An Overview of Out-Migration from Uttar Pradesh Using Census 2011

Pinak Sarkar

Introduction

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in the country, with a population size of around 200 million (199, 812, 341 persons), and constitutes around 16.52 per cent of the total population of India. The state also has a very high population density of 828 per sq km compared to the national average of 382 per sq km (Census 2011). Regional imbalances, very high level of unemployment and widespread poverty are well-established characteristics of the state. Uttar Pradesh has become one of the largest migrant sending states in India. Among Indian states, it has the largest number of inter-state outmigrants – 12.32 million. The state also has around 52 million internal migrants. Of these, 66.92 per cent, i.e., 34.80 million are intra-district migrants and 33.08 per cent, i.e., 17.20 million are inter-district migrants (Census 2011).

Migration from Uttar Pradesh in a Historical Context

Out-migration from Uttar Pradesh is not a recent phenomenon and is not confined to the national boundary. Cross-boundary migration from the state started as early as in the 1820s, when a large number of artisans, agricultural labourers and cultivators left for different British colonies like Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius and Fiji and also to the sugarcane-growing areas of the tropics, in search of work (Jayaram 2011). However, the major flow of migration from the state was within the country when, in the 19th century, people started migrating to the industrially developed areas of West Bengal, the tea gardens of Assam and Darjeeling (West Bengal) and the coal mines of Bokaro, Giridih and Karanpur in Jharkhand (then Bihar) among other places (Kundu and Gupta 1996). The seasonal and circular migration during this period helped marginal farmers and agricultural labourers to help cover the bare-minimum level of subsistence (Yang 1979). The trend continued in the early decades of the post-Independence period.

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The origin of recent migration from Uttar Pradesh can be traced back to the late 1960s and early 1970s when the Green Revolution created a huge demand for agricultural labour in Punjab and later to Haryana and even parts of Jammu (Breman 1985; Singh and Karan 2000). However, in the last two to three decades, the destination has diversified with large numbers of people moving to various parts of the country, particularly to more industrialised and prosperous states such as Maharashtra, Delhi and Gujarat.

Reasons for Migration

Recent migration-centric literature in the Indian context suggests that the likelihood of out-migration for employment-related reasons is highest among the EAG (Empowered Action Group) states[1] where it has become a livelihood strategy for many (Sarkar 2019a). The Census 2011 D-series data also confirms this pattern, suggesting that employment-related out-migration is more prevalent among the lower-income states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

In this section, the reasons for migration from Uttar Pradesh are compared with all-India figures. The reasons for migration are analysed separately for male and female migrants because male migration is mostly dominated by employment-related reasons, whereas female migration occurs due to combined effects of employment and marriage. An aggregate analysis in this regard may give biased results.

