

Working Paper No.2

Action Research on Women's Labour Migration in India

(December 2017–July 2018)

Macro-Data Analysis of Women's Employment and Migration

Neetha N.

ILO's Work in Freedom Project RAS 13/55/UKM



CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

An autonomous research institute supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research

25, Bhai Vir Singh Marg (Gole Market), New Delhi - 110 001.

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The link between employment and female migration though have been significant, absence of statistics has been an issue. National level datasets due to conceptual and definitional issues not only have underrepresented women's work but also have largely invisibilised female labour migration. Orientation towards a permanent settlement paradigm with a mono-causal approach to migration that differentiates economic and social reasons for migration combined with an individual labour unit based conception/definition of work/employment are issues that have overlooked women. There is now sufficient evidence that women move to locations outside their place of usual residence, either with the family or even as single women to take up employment. The decline in rural household incomes with declining rural employment in the backdrop of ongoing agrarian crisis have added to such mobility. The nature and terms of migration has also undergone many changes, with increase in short term, circular and seasonal migration. These changes are also part of the structural changes in employment due to changes in production organisation with volatile labour requirements.

The present paper explores some of the contemporary features and characteristics of female migration and the relationship between female migration and economic changes - particularly in the context of employment. While on the surface there are apparently growing opportunities for migration based employment for women, the ongoing crisis in female employment and the segregation in employment are adding to the vulnerability of female migrants. As labour migration needs to be located in context of larger employment patterns and structures an analysis of employment data is attempted using NSS employment data across various rounds. Female labour migration and their distribution across sectors/industries, is analysed from the latest available NSS survey on migration conducted in 2007-08.¹

The Macro-Context of Employment

An important concern in the analysis of employment is the lack of data for the period after 2011-12 and thus the analysis are limited to the period till 2011-12. One of the striking features of the macro-context is the crisis of employment in the economy as a whole, along with the growth of temporary and predominantly casual forms of labour. According to the usual principal and subsidiary status (UPSS) definition, 101.8 million women in rural areas and 27.3 million in urban areas were in the workforce in 2011-12. Women workers in rural India registered a significant decline from 2004-05. From 2004-05 to 2011-12, the number of

¹ NSSO, *Migration in India 2007-08*, MOSPI, Govt. India, 2010.

women workers dropped by 22.2 million. Though women's work participation rate in urban areas increased by about 1 percentage points between 2009-10 and 2011-12, this increase could not contain the continuous decline in number of women workers in rural areas. Accordingly, there has been a sharp decline in women's workforce participation rate from 28.2 per cent in 2004/05 to 21.7 per cent in 2011/12, which reflects an ongoing crisis. Not only is the WPR lower for women, for rural women there has been a dramatic fall, and about 22.2 million women moved out of the workforce in rural areas during 2004–05 to 2011–12. Male WPR during the period though has not increased have remained more or less the same. Thus it seems that the pattern of growth in the last few decades had a negative impact on employment which is also gendered.

Table 1: Trends in Work Participation Rates – Male and Female- UPSS

Rounds	Total		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1993-94	54.4	28.3	55.3	32.8	52.1	15.5
1999-2000	52.7	25.4	53.1	29.9	51.8	13.9
2004-05	54.7	28.2	54.6	32.7	54.9	16.6
2007-08	55.0	24.6	54.8	28.9	55.4	13.8
2009-10	54.6	22.5	54.7	26.1	54.3	13.8
2011-12	54.4	21.7	54.3	24.8	54.6	14.7

Source: National Sample Survey Data, Different Rounds

One of the important issue in the analysis of employment is the lack of recent data, in the event of speculations of a decline in overall employment with many changes at the macro level. The only data available for this period is the the Labour Bureau's Employment- Unemployment Surveys², the latest round being for 2015–16 with a sample size of more than a lakh households.

As per the Labour Bureau estimates for the age group 15 years and above, total employment in UPS declined by about 37.4 lakh persons during the period 2013–14 to 2015–16. This suggests that the decline in employment growth during the previous period has not only continued but has further deepened with an absolute decline in employment, for the first time in independent India. All the segments except rural males, i.e, rural females, urban females and males, all showed an absolute decline in employment. Thus, while employment for both men and women in urban areas showed a decline, in the rural areas, the drop in employment was limited to women.

² Labour Bureau data sets have been criticized for its small sample and thus lack of representativeness.

In the literature, the positive income effect of higher real wages in the economy and positive outcomes of educational programmes are the main reasons attributed to the decline in women's employment. However, neither increasing participation of females in education nor the increase in real incomes of households can explain the massive decline in female employment (Kapsos, et. al, 2014). Though the decline is marked both subsidiary and principal status workers, it has been largely in principal status employment. Analysis of social groups have shown that women of marginalised groups, where women's participation have been higher, are the hardest hit (Neetha, 2014).

Table 2: Distribution of Workers across broad industrial divisions 1999-00 to 2011-12

Industry	1999-00		2004-05		2011-12	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Agriculture	52.7	75.4	48.6	72.8	42.5	62.0
Mining & Quarrying	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.6	0.3
Manufacturing	11.5	9.5	12.4	11.3	12.6	13.4
Electricity, Gas& Water Supply	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.1
Construction	5.8	1.6	7.6	1.8	12.4	6.0
Services	28.8	13.2	30.2	13.7	31.5	18.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Employment and Unemployment Reports, various rounds, NSSO.

Coming to the broad sectoral picture, in 2011-12, while 62.3 per cent of women were employed in the agriculture, only about 20 per cent were employed in the secondary sector and 18 per cent in the services. In the secondary sector, there has been an increase in the proportion of women in construction over the period, where the nature of employment is an issue. Many struck by the agrarian crisis have been flooding into construction and related activities, an area that has seen a boost with the real estate boom in the post-liberalisation era. Distress migration of households into other rural and urban areas has been marked and well documented. Some of this is regular work are extremely exploitative, with workers tied by credit and debt bondage to layers of contractors who control their lives and work.

