rural North-East India. It has been emphasised that the growth of NF sector is much higher than that of all-India averages. It suggests that this is mainly due to distress

diversification associated with a ban on timber trade and lack of cultivable land. It is pointed out that this type of NF sector growth might have little hope for the reduction of poverty. It is concluded that the falling poverty ratio in the North-East was incompatible with the phenomenon of distress diversification.

M. Satish Kumar presents the *Structure and Trends in the Informal Sector: A Case Study of North-East India*. He refers to Stiglitz's on Globalisation and the particular nature of the North-East, which is plagued with endemic backwardness and stagnation. This characterises informal labour market as being highly heterogeneous and diversified. Analysing the role of informal sector the author opines that a large component of the Gross Domestic Product comes from the informal or unorganised sector. After a state-wise analysis of the role of the informal sector in North-East, the paper states that among other things employment in the unorganised sector is growing in the North-Eastern states. He concludes that: (a) State sponsored industrialisation has failed to take off in the region, (b) Small and medium-sized private industries have also not done well (c) Internal liberalisation is equally important and that co-operatives have got an important role to play in the development of the region.

Nirankar Srivastav provides an assessment of the *Development of Service Sector: Is there any Hope for the Economies of North-Eastern India*. The paper evaluates the status of services sector in the north-eastern states and finds that like other relatively developed states of India, service sector also plays a dominant role in terms of its contribution to Net State Domestic Product in all the states of North-East. However, public expenditure contributes more than other elements under the service sector. The paper highlights the lack of significant structural changes in the service sector of the states of North-East in recent past.

Saundarjya Borbora and Ratul Mahanta provide a comprehensive discussion on *Border Trade with Bangladesh and Pre-Investment Feasibility: Economic Prospects of North-Eastern Region*. The paper identifies resource potential in North-Eastern Region on India's trade with Bangladesh with the help of data on the composition and trend of imports and exports of the two countries, the role of land customs stationed along the NER-Bangladesh border. It further assesses the demand potentialities of diverse goods and the investment opportunities based on import demand and resource availability and suggests an action plan on the investment potential in Assam. The paper highlights the need to take advantage of new liberalized trade regimes in the SAARC region, to improve the infrastructural facilities in order to increase border trade. The role of peace is imperative in the North-Eastern region for development to be effective.

B.S. Mipun and Charles Romalswama discuss *Border Trade in Mizoram*. The paper highlights the socio-economic conditions and standards of living of border traders in Mizoram, in terms of the capita income, standard of living and higher literacy. The paper focusses on the high quality of imports from Myanmar, which is also facilitated by the cultural affinity among traders on both sides. For Mizoram, the contribution of border trade in Net State Domestic Product and employment is significant. It suggests that the government should introduce regulations, which not only generates revenue for the country but also intervenes minimally in the age-old mode of trade.

A.C. Mohapatra and Josojit Dey's paper on *Locations, Economic Growth and Trade: Recent Economic Trends in South Asia*, focuses on the process of trade-driven development in South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The 'location driven investment in coastal regions' in the last couple of decades is crucial, affecting regional

developments and disparities in these countries. The paper concludes that as economies move under WTO obligations towards free trade, free enterprises help in a higher GDP growth and reduction in poverty. At the same time, growing disparity between richer and poorer regions is concomitant to this process of economic liberalization.

The paper entitled *Globalisation and the Challenge of Poverty, Unemployment and Social Sector Development in North-Eastern States* by Sudhakar Panda, opines that states which have better infrastructure have gained from globalisation. He concludes that most of the states since 1991 have not done well in terms of combating unemployment, but alleviation of poverty has worked to a certain extent. Given that globalisation regime has come to stay, it is inevitable that more state level efforts and intervention is necessary towards development of the social sector.

E. Bijoya Kr. Singh's paper *Globalisation and it's Employment Implication for North-East* examines the issues involved with the sectoral structural change, distribution of workers, work participation rates, and unemployment scenario in the North-Eastern states. The paper focuses on the growing trends of tertiarisation of the economies which have been reinforced within the region. The comparative performance of sub-sectors during the 1980s and 1990s does not indicate any change compatible with enlarged job opportunities. The change in shares in NSDP has not been matched by proportionate change in the distribution of the work force, which has remained static and is detrimental to the growth of productive employment. The challenge is to strike the right balance between sectoral distribution of NSDP and work force.

