

Migration from North-East to Urban Centres: A Study of Delhi Region

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Babu P. Remesh



V. V. Giri National Labour Institute

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Preface

North East Research Centre (NERC) at V.V.Giri National Labour Institute has been set up with an objective of promoting research on themes specially related to labour and employment issues pertaining to India's North Eastern Region, comprising of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. Identifying and involving concerned institutions and individuals who are working on similar issues was the first task before NERC. It is in this context that a National Workshop was organised during 19-20th November, 2009 at Agartala, Tripura in which invited resource persons presented papers and proposals on their ongoing and proposed research on various dimensions of labour in North Eastern States. As a follow up to this workshop, a set of research projects were commissioned by the NERC on relevant and prioritised areas/themes. The present working paper by Dr.Babu P. Remesh, titled, '*Migration from North-East to Urban Centres: A Study of Delhi Region*' is the output of one of these projects.

Through a case study of Delhi Region, the present study looks into the dynamics of out-migration of youth from the North Eastern Region to the urban centres of rest of India, which picked up momentum in the recent past. Being a less researched aspect of migration in the context of NER, this research on outward move of younger population is one of the pioneering works in the area. The author meticulously portrays the myriad dimensions of the migration dynamics, giving special attention to the issues being confronted by the migrants in the urban milieu. The research helps to address the dilemmas of the North-East migrants in the urban centers in a more understanding and informed manner.

I am sure that this working paper, focusing on certain hitherto largely unaddressed concerns of internal migration in India, will be of immense interest and use to policy planners, academics and other concerned actors – dealing with issues of migration and migrants. I congratulate the author for the excellent and time bound work and thank Shri Anoop K. Satpathy for skillfully coordinating this project for the NERC/VVGNI.

V.P. Yajurvedi
Director General

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Migration from North-East to Urban Centres: A Study of Delhi Region

Babu P. Remesh¹

I. Introduction

1. 1. The Study

Extant scholarship on migration with respect to the North Eastern Region (NER)² of India largely confine to issues of in-migration - as the region has been historically a migrant receiving zone. Accordingly, issues related to influx of migrants (such as social tensions between locals and foreign/inter-state migrants; illegal migration from neighboring countries; and emerging concerns of internal security) attracted greater gravity and concern, in usual migration-discourses pertaining to NER.

It is only very recently that out-migration of natives of NER to other localities in India became a problem of apprehension. Though the natives of NER are traditionally believed to be rather reluctant to migrate (Panda, 2010) for various reasons, out-migration from the North Eastern states has steadily been increasing in the recent past (Singh, 2007). Using Census Data, Chyrmang (2011) shows a steady and steep increase in out-migration during 1981-2001³. Rough estimates and reports suggest that this trend got discernibly strengthened in the subsequent

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² NER comprises of eight states namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The assumption of homogeneity in the understanding of issues of North East is erroneous. However, the paper uses this unified approach as an entry point to lay out some common issues of out-migration of the youth from the region to urban centres.

³ As per the estimation, the proportion of out-migration from North East Region has increased from 1.7 per cent to 2.9. per cent during 1981 to 2001. While 1981-91 period marked a steady increase in out-migration, in the next decade (1991 to 2001), the increase in out migration doubled (Chyrmang, 2010)

decade⁴, though there is not much secondary statistics available to substantiate this. Confirming this argument, of late, there has been an increasing presence of 'youth on move' from NER in the prominent urban centres of the country (Shimray, 2007). By now, it is widely acknowledged that the unprecedented city bound exodus of youth from NER in the most recent years is determined by multiple factors including motives of quality/higher studies⁵ and better employment prospects. An equally pressing reason is the socio-political unrest prevailing in most parts of the region⁶.

National Capital Region (NCR) - or broadly 'Delhi Region' - is one of the most favoured destinations of migrants from NER. Estimates suggest that currently in Delhi region, there are 90 to 100 thousand northeastern ethnic residence. The other major urban centres include Bangalore, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai, Chandigarh, Pune and Hyderabad. Along with this city bound movements, some proportion of the migrants also move to smaller towns and suburbs of far off states within the country. For instance, a recent research suggests that there are 8000 Assamese youth working in plywood factories in Perumbavoor, a town in far off Kerala (Das & Chutia, 2011).

Understanding the dynamics of the ever increasing migration and analysing its characteristics is important to arrive at appropriate policy formulations apropos maximising the benefits and minimising the adverse impacts of such a population transfer, both in the receiving cities as well as in the states of origin of the migrants. The present study on 'Migration of Youth from North East to National Delhi Region' is undertaken in this backdrop.

1.2. Objectives

Broadly, the study aims to capture the overall dynamics of migration of youth from North Eastern Region and to arrive at useful empirical insights for effective policy formulation, which inter alia lead to the improvement of the state of affairs of migrants from NER in Delhi and other urban centres in India. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (a) Understand the unique aspects of migration from NER to urban centres and its determinants.

⁴ For instance, a recent report claims that in 2010 alone around 1 lakh people migrated to from North East region to other cities of India (Assam Chronicle, 2011)

⁵ A recent research reports that 66.35 per cent of migration from NER to other cities of India is for the purpose of higher education only (NESC&H, 2011).

⁶ While analysing the patterns of interstate migration in India (2001), Krishnan (2007) observes that the politically disturbed states such as Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and Assam have recorded more out-migrants than in-migrants during the period under study. For a detailed account of socio-political unrest in NER, refer Shimray (2004).

- (b) Conceptualise the characteristics of migrants and their working and living patterns.
- (c) Identify and analyse the issues confronted by the migrants in urban neighborhoods and at workplaces.
- (d) Analyse the role of social networking and institutional/agency networks in the migration of youth from NER to urban centers.

1.3. Data Sources, Methodology and Scope

The study is primarily based on a field survey conducted in four identified localities in Delhi region, which have a noticeable presence of migrants from North Eastern region. These four localities (Vijaya Nagar, Munirka, Moti Bagh and Kotla Mubarakpur) were selected on the basis a detailed mapping of pockets with higher concentration of migrants from NER and subsequent discussions with some key resource persons. To provide the background and enrich the discussion some use of secondary data (NSS 64th round (2007-08) on Migration) and available secondary literature is also attempted.

A total of 402 working migrants from NER were covered in the primary survey, from the selected localities, with the help of pre-tested questionnaires. Apart from this, 40 case studies were also prepared, to gather supplementary qualitative information. The interview team also had discussions/informal interviews with several including social activists, researchers, and church based social organisers, researcher, and student leaders and so on – who are actively engaged with the issues of migrants from the region.

A visit to source regions of migration (in the North East) was also conducted as part of the study. This visit to four states in NER (Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Nagaland), helped gaining some first-hand information apropos the context of increasing migration from the region. During the visit, discussions were carried out with migrant families, church authorities, researchers, labour department officials and social activists, on various aspects of employment, unemployment, migration patterns, social and kinship networks and so on.

II. Understanding Migration from North East to Urban Centres

The nature and dynamics of migration from North East may not be exactly of the same nature or with similar issues and problems vis-à-vis the widely understood migration patterns (from rural to urban or urban to urban migration, or inter-state migration) within the rest of India. Thus, it may be wrong to conceptualise the reasons and determinants of migration of people from NER to urban centres similar to those of migration from other parts of the country (e.g. migration from Bihar or Orissa to Delhi). The underlying explanations/assumptions of many of

the extant studies include: rural-urban migration - for occupational changes and income enhancement; migration as a survival strategy; distress driven migration and so on. Contrary to these stereotyped approaches, the present study is based on a premise that a mere application of received theories and wisdom would not be appropriate to explain the migration from North East.

2.1. Determinants of Migration

An important reason behind the migration of youth from North East Region (NER) to urban centres is 'educational and employment considerations'. It is widely understood that despite a high literacy rate⁷, the region is characterised by a visible lack of adequate avenues for higher or technical education or vocational training. There is also a felt mismatch between the demand in the job market and the weak local educational system –especially to meet the requirements of the new economy occupations and professional service sectors (Lyndem & De, 2004). These conditions, coupled with inadequate economic infrastructure, may have definite implications on the migration decisions of educated and ambitious youth to urban centres for higher learning. It is widely understood that a good proportion of this youth continue in urban centres after education, for employment⁸.

The bleak employment prospect in the local labour markets is perhaps the most important determinant of migration of youth from NER to urban centres. Increasing educated and youth unemployment in the North Eastern states owe considerably to the abysmally lower level of industrialisation and lower expansion of modern service sector occupations in the region. The recent saturation in the government/public sector jobs also intensifies the unemployment situation. Lower labour absorption capacity of local labour markets and perceived employment prospects in the urban centres together prompt the aspirant youth in NER to migrate to cities (at least for sometime) to explore better opportunities.

