
| RESEARCH ARTICLE**A Regional Perspective on Caste-Based Migration: Evidence from West Bengal****Amit Kundu¹ ✉ Mou Bandopadhyay² and Arabinda Bhattacharya³**¹Associate Professor, Department of Management, North-Eastern Hill University, (A Central University), Meghalaya, India²Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies, Techno Main Salt Lake, Kolkata- 700 091, India³Former Associate Professor, Department of Business Management, University of Calcutta, 1, Reformatory Street, Kolkata - 700 027, India**Corresponding Author:** Amit Kundu, **E-mail:** amit.kundu74@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT

Migration, or the movement of population from one area to another, is an integral part of society. Since ancient times, people have moved from one area to another for various reasons. That trend is continuing in the 21st century as well. Migration is a big problem in the world. India is no exception; rather, it has a considerable impact on India's socio-economic structure. Internal migration can be classified into i) Inter-state migration, ii) Intra-state migration. An attempt in the present study is to focus on intra-state migration for scheduled caste (SC) people in West Bengal, taking the data from the 2001 census. At present (2019), West Bengal has 23 districts, but in 2001, it had 19 districts. Within these 19 districts, migration occurred from i) rural to rural areas, ii) rural to urban areas, iii) urban to rural areas, and iv) urban to urban areas. Moreover, migration also varies with the duration of residence. In the 2001 census data, five periods of duration have been taken into account like 1) All durations of residence 2) Duration of residence 10 years and above 3) Duration of residence 5-9 years 4) Duration of residence 1-4 years 5) Duration of residence less than 1 year. From the 2001 census data, it has been observed that the main determinants for male and female migration are work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved after birth, moved with household, and others. The present research is aimed at establishing the extent of influence of duration of residence and types of migration on migration. This relationship has been examined across gender and also reasons for migration. The models developed using regression analysis for each segmentation examine the impact of duration of residence and types of residence on migration.

| KEYWORDS

Migration, Scheduled Caste, Duration of Residence, Last Residence, Gender, West Bengal

| ARTICLE INFORMATION**ACCEPTED:** August 09, 2026 **PUBLISHED:** September 11, 2026 **DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.61424/bjhss.v3i1.1002>

1. Introduction

Migration, or the movement of population from one area to another, is an integral part of society. Gazing at it through the lens of society, it can even be termed a social process. Historical texts give testimony to the fact that people have moved from one area to another for multiple reasons, and those reasons have changed in gravity and importance across time periods. With history repeating itself, the trend of migration continues even in the 21st century. Notwithstanding the status of the economy and type of government in the country, migration is always a first-order problem. As an outcome of the problem's priority, policymakers have always taken migration into

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cognizance for framing policies. India, the second most populous country in the world, is not an exception to the process of migration. Migration has a considerable impact on Indian socio-economic structure.

Migration may be in-migration and/or out-migration, i.e., 'Immigration' and 'Emigration' respectively. It cannot be denied that both immigration and emigration demand extensive attention from the Government and policymakers. This paper focuses on migration in the state of West Bengal, India.

On the basis of geographical boundary, migration can be classified into 1) internal migration and 2) international migration. Internal migration occurs within the national boundary of a country and can be further classified into i) inter-state migration, ii) intra-state migration. Many research papers have been written over the years regarding inter-state migration, making very effective contributions to the pool of migration studies, but intra-state migration has not been worked on much.

This paper has tried to focus on intra-state migration for scheduled caste people in West Bengal, sourcing the data from the 2001 census. At present (in 2019), West Bengal has 23 districts, but in 2001, it had only 19 districts. Within these 19 districts, migration occurred from i) rural to rural areas, ii) rural to urban areas, iii) urban to rural areas, and iv) urban to urban areas. Migration also varies with the duration of residence. Census 2001 records time periods in 5 brackets of time, namely 1) all durations of residence 2) duration of residence 10 years and above 3) duration of residence 5-9 years 4) duration of residence 1-4 years and 5) duration of residence less than 1 year

Census 2001 highlights six pertinent reasons for male and female migration, namely work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved after birth, moved with household, and others. The data used for this paper were collected by the enumerator on the basis of 'the place of last residence' of migrants.

1.1 Background of the Study

From 1961 to 2011, a declining trend of rural-urban migration had been observed. The number of rural people who tried to migrate from rural to urban areas to get advantages specific to urban areas had considerably gone down by 2011. Modern cities, having understood the pressure that rural-urban migration has been creating on the limited city resources, tried their best to control the rural-urban migration. It was also observed that the number of females and children was increasing among the total migrated population, and as a corollary to this, it could be substantiated that more and more males by 2011 were migrating with their families (A Kundu & L. Ray Saraswati, 2012).