Amitava Mitra's paper on *Economic Reforms and Prospects of Developing Network-Based Tourism in North-East India: A Study of Arunachal Pradesh* deals with the prospects for

developing nature-based tourism. In the context of resource crunch faced by all the states, it can be a major earning sector where the existence of consumer surplus points towards the possibility of even hiking the fees in the tourist sector and thereby increasing the volume of revenue. It is found that such tourism should be made sustainable with well-identified policy interventions so that the negative impacts are marginalised.

A.K. Agarwal in his paper on *Globalisation and its Relevance for the North-Eastern Region of India* discusses the expected impact of globalisation in the North-Eastern region, which is geographically isolated from the rest of the country and have a weak industrial base along with an enclave type of industrial sector. The author opines that globalisation have not helped so far in raising the economic welfare of the masses in this region. He concludes that tourism could be developed further in this region and required higher investment on linkage-based industries whose products have markets in the neighbouring countries.

The book is expected to be a variable addition to the rather scanty literature on these relevant and contemporary economic issues with reference to North-Eastern region of India.

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Are Migrants Worse or Better-off ? Asking the Right Questions

*Arjan de Haan
Amaresh Dubey*

1. Introduction

The characteristics of migrants are often discussed in terms of comparisons with the non-migrant population. From an analytical viewpoint, this seems sensible, as it provides a way of 'explaining' migration. From a political point of view the comparison is also understandable, as it provides the part of language in which immigration is discussed, and (less) about those leaving about a country or area.

In this paper we will discuss such comparisons by first drawing on secondary literature from India and elsewhere and second by an analysis of NSS data for two rounds (1987-88 and 1999-00) at the all-India level and for the North-Eastern Region (NER). The paper goes on to discuss an aspect of the data on 'migrants' which is usually less explored, i.e. large variations in various respects within the category of migrants, which is partly related to the 'type of migration' (as defined in NSS), but even within the category of migration for work variations are likely to be large. We hypothesise that variations among the migrants are larger than between migrants and non-migrants, throwing open the

query as to how meaningful is the comparison among these two groups.

The next section discusses the policies relevant for migration. At the outset, we will first rehearse the arguments criticising dominant approaches that ignore and/or under-estimate migration, and objectives in policy approaches and projects that aim to reduce migration and enhance benefits. We will draw conclusion regarding the implications of the findings in earlier sections regarding diversity among migrants, noting that specific policies need to be formulated for specific groups of migrants.

2. Comparing Migrants and Non-Migrants – What Does the Literature have to Say?

There is little doubt that migration is related to differentials in some form of economic differences. This was core to the much-quoted Harris-Todaro model that focused on rural-urban migration. In India at the macro-level, it has been shown that using 1981 state data, migration is higher with higher levels of rural poverty (leading also to an expansion of the informal sector).¹ The link was shown by Singh (1993) for districts in Haryana,² however no simple explanation should be expected: James (2000) shows that inter-district migration patterns in Andhra Pradesh were not in conformity with dominant migration theories because people moved into Telangana districts where land was available (possibly 'tribal') from relatively developed Godavari-Krishna region. International migration also clearly takes the direction of economic differences, though some states have developed stronger 'traditions' of out-migration than others. Indeed economic differences for example are unlikely to explain the high rates of out-migration from Punjab.

At the individual level of migrants more specific information is now available. De Haan and Rogaly (2002) and de Haan

(1999) discussed some of the international literature on the subject of migration, concluding that labour migrants are usually adult young men (though women are by no means absent), and are often not the poorest in areas of origin, often slightly better educated, and come from a wide range of backgrounds in terms of class and social status. Further, there are no uniform patterns and characteristics of migration depend on labour market structures as well as government policies.

Within the Indian literature migrants have been described with reference to a wide range of characteristics, i.e. the caste of the migrant. For example, Breman's research (1996) in western India stresses the over representations of the lower castes and Harijans in circular migration, and Rogaly (1999, 2002) describes caste as one of the axes along which migration in rural West Bengal is segmented. Studies of indentured labour (Tinker 1974), representing India's early integration in a global labour market indicated that migrants formed an average, broad-middle sample of India's rural population. My own research in northern India (de Haan 1994) suggests that all castes have been represented in migration and research on international migration from Punjab emphasised that (perhaps exceptionally) even the lower castes and worse-off migrated, sponsored by better-off and early migrants (Pettigrew 1977).

