

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Migrant Workers in Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Abba Pulu
JTMD College, Roing

Abstract- Introduction: Migration has long shaped human societies, and India continues to experience significant internal mobility driven largely by economic factors. In the Northeastern region, Arunachal Pradesh stands out with the highest proportion of migrants, and within the state, Lohit district particularly its headquarters, Tezu records the greatest in-migration.

Material and Method: This study is based on the primary data from 110 migrants selected through random sampling from the official labour records at the Department of Labour Lohit district, supplemented by Census 2011 migration tables.

Results: Findings shows that migrants are predominantly young and engaged in low-skilled occupations such as daily wage work, construction, and shop-based employment, with limited educational attainment. Household conditions indicate modest socio-economic status, reflected in high dependence on rented accommodation, shared water and sanitation facilities, and substantial use of solid fuels. Employment emerges as the principal driver of migration, with family and social networks playing a significant role in influencing migration decisions and duration of stay.

Conclusion: The study underscores Tezu's role as an important labour-receiving centre and highlights the need for policy measures to improve housing, basic amenities, and access to clean energy, while acknowledging migrants' contributions to the local economy.

Keywords: *Labour migrants, Employment, local economy, Migration.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of human being is the history of migration. In other words one could reasonable claim that mankind's entire history has been a history of migration. People migrate due to various reasons however the core cause is for better employment and quality of life. Migration of workers from one state to another state is a continues process, and dynamic in nature. As per the Report Migration in India, 2020-21,

based on Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2020-21, released by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the total migration rate in India was 28.9% and in rural was 26.5%. Out of the total migrant persons, around 10.8% persons were migrated due to employment related reasons. The employment related reasons include in search of employment/better employment, for employment/work (to take up employment/ to take up better employment/ business/ proximity to place of work/ transfer) and loss of job/closure of unit/lack of employment opportunities.

Migration flows can comprise of the entire household moving or a member of the household out migrating. The moves can be permanent or temporary. Information on migration collected as part of Census of India pertains only to permanent moves. The number of internal migrants in India increased from 232.1 million in 1991, to 314.6 in 2001 and further to 453.7 million in 2011(Chandrasekhar, Naik, and Roy 2017).

Similarly the history of Northeastern part of India has been a history of migration. Before written history, the flow was mainly from the eastern direction, so that most of the ethnicities that today claim to be the autochthons can trace their ancestries to the east of India, mostly to Southeast Asia. Subsequently, people from the western direction also began coming in and the communities like the caste Hindu Axamiya—speaking population of Assam often trace their origin back to parts of mainland India (Goswami2007).

Northeast India has been the significant receiver of migrants in the past being the frontier region with low density of population. The Northeast region is less mobile as compared to the country average. About one-third of people in the region are migrants as compared to about 37% country average. Arunachal Pradesh is the only state having a higher percentage of migrants than the country average with about 45% of

population as migrants. The lowest mobility is observed in the states of Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland, where just about one-fourth are migrants (Lusome and Bhagat 2020).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Sample- This study is based on the primary survey data on the migrant workers in the Tezu township of Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh, India. List of the migrant workers were collected from the office of the District labour officer Tezu. From the sampling frame 110 samples were selected through random sampling.

Data- Data has been collected through personal interview with closed ended and open ended interview schedule. Interview schedule has been categories into three sections. The first section gather the information on personal details of the migrant worker for example age, type of occupation, education attainment etc. Second section deal with the information on migration like place of last residence, reasons of migration. Third section gather the information on the economic status for example wage, number of days working, remittance etc.

Study also used the 2011 census data on migration. Census have been collecting data on migration since 1961 by considering that a person is considered as a migrant if birthplace is different from place of enumeration. However, in 1971 census, an additional question on place of last residence was introduced to collect migration data. Since then, census provides data on migrants based on place of birth (POB) and place of last residence (POLR). If the place of birth or place of last residence is different from the place of

enumeration, a person is defined as a migrant. On the other hand, if the place of birth or place of last residence and place of enumeration is the same, the person is a non-migrant.

The completed interviewed questionnaires were scrutinized for internal consistency and were edited. Data was entered in the SPSS and uni-variate and bi-variate analysis were carried out.