The political unrest, violence and poverty of the region also often influence the decisions of youth in favour of migration. Most of the states in the NER have unrests and tensions (which include: religious/ethnic/communal clashes, tensions between local and infiltrated population, insurgency, tensions between people and army, insurgency and so on). Due to these tensions, the normal life of the people in the region is affected. For instance, reports suggest that in Manipur in recent years the life has become difficult for the ordinary people. With 100 days of public strikes a year, market shut, schools closed and public transportation off the road, the people find it very difficult to pursue their studies and livelihood

⁷ In terms of literacy rate, most states in the region are much ahead of the national average (64.8 %) –e.g. Mizoram 88.8 %; Tripura 73.2 %; Manipur 70.5 %; Sikkim 68.8 %; and Nagaland 66.6 % (Government of India, 2011).

⁸ Educational considerations' is reported as the second major reason for migration of youth from NER, after employment.

in the state. Such tensions together with bleak educational infrastructure and employment prospects in the region are found prompting the youngsters to try their luck in urban centres in other parts of the country.

Charm of working in cities /and in new economy jobs and possibilities of getting jobs in the city also add to their decision regarding migration. It is widely reported that relatively better command over English (among educated) and friendly attitudes of the youth from NER often help them to easily find a job in the cities – especially in hospitality and care works. Further to this, it is commonly perceived by NE people that getting a central government job is relatively easy for those belonging to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe Communities – as many of them are rightly qualified for reserved jobs at various levels.

The reasons/determinants of migration could also be grouped as ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors, as done by NESO & H (2011). Such binary segregation allows situating the emerging situation of migration within the broad categories of ‘compulsions’ and ‘attractions’.

2.2. Some Insights from NSSO Data

Despite the non-availability of detailed and reliable secondary data⁹, a preliminary analysis of data from the NSS 64th round (2007-08) on migration is carried out (Please refer to the Tables provided in Appendix). This analysis provides some broader characterisation of migration from the North East region. Further, it also shows that some of the dynamics related to migration of youth from NER are not adequately reflected in the available secondary data.

The data suggests that the North Eastern states generally show higher proportion of migrant households to total households. For instance, the Appendix Table 1 shows that most of the states in the region show considerably higher number of migrant households per 1000 households than the all-India average. While the national average is 19 per 1000 households 4 states Sikkim (43), Arunachal Pradesh (40), Manipur (34) and Nagaland (26) show comparatively quite high numbers and Mizoram (19) is just on a par with the national average.

The data on migration rates (per 1000 persons) – Appendix Table 2 - however, shows that all of the North Eastern states (except Sikkim; 336) lag considerably behind the national average (285) - for total population; rural and urban included. The pattern holds true even when we take the data pertaining to females alone. However, when we see the migration rates for males, two more states, Mizoram (143) and Nagaland (121) join Sikkim (233) with higher rates than the All-India

⁹ Using the Census Data, Chyrrnang (2011) provides some estimates on out-migration trends from the North Eastern Region for the period 1981 to 2001. However, as the analysis pertains only upto 2001 Census data, it does not provide much insights into the most recent phase of migration (i.e. in the first decade of the current century), which is the prime focus of the present study.

(109). The first impression that one gets from this secondary data on migration rates is that it does not adequately capture or reveals the actual status of increasing trend of migration from North Eastern states, compared to rest of the regions of the country. For instance, the migration of males and females from Manipur is given as only 7 and 10 as against national rates of 109 and 472 respectively, which does not truly confirm to the facts at ground level. Notwithstanding this, a closer analysis shows that the data on female migration is reasonably fair, if we consider the fact that more than 90 per cent of women's migration from other states of India are subsequent to marriage (though the figure attached to Manipur is still contestable). This aspect is further followed in the subsequent discussion on reasons for migration.

Analysis of disaggregated data pertaining to different Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) quintile (Appendix Tables 3 & 4) suggests it is the relatively rich segments who migrate, which is true for both rural and urban areas. This explains that abject poverty or search for basic employment is not the pressing reason for migration from these states. Higher migration from upper quintiles also suggests the enabling aspects of assets and financial resources in migration. Further, it is evident from the data (Appendix Table 5) that, among UPR migrants, migration of temporary nature but with longer duration of stay (i.e. 12 months or more) is much more for North Eastern states than the national level.

Distribution (per 1000) of migrants by location of last usual place of residence suggests that some of the North Eastern States are much far ahead than the national level, in terms of shifting residences to other states. For instance, in the case of migration of rural population (Appendix Table 6) as against the national figure of 15 (per 1000), Meghalaya showed a highest figure of 114, followed by Manipur (77), Sikkim (27), Nagaland (20) and Arunachal Pradesh (20). This to some extent, corroborate with the trend of increased migration of people from NER to urban centres. However, here, it should also be noted that states like Assam (3), Mizoram (1) and Tripura (1) are with very lower figures than the all India one. For urban population also (Appendix Table 7) the trend more or less holds good, though there is an exceptionally striking low figure for Manipur (1), which is the most prominent state apropos out-migration. A better understanding of the out-migration can be arrived at by analysis the data on out-migrants – Appendix Table 11. Here too all the states show figures much below the national average, though states like Manipur show much higher figures (35 for Total; 48 for Male; and 21 for female). The distribution of out-migrants across present place of residence (Appendix Table 12 provides useful insights on the migration patterns. The category 'outside the state' shows very high rates for Manipur and Tripura (372 and 259 respectively) as against the all India average of 232.

An analysis of the reasons behind migration (Appendix Tables 8, 9 & 10) suggest that migration for studies and employment assume much more significance in the case of north eastern states than rest of India. For instance, while the all India figures related to employment reasons and studies are 99 and 24 respectively, for Manipur these figures are 222 and 241 respectively. Nagaland (338, 72); Sikkim (238, 66) and Meghalaya (211, 54) are some of the states with distinctly higher figures. While these reasons prominently come for both urban and rural (male and female), the findings are strikingly so in the case of female population (Appendix Table 10). To cite some instances as against the all-India figures of 99 and 24 for employment and educational reasons, for Manipur females the figures were 222 and 241 respectively. To some extent the data is confirming with the increased outflow of youth from Manipur to urban centres of other states (for educational and employment pursuits).

The data on the distribution of out-migrants across reasons shows the above pattern clearly (Appendix Table 13). All the states except Sikkim show very high proportions under employment related reasons with Manipur topping the states 629 out of 1000 (which is followed by Arunachal Pradesh, 609; Mizoram 596; Meghalaya, 496; Tripura, 494; Assam, 477 & Nagaland. When combined with educational reasons, the picture becomes more vivid with Meghalaya (884) and Manipur (835) and Mizoram (744) leading the list . All the states show higher values than the national average of 346, with Assam showing the lowest (490) among the North Eastern States. It is important in this context to note that only very small proportions of migrants from these states belong to the category of illiterates, compared to the national average (448) which is in tune with the above pattern. Interestingly, barring Assam and Tripura, all the states have high proportion of migrants with education 'graduate and above'.

2.3. Unique Aspects of Migration from North East

From the discussions in the subsequent sections, it is evident that the dynamics of migration from NER to urban centres is distinct from the usual patterns of migration of rural poor to urban centres. Compared to the migrants from other parts of India, the migrants from North East are from better economic and educational backgrounds. Due to this, a large chunk of migration is not due to abject poverty or in search of basic manual employment in the city. For instance, we could hardly see any rickshaw pullers or urban street vendors from the North East. Further, the presence of north east population is also very minimal in factories in NCR region.

Given the better educational background, migrants from NER are more inclined towards pursuing higher studies or entering into office jobs/white collar occupations in government or private sector firms. The proliferation of

jobs in the modern service sector industries, in the recent years also opened up considerable occupational avenues for the youth from North East, who have 'right' aptitudes for the customer oriented service economy.

A major aspect to be noted here is the linkage between the migration for educational purpose and for employment purpose. It is widely understood that a major pattern of migration of NER youth to Delhi region, involves two stages. In the first stage, the youths will come to the city as students and after the completion of their course or after few years of study, they get into some suitable jobs available in the city. While some of the states. A closer examination suggests that migrants from certain states (e.g. Manipur) show stronger cases of such two-stage migration.

