

Determinants of Return Migration: Evidence from Fieldwork in the Squatter Settlements of Delhi

Himmat Singh Ratnoo¹

Abstract: The study aims to find the probable factors of return migration from Delhi. It involves a detailed and intricate research design and meticulously carried out survey, resurvey and analysis of panel data spanning nearly four decades collected through two rounds of fieldwork in the squatter settlements of Delhi two decades apart. The study brings out a few important determinants of return migration. One of the important findings is that the occupational sector of the migrant's first job upon arrival in the city significantly matters in determining the 'stay' or 'return' of the rural migrant. The continuation of the existence of the squatter settlement is associated with continuance of stay in the city and its demolition with return. The other interesting results reveal that while the number of total years a migrant has spent in Delhi are positively associated with further stay in the city; the number of children and number of cattle back in the village are both positively associated with return to the village. The study brings out that it is the demand for labour or lack of it that determine any decision of the migrant to stay back in the city or return to the countryside from where they came.

Keywords: Delhi, Labour mobility, Return migration, Rural class, Squatter settlements, Urban occupation.

Introduction

Migration and specifically, rural to urban migration, occupies a central position in both theoretical and empirical studies of economics and development. An assumption that is often implicit in such approaches is that migration is permanent – but this approach has been rightly questioned for ignoring the significant levels of return migration that exist across different settings and with varied economic, demographic and social impacts (King, 1986; Kunuroglu et al., 2016). Using an original survey dataset that tracks whether a sample of rural to urban migrants in Delhi squatter settlements stay or return, the present study makes an empirical contribution to this research in a developing country context. We emphasise the implications of understanding who returns, when and why; and collate earlier studies of return migration that underline the need for empirical analysis to discover the determinants of return migration. In subsequent sections, we explain the data sources and the chosen methodology, and analyse and contextualise the results of the regression analysis, before presenting some concluding considerations.

Most of the literature actually projects migration almost as a one-way ticket for all of the migrants and thereby almost ignores the return migration. In fact, the very act of migrating is portrayed as irrational and the migrants as beings who stay at destination in the hope of some fictional expected wage higher than they can actually hope to get for a foreseeably long period of time (Hoselitz, 1962: 169; Harris and Todaro, 1970). One can see a lot of interest in return migration as a result of the extraordinarily strange developments surrounding the pandemic but that can be a subject matter of another set of review articles. Sufficient here to say that return

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, Haryana, India; Email: drhsratnoo.eco@mdurohtak.ac.in

migration is conspicuously inconspicuous in ‘normal’ times. Our earlier work (Ratnoo, 2017) is about busting the myths about migration on the basis of primary evidence and a review of theories and policies on migration. An understanding of return migration is important for figuring out the political economy of migration, for getting an enlightened and fair perspective on migration and enabling goodness at different levels of governance ranging from the local to the global. The possible reasons for the contrast of conspicuousness of migration and the inconspicuousness of return migration is well-supported by an excellent survey of literature in an attempt to revisit the conceptual framework for understanding of return migration by Cassarino (2004: 253). The importance of the study of return migration is becoming increasingly apparent now with the higher proportions of migrants in populations all over the world and there have been important earlier contributions (Kubat, 1984; Council of Europe, 1987).

In Indian society, the presence of the greater number of children at origin can safely be taken as proxy for spouse being in the village of origin. This can be related directly to the kind of analysis that follows in the later sections. By way of ‘calculated strategy’, the New Economics of Labour Migration emphasises that migration decision cannot be seen “as an act of desperation or boundless optimism” and that migrants plan and strive to respond to the uncertainties of market (Stark, 1996: 26). Niedomysl and Amcoff (2011) attest to the importance of social factors in return migration through their finding that the return migrants were more likely to return for social reasons- ‘longing for roots’- than for employment. Based on the discovery of the importance of social reasons in return migration and considering its estimate of one quarter of all internal migrants being categorised as return migrants, the study advocates greater attention to return migration in the general migration literature. Several studies also highlight that non-economic factors are coming to be increasingly recognised as significant in return migration and the studies by Kļave and Šūpule (2019) as well as by Dhar and Bhagat (2020) touch upon these factors in the case of India. The problem that there are more studies on return of international migrants than internal migrants can be mitigated to a large extent if we understand that all migration, in essence, runs on principles, mechanisms, motivations, underlying social and economic factors whose operations may vary in apparent manifestations, and may be in extent, from one situation to another but have quite some in common.

