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INCLUSIVE GROWTH? LABOUR MIGRATION AND POVERTY IN INDIA

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This paper discusses the relationship between labour migration and poverty in India, during a period of rapidly growing inequalities. This is placed against the on-going debates on changes in the patterns of employment and job creation, during the period of economic liberalisation, under the Inclusive Growth policies that are being followed since 2004, and under the impact of the global financial crisis. The paper focuses on the migration patterns of deprived social groups, analyses whether migration signifies a route out of poverty, and the specific policies that exist and should be recommended. The paper argues that a macro–micro paradox limits our insight into migration dynamics, with macro data highlighting the better-off groups, which are over-represented amongst migrants, while under-recording the migration of the most vulnerable groups, thus calling for an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of migration. This is directly relevant for policy and the Inclusive Growth model, as the invisibility and neglect of migrants often combine with a common perception of the need to reduce migration.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper, which was first presented at the 52nd Annual Conference of the Indian Society for Labour Economics (ISLE), discusses the relationship between labour migration and poverty, in the context of the recent growth patterns and policies in India.[1]To the extent that the existing data allow, the paper considers whether it is likely that patterns of migration and their links with poverty have changed since the early 1990s, and whether current social policies under the Congress-led government have become inclusive of poor labour migrants. Within this context, it focuses on the migration patterns of deprived social groups, in order to analyse whether migration does form a route out of poverty, and whether specific policies for these groups exist or should be recommended.

This discussion on labour migration is placed against the ongoing debates on the changes in patterns of employment and job creation in India, during the period of economic liberalisation,[2] under the 'Inclusive Growth' policies since 2004, and under the impact of the global financial crisis, in the context of around 93 per cent of India's workforce currently being in 'informal employment',[3] and growing inequalities.[4] Migration patterns, to some

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extent, mirror the changes in labour markets (and the dominance of informal employment) more generally, but not completely, and too little attention tends to be placed on the study of migration, particularly its changes over time (the recent 2007-08 NSS data facilitate new analysis in this respect). Too often, also, existing analysis is caught in simple two-sector models, which, this paper argues, neglects the diversity of labour mobility within India as elsewhere.

The paper is divided into four parts. Section II briefly discusses the general and global findings on the links between poverty and labour migration, focusing on population movements that remain within national borders (as these are most relevant from a poverty perspective). These stylised facts are used in the third section, to structure the insights into the changes in migration patterns in India. The fourth section discusses the implications of these insights for the notion of 'Inclusive Growth', followed by a brief conclusion reflecting on the analysis of migration and possible policies to enhance the well-being of migrants and their ability to participate in India's 'disequalising growth'.

II. MIGRATION AND POVERTY: WHAT DO WE KNOW?

The subject of migration remains contested, for a variety of reasons. Politically, while there is generally a preference for or at least an acceptance of people moving when there is a demand for labour, there are at least equally strong voices (strengthened in times of crises) calling for reducing the number of (im-)migrants.[5] Academically, questions remain regarding the causes and impacts of migration, and how mobility relates to inequality and poverty. Disciplinary differences regarding approaches to understanding migration continue to exist. The author's understanding based on the international literature of (labour) migration processes can be summed up as follows, highlighting that while there are general lessons regarding migration, the links between migration and poverty are deeply context-specific.[6]

First, the movement of people is much more common than is usually assumed, and has existed for much longer than is often acknowledged—too much of the development literature (though much has changed in this respect over the last ten years) has a sedentary bias, and is fuelled by and reinforces policy bias against migration. Moreover, recent international migration literature tends to neglect the fact that most migration remains within the Global South,[7] and within national borders—much of that, therefore, remains unrecorded. Labour migration also assumes many forms, of which the classic rural–urban transition is only one: the movement of entire households is only one of them, and the (usually) more common form is the movement of one member of the household, who retains links with her or his origins, migrating for varying (and often *a-priori* unknown) periods of time.

Second, the question of who migrates does not have a simple answer. In different contexts, different socio-economic groups migrate, prompted by different capabilities, opportunities, and differentiated access. Different regions and countries have varying propensities for migration, to different types of destinations and opportunities: simple push-pull models tend to be inadequate to explain the complexity of segmented migration streams. But often the poorest people (or those lacking sufficient labour within households) may not be able

to migrate, and the poorest areas do not necessarily have the largest number of migrants.[8] The phenomenon of chain-migration leads to a great deal of path dependency—though not determinism—in terms of migration patterns.[9] Globally, with technological change, migration has tended to become more selective, thereby offering fewer opportunities for unskilled workers (recent data appear to confirm this for India too as discussed below).

Third, gender and age constitute the key elements to understanding migration processes.[10] There are no generalities about whether men or women migrate, though a great deal of path dependency and gender stereotyping exist. While in most places, young men might be over-represented amongst migrants, thus constituting particular gendered and household impacts, women have always been mobile as well (with outside movement for marriage being a dominant reason for migration in India), and moving for engaging in 'traditional' female occupations and newer ones, including unskilled and semi-skilled manufacturing and service sector jobs.[11] Female migrants tend to be particularly vulnerable, and suffer from labour market discrimination and violence, but migration also has an impact on gender identity and relations.

Fourth, the reasons for migrating are diverse, with 'push-and-pull' being differently configured for different types of migrants. Statistical data tend to record only one reason for migration, thus under-estimating the complexity of migration (notably, the category of migration for marriage, as discussed below). Migration often arises from desperation, lack of work, or indebtedness. Seasonal migration, including rural–rural and rural–urban, for many households, is part of regular household strategies. But a lot of migration is also driven by the hope or idea of better opportunities and broadening horizons, or is part of rites of passage of young men and women.[12]

Fifth, as the reasons and patterns of migration are diverse, so also are its impacts. At the household level, migration usually improves incomes and well-being, but often tends to maintain levels of living, for example, illustrated by a common expression that remittances allow farmer households to plough their land (as opposed to losing land). The areas of origin usually show clear signs of migrant remittances,[13] but there appear to be relatively few cases of transformation of areas, thereby also suggesting that migration tends to be *part of* the regions' economies rather than initiating economic development, or causing severe brain drain.[14] The question of impacts on the areas of destination has received relatively a lot of attention, but assessments tend to vary, such as migrants being positively seen as enhancing growth and well-being, to being negatively perceived as a drain on local economies (as well as upsetting local cultures).

