

MIGRATION FROM BIHAR, INDIA: TREND, PATTERN, DURATION AND DESTINATION

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***Abstract:** The census is one of the key sources of migration data that provide insights on internal, interstate and international migration; researchers have often ignored it in internal and international migration studies despite its usefulness. It is primarily used to explore interstate migration. With this understanding, this study uses census data of India to explore all three kinds of migration (internal, interstate and international) in the context of Bihar, an Indian state known for the large outflow of migrants (Sharma, 2005). The study uses the data on migration from the 1991, 2001 and 2011 censuses and provides insights into long-term migration behaviour. In that context, this study has explored the volume, streams, gender, origin, destination and reasons for migration. It also shows the implications of the bifurcation of the state on migration.*

***Keywords:** census, migration, internal migration, inter-state migration, and international migration.*

***JEL Classification:** F22, O15.*

1. Introduction

Migration is a common practice in India. One out of every three Indians is migrant (Census, 2011; Mistry, 2021). Most Indians migrate internally (one state to another), while a smaller yet significant number of people move beyond the international border. The main reasons for migration classified by the census-2011 are work/ employment, education, marriages, business, moving after birth, moving with a household, and others.

Past studies suggest large-scale out-migration from economically poor to economically prosperous states (or more well-off states). The most common feature of this migration is that they are employment-driven. Such migration is common in states like Bihar to Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi (UT) (Keshri and Bhagat, 2012). Migration is vital from a demographic perspective; it alters the demographic composition of origin and destination. It affects the size, sex ratio, and labour force of a region; it increases the population at the destination and decreases at the source. Migration triggers the demand for amenities at the destination, which burdens the host government. This additional demand may raise the price of housing and other services. From a policy perspective, Indians are free to move and work within the geographical boundary of India (Keshri and Bhagat, 2012).

Migration management is a shared responsibility of the administrations of the origin and destination. Their commitment is to provide basic facilities for living and safety. During the recent Covid19 crisis, governments have ignored the migrants, becoming their country's most vulnerable citizens. The main reason for this plight condition of migrants was a poor understanding of the size and condition of migrants (Bhagat et al. 2020). This study attempts to understand the size and condition of out-migration from Bihar while there is little reflection on internal migration (migration within the state).

In India, there are three key sources of information on migration- (i) the Census of India, (ii) NSSO data and (iii) reports and studies based on separate data and methodology conducted by individuals and organizations. The first two are collected and compiled by the government departments. The latest census data is for 2011, while NSSO data is available for

2007-08. Similarly, individual reports have limitations as they report specific cases. The Census data is crucial for studying migration in India because it is a complete enumeration of the population, and many indirect methods can be used to analyze it. That ultimately helps in policymaking and managing the resources.

2. Context of out-migration from Bihar

Bihar, India's third most populous state, poses every feature of an underdeveloped state, such as lower per capita income, low HDI, poor infrastructure, and limited employment opportunities (Census, 2011). From an employment perspective, the economy of Bihar depends on agriculture, while in terms of contribution to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), it is a service sector-driven economy (GOB, 2021).

This agrarian economy has disadvantages; the unequal land distribution makes the majority landless. In this condition, they have to work as agricultural labourers, providing limited income for their livelihood. Sometimes they move to other informal sectors that neither provide safety at work nor social security. During the lean season, they move out for work. These movements are generally beyond state borders and prefer well-off or prosperous states (Sharma, 2005; Kumar and Bhagat, 2012). This migration practice has a historical background. Bihar is one of those states that simultaneously suffer from flood and drought and has a poor industrial base. Even the farming sector on which the state rests has some disadvantages like smaller landholdings, poor irrigation, labour-intensive technique, absence of fair pricing and lack of capital (Deshingkar et al., 2006; Kumar and Bhagat, 2012). Due to this, the state could not benefit from the Green revolution like other states such as Punjab and Haryana.