Seasonal migration, which is a prominent pattern with those migrants from other North Indian states is almost absent in the case of migration of NER youth. Compared to migrants from Bihar, Haryana and UP the North Easterners stay for more months and a larger portion subsequently opts for permanent stay in Delhi region¹⁰. Given the better financial status, educational profile and better human resources this pattern needs to be understood in detail. The preference for continuing city largely owes to the tensions in native states. Almost all the states in region are crippled with some tensions – be it is insurgency, ethnic clashes or tensions between natives and infiltrated. This prompts those who have some resources to migrate to the cities especially for education of their children. As the North Eastern states lack higher educational infrastructure (but are endowed with good educational system upto secondary level) such migration for educational pursuit is prominent among aspirant youth who have completed some level of education at their native places. The other implication is that after obtaining better education in the city most of them find that in order to 'best utilise' their capacities they need to continue in the city. Thus, while tensions and lack of educational infrastructure jointly act as the driving force for first-stage of migration, it is lack of employment opportunities (which is also related to tensions) that deter the return back of migrants.

A lower share of marriage migration characterises the migration of youth from NER to urban centres. Mostly, the migrants are unmarried or single. In some cases, single migrants have their friends or relatives to join in the city. The initial settling at the city is mostly managed with the help of these friends and relatives. After initial acquaintance with the city, they choose to stay in groups (of relatives; of persons from same communities/region).

Available secondary literature also suggests that there is also an extended aspect

¹⁰ The survey data suggests that more than 50 per cent of the respondents continued in their present occupation for more than a year. 28.4 per cent was with more than 2 years.

of ‘human trafficking’, when one discusses the migration from North East (UNDP, 2005). It is pointed out that many a times young children and girls from the region are trafficked by individuals and agencies (with the promises of better educational and employment opportunities). These children and girls are later on forced to work as child labor and in brothels in bigger cities and far off labour sites. The recent High Court Judgment banning the migration of school children from Manipur came to place in this broader context.

On the whole, it needs to be concluded that a preliminary examination suggests that the migration from North East to urban centres needs to be seen as distinct as it has several other dimensions vis-à-vis the migration of youth from rest of India. These understandings will be further cross-checked in the subsequent enquiry based on primary data.

III. Migrants, Migration, Neighborhoods and Employment

Based on primary data gathered, this section discusses the profile of respondents and the details of migration (pattern and other particulars). To provide the backdrop for discussion, it begins with the details of the field study.

3. 1. About the Field Survey

In the absence of any authentic and comprehensive data on the quantum and spread of North East population in Delhi, the survey followed a snow ball technique of sample selection. After detailed discussions with key resource persons, four areas were identified in Delhi (viz. Vijaya Nagar, Munirka, Moti Bagh and Kotla Mubarakpur), which are considered as hubs where more people from North Eastern states reside. To get a good account of the details it was planned to interview around 400 persons (100 each from the four selected areas). Accordingly, a total of 402 respondents (100 each from Kotla, Motibagh and Munirka; and 102 from Vijaya Nagar) were covered in the study.

Though the study has not followed any strict statistical procedure, attention was given in selecting representative samples giving due attention on various attributes such as gender, age, state of origin, occupational categories and so on. All the respondents are employed or actively seeking employment. Accordingly, the survey did not cover the students of North East region at NCR. Nevertheless, responses of some of the student representatives were gathered as supplementary information¹¹.

The intensive field survey was carried out in 6 months starting from June-

¹¹ As the specific focus of the present study was on migration for employment and labour related issues confronted by migrants in the city, the sample did not include students from North East. However, during the course of the present study, it is strongly felt that the analysis in the study could be further enriched, if it is supplemented with a field study of students from North East and their collectives.

December 2010, with the involvement of data investigators, who are primarily from North East. This allowed the study team to have more access to the respondents.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Study Area

Study Area	No. of Respondents		
	Male	Female	Total
Kotla	60	40	100
Motibagh	51	49	100
Munirka	49	51	100
Vijay Nagar	54	48	102
Total	214	188	402

Source: Survey Data

As part of the field data gathering, as per the original plan of the study a visit to the source regions was also conducted along side the field survey. During this visit, four North Eastern States were covered such as Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Sikkim. This trip enabled the study team to have closer field level insights and to conceptualise the cultural gap being experienced by the North-Easters in alien urban set ups.

3.2. Profile of Migrants

Out of the 402 respondents 214 (52.24 per cent) were males. Around three-fourth (74.8 per cent) of the respondents were from 25-30 Age group. 15.2 per cent of the respondents were still younger (18-25 Age group). These strongly indicate the 'youth' aspect of the migrants. 93 per cent of the respondents were unmarried. A small proportion of them (1.24 per cent) were either separated/ deserted. This pattern can be explained as follows. As the influx of North East youth to the new economy occupations are fairly new, the age profile is rather young. Partly, recruitment of youth is also an objective function of the firms in new service sector occupations. Further, as most of the respondents are within the first five years of their migration/ entering into work they are mostly single and sharing same residential premises mostly with their friends from North East (same locality or same tribe)

Table 2: Age wise Distribution of Respondents

State of Origin	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Upto 20	8	2.0
20-25	53	13.2
25-30	301	74.8
Above 30	40	10.0
Total	402	100.0

Source: Survey Data

44.3 per cent of the respondents are from Manipur¹². This was followed by Mizoram (17.2 per cent); Assam (16.2 per cent); Nagaland (7 per cent); Arunachal Pradesh (6.2 per cent); Tripura (6.0 per cent); and Meghalaya (3.2 per cent). There was no respondent from Sikkim¹³. 57.2 per cent reported that they belong to semi-urban areas of their state. This is followed by urban (30.3) and rural (12.4)¹⁴.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by State of Origin

State of Origin	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Assam	65	16.2
Arunachal Pradesh	25	6.2
Manipur	178	44.3
Meghalaya	13	3.2
Mizoram	69	17.2
Nagaland	28	7.0
Sikkim	-	-
Tripura	24	6.0
Total	402	100.0

Source: Survey Data

Majority of the respondents reported as Christians (49.75)¹⁵ or Hindus (45.02 per cent). 48 per cent of migrants from Arunachal Pradesh reported that they belong to Buddhism. Manipur and Tripura are other two states reported Buddhism (6

¹² While drawing the sample, due attention was given in selecting a more or less a representative sample of respondents. Thus, the higher proportion of Manipuris in all the study areas reflect the overall dominance of the people from this state among the migrants. This increased presence could be because of the increased intensity of socio-political tensions in the state, compared to other states of North East. Though many of the states in the North Eastern Region have some internal tensions or other, the intensity of such troubles is much more in the case of Manipur. Due to this, a large number of Manipuris prefer to move out of the state for educational and livelihood options. Even after continuing their education, many of these youth prefer to stay back in the city or move to some other city/destination, as they find it difficult get suitable avenues for employment in the native states (and on account of better environment in the city for education and development of their children). Thus, it is the 'higher retention rates' of migrants from Manipur compared to their counterparts from other states that result in their predominantly higher share among the overall migrants from North East.

¹³ Absence of migrants from Sikkim in the sample is partly due to the negligible proportion of people from this state among the total migrants from North East. From the visit to Sikkim it is evident that compared to other states in the region, there were not much acute internal tensions or instabilities in the state – which to some extent explains the lower presence of migrants from this state in Delhi.

¹⁴ The above set of information also prompt one to question the validity of available secondary data on Migration with respect to North Eastern States. For instance, the NSSO data shows higher migration rates for Sikkim people and lower rates for Manipuris, which is not in line with the pattern that one gets from the present survey data.

¹⁵ The proportion of Christians in total population varied from 98.6 and 96.4 per cents in Mizoram and Nagaland to 0 per cent in Assam.

and 4.2 per cent respectively)¹⁶. Respondents belonging to Muslim Community were only 0.2 per cent of Total (or 1.5 per cent of Assamese), who all stayed in Motibagh. 57 per cent reported themselves belonging to STs and 35.1 as Forward Caste. 6.0 per cent were found from OBCs and other 1.7 from SCs.

Educational profile of the respondents is impressive. There are no illiterates among the respondents and those who are with less than intermediary (plus two) education is less than 3 per cent. Around 84 per cent of the respondents have at least graduation/professional diploma or similar higher qualification. 47.5 per cent reported as graduates; 30.2 per cent as post graduates; and 6.4 per cent as with professional diploma and higher vocational skills. Apart from this several of the respondents were found studying for some other courses along with their present employment.

The respondents were mostly found working in office based white collar jobs (both in public and private sector) and in a variety of service sector occupations in the new economy – ranging from sales persons to air hostesses¹⁷. 67.4 per cent of the respondents reported that the present occupation is their first job, which point towards the phase wise shifting from studentship to worker status. 81.1 per cent reported their job as permanent. But from detailed probing, it was evident that the permanency is a notion, as most of them worked in projects/contracts or with term based appointments. In view of this, it is more appropriate to conceptualise them as regular but semi-permanent.