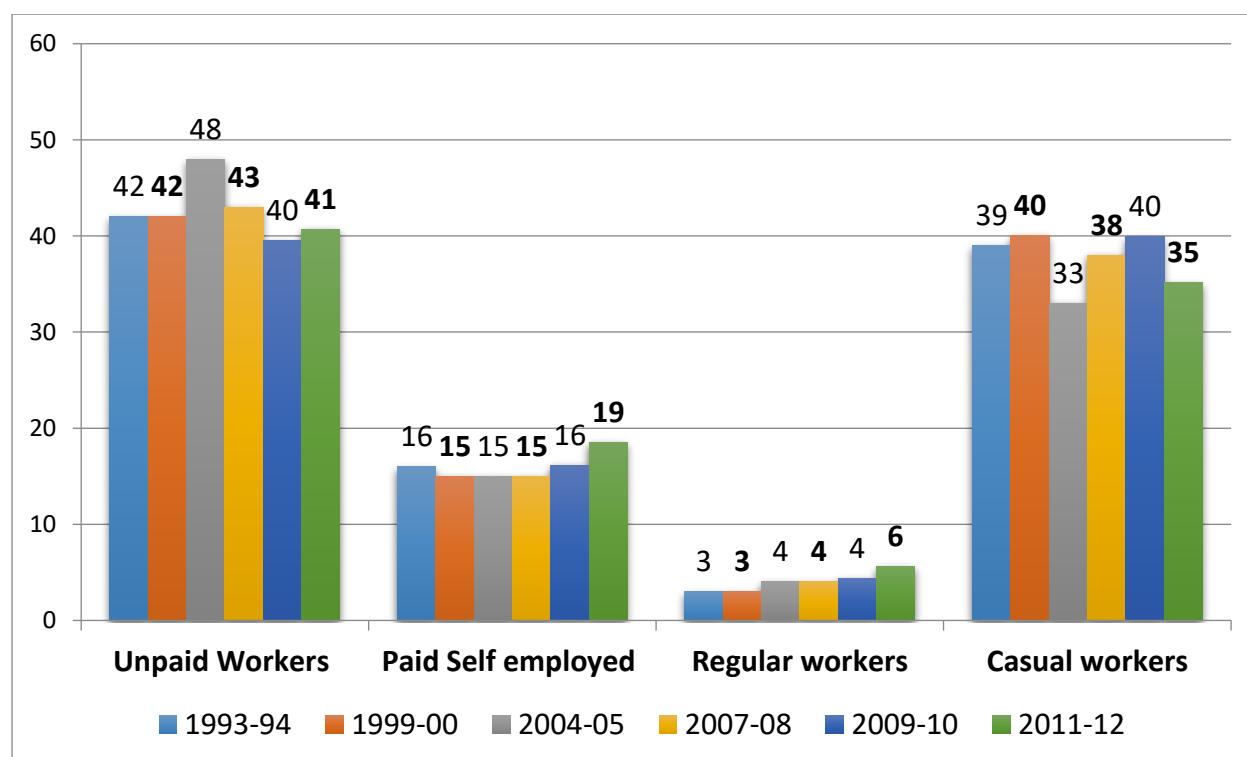
Among women, the movement of workers away from agriculture seems to have actually propelled a large number of them out of the workforce altogether. At an aggregate level, agriculture has seen an absolute fall in the numbers of women workers (a female specific phenomenon) from an estimated 94.2 million in 1993-94 to around 87.6 million in 2009-10. The fall in women workers continued even between 2009-10 and 2011-12, marginally. That such a fall has not been adequately compensated by the limited expansion of their employment in other sectors, is evident in the overall decline in rural female work participation rates.³

³ A brief spike in FWPR in the NSS' quinquennial round of 2004-05 was largely attempts to prop up incomes through self employment with family labour, whose lack of success became evident in the following larger NSS surveys of 2007-08 and 2009-10 when it fell precipitately. (See Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011 for more details). It may be borne in mind that agricultural employment is not confined

Nature and Quality of Women's Employment

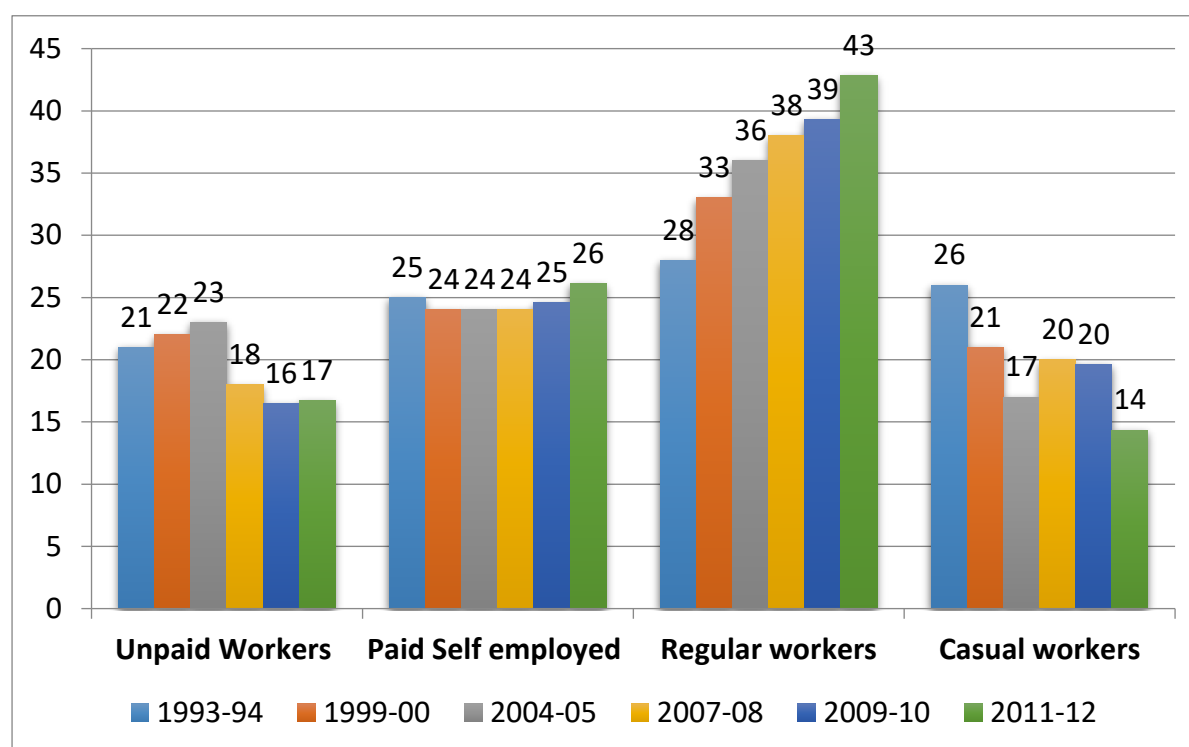
What is the nature of employment that women are in? For rural women unpaid workers/helpers are the largest group (41 per cent) and then casual workers (35 per cent) (Figure 1). Agriculture and artisanal work are in crisis and men are moving out to search for other paid work, leaving women to carry the burden and then be documented as paid self-employed or own account workers. The decline in casual workers is sharp over the period, about 4 percentage. Regular workers are a miniscule proportion (6 per cent), even if there has been an increase.

Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Rural Female Workforce by Employment Status (UPSS)



only to rural areas, and has remained a significant share of female employment even in areas designated urban by the NSS and Census.

Figure 2: **Percentage Distribution of Urban Female Workforce by Employment Status (UPSS)**



Turning to urban women workers, the situation at the overall level seems improving since we see a trend of increasing numbers of regular workers, by 10 percentage in 20 years ((Figure 2). However, as discussed earlier, women's work participation rate is very low in urban areas - just 15 per cent in 2011-12. This, coupled with how regular work is defined makes the overall trend defeating. It is not formal, regulated work, with minimum wages and decent working conditions. It may be the worst forms of work, but provides employment of continuous nature - without its tenure being specified. This includes paid domestic work and other service sector jobs such as shop assistants, receptionists, etc., besides different forms of contract employment. Thus, a major chunk of regular workers also need to be seen as part of the growing informal sector. The other trend to note is about 1 percentage point increase in paid self-employment. On the one hand, women are receiving some income possibly independently of other family members, which they can use as they wish, mostly to meet regular consumption expenses. However, the bulk of these self-employed are not petty entrepreneurs but are working as part of the vast expanding base of home-based workers in manufacture – in beedi, textiles, bangle or bindi making, packaging, etc. Wage rates in home based work is very low, whether piece rate or hourly wages, requiring very long hours of work and onerous labour to make a livelihood, and where they may be dependent on the contractor. For some, the familial recognition as a worker may not be there, and with harsh conditions of work they are ready to give it up when they can afford to do so. A careful look at the distribution over different areas of work within services is required to get the employment aspects of this growth oriented sector. What is striking is that it is not in trade, hospitality or communication sectors that a

large proportion of women are employed (Table 3). The bulk of the growth has been in education sector and in domestic work (private households with employed persons). In domestic work wages and work conditions vary widely and work relations are marked by constant and individual control. Absence of state laws is an issue, with many states yet to extend the coverage of Minimum Wages to these workers.

Education is perhaps the most promising area in terms of providing women a status as independent workers. Unfortunately, with the increasing privatisation of education at all levels, often women who work in this sector are in uncertain employment, exploited in various ways, and not paid the wage due to them.

Table 3: Distribution of Workers across broad industrial divisions of the service sector- 1999-00 to 2011-12

Service	1999-00		2004-05		2011-12	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Trade	40.8	27.8 (12.0)	41.3	24.4 (11.2)	39.7	22.7 (11.0)
Hotels & Restaurants	4.8	5.1 (17.7)	5.2	5.8 ((19.5)	6.2	5.2 (15.4)
Transport, Storage & Communication	18.3	2.7 (2.9)	19.4	2.6 (2.8)	19.2	1.8 (2.0)
Public Administration & Defence	12.1	7.5 (11.0)	8.6	5.4 (11.8)	6.8	4.4 (12.2)
Education	6.8	21.1(38.4)	7.2	24.3 (41.9)	7.6	27.0 (43.5)
Other Community, Social & Personal Services	8.4	19.1 (31.2)	7.0	9.3 (22.3)	6.2	11.5 (28.6)
Private Households with Employed Persons	0.7	6.7 (64.0)	1.5	16.6 (70.9)	1.2	11.7 (67.2)
Other Services	8.0	10.1(20.1)	9.9	11.5 (19.9)	13.0	15.7 (20.7)
Total	100.0	100.0 (16.7)	100.0	100.0 (17.6)	100.0	100.0 (17.8)

Source: Unit-level data, various rounds, NSSO.

The overall dimensions of employment will definitely be reflected in the context of migrant workers also. Given the overall lower status of migrant workers in general, the macro pattern may get more pronounced for migrants. The continuous erosion of the value of women's work and the expansion of commercially oriented work and employment would imply that the opportunities for income from labour should increasingly become more important for women.

Female Migration and Employment: The Macro picture

Female migration is known to account for a large proportion of population migration with marriage occupying a key position. Estimates of the National Sample Survey, 2007-08 suggest that 327.7 million people in the country are internal migrants, which is roughly about 29 per cent of the population. 80 per cent of migrants are female, and they accounted of 48 per cent of the rural female population and 46 per cent of urban females respectively. What is noteworthy in this context is the increase in the rate of female migration over the years. Thus, in 1993, only 40 per cent of the rural and 38 per cent of urban female populations were migrants. The case of female migration becomes all the more interesting in comparison to the changes in male migration. Male migrants in the rural population declined from 6 per cent to 5 per cent between 1993 and 2007-08, and increased by only 2 per cent (from 24 per cent to 26 per cent) in urban areas. During the recent decades with increasing urbanisation and on ongoing rural crisis, urban-bound migration has been of particular interest and focus, both from the context of development as well as policy interventions.

Marriage accounted for 61 per cent of female migrants followed by associational migration (29 per cent) in urban areas in 2007-08. Though at the overall level, the pattern was same in 1993, marriage accounted for only 31.7 per cent of migrants with associational migration leading at 49.5 per cent. Migration for employment related reasons in urban areas, a phenomenon which has been reported by micro level studies, have shown a decline from 4.9 per cent to 2.7 percent. For this reason, female migration is often analysed as demographic movements and female labour migration is assumed insignificant.

Attempts to understand labour or work based migration by women based on the NSS data on migrants [defined as those who have change of usual place of residence (UPR)], have hitherto concentrated on the difference in work participation before and after migration. It has been shown that generally women have higher work participation rates after migration in comparison to before, albeit with some regional variation (Shanthi, 2006). Useful as such analysis is in showing that social reasons for migration including marriage may in effect also act as a transfer of female labour or the capacity to work, for example from natal to marital home/village/town, we believe that such a method has little utility for gauging the extent and features of labour mobility/migration for women. The reason for our skepticism is because of the large number of women recorded as migrants only because they have married into another village/area, and who, even if they are workers there, may be so only in their *immobile and local* capacity as wives and daughters in law of the village they have married into. As such the industrial distribution of all female migrants after migration appears as virtually the same as the overall industrial distribution of the female workforce in the country. From such a procedure, it is neither possible to understand the relative importance of the sectors/industries driving labour migration, nor is it possible to distinguish migrant workers from immobile local workers in the case of women.