Further, the commercialization of farming hurt the farmers of Bihar. They could not compete with the farmers of other states. Many farmers moved to Punjab and Haryana to work as agricultural labourers (Kumar and Bhagat, 2012). All these settings have set a permanent migration corridor to prosperous Indian states. In contemporary Bihar, the migration of skilled and educated people is expected. They move in search of better employment, higher wages, and better living; Bihar generally lags—this aspect of migration results from the revolution in information and communication technology. Further, the ease in visa norms has also promoted international migration from the state.

3. Methodology and Data

The current study provides insight into the trend, stream, and reasons for out-migration from Bihar since 1991. The study utilizes migration data from Census 1991, 2001, and 2011. The study provides a comparative understanding of trends and streams of migration over the census period.

The reasons for migration are similar, as reported by the Census of India. The census of 1991 captured data on natural calamities as a reason for migration, but this reason was abandoned in subsequent censuses. The census captures migration on two bases- (i) Place of Birth and (ii) Place of Last Residence (POLR). The place of birth as a reason for migration can be confusing as a person might have migrated many times. So this study has focused on the second type of migration that deals with the usual place of residence.

This study captures the migration from Bihar before and after its bifurcation into two states-namely, Bihar and Jharkhand. That shows a sharp increase in migration in 2001 because internal migration became interstate migration.

4. Level and trends of migration

The level and trend of out-migration from Bihar give a broader understanding of the migration behaviour of the state's people. The census data on POLR in table 1 shows the total population, total migrants, internal migrants, interstate migrants and international migrants of Bihar during the 1991, 2001, and 2011 censuses. Total migrants (consists all forms of migration) constituted 33.36 per cent of the total population in 1991 which declined to 24.67 per cent in 2001 but increased to 26.17 per cent in 2011. Most people have migrated internally, i.e., within the state; 31.46 per cent of the total population migrated internally in 1991, declined to 22.47 per cent in 2001, and increased to 24.71 per cent in 2011. Comparatively, a small population migrated to other states; in 1991, the share of interstate migration in the total population was 1.59 per cent, which increased to 1.95 in 2001 but declined to 1.07 per cent in the 2011 census. A similar trend was found in the case of international migration from Bihar. In 1991 the share of international migrants was 0.29 per cent which declined to 0.25 per cent in 2001, but it increased to 0.38 per cent in 2011.

Table 1: Migrant population of Bihar

Census Year	Total Population	Total Migrants	Internal Migrants	Interstate Migrants	International Migrants
1991	6,45,30,554	21529825 (33.36)	20303129 (31.46)	1031566 (1.59)	190130 (0.29)
2001	8,29,98,509	20480976 (24.67)	18649877 (22.47)	1619031 (1.95)	212015 (0.25)
2011	10,40,99,452	27244869 (26.17)	25728400 (24.71)	1111954 (1.07)	398592 (0.38)

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1991, 2001, and 2011.

It is important to note that in 2000, Bihar was bifurcated into two states, namely-Bihar and Jharkhand. This bifurcation has significantly affected the migration pattern of Bihar. The total migration, internal migration and international migration declined in the 2001 census, but interstate migration increased because the newly formed state hosted many Bihari migrants who were once internal migrants.

5. Streams of Migration

Migration streams are of four kinds- Rural to Rural (RR), Rural to Urban (RU), Urban to Rural (UR) and Urban to Urban (UU). Table 2 shows these four migration streams of Bihar as a percentage of total migrants in that census. Internal migration is highest in all three censuses, and rural to rural migration stream is highest, followed by rural-to-urban. In 1991 rural to rural migration was 77.72 per cent, which declined to 72.27 per cent in 2001 and 70.78 per cent in 2011. In 1991, the urban-to-rural migration was 1.81 per cent of total migrants, and urban-to-urban was 3.02 per cent; in 2001, this figure was 1.62 and 0.63 per cent, which increased in 2011 to 3.19 and 4.76 per cent. A similar pattern is seen in interstate migration; however, its proportion is small compared to internal migration. These classifications are not available for total migrants and international migrants, so total-to-rural and total-to-urban is used here. International migration is on the rise in Bihar. The census data shows that most international migrants have migrated to rural areas.