Reviewing the explanations for return migration in terms of a failure to find well-paying job at destination; higher returns to capital in areas of origin; and the cost of living being lower at home than at destination, a study reports that return contributes to economic diversification and that urban employment duration has significant effect on nonfarm employment on return (Zhao, 2002: 377). Zhao (2002: 381) brings in personal characteristics like age, marital status and education to conclude that the returnees are less competitive in the labour market than are migrants, but they are more competitive than non-migrants. Zhao (2002: 381-385) also extensively reviewed the causes of migration in terms of characteristics of the migrants and the processes of migration and return migration that could work as a norm for suitable comparison and for launching such deeper studies in other developing countries. Therefore, it might be worth bringing some of the important findings that could be used to see what could tentatively be expected and for comparison of findings in the case of India since that could hold some value for arriving at a tentative understanding of the norm. The returnees are typically married male workers; older than migrants but younger than non-migrants; educational level lying between the migrants and the non-migrants; less competitive in labour markets than the migrants but more competitive than non-

migrants; about 20% less family land-endowment than for the families of migrants and non-migrants; family with fewer adult workers; better educated and with a spouse who has not migrated (Zhao, 2002: 381-384). Also, the villages to which migrants return were found to have larger non-farm employment and higher per capita income than the villages with current migrants or those without return migrants (Zhao, 2002: 381). The present study is an inter-temporal comparative research based on repeat fieldwork conducted in slums of Delhi. It throws light both on migration and the conditions of return migration anchoring the paper to the theoretical framework of overall migration.

Materials and Methods

The problem that led to the two rounds of fieldwork for a longitudinal micro-study was to test the question of ‘recruitment versus expulsion’ with a tight focus. The empirical background was a widely-held belief that was almost commensurate with such pessimistic theories and the faulty generalisations based on speculations and wrong reading of the data that were neither appropriate nor relevant nor adequate to answer the question; and the invalid methods that the major trends of inter-state migration in India reflected and insisted that the misery at origin was the main and decisive factor in migration of labour (Ratnoo, 2017: 13-14). The central hypothesis is to test if return migration is determined primarily, basically and in any significant manner by the demand for labour or a lack of it for the kind of labour services and skills that the returnees possess rather than by the conditions back home. The main reason for conducting a study of Delhi is the fact that almost all migration into Delhi is inter-state. This is important in the context of the census of India providing data on inter-state migration and Delhi being the only case in India where a state is equal to a city. About two thirds of the inter-state rural to urban male migrants for employment in Delhi were from the two highly out-migrating states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, a larger than average proportion migrants from these two states reported as having come for employment.

The study employed multi-stage stratified sampling to choose migrants. The two rounds of the fieldwork were carried out in 1992 and 2009 respectively. However, it was not a “period study”. In fact, it is a longitudinal *generalising case study* because it is almost exclusively focussed on testing if it is the labour demand at origin or the misery at the origin that is the decisive factor in the decision to migrate or return in a large developing country context. We chose squatter population for the sample survey because we wanted to study a relatively poorer population with a higher proportion of migrants in it. The squatter settlements fulfilled this requirement. A lot of baseline information on diverse aspects of socio-economic life was used to arrive at the most representative sample that was feasible within the limited resources. The sampling was done in the following four stages. The first stage of sample-selection was meant to select a part of Delhi with high proportion of migrant households and squatter settlement population. An earlier household survey cited by Banerjee (1986: 12) found the proportion of migrants to be highest in South Delhi compared to other parts of Delhi. Our own detailed calculations and in-depth deliberations showed the proportion of squatter population, as also the migrant proportion to be the highest in South Delhi (Ratnoo, 2017: 24, 27, 263, 173, 137-139). Therefore, the South Delhi Zone was selected.

The second stage of sample-selection was used for choosing ten squatter settlements out of the total of 159 squatter settlements that dotted different parts of South Delhi at that point of time.

An 'index of poverty and recentness of migration' was calculated for the 159 clusters of South Delhi. The calculation of this index was based on the data from an earlier baseline survey conducted during 1988–1989 that covered all parts of Delhi on the west of the Yamuna river (Institute for Socialist Education, 1989; Ratnoo, 2017: 25, 139). The report on this baseline survey had categorised the squatter settlements into five size-groups (up to 100, 100 to 250, 250 to 500, 500 to 1000, 1000 to 3600). Two clusters with the highest values of the index were chosen from each of these five size-groups. Thus, the ten squatter settlements that were chosen at this stage of sample-selection represented as much diversity as was possible on the basis of all the previously existing information on these 159 squatter settlements of South Delhi.