In order to overcome such problems, the nature of the NSS data offers us little option but to exclude female marriage migrants from the frame as a preliminary step towards identifying patterns of female labour migration. This is notwithstanding our own argument that marriage as a reason for migration may and indeed does camouflage some labour migration by women.

But elimination of such camouflaged labour migration is a lesser error when compared with the immensely distorted and inflated picture of female labour mobility that would be the result of inclusion of all marriage migrants who are workers as labour migrants.

From among the category of migrants by UPR, those who gave ‘employment’ as their reason for migration may of course, ab initio be identified as employment/labour migrants. However, to our minds, a better estimation of labour migration could be made if all usual status *paid/income earning workers* from among *migrants by UPR*, who may have given as an initial reason for migration ‘family movement’, ‘education’ and ‘other reasons’ were also counted as labour migrants, since the nature of their employment may be presumed to be premised on their having moved from some other area of origin. The second category of *Short term migrants* could also ipso facto be counted as labour migrants, since they are defined as those who did not change their UPR but undertook short-term movements and stayed away from village/town for a period of 1 month or more but less than 6 months *for employment or in search of employment*.⁴

The estimated total number of labour migrants so identified, were 66.6 million in 2007-08, of which 15 per cent were female (9.6 million). The share of female migrants in migration based employment is thus even lower than the share of all female workers in the overall paid workforce, which stood at 22 per cent that same year (Mazumdar, Neetha, 2011).⁵ In other words, while males accounted for 78 per cent of all jobs that year, their share of migrant jobs was 85 per cent. The relatively greater male bias in migration employment implies that the pattern of labour migration may itself be playing a role in enhancing gender biases in employment in India. Table 4 presents the estimations of the numbers of migrant workers of both categories, i.e., of migrant workers (UPR) [excluding marriage migrants] and short term migrants, by major sector/industry (with percentage distribution in parenthesis) from NSS’ 64th round of 2007-08.⁶

⁴ Short term migrants were defined by the NSS as those who stayed away from village/town for a period of one month or more but less than 6 months for employment. It is important that spells of 15 days and more were included in the calculation of duration. Short term migrants are explicitly labour migrants in contradistinction to the general data on migration is based on change of usual place of residence (UPR) and relates primarily to population movements.

⁵ Although some labour migration by women that is hidden within marriage migration would no doubt add to the numbers of female labour migrants, it is unlikely that it would be of sufficient order to alter the basic picture of a lower share of migration based employment for women when compared with their overall share of paid employment.

⁶ A caveat may be noted that the estimate for female labour migrants is more than likely to be an underestimate because no way could be found to estimate and include labour migration camouflaged as marriage migration. Nevertheless, the substantive picture of substantially and relatively lower levels of mobility in the female workforce is, we believe, an accurate representation of reality.

Table 4: Estimated Numbers of Labour Migrants in sectors/industries (2007-08, NSS)

Industry	Paid/Income earning Migrant workers excluding migrants for marriage (UPR) [000s]		Short term Migrants		Total labour Migrants		Female Share of Total
			[000s]		[000s]		[%]
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry, Fishing	6,430 (14.53)	2,399 (31.74)	2,449 (19.32)	922 (43.47)	8,879 (15.60)	3,321 (34.31)	27.22
Construction	4,257 (9.62)	402 (5.32)	5,289 (41.73)	700 (33.00)	9,546 (16.77)	1,102 (11.39)	10.35
Mining, Manufacturing, Electricity	11,258 (25.44)	1,575 (20.84)	2,412 (19.03)	306 (14.43)	13,670 (24.01)	1,881 (19.44)	12.09
Trade, hotels, restaurants	8,027 (18.14)	474 (6.27)	1,190 (9.39)	32 (1.51)	9,217 (16.19)	506 (5.23)	5.20
All services other than trade, hotels, restaurants*	14,280 (32.27)	2,698 (35.70)	1,338 (10.56)	161 (7.59)	15,618 (27.44)	2,859 (29.54)	15.47
Total	44,252 (100.00)	7,556 (100.00)	12,675 (100.00)	2,121 (100.00)	56,927 (100.00)	9,677 (100.00)	14.53

**All services other than trade, etc. covers Community, social and Personal services, finance, real estate and business services, as well as transport, storage and communication.*

The picture of employment/labour migration as emerges from the table indicates that agriculture is the single largest employer of female labour migrants followed by other services (i.e., transport/storage/communications, finance/real estate/business services, and community/social/personal services).⁷ For males, other services followed by mining/manufacturing/electricity, etc. (i.e., basic components of industry minus construction) appear as the prime drivers of labour/employment migration. It may be noted that in the table, trade, hotels and restaurants have been given separately while all other services have been clubbed together.⁸ If trade and other services are combined and construction added to mining/manufacturing/electricity, a broad idea of the distribution of migrant workers across agriculture, industry and services may be had. Among male migrants, the distribution would roughly be as follows: Agriculture – 15.6%, Industry – 40.8% and Services – 43.6%. In contrast, among female migrant workers the distribution would be: Agriculture – 34.3%, Industry – 30.8% and Services – 34.8%. At an overall level, it does appear that services have emerged as the major driver of migration in contemporary times, and it is interesting that the

⁷ In other services, community/social/personal services are the major employment for women.

⁸ Trade is particularly important and requires some specific delineation because of the size of the workforce and also because of the very large proportions of the self-employed in primarily petty retail trade, which in turn numerically dominates the workforce profile of workers in trade, hotels, restaurants.

sector/industry distribution of labour migrants is quite different from the composition of the overall paid/income earning male and female workforce.⁹

The principal difference between the industrial distribution of migrant workers in comparison to all workers, of course lies in the relative share of agriculture. Agriculture, which accounted for a just 15.6 per cent of male labour migrants in 2007-08, otherwise constituted 46.6 per cent of the country's income earning male workforce in the same year. In female labour migration, agriculture is of course much more prominent, but its 34.3 per cent share in female labour migration was almost half the 65 per cent share of agriculture in the country's income earning female workforce in 2007-08.¹⁰ As further evident from Table 5, it would appear that the agricultural workforce is overwhelmingly more *local* cultivator/agricultural labour oriented when compared with all non-agricultural industries. Only 7 per cent of its male workforce and even less (6%) of its paid/income earning female workforce were migrants. Nevertheless, in comparison to all other sectors/industries, the share of women remained the highest among migrants for agriculture at more than 27 per cent, which is more than double their share of around 12 per cent in migration based employment for all other sectors/industries when taken together. As such, in any approach to female labour migration in India, agricultural migration merits special attention.