III. INDIAN PATTERNS OF MIGRATION: ARE THEY CHANGING?

The movement of workers across the Indian sub-continent is an age-old phenomenon. This depends on changing patterns of economic development, and is partly related to the levels of poverty, but with little evidence that migration contributes to a reduction in regional disparities, and to diverse migration patterns that challenge migration theories.[15] Poorest states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh provide the largest numbers of migrants, who tend to

move to richer areas like Delhi, and cities and rural production sites in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The patterns of movement are also prompted through chain migration, with the states of Kerala and Punjab being prime examples with respect to international migration (which is of relatively little importance for India's overall economy and labour force), but similar segmentation of migration streams exists within India. [16] Patterns of labour migration in India can be observed in terms of the five characteristics mentioned above.

1. Trends in Migration: Trapped Transition?

It is important to emphasise that the speed of urbanization in Asia, India included, has not been as fast as is often assumed and as alarming projections of urbanisation suggest, in comparison with other continents. Data on migrants confirms that the rural–urban transition is occurring at a moderate speed, and evidence suggests that this is associated with the increased 'unaffordability' of India's cities in terms of land and basic services, and slum clearances, with observers fearing the possibility of this 'exclusionary urban growth' intensifying in the future.[17] According to the NSS 64th Round of 2007-08, 3.3 per cent of urban households belonged to the migrant category (including households that had moved during the previous year); the corresponding figure for 1993 was 2.2 per cent,[18] thus suggesting a slightly upward trend. The out-migration rate in 2007-08 for males from rural areas was 9 per cent, while for females, it was 17 per cent (which includes a large proportion of marriage-related migration, which is discussed below).

These permanent shifts of labourers and population more generally reflect only part of the total labour mobility. The NSS data for 1999-2000 (in de Haan and Dubey, 2006, excluding migration for marriage, see Table 1) showed that less than 10 per cent of the total population was classified as 'migrants', and this had changed little as compared to the 1987-88 data (indicating a slightly downward trend). According to the NSS round of 2007-08, 35 per cent of the urban population and 26 per cent of the rural population were classified as migrants, with the term 'migrant' being defined as a household member whose usual place of residence is different from the present place of enumeration (thus including those who had migrated for marriage).[19]

NSSO (2010) presents changes in migration between 1983 and 2007-08 (reproduced

Table 1
Proportion of Migrants (Excluding Migration due to Marriage) Out of the Total Population

Year	*Rural*	*Urban*				*Total*
		STR1	*STR2*	*STR3*	*Total*	
1987-88	6.19	20.80	23.07	24.74	22.55	9.89
1999-2000	5.53	18.67	23.17	21.60	21.46	9.56

Notes: STR1 = towns with population of less than 50,000; STR2 = towns with population between 50,000 and 10 lakh; STR3 = cities with population of 10 lakh or more.

Source: De Haan and Dubey, 2006, special tabulation using unit record data on employment and unemployment collected by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) during 1987–88 (43rd Round) and 1999–2000 (55th Round).

in Table 2 and Graph 1, which, unlike Table 1, refers to all categories of migrants).. The proportion of migrants in both urban and rural areas has gone up (from 21 per cent to 26 per cent, and 32 per cent to 35 per cent, respectively). But this is entirely due to increases in female migration (which explains much of the difference with the data in Table 1). The proportion of male migrants *declined* in rural areas and stayed the same in urban areas. During both the years, intra-rural migration was the most important form of migration (accounting for 62 per cent), but it declined somewhat in relative importance for male migrants. The differences between the trends for men and women clearly need further analysis, while the decline in male migration (in line with the analysis of labour migration in de Haan and Dubey, 2006) is in itself noteworthy, particularly in a context where 'jobless growth' has been a main academic and policy concern.

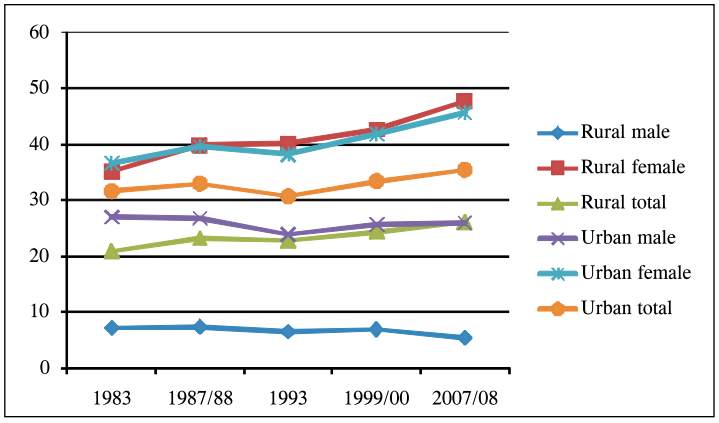
Much of the movement of labour in India has remained circular. This is, of course,

Table 2
Migration Rates In India 1983-2007/08
(Includes All Migrant Categories)

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
Rural			
38th (January-December 1983)	7.2	35.1	20.9
43rd (July 1987-June 88)	7.4	39.8	23.2
49th (January-June 1993)	6.5	40.1	22.8
55th (July 1999-June 2000)	6.9	42.6	24.4
64th (July 2007-June 2008)	5.4	47.7	26.1
Urban			
38th (January-December 1983)	27	36.6	31.6
43rd (July 1987-June 1988)	26.8	39.6	32.9
49th (January-June 1993)	23.9	38.2	30.7
55th (July 1999-June 2000)	25.7	41.8	33.4
64th (July 2007-June 2008)	25.9	45.6	35.4

Source: NSSO, 2010.

Graph 1
Migration Rates in India 1983–2007/08



Source: See Table 2.

the case for migration for seasonal occupations, particularly in rural areas,[20] and with a high concentration of out-migrants from India's poorest areas like western Orissa.[21] But workers in urban occupations also tend to maintain links with their areas of origins, as casual observation regarding domestic workers in major cities indicates, as shown by the author's own research among industrial labourers in Calcutta (de Haan, 1994), and as was recently documented for workers in the diamond industry in Surat, many of whom moved back temporarily to their villages after the economic decline of 2008 (Kapoor 2011). Within the NSS data, which recorded 12 per cent of the population as 'return migrants', the relatively small number of migrant *households* as compared to the members of households migrating,[22] arguably confirms that migration, by and large, remains circular rather than constituting the classic rural–urban transition.