Graph-1: Reason for migration among Male migrants for India and Uttar Pradesh
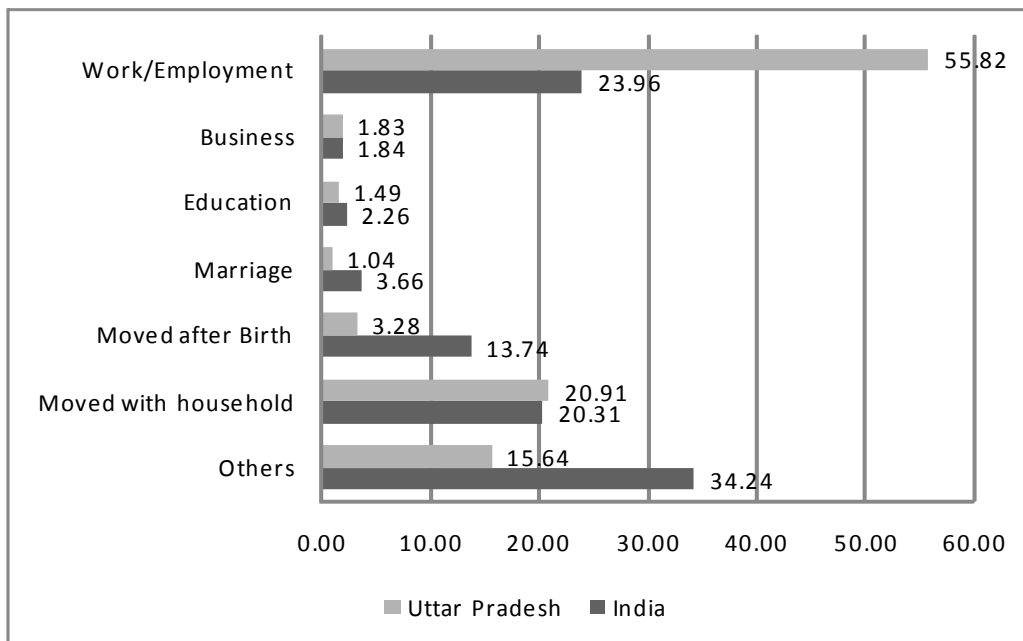
Graph-1 shows that for male migrants across India, on an average, 24 per cent have migrated due to employment-related reasons; on the other hand, in case of Uttar Pradesh, the rate is 56 per cent—more than double the all-India figure. This points to the high economic dependence on migration as a livelihood strategy among the people of Uttar Pradesh. For business-related reasons, the migration rate for Uttar Pradesh is the same as the national average—around 2 per cent. After employment, education is another important reason for migration. Literature suggests that education-led migration is mostly for higher education, and those with higher education are more likely to get a higher return: they have an advantage in the job markets, both at the destination and source (Lucas 1997; Kochar 2004; Kundu 2007). However, in Uttar Pradesh, the figures for educational migration is almost half of the national average, implying migration of a much lesser number of youngsters for higher education and, therefore, fewer additions to the high-skilled workforce.

**Graph-2:** Reason for migration among Female migrants for India and Uttar Pradesh
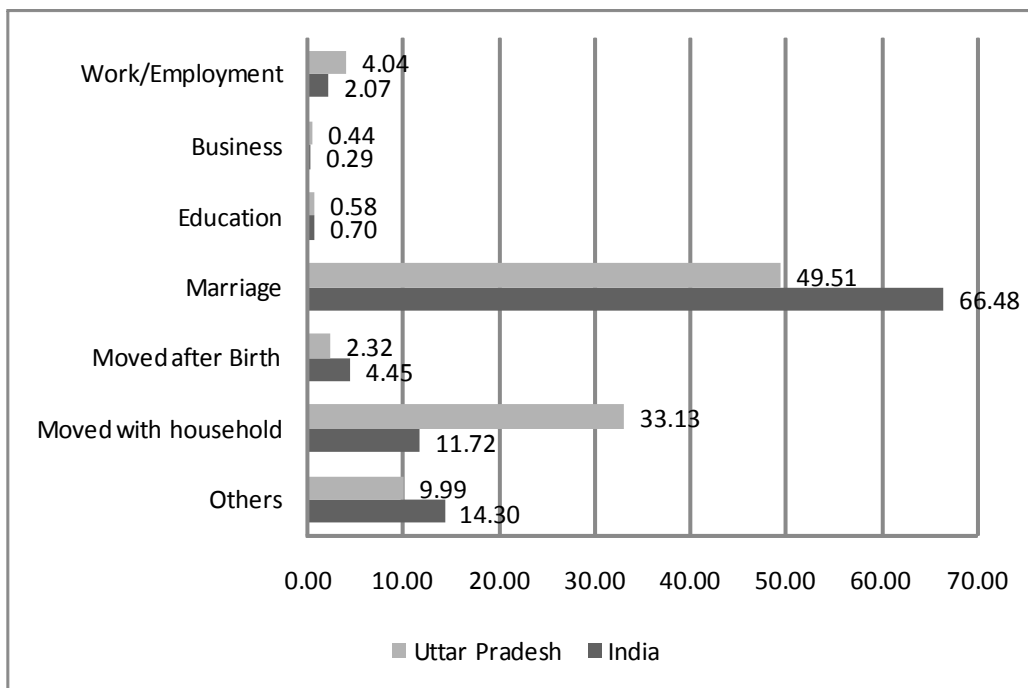
Graph-2 shows that for female migrants, the propensity to migrate for economic reasons such as employment and business is double for Uttar Pradesh compared to the all-India average. It is observed that in Uttar Pradesh around 4.04 per cent of female migration exclusively happens for work/employment-related reasons compared to 2.07 per cent at the all-India level. Both graphs suggest a higher level of willingness or need to migrate for economic reasons among the female population of the state.

