
Mode of Production and Migration in India - A Sociological Study

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Abstract: *In pre-colonial period, Indian economy was based on agriculture by and large. Main forces of production were agriculture and handicraft. Industries were gradually developed. The flourishing economy and plenty resources attract the outsiders to migrate to India in different periods of history. Migration is not a new phenomenon in Indian history. In precolonial India an instance of migration can be found from the book of Jos Gommans. After the partition of India in 1947, an influx of refugees one after another migrated to India from East Pakistan. In this paper the researcher intends to focus on the relation between migration and mode of production in India in different periods of history.*

Keywords: *Agricultural Production, Capitalism, Economy, Migration, Partition, Socialism.*

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Introduction

In pre-colonial period the phrase Mode of Production becomes one of the major issues of debate among the scholars. Marx's theory of Asiatic Mode of Production attracts the scholars of different fields regarding analysis of non-western agrarian society of Indian subcontinent. This particular term is exclusively related with forces of production, the physical and technological arrangement of economic activity and the social relations of production that is the indispensable human attachments which is formed by people with one

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another in carrying on this economic activity. *Oxford dictionary of Sociology* defines mode of production as ‘a constitutive characteristics of a society predominant within it -for ex-capitalism, feudalism or socialism.’ According to Marx, every society, whatever its stage of historical development rests on economic foundation. In his words this is the ‘mode of production’ of commodities. These relations of productions like the precolonial society essentially affect the human movements and their migration in this subcontinent. The present researcher tried to depict this particular issue in this paper.

In pre-colonial age Indian economy was based on agriculture by and large. More than 75 percent people lived in villages and they were closely related with agricultural works. In village community natural economy was prevailed. Main forces of production were agriculture and handicraft. In agriculture, the production of cash crops like indigo, silk, tobacco, maize, sugarcane, opium etc. gradually increased in precolonial period. After fulfilling the demands of the villagers, the excess productions (crops) exported outside of the village. India exported fragrant spices to European countries in a massive scale. Different kinds of spices like black pepper, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, cloves etc were exported.

In non-agricultural production sector, various kinds of industries were founded in precolonial period in India. Different metallic utensils, wooden furniture, leather goods, embroidery, perfume, paper, soap, glass, clay made utensils were produced in precolonial India. The construction industries, transportation industries, metal industries, leather industries were in a primary level. Weaving industry was one of the important industries. Silk, Wool, Carpus, Cotton made clothes were produced and also exported outside India. In Mughal Period in India agricultural productions, small-scale industrial productions were in a much satisfactory level. Later on, in colonial period also India was full of resources and Indian economy was very prosperous. Mainly the basin of the Ganga had a very fertile land. Annually over 50 inches of rainfall was received by the middle Gangetic plain. Plenty rainfall, fertile lands, monsoon forests were the causes of huge agricultural productions. As a result, prosperous economy and plenty resources attracts the outsiders to migrate to India.

Migration is not a new phenomenon in Indian history. If we go through Indian history then it would be clear that migration started in India many years ago. In different periods of history India was ruled by different rulers. Such as the Sakas, the Hunas, the

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Pathans, the Mughals and lastly the British. All of them were not the inhabitants of India, they migrate from another country. Gradually they became the dweller of India. Except the British, the other rulers were gradually considered India as their native land. They were not willing to return to their homeland. They owned India as their motherland. So, it can be said that in India there are various instances of migration. The instances are-

1. Economic prosperity of India attracted the immigrants to migrate to India. Such as the immigrants from north and west migrate to India, especially in the northern part of India.
2. In 18th century the nobilities under the Mughal migrated to the provinces for their betterment and some of them formed separate principalities of their own. Such as- Nizamul Mulk Ashaf Khan who was previously the Wazir under the Mughal migrated to Hyderabad and popularly known as the Nizam of Hyderabad.
3. In the first decade of 18th century, due to demand of heavy land revenue, tax was imposed on the peasants by the Mughal government. They were exploited by revenue collectors and landlords. As a result, the peasants gave up cultivation and migrated to another place deserting the villages they inhabited.
4. In the book *The Rise of Indo-Afghan Empire: C 1710-1780*, Jos Gommans depicted about migration in an article *Afghan Migration and State Formation in Mughal India*. According to Gommans, the Rohilla immigrants during the 17th and 18th century settled in Katehr area, which is later known as Rohilkhand. They originated from Peshawar area and belong to Yusufzai tribe. Gommans observed that for better opportunities in India they leave their homeland. In the words of Gommans- as the new Islamic Sultanates on the subcontinent opened new prospects of employment and trading opportunities, more and more Afghans, most notably in a capacity of merchants or mercenaries, left their homeland and their luck in the promised land of India.¹