2. Migrants' Characteristics: A Macro–Micro Paradox

Many studies also show the diversity of labour migrants involved. To illustrate how diverse the movements of labour are, de Haan and Dubey (2006) estimated the Gini coefficient of household consumption among migrants and non-migrants registered in the 1999-2000 NSS, which showed that the inequality is higher among migrants than among non-migrants (Table 3).

Table 3
Inequality among Migrants and Non-Migrants
(Gini Coefficient, Household Consumption)

	1999-2000		
	Rural	*Urban*	*Total*
Migrants	*0.273*	*0.335*	*0.333*
Non-migrants	*0.248*	*0.325*	*0.295*

Source: See Table 1.

The recent NSSO report quoted above, reporting 2007-08 data, lists the incidence of migration among different income groups, showing a *higher* propensity of migration of households in the top income deciles than in the lower ones.[23] In line with this, it was found that the poverty rates amongst migrants for the years 1987-88 and 1999-2000 were much lower than those amongst non-migrants,[24] and that the average number of years of schooling

Table 4
Poverty Incidence (Hcr) of Migrants
(Excluding Marriage Migration) in Urban Areas

Number of Years since Migration	*1987-88*				*1999-2000*			
	STR1	*STR2*	*STR3*	*Total*	*STR1*	*STR2*	*STR3*	*Total*
0–5	26.46	21.54	20.88	23.19	21.16	15.21	12.83	16.34
5–10	30.43	26.32	20.55	26.53	26.45	14.69	19.85	18.61
>10	31.98	27.11	22.54	27.12	24.25	18.52	13.77	18.33
Total migrants	28.82	24.42	21.65	25.29	23.22	16.29	14.52	17.54
Non-migrants	53.51	43.97	30.86	44.81	43.30	32.64	22.71	33.03

Source: See Table 1.

Table 5
Average Years of Schooling of Migrants (Excluding Migration Due to Marriage) vis-à-vis Non-migrants

Sector	1987-1988				1999-2000			
	Migrants			*Non-migrants*	*Migrants*			*Non-migrants*
	Rural	*Urban*	*Total*		*Rural*	*Urban*	*Total*	
Rural	2.75	4.58	3.10	1.89	3.92	5.62	4.32	2.78
Urban	4.63	6.65	5.50	3.77	5.70	8.14	6.71	5.03
Total	3.56	6.03	4.34	2.27	4.83	7.38	5.69	3.30

Source: See Table 1.

of migrants was higher, during both the years, and in both rural and urban areas (see Tables 4 and 5). The Indian Village Studies project also showed that migrants were educationally better placed than non-migrants (Connell, *et al*., 1976).

The patterns of migration change over time. Most recently, for example, international migration has become much more common from Uttar Pradesh, now surpassing Kerala in total numbers. A re-survey by Deshingkar, *et al*. (2008) in Madhya Pradesh showed that circular migration had become more accumulative for the poor, with reduced uncertainty of finding work, increased wages and decreased dependence on contractors, but bringing greater returns to those with skills or strong social networks. Migration reduced borrowing for consumption, improved debt repayment capacity, and enhanced the migrants' confidence.

Patterns of landownership amongst migrants, which are well documented in a range of studies, also illustrate diversity. Connell, *et al*. (1976) showed that the landless were least likely to migrate.[25] Yadava, *et al*. (1996-97) found a positive relationship between landholding and migration in India (and that migrant households are socio-economically and educationally relatively better-off than the non-migrant ones). In a comparative study in the 1980s, Oberai, *et al*. (1989) showed that in Bihar, the poor and landless were (slightly) more likely to migrate; in Kerala, the middle peasantry migrated more often, and in Uttar Pradesh, all landed groups, except the largest cultivators, migrated frequently. While there is some degree of path dependency, these patterns change over time, as Arvind Das (1985) narrated for a village in Bihar where sons of landowners were amongst the first to migrate, followed by the less well-off. A similar pattern has been detected with respect to the international migration from Punjab, where the better-off earlier migrants sponsored the less well-off ones (Pettigrew, 1977).

Similarly, the caste background of migrants has been well studied. Ben Rogaly (2002) stresses that caste is one of the important axes along which migration in rural West Bengal is segmented. Studies of indentured labour (Tinker, 1974), representing India's early integration into a global labour market, indicated that migrants formed an average broad-middle sample of India's rural population, a pattern that seemed to have continued in the migration to the old colonial industries (de Haan, 1994). Breman's (1985) seminal work in western India stressed the over-representation of lower castes and Harijans in circular migration. In a study of Mahabubnagar village in Andhra Pradesh, Korra (2010) observes that each Reddi

(powerful caste) household has a migrant in urban areas, whereas migration to rural areas was much more common among, for example, the Madiga (Dalit) and landless marginal farmer households.

With respect to caste, too, patterns can change over time. In Palanpur in western Uttar Pradesh, higher castes were more prominently represented among migrants in 1983-84, but during the earlier years, lower castes had secured outside jobs (Lanjouw and Stern, 1989). The re-survey by Deshingkar, *et al*. (2008) also showed increased participation by higher castes (and women) in migration as opportunities became more rewarding (also see Rogaly and Coppard, 2003, for Puruliya).

The NSS data provide information about migration among different castes, though the earlier-mentioned problem of under-recording may be particularly pertinent here (as the types of migration of the most deprived groups may remain unrecorded more often than those of the better-off). The joint publication with Amaresh Dubey exploring NSS data for 1987-88 and 1999-2000 highlighted striking differences in the mobility of social groups: the proportion of recorded migrants among Dalits and Adivasis is, on an average, lower than among other groups. The NSS data for 1999-2000 and 2007-08 (see Table 6) referring to migrant households suggests a slightly different picture, with a somewhat lower proportion of migrants amongst Dalits, but higher proportions of migrants amongst the Adivasis in urban areas—a fact that may be related to reservation.