A striking feature is the relative insignificance of trade in female migration. Trade, hotels and restaurants accounted for a mere 5 per cent of female labour migration and a similar share in migrant worker based employment in trade. It appears that migration for trade related employment (mostly of a self-employed nature) is most heavily weighted in favour of males. While trade, etc. accounted for 16 per cent of male migrants, more importantly, 95 per cent of *all* migrant workers in trade were male. Other services, accounting for around 30 per cent of female labour migrants and 27 per cent of male labour migrants, initially appears as more significant in driving female labour migration in comparison to male. However, the limited supply and perhaps demand for women migrants in this segment of the labour market becomes apparent when one realizes that 85 per cent of the jobs for migrant workers in other services had gone to men. A similar pattern of an even larger scale of male domination of migration based employment in manufacturing, etc. is evident from the fact that men commanded 88 per cent of migrant jobs in manufacturing. If one looks for comparison to the overall workforce (migrant + non-migrant), the male share is less at 73 per cent in other services and 78 per cent in manufacturing. It thus appears that the impact of diversification of female employment through migration is of a relatively more limited nature than is suggested by the remarkably

⁹ In 2007-08 among the overall paid workforce the distribution of male workers was as follows: Agriculture – 48%, Industry – 23%, Services – 30%. In the female workforce, it was: Agriculture – 65%, Industry – 17%, Services – 18%.

¹⁰ While in the male workforce, services had increased its share of general employment from 26 per cent in 1993-94 to 30 per cent in 2007-08, among the female workforce the increase was from 12 to 14 per cent. By 2009-10, among males the share of services actually declined marginally by around 0.4 per cent, while among females it continued increasing, although it was still low at 15 per cent of the total female workforce.

even distribution of female migrant workers across the three broad sectors of agriculture, industry and services.

In 2007-08, migration for construction too seemed to be overwhelmingly male, with women accounting for just 10 per cent of construction jobs for migrant workers. Since then, given an increase in the share of female employment in construction in the latest employment survey (2009-10), it is possible that the female share of migration for construction may also have increased a little after 2007-08. However, such increases are unlikely to change the overall picture of construction labour migrants being overwhelmingly male at an all India level.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is significant that among female short term migrants, construction is second only to agriculture, while among female migrants by UPR, the numbers in construction are less than in any other sector. It would then appear that for women, migration for construction work does not offer opportunities for more durable employment or for effecting a more permanent movement out of agriculture.

In looking at the role of migration from the demand side, Table 5 presents an interesting picture of which sectors/industries draw more upon migrants and where migration fits into the country's paid/income earning labour and employment profile. In general, as would be expected, manufacturing/mining/quarrying and construction are the industries that display a higher share of migrants in their workforce, as predominantly evident from the proportions of migrants in their male workforce. However, for their female workers, manufacturing/mining/quarrying appears to rely much less on migrants, and it is the construction industry that relies to a much greater extent on migratory workers for its female workforce. Where manufacturing employed more than 36 per cent of migrants in their male workforce, among their female workers, only 18 per cent were migrants. In contrast, where the construction industry employed 36 per cent of migrants in its male workforce, in its female workforce too, more than 35 per cent were migrants.¹²

¹¹ Construction is the one industry where there is very little unpaid labour. Standard workforce figures for construction may thus be taken as roughly the same for the paid workforce.

¹² Given the nature of the NSS survey, which is based on sets of household samples drawn from rural and urban settlements, and based on our own field experience, we would contend that migrants in agriculture (mostly short term) and in construction are severely underestimated. Further, there are some sub-segments of manufacturing such as brick making, where migrant housing is onsite, and are not likely to have been netted in the NSS survey.

Table 5: Share of Migrants in Paid/Income earning Workforce (2007-08 NSS)

	Paid/income earning workforce [000s]		Share of Female Workers in paid/income earning workforce	Share of migrant workers in paid/income earning workforce by sex [%]	
	Male	Female	[%]	Male	Female
Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry, Fishing	132,467 (46.62)	53,266 (65.05)	28.68	6.70	6.23
Construction	26,529 (9.34)	3,145 (3.84)	10.60	35.98	35.05
Mining, Manufacturing, Electricity	37,725 (13.28)	10,452 (12.76)	21.69	36.24	18.00
Trade, hotels, restaurants	36,748 (12.93)	2,838 (3.47)	7.17	25.08	17.83
All services other than trade, etc.	49,494 (17.42)	12,141 (14.83)	19.70	31.56	23.55
Total	284,112 (100.00)	81,881 (100.00)	22.37	20.04	11.82

With close to 20 per cent of the paid/income earning male workforce being drawn through labour migration, and in fact 32 per cent of the male non-agricultural workforce being migrants, the role of migration in shaping and diversifying male employment patterns cannot be considered insignificant. In comparison with migrants constituting less than 12 per cent of the paid/income earning female workforce, the impact of labour migration by women on the structure of the female workforce is far less significant. However, the fact that 22 per cent of the non-agricultural paid female workforce is migrant, suggests that that migration is playing a larger role as far as women's participation in non-agricultural employment is concerned, even if it does not appear to be making such a difference to the general structure of female employment in the country. Of course, it is clearly the high share of migrants among women workers in construction and a relatively higher proportion of migrants among women in predominantly the domestic worker segment of other services that is primarily responsible for the relatively greater presence of migrants in the non-agricultural female workforce. It is doubtful that either or both together would ensure a durable move out of agriculture for many of the women currently working in these segments.

Finally, apart from the sectoral composition of migrant labour, it may be noted that 'short term migrants' constituted some 21 per cent of male labour migration and 22 per cent of female labour migration in 2007-08. Further, some 10 per cent of UPR based female migrants and 7 per cent of male migrants reported that their migration was temporary. Acceleration in return migration also appears to have taken place between 1993 and 2007-08, with the proportions of return migrants increasing from 12.2 to 16.1 per cent in the case of male migrants and from 4.4

to 10.6 per cent in the case of female migrants. Although they may not all be labour migrants, nevertheless it suggests that term migration is increasing relative to permanent. Taken together, the NSS data seems to suggest that the movement of roughly one third of all labour migration is definitively temporary.