The third stage of sampling involved the choice of census blocks. The sampling frame for this stage consisted of all the 48 census blocks of the 1991 population census that covered all the ten squatter settlements that were chosen in the preceding stage of sample-selection. Since the census of India does not make public the maps of census blocks, the author physically checked the originals from the census office to recognise and ascertain all the 48 census blocks that formed our sampling frame for sample-selection at this stage. The probability-proportionate-to-size, with a random start was applied as sampling technique to select five census blocks out of the 48 that covered the ten squatter settlements chosen in the preceding stage of sample selection (GOI, Census of India 1991, 1992; Ratnoo, 2017: 25, 140). These five census blocks fell in three squatter settlements namely Subhas Camp, Sanjay Colony and Bengali Camp.

The fourth stage of the sample selection started with a listing of all the households of the selected five census blocks for complete census. The objective of this listing survey was to gather all the basic demographic information, including preliminary questions on migration, on each of the household and then choose certain migrants who fulfilled certain criteria, for further in-depth interviews and analysis. Basically, the idea was to choose for further detailed interview only the migrants who was the head of household in Delhi, had arrived in Delhi from rural areas of other states as a non-child decision-making migrant in or after the year 1972. This cut-off year was chosen both for an easy recall and relative recentness of migrants.

The Survey and the Retracing Resurvey

The primary dataset used for the present study has been culled from the data collected through the survey in 1992 and those from the resurvey in 2009. The fieldwork survey in 1992 that interviewed 184 sample migrants was meant to look at variables that were about the pre-migration socio-economic status for gauging the deprivation of the sample migrant in relation to others in the village of origin and the variables about the pre-migration knowledge of urban job and the availability of the channels of recruitment to see if and how the connectivity with the urban labour market was related to migration to Delhi and the return back to the village. Since the focus of this paper is on figuring out the determinants of return migration through analytical approach and also for brevity, the detailed descriptive information on demographic and socio-economic profile of our sample migrants is not being included in this paper. However, it may be worth mentioning that typically our sample migrants were young married semi-literate males from the countryside of the region of India that is thought to be highly out-migrating (Ratnoo, 2017:142-144) and they came from the below average-not the lowest- economic and social status (Ratnoo: 2017:29-56, 147-152). We put this information to use for discovering the determinants of return migration. We try

to do that by splitting the original sample migrants into those who stayed back in Delhi and those who returned.

Although the scope of the 2009 resurvey went much beyond retracing the migrants of the 1992 fieldwork. However, we only make a limited use of information from that resurvey as a basis for updating information on who is living, who is dead and where are they with respect to the set of 184 migrants whom we interviewed in 1992. For that, we first exclude from the original sample of 184 migrants, the 22 migrants who, as per our latest updated information, have passed away. Thus, after excluding these 22 migrants who are dead, we are left with 162 migrants who were reported to be living and who constitute the sample for the present study. Out of these 162 living migrants for which we make analysis in this study, the 105 migrants are those who stayed back in Delhi and the remaining 57 returned.

As for the ways to retrace, we used several methods. The approach that proved successful consisted of catching up with neighbours, friends, relatives and community leaders in Delhi and the *sarpanches* in the villages of origin and follow up the leads through visits in the squatter settlements of Delhi and through post and telephone elsewhere. First, we tried a questionnaire to talk to neighbours, friends, relatives and community leaders of our respondents of the 1992 fieldwork in Delhi but this tool did not prove very useful and we abandoned it because the respondents were more comfortable without it. A letter was written to the 74 sarpanches of the respective villages of the migrants who could not be in Delhi through fieldwork in Delhi: one-third of these letters came back to us because the postal department could not deliver these; the responses to the letters that were delivered helped know the whereabouts of about one-fourth of the migrants who had left and were untraceable in Delhi. The information sought by multiple methods kept trickling in and we use it to understand who stayed put and who left and why.