Gommans indicated that in the late seventeenth century India had a prosperous economy and had an extended trade relation. The Afghan merchants supplied military horses to India. Horse trade became a profitable business. So, the Afghans were motivated to leave their dull Afghan homeland for the bustling world of India. He concluded that after migration they used to live in India permanently and very few of them return to their homeland.

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II

In colonial period India was under the British rule. In this time the great famine of Bengal in 1770 occurred. During this period the peasants had to pay high land revenue to fulfil the greed of colonial ruler and his indigenous agent. In this situation they had hardly any means for subsistence. So, the poor peasants migrated to Kolkata from their villages. Because in Kolkata there was a demand for labour. The wage rate was also high in Kolkata. Peasants left their agricultural works and recruited as a bonded labour. Thus, a forced migration happened in colonial period.

In colonial period, we can see the growth of industries. As the industrial development took place in modern sense, a tendency had been observed among the agricultural workers to migrate to cities. The various kinds of job opportunities, high rate of wages, urbanized style of living, educational facilities etc. became the pull factors of such migration.

In a paper entitled 'Coerced and Migrant Labourers in India- The Colonial Experience', Crispin Bates showed that, the prevalence of rural-to-rural migration in precolonial period became apparent, interlinked with migration between villages, between rural areas. He clarified that rural to rural and rural to urban migration in India is connected with the emergence of plantation labour. In colonial period, during Santhal insurrection the tribals like Santhal, Oraon, Munda tribal labourers migrated to North Bengal and were engaged in tea gardens and some migrated overseas.²

In the book *Migration in colonial India: The articulation of feudalism and capitalism by the colonial state* Gail Omvelt suggested that colonial migration reveals some specific features of colonial working class. A tendency of migration from India to other South-East Asian countries had been seen. At the end of eighteenth century Indian labourers migrated to other British colonies like Mauritius (engaged themselves in sugar plantations); and also, to Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guyana and so on.³

So, we can see that in precolonial and colonial period migration was a common event in Indian history. Migration is related with economic infrastructure, economic prosperities, and nature of mode of productions of Indian subcontinent. The postcolonial

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period is no exception. In postcolonial period in Indian history, we can see one of the most remembered migrations of world history.

III

After the partition of India in 1947, an influx of refugees one after another migrated to India from East Pakistan, later known as Bangladesh and from Pakistan. In Punjab the migration stopped after some years. But in Bengal migration is a continuing process. Although the major causes of this migration were political and religious, but one of major cause was economic. In 1971, after the creation of Bangladesh the migration started again. In this time the political disturbances in Bangladesh, war between India and Pakistan, ongoing violence within the country were the main reasons for migration. Later on, after 1980 although there was no solid reason like political turmoil, riot, still the migration from Bangladesh to India never stopped. In India, West Bengal is the adjoining part of Bangladesh. The language of both is same- Bengali. Naturally inherited this intangible aspect of their culture, the Hindus from Bangladesh migrated to West Bengal. They are not refugees; they are intruders and so the phase may be called intrusion phase.

The transborder between India and Bangladesh continuing till today has several causes. It is also a controversial issue in India and Bangladesh. It is a forced illegal migration. The causes of migration are-

1. To search for economic security and stability.
2. For secured shelter.
3. Poverty
4. Lack of employment opportunity.
5. Lack of development in Bangladesh.
6. To get rid of religious bigotry.
7. Political instability.
8. Self-esteem.
9. Higher education.
10. Forced grabbing of landed property from minority group.

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So, mainly for economic security and stability now-a-days the migrants are coming from the neighbouring country that have been shown in the following tables. Here, a survey work has been conducted among the migrants. The numbers of samples (migrants) are three hundred. All of them live in Nadia district. The survey is conducted by purposive sampling method. Here, some tables are presented.