Table 6
Proportion of Migrants among Different Social Groups

55th Round (1999-2000)	*Rural*			*Urban*		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Scheduled Tribe	5.6	35.7	20.4	28.2	41.1	34.5
Scheduled Caste	6.4	43.4	24.4	22.5	39.3	30.5
Other Backward Class	6.5	42.8	24.2	23.7	41.7	32.3
Others	8.1	44.3	25.9	27.6	42.6	34.7
All (Incl. N.R.)	6.9	42.6	24.4	25.7	41.8	33.4
64th Round (2007-08)						
Scheduled Tribe	4.7	44	23.8	28.8	43	35.6
Scheduled Caste	4.9	48.2	26	23.5	44.7	33.7
Other Backward Class	5.1	46.8	25.5	23	43.7	33.1
Others	6.8	50.6	28.1	29	47.7	37.9
All (incl. n.r.)	5.4	47.7	26.1	25.9	45.6	35.4

Source: For 1999-2000 figures, same as for Table 1; for others, NSSO, 2010, p. 17.

There is thus a macro–micro paradox that arises from this brief overview. On the one hand, national level data highlight that migration is selective with opportunities biased against the poorer, a process that might be reinforced with technological change. On the other hand, micro studies often show very high rates of migration amongst the poorest and socially marginalised groups, and over-representation of migrants—including bonded and child labour, with Adivasis and Dalits being over-represented—amongst the bottom layer of the working class (NCEUS 2009, pp. 145-47). Much of the latter may go unrecorded, which may add to their vulnerability,

as is discussed later. In order to ensure a better insight into the dynamics of migration and its relations to poverty, an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of migration is needed, as is clearly demonstrated when the gendered nature of migration is considered.

3. Gender and Age Structure Migration

Migration in India, as elsewhere, is strongly gendered, with regional and class differences, thus structuring the potential of migration to be an inclusive force. The Census and NSSO data show very low rates of female labour migration: between 70 per cent (in Kerala) and 94 per cent (in Bihar) of women in migrant households moved because of marriage (as the primary reason), and at a relatively young age. However, labour force participation after migration increases steeply, as shown in Table 7 (Shanthi, 2006, pp. 22-25).

Table 7
Female Migration in NSSO 55th Round (Selected States)

	Reasons for Female Migration		*Labour Force Participation Women in Migrant Households*	
	Employment	*Marriage*	*Pre*	*Post*
MP	1.8	88.8	17	42
UP	0.9	91.2	5	19
Haryana	1.1	85.5	2	8
Punjab	1.5	87.8	4	8
Rajasthan	1	87.2	20	34
Gujarat	1.6	82.1	25	33
Maharashtra	2.9	73.7	25	42
Bihar	1.3	94.1	3	19
Orissa	1.6	86.3	14	24
West Bengal	1.8	83.2	3	15
AP	3.6	71.1	37	48
Karnataka	3.4	79.9	17	43
Kerala	2.7	69.4	17	26
Tamil Nadu	3.3	73	28	42

Source: Shanthi, 2006, refers to women in migrant households.

Many studies have shown that young women do migrate but often face more barriers to mobility and access to opportunities, thereby ending up in informal sector jobs (Mukherjee 2001; Mehra and Gammage, 1999), and receiving lower wages, particularly in rural and casual urban occupations (but even in regular urban work, particularly for those with the lowest levels of education).[26] They are highly represented in extremely exploitative occupations like sugarcane cutting (Teerink, 1989), which are likely to go unrecorded in national statistics. The under-recording of this female migration in both the Census and the NSSO can be related to the fact that respondents are required to give only one reason for migration, that is, the working women that move for marriage are not recorded as labour migrants, in view of the prevalent cultural inappropriateness to emphasise the economic role of the women, particularly vis-à-vis a male interviewer, and the emphasis on primary and full-time work (Shanthi, 2006, p. 5).

Internationally, and across the Indian sub-continent, gendered patterns of migration differ. A.M. Singh (1984) concluded, on the basis of macro- and micro-level studies, that there were contrasting patterns of female rural-to-urban migration in northern and southern India, with the South showing higher rates of female migration,[27] a pattern also indicated in the NSSO 55th Round data shown in Table 7. Singh emphasised the importance of cultural norms, in particular northern Indian practices relating to the seclusion of women that affected the rates of female out-migration and employment.

Gendered patterns of labour migration change over time. For example, the (formal sector) manufacturing industries had a substantial proportion of female workers in the early twentieth century, which declined gradually (following a decline in child labour), thus contributing to a very low percentage of female labour in India's formal employment category. In India, which has been mirroring global trends, since the 1980s, there has been a gradual trend of increasing female employment, in new manufacturing and service sector jobs, and into self-employment, a (slow) process that "signifies not only the growing economic empowerment of women but is also a harbinger of unprecedented social change in the hitherto tradition-dominated milieu in the country" (Rustagi, 2010, p. 495). Apart from signalling gradual changes in gendered patterns of migration, this may also be reflecting the broader pattern of increasing disparities within the labour market, with the better-educated usually benefiting more from these patterns, while many remain trapped in poverty, particularly women and children confined to the unregulated informal sector.

4. Reasons for Migration: Beyond Push and Pull

A large section of the research describes individual motives for migration, while often trying to determine whether push or pull is the most important driving force (a question which was once compared to asking which leg of a pair of scissors does the cutting). These empirical questions are often posed in the context of a dualistic framework of migration, which insufficiently captures the circular nature that dominates labour migration in India.

As mentioned earlier, NSS data highlight that amongst all the recorded migrants, migration for marriage is—and has remained—the most important category (accounting for 90 per cent of the rural female migrants), with the 'search for employment' being the reason for migration for 18 per cent of the migrants, according to 1987-88 NSS data, and 14 per cent in 1999-2000 (de Haan and Dubey, 2006), while over 50 per cent of the urban male migrants quoted 'employment-related reasons' for migration. Data pertaining to 2007-08 show that 61 per cent of the *households* had migrated for employment-related reasons, while only 10 per cent of the *persons* had migrated for employment-related reasons, which included 46 per cent among men, and 1 per cent among women. The pattern of circular migration is more adequately captured in the context of a family-oriented migration model, such as that advanced by Oded Stark and others.[28]

While economic opportunities obviously constitute the key reason for migration among labour migrants, field studies tend to reveal a variety of motivations for migration, which

are shaped by conditions at both the origin and destination of migration, and by the patterns of recruitment and migration networks (de Haan, 1994). Family structure shapes both the urgency and limitations to migrate, as larger families tend to have a greater need to diversify resources, and the ability to maintain labour inputs when part of the family migrates. The age factor is, of course, crucial in terms of employment possibilities (with young men having the most opportunities) but also in terms of a rite of passage, and the youngsters' drive to explore the world outside their immediate vicinity (and sometimes, away from parental control). Similarly, and as mentioned above, socio-cultural factors structure migration patterns, exemplified in the higher rates of female migration and labour force participation in southern parts of India and amongst specific communities.