Table 2: Streams of Migration, Bihar

Census	Place of the last residence	Place of enumeration	Percentage of different stream			
			Total	Internal	Interstate	International
1991	Rural	Rural	NA	77.72	2.32	NA
	Rural	Urban	NA	11.39	1.27	NA
	Urban	Rural	NA	1.81	0.30	NA
	Urban	Urban	NA	3.02	0.86	NA
	Total	Urban	16.81	14.47	2.15	0.18
	Total	Rural	83.19	79.82	2.64	0.70
2001	Rural	Rural	NA	72.27	5.72	NA
	Rural	Urban	NA	6.54	0.64	NA
	Urban	Rural	NA	1.62	0.39	NA
	Urban	Urban	NA	0.63	0.63	NA
	Total	Urban	11.75	1.38	1.38	0.13
	Total	Rural	88.25	6.53	6.53	0.91
2011	Rural	Rural	NA	70.78	2.34	NA
	Rural	Urban	NA	7.34	0.32	NA
	Urban	Rural	NA	3.19	0.59	NA
	Urban	Urban	NA	4.76	0.59	NA
	Total	Urban	14.60	13.45	0.96	0.18
	Total	Rural	85.40	80.98	3.12	1.28

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1991, 2001, and 2011.

NA: Not Available; Census does not classify this stream of migration

5.1. Gender and Migration

Table 3 shows the role of males and females in migration. The table shows that in Bihar, females are more migratory. This result is visible in the three censuses (1991, 2001 and 2011) and three forms of migration (internal, interstate and international). However, the internal migration of males is increasing over time, while others have a similar pattern over time.

Table 3: Migration of Males and Females in Bihar

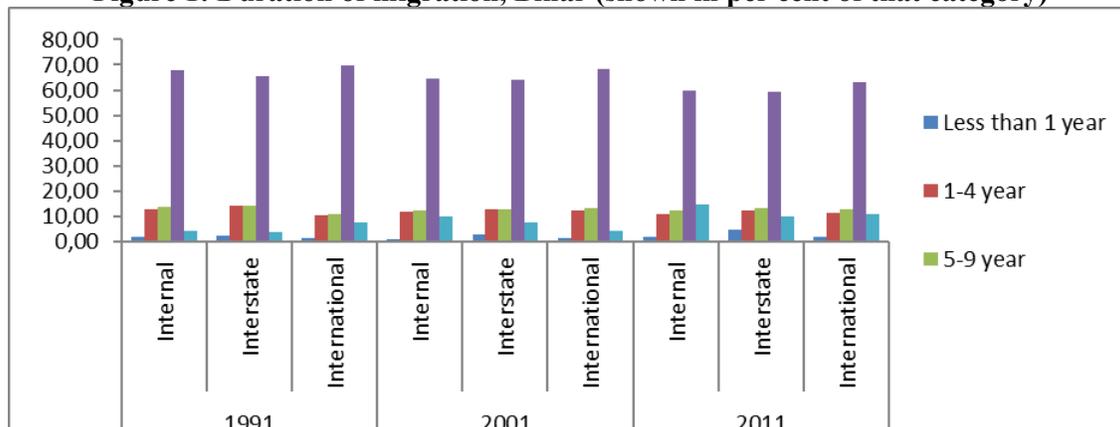
	Internal		Interstate		International	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1991	9.55	84.75	1.33	3.45	0.14	0.73
2001	9.79	81.26	1.09	6.8	0.09	0.94
2011	13.32	81.11	0.6	3.47	0.15	1.3

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1991, 2001, and 2011.

5.2. Duration of Migration

Figure 1 shows the migration duration during the three censuses for internal, interstate and international migration. It shows that most people have migrated for a longer duration. Among them, more than 60 per cent have migrated for ten years and above; this composition is favourable in internal, interstate and international migration. Around ten per cent of people have migrated for either 1-4 years or 5-9 years, while the least have migrated for less than one year.