Another important observation is that though the Census data show marriage as the most prominent cause of migration among female migrants, it is substantially lower for female migrants from Uttar Pradesh compared to the all-India figures. Female migration due to marriage in Uttar Pradesh is 49.51 per cent compared to 66.48 per cent in case of female migration at all India level. This reason for lower marriage-led migration among female migrants in the state can be attributed to a higher share of female migration in 'moved with household' category, which is around three times the all-India average. This implies that family migration is also high in UP.

Out-migration from Uttar Pradesh to Major Destination States

As already discussed, inter-state migration has been highest from Uttar Pradesh in terms of actual numbers, and since most of the out-migration is due to economic reasons, it becomes important to identify the major destination states. Here, the analysis is done for the migration duration between 0-9 years to capture the most recent migration trend. Graph-3 and Graph-4 show that migration from Uttar Pradesh is mainly directed to states with higher incomes, industrialisation, and urbanisation. However, as the Census data mainly attribute male migration to economic or employment-related reasons and female migration to marriage, a combined (male+female) trend may give misleading results in the distribution of migrants to economic destinations. This section, therefore, shows the combined trend in Graph-3 and the pattern of male migration separately in Graph-4.

Graph-3: Distribution of all migrants from Uttar Pradesh (Male + Female)
across Indian states (0-9 years duration)
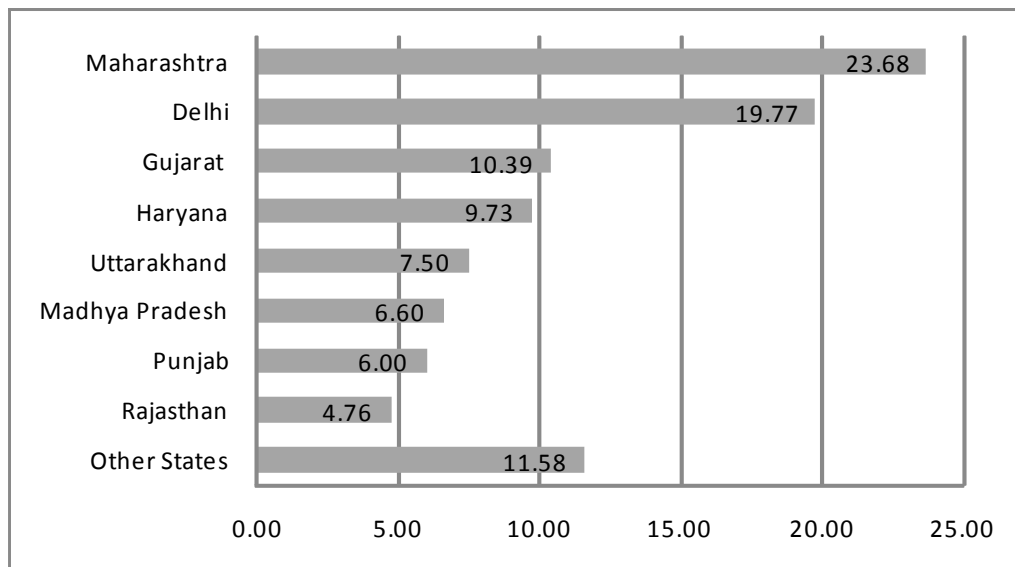
Graph-4: Distribution of male migrants from Uttar Pradesh across Indian states (0-9 years duration)
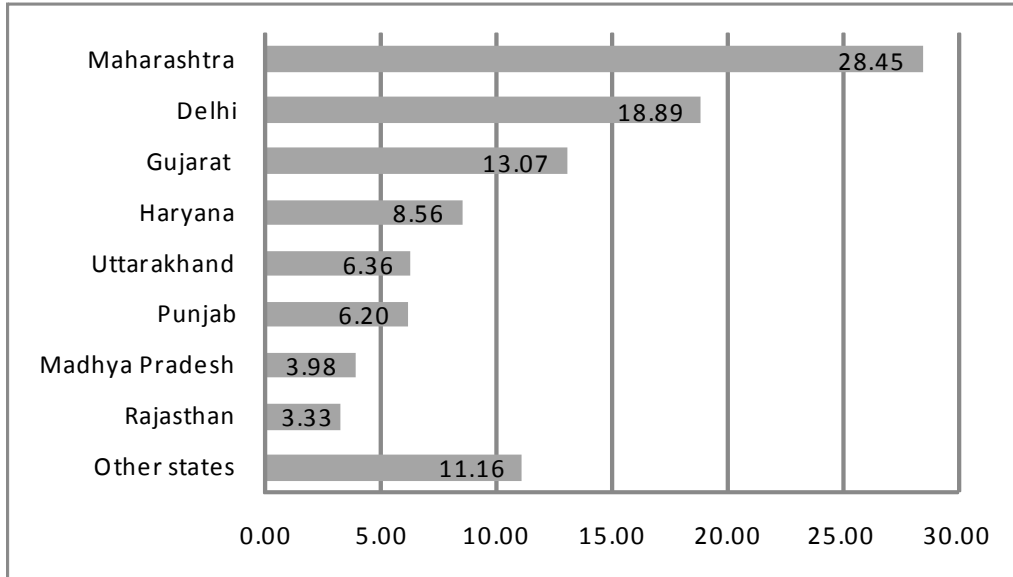