Although the 2007-08 migration survey does give us a rough outline of labour migration in India, among the several important features that the NSS fails to capture, probably the most significant is its inability to cognize the different types of labour migration, and particularly the circular types of labour migration. Despite attempts to make some distinction between temporary and permanent migration in the UPR data and the important step taken through a separate focus on short term migration, a failure to capture the full extent of temporary migration and its features remains a persistent problem with the macro-data.

Female Migrants Workers in Urban Areas: Expanding opportunities with increased segregation

Possibility of increased opportunities for work with migration is a well acknowledged phenomenon. For women, the proportion of non-working category remains high even after migration though some increase in work participation is noted (Banerjee, 2009). Whereas the proportion of migrant women in employment before migration was only 9 per cent their work participation increased to 19 per cent after migration¹³. Thus, whatever be the reason for migration, the fact is that a section of women migrants are in employment and their work participation rate is higher than that of all women, which is 13.6 per cent in 2007-08. In recent literature, female migration is linked to gender specific patterns of labour demand in urban areas and cities. It has been argued that it is the opportunities available to women in the services and industrial sectors especially with the opening up of the economy that has resulted in a high female labour mobility.

The data shows that self-employment is critical even after migration with the share of women self-employed as high as 44 percent¹⁴. Though the proportion of self-employed increases after migration, the structure of self-employed changes- with the share of unpaid helpers declining alongside an increase in own account workers. This structural change within self-employment is noteworthy with own account workers constituting for more than half of the self-employed while for men the proportions have remained almost stagnant.

¹³ As stated earlier, in the following analysis, all the women migrants who were reported in employment are taken irrespective of their reason for migration to urban areas.

¹⁴ The analysis is limited to the age group of 15-60 and this category constitute for almost 97 per cent of all migrant female workers in 2007-08. Work participation rate among these migrants is also higher with 19.36 per cent as against 17.2 per cent for all women migrants and 13.8 for total urban females (both migrants as well as non- migrants)¹⁴.

Table 6: Proportion of Migrants across status of employment: Before and after Migration

	2007-08				Difference between 2007-08 and 1999-00			
	Before migration		After migration		Before migration		After migration	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Own account worker	25.6	9.2	25.7	22.9	-1.1	-1.4	0.21	-2.21
Employer	1.3	0.1	2.5	0.7	0.7	-0.6	1.27	0.06
Helper	9.6	23.5	3	20.3	0.7	6	-0.6	-1.11
Regular workers	37.6	29.4	56.9	36.2	-2.6	-1.9	0.43	6.18
Casual workers	25.9	37.8	11.9	19.8	2.1	-2.3	-1.31	-3.03

Source: Migration in India, Unit level data, 1999-00 & 2007-08

Whether, this shift in employment structure reveal a move towards better employment cannot be judged at this point as the sector of employment is critical. Regular work is another category which has shown an increase. While regular work has increased in the case of male workers also, this has not been the case with own account work. When unpaid helpers are removed the broad structural distribution of male and female worker does not show much variation with regular work leading the distribution.

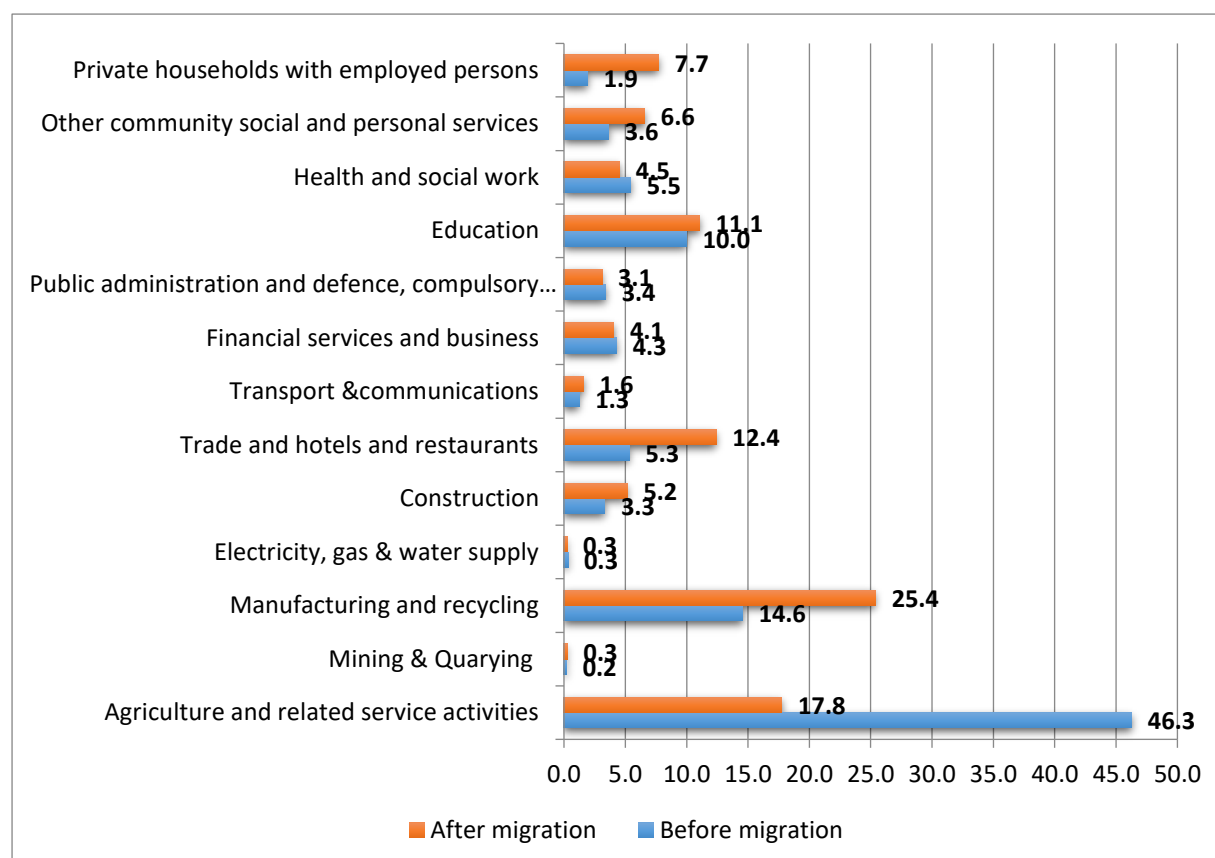
A comparison with 1999-00 however, gives the changing trends over time which shows a decline in the share of own account work for women and a noticeable increase in regular work, which seems to have increased by 6.2 percentage points over time. For men, the trend does not show much change. The growing importance of regular work in urban female employment is a notable feature during the last two decades and this pattern seems to be true with migrants also.

