

Structure and Pattern of Migration in Northeast India: Some Insights from Two Census Data

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Migration has been a topic of intense debate among academia and policymakers in North-east India (NEI) since the pre-independence era. With the help of the last two census data and the observed facts, the present paper analyses structure and pattern of migration in NEI. By employing descriptive statistics, the paper finds that the volume of the net migrants in Assam and Manipur within the region has been negative. Despite its simmering political and internal unrest, the region as a whole received large numbers of in-migrants, mainly contributed by Bihar and followed by West Bengal. Within the region, Assam turned out to be the largest labour migrant sender to its sister states, and these migrants have their roots either outside the country or erstwhile migrated from different parts of the country. These in-migrants mostly work in low-wage positions that locals are either unwilling or unable to fill. Due to the shortage of educational infrastructure in the region, a large number of people are also moving out for educational pursuits.

I Introduction

Migration is an age-old phenomenon in human civilization that involves a shift/change in one's usual place of residence, normally crossing an administrative boundary during a given migration interval (United Nations 1993). Therefore, the concept of migration involves both time and space dimensions. But, no single operational definition of migration has been put in place till date (Kok 1999). Migration happens for a wide range of reasons that include economic, political, social, environment and family reasons. Practically, migration unlocks a host of economic opportunities by filling job vacancies, meeting skill requirements, bringing energy, knowledge and innovation and contributing to cultural diversity (Noja, *et. al.* 2018). At the same time, it also induces many new forms of conflicts and contestations if migrant population crosses the threshold limit and economic resources are depleted at the destination (Acharya 2020, Egger 2017).

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