The nature of migration among the poorest workers has led many authors to argue that it is inappropriate to conceptualise this along the model of individual (or household) choices postulated by neo-classical and dualist models. Jan Breman (1985) has emphasised the forced nature of labour migration, particularly in western India, where capitalist production and old exploitative socio-economic relations lead to extreme forms of deprivation. Conditions of bondage in migration processes amongst Adivasis in western India are described by David Mosse, *et al*. (2002). These forms of migration are usually organized through labour contractors, who often also operate as money-lenders in the areas of origin.

Push-pull models, while having continued attraction for analysts in India and elsewhere, and some predictive power, remain inadequate for understanding the complexity of migration patterns. The reasons for migration are very complex, and simple categories may lead to a serious misreading of broader patterns, such as in the case of female migration 'for marriage', or regarding the conclusions pertaining to the impacts of migration, which are discussed in the next section.

5. Impacts of Migration

The question of impacts of migration remains difficult to answer for various reasons, including the diversity of migrants and selectivity of migration, the difficulty in calculating the costs of migration, and the complexity of isolating the impact of migration and remittances from broader household or livelihood strategies. Of course, the impact of migration on individuals and (different) communities varies.

An analysis of the impact of migration based on the use of household survey data tends to be particularly limited. Using 1999-2000 NSSO data, Joe, *et al*. (2009) analyse the net gain of rural–urban migration based on the probability of migrant and non-migrant population in different income quintiles. Their analysis shows that migrants have a much lower probability to be in the bottom quintiles than the non-migrant population in areas of origin (though the disadvantages caused by caste and education remain), which as they acknowledge, does not provide information about individual households' income.

There is increasing evidence about the amounts of remittances that migrants send home. The NSSO data for 2007-08 show that international migrants, on an average, sent back Rs. 52,000,[29] while migrants within India remitted, on an average, Rs.13,000—hence as 19 per

cent of the urban and 19 per cent of the rural households reported an out-migrant, this is not an insignificant contribution. Over 90 per cent of the income remitted was spent on household consumption goods, confirming micro-study findings which show that remittances lead to limited investment. Debt repayment constituted a significant— but much smaller use—of remittances in rural areas, whereas savings and investments were more common in urban areas.

The NSSO data appear to confirm the hypothesis postulated by Lipton (1980) on the basis of the Indian Village Studies, among others, that migration is likely to increase inequalities, as those who are better-off can afford to invest in migration opportunities that are likely to have higher returns. International migration has the highest returns, but few can afford the investment entailed in this kind of migration. Further, the average amount of remittances varies significantly across income groups: remittances for rural households in the lowest income decile were, on an average, worth Rs.9,300 (Rs.14,600 for urban migrants), while for the highest income group, it was Rs.40,300 (Rs.85,000 for urban migrants; NSS, 2010, pp. 109-10). While this may still be progressive in the sense that other sources of income are even more unequally distributed, clearly migration, on an average, reinforces initial inequalities.

This distribution of the benefits of migration and the use of remittances confirms the findings of Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003), who conclude that despite the positive impacts on incomes and investment, internal migration from poorer areas signifies a form of 'safety valve'. This is also in line with both historical studies and macro-perspectives which reject the hypothesis that migration would lead to equalisation between the regions of origin and destination, or even those (such as Marxist theories) which instead argue that continued disparities are critical for maintaining capitalist development. In any case, the benefits from migration at the bottom of the income hierarchy, are likely to be the least, and in cases of bonded labour migration, may actually reinforce conditions of bondage (Mosse, *et al.*, 2002).

There are many costs of migration. Data on remittances typically neglect the investment that migrants and their families have to make before moving. Many migrant labourers have no option but to take their children along; CREATE (2008, p. 5) estimates that children under the age of 14-years may constitute one-third of all migrants, thus potentially contributing to increased child labour, and gaps in education, besides potentially further transmitting poverty across generations. The health of migrants is also adversely affected by their poor living and working conditions, increased exposure to infectious diseases, lack of access to healthcare, and emotional stress related to the movement.

The impacts of migration thus continue to constitute major questions, conceptually, empirically, and politically. These questions are increasingly important, as labour markets and migration patterns appear to become increasingly unequal. This poses a major challenge for the debate on inclusive growth.

IV. INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND MIGRATION

As yet, there is very limited evidence regarding the changing patterns of migration in India over the last two decades. However, existing evidence seems to contradict the expectations expressed in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan that accelerated growth would lead to increased

migration (Vol. 1, p. 21). The NSS and Census data seem to confirm that the proportions of migrants have not been increasing, and in some cases (notably rural male migration), the data even suggest declines in migration. This would be in line with evidence regarding the patterns of job-less growth, and possibly with the growing regional inequalities in India.

At the same time, as a large part of the phenomenon of migration remains unrecorded, this may be under-estimating the continued importance of short-term and circular migration. While this bias in recording migration is significant, it does not seem to contradict a hypothesis (and paradox) that while at the individual and household levels, migration is intended and usually does enhance livelihoods, at the macro level, there are continued barriers against mobility that would lead to more inclusive growth.

While internal migration tends to remain invisible within much policy debate and (related) statistics, this section argues that policies are critically important in determining the patterns of migration, and the likelihood that migration leads to better outcomes for migrants, thus pointing at some directions to enhance the inclusiveness of India's present development path.[30] This has four aspects, related to the invisibility of migrants, the idea of desirability to reduce migration, existing social policies, and specific measures for most deprived groups.