Both the combined (male+female) and only male out-migration patterns display a similar pattern when it comes to the most preferred destinations. Graph-4 shows that the most favoured destination state for male migrants is Maharashtra (with 28.45 per cent of the total inter-state outmigrants from Uttar Pradesh), followed by Delhi (18.89 per cent) and Gujarat (13.07 per cent). Comparing this trend with a recent study by Sarkar (2019b) on out-migration from Bihar, a state with similar socio-economic characteristics, it is found that though the prominent destination states are the same, the magnitude and intensity of out-migration differ a lot for both these states. For male Bihari migrants, the major destination states are Delhi (21.47 per cent), Maharashtra (13.18) and West Bengal (12.39 per cent). Such a comparison helps to argue that it is very difficult to generalise out-migration trends even from states with similar socio-economic characteristics and levels of development. Migration patterns are influenced by both, the individual characteristics of migrants such as age, sex, education, skills, social position, level of endowments etc., and the macro-level characteristics of the source and destination regions that determine the demand and supply of labour.

District Level Concentration of Migrants from Uttar Pradesh in the Major Destination States

In this section, an attempt is made to analyse the district-wise concentration of migrants from Uttar Pradesh in the major destination states. The district-level comparison is important because migrants may be attracted to some particular districts in a given state and not to all districts. Also, this will help us understand which districts attract more migrants from Uttar Pradesh and the possible reason for it. While existing literature, and also the migration data from Census 2011 and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 64th round data, identify Maharashtra,

Gujarat, Delhi, etc. as the major destination states for inter-state migrants, there is a dearth of literature on the decomposition of migration across districts of the major destination states.