TABLE-1

Opinion regarding the reason for migration to India by income **(In percentage)**

Income (Rupees)	Economic security, stability, secured shelter	Religious bigotry	Self-esteem	Political causes	Higher education	Total
1,001-3,001	74 (24.67)	5 (1.67)	4 (1.33)	2 (0.67)	-	85 (28.33)
3,001-5,001	46 (15.33)	20 (6.67)	5 (1.67)	1(0.33)	-	72 (24.00)
5,001-10,001	40 (13.33)	26 (8.67)	1 (0.33)	2 (0.67)	2 (0.67)	71 (23.67)
10,001-15,001	13 (4.33)	9 (3.00)	4 (1.33)	3 (1.00)	3 (1.00)	32 (10.67)
15,001-20,001	16 (5.33)	5 (1.67)	1 (0.33)	1 (0.33)	1 (0.33)	24 (8.00)
20,001 and above	14 (4.67)	-	-	-	2 (0.67)	16 (5.33)
Total	203 (67.66)	65 (21.67)	15 (5.00)	9 (3.00)	8 (2.67)	300 (100.00)

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This table presents that irrespective of all income group the respondents choose economic security as the reason for migration. After that 21.67 percent respondents choose religious bigotry as the second reason for migration.

TABLE-2

Opinion regarding the reason for migration to India by occupation **(In percentage)**

Occupation	Economic security, stability, secured shelter	Religious bigotry	Self-esteem	Political causes	Higher education	Total
Professionals	2 (0.67)	-	1 (0.33)	-	1 (0.33)	4 (1.33)
Teachers	10 (3.33)	6 (2.00)	-	-	1 (0.33)	17 (5.67)
Executives	44 (14.67)	8 (2.67)	2 (0.67)	4 (1.33)	5 (1.67)	63 (21.00)
Clerks	5 (1.67)	-	-	-	-	5 (1.67)
Middle scale businessmen	17 (5.67)	18 (6.00)	1 (0.33)	-	-	36 (12.00)
Small – scale businessman	29 (9.67)	12 (4.00)	2 (0.67)	-	-	43 (14.33)
Housewives	36 (12.00)	15 (5.00)	6 (2.00)	3 (1.00)	1 (0.33)	61 (20.33)
Daily labourers	41 (13.67)	4 (1.33)	3 (1.00)	2 (0.67)	-	50 (16.67)
Cultivators	4 (1.33)	-	-	-	-	4 (1.33)
Maid servants	14 (4.67)	2 (0.67)	-	-	-	16 (5.33)
Others	1 (0.33)	-	-	-	-	1 (0.33)
Total	203 (67.66)	65 (21.67)	15 (5.00)	9 (3.00)	8 (2.67)	300

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The table reveals that the majority of respondents, that is 67.66 percent engaged in different types of occupations select the reason of economic security for their migration. In the second position 21.67 percent respondents choose religious bigotry as the reason for their migration.

After coming to India, the migrants had to do a lot of struggles. In Bangladesh maximum people live on agricultural occupations. They had a plenty number of agricultural lands, orchards, vinery of betel, ponds, river etc. So, before migration majority of people were related with agricultural works. They were agricultural labourers, fishermen, boatmen etc. After migration majority of the migrants gave up agricultural occupations and engaged in some other job like daily labourers, maid servants, gardener, carpenter, shopkeeper, barber, rikshaw-puller etc. In these tables we can see the change of the occupation of the respondents before and after migration.

TABLE-3

Distribution of respondents regarding their occupation before migration **(In percentage)**

Agriculture	Teacher	Service	Business	Doctor	Daily labourer	Others	Total
136 (45.33)	6 (2.00)	26 (8.67)	116 (38.67)	4 (1.33)	10 (3.33)	2 (0.66)	300 (100.00)

In this table we can see majority of the respondents i.e., 45.33 percent are engaged in agricultural activities. Secondly, 38.67 percent respondents are businessman.