Second, land ownership has been a regular element in the analysis of migration. The village studies project in India (Connell 1976) showed that the landless were least likely to migrate (as well as the unequal effect of migration).³ Yadava et al (1996/97) conclude on the basis of their own and secondary data that migrants households in India are socio-economically and educationally better placed than others, and that there is a positive relationship between landholding and migration. However, according to a survey in India in 1980s, the landless and poor in Bihar were more prone to out-migrate (though differences were small), in Kerala the middle peasantry migrated

more, while in Uttar Pradesh all landed groups except the highest size of cultivators had relatively high propensity to migrate (Oberai et al. 1989). Data on changes in inequality in Palanpur, Western Uttar Pradesh, show that higher castes were more prominently represented among migrants in 1983/84, but lower castes had seized the opportunity for outside jobs in earlier years (Lanjouw and Stern 1989:17).

Similarly, evidence on education indicates complex pictures with the above mentioned Indian village studies suggesting that migrants are educationally better placed than non-migrants (Connell et al. 1976; also Yadava and Sinha 1996/97). My analysis of 1983-84 NSS data for Indian urban migrants suggested that migrants have a higher average per capita consumption than non-migrants (de Haan, 1997a).

Finally, no migration analysis can afford to ignore the gender perspective. Many studies have shown that women do migrate but often face more barriers to mobility and access to opportunities, tending to end up in 'informal sector' jobs (e.g., Mukherjee 2001, Mehra and Gammage 1999). However, Andrea Menefee Singh (1984) concluded from macro and micro level studies that there are contrasting patterns of female rural-to-urban migration in northern and southern India, with south having higher rates of female migration. Her analysis emphasizes cultural norms, in particular northern Indian practices relating to seclusion of women that affects female out-migration and employment.

The conclusion for migration studies ought to be that it is unwise to generalise. Patterns of migration differ for a variety of reasons. At one extreme there are international migrants, generally better off to start with and who have managed to significantly enhance their positions, while at the other end migrants in rural areas or women have worse starting positions and often end up in worse jobs sometimes even increasing their burdens of debts.

3. Migrants in India: Characteristics from the NSS

In this section we discuss the magnitude of migration and some socioeconomic characteristics of the migrants. Table 1 reports the proportion of migrants in the total population in 1987-88 and 1999-2000. In these calculations, we have left out those who migrated due to marriage. The Table suggests that there has been a decline in migration over the 12-year period. This goes against expectations since economic growth has been substantial and the economy has opened up a great deal by the turn of the century. This declining trend does not appear as a new phenomenon; Census data for example showed a decline between 1981 and 1991 (29.5 % in 1981 to 26.6% in 1991).⁴

Of course survey data on migration can be notoriously unreliable. Srivastava (1998: 600 ff.) emphasises that both census and NSS “ignore or severely underestimate short duration (circular) migrants and commuting labour.” He argues that with improvement in infrastructure labour commuting may have increased (and no data regarding commuting are available). But it seems doubtful that this can be the only explanation for the trend. The results of different NSS rounds appear fairly consistent, and has been corroborated by James (2000) for Andhra Pradesh in line with information from the Census (data on migration in the North-East discussed below also suggest reliability of NSS data).

In this table, urban areas have been divided into three city sizes (see note to table 1). It has been argued in the literature that as city size increases (city size is measured here in terms population) productivity of factors of production, which includes labour, increases (Sviikauskas, 1973). The proportion of migrants in the total population is highest in million plus cities but the slow down also has been most marked in these cities.

Table 1 : Proportion of migrants (excluding migration due to marriage) out of the total population

Year	Rural	Urban			Total	Total
		STR1	STR2	STR3		
1987-88	6.19	20.80	23.07	24.74	22.55	9.89
1999-00	5.53	18.67	23.17	21.60	21.46	9.56

Notes : STR1=towns with population less than 50,000; STR2=towns with population between 50,000 to less than 10 lakhs; STR3 = cities with a population of 10 lakhs or more

Source : Special tabulation using unit record data on employment and unemployment collected by the National Sample Survey Organization during 1987-88 (43rd round) and 1999-00 (55th round).

It is clear from Table 1 that rural to urban migration is still most important for economic analysis. The slow-down in migration among the million plus cities as well as in smaller towns suggested in Table 1 could be due to at least two reasons. Among the million plus cities slow down could be due to 'saturation' (which one could illustrate for Calcutta for example; de Haan 200b). A possibility to be examined more closely being towns and cities around the million-plus category might be experiencing in-migration of labour that is actually because of million plus cities. Secondly, the slowing down of migration among the smaller towns could be due to recent surge in infrastructure development, especially road network and transport facilities. Given that the Indian migrant labour is known to maintain their rural bases, these developments have provided a leverage to the labour to take up work in near-by towns and thereby retain links to their rural household. In these decisions, apparently prospective migrant labour weighs the cost of setting up separate new household in the near by town against the cost of daily commutation.