Dineshappa (2014) tried to focus on some specific issues like 1) economic conditions of migrants before and after migration 2) important reasons for migration 3) in-migration and out-migration and 4) determinants of internal migration in India.

As already discussed, generally there are four types of migration within the state, such as i) rural to rural area ii) rural to urban area iii) urban to rural and iv) urban to urban area. Out of these four types of migration, rural-urban migration is the most commonly observed migration pattern in almost every Indian state. Tyagi & Siddiqui (2016) have mainly focused on rural-urban migration and factors affecting the same. It also tells us about the impact of migration on the urban economy, i.e., urbanization. According to the authors, business, employment, education, and securities are the main engines that have enhanced male migration from rural to urban areas. On the other hand, female migration has been driven by marriage outcomes.

Arup Maharatna (2003) has tried to focus on the out-migration from West Bengal. In his research study, he has mentioned that comparatively more capable, enterprising, and efficient people migrate from one urban area to another. As per his study, less efficient and mediocre people preferred not to migrate and remained in their home state.

Female migration in India is very important from many different perspectives. Sandhya Rani Mahapatro (2013), in her work, has tried to study the linkage between women's empowerment and female migration. She stated that females at present do not migrate for 'marriage' purposes only; they also migrate for higher education and employment purposes. It ultimately proves that the gender relations among households have been changing.

Women are more powerful than before, and they also actively take part in the decision-making process of the household. Empowerment has helped them to come out and express their views regarding migration.

1.2 Research Gap

Past research studies have only considered rural-urban migration, youth migration, female migration, etc, as their primary focus area. Very few papers have traced the path to study intra-state migration. A humble attempt has been made in the present study to analyze the intra-state migration of the Scheduled Caste population in West Bengal. Besides, the paper has tried to establish the influence of duration of residence and types of migration on migration.

1.3 Research Design

From the 2001 census data, it has been observed that the main determinants for male and female migration are work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved after birth, moved with household, and others. Work/employment and business are two very important determinants for SC male migration. To get a better job, male are always very keen to migrate because, in most cases, they have to bear the whole burden of their families. Education is also a very important factor that mainly attracts youth to migrate. Marriage is the main reason for women to migrate, which is not very important for male migration. The reason ' Moved after birth ' was included for the first time in the 2001 census. Mothers moved either to their natal residence or to a place for get more medical facilities for delivery. Women are not treated as migrants at these temporary places, but children are treated as migrants when they come back to their normal residence with their children. 'Moved with households' is another reason for migration. Women and children sometimes have to move when the households move for any reason. Other reasons mainly include lack of security, political disturbances, natural calamity, inadequate distribution of land, scarcity of cultivated land, etc which also drive people away from their original home. The data used in this paper are collected by the enumerator on the basis of 'the place of last residence' of migrants.

1.4 Research Objectives

The present research is aimed at establishing the extent of influence of duration of residence and types of migration on migration. This relationship has been examined across gender and also reasons for migration. The models developed for each segmentation examine the impact of duration of residence and types of residence on migration.

2. Analysis

Regression analysis has been used with 'number of people migrated" as a dependent variable, and independent variables are 1) types of migration like rural to rural, rural to urban, etc.; 2)duration of residence like all durations of residence, duration of residence 10 years and above, etc., for male/female segment with specified reasons of migration such as work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved after birth, moved with household, and others. The details of the parameters used with their respective codes are listed in Table 1 for a complete understanding of the developed model.

Table 1: Details of the parameters used for the development of the model with their corresponding codes

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Category/ division of dependent variables	Corresponding Code	Controlling Parameters	
Number of People Migrated	Duration of Residence	All Duration	1	Gender	Reasons for Migration
		10 years & above	2		
		5-9 years	3		
		1-4 years	4		
		Less than 1 year	5		
	Types of Migration	Rural to Rural	1	Male(Code 1) Female(Code 2)	Work/ Employment (Code 1), Business(Code 2), Education (Code 3), Marriage (Code 4), Moved after birth (Code 5), Moved with household (6), and others (7)
		Rural to Urban	2		
		Urban to Rural	3		
		Urban to Urban	4		

Based on the controlling parameters and all their possible combinations (in total 7), the developed model may be categorized into seven cases where the degree of association between the variables and the level of significance of the model are judged. The coefficients associated with the variables are also indicative of the level of influence of the independent variables on the migration of the people.

