



Analysis of conceptualization of migration: A geographical perspective

¹Abhay Kumar*, ²Sandesh Yadav

¹Alumnus, Department of Geography, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India

²Freelance Researcher, New Delhi, India

E-mail: kr.abhaykumar@gmail.com

Contact no. +91-9891342550 *Correspondance Author

Abstract: The present research article deals with the aspect of meaning and conceptualization of migration from the geographers point of view. Though, the debate is age-old and aspect of migration is dealt by different disciplines in different ways ranging from social processes (sociology) to qualitative and quantitative research (economics) but what we are failing is to cover migration from the geographers perspective. The purview of Geography as a discipline is much more wide as compared to other disciplines and encompasses socio (social geography), economic (economic geography), demographic (population geography), urbanization (urban geography) attributes of different disciplines. This interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of geography bridges the gap in the conceptualization of the migration. Though the process of migration involves 'to and fro' movement of people between different geographical boundaries but the migrants belongs to all strata of society, religion, caste, rich, poor, dependents, independents and all age groups which compel the geographers to analyze all possible factors and movements taking place within the different geographical boundaries. At this vary point, it becomes extremely important to understand the meaning and conceptualize the process of migration with special reference to India. The present study is based on comprehensive literature survey involving research papers, reports, documents of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The study is an attempt to explore that how scholars, intellectuals and bureaucrats percieve the process of migration and how they define the process of migration as per their notion? The study attempts to identify the loopholes in the process of conceptualization of migration.

Keywords: Migration, Meaning, Conceptualization, Geographical boundaries.

1. Introduction

The process of migration is defined as the 'spatial mobility' or 'to and fro' movement of human beings and taking place from time immemorial. The forms of the process kept on changing throughout the ages and varied from nomadic movement to the present day movement. This process of migration was catalyzed by the rapid rate of industrialization and urbanization. Consequently, triggered the process of developmental activities which required heavy workforce and offered opportunities to gain in terms of monetary benefits (Lusome and Bhagat,

2006)¹. Moreover, urban regions and rural regions came into scene with different sets of push-pull factors which in lieu determine the migrating patterns of human beings (Joseph, 1988)². The present research article is based on the basic idea that when the scenario of movement of human beings kept on evolving between the different geographical boundaries then how the meaning and concept of migration will remain same in todays highly dynamic world. The present research article also makes an attempt to discuss the process of migration under normal and special circumstances.

2. Objectives

- To identify the meaning and concepts of migration from the geographical perspective.
- To understand the various forms of migration in todays highly dynamic world.

3. Conceptual framework

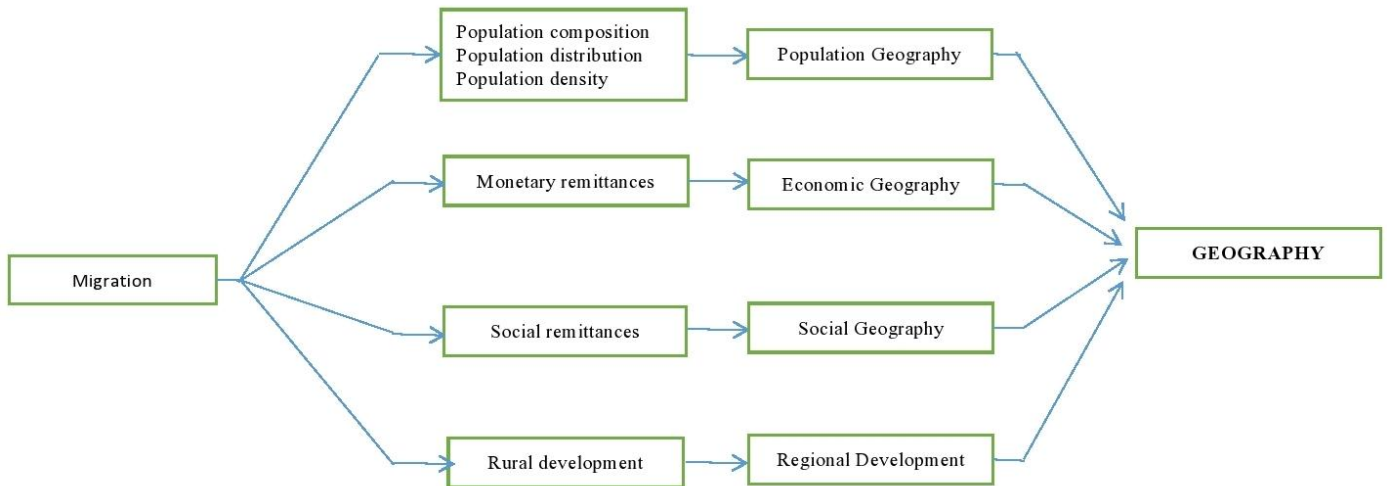
The process of migration kept on evolving right from the primitive time period, human beings moved from one place to another in hunt of food. The purpose of migration was 'survival' with 'unidirectional' movement of primitive human beings. During this period, the conceptualization of migration was sort of vague with too much simplified trends and patterns of movement and no demarcation of clear cut geographical boundaries. Consequently, no concept of place of origin and place of destination came into scene. With the advent of industrialization, people of African countries were forced to move as 'slaves/labourers' towards the different parts of the world. Here, the process of migration was 'male dominated' characterized by the forced movement with no economic returns. During this period, the concept of migration included the aspect of unskilled work but the aspect of monetary benefits was missing. Moreover, migrants were forced to live in inhuman conditions. With the passage of time, means of transport and communication came into scene which marked the beginning of rapid mobility of human beings. This was the first time that the concept of migration included the skilled, unskilled and monetary benefits in the form of wages (though underpaid). The main streams of migration were rural-rural and rural-urban in specific parts of



the world as means of transport and communication were limited to the rich people only. Here, the concept of remittances in the form of savings became sole motivating factor behind the process of migration. The improved network of transport and communication brought the geographical world

very close to each other and rapid mobility with fast pace of flow of information facilitated the movement of migrants. Here, the complex patterns of the process of migration came into scene with different sorts of movement of migrants.