3.3. Patterns of Migration and Migrant Neighborhoods

Most of the youth came to the city were single migrants, without their family or friends in a group. As per the survey data, 93.2 per cent of the respondents reported as single migrants. But most of them had some one (family members, relatives, friends or someone from the same community/locality) to provide initial support and help. After coming to the city, normally they stayed with some of these known persons for few days, till they get acquainted with the place. The new migrants are introduced by their contact persons to someone who can help them in the job search or an organiser in church or voluntary organisation during this time. The early migrants/settled persons also found referring/introducing (or provides information) them to some of the possible openings.

The findings of the study, thus, suggests that community networking has a prominent role in migration of youth from NER. More than 90 per cent of the respondents reported that they received some help from kith and kin networks. It was also noted that some respondents also had been hosts to newly arrived migrants. Such social networking often assumes a 'close group' nature, where

¹⁶ The proportion of Buddhists to total respondents was 5 per cent.

¹⁷ The emerging occupational profile will be discussed in a subsequent section.

family relations and ethnic connections are central over other considerations. Among those who accessed social networks for migration, more than three-fourth chose family relations or people from same tribe as their initial-support providers in the city. The community networking begins even at the stage of contemplation of migration, especially to access information on prospects for higher education/employment in the city. With increased use of internet and social networking sites the scope and extent of 'close group' networking has expanded¹⁸.

Another major pattern is coming to the city for education and then continuing for employment. Several of the respondents initially came for education in prominent education institutions (like Delhi University, JNU and Jamia Milia) and during their stay in Delhi found out a suitable job and continued in the city. While most of these migrants came for post-graduate education, in most recent years, several of the youngsters are found coming for undergraduate studies or even for basic schooling. In such cases, the migration often becomes family migration. For instance, some of the respondents pointed out that their primary aim of migration to the city was to educate their children.

Compared to migrants from other states, those from NER and found living in pockets where there are more people from same region/locality/tribes. Sharing of same residence/room by two-four persons is the most prominent form. In the survey, 44.2 per cent of the respondents reported that they stay with their friends or colleagues. Another, 17.6 per cent also reported staying in groups – but with close relatives or family members. In the former category also, the preferred arrangement is to stay with those people, who are from same community/tribe or region. When the group becomes that of close relatives even the number goes up. During the survey, the study team saw many such groups where 8-10 members of same family (or close relatives) staying together. This pattern of staying in blocks gradually brought into existence several NER migrant neighborhoods in Delhi region. All the four selected study regions are such migrant neighborhoods.

Staying in close groups is found to be appropriate by most of the respondents and they cited several reasons for that. *“As we do share common food habits, eating habits and cultural background, being together means a kind of mutual support to each other”* says a Manipuri women respondent in Vijay Nagar. *“We can understand the problems and puzzles of other person, as we also face those of same sort”* adds a Naga boy in Moti Bagh. Several of the groups that the study team came across were that of either single migrant girls or boys. Very rarely only small groups constituting of boys and girls were found – these groups were mostly of close relatives /family members. Staying all alone and with spouse/

¹⁸ Certain associations of North Eastern students in Delhi are also found providing useful information (especially on job/educational opportunities) and initial hospitality to the prospective/new migrants.

fiancé was also noticed, though not very frequently. But, even such smaller units preferred to stay in a locality with more concentration of people from their own region/community.

Some of the respondents (17.6) were also reported staying independently in rented accommodations. A few also reported staying as paying guests (2.2 per cent). Even those were with single accommodation status reported that they prefer to stay in (or close to) pockets, with concentration of North East people, as it is easy to relate one with each other.

Formation of such pockets/migrant neighborhoods, provides a lot of advantages apart from having a feeling of togetherness and understanding. There are shops run by people from their locality or sometimes shops that sell the goods from their native states. For instance, a restaurant being run by a Manipuri person in Munirka is one of the eating joints, which is frequented by people from all parts of North East. *“The food provided is a mix of food from different regions within North East and thus is liked by most of the people from North East”*, says the owner of the eating joint. Within migrant neighborhoods, the members also get opportunities for having get together on occasions such as festivals and state formation days etc. It also helps them to closely work with community based collectives. For instance, Munirka has a fellowship of North Easterners belonging to Vaiphei Christians, the meetings of which are even used to discuss common issues and challenges confronted by migrants from North East in the city. In Dwarka, in a north east based church, more than one thousand people from NER are reported to attend the Sunday mass – for which even people commute from other migrant neighborhoods such as Vijay Nagar, Munirka and Noida.

It was highlighted by most of the respondents that giving in pockets of NER people provides them a security feeling and in these urban neighborhoods many of their tensions back home are forgotten. For instance we could see members from communities which are clashing at Manipur, living harmoniously in a Delhi settlement. Thus, urban settlement provides them a feeling of togetherness and binding, which is often lacking in their native places. The migrants feel that it is the neighborhood community that is first consulted when there is any issue related to their work and stay in the city.

3.4. Emerging Occupational Profile and Process of Accessing Jobs

Till early years of the present century, a major proportion of the migrants in Delhi from North East were found working in government jobs. Since there is some reservation for those belonging to SC/ST communities, North Easterners found these jobs easily accessible, given their better educational backgrounds and fluency in English. But in the recent years, with the emergence of new occupations in the globalised era, there are more avenues coming in the private

sector and service sector occupations (NESC & H, 2011). Accordingly, a major chunk of youngsters were found working in a host of private sector occupations (including administrative and office jobs, BPO jobs, customer care activities, hospitality jobs – waiters/waitresses, receptionists, sales executives and so on)¹⁹. The four pockets selected for detailed case studies, most of the people were found working in such private sector or MNC occupations in Delhi and other parts of NCR. Accordingly, the discussion that follows is more related to such occupations in the private/MNC sector.

A prominent pattern of getting access to city jobs was through referrals. This is truer for those who work in new service sector occupations. *“the company promotes a ‘bring your own buddy’ policy and it was easy for me to find a job as my cousin was working there”* said a Mizo girl who works in a BPO firm. Several others got the job through applying to the firms, of which they had some understanding through their kith and kins. Other important means was to apply directly in response to advertisements (especially in news papers and internet) and to appear for direct/telephonic interview.

There were also instances where the employees were recruited directly from North East, in recruitment melas organised by the company or through placement agencies/training centres, where they got basic knowledge about the jobs. During the visit to North Eastern states, it was noticed that several of the BPO firms had some arrangements with training centres in Shillong, Kohima, Dimapur and Guwahati to recruit candidates with right aptitudes.

Irrespective of the mode of selection, the respondents had to undergo several rounds of testing which include aptitude tests, group discussions, and telephonic/direct interview, written tests and so on. More than academic qualifications, the respondents feel that, it is their positive aptitudes and attitudes that were counted by the firms. The pleasing appearance, fluent English, trendy dressing styles and free mingling nature of the youth often help them to find a job in the hospitality sector. For instance, during the CWG period thousands of youth from the region got temporary but nicely paying jobs in the reception and hospitality related sections of the organising committee.

The docile but committed and hard working nature of the North Easterners is often preferred by the employers. *“They are hardworking, honest and committed”, “pleasing appearance”, “soft-spoken and with nice behavior”, “They won’t group against the interests of the company”* – These are some of the typical and oft repeated responses of the owners and managers of the firms. Yet another attraction is the higher retention rates (or longer period of continuance) of

¹⁹ In a study covering 34 women workers from 6 states from North East, Shingmila (2007) also observes that majority of the new migrants are working in service sector (e.g. showrooms, shops, hotels, beauty parlours, hospitals and call centres).

North East workers. The survey data suggests that more than 50 per cent of the respondents continued in their present occupation for more than a year. 28.4 per cent was with more than 2 years. Distinct physical features of the North Eastern migrants are also preferred often by the employers (e.g. Chinese restaurants, Momo Stalls in Multiplexes²⁰, star hotels and hospitals, shopping malls etc.) – as it helps the firms to give some international/cross cultural/ethnic ambience to their establishments.

IV. Issues confronted by Migrants from North East in the City

4.1. Insecurities and Vulnerabilities

Most of the respondents found the city “*tougher than expected*” and opined that they felt “*more insecure*” in Delhi. The same observation was maintained by the respondents, even when it was pointed out that many of them had to leave their native places due to insurgencies and disruption in normal life²¹. “*There is a huge difference between what we expected and what we are experiencing*”, said respondent. “*The insecurity that we felt in our home state is different compared to that we face here. We cannot compare both*” adds another respondent.