Table 2 shows the distribution of migrants based on the

reasons to migrate. What is striking is that most migration is not for economic reasons. Out of the total migrants, only about 18 percent migrated in search of employment in 1987-88, which declined to about 14 percent in 1999/00 - reinforcing the questions regarding migratory responses to economic growth. This table suggests another possible explanation for the slow-down in rural- urban migration, i.e. in recent decades nearly third of total rural to urban migration is accounted for by movement of dependents of migrant workers.

Table 2 : Reasons for migration

Reason	1987-88		1999-00	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
In search of employment	1.93	10.54	1.11	7.26
In search of better employment	2.82	7.59	1.83	6.75
To take up employment/ better employment	NA	NA	1.07	3.99
Transfer of service/contract	1.60	6.56	1.05	4.21
Studies	1.00	3.73	1.09	3.31
Social/Political problems	1.74	2.22	1.00	1.01
Marriage	73.31	31.35	77.63	35.80
Migration of parent(s)/ earning member(s)	10.65	30.02	9.15	29.47
Other reasons	6.96	7.99	6.06	8.20
Total	100	100	100	100

- Note: (a) The figures are percentages of total migrants
 (b) In 1987-88, Natural calamity (code 8) has been merged with other reasons (code 9) to form 'Other reasons'.
 (c) In 1999-00, proximity to place of work (code 5), acquisition of own house (code 7), housing problems (code 8) and health reasons (code 10) have been merged with other reasons (code 19) to form 'Other reasons'.

Source: As in Table 1

Table 3 shows the origin of migrants to urban areas. In smaller towns, the majority of the migrants come from the same district (over 50 percent in both rounds). At the other extreme are large cities (metropolitan cities) where 50 percent of the migrants come from other states and other countries during 1987-88. There is a steep decline in the share of migrants in metros from other states/countries within a 12-year period.

(See Wide Table 3)

An important characteristic of migration in developing countries in general and in India in particular is that migration is male dominated. At the aggregate level this seems to be true as apparent from Table 4. Male migrants dominate rural-urban migration, particularly in larger cities - though about 40% of the migrants are women. The Table also shows the duration of stay of the migrants in different city sizes, suggesting that the numerical dominance of men has been declining over time (and a possible explanation of slow down in the migration in search of employment).

(See Wide Table 4)

It was discussed in the last section that migrants in general possess higher levels of human capital. Table 5 presents average years of schooling of the migrants. Those migrating from a rural area to rural area had on an average just about 3 years of schooling - but still a year more than the non-migrants on an average (the averages, of course, mask huge variations). Migrants to urban areas are clearly better educated than the non-migrants. As expected the average years of schooling has improved over the two rounds, but differences between migrants and non-migrants did not reduce.

Table 3 : Location of last usual residence of migrants (excluding migration due to marriage) in the urban areas

Location	1987-88			1999-00				
	STR1	STR2	STR3	Total	STR1	STR2	STR3	Total
Same district-rural	34.98	25.22	4.93	24.25	34.66	23.75	7.23	22.08
Same district-urban	17.79	13.87	9.03	14.14	15.47	15.31	10.14	14.00
Another district of same state- rural	14.63	17.64	21.41	17.44	17.06	18.71	30.72	21.48
Another district of same state- urban	15.42	19.43	14.03	17.08	16.97	20.32	15.99	18.34
Another state- rural	7.24	11.35	24.71	12.73	7.72	11.78	22.46	13.59
Another state-urban	7.87	8.91	20.53	10.91	6.81	8.47	11.83	8.95
Another country	2.06	3.58	5.36	3.46	1.30	1.66	1.63	1.56
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Figures are in percentages

Source: As in Table 1

Table 4: Proportions of male migrants (excluding marriage migration) in urban areas

Number of years since migration	1987-88				1999-00			
	STR1	STR2	STR3	Total	STR1	STR2	STR3	Total
	0-5	57.18	58.81	60.84	58.41	56.56	59.08	61.60
5-10	57.56	58.01	65.84	59.31	57.26	58.45	64.96	59.44
10-15	56.32	63.04	66.62	61.96	58.89	60.66	61.24	60.39
15-20	61.42	65.42	70.34	65.52	62.43	64.70	72.69	66.51
20-25	64.44	65.43	73.29	67.36	64.72	67.55	69.32	67.55
25-30	65.28	70.06	80.16	72.13	66.14	67.56	69.87	67.94
30-35	61.68	68.23	71.80	67.68	68.82	67.93	73.00	69.78
35-40	62.29	58.98	64.39	61.37	67.38	68.54	75.74	70.93
40-45	71.67	65.89	64.73	66.19	67.92	69.32	65.81	67.80
45-50	60.56	66.05	72.97	67.10	69.96	72.01	65.08	68.81
>50	65.99	72.53	90.95	77.93	62.58	62.10	77.92	68.53
Total Migrants	58.21	60.80	66.55	61.16	58.77	61.00	65.13	61.40

Note: (a) Figures are percentages of total migrants in the respective strata

(b) The proportion of female migrants is obtained by subtracting the proportion of male migrants from 100.