The mathematical model of regression analysis can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Number of people migrated} = \hat{\beta}_0 + \hat{\beta}_1(\text{Duration of Residence}) + \hat{\beta}_2(\text{Types of Migration}) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Subject to the specification of the gender (male/female) and also the reasons for migration

Where $\hat{\beta}_1$ = Co-efficient associated with Duration of Migration, $\hat{\beta}_2$ = Co-efficient associated with Types of Migration

$\hat{\beta}_i$ (i=1,2) indicates the level of importance of i-th variables towards migration of males associated with the corresponding reason of migration by virtue of its sign and magnitude

3. Results - Male Segment

The results of the regression analysis for the male segment are represented in the summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Summarized results of Regression analysis with the co-efficient value associated with the variables

Controlling Parameters		Model Code	R-Square	Adjusted R-square	Constant	$\hat{\beta}_1$	$\hat{\beta}_2$
Male	Work/Employment	11	0.548	0.494	16061.2	--1759.7**	--2960.0***
Male	Business others	12	0.539	0.485	462.067	-56.625***	-77.840***
Male	Education	13	0.300	0.218	5288.975	Not Significant	-1268.74**
Male	Marriage	14	0.416	0.347	11672.65	-1254.35*	-2351.520**
Male	Moved after birth	15	0.452	0.388	5228.675	-664.225**	-809.860**
Male	Moved with household	16	0.460	0.397	15927.975	-1790.525**	-2962.780***
Male	Others	17	0.409	0.339	19867.525	-2067.075***	-3917.080**

*, **, *** indicate significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels, respectively.

The value of the associated coefficient in both cases is negative. After analysis of census data, it has been found that migration increases with the duration of residence, which necessarily means SC males are more prone to migration for various reasons with an increase in the duration of residence. The intensity of migration is at its maximum when it occurs from rural to rural areas. It gradually decreases for rural to urban, urban to rural, and urban to urban areas.

4. Results –Female Segment

The results of the regression analysis for the female segment are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Summarized results of Regression analysis with the co-efficient value associated with the variables

Controlling Parameters		Model Code	R-Square	Adjusted R-square	Constant	$\hat{\beta}_1$	$\hat{\beta}_2$
Female	Work/Employment	21	0.450	0.385	6230.525	Not Significant	-1325.800***
Female	Business others	22	0.437	0.370	428.550	-47.650**	-82.420***
Female	Education	23	0.338	0.260	1327.60	Not Significant	-299.820**
Female	Marriage	24	0.407	0.337	380190.4	-41665.4*	-75876.7**
Female	Moved after birth	25	0.426	0.358	3604.95	-443.150**	-552.840**
Female	Moved with household	26	0.482	0.421	18644.125	-2028.175**	-3507.860***
Female	Others	27	0.383	0.310	24887.975	-2802.025*	-4792.84**

*, **, *** indicate significance at the 10, 5, and 1 percent levels, respectively.

For scheduled caste (SC) females of West Bengal, migration increases with duration of residence for all determinants. Scheduled caste females mostly migrate from rural to rural areas. The intensity of migration gradually decreases from rural to urban areas, urban to rural areas, and urban to urban areas.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that irrespective of gender, intensity of migration increases with duration of residence. SC people generally do not want to migrate for small period of time, irrespective of the reason. At the same time, both SC males and females mostly want to migrate from rural to rural areas and not from rural to urban areas. Government of India has taken different poverty alleviation programs and activities in rural areas to control migration-induced problems, but those are not sufficient because many wealthier rural residents also migrate for formal employment opportunities, education, etc. A Government of India (GOI) initiative, PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas), the brainchild of former President Dr. A. P. J. AbdulKalam, has been launched with grand intentions to reduce migration. At the gross level, this program focuses on generating employment and an urban level of income in rural India instead of concentrating on the implementation of mere poverty alleviation programs. The whole agenda of this grand program is to make rural India more capable of having a decent sustainable livelihood. The level of importance of factors determining migration is different across genders, but the relationship between migration-duration and migration-type remains the same irrespective of gender.

5.1 Study Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study is based on dated secondary data (Census Year 2001), which may not fully capture the most recent dynamics and patterns. This chronological gap restricts the findings' immediate relevance to the present. It is difficult to identify long-term longitudinal patterns or monitor family mobility over lengthy periods of time when static cross-sectional data is used. Segmentations at the district or regional levels may conceal intra-district differences, localized economic shocks that drive migration, or micro-level agricultural stress. The study focuses on caste mobility inside the state of West Bengal and exclusively looks at West Bengal's intra-state movement patterns within India.

A more thorough understanding of migration dynamics may be possible in the future using primary field surveys and longitudinal panel data. Multi-layered intersections, such as caste mixed with household economic status, landholding size, and educational achievement, can be examined using regression models. Similar research could be conducted in the other Indian states, dividing the nation into the east, west, north, and south to gain a better

understanding of the results and conducting a comparative analysis of caste migration across Indian states to determine the impact of migration types and duration on migration across genders as well as the reasons for migration.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Disclosure: The authors declare that no artificial intelligence tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

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