Figure 1: Duration of migration, Bihar (shown in per cent of that category)

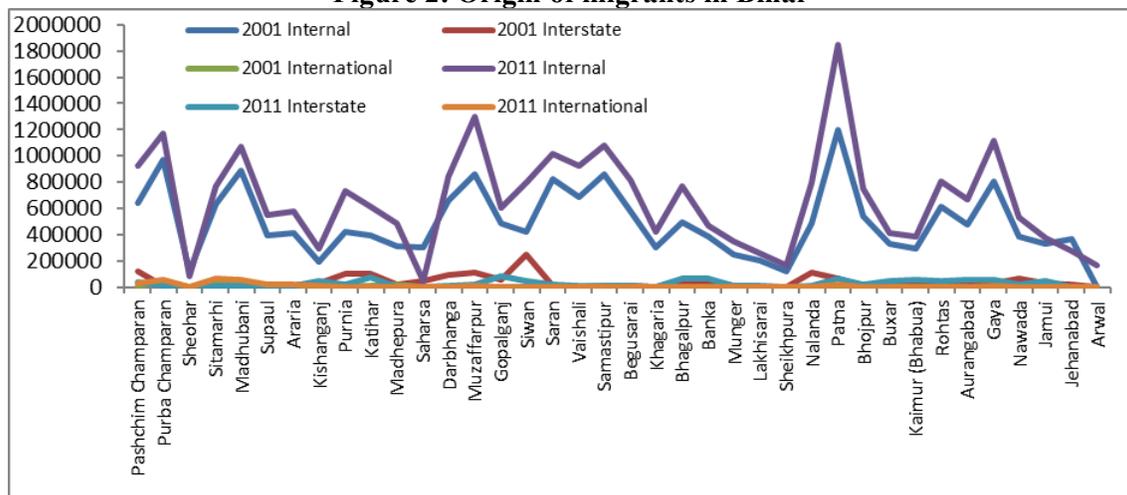


Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1991, 2001, and 2011.

5.3. Origin of Migrants

Information about the origin of migrants gives essential insight into migration. There are 38 districts in Bihar, all of which contribute to migration in different proportions. Figure 2 shows the contribution of these districts in internal, interstate and international migration during the 2001 and 2011 censuses. The census of 1991 has been abandoned to bring uniformity to the study. This census was conducted when Jharkhand was a part of it. The figure shows that more prominent districts of Bihar, such as Paschim Champaran, Purbi Champaran, Sitamarhi, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Patna and Gaya, have higher internal migration during the 2001 and 2011 censuses, while interstate migration is higher from Paschim Champaran, Purnia, Darbhanga, Siwan, Bhagalpur, Nalanda, Patna and Nawada districts. A small yet significant proportion of the people of Bihar migrate internationally. These migrants mostly come from Madhubani and Sitamarhi districts.

Figure 2: Origin of migrants in Bihar



Source: Compiled from Census of India 2001 and 2011.