Source: As in Table 1

**Table 5: Average years of schooling of migrants
(excluding migration due to marriage)
vis-à-vis non-migrants**

Sector	1987-88				1999-00			
	Rural	Urban	Total	Non-migrants	Rural	Urban	Total	Non-migrants
Rural	2.75	4.58	3.10	1.89	3.92	5.62	4.32	2.78
Urban	4.63	6.65	5.50	3.77	5.70	8.14	6.71	5.03
Total	3.56	6.03	4.34	2.27	4.83	7.38	5.69	3.30

Note: For the migrants, a cell c (k,j) denotes the average years of schooling of those who move to sector k from sector j.

Source: As in Table 1

More detailed analysis of migration to urban sector, investigating migration over the three city sizes from the NSS data is presented in Table 6. Average years of schooling of the migrants increases as we go up the city size and there is a general increase over the two years.

(See Wide Table 6)

Table 7 presents the incidence of poverty by city size between the migrant and non-migrant households. The poverty incidence is lower among the migrants households compared to non-migrants households, supporting earlier findings that migrants are better off in terms of levels of living. The differences exist in both rounds, suggesting that on an average migration dynamics have not changed dramatically.

(See Wide Table 7)

We further look at migration classified by social group of the migrants, using the NSSO classification of four mutually exclusive groups, Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Castes (OBC) and all other castes (OTH). The

**Table 6 : Average years of schooling by type of last usual residence of migrants
(excluding migration due to marriage) in the urban areas**

Type	1987-88			1999-00				
	STR1	STR2	STR3	Total	STR1	STR2	STR3	Total
Same district-rural	4.51	4.88	5.36	4.73	5.86	6.25	5.58	6.04
Same district-urban	5.31	5.77	5.88	5.60	7.29	7.50	7.52	7.44
Another district of same state- rural	4.90	4.74	5.37	4.94	5.87	5.93	5.93	5.92
Another district of same state- urban	6.81	7.29	7.73	7.23	7.78	8.40	9.40	8.48
Another state- rural	3.74	3.74	4.50	4.03	5.05	4.92	4.59	4.79
Another state-urban	6.44	6.76	7.89	7.11	7.72	8.69	8.77	8.53
Another country	3.62	4.84	6.58	5.15	5.78	5.76	7.21	6.16
Total	5.14	5.48	6.11	5.50	6.48	6.86	6.68	6.71

Source: As in Table 1

Table 7: Poverty incidence (HCR) of migrants (excluding marriage migration) in urban areas

Number of years since migration	1987-88			1999-00			Total
	STR1	STR2	STR3	STR1	STR2	STR3	
0-5	26.46	21.54	20.88	21.16	15.21 ¹	12.83	16.34
5-10	30.43	26.32	20.55	26.45	14.69	19.85	18.61
>10	31.98	27.11	22.54	24.25	18.52	13.77	18.33
Total Migrants	28.82	24.42	21.65	23.22	16.29	14.52	17.54
Non-migrants	53.51	43.97	30.86	43.30	32.64	22.71	33.03

Source: As in Table 1

last category, in terms of poverty tends to be better off compared to other caste groups and OBCs tend to be in between ST/SC groups in terms of levels of living. The tabulation is restricted to 1999/00 as for earlier rounds the category OBC was not included in the NSS data. The Table shows that the more deprived groups have lower incidence of migration, thereby suggesting that they suffer from lack of mobility as well as higher incidence of poverty. In the rural sector, labour mobility follows similar pattern. However, in the urban sector the ST has the highest proportion of migrants among them. One possible explanation could be that in the recently formed smaller and tribal-dominated states (Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh) migration is from within the state, which could increase this proportion.

Table 8: Proportion of Migrants Among different Social Groups (1999-00)

Sector	ST	SC	OBC	OTH	ALL
Rural	4.38	5.09	5.17	6.36	5.43
Urban	24.09	18.39	19.60	23.14	21.37
Total	6.56	7.59	8.37	12.36	9.48

Note: The figures are in percent and have been calculated out of the total population of the respective social group.