Statistical Analysis

A linear regression using ordinary least squares estimation would be ill suited to the data since the key dependent variable, whether a migrant chooses to return or stay, is a binary one. In such a case, a Probit model with maximum likelihood estimation is preferred, and employed in this paper. The basic intuition behind this model is that it takes a binary, dichotomous variable (the decision of the migrant to stay or return) but transforms it so that we can predict the continuous probability (between 0 and 1) of an event occurring based on a linear combination of predictors. Specifically, in this paper the model estimated can be denoted by

$$Stay_{il} = \alpha + X\beta + \gamma_l + u_{il}$$

Where stay takes the value of 1 if the migrant i in locality l has stayed in Delhi, 0 if returned; X is a vector of variables that may be pertinent to explaining this decision relating to both occupational, demographic and economic characteristics of the individual, γ controls for locality fixed effects and u denotes the error term. The model is estimated both with and without the locality fixed effects.

One important challenge faced was the demolition of the Bengali Camp in the period between the first survey and the resurvey. This shock is treated in two ways. First, we treat the demolition as a natural part of the life of migrants living in non-regularised settlements. So, we

estimate the model using all three localities, attempting to evaluate the importance of the different explanatory variables alongside the demolition of the camp. Second, we exclude all migrants from this demolished locality from the model. This approach allows us to focus on potential predictors of return migration that may have been overshadowed by the influence of the demolition.

Rationale of Return

The results of the probit model shows that the economic background of the migrants back home, number of children, the occupation engaged in at destination, and having suffered from the experience of demolitions are important determinants of likely return. The variables reflecting economic background back in the village are included as independent or predicting variables. Such variables include the economic variables such as ‘own land’ (i.e., whether the family of the migrants owned any land before migration) and ‘number of cattle’. We expect these to affect return migration because, depending on the scale of ownership of such assets back in the village, these possessions are expected to keep the family tied back home and these economic and family circumstances together may present a certain degree of foothold back in the village on the basis of which the landing back in the village makes some sense. In general, and *ceteris paribus*, greater the scale of these assets back in the village, greater would be the likelihood of such a migrant returning. Thus, these are expected to be good economic indicators that could help predict stay in the city of destination or return to the village of origin.

The number of children can be taken as an indicator of the migrant’s connection with the village of origin because in the oriental and Asiatic cultures this is a social and anthropological proxy for the presence of the spouse and the extended family in the village that supports and sustains social connection of the migrants with the native village and thus imply a greater probability and propensity to return. The earlier research indicates prevalence of the greater levels of literacy amongst migrants compared to the communities of their origin and hence it might be interesting to keep this as one of the dependent variables in our analysis. Among these, the occupational variables are important as they are likely to be significantly associated with the dependent variable. The theoretical and empirical considerations can help us expect why occupation is likely to be an important determinant of return migration and also what we expect in terms of some occupations being less or more likely to lead to return migration. For instance, the results of an earlier research indicate that the main sectors of migrants’ entry into the Delhi labour market were construction, service, and factory, respectively. The construction sector emerges as the entry point for two-fifths of the migrants. Usually migrants from low socio- economic status and with low education started working in unskilled construction jobs. Moreover, the low technology and labour-intensive nature of this work meant there was more demand for labour in this sector compared with others (Ratnoo, 2017: 86). The analysis of the sequence of factors through decision-tree analysis in our earlier research (Ratnoo, 2017: 116) also shows that those who had their first job in Delhi in the construction sector were likely to return under the conditions of demolition of their settlement, losing their first jobs under adverse circumstances and being in debt if they were relatively younger in age at the time of the resurvey in 2009 (in the 32 to 51 year bracket than in 52 to 61 year bracket). Having seen the construction sector to be a clear-cut leader in return migration under certain conditions and in view of the fact that the employment elasticity of service-sector jobs is higher compared to those in manufacturing due to the limits to mechanisation and automation in the services sector as a whole compared to the manufacturing, we would expect those in the service sector to be more likely to stay than those in the factories

sector. The traders amongst our squatter settlement respondents consisted of those involved as small shopkeepers, shop worker and vendors and we expect them to be relatively more likely to stay as they generally graduated to this occupational category on the back of their social networks and trustworthiness. The residual category generally consists of the miscellaneous jobs that only the rare ones in the group do. In our sample, these were jobs like that of porter, chipping firewood, laying railway tracks, hawking for or picking up scrap paper or used bottles, para- medic and one describing himself as “assistant to prostitutes”. We generally expect such a motley crowd to stay on for the sheer diversity and uniqueness of their occupations unless some particular occupation gets out of the need or fashion.