The industrial distribution of women before and after migration reveals further the gender specificities of migration to urban areas. Figures for male and female migrants are quite diverse with male migrants showing a diverse occupational profile, compared to females which show more concentrations. Agriculture is major sector from where many females have migrated, the data shows that male migrants are from a diversified set of occupations. However, agriculture constitute for only a small proportion of total migrant workers as a much larger proportion are drawn from unemployed women, who would have been engaged in household domestic duties (CWDS, 2012).

This nature of concentration of women before migration seems to have influenced their choice of labour market entry in urban areas. Women migrants are more concentrated in manufacturing and allied activities, with education, trade, hotels and restaurants sharing the bulk of the service sector jobs. What needs to specially noted is the proportion of women engaged in the category private households with employed persons, who are largely into domestic work. At the overall level, there is substantial diversification of female employment

after migration despite a high degree of concentration in specific sectors. Micro level studies have further indicated that the structure of the female migrant workforce is far more dominated by unskilled/semi-skilled manual work than the male migrant workforce, whether the destination of migration is rural or urban¹⁵.

Figure 1: Distribution of migrant workers across broad industrial sectors: Before and after Migration



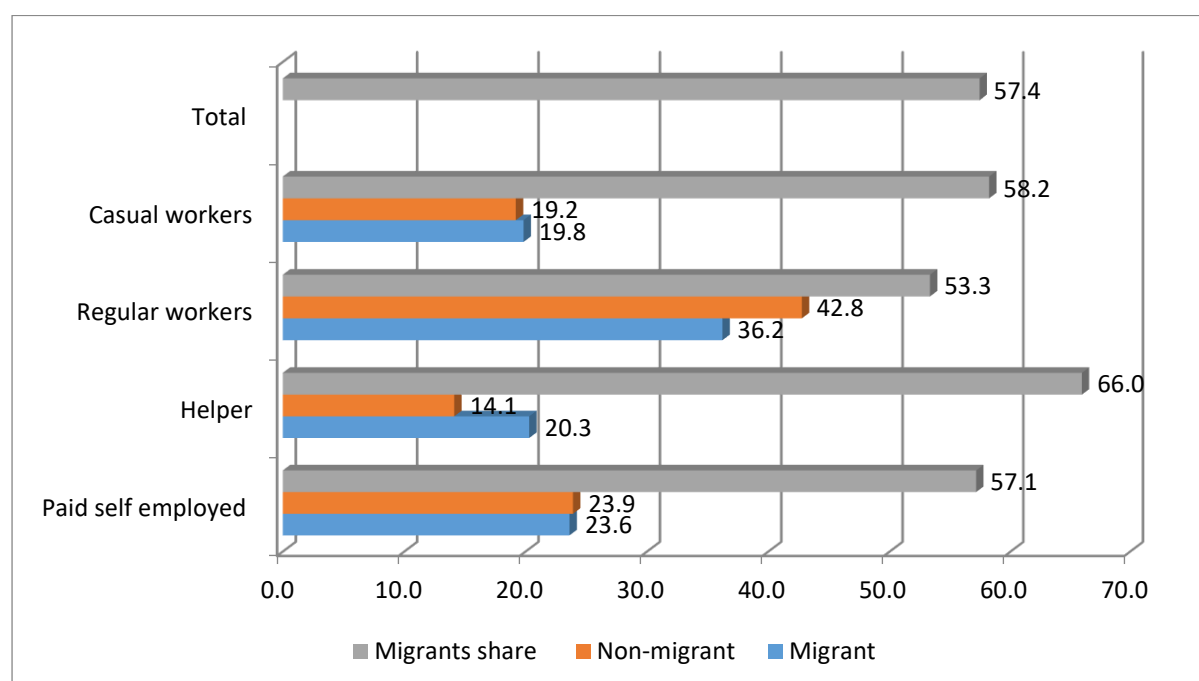
Source: Migration in India, Unit level data, 2007-08

A comparison across the two periods, 1999-00 and 2007-08 gives further insights into the overall concentrations in the employment profile of women migrants. Segments that have increased its share over time are manufacturing, health and social work and private households with employed persons. In contrast to these, declines have been across a number of sectors such as trade, hotel and restaurants, construction, education, public administration and miscellaneous services. Thus, though migration have opened up more possibilities of employment, over time there are tendencies of concentration, especially within the service sector occupations.

¹⁵ The CWDS study found 59 per cent of the women migrants with urban destinations in unskilled/semi-skilled manual work in comparison to 52 per cent of the male migrants.

The above analysis provides the broad employment picture of migrants. A comparison of distribution across status of employment of migrant and non-migrant workers shows that though the overall pattern is similar for both though the proportions vary. Though share of migrants are higher in all categories, given the hierarchy of employment status, the figure clearly shows the concentration of migrant women worker in the lower categories. Thus, the share of migrant women is the highest in helper category and declines as it move upward with regular work showing almost an equal share (50.6 per cent). The above trends need to be analysed against the sectors of employment to provide further insights on its implication for female labour migration and migrants.

Figure 2: Proportion of migrant and non-migrant women across status of employment



Source: Migration in India, Unit level data, 2007-08

The sectoral picture is revealing with manufacturing and related activities accounting for the largest share of female migrant workers (25.4 per cent); followed by trade, hotels and restaurants (12.4 per cent) and education (11.1 per cent) and private households with employed persons (7.7 per cent)¹⁶. Construction accounted for about 5.2 per cent of urban female migrant workers. The importance of these two sectors in terms of migrant women is further clear from migrant-non-migrant women's share in these sectors. In 2007-08, female migrant share was estimated to be lowest in manufacturing clearly showing the increased presence of local labour. On the other hand, domestic work and construction shows highest values for female migrant

¹⁶ The share of domestic workers in urban female employment is clearly an underestimate as domestic workers as a category is often not captured in large surveys due to multiple factors, which is evident from many micro level studies.

shares, which is a reflection of the poor conditions of work in these sectors which deters entry of local workers.