Right from climate, eating habits, customs, and costumes - everything in Delhi is different for the migrants and adjusting to all these changed situations is the first challenge confronted by the North Easterners. Many of them pointed out that all these make them insecure in the city – and that is suggested as the major reason for the strong preference for sharing accommodation with friends/relatives/colleagues from North East in localities which are pre-dominantly inhabited by North Easterners²². “*It is the strong feeling of loneliness and isolation that prompts us to stay together in localities where the residents share same issues*” says a Naga respondent from Kotla.

In quite a few cases the respondents reported that they tried to adjust with the changed situations to break their ‘outsider’ status. Picking up of bits of spoken Hindi, familiarising with North Indian food items, dress styles, participation in local festivals etc. are pointed out as some of the activities towards “acquiring basic skills for day to day life in the city”! But even after these adjustment efforts, many of them find that their Mongolian features and fair skin often made them

²⁰ This is despite the fact that many of them had no other connection or exposure regarding Chinese cuisines or ways of hospitalities. Further, to its surprise the study team could not find any street-side Momo stalls run by people from North East. Mostly, such stalls are run by people from either Darjeeling, Nepal or from Tibet.

²¹ For instance, majority of the Manipuri respondents pointed out that their primary intention of moving to Delhi was to attain a peaceful environment for education and pursuit of better employment, which is not possible at their native state.

²² Unlike migrants from other states, the North Easterners are normally particular about choosing their room mates from own community/state/region and about staying in pockets where they could find more migrants from their own community/state/region.

distinct in public spaces. A number of unsuccessful attempts to become insider were reported by the respondents. “Even after wearing Sari or Salwar Kurta it is very is to recognise our difference due to our fair skin and wrongly pronounced Hindi by everyone - be it is auto drivers, street vendors or eve teasers. And sooner we will fall pray to discriminatory treatment” said a BPO employee from Arunachal Pradesh, staying at Munirka.

Quite often the distinct identity of the migrants adds to their vulnerabilities in the urban alien land. The calm nature and friendly attitudes of North Easterners are often mistaken as signs of docility and helplessness. To quote a respondent: “Basically our people are peace loving and friendly and sometimes we find these qualities as misfit in the harsh city life. Our smiling and soft-spoken faces are often read as signs of vulnerability”.

4.2. Cultural Gap, Faulty Notions and Social Labeling

Majority of the respondents reported that the root of insecurity lies with the attitude of the society towards people from North East. It is visible that here the issue is that of a ‘cultural gap’. As the land and people of Delhi differ drastically from North East in every aspect (including climate, culture, food habits, faith and social systems, physical features, personal traits and so on). Due to this cultural difference, quite often the host community find the migrants from NE strange and their social behavior non-confirming to accepted ‘social values’. *“It is quite strange to expect a north eastern tribal youth, who was brought up with the values of a particular tribal community, to behave confirming to the values and ethos entertained by the caste based society shaped in patriarchal lines”* explained a University teacher from North East, while responding to this cultural gap.

As most of the migrant belong to tribal societies in North East, their norms of social behavior are distinctly different from the north Indian population. The social life in most of the tribal societies are with more gender equality and thus the friendly mingling of youth from North East, without inhibitions based on gender divisions often prompt the local population to perceive the North Easterners as those with loose moral values.

Compared to an average North Indian, the people from North East are more fluent in English. Their dressing styles and entertainments are also different (more close to those of South East Asian and Western societies than mainland India). All these aspects lead to the formation of faulty notions regarding the social life of the migrants from the region, which inter alia are used for labeling them as socially inferior²³.

²³ A recent study of NESC& H explains this aspect as ‘social profiling’ and hostile mindset of the locals (NESC&H, 2011).

During the survey many a respondents pointed out that their calm nature and positive attitudes are often taken as vulnerabilities and due to the qualities, often they fall pray to various discriminations in their day to day life.

4.3. Discriminations in Daily Life

Discriminatory treatment reported by the respondents ranged from basic rights of living to larger issues of citizenship. A common issue cited by majority is related to discriminatory practices related to rented accommodation.

It is interesting to note that out of the 402 respondents, only one reported to stay in own accommodation. Getting a room/flat on rent is the most difficult task for migrants from North East. A good chunk of the local landlords are not even considering North Easterners as potential clients to rent out their rooms/flats – as they look down to North East people citing differences in culture. “*They have loose morals*”; “*They eat pigs and dogs*”; “*Their presence will pollute our children*” etc. are the justification given by many of this local room/flat owning people (as reported by some of the respondents. Some of the respondents got the rented accommodation only after ensuring that they will cook and eat only vegetarian food in their rooms. A very few also shared instances of eating ‘smuggled’ non-vegetarian food in their rooms, without information of land lords.

Yet another set of property owners charge exorbitantly extra rents from the North Easterners. The middlemen, the property dealers, also found demanding more money from the North Eastern people²⁴.

The rent charged to North Easterners is found fairly high compared to the ongoing market rates. The survey data suggests that on an average the respondents pay Rs. Rs. 6535 per month. If we juxtapose this data with the fact that most of them are staying in groups show the exorbitantly higher levels of rent. “*We normally pay about two times rent than people from other parts of the country*” a migrant resident of Vijaya Nagar points out.

The advance amount collected from North Easterners related to renting of residential space is also found exorbitantly high. On an average, the respondents paid Rs.8930 as advance amount. Maximum average advance amount was reported in Kotla (13825) followed by Munirka (11430), Motibagh (6725) and Vijay Nagar (4417). The average commission/brokerage amount paid by migrants was found to be Rs. 2632 – for 11 months for the present staying arrangement. Mostly these renting activities and advance payment are carried out informally

²⁴ In Delhi, the preference for tenants is often strongly linked to their home state. While South Indians are generally preferred by the North Indian property owners, people from North East come as one of the least preferred categories. The reason for this strong non-preference is closely linked to the cultural gaps, faulty notions and labeling – which is discussed in the previous section.

and several instances of denial of repayment and withholding of the deposits are reported.

Apart from high rent rates and advance amounts, in several instances the landlords refuse to ensure continued support in terms of ensuring basic facilities (such as water supply) and to take care of basic maintenance and repair of the living space. *“This is my third year in this room; even when I got it no maintenance or white wash of the room is done. The owner won’t do it so long as we stay here, though the rent is increased every year. They know that we have not much options than continuing as per their terms”*, remarks a distraught Mizo resident in Munirka.

Many of the respondents reported that they had to change the residences against their will and consent, even before the term of the contract (be it is written or oral), as the owners did not take them serious enough to be consulted before taking such decision of eviction. A good chunk of the respondents reported that they have shifted their residences two-three times²⁵. Several of the respondents reported that there is a constant fear they might be given notice any time to move out. The lease agreement in many cases is formality sake and thus does not provide any protection. Even if there is a written agreement, it is only for a year or less than that, leaving enough scope for periodic revision of the rents. *“Even after taking good care of the house, it’s really sad that every now and then the rents are revised or we are asked to move out, which is not happening to tenants from other states”*.

Another oft-reported complaint by the migrants is related to extraction of high charges for electricity supplied to the tenants. A typical complaint in this direction is as follows: *“They fix faulty meters and read them according to their wish. Every month they demand to increase some money in any case”*. In few cases respondents pointed out that the landlords used to charge extra when guests or visitors from native place come.

The most insulting aspect, according to some of the respondents, is intrusion into their personal lives and ‘moral policing’ by the landlords. Many of them reported that landlords use to visit their rooms/flats any time without any prior intimation. Even in the presence of visitors rude comments are passed such as: *“we don’t like you to bring your friends”*, *“You people do not have any manners”*; *“You are uncivilised people”* and so on.

The inability of migrants to speak Hindi fluently often gives a false impression to the local people that the former are ignorant/dumb on some aspects. This too also leads to situation of locals dominating over the migrants. Apart from this,

²⁵ Here, however, it needs to be noted that all shifting need not be of involuntary nature. As explained in the earlier section, the pattern of stay of North Easterners has an element of shifting residence – along side their progress in the city life.

the respondents expressed their woes apropos many other aspects, which include charging of higher rates (on a par with foreigners) by auto rickshaw drivers and street vendors to denial of equal rights in common forums. All the respondents had several stories to substantiate the imposition of higher rates (on account of their distinct features) in every day to day aspect. *“Even after mastering Hindi and changing dress styles, with this fair skin and distinct physical features, it is difficult to avoid “skin tax” by auto drivers and shop keepers!”* Says a youth from Tripura.

Most of the migrants felt that they do face discriminatory treatment when it comes to participation in social activities – for e.g. in collectives of residents. While the North Easterners are asked to contribute more than local at times of pooling of resources, the flow of benefits are in the reverse order – according to most of the respondents. *“Even in the matter of collection of bribes, authorities expect more from the North East people”* – adds another respondent.