FINDINGS

In North East India Arunachal Pradesh is the only state having a higher percentage of migrants than the country average (Lusome and Bhagat 2020). Table 1 shows the district wise magnitude of migration in Arunachal Pradesh. It is apparent from the data that highest percentage of mobility is recoded from the Lohit district followed by the capital district i.e. Papumpare (fig.1) and the lowest mobility can be observed in the district of Tawang and Upper Siang.

Table no.1 Magnitude of migration in Arunachal Pradesh by place of last residence, 2011

District	Population (000s)
Tawang	5,468
West kameng	13,835
East Kameng	12,423
Papum pare	29,989
Lower Subansari	13,340
Uper Subansiri	13,869
West Siang	19,756
East Siang	13,869
Upper siang	5,803
Dibang valley	16,221
Lohit	32,116
Changlang	25,268
Tirap	10,515

Source: Table D-2, Census of India 2011

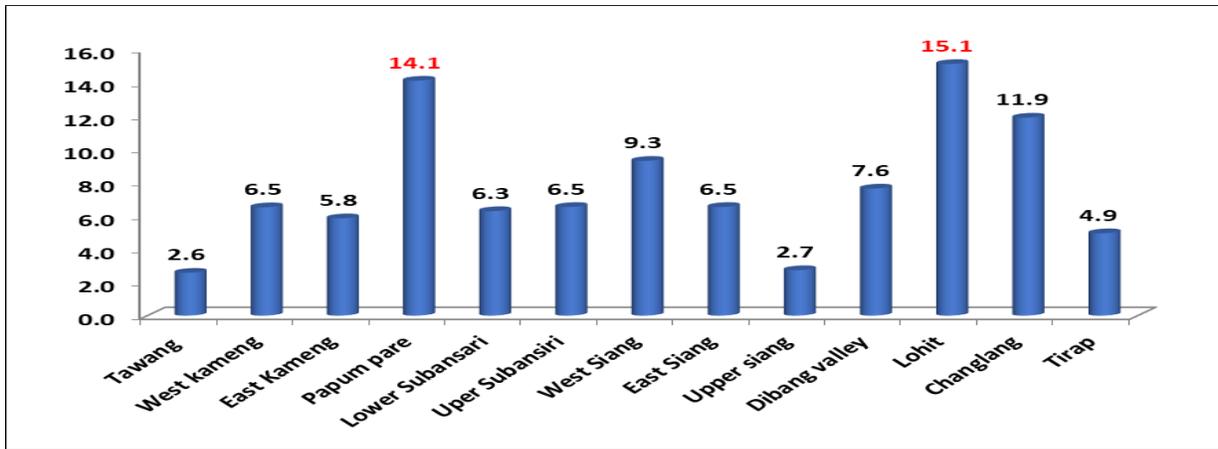


Fig 1 District wise magnitude of migration in percent

Source: Computed from Table D-2, Census of India 2011

Table no 2 Background characteristics of sample migrants

Background characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age Composition		
Less than 20	10	9.1
21 - 30	36	32.7
31 - 40	37	33.6
41 – 50	18	16.4
More than 50	9	8.2
Type of occupation		
Rickshaw Driver/Puller	7	6.4
Daily labour	23	20.9
Construction labour	27	24.5
Employed in shop	34	30.9
Vendoor	11	10.0
Other	8	7.3
Education Attainment		
Illiterate	17	15.5
Primary	27	24.5
Secondary	37	33.6
Higher Secondary	21	19.1
Above Higher secondary	8	7.3

Table 2 shows the descriptive characteristics of the migrant workers. The sample workers comprises of relatively youth population as the mean age of the sample migrant is 34 years. About three fourth of them are less than 40 years of age and as old as 55 years worker also reported that he migrated recently. Most of the migrants are engaged in labour work either as a daily labourer or construction labour however major chunk of the migrants are also working as a sales man in the different shops of the Tezu township. Few of them are also reported to be engaged in other occupations like driver, fish seller. Around 16 percent of them illiterate, one fourth had primary education and only eight migrants reported to have education attainment of above higher secondary level.

Household Characteristics

Household characteristics of migrant workers often include small household size, a higher proportion of young adults, limited access to amenities etc. This study also tries to highlight some of these aspects of migrant worker’s household through table no 3. The average family size is five, with almost three fourth of migrants have a relatively small family size of five person or below and one fourth of them reported to

have a smaller family size of 3 or less persons. Most of them staying in the rented house followed by the migrants who live in the accommodation provided by the employer or company and very few of them live in the relative’s house. Almost half of the sample population are depended on public or shared facilities for drinking water. Though very less but surprisingly few of them still dependent on river for the water.