On the basis of earlier migration research in general and the work of Piore (1979) in particular, we expect that those of the migrants who have been longer in the city develop roots at the destination. Therefore, the first-generation migrants face the dilemma of wishing to return but not being able to return as they have generally laid roots in the form of children having born and brought up and the social relations and networks of friendships, support and solidarity having been cultivated in the city of destination. Therefore, the duration of stay in the city could be an interesting independent or predictor variable for the dependent variable of stay or return. It is generally expected that the demolition of a squatter settlement is so disastrous that it would produce a greater probability of the residents of such settlements to return than stay as this factor came out as one the most prominent factors in the sequence of importance of factors in the decision-tree analysis of this phenomenon of ‘stay’ or ‘leave’ that has been carried out in an earlier study (Ratnoo, 2017: 111-117). With regard to the localities that did not suffer dismantling and demolition, we expect the older ones and those with relatively larger proportion of respondents with occupations in service and factory sectors than construction to be associated with ‘stay’ and to exhibit lower tendency of return amongst their migrant residents.

Table 1 presents the results of the probit models that were run on the dataset. All columns show results of probit models where the dependent variable takes the value of 1 if the migrant stayed in Delhi or the National Capital Region (NCR) and the value of 0 if the migrant returned. Columns 3 and 4 run the same models as columns 1 and 2 but with the migrants from the Bengali Camp that was demolished removed. To interpret the coefficients in the table in an intuitive way, it is necessary to estimate the marginal effects. The magnitude and statistical significance of these coefficients can then be assessed side by side. The following point-wise description summarises the results given in Table 1 and incorporates the magnitude of the effects of independent or predictor variables on the key dependent variable, i.e., whether a migrant chooses to return or stay and the possible meaning these effects might hold:

1. The age at which migrants arrived does not as such seem to affect the likelihood of them staying.
2. However, the number of total years a migrant has spent in Delhi is positively associated with further stay i.e., migrants who have migrated for longer periods of time based on initial survey data are more likely to still be in Delhi or the NCR in 2009. As discussed earlier, this is expected as the family and children then belong to the city and it is hard for such a migrant to return. These results match with those reported by an earlier study by Massey (1987) who observed greater capacity to handle risks of settling due to longer exposure to risks, greater accumulation of social and economic ties at the destination.

Table 1: Determinants of Migrant to Stay or Return

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age at arrival	-0.007 (0.038)	0.008 (0.037)	0.064 (0.045)	0.062 (0.044)
Years in Delhi	0.080** (0.033)	0.060** (0.025)	0.076* (0.039)	0.073* (0.037)
First occupation: Service	0.987*** (0.115)	0.629*** (0.157)	0.761*** (0.174)	0.739*** (0.187)
First occupation: Factory	0.640*** (0.082)	0.371*** (0.109)	0.379 (0.264)	0.396 (0.282)
First occupation: Shop keeping	0.933* (0.492)	0.370 (0.460)	0.474 (0.764)	0.473 (0.765)
First occupation: Other	0.393 (0.816)	0.038 (0.778)	0.426 (0.755)	0.420 (0.752)
Literate	0.360** (0.175)	0.229 (0.146)	0.164 (0.167)	0.158 (0.160)
Number of children	-0.143** (0.063)	-0.149** (0.069)	-0.161 (0.117)	-0.160 (0.117)
Own land	-0.123 (0.223)	-0.004 (0.221)	0.255 (0.550)	0.239 (0.550)
Number of cattle	-0.061 (0.098)	-0.034 (0.043)	-0.152*** (0.035)	-0.145*** (0.038)
Sanjay Colony		-0.291** (0.119)		-0.106* (0.055)
Bengali Camp		-1.156*** (0.030)		

<i>Observations</i>	162	162	103	103
<i>Locality FE</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Pseudo R-square</i>	0.162	0.233	0.128	0.129

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the locality level. *, ** and *** denote significance at 10, 5 and 1 per cent respectively. All columns show results of probit models where the dependent variable takes the value of 1 if the migrant stayed in Delhi or NCR and the value of 0 if the migrant returned. Columns 3 and 4 run the same models as columns 1 and 2 but with the migrants from the demolished Bengali camp excluded.