In conclusion, we see that NSS data presents us with two perhaps surprising facts. First, migration within India according to this data source has not been increasing. Much more needs to be done to understand this paradox of economic growth and lack of migration response including whether NSS data properly reflects all kinds of migration. However, the possibility that there was as much migration earlier as there is now should not be dismissed.⁵ Second, the NSS data suggest that migration is more common among better-off groups: for

example people from higher castes are twice as likely to migrate as a person classified as Scheduled Tribes. Again, more work needs to be done to find out whether the data is representative, but these findings are in agreement with some other studies.

4. Migration in the North-East

In this section we analyse the same NSS data with reference to the North-Eastern Region (NER).⁶ Of course, these data focus on in-migration, which needs to be complemented by analysis of out-migration. Nevertheless, the data suggest interesting trends regarding trends in migration and migrants' characteristics.

Table 9 shows that (in-) migration in NER is low compared to India as a whole, which is of course not surprising given the communal/ethnic issues (as described for example by Hussain, 2000, for Assam with its large scale internal displacement). There was a slight increase between 1987 and 1999, particularly in urban areas.⁷ Both in 1987 and 1999, about two-third of migrants in rural areas remained within the same district; in urban areas this was about 50 per cent.⁸ Less than a quarter of all migrants came from outside the state and/or country. In 1987 a larger percentage of migrants came across the internal border than in 1999; inter-state migration did not show a similar decline. The low incidence of migration appears to be related to reservation policies, son-of-the-soil attitudes, restrictions on movement, (though Manipur and Meghalaya seem more open to migrants comparatively), and agitation against international migrants in the 1980s.

61 percent of the people who had migrated to the rural areas in 1987-88 did so because of marriage, and this proportion increased to 67 percent in 1999-00. The most important reasons for migration to the urban sector are the search for employment or better employment.

Table 9 : Migrants as percentage of population and labour force (15-59 years)

	1987-88			1999-00		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
% of population						
NER	2.63	6.03	3.00	2.40	8.72	3.25
All India	6.19	22.55	9.89	5.53	21.46	9.56
% of labour force	6.18	11.93	6.87	10.30	15.78	11.05

Note: The figures relate to all the migrant workers including migration due to marriage

Who are the migrants, and what are their characteristics? Table 10 presents incidence of poverty among migrants and non-migrants. In line with the trend described above the percentage of people living below the poverty line is much lower among migrants than among non-migrants, though this difference had decreased by 1999/2000 due to a substantial increase in poverty among migrants.

Table 10 : Poverty Headcount Incidence (HCI) of Migrants and Non-migrants

	Migrants			Non-migrants		
	Rural	Urban	1987-88 Total	Rural	Urban	Total
HCI	13.80	4.42	11.78	35.58	8.70	32.67
			1999-00			
HCI	36.57	3.00	23.83	39.97	8.30	35.86

Note: The figures for migrants exclude migration due to marriage

These differences in poverty incidence may be partly explained by the different occupations. In 1999-2000, a slightly higher proportion of migrants than non-migrants worked as

white-collar workers (this difference was much larger in 1987-88; see Das et al. 2002).

Table 11: Occupational pattern among migrants and non-migrants, 1999-2000

	Rural		Urban		All	
	White Collar workers	Manual workers	White Collar workers	Manual workers	White Collar workers	Manual workers
Migrants	16.7	83.3	60.5	39.5	28.2	71.8
Non-migrants	14.4	85.6	57.9	42.1	19.4	80.6

Finally, Table 12 shows the average years of schooling of migrants and non-migrants in the North-East. Again, migrants are better off than the non-migrants. Average years of schooling of the urban white-collar workers in 1987-88 were 8.85 for the migrants and 6.97 for the non-migrants. The difference was less than a year for the manual workers. This difference has narrowed down in 1999-00.

(See Wide Table 12)

This analysis of the patterns of migration in the North-East is not a typical illustration of India's general pattern. However, it does illustrate two key points (apart from reinforcing confidence in the validity of NSS data related to migration). First, it shows what the specific reasons may be for a decline in-migration, internationally or across states. The low in-migration is partly due to low levels of economic development (and as mentioned, out-migration may predominate) but its decline is caused by specific social-political circumstances. Second, it clearly underlines the point that migrants tend to be better off (though in this case the differences declined over time).