Table-1: Distribution of Migrants from Uttar-Pradesh across Districts of the Destination States (0-9 years duration)

Concentration of migrants from Uttar-Pradesh across Districts of Major Destination States (in Percent)								
Maharashtra								
Thane	Mumbai Suburban	Mumbai	Pune	Raigarh	Nasik	Nagpur	Remaining Districts	Total
37.79	31.99	9.03	9.01	3.02	2.47	2.02	4.66	100
Delhi								
North West	South	North East	South West	West	East	North	Remaining Districts	Total
19.72	18.67	18.06	14.55	12.21	10.54	4.27	1.98	100
Gujarat								
Surat	Ahmadabad	Valsad	Vadodara	Kachchh	Bharuch	Rajkot	Remaining Districts	Total
53.46	14.83	8.98	4.1	3.59	2.55	2.49	9.99	100
Haryana								
Faridabad	Gurgaon	Panipat	Yamunanagar	Palwal	Sonipat	Panchkula	Remaining Districts	Total
20.94	18.38	9.67	6.8	5.93	5.92	4.39	27.97	100
Uttarakhand								
USN*	Hardwar	Dehradun	Nainital	Garhwal	Tehri Garhwal	Champawat	Remaining Districts	Total
32.3	28.26	20.92	9.79	2.82	1.28	1.16	3.48	100
Madhya Pradesh								
Indore	Gwalior	Bhopal	Tikamgarh	Chhatarpur	Bhind	Datia	Remaining Districts	Total
9.18	8.26	8	7.92	7.62	7.57	4.67	46.79	100
Punjab								
Ludhiana	SASN**	Jalandhar	Hoshiarpur	Patiala	Bathinda	Amritsar	Remaining Districts	Total
29.08	11.36	10.61	7.49	6.37	5.03	4.71	25.35	100
Rajasthan								
Bharatpur	Jaipur	Dhaulpur	Alwar	Ganganagar	Kota	Hanumangarh	Remaining Districts	Total
19.37	17.77	11.39	11.3	6.95	4.58	3.93	24.71	100

Source: calculated using Census 2011, D-13.
*USN-Udham Singh Nagar
**SASN-Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar

Table-1 shows the concentration of migrants from Uttar Pradesh across the districts of the major destination states. The table shows that the concentration of migrants varies from district to district in each of the destination states. The reason is that just as each destination state varies from the other in terms of economic opportunities, level of industrialisation, job prospects, natural resources, etc., making one state a more favourable migration destination than the other, within a state, districts also vary in terms of these characteristics. Table 1 shows that within each destination state, the migrant concentration is higher in the districts that have a vibrant economic environment and have business hubs with a concentration of industries in the MSME sectors (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises), service sector and construction sector etc., where the migrant workers are more likely to get work. For example, Thane and Mumbai Suburban districts in Maharashtra, and Surat and Ahmedabad districts in Gujarat, have the highest concentration of migrants from Uttar Pradesh. Given this finding, it can be argued that while drawing any state-level linkages to understand the magnitude of migration, it would be more appropriate to consider the district-level characteristics to get a better understanding of the migration phenomenon.

Summary

Migration from Uttar Pradesh is a well-recognised phenomenon in migration literature. Census 2011 data clearly establish that the rate of out-migration for both male and female from Uttar Pradesh for economic reasons such as work and employment is more than double the all-India figures, reflecting the economic dependence on migration in the state. It is well-known that migrants from poor and backward states prefer more industrialised and urbanised states, but their choice of destinations has also evolved in a historical process. For migrants from UP, states like Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab are top destinations. However, within the destination states, the concentration of migrants is not uniform across districts, i.e., some districts are more preferred than the others, given the varying levels of economic opportunities for the migrants.

One implication of high migration rates from the backward and poor states like UP and Bihar is that they are losing the human capital much needed for their own development (Bhagat 2009; Chandrasekhar & Sharma 2014). However, it can also be argued that economic migration is benefitting states like UP in terms of reducing their unemployment burden and gaining remittances.

Notes

1. The EAG states include Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Jharkhand.

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