4.4. Illegality as a Means of Exploitation

It is widely pointed out that the vulnerability of the migrants are often perpetuated and maintained carefully by locals and authorities by not confirming them legal rights and formal status in many cases. In an interview a restaurant owner from North East, who runs a very popular eating joint for North Easterners in Munirka pointed out that the local authorities have been systematically stalling all his attempts to get a formal license to run the establishment for the past several years. *“They know that giving license to me is loosing a permanent client”*, said the respondent. He added that due to his non-confirming status he ends up paying in exorbitant rents apart from meeting recurring demands for bribe to concerned officials from all relevant Municipal Departments.

Viewing the migrants from North East as terrorists and those involved in anti-national activities is also yet another aspect of labeling them. In many a cases, wrong portrayal of facts by media and erroneous conceptualisations by the urban middle class often leads to situations of isolating and ill-treating the migrants.

Several Respondents from Munirka and Vijaya Nagar informed that the local politicians and flat owners discouraged or practically objected them enrolling themselves in the voter list, despite the fact that they have been staying there for several months. It is widely understood that with voter rights in the locality, the bargaining power of the migrants will considerably increase. Moreover, in many of these pockets, migrants have decisive share of votes that can influence the results at least in local self government elections. In view of all these, there is a planned resistance from locals, while the migrants want to get their names enlisted in the voter list. *“They even denied us to enroll ourselves in the*

Population Census. That means we are not Indian citizens!” – An agitated youth in Moti Bagh pointed out.

Unlike the average migrants in Delhi the migrants from North East are more educated and conscious about their civic rights and about obtaining the minimum documents that are essential for surviving in the city (such voter id card, ration card, bank account etc.). However, majority of the respondents testify that they had to spend lots of money, time and resources to obtain these documents. This bleak status itself shows the prominence of politics of illegality, in the lives of migrants from North East.

Opening a Bank Account, getting driving license and so on are reported as major hurdles by most of the respondents. Many of them told that the authorities simply refused to entertain their applications, even when they had supporting documents. *“Some more compassionate approach from the authorities would have provided formal address and some bargaining power to the migrants”* – opined a social activist.

4.5. Verbal Abuse, Racial Discrimination and Violence

Use of obscene language by local people is one of the most prominent forms of insult faced by the migrants in the city. Almost all the respondents had something to tell about the verbal abuse they have faced in the city. All the respondents told that several times they were addressed public ally as ‘chinki’²⁶ by the local people and even by officials and authorities. Similarly, many a times the respondents were addressed as ‘Nepali’. Some of the women respondents told that words like ‘chinki monkeys’, ‘Thapa’ (Thai Bar) ‘Chini Malai’ are very commonly used by eve teasers. *“If we react they openly mock at us and rudely tell us to go back to China”* tells a Mizo girl from Munirka.

Discrimination here often takes the form of racial abuse, as it is primarily based on appearance and characters (colour, figure, facial features) due to the East Asian ethnic origin of the migrants. Most of the respondents remarked that they used to avoid confrontations and neglect such abuses to the extent possible, as a reaction of same kind may sometime lead to more undesirable outcome. Minority feeling always deter the victim from fighting back or reacting to such abuses with similar responses.

Many of the respondents always anticipated some kind of lewd remarks from the local people and those from mainland India and thus they have been skeptical about the usage of each and every term. The term migrants itself upset many of the respondents and key resource persons. Although the terms such as migration

²⁶ Chinki’ is a racial slur referring mainly to a person of Chinese ethnicity but sometimes generalised to refer to any person of East Asian descent. The usage of the word is often considered as an ethnic insult.

and migrants are frequently used in the study of internal migration, for the first time the researchers felt that the respondents are not comfortable with the term. Some of them openly questioned the use of such a term by sending that “*we are very much Indians; and still you call us migrants*”. The report released by NESCS&H also reflects this uneasiness. To quote from the report: “*The term migrant is used when a citizen of the country goes and lives in another country but terming the same citizen who goes and lives in another city of different state within the country, the term becomes questionable*”.²⁷

Such situations of verbal abuse often lead to loss of dignity and many of the respondents pointed out that even in their own national capital they find themselves as strangers. To quote a typical observation: “*At times, we do not feel that we too are Indians. We are treated as foreigners*”.

A major reason for labeling and insulting is the faulty prejudices and wrong notions entertained by the host community regarding the North Easters. A typical North East Peron, from the perspective of common Delhites can be summarised as “*one with ‘chinkey’ eyes, fair complexion, who follows Christianity and who eats pigs (and even dogs), and who dress scantily but fashionably and mingles with persons of even opposite sex without any inhibition – as s/he has very loose moral values*”. A few of the quotations from an internet discussion site explain this faulty prejudices and wrong judgments by the host society:

“It is known that north east tribes like Nagas, Mizos, Arunachalis etc. did not wear clothes some decades back. So they have the habit of wearing short and skimpy dresses”

“North East boys also dress in a very unsmart [shabby] and third class manner, with cargo pants, half pants, tattoos and rings, spikes etc. Maybe because they are tribal, they do not know to dress decently”. (bracket added)

In many a cases the abusers do not accept the deviations from their preconceived notions. For instance, though many of the Manipuris have typical North Indian/Hindu names and at times, they had to face some questions (sometimes innocent clarifications) regarding this. In this connection, a Manipuri respondent told that she had changed her name – as she had to answer frequent irritating queries like: “*how come you have our name?*”

Apart from verbal abuse, few of the respondents also reported instances of physical attack and atrocities in public spaces. While narrating an incident faced by her, a Manipuri respondent told that after that event, she lost confidence for moving out alone freely. Though they were not direct victims, many had episodes to add. The frequent reports of atrocities on migrants from North East add to their anxieties and helplessness in the city.

²⁷ NESCS & H, 2011

It was commonly complained that the authorities often do not provide adequate help and support at times of such physical violence. Reluctance in filing FIR by the police is an oft-repeated grievance. In one of the incidents, narrated by the respondents, the police took the victim in the same vehicle along with the perpetrator. In several cases, the intervention of police ended with a counseling session to victims with specific advices regarding how to conduct in the city (in terms of dressing and mingling with friends)

4.6. Discriminations and Harassment at the Workplace

38.2 per cent reported that they felt some sort of discrimination at the workplace, while 9.6 per cent did not respond to this question. The rest 42.2 per cent categorically denied any instance of discrimination. The aspects of discrimination ranged into a variety of issues like assigning higher work targets or long hours of work, denial of leaves, discriminations at the time of promotion, holding up of salaries and termination from jobs without prior notice.

The perceived notions of submissiveness and helplessness attached to youth from North East often prompt the authorities not to consider them seriously. *“Just because we are soft-spoken and nice people tend to take us for granted. Our importance arises only when there is work beyond office hours and on holidays”* says a BPO worker from Mizoram.

Tensions at workplace often arise when the success of the NE migrants in attractive entry level jobs leads to some resentment among local workers. Eventually, many such discomforts lead to bullying at workplace - even with an extended tone in racial lines. To quote a typical statement: *“They are driving down salaries; stealing our jobs; driving up rents in some neighborhoods”*. Most of the respondents told that rather than sharply voicing their voice against these discriminations most of them try to overcome these tension by concentrating more on work or by simply quitting the job (and thereby the related worries!).

Company of colleagues from same region often provides mutual support and solace at workplace. 80.8 per cent reported presence of north-eastern colleagues at the workplace. Despite this, a good number of the respondents had to tell something about sexual harassment at the workplace, which happened (as per their perception) due to their disadvantageous position as migrant from North East. Though a very few had direct and blatant incidents to narrate, many had some narratives that happened to their colleagues or to some one closer to them.

While 70.9 per cent of the workers reported no serious sexual discrimination, almost all the female respondents told that they have faced milder forms of sexual harassments (coloured remarks/jokes, touching, staring and so on) at least few times at their workplaces. Coming from a different society with more free social relations, they find this negative treatment unreasonable. But many

of the victims tried to ignore such cases or kept some 'safe distance' from such persons. Only one respondent reported a clear cut case of sexual harassment, in which the perpetrator did not get much punitive action – rather than a simple change of workspace, away from the complainant.

Several of the respondents expressed their displeasure regarding the careless handling of sexual discrimination cases at workplace. When the sexual harassment comes from the consumers, quite often not much follow up is made in this matter. *“If it is from a colleague you can report to TL or higher authorities, they will warn the miscreant. But, if it is a customer quite often the TL will ask us to ignore”* reports a floor walker, from Manipur, in a shopping mall. *“People here don't see the women of North East as potential workers. They look to us as commodities to be used”* adds a bank executive, hailing from Morigon District of Assam It was reported that many of the victims leave the workplaces after the incident, as the work atmosphere no longer continues to be warm and friendly²⁸.