6. Destination of Migrants

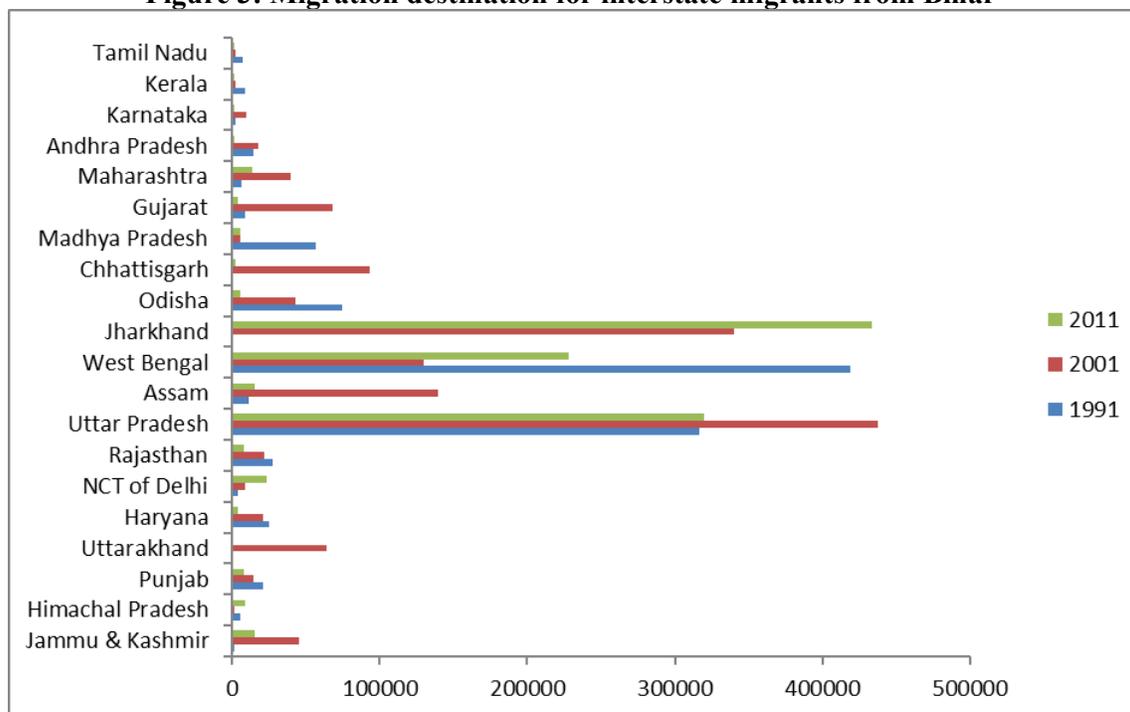
The destination of migrants has always brought curiosity to researchers and policy-makers. It affects the destination in multiple ways, like altering the demand and supply of

locally available resources and the size of the population and labour forces. This section explores the destination of internal, interstate and international migrants. Most people who migrate internally in Bihar do not cross their district, while a smaller number of such migrants go to other districts. Inter-district classification of migration has not been studied here.

6.1. Interstate migration

Figure 3 shows the destination of interstate migrants from Bihar during the 1991, 2001 and 2011 censuses. It shows the 20 states that Bihari migrants most prefer. In 1991 most preferred destinations of Bihari migrants were West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. In 2001 three new states, namely Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand, were carved out from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The Census 2001 data shows that newly formed states are hosting many migrants from Bihar while the share of their sister states has declined. In this census, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam hosted the highest number of Bihari migrants. In the 2011 census, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh hosted the highest number of Bihari migrants. It is worth mentioning that the states like Gujarat, and Maharashtra, known as industrial hubs and host many migrants from various Indian states, including Bihar, witnessed fewer migrants from Bihar.

Figure 3: Migration destination for interstate migrants from Bihar



Source: Compiled from Census of India 2001, and 2011.

6.2. International migration

International migration is less common among the Bihari migrants. Only a smaller fraction of migrants go beyond the country's international border. The census provides information about numerous countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, North and South America and Oceania, where people of Bihar migrate. However, their share in most countries is minimal, even less than a thousand. In the 1991 census, out of the total internationally migrated people,