5. Heterogeneity of Migrants and Migration

This section looks at the same NSS data by focusing on the extent of variation in the various characteristics within the groups of migrants and non-migrants. The hypothesis is that the differences among migrants are at least as large as among the non-migrants. This would help us understand at least the second key issue that came out of the last section regarding the relatively better position of migrants: if the variance within the group is very large, there is actually little point in making the comparison.

What is the evidence from the literature that makes us suggest this hypothesis? The Village Studies quoted above (Connell 1976) indicated multi-polarity in migration: both the better off and the poor migrated (though with very different welfare outcomes). A similar picture, to digress slightly already existed at the beginning of the 20th century in western Bihar (de Haan 2002) where both laborers and the sons of the landlords left the villages to find work, but of course with rather different opportunities. Other research quoted above also shows that such distributions are context specific.⁹

The NSS data analysed by de Haan (1997) showed that migrants in urban areas were slightly better off but that the differences were very small and that the distribution across income groups showed much similarity. Our preliminary analysis of NSS data for 1999/2000 showed a mixed picture. Annex 1 graphically illustrates income distribution across migrants and non-migrants and Table 13 presents the Gini coefficients between the two groups. This indicates that indeed inequality is higher among migrants (though inequality is higher in urban areas, the difference between the two groups is larger in rural areas).

Table 13: Inequality among migrants and non-migrants

	1999-00		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Migrants	0.273	0.335	0.333
Non-Migrants	0.248	0.325	0.295

Source: NSS data

This picture of heterogeneity should be no surprise for a number of reasons. Different work opportunities of course attract different groups of migrants. Hence changes over time are complex: for example, for unskilled migrants from Bihar there may have been more opportunities in Calcutta until the 1930s than since Independence. Perhaps increasingly, migration opportunities are more localised (which might explain NSS trends in numbers) and faster traffic increases commuting and reducing 'migration'. But a range of non-economic factors also account for the complex picture. The 'paradox' of high out-migration from Punjab was already referred and has as much to do with its history of migration as with relative deprivation. The relatively egalitarian structure of the migration streams - with lower castes also finding a place in international migration streams - has probably as much to do with its culture as with the political economy. We noted the relative immobility of Scheduled Tribes: even among the poorest groups in western Orissa, researchers suggest that differences exist in terms of villages with more and less physical access. And we also referred to large gendered differences in migrations, which again can be only partly explained by the political economy.

The key point would be a simple but important one. It is impossible to generalise about migration, even - and perhaps particularly - about labour migration. People migrate for a variety of reasons and different groups have very different access to

migration opportunities. In a globalising world, this heterogeneity is likely to be larger not smaller.

6. What can Policies do for Migrants?

We have argued elsewhere (de Haan 2000, de Haan and Rogaly 2002) that migration tends to be seen in academic and policy debates and in the popular press as problematic. It is often seen as the *consequence* of ruptures, of environmental disaster, of economic exploitation (increasingly related to globalisation), or political or civil tensions and violence. Popular as well as more academic statements regularly refer to rapidly increasing migration which finds little basis in data as we described above, and which ignores migration as a common livelihood strategy often with long histories. And it is often perceived to be a *cause* of problems, like environmental degradation, health problems, 'brain drain', political or social instability, declining law and order, and unravelling social fabric and support systems.

Recent policy changes in India (the North-East being rather exceptional of course) throw up the question whether this statement needs to be revised. Internationally, there are many instances of reversals in migration policies. Both China and Ethiopia have reduced the strict controls on population mobility. In the UK and elsewhere, active policies have been designed to increase numbers of skilled migrants (introducing a US type of selection system). In case of India, with liberalisation, migrants who have left India have increasingly been seen as assets and attempts are made to facilitate their contribution to the Indian economy and society more widely. Other countries with large numbers of migrants have gone further in trying to assist the migration flows.

Nevertheless, we believe that within India there is still a need to promote a more positive assessment and policy approach

towards migration and recognition of the importance of migration. Studies show that state or district level officials are often unaware of large numbers of migrants passing internal borders. The point here is not that migration is good or bad: in many cases it is extremely exploitative and not a route for improving livelihoods. Any assessment of migration should start from an insight into the heterogeneity of migration as indicated above, that people move for different purposes and with often very different outcomes. But this does not take away our concern that where migration exists, it needs better recognition and policies should be supportive of migrants.