- The most robust result of the exercise is that migrants whose first job after migration was in the 'service' sector are much likelier to stay rather than return relative to those in the construction sector. It is to be noted that the sphere of personal services and an element of personal touch in all services tends to develop tying up, jelling, settling down with or along or in the vicinity of the people who use and consume services and thus it can become an important factor that raises demand for service sector workers in the city and leads them to stay put in the city longer and may be settle down in the city.
- There is some evidence that what is true for the service sector also applies to those migrants whose first jobs were in factories relative to those in construction. However, this does not apply once we remove all Bengali Camp migrants in columns 3 and 4. In models 1 and 2, the limited evidence for importance of the first job being in a factory suggests that such migrants have a 11% (lower bound) to 21% (upper bound) higher probability of staying in the NCR. The respondents of the study with occupations of helper/labourer in non-garment factory, semi-

skilled non-garment factory work, helper/labourer in garment factory, tailor, other semi-skilled garment factory work have been defined as belonging to the factories sector for the purpose of the present study. The respondents of the study with occupations of unskilled construction work (*beldari*), semi-skilled construction work and other unskilled construction work have been defined as belonging to the construction sector for the purpose of the present study (Ratnoo, 2017: 73-74, 181).

5. The traders amongst our squatter settlement respondents consisted of those involved as small shopkeepers, shop workers and vendors (Ratnoo, 2017: 73-74, 181) and we expected them to be relatively more likely to stay as they generally graduated to this occupational category on the back of their social networks and trustworthiness. However, no robust evidence for the effect of first job being shop keeping is evident. Perhaps it is too small a category in terms of numbers to warrant any firm conclusion. Those in trading sector were merely 3 percent of the sample.
6. There no robust evidence for the effect of first job being 'other'. This residual category consisted of the other jobs like porter, chipping firewood, laying railway tracks, hawking for or picking up scrap paper or used bottles, paramedic and one describing himself as "assistant to prostitutes" accounted for the remaining 3 per cent of the first jobs (Ratnoo, 2017: 73-74, 181). Perhaps it is too small a number category to allow us to conclude anything.
7. No robust effect was found of the ability of the migrant to read, that was also defined as the literate in our study, on the probability of the migrant staying or returning. As expected, most of the migrant respondents of our study were literate and hence it did not turn out to be a differentiating factor.
8. Looking at the full sample (columns 1 and 2), having a higher number of children (at the time of 1st survey) reduces the probability of the migrant still being there in 2009, but this effect is not significant with the subsample in columns 3 and 4. This could partly just be an effect of the reduced sample size. In terms of magnitude, the one additional child is associated with an increase in the probability of migrant return by approximately 4.5%, and this figure stays reasonably stable across different specifications. This is an interesting but understandable finding. A relatively less well-off migrant cannot normally afford to bring the family to settle in the city and, therefore, such a migrant often gets back to take care of and to get cared and looked after by the family back home. A higher number of children back home could also be a proxy for the spouse being left home. Thus, this finding is also in consonance with Zhao (2002: 384) who found 'spousal separation' to be a dominant cause of return migration. We expected it to be so due to the importance of family, social and cultural factors for such migrants with close ties back home. More children would mean more cost of living if the family were kept in the city and so to minimise the cost of living in the city it makes sense in terms of Adam Smith dictum of upbringing in the areas with low cost of living, i.e., low cost of reproduction of labour, and the working age ones coming to the destination to earn higher wages (Smith in Skinner, ed., 1970: 178). It also means having more support for the returnee.
9. Whether the migrants owned land before their migration is not significantly associated with their decision to stay or return. This could be due to the fact that most of our migrant respondents who owned any land came from households which were marginal, small or semi-medium land operators (Ratnoo, 2017: 41-42).
10. There is some evidence, particularly for the subsample of migrants whose settlements weren't demolished that the probability of them staying is lower and returning is higher if they had a larger number of cattle before migration. The variable 'number of cattle' is the sum of cow,

buffalo, bullock etc. An increase of 1 in the cattle variable is associated with an approximately 3% increase in the probability of the individual returning to their village. We generally expect that the demolition of a squatter settlement produces a greater probability of return but in a much more nuanced manner and this is corroborated by these results. A larger number of cattle would mean this type of the migrant has had wherewithal back in the village and is not completely a 'proletarian' or a 'have not'.