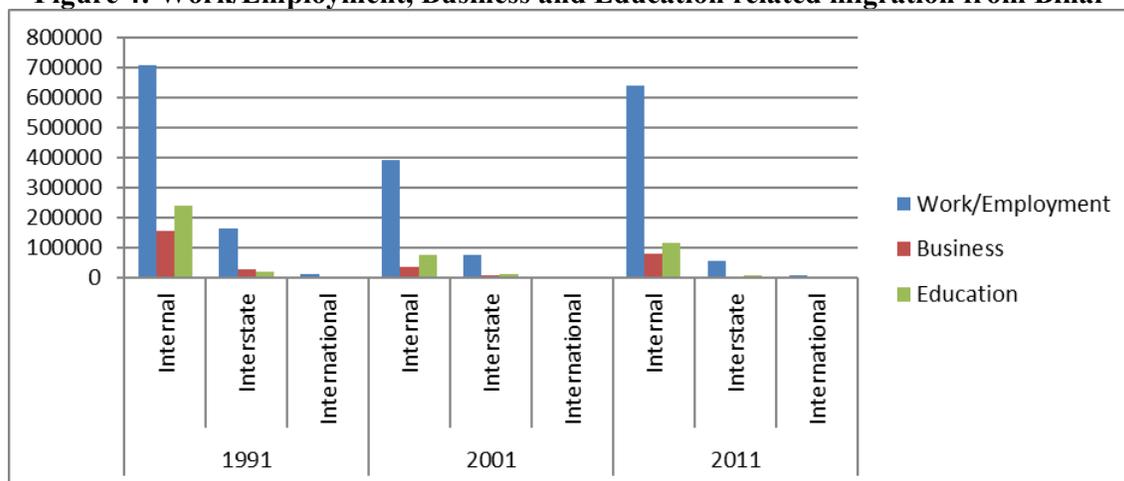
71.91 per cent were in Nepal, 12.42 per cent in Bangladesh and 3.81 per cent in Pakistan. In the 2001 census, this figure was 71.80 per cent, 4.72 per cent and 0.52 per cent, respectively, while the latest census shows that 65.35 per cent of total migrants are in Nepal, while the share of Bangladesh and Pakistan is 1.47 per cent and 1.68 per cent, respectively.

7. Reasons for Migration

The reasons for migration can be numerous, but the census classifies it in seven broad terms. They are work or employment, business, education, marriage, moved after birth and moved with household, while all other reasons are classified as others. In the 1991 census, natural calamities were also considered one of the reasons for migration, but in the later period, this reason was not recorded. According to the census, marriage causes more migration than any other thing. In the 1991 census, 85.31 per cent of internal, 61.33 interstate and 73.69 per cent of international migration occurred due to marriage. In the 2001 census, little change was observed; now, 78.48 per cent of internal, 74.43 of interstate and 81.82 per cent of international migration is caused by marriage, and in the 2011 census, it became 75.03 per cent, 73.26 per cent and 79.87 per cent respectively.

Other than marriage, work/employment, business and education are the main reasons for migration from Bihar. Figure 4 shows migration caused by it. It shows that work and education are the leading cause of internal and interstate migration. In 1991 the employment and education-related migration was highest, which declined in 2001 and shows growth in the 2011 census but remains below the 1991 level. Business-related migration is frequent in internal migration. The causes of international migration are not visible in the figure because the number of migrants in international migrants is meagre. And less than 5 per cent of international migrants move for the following reason.

Figure 4: Work/Employment, Business and Education related migration from Bihar



Source: Compiled from Census of India 2001 and 2011.

8. Conclusions

Bihar is one of India's most populous states, also known for poverty and backwardness. This has been reported as a cause of out-migration from the state. The current study also finds a similar result in people migrating within and beyond the state border. The reasons for migration are employment, education and businesses, while marriages remain one of the reasons for migration associated with the local culture in which females move to the

inlaws' house. This study covers the three censuses, 1991, 2001 and 2011, in which Bihar has witnessed multiple changes, such as the state's bifurcation into two states. This bifurcation has implications for migration. Jharkhand, the newly formed state, became one of the most preferred out-migration destinations of Bihar in the 2001 census, and in the 2011 census, it became the host with the highest number of migrants. The share of international migration in the total migration from the state is low; interestingly, most people are migrating to Nepal, a less developed country. Bihar also contributes the highest number of Indian migrants in Nepal. This migration is often explained in terms of geographical proximity and similar values (Kirti, 2021).

The findings of this study can be used to make effective regional policies for development. Policy-maker can improve transportation and communication in the most likely destinations for the smooth movement of people further, and they can help with remittance sharing with households for regional development.

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