1. Migrants' Invisibility

First, the 'invisibility' in policies, law and statistics itself is important, as it can enhance the vulnerability of migrants, thereby excluding them from social services and rights.[31] When migrants are visible, they tend to be portrayed as victims, of economic exploitation and sexual oppression (particularly of women), thus denying migrants' agency (Kapur, 2010). While there is a wealth of empirical studies on migration in India, the insights from the complexity of migration do not sufficiently inform the large-scale data collection. As mentioned earlier, NSS data may be under-recording migration, but also and perhaps more importantly, they may be insufficiently recognising the complexity of migration processes, including with reference to female migration (largely recorded mainly as marriage migration). For example, we need a much better understanding of the changes in migration and employment that are now reflected in the 2007-08 data.

A large part of the analysis of migration has departed from a dualistic model, with its emphasis on the gradual absorption of a labour surplus into the modern sector.[32] Some analysis uses net migration as the evidence of labour mobility, thus largely missing complicated patterns of migration.[33] The recent World Bank report, *Accelerating Growth and Job Creation in South Asia* (Ghani and Ahmed, 2009), which attributes great importance to labour legislation as a cause of under-utilisation of labour, concludes that labour mobility is "the natural mechanism for promoting faster and inclusive growth regionally and globally." Mobility within South Asia's countries, however, is thought to be low, with 96 per cent of the Indian population living in the state in which they were born, and their mobility restricted because of distances, poor infrastructure, cultural factors, language, poor education, and location-specific safety net programmes such as rural employment guarantee schemes, which prevent migrant workers from using safety nets in the states where they were not born (Ghani and Ahmed, 2009, p. 26).

Although this modernisation, implying the transition from the rural and informal sector into an urban modern sector has not happened in India as forcefully as was predicted and often assumed, and despite recent evidence of continued stagnation and even some reversal of growth in the modern or organised sector (as also manifested in the slow rates of urbanisation), many studies continue to depart from a theoretical framework which assumes a progressive transition. In the process, these studies tend to ignore the multiple forms of labour mobility which occur with those two or three (Bhattacharya 1998) sectors of the dual model. As within the concept of the informal sector, so also with migrants, there is a risk that the assumption of a half-way existence on the road to modernisation may hinder creative thinking about the ways in which migrants can be supported.

These theoretical limitations matter even more as they may feed into public and policy debates. These discussions tend to have—or at least obtain at points of time—a strong anti-migrant bias. Policy-makers around the world tend to regard migrants as vagrants, and perceive migration as a threat to stability, to social order, and/or to national or regional identity. The next section takes up the question as to whether there are arguments to reduce migration from an inclusive growth perspective, and if so, by what means.

2. Should Migration be Reduced?

Where migration does appear in policy objectives, the attention tends to focus on reducing the numbers of migrants. For example, rural development programmes and the social protection schemes including the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)— and the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS) earlier—often include an objective to reduce the numbers of out-migrants, often specifically referring to (but not defining) 'distress migration'.[34] Emerging evidence from studies by Drèze and Khera, and by the India School of Women's Studies and Development highlights that NREGA has indeed led to a decrease in distress migration from villages, with workers stating the preference to work in and around their villages, rather than bearing the social and other costs of migrating elsewhere in search of work (quoted in NCEUS, 2009, pp. 220, 223). Indeed, NCEUS (2009, p. 251) is hopeful that "programmes have made a significant contribution in not only enhancing income levels of the poor but have been helpful in stemming the rural and urban migration of the poor also."

While this seems to be socially desirable, this emphasis on reducing migration *per se* is problematic. In the first place, evidence shows that it is as likely that migration will continue or even increase with development (as enhanced resources become available and access improved) as decrease; patterns of migration will change, but mobility is clearly part of the development paths of societies. Second, it is critical to take into account that migration tends to be part of the established livelihood strategies of households, which they are unlikely to give up easily, and public policy should focus on supporting these strategies rather than on trying to minimise them. This is not to argue that policies should assume a *laissez-faire* approach and presume that migration leads to optimal outcomes. Rather, policies that try to reduce the exploitation of migrants should be based on an understanding

of the complexity of migration patterns, motives and outcomes, and take into account the perspectives of migrants.

3. Social Policies and Migrants' Neglect

The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (Vol. 1, para 4.48) is explicit in the recognition of a severe gap in policies vis-à-vis migrants: "migrant workers are the most vulnerable and exploited among the informal sector workers, and have not received any attention in the labour policy. In the States which are sources (origin) of supply of migrant workers ... effective and large-scale effort for vocational training in the labour intensive occupations is required ... amenable to the special needs of the entrants to informal labour markets. In the destination States, the focus of public policy (including Labour Policy) should be to improve the conditions under which the bulk of these in-migrants live and work."[35]

A lot of the attention, however, has focused on the social protection schemes.[36] There is little in terms of legislation and policies to support labour (with NREGA seen as supporting employment, whereas it is primarily a cash transfer scheme). The NCEUS recommendations that focused on support to the informal sector, by and large, seem to have been shelved, as the dominant policy paradigm has been to improve the investment climate through which jobs would be generated, and to offer support to the poorest through flagship schemes. The objective of improving the employability of and conditions for migrants does not appear to be high on the agenda, as even offering support to the 'informal sector' appears unpopular amongst policy-makers. The conclusion of Srivastava and Sasikumar that "legislation regarding migrants fails because regulatory authorities are over-stretched; the state sees migrants as a low priority", by and large, seems to hold, while acts like the Inter-state Migrant Workman Act remain without teeth.

Many social protection schemes, moreover, tend to have a 'sedentary bias', that is, they focus on the 'resident' population, and tend to exclude migrants. Since they mostly work in the informal sector, migrants tend to lack work-related social security, and are seldom unionised. Migrants may not even have access to the public distribution system (PDS) and housing schemes. Healthcare too may not be accessible to them, either because of an absence of or large distance from healthcare centres and *anganwadi*s, or because of the discrimination against groups of migrants. Even immunisation schemes may neglect the children of migrants.[37] Similarly, schooling may not be available to migrants, particularly if they move seasonally.