11. Relative to Subhas Camp, the probability that a migrant from Sanjay Colony stays in lower. The increase in predicted probability of this happening based on the model is around 7%. Here it is worth noting that Subhas Camp is an older locality compared to the Sanjay Colony and the former had greater proportion of service sector workers. The longer stay and these occupations have been found to have greater association with 'stay' than 'return'. Subhas camp is an interesting case of a locality in that the migrants there tend to stay back and this was also corroborated during conversation with the respondents. They stay there and, in many cases, settle their children there before they start staying part of the year in the village and part of the year in this settlement. The Subhash camp which is a little older settlement, located in the vicinity of the wealthy residents of a locality called Saket, the big government-owned residential locality of office-workers in the public sector called PushapVihar and a vast resettlement colony of former squatters who were shifted, moved and allotted small places during the "National Emergency" imposed by Mrs Indira Gandhi and named as Dakshinpuri. Thus, the residents of this locality called Subhas Camp are likely to have had better chances of service sector employment, connectivity with the local economy and a kind of stability and, thus more likely to have been stayers compared to Sanjay Colony and Bengali Camp.
12. Relative to Subhas Camp, the probability that a migrant from Bengali Camp stays is significantly lower - not surprising of course given it was demolished. Accordingly, the predicted probability of a migrant from Bengali Camp returning is as high as 37%. It is worth noting that the Bengali Camp suffered demolition before the resurvey.

Conclusion

Return migration is an integral part of the processes of migration. It is interesting that children and cattle back home are associated with high probability of return to take care of these two types of "entities" and get looked after and benefit from these. The results broadly throw a picture of the nature of demand for labour in the city broadly being the most important factor in return migration. Therefore, while those in the service and factory sectors stay back because employment in these sectors is such that the migrants can hang on in the city for a larger number of years and it gives the kind of stability that tends to keep the migrants settled in Delhi. The construction sector, on the other hand, has the demand that is more fleeting and changing. The migrants entering construction sector in Delhi were found to be more likely to return than those entering other sectors. This is to be seen in the context why the construction sector is the sector of entry in Delhi for a significant and huge proportion of migrants as for nearly 34 percent migrants it was the sector of their entry into the first job in Delhi (Ratnoo, 2017: 73-74, 181). The construction being the largest sector of entry in the job market of Delhi sends off people who do so, indicates that the migrants to Delhi have a strong possibility of return.

The fact of longer a migrant has stayed in Delhi, greater the chance of his staying back throws light on the fact that the people lay roots, children get education and jobs in Delhi and that

Determinants of Return Migration: Evidence from Fieldwork in the Squatter Settlements of Delhi

way these migrants do not get back. It came out during the fieldwork that elders would stay put with their children in the squatter settlements of Delhi and at the same time would go to the village for longer break while the younger lot stays in more or less all the time Delhi. It looked almost like a change of guard with the home in Delhi allowing the family to stay on. Such cases were particularly seen during the fieldwork in Subhash Camp. The contrast of the migrants living in Subhash Camp, as compared to the other localities of the fieldwork, being more likely to stay back than return to the village could also be a pointer to the time the squatting started on this site, i.e., the time of “establishment” of the settlement and the type of jobs those inhabiting here got into. The Subhash Camp, named after the legendary freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, was found to have been established earlier than the two other squatter settlements of South Delhi where fieldwork was done. This squatter settlement came up in the vicinity of offices and localities of middle-class employees where there have been more service jobs compared to the other two settlements of our fieldwork.

The Bengali Camp, on the other hand, was the one that was broken up. Most the migrants there were construction workers who were anyway more prone to go back because larger proportion of them were construction workers with some of them coming over to city only during the time when it was off-season in the village. The author found a few construction workers in Sanjay Basti and Bengali Camp who explicitly identified themselves as ‘seasonal migrants’ who would come when it was off-season in the countryside. The author also came across a typical woman ‘target migrant’ in Sanjay Basti who said she would come every year to Delhi for about one and half months when it is lean season in the village, rent a place in the squatter settlement, earn enough for children’s education and return.