Figure 01 Aspects of migration and their linkages with Geography



Source: Prepared by the author based on the comprehensive literature survey

Here, the meaning and concepts of migration changed and attain high level of complexity. Now, the conceptualization of is possible but generalization of migration is not possible because of different streams of migration, different forms of migration and various factors acting at the same time. It was during this time period that the concept of push-pull factors with multi-directional movement of migrants came into scene.

The process of migration, under the influence of globalization, urbanization and industrialization, acquired different forms and migrants crossed geographical boundaries (micro, meso and macro geographical boundaries). If we talk about the international migration then emigration and immigration while domestic migration includes in-migration and out-migration as the major forms of migration. The domestic migration is bit complex as it involves the different streams of migration viz. Rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-urban and urban-rural. This brings out the multifaceted and complex nature of migration and thus, adding new dimensions to the meaning and conceptualization of the migration.

The aspects of migration includes population composition, population density and population distribution (population geography) (Davis, 1963)³; monetary remittances (economic geography) (Ping et.al., 2010)⁴; social remittances (social

geography); development of local economy both at place of origin and place of destination (regional development) (Orzoco, 2016)⁵. The conceptualization of migration from geographical perspective need to accommodate the ideas of population geography, economic geography, social geography and regional development and these branches of geography overlaps with other disciplines like sociology, economics etc.

4. Forms of migration

The process of migration can be studied under the two broad heads viz. voluntary human movement under normal circumstances and involuntary human movement under special circumstances. The movement categories viz. emigration, immigration, in-migration and out-migration falls under the head of voluntary human movement. On the other hand, migration forms such as mass migration, reverse migration, distressed migration falls under the head of involuntary human movement. The difference between the voluntary and involuntary human movement is that voluntary human movement are ‘by choice’ movements with clear purpose and objectives in the minds of migrants and such movements takes place within legal framework of place of origin and place of destination. Moreover, migrants follow legal route while travelling. While, involuntary human movement are ‘sudden’ and ‘forceful’with vague purpose of survival. The





involuntary human movements generally do not follow the legal framework and legal routes.

The voluntary human movement may be due to better job opportunities, better education facilities, better living and social standards, medical facilities at the place of destination while the involuntary human movement is due to natural calamities specifically flood, drought, earthquake, landslides etc., wars, social conflicts, civil war, partition disputes.

The next human movement is temporal in nature and can be placed under two broad heads viz. short-term migration and long-term migration. The short-term migration generally is for the period of more than three months and less than three years and these type of human movements is for attaining education, training process, job opportunities (skilled and unskilled) etc while the long-term

migration takes place when the period of stay extends beyond three years and possible reason for such type of migration is when one is willing to settle permanently at the place of destination in order to raise social and living standards. The long-term migration process have serious impacts on the place of origin as it creates deficit of people (both skilled and unskilled).

The other forms of migration include seasonal migration (labour movement towards the State of Punjab and Haryana during the harvesting season) and circular migration though these forms of migration are more prevalent in India but still, they constitute the special form of migration. These sorts of migration are basically driven by the psychology of 'normal livelihood strategy' and improves the per capita income of the migrants households. This type of migration process ease the survival of the migrants and their family.

Table 01 Thinkers and their models dealing with different aspects of migration

Thinker	Model	Basic idea of model
Ravenstein (1880s)	Laws of migration	-Migration results in more balanced redistribution of population -Social capillary movement
Evertt Lee (1969)	Conceptualization of factors	'drive away' factors and 'to hold' factors
Stouffer	Intervening opportunity model	Inverse relation between migration and intervening opportunity
Todaro Model (1971)	Economic factors	Economic costs versus benefits
William J. Reilly (1931)	Gravity model	Based on Newton's law gravitation

Source: Prepared by the author based on the chapter entitled 'Theories and typologies of migration' (Dutta, Moindra) contained in booklets of IGNOU.

5. Spatial 're-distribution' of population, resources and development - A geographical perspective

The process of migration involves the human movement from the place of origin to place of destination, remittance generation and their flow, upliftment of living standards and social standards, improvement in quality of life. In other words, it implies that process of migration re-distributes the population between the place of origin and place of destination, resources both monetary (remittances) and non-monetary (diffusion of knowledge, culture, social norms), developmental processes (increased pucca house, increased household amenities, increased agricultural productivity etc.). This re-distribution triggers the process of urbanization at the place of origin and catalyzes the same at the place of destination (Bhagat, 2011)⁶. This redistributive aspect of the process of migration gives an hope to various experts that sustainable cities and urbanization can be achieved through

migration. Likewise, others also favoured the promotion of 'migration related developmental equation' (Peggy, 2008)⁷. Scholars are considering migration as a positive process which can play a major role in development strategy in the third world (Sharma,2008)⁸. The above discussion suggests that migration is a positive process and plays major role in nation building.

6. Conclusion

Geography considers the process of migration as an integrated and positive process. Though the many aspects of migration process are still unexplained, for example, refugees do not fall under the category of migrants. These unexplained aspects hinders the process of conceptualization of the migration process in general way. The conceptualization of migration, irrespective of the discipline, is bit complex process due to highly dynamic and ever changing environment and unpredictable human behaviour.



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