A range of initiatives shows that social policy does not need to exclude migrants and their families. Rural livelihood programmes have experimented with support programmes for migrants. NGOs have worked with migrant groups to ensure that they can avail of their basic rights and have the necessary identification and documentation. Janarth started a pilot project in the sugar districts of western Maharashtra in 2002 with schools being set up for the children of sugarcane migrants; after three years, this included 30 factories and 12,000 children. In Gujarat, SETU (meaning bridge) started education interventions to prevent the migration of children to unsuitable worksites in the state. Vikalpa and Lok Drishti in Orissa have tried to retain children in villages in the Bolangir and Nuapada districts. The Sarva

Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) project has accepted those ideas, and has special schemes (EGS and AIE) for out-of-school children, while taking note of migrant children as a category, and encouraging the states to accept the support of NGOs in reaching difficult categories of children.[38] Elsewhere, there has been extensive discussion about the 'portable' rights for migrants, and this also is worth exploration within the Indian context.

Thus, while national policy does recognise a policy gap in addressing the issue of exclusion of migrants, and many local and NGO initiatives show ways in which mainstream policies can be made inclusive, at the national level, much remains to be done to make growth more inclusive. These challenges are particularly large for the most deprived groups, as described next, for whom 'regular' forms of deprivation are augmented by the sedentary bias of public policies.

4. Multiple Deprivations

The macro–micro paradox highlighted above is particularly relevant for the migration of most deprived groups, especially those who suffer from economic disadvantages as well as social discrimination. While micro studies highlight the large number of people moving for casual work, often over short distances, the macro data shows a continued under-representation of the most deprived persons in labour market and migration statistics.

Concerns for socially disadvantaged groups are by no means new in India. A wide range of programmes has been in existence for decades to address the discrimination of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). While there have been some significant achievements, notably through affirmative action (reservation), disparities between groups have not disappeared, and the political emancipation of (some) groups has not been accompanied by the social transformation that many progressive observers and policy-makers expected to see after Independence. Programmes for the excluded sections have, by and large, conformed to the welfarist model of India's social policy, with targeting at specific groups having contributed to a reinforcement of social categories and categorisation in the administrative apparatus. Significantly, as stressed by S.K. Thorat, for example, the policies have not addressed some core aspects of discrimination, particularly in the sphere of labour (and product) markets.

The policy gaps vis-à-vis migrants are larger for these deprived groups than for other migrants. Over and above invisibility, they suffer from stereotypes and the denial of basic rights, as it is unlikely that their social identity would become irrelevant after they move (even though some of the worst forms of caste discrimination are less prominent in urban areas). Marginalised migrant groups also face additional barriers in terms of accessing health and education provisions. In the labour market, similarly, they are discriminated against as both migrants as well as Dalit and Adivasi women and men.

V. CONCLUSION: MIGRATION AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

While many micro-studies describe the often extreme vulnerability and exploitation of migrants in India, macro-studies have continued to struggle with the role of migration in economic

transformation. This paper, however, demonstrates that an inter-disciplinary approach is needed to chart the complexity of migration dynamics and how they relate to the issues of poverty and well-being. These questions are increasingly pertinent, as the policy objective of inclusive growth is an explicit response to the knowledge that India's economic model has produced high growth figures, but with increasing inequalities and without bringing about a transformation in terms of the absorption of labour within a 'modern' or 'formal' sector. As a significant part of the migration analysis has been formulated in terms of that classic transformation, it is even more important to consider the role of migration in the current pattern of inclusive growth.

A key insight into migration patterns globally and within India is that while migration is critical for the livelihoods of many households, it does not by itself produce structural change. People respond to opportunities, but these are structured by initial economic, political and even socio-cultural conditions. In many cases, migration reinforces these: inequalities within the areas of origin may be reinforced, substantial benefits go to the better-off and well-connected regions, and extreme exploitation including that of bonded and child labour may be intensified through the grip of labour contractors and money-lenders.

The main hypothesis put forward in this paper—needing much further data analysis and perhaps conceptual innovation—is that the changes in migration patterns reflect the uneven growth pattern that India has been experiencing since the 1980s, with increasing inequalities, and the limited creation of 'decent' jobs. The patterns of migration have not been stagnant, with, for example, women assuming an increasing role in the labour force and migration. However, data at the macro level indicate that the better-off are benefiting more from the opportunities provided through migration than the lower-income groups, while micro level studies continue to show severe discrimination against poor migrants.

The 'Inclusive Growth' policy needs to do much more than it is presently doing to address the exploitation and exclusion of migrants. The new social protection schemes unquestionably enhance the well-being of the poor, particularly through NREGA. But more can still be done to enhance the participation of migrants in the growth process. In my view, this needs to start from accepting the reality of labour outside the modern sector, in which migrants occupy a specific position. Economic growth has not, and will not,, substantially change the structure of employment in the near future, with over 90 per cent of the workforce engaged in the so-called informal sector.