V. Other Important Aspects

5.1. Social Networking, Collectives and Institutional Support

Detailed discussions with the respondents revealed the presence of some social networking activities and collectives. A major sort of social networking and collectivity is in the lines of community connections. People from same tribes and communities are found meeting at common places to celebrate festivals or to discuss issues concerning that particular group. Such collectives are often organised at the behest of or with the support of church and related organisations (e.g. Vai Phei Christian Fellowship; North East Support Centre & Helpline). While some of these organisations confine them mostly to religious and community related aspects, some organisations like NESC & H provides more detailed sort of help including assistance in situations of need, irrespective of the community or sub division of the victim. NESC & H is found helping helpless victims from the region to file an FIR and to put pressure on authorities to take follow up action. Legal support and pressure group building are also found successfully done by such collectives, despite their limited financial and physical resources, compared to governmental agencies.

Concerned state and central government bodies are not much effective in providing support to migrants on various aspects – such as facilitation of informed migration; career guidance; provision of legal support in times of need and so on – as per majority of respondents. *“The functions of various state bhawans are limited to those of guest houses and restaurants”*, points out a

²⁸ Notwithstanding the above descriptions, it is important to mention that not all migrants from NER are discriminated against and ill-treated in the city. Those who are in better professional positions (e.g. academics, bank executives etc.) are often found free from such abuses. This aspect is evident in some of the case studies, prepared as part of the study.

social worker dealing with issues of migrants from North East. The collective of Parliamentarians from North East (e.g. North East MP forum) also is not found effectively intervening to improve the plight of the migrants, observes a recently completed study (NESC & H, 2011).

Box1: NESC&H: A Collective of Migrants from North East

North East Support Centre & Helpline is a collective functioning in Delhi region since 2007. It is a body of the All India Christian Council, established with a specific objective to fight racial/gender-based violence faced by the people from North East India living in Delhi and NCR. Specifically, the organisation aims to provide proactive assistance to the North East India communities and tribal communities from other states studying, working and living in Delhi and NCR. This initiative is supported by All India Catholic Union, United Christian Action, All India Christian Council and All India Confederation of SC/ST Organisations and North East Students' United Forum Delhi. The organisation helps the migrants from the region in Delhi in times of crises, by providing telephonic and on-line support as well as guidance while approaching police, administrative authorities as well as court to fight discriminatory practices. Currently, the collective is coordinated by a Christian Missionary, who is originally from the state of Manipur.

Source: Survey Data

So far, the most effective groups in addressing the issues of migrants from North East are the various student unions with respect to various states (e.g. unions of Manipuri students, Naga students, Mizo students etc.). These student organisations, based on central university campuses (Delhi University, JNU etc.) are the first to react on many of the atrocities against the migrant population. Contrary to community based organisations²⁹, these students' organisations are found working closely on issues of mutual interest– at least on an issue based, case to case mode.

Virtual collectives are other stronger way of collectivity that is actively present among the migrants (e.g. website of epao – an internet forum of Manipuris). These collectives provide the youth to reach to other similarly placed migrants and share their concerns. A regular following up internet discussions related to the issues of NE migrants in urban centres reveals the efficacy of such virtual discussion forums to debate on important concerns of the migrants.

²⁹ From the discussions with some key resource persons it is understood that a major hurdle for collectivity of community based organisations of people from North East is the lack of unity among groups representing people from different states and different tribal communities. Often these organisations compete each other in organising or protesting.

5.2. Patterns of Savings and Remittances

The patterns of savings and remittances showed interesting results. Unlike the migrants from other states to Delhi region (e.g. those Bihar or Kerala), the North Easterners are not found remitting considerable portions of their income to their family in the native states³⁰. An interesting finding is that majority of the respondents do rely on formal banking system for saving and remitting amounts back home. Despite the difficulties narrated apropos opening Bank accounts 93.3 per cent reported that they do have a bank account in Delhi. More than two third of the respondents reported that whenever they want to transfer money to native places, the most preferred option is formal banking arrangement. A reason for this particular aspect is the higher level of education and awareness of the migrants. However, average annual saving level is too low for the respondents at Rs. 346.7. The average annual remittance also stands at a low figure of Rs. 578.7. The data suggests that the respondents are not saving larger amounts after meeting their personal expenditure.

The meager levels of savings and remittances despite the impressive levels of income (as most of the respondent are regular salaried) suggests that there are several ways with which the migrant youth are spending their income. A major head in the expenditure is rent (as discussed in a previous section). Other important item is personal expenditure on dress, food and entertainment. It was evident from the survey that given the unique cultural background, most of the youth are found spending a good proportion of their income on outfits, food, traveling and organising frequent gatherings of friends and community members. This feature is quite distinct from the migrants in Delhi belonging to other parts of the country.

Yet another significant item is educational expenses. Several of the respondents were found studying for higher qualifications, in correspondence courses or in evening/weekend classes. Due to all these, most of the respondents are found not much bothered about saving some money and sending it back home. Many respondents reported that their parents are not expecting any financial help from them. Rather, they are even ready to send some money, in cases of requirement. This pattern also points out that it is not absolute poverty that pushed the migrants from their natives. Rather, it is the better opportunities for education and employment, along with perceived notions of peace and well being at Delhi that prompted the migrants to move to Delhi.

³⁰Linking this negligible amount of remittances and huge costs incurred by states in the NER, due to loss of human resources, Singh (2007) explains the migration from NER to rest of the country as a clear example of brain drain, where receiving regions (developed and advanced states) are reaping all benefits at the expense of states from NER.

5.3. Divergence in Social Norms and Gender Relations

The analysis in the study suggests that most of the hardships and problems confronted by the migrant youth in Delhi owe to the cultural differences and the deviations in social norms of the guest and host societies. As the North Eastern societies are largely community based and the social/gender relations are unique, the behaviour of the youth from North-East are often mistook in cities like Delhi – where the social norms are largely shaped in the orthodox patriarchal lines. As the local people do not have much exposure to the culture and social norms of the tribal and community based societies, they often view the people as uncivilised and as those who lack values. The images gained from popular media on tribal societies (with traditional outfits) and the quite contradicting stylish and westernised outfits of the North Easterners add to the confusion of the local societies. The women members in North Eastern societies normally enjoy much more egalitarian treatment and they are quite friendly in terms of socialisation. This aspect of free social assimilation is often mistook as absence of moral values, which eventually leads to adverse social profiling and resultant atrocities – especially towards women migrants.

Thus, it is evident from the field study that any effort to improve the plight of North Easterners in the city needs to start with orienting the host communities regarding the values and culturally rich background of the sources of origin. The media and other social partners (government and collectives) can take lead roles in this matter.

VI. Concluding Remarks

On the whole, the foregoing analysis suggests that the characteristics and dynamics of migration of youth from North Eastern states of India to urban centres are quite unique. In view of this, conceptualising it with the perceived notions and received theories on migration may not be appropriate. Analysis of the determinants of the migration suggests that the increased presence of youth from NER in urban centers has more to do with the backwardness of the source regions in terms of economic development, facilities for higher education and availability of gainful employment opportunities. These drawbacks coupled with the social tensions (due to a multitude of reasons) push the prospective youth to search for education and employment in urban centres far away from the native. Joining educational institutions often becomes the first step in the migration process, in cases where the migrants continue to live in the urban centre, as employees, after completion of higher studies. In other cases, the youth are found coming to the city mostly as single migrants. With the help of social networking and with the support obtained from early migrants from own community or regions, these job aspirants get access to their employment.

The study shows considerable mismatches between the expectations of migrants (apropos work and life in the city) and the hard realities they have to face in day to day life and at the workplaces. Due to multiple reasons (including wrong notions / perceptions about the migrants; cultural differences; and absence of supportive systems), the migrants often have to face various forms of harassments – ranging from verbal abuse to physical attacks and racial discrimination.

The analysis suggests that a root cause of tension is the differences in gender relations. Women in North Eastern societies normally do enjoy more freedom and space in the public sphere, which is not matching with the accepted/social norms of the host society, which are largely molded by conventional patriarchal values. Low level understanding of the local community regarding the rich cultures of North Eastern societies often lead to adverse social profiling and subsequent atrocities against migrants. The perceived notions of docility of youth from North East also lead to discriminations and abuses at the workplace and in the public domains. Absence of strong collectives of people from North East is yet another problem that adds to the vulnerabilities of the youth in the city.