It is common for development and anti-poverty programmes to include a goal of reducing migration. For example, EAS, JRY, IAY, and MWS schemes creating wage employment, and carried out in the agricultural lean season are intended to reduce unemployment as well as migration (e.g. Dayal and Karan).¹⁰ There is of course no objection to aim to provide better livelihood to people who are forced to migrate. The evidence whether this has worked is limited. International evidence suggests that development programmes do not reduce out-migration. Mosse et al. (2002: 83-84) described the impact of the development project KRIBP project on rates of out-migration, showing that in two sets of villages the effects on total numbers were the opposite, and the changes in incidences of migration were different for men and women, and the poor and less poor. The main point however is that by aiming to reduce migration or by ignoring it, opportunities may be lost to support migrants.

Our discussion of migration-relevant policies brings forward the following sets of issues. First, it is crucial that policies and policy makers as well as studies incorporate an understanding of the importance of migration. Good data is essential to understand the importance of migration and there is scope for more analysis of existing India-wide datasets (including in-depth

work to establish whether migration streams are covered). It needs to be kept in mind that rural-urban migration is only a small part of total migration that most migrants have remained within rural areas and particularly the poorest are least likely to migrate over long distances. Understanding the existence and dynamics of rural-rural migration need to be a common aspect of any rural development policy and programme.

Secondly, policy measures can help to make migration less costly and more secure. This can start from helping to provide better information regarding employment opportunities. Work by Action Aid and others in western Orissa also focused on the travel between home and destination, and security particularly on return when some money has been earned has been signalled as a key issue elsewhere. As described by Prakash (2000) for return migrants from the Gulf, special measures for more vulnerable households may be required. To help formulate such policy measures, specific field studies could contribute towards improving the understanding of the motives and rationales of policy makers.

Furthermore, it is essential that discrimination against migrants is addressed. Their often bad living conditions can be made worse by the absence of rights and legal protection and being subject to harassment. Migrants often are denied or have costly access to health care and other services, and they have little ability to organise and express their voice. One should also be aware of the positive negative effects of 'protective' measures such as trying to ban middleman (e.g. through arrests of labour contractors, recently was reported in Chattisgarh/western Orissa) without providing alternative structures regarding migrants access to jobs.

A few examples show more supportive approaches to migration thereby incorporating an understanding of the programmes and policies. Action Aid with others in western

Orissa have tried to work with various parties involved, including officials and employers to improve the situation of poor migrants in unskilled labour around Hyderabad. Education programmes like Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan have introduced special schools for the children of migrants who leave the villages during the dry season. And in the KRIBP project quoted above, a 'migrant support component' was introduced, which includes practical measures like training for migrants. It tries to reduce the cost of migration by establishing accommodation for both migrants and those staying behind in the villages, and encouraging support systems for migrants such as leasing of land and cattle. It aims to ensure migrants rights to health care, education and food distribution at the place of destination, as well as increasing awareness of such rights. Such measures may be considered in the context of North-East India. How far such approaches are successful and under what conditions they can exist can only be assessed with more in-depth analyses. The key point here is that they represent examples of initiatives with more 'positive' approaches to migration. This involves a change in the mindset away from seeing migration as a problem to a sympathetic understanding of migration and the migrants involved, to an approach that tries to reduce the most negative aspects of migration and enhance their positive benefits to the region.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mitra (1992), the emphasis being that many of the urban poor are not migrants, and that only about one fourth of the increase in the urban labour force between 1971 and 1981 consisted of migrants.
2. This is contradicted by Ghatak (1996) using Indian state level data, but he uses urban population figures rather than direct migration data.
3. The village studies emphasized the importance of village level factors, like concentration of landholding and landlessness, literacy, commercialization of agriculture (as cause and consequence), proximity to urban areas and main roads.

4. Kundu and Gupta 1996, in Srivastava 1998: 584. 2001 Census data on migration is not yet available.
5. See also James (2000), using both the 1991 Census and 1987-88 NSS data for Andhra Pradesh showing stagnant migration between 1981 and 1991, and similarities in percentages of migration between Census and NSS.
6. This summarises the paper by Das, Dubey and Pala presented in September this year. That paper also elaborates on the differences across the states in NER.
7. In Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura migration declined; in the other four states, migration increased.
8. In Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, urban-to-urban migration was the predominant type in 1999-00.
9. A recent UK Home Office publication suggests heterogeneity among migrants may be larger than among home population. For example, migrants concentrate in both affluent Kensington and relatively deprived Tower Hamlets.
10. For example, as noted by Mosse *et al.* (2002) the western India Kribhco Indo-British Rain fed Farming Project (KRIBP) used to focus on land as the core livelihoods resource, and subsequently saw migration as problematic (this view has changed, and the importance of migration is recognised, as described below).

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