Domestic work was found to top the list of occupations for urban female migrants in a multi-locational study carried out by CWDS; accounting for more than 27 per cent of urban female migrants. Construction accounted for another 16 per cent making these sectors/occupations the destination of some 43 per cent of female migrant workers in urban areas. (CWDS, 2012). The importance of these two sectors in terms of migrant women is further clear from migrant-non-migrant women's share in these sectors. In 2007-08, female migrant share was estimated to be lowest in manufacturing clearly showing the increased presence of local labour. On the other hand, domestic work and construction shows highest values for female migrant shares, which is a reflection of the poor conditions or work in these sectors which prevent entry of local workers.

What is interesting across the period 1999-00 to 2007-08 is the changing shares and importance of various sectors. Thus, while manufacturing and private households with employed persons (who are largely paid domestic workers) increased their share of migrant's workers across periods, education, trade and hotels show a decline. Of these sectors of migrant employment, paid domestic work is now well acknowledged as a fast growing sector of female migrant workers.

Profiling Migrant Women Workers in Urban Areas

The above analysis clearly shows the increasing importance of female migrant workers in urban areas though with sectoral concentrations. Migration and related processes needs to understood and analysed in the context of those who migrate. Not much information, however, is available on the profiles of migrant women workers. Few micro level studies have provided some understanding on the specificities of women migrants in select sectors. Based on NSS data, a basic profiling of migrant workers are given in the following table.

Table 7: Profile of Migrant Workers

Categories		1999-00	2007-08	
		Female	Female	Male
Age Cohorts	15-18	2.83	1.99	2.70
	19-25	13.14	12.32	16.81
	26-40	51.79	51.63	46.98
	41-50	22.09	23.42	21.64
	51-60	10.15	10.64	11.86
Marital Status	Never married	5.55	7.56	20.33
	Currently married	79.47	77.32	78.72
	Widowed	13.22	12.75	0.83
	Divorced/separated	1.76	2.37	0.12
Social Group	ST	5.45	4.33	2.93
	SC	20.08	18.37	13.61

	OBC	36.32	40.26	33.32
	Others	38.15	37.04	50.15
Educational level	Not literate	49.20	38.57	10.84
	literate without schooling	7.70	0.40	0.58
	literate with formal schooling below primary		7.37	6.11
	Primary	8.60	10.18	11.06
	Upper primary / middle	9.40	11.97	18.40
	Secondary	7.50	7.39	16.77
	Higher secondary	5.00	5.00	9.78
	graduate -13		11.22	16.04
	postgraduate and above -14		5.20	6.05
	Graduate & above	12.70	16.42	22.09
	diploma/certificate course -12		2.69	4.38

Source: Migration in India, Unit level data, 2007-08

A large segment of women migrant workers are in the age cohort of 26-40, which is normally the working age group for most women. Though for men also this is the age group which have the highest proportion, the values are lower compared to women. Currently married women account for almost more than three fourth of all migrant women workers with a declining proportion over the two periods. It needs to be noted that, though the share of unmarried women is small, the share show an increase over the period. What is striking when male- female comparisons are made is the higher values for the category of widowed – for men this category is negligible. Social group profiles of migrants do not match with the overall high level of work participation among SCs. Lower social and caste status propels/compels greater involvement of women in paid work. However, in the context of urban women migrant such a pattern is not visible. This clearly means that more diversified and less stigmatized service occupations in urban areas, have obviously opened up more opportunities for upper caste women than for traditional female workers, who are drawn more from SC and ST¹⁷. What is interesting is the relatively higher share of OBCs among female migrants and its increase over time. The greater proportions of women from OBC backgrounds in urban migration perhaps reflects the greater levels of internal differentiation that has taken place within the large omnibus category of OBCs.

The educational profile of women migrant workers reflects the nature of work available for women in urban areas. The largest chunk of women is illiterate. Interestingly, their share shows a decline across the two time periods by around 14 percentage points. Though there has been simultaneous increase across many educational categories, proportion of graduate and above show the maximum increase of 5 percentage points, followed by upper primary and middle. This clearly points to the emerging opportunities and segregation in urban areas with the illiterate and poorly educated taking up less skilled, less paid jobs like domestic work casual

¹⁷ This is more marked in the context of male workers- upper castes account for about half of the total migrant male workers.

labour in construction and manufacturing or that of vendors and helpers. The middle layer constitute for the less educated, filling up the demand that arise in urban areas with the coming up of organised trade, changing life style of the urban middle class such as beauticians etc. At the top of the hierarchy, are the well-educated, skilled whose demand are related to the expansion of service sector outsourcing and emergence of financial and insurance industries in urban areas.

Profile of both male and female workers across technical education show a weak outcome with about 94 per cent of females and 90 per cent of male having no technical education. What is intriguing is the small decline, by 1 percent, in the proportion across the period for females. It is true that in many of the service sector jobs that are expanding, technical education is not the requirement.

The pattern that emerges from the profile of women migrants and their educational profiles are reflective of the demand side. The proportions of workers are high among the less educated and the highest educated with middle level educated having the lowest. The nature of urban jobs that are open to migrant women seems to draw either from the bottom, or require those with higher skills.

Conclusion

The macro data on employment challenge the common assumption of ‘feminization of labour’ and its presumed relationship with migration. The macro-picture of the composition of male and female migrant workers indicates that the pattern of labour migration is actually aggravating gender biases in the labour market, particularly for industry and services. The 2007-08 migration data of the NSS shows that within an overall multi-sectoral bias towards males in labour migration in India, female labour migration is particularly differentiated from male migration by the relatively greater weight of agriculture in the sector profile of female migrant workers, and a far greater weight of services and industry among male migrant workers. These features are linked to a highly gendered employment crisis reflected in the declining female work participation rates in rural India and stagnation at extremely low levels of female employment rates in urban areas. The indications are that migration in the contemporary period has led to relatively limited diversification of female occupations even in urban areas. An increased number of women involved in paid domestic work after migration in comparison to before was the most significant feature of urban-wards migration, even as employment in new and other diverse service jobs also increased after migration among urban women migrant workers. The process of concentration in paid domestic work thus emerged as the most distinctive trend of female labour migration to urban areas.

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