The flattening of the Bengali Camp was taken as given in the sense that we did not go too much into its demolition. That way we took it as an exogenous event. However, it is not rare in developing countries for the squatter settlements to be broken up. Our earlier work on return migration through the method of decision tree also brought out an interesting and important discovery of the availability of residence in the city to be the most significant of all the factors that came in that analysis (Ratnoo, 2017: 116-117). We argue that having a “place to cover one’s head”, as the idiom in many languages goes, is not merely a physical place to live. It is also about the social networks. These are the networks that not only gave them information, guidance, assistance, support and solace from their initial thought of leaving their village to find work in the city until they got settled down. These social support systems remained a critical requirement for migrants long after they decided to move. It will also have to realise the role of return migrants in promoting investment not only in improved agriculture but also in the growth of non-agricultural output in the countryside and growth of non-metropolitan cities as a compliment to rise in the productivity in the economy. In fact, the governments have to wake up to the benefits not only of migration but also that of return migration. Unless the country takes a sensible view of the economic benefits of migration, return migration and urbanisation, it can all end up in a mess greater than the one being seen following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

References

- Banerjee, B., 1986, *Rural to urban migration and the urban labour market: A case study of Delhi*. Delhi: Himalaya Publishing House.
- Cassarino, J. P., 2004, Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6(2): 253-279.
- Cassarino, J. P., 2020, Are current 'return policies' return policies? A reflection and critique. In Bastia, T. and Skeldon, R. (Eds), *Routledge handbook of migration and development*. Chapter 31. Routledge, London and New York.
- Council of Europe, 1987, *Third Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Migration Affairs: Conclusions* (MMG-3 (87) 22. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Dhar, B. and Bhagat, R. B., 2020, Return migration in India: internal and international dimensions, *Migration and Development*, Doi: 10.1080/21632324.2020.1809263
- GOI, Census of India, 1981, *Series-31, Delhi: Migration tables, Part V – A & B*. New Delhi: Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India
- GOI, Census of India 1991, 1991, *Series-31, Delhi- provisional population totals, paper 1 of 1991*. Delhi: Director of Census Operations, Delhi, Government of India.
- GOI, Census of India 1991, 1992, *Delhi, series-31, Occasional paper no. 1 of 1992, provisional total population and scheduled caste population*. Delhi: Director of Census Operations, Delhi, Government of India.
- Harris, John R., and Michael P. Todaro, 1970, "Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis." *American Economic Review*, 60(1): 126-42.
- Hoselitz, B.F., 1962, The role of urbanisation in economic development: Some international comparisons. In Turner, R. (Ed.), *India's urban future* (pp. 157–181). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Institute for Socialist Education, New Delhi, 1989, *Socio-economic baseline survey of 457 J.J. clusters in Delhi* (Unpublished).
- King, R. (Ed.), 1986, *Return Migration and Regional Economic Problems*. London: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315722306>
- Kļave, E. and Šūpule, I., 2019, Return Migration Process in Policy and Practice. In Mieriņa, I. and Kasa, R. (Eds) *The Emigrant Communities of Latvia: National Identity, Transnational Belonging, and Diaspora Politics*. Chapter 12; Springer Open. Retrieved from: <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/23042/1007119.pdf?sequence=1#page=263>
- Kubat, D., ed., 1984, *The Politics of Return. International Return Migration in Europe* (Proceedings of the First European Conference on International Return Migration, Rome, 11–14 November 1981). New York: Center for Migration Studies.
- Kunuroglu, F., van de Vijver, F. and Yagmur, K., 2016, Return migration. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 8(2), 1.
- Markowitz, F. and Stefansson, A. H. (Eds.), 2004, *Homecomings: Unsettling paths of return*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Martin, K., 1991, *Strategies of economic development: Readings in the political economy of industrialization*. London: Macmillan Academic and Professional Limited.
- Massey, D. S., 1987, "Understanding Mexican Migration to the United States." *Amer. J. Soc.* 92, 6:1372–1403.
- Niedomysl, T. and Amcoff, J., 2011, "Why return migrants return: survey evidence on motives for internal return migration in Sweden." *Population, Space and Place* 17.5 (2011): 656-67

Determinants of Return Migration: Evidence from Fieldwork in the Squatter Settlements of Delhi

- Piore, M.J., 1979, *Birds of passage: Migrant labour and industrial societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Ratnoo, H.S., 2017, *Migration of Labour in India: The squatter settlements of Delhi*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Smith, A., 1970, *The wealth of nations*, books I–III. Skinner, A. (Ed.). Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Suri, P., 1991, *Housing for the urban poor: People's needs, priorities and government response – Case study of Delhi*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi.
- Sussman, N., 2010, *Return migration and identity: A global phenomenon. A Hong Kong case*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Zhao, Y., 2002, Causes and consequences of return migration: recent evidence from China. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 30(2): 376-394.