It is evident from the findings of the study that some positive changes for the migrant youths in urban centres could be brought out only through coordinated and concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including civil society organisations, governmental agencies, collectives and so on.

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Appendix Tables

Appendix Table 1: Number of migrant household per 1000 households during the last 365 days preceding the date survey for each state/U.T

State/u.t./all-India	Rural	Urban	Rural+urban
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Arunachal Pradesh	39	42	40
Assam	12	60	18
Manipur	38	26	34
Meghalaya	5	11	6
Mizoram	9	32	19
Nagaland	14	61	26
Sikkim	38	76	43
Tripura	12	26	15
All-India	13	33	19

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table2: Migration rate (per 1000 persons) for each State/U.T. rural+urban

State/u.t./all-India	Male	Female	Male+female
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Arunachal Pradesh	17	9	13
Assam	45	236	134
Manipur	7	10	9
Meghalaya	38	32	35
Mizoram	143	164	153
Nagaland	121	148	134
Sikkim	233	448	336
Tripura	66	169	117
All-India	109	472	285

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 3: Migration rate (per 1000 persons) in different MPCE quintile class for each State/U.T. Rural male+female

State/u.t./all-India	MPCE quintile class					
	0-20	20-40	40-60	60-80	80-100	All
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Arunachal Pradesh	7	1	7	10	16	8
Assam	129	135	128	88	124	120
Manipur	8	2	2	4	12	6
Meghalaya	9	14	23	38	84	33
Mizoram	118	113	112	51	158	110
Nagaland	46	39	50	78	168	76
Sikkim	192	228	232	288	560	300
Tripura	131	81	107	95	134	110

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 4: Migration rate (per 1000 persons) in different MPCE quintile class for for each State/U.T. Urban male+female

State/u.t./all-India	MPCE quintile class					
	0-20	20-40	40-60	60-80	80-100	All
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Arunachal Pradesh	29	55	18	24	40	33
Assam	231	213	194	267	443	270
Manipur	4	1	0	54	30	18
Meghalaya	32	18	22	69	80	44
Mizoram	135	157	198	176	366	206
Nagaland	318	296	224	418	365	325
Sikkim	629	520	712	525	719	626
Tripura	131	96	190	154	210	156

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 5: Distribution (per 1000) of migrants by nature of movements for each State/U.T. Rural+urbanmale+female

State/u.t./all-India	Nature of movement			
	Temporary with duration of stay			
	Less than 12 months	12 months of more	Permanent	All (incl.n.r.)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Arunachal Pradesh	28	783	98	1000
Assam	3	79	918	1000
Manipur	136	819	40	1000
Meghalaya	0	382	606	1000
Mizoram	1	180	813	1000
Nagaland	9	708	270	1000
Sikkim	1	409	589	1000
Tripura	7	141	849	1000
All-India	3	90	906	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 6: Distribution (per1000) of migrants by location of last usual place of residence for each State/U.T.Rural male+female

State/U.T./all-India	Last usual place of residence in							
	Rural areas of			Urban areas of			Other countries	All (incl. n.r.)
	Same state		Other states	Same state		Other states		
	Same district	Other district		Same district	Other district			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Arunachal Pradesh	421	33	111	311	57	20	1	1000
Assam	736	207	7	30	14	3	2	1000
Manipur	540	193	89	0	93	77	0	1000
Meghalaya	339	305	89	85	59	114	0	1000
Mizoram	460	182	74	48	60	1	175	1000
Nagaland	329	119	97	180	250	20	3	1000
Sikkim	443	231	160	41	32	27	65	1000
Tripura	671	55	107	36	2	1	112	1000
All-India	659	211	40	41	28	15	6	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 7: Distribution (per1000) of migrants by location of last usual place of residence for each State/U.T. Urban male+female

State/U.T./ all-India	Last usual place of residence in							
	Rural areas of			Urban areas of			Other countries	All (incl. n.r.)
	Same state		Other states	Same state		Other states		
	Same district	Other district		Same district	Other district			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Arunachal Pradesh	83	19	397	22	137	201	1	1000
Assam	349	289	96	62	181	22	0	1000
Manipur	74	495	4	87	339	1	0	1000
Meghalaya	219	283	128	40	188	117	1	1000
Mizoram	242	242	26	137	274	63	14	1000
Nagaland	176	198	189	58	330	35	3	1000
Sikkim	287	132	155	24	111	285	3	1000
Tripura	471	93	114	193	22	13	93	1000
All-India	244	199	149	112	196	91	8	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 8: Distribution (per 1000) of migrants by reason for migration for each state/U.T. Rural+urban male

State/U.T./ all-India	Reason for migration						
	Employment related reasons	Studies	Forced migration	Marriage	Movement of parent/ earning member	Others	All (incl.n.r)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Arunachal Pradesh	687	96	6	0	23	43	1000
Assam	368	52	214	50	170	130	1000
Manipur	435	80	0	0	470	0	1000
Meghalaya	273	76	17	351	205	54	1000
Mizoram	442	35	22	14	383	61	1000
Nagaland	585	110	6	0	211	73	1000
Sikkim	575	51	3	6	232	132	1000
Tripura	256	27	379	15	167	146	1000
All-India	456	82	24	44	241	148	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 9: Distribution (per 1000) of migrants by reason for migration for each state/U.T. Rural+urban female

State/U.T./all-India	Reason for migration						
	Employment related reasons	Studies	Forced migration	Marriage	Movement of parent/earning member	Others	All (incl.n.r)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Arunachal Pradesh	215	82	0	359	108	61	1000
Assam	13	4	27	828	69	27	1000
Manipur	63	355	0	63	369	37	1000
Meghalaya	134	26	0	426	318	42	1000
Mizoram	172	56	16	144	509	51	1000
Nagaland	124	38	6	406	373	46	1000
Sikkim	47	74	0	607	231	38	1000
Tripura	16	13	115	680	114	59	1000
All-India	11	10	4	836	107	27	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 10: Distribution (per 1000) of migrants by reason for migration for each state/U.T. Rural+urbanmale+female

State/U.T./all-India	Reason for migration						
	Employment related reasons	Studies	Forced migration	Marriage	Movement of parent/earning member	Others	All (incl.n.r)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Arunachal Pradesh	533	92	4	118	51	49	1000
Assam	77	12	60	688	87	46	1000
Manipur	222	241	0	36	412	21	1000
Meghalaya	211	54	9	384	255	50	1000
Mizoram	299	46	19	82	450	56	1000
Nagaland	338	72	6	218	298	59	1000
Sikkim	238	66	1	390	232	72	1000
Tripura	83	17	190	492	129	84	1000
All-India	99	24	8	681	134	51	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 11: Number of out-migrant per 1000 persons for each State/U.T. rural+urban

State/u.t./all-India	Male	Female	Male+female
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Arunachal Pradesh	49	19	34
Assam	42	49	45
Manipur	48	21	35
Meghalaya	33	19	26
Mizoram	50	40	45
Nagaland	61	75	68
Sikkim	78	97	87
Tripura	37	32	35
All-India	81	152	115

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 12: Distribution (per 1000) of out-migrant by present place of residence for each state/U.T.Rural+urbanmale+female

State/U.T./all-India	Present place of residence						
	Same state		Same state (col.2+col.3)	Out-side the state	With in country (col. 4+col. 5)	Another country	All (incl.n.r)
	Within same district	Another district					
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Arunachal Pradesh	536	262	798	189	986	3	1000
Assam	426	409	835	162	998	2	1000
Manipur	241	382	623	372	995	5	1000
Meghalaya	380	396	776	209	985	14	1000
Mizoram	378	463	841	156	997	3	1000
Nagaland	423	441	864	134	999	1	1000
Sikkim	447	294	740	211	951	49	1000
Tripura	462	250	712	259	971	28	1000
All-India	430	298	728	232	960	38	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

Appendix Table 13: Distribution (per 1000) of out-migrants by reason for out-migration for each state/U.T. Rural+urbanmale+female

State/U.T./ all-India	Reason for out-migration						
	Employment related reasons	Studies	Forced migration	Marriage	Movement of parent/ earning member	Others	All (incl.n.r)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Arunachal Pradesh	607	219	0	92	28	31	1000
Assam	477	13	1	442	57	6	1000
Manipur	629	206	1	93	43	24	1000
Meghalaya	486	398	3	96	3	10	1000
Mizoram	592	152	1	225	18	8	1000
Nagaland	401	154	1	433	5	8	1000
Sikkim	270	298	0	349	45	37	1000
Tripura	494	61	0	379	40	21	1000
All-India	298	48	1	543	85	22	1000

Source: NSS 64th Round (2007-08)

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