Migrant workers often face significant health hazards due to exposure to various factors and one among them is kind of fuel use for cooking. Solid fuels produce harmful gases such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter, endangering human health and the environment (Desai et al., 2004; Smith & Mehta, 2003). This study indicates that the migrant workers of Tezu Township is also expose to this health hazard as around 43 percent are not using clean fuels. When it comes to access to toilet around 55 percent said that they have owned separate toilets however, as large as 44 percent of them using the share toilet and 1.8 percent responded that they don t have toilet therefore they use open space.

Table no. 3 Household characteristics of migrant workers.

Household Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Total Family Size		
< 3	29	26.4
4 to 5	49	44.5
6 to 7	21	19.1
>= 8	11	10.0
Type of House		
Rented	75	68.2
Provided by employer/company	24	21.8
Rent free/Relative house	11	10.0
Drinking Water		
Own tape	40	36.4
Public/Shared	52	47.3
Own Hang pump	12	10.9
River/Stream	6	5.5
Type of Fuel		
Kerosene	2	1.8
Firewood	45	40.9
Gas	63	57.3
Type of toilet		
Own	60	54.5
Shared	48	43.6
No facility/Open space	2	1.8

Migration in Tezu

According to 2011 census Arunachal Pradesh is only the state in north-east India having a higher percentage

of migrants than the countries average. Further within different districts of Arunachal Pradesh Lohit district have the highest percentage of migrants (fig. 1). Tezu is the district headquarter of Lohit district and as per 2011 census Tezu town has population of 18,184. Migration in Tezu could be as early as the history of migration in Arunachal Pradesh since it is one of the oldest towns of the state. However from the field survey of this study the earliest person reported to be migrated in the Tezu was 1971. Fig. 2 further depicts about the number of years living in Tezu, most of them reported that they migrated around 5 to 10 years back from the date of survey. Followed by the migrant workers who stayed more than ten years in Tezu and around one fourth migrated less than five years before the survey.

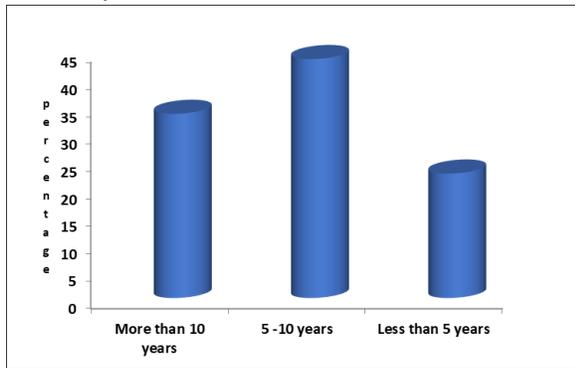


Fig. 2 Duration of stay in Tezu

Reasons of migration.

Migration of people from one place to another is the outcome of many reasons, ranging from social and cultural, economic, political conditions and environmental factors. The employment and business (26%) among males and marriage (66.7%) among females were found as the main reasons for migration

in 2011 census. Associational reasons - movement on account of accompanying parents or any member of the family was elicited second most important reason among both male and female migrants (20.5%) and (11.7%) (Sing and Biradar, 2022). This study also finds that the main reason of migration (Fig 4) in Tezu is of employment as more than three fourth of the study population reported employment is the cause of movement and around 22 percent said they move with parents.

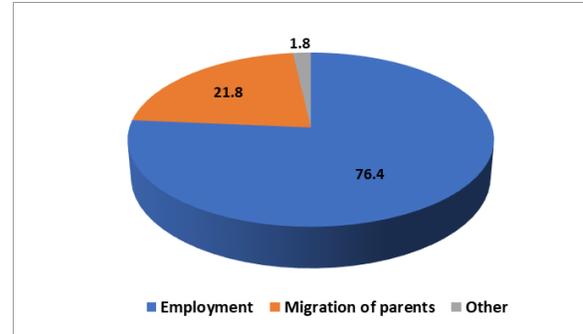


Fig. 4 Reasons of Migration

The decision to move is usually made by an individual but often they move with family and in some cases it is other relatives and friends which made them to migrate. Around 30.9 percent workers reported that they made the decision themselves to move into Tezu, followed by the workers who came with parents. Around 18 percent reported that decision was made by their friends. Further table no 4 show that those who are influenced by the friends to move are of most recent one as 44 percent of workers whose stay is less than 5 years reported that decision to move was made by the friends. On the other hand those who came with parents majority of them have a more than 10 years of stay at Tezu.