As highlighted by Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003), labour legislation can be enforced more strictly, with modification in the laws where necessary. Advocacy campaigns can be mounted to address stereotypes about migrants. Migrants can be directly supported by providing skills training, and information about jobs and the risks of migration. Rather than waiting for an absorption into the modern sector, much more can be done to promote the rights of migrants in the informal sector, to ensure that social policies are extended to migrants (and the families they leave behind), that small-scale initiatives are supported, and that the awareness of rights among migrants is strengthened.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Alakh Sharma for encouraging me to write this paper, and for the comments of an anonymous referee. My work on social policies and marginalised groups has been supported by an NWO-ICSSR grant. Tiina Honkanen provided excellent bibliographical assistance for this paper
2. While total employment grew by 2 per cent per annum between 1993-94 and 2004-05, formal employment declined by 1 per cent per year (Ghosh, 2010). Chandrasekhar (2010) notes some employment growth over the last decade, but little in terms of growth in the productive sectors and/or decent work. See also Jatav (2010).
3. NCEUS (2009) highlighted the need for 'maximising employment'; the report describes the vulnerability of migrant workers, but appears to include little in terns of policies that are specific to migrants (Chapter 7).
4. During the post-reform period (1993-94 to –2004-05), the wages of regular workers up to the 50th percentile declined, while they increased by 5 per cent in the highest quintile (Sarkar and Mehta, 2010).
5. For example, in China, where migrants have been and are regarded as drivers of economic transformation, the hukou system continues to keep migrants excluded from many public services in urban areas. Immigration into Europe has shown an opposite reversal, where the labour migrants of the 1950s and 1960s have come to be defined as the main societal problem of the 2000s: "the economic question of facilitating mobility is subordinated by nation states to the political issue of migrants as new citizens or as invaders" (Harris, 2010, p. 8).
6. This builds on earlier overviews, and on the work of, amongst others, Skeldon (2002), Sørensen, *et al.* (2002), regarding the migration-development linkages, *Human Development Report* 2009 (UNDP, 2009).
7. Hujo and Piper, 2010. UNDP (2009) estimates that globally, there are four times as many internal migrants than international migrants, and that there are twice as many migrants moving South-South than South-North.
8. International migrants are twice as likely to come from countries with a high human development level as with low human development (UNDP, 2009).
9. See de Haas (2008) for a critical review of theories of chain migration.
10. Chant and Radcliffe (1992), Wright (1995), Arya and Roy (2005); Yaqub (2009) and de Haan and Yaqub (2010) with reference to children.
11. See Gaetano and Yeoh (2010), and the articles in the special issue of *International Migration* edited by them on 'Women and Migration in Globalizing Asia: Gendered Experiences, Agency, and Activism'.
12. De Haan, Brock and Coulibaly (2002) for Mali, Elmhirst (2002) for Indonesia.
13. International remittances have received a great deal of interest over the last decade, for example, because they now far outstrip official ODA flows and many governments have become increasingly welcoming of remittances as a source of foreign earnings (see Kapur, 2004, for a discussion of remittances as a new development 'mantra').
14. "[E]conomic and human development increases people's capabilities and aspirations and therefore tends to coincide with an increase rather than a decrease in emigration" (de Haas, 2007, p. 1; also Papademetriou and Martin, 1991). A positive assessment of the impact of international remittances was provided by Adams and Page (2003).
15. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, people moved from the relatively developed Godavari–Krishna region into districts where (tribal) land was available (James, 2000; Vijay, 2010). However, Mitra (1992) and R.K. Singh (1993) did show that migration is higher with higher levels of rural poverty.
16. Recent research on migration within and away from Bihar includes that of Deshingkar, *et al*. (2006); Rodgers and Rodgers (2011). International migration from Kerala is extensively documented in the work of the Centre for Development Studies (*http://www.cds.edu/*).
17. Kundu (2009) analyses urban growth rates, urban rural growth differences, and percentages of rural migrants in urban areas. Kumar (2010) highlights the low rates of migration to cities amongst low-income groups (discussed further below).

18. NSSO (2010, pp. 16-17). During both years, one per cent of the rural households were classified as migrant households.
19. According to the 2001 Census, 309 million persons were migrants based on the place of last residence (with more than two-thirds being female), signifying an increase of 27 per cent since 1991. An estimated 98 million persons moved during the decade 1991-2001. See: http://community.eldis.org/.59b6a372/Internal%20Migration%20and%20Regional%20Disparities%20in%20India.pdf.
20. Deshingkar and Start (2003) emphasise this under a concept of livelihoods. Also see Deshingkar and Akter (2009). See Jha (2008) for a study of more settled migrants.
21. ActionAid estimates that approximately 2 million people migrate from the predominantly tribal districts of western Orissa to brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh (see CREATE, 2008, p. 11).
22. The NSS 2007-08 recorded 1.7 per cent of the rural population and less than 1 per cent of the urban population as short-term migrants (defined as persons who had moved for employment between one and six months during the previous year). The latter category is likely to be a significant under-estimation of the frequent short-term movements of workers.
23. This was also demonstrated in a paper presented at the 52nd ILSE Conference by Chinmay Tumbe (2010). For short-term migrants, this was the reverse (NSS, 2010, p. 93) but the number of recorded short-term migrants is very low.
24. An analysis of 1983-84 NSS data for urban migrants suggested that migrants have a higher average per capita consumption than non-migrants (de Haan, 1997).
25. The Village Studies emphasised the importance of village level factors such as concentration of landholding and landlessness, literacy, commercialisation of agriculture (as cause and consequence), and proximity to urban areas and main roads.
26. See Madeshwaran (2010, p. 467), who finds particularly high female/male differentials among Scheduled Caste regular rural workers.
27. Shanthi's (2006) analysis of the NSSO 55th Round shows slightly higher incidences of female migrants who were 'never married' in southern states and West Bengal.
28. See Parida (2010). From a different perspective, Epstein's (1973) South Indian research used a concept of a 'share families' focusing on units living separately while sharing responsibility for incomes and expenditure.
29. Particularly to Kerala and Punjab, with a rapid increase of international migrants from UP seen recently. The NSS estimate is far below the estimate of private transfers by the Reserve Bank of India.
30. Inclusive growth is defined by the Planning Commission (2007) as a process which yields broad-based benefits and ensures equality of opportunity for all. NREGA is considered as a key instrument for development employment opportunities.
31. For example, the National Council for Rural Labour (NCRL) estimated the number of seasonal and circular migrants in rural areas to be 10 million; while other estimates suggest at least 30 million (CREATE, 2008, p. 5).
32. Lewis (1954), Todaro (1969), Harris and Todaro (1970), Hatton and Williamson (1992), Ghatak (1996), Ranis (2003). This is also the perspective in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (Vol. 1, p. 63).
33. Purfield (2006, p. 10) and Cashin and Sahay (1996) analyse the increasing regional disparities in India. Munshi and Rosenzweig's (2009) emphasis on permanent migration also biases their perspective on why mobility in India is "so low".
34. According to the NREGA guidelines, its basic objective is to "enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work." Other objectives include generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, and reducing rural–urban migration.

35. The Plan argues that if basic minimum conditions to the new migrants are not available, economic growth should be restrained. It argues for better implementation of legislations for migrants, though the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1976; the Building and Other Construction Workers (Cess) Act, 1976; the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, and The Unorganised Workers' Social Security Bill, 2007.
36. de Haan (2010, Chapter 8) analyses South Asian social policies as welfarist (contrasting them with the East Asian 'productivist' focus) with social security being perceived as residual, a strong emphasis on targeting, and surprisingly low social sector spending (particularly in health).
37. Jayati Ghosh (personal communication). The NRHM recognises the specific health needs of migrants as a group, but it is not clear whether separate initiatives for migrants are included.
38. CREATE (2008, Chapter 5, p. 36) describes these initiatives in education, and the challenges that they face.

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