TABLE-4

Distribution of respondents regarding their occupation after migration **(In percentage)**

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Professionals	4 (1.33)
Teachers	17 (5.67)
Executives	63 (21.00)
Clerks	5 (1.67)
Middle Scale	36 (12.00)
Small-scale businessman	43 (14.33)
House wives	61 (20.33)
Daily labourers	50 (16.67)
Cultivators	4 (1.33)
Maid	16 (5.33)
Others	1 (0.33)
Total	300 (100.00)

So, from these two tables a clear difference of occupation is noticed. In table-3 the majority of the respondent that is 45.33 percent was engaged in agricultural works. Only 3.33 percent daily labourers were there. In table - 4, only 1.33 percent respondents are engaged in cultivation. Whereas the number of daily labourers is 16.67 percent. A new job that is maid servant is also seen here and 5.33 percent respondents are maid servants.

IV

In Bangladesh the participation of women in outdoor activities were very rare. Social restrictions were imposed upon them. Very few women in rural areas of Bangladesh are engaged in outdoor activities. So, they did not participate in economic activities like men. Though their participation could help their families economically, but due to rigid social system their mobility was regulated. After migration in India in a migrant family the female members also are engaged in outdoor activities. In the poor families mainly, the women take the job of maid servants. It can also be noted that, this profession of maid servant can be considered now-a-days with much attention.

In case of economic differences between India and Bangladesh the migrants opined that in Bangladesh maximum people live on agricultural occupations since the industrial development of Bangladesh is slow enough. Bangladesh is underdeveloped in various economic sectors while India is in far better condition in case of industrial growth. The numbers of factories are very few in Bangladesh. So, the occupations based on industry are also hardly available there. But the migrants state that they know agricultural works better than the people of West Bengal. The migrants, who migrated after 1947, said that after migration to India, they cultivated the infertile lands and low land areas of West Bengal.

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Gradually the lands became fertile. They knew techniques of farming better than the people of West Bengal. As a result, the agricultural productions of West Bengal increase in a massive scale.

The migrants, who migrated after 1981, opined that they were harassed by a section of the Muslim in various ways. They looted their money, utensils, clothes, valuables substances etc. thus they often faced problem to perform their occupational activities. This was also one of the reasons for their migration. But behind this religious bigotry, there lies an economic cause. After migration, the economic condition of the majority of the migrants upgraded. Their style of living improved. In the following table we can see the opinion of migrants regarding the nature of style of living after migration.

TABLE-5

Opinion regarding the nature of style of living of the migrants after partition by income (in percentage)

Income (Rupees)	Upgrading style of living	Traditional style of living	Degrading style of living	Total
1,001-3,001	44 (14.66)	21(7.00)	20 (6.67)	85 (28.33)
3,001-5,001	60 (20.00)	7 (2.33)	5 (1.67)	72 (24.00)
5,001-10,001	62 (20.67)	8 (2.67)	1 (0.33)	71 (23.67)
10,001-15,001	23 (7.66)	8 (2.67)	1 (0.33)	32 (10.67)
15,001-20,001	16 (5.33)	8 (2.67)	-	24 (8.00)
20,001 and above	12 (4.00)	4 (1.33)	-	16 (5.33)
Total	217 (72.33)	56 (18.66)	27 (9.00)	300 (100.00)

The table presents that among the migrants, 72.33 percent respondents lead upgrading style of living. Only 9 percent respondents lead degrading style of living after migration.

But due to the illegal human traffic from the other side of the border the socio-economic condition of India affected a lot. The relations of production were changed. This influx not only changed the lifestyle of the migrant people, but also contributed in formation of new social canvas. It affected certainly the life style of the local people by rendering their

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(migrants) service. Rise and growth of service sector in Bengal, by and large was the outcome of their presence. On the other hand, due to influx the population of India exploded and connected to this problem, the unemployment problem, housing problem, increasing rate of crime, degradation of health standard also followed by. In India poverty increases due to the population explosion. So, the after effect of this migration was severe. People are coming almost every day from Bangladesh to India. It is very urgent for the policy makers and planners to not overlook this problem; otherwise, it will seriously affect the development of our country.

In conclusion it can be said that, mode of production and migration are related to each other. In different periods of history for economic purposes migration happened in our country. But the after effects of migration may be separate. Somewhere after migration a state was formed by the migrants, somewhere continuous flow of migration affects the socio-economic conditions of the destination country and thus mode of production and migration are the dual aspects of the same process.

Notes & References

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