Table no 4 Percent distribution of Decision to move by duration of stay.

Decision to move	Duration of Stay			Total
	More tha 10 yrs	5-10 yrs	Less than 5 yrs	
Came with parents	40.5	14.6	8.0	21.8
Relatives	18.9	16.7	4.0	14.5
Friend	5.4	14.6	44.0	18.2
Family member	10.8	14.6	8.0	11.8
Spouse	5.4	2.1	0.0	2.7
Myself	18.9	37.5	36.0	30.9

CONCLUSION

The study shows that Tezu has emerged as a significant destination for migrant workers in

Arunachal Pradesh, largely driven by the search for employment and better living conditions. Lohit district, with Tezu as its headquarters, records one of the highest levels of in-migration in the state,

confirming its role as an important labour-receiving centre in the region.

Findings indicate that migrants are predominantly young, engaged mainly in low-skilled occupations such as daily wage labour, construction work, and sales in shops, with relatively low levels of educational attainment. Their household conditions reflect modest socio-economic status, with many living in rented or employer-provided housing and relying on shared water and sanitation facilities, and a substantial proportion still depending on solid fuels for cooking, which has health implications.

The analysis of reasons and decision-making behind migration highlights employment as the dominant push-pull factor, followed by associational reasons such as moving with parents, relatives, or friends. Friends and family networks not only facilitate movement but also shape the timing and duration of stay, especially for recent migrants influenced by peer decisions.

Overall, the study underlines that migration to Tezu is a dynamic, ongoing process linked closely to regional labour demand and limited opportunities in places of origin. These patterns call for policy attention towards improving basic amenities, housing, and access to clean energy for migrant households, as well as recognising their contribution to the local economy in planning and development strategies.

REFERENCES

[1] Attah-Otu, B., et al. (2024). Dynamics of temporary labor migration: Insights from rural India. *Population, Space and Place*. Advance online publication.

[2] Babin, R. (2021). A study of Tibetans in Arunachal Pradesh. *Mizoram University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 129–140.

[3] Bhagat, R. B., & Lusome, R. (2020). Migration in Northeast India: Inflows, outflows and reverse flows during pandemic. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 63(4), 1021–103.

[4] Census of India. (1981). *Town survey report Tezu, Lohit District, Arunachal Pradesh (Part X-B, Series-25)*. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.

[5] Desai, M. A., Mehta, S., Smith, K. R., World Health Organization, O., & Environmental Health, T. (2004). Indoor smoke from solid fuels

: assessing the environmental burden of disease at national and local levels / Manish A. Desai, Sumi Mehta, Kirk R. Smith. In. Geneva: World Health Organization.

[6] Keshri, N., & Bhagat, R. B. (2013). Socioeconomic determinants of temporary labour migration in India: A regional analysis. *Asian Population Studies*, 9(2), 175–195.

[7] Mishra, S. (2025). Migrant capital: The role of internal migrants in mediating structural transformation. *World Development*, 178, Article 106567.

[8] Nivedita. (2021). *Arunachal Pradesh's response to migrant workers during COVID-19*. MCRG-IWM Migration Research Series.

[9] Panda, S., & Mishra, S. K. (2018). Factors affecting temporary migration in India: A review. *Journal of Rural Development*, 37(3), 345–362.

[10] Srivastava, R. (2020). Internal migration, urbanisation and employment in India: A study of trends and patterns. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 55(36), 45–52.

[11] Sucharita, S. (2020). Socioeconomic determinants of temporary labour migration: Evidence from Jharkhand villages. *Journal of Social and Economic Development*, 22(1), 123–140.

[12] V. V. Giri National Labour Institute. (n.d.). *Centre for North-East India: Labour scenario in the North Eastern Region*. <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/town/801447-tezu-arunachal-pradesh.html>