

**POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION :  
A SURVEY OF LITERATURE**

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**C E R T I F I C A T E**

I have the pleasure to certify that MR. ABHAY PRASAD SINGH, an M.A. student of the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, has pursued his research work and prepared the present Dissertation entitled "POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RURAL - URBAN MIGRATION : A SURVEY OF LITERATURE" under my guidance and supervision. The present dissertation is the result of his own research work and the best of my knowledge, no part of it has earlier been comprised of any other monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the University of Delhi for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in Political Science in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the said degree.



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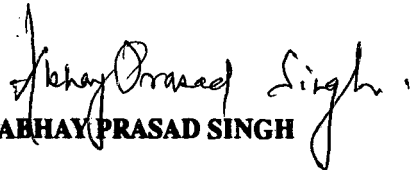
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Date :

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## INTRODUCTION

A Spectre of ever-increasing rural to urban migration is haunting most of the Third world countries<sup>1</sup>. The problem of rural to urban migration has emerged as a major population and development concern for most of the Third World states. The challenge posed by rural to urban migration drew attention of scholars belonging to various disciplines, and a plethora of writings have come up but have failed to provide more than proximate explanations of queries like, why rural to urban migration occurs ? Who migrates : is it result of an individual's rational decision to migrate or does this constitute a conditioned response of a particular section of the society to the existing modes of production ? What is the impact of migration on the political economy of the source areas, migrants migrate from, and upon the political economy of the destination, they migrate to ? And, what happens to migrants themselves.

The attempt here is to provide a political economy perspective on the on-going process of rural to urban migration in Third world countries but my subject of emphasis will be India. I am not to state that this endeavour is to fill the void, because that would be a vital task beyond the scope of this project : my effort, here, will be merely to explore the theoretical aspects of various writings on the subject and discuss the possible parameter of a theoretical framework.

This dissertation is Organised into four chapters. In the first chapter we will have an overview of Classical economists' writings as well as Marx's fundamental understanding of the subject.

Ever since Adam Smith, Classical Economists had been delineating their views pertaining rural to urban migration (however, they used the term 'transfer of labour'). Among classicists, Adam Smith's position was unique in that he placed labour transfer within an overall framework of growth and accumulation in the long term. As with other classicists, Smith believed that the dynamics of population change were regulated by the laws of the market. Accordingly, the 'production of men' was constrained by the quantity of food and other necessities of life : increasing in times of prosperity and decreasing in times of hardship. But contrasting Malthus and Ricardo who were concerned with the 'evils' of overpopulation, Adam Smith viewed labour transfer as an Organic element in the rise of the new industrial order in England. He placed labour transfer in the realm of the division of labour and the growing Commercial relations between the town and the Country. What he called 'the great Commerce of every civilized society', appeared as a natural consequence of the expansion of market relations.<sup>2</sup>

Marx's approach resembled Smith's in that it incorporated labour transfer into a wider theory or conception of the development of capitalism but differed from it and other classical economists' in several important respects; the emphasis was laid on the relationship between labour and the means of production (as against classicists' understanding of means of

subsistence); different forms of surplus population were highlighted; their cause of genesis; their (rural to urban migration) impact on the health of capitalist development and on themselves; and although, his analysis centered on the 'Classic' case in England, the historic character and the social conditioning of the mechanism governing this process were stressed.<sup>3</sup>

In the second chapter, there are number of development theorists who advanced varied arguments in relation to rural to urban migration. In this context Ravenstein was first to describe rural to urban migration in terms of forms and causes of its genesis. He had highlighted the expectation of labourers to secure better opportunities in the urban areas as compared to rural areas, lower rate of migration depending upon its spatial proximity, and step-migration had its impact upon creating a counter stream of urban-rural migration for each stream of its rural-urban counterpart. However, the latter dominates the former.<sup>4</sup>

Development theorists get espousal acceptance from 'Sir Arthur Lewis' pioneering article 'Economic Development with unlimited supplies of labour (1954)' which sparked off and kept alive a foray of discussions and controversies since the 1950s. The central focus of his literature was dichotomic understanding of two sectors : a low productivity, subsistence sector, and a high productivity, capitalist sector. The former, characterized by 'disguised unemployment' of labour with 'negligible, Zero or even negative' marginal productivity including, beside agriculture, petty retail trading, domestic service and a whole range of other casual jobs done by labourers. He exposed veiled 'unlimited supply



of labour' to the capitalist sector at free of cost, for he was convinced that capitalist sector in the urban areas have to set minimum wages at least thirty percent higher than what people can earn outside that sector—partly to allow the higher cost of living in towns and, partly to induce subsistence workers to leave their traditional activities.<sup>5</sup>

Nurkse, one of his contemporaries, was also talking interms of Zero marginal productivity of labour and 'disguised unemployment' and implied that even with unchanged techniques of production, a large part of population engaged in agriculture could be removed without reducing agricultural output.<sup>6</sup> Alongwith this line Myrdal, however, resorted to similar classical paradigms, viewed through a different angle. His argument formed a conceptual basis for what is generally known as the "Center-periphery" paradigm.<sup>7</sup> To him, in the process of movement of labour from rural to urban areas, destination areas grew on the one hand, Source regions experienced underdevelopment and impoverishment on the other.

Increasing tides of cityward migration and growing urban unemployment and under employment led to a new generation of studies in the 1960s' notably the works of Sjaastad (1962), Lee (1966), Fie's and Ranis model (1961), Todaro (1969) and Harris and Todaro (1970). Contrary to Lewis' and Myradal's paradigms based on classical economics, new studies adopted a neoclassical economic behavioural approach and normally applied partial equilibrium model to explain labour migration. Fei-Ranis version<sup>8</sup> of elaborated Lewis' model considers migration as an 'equilibrating mechanism' which through

transfer of labour from the labour-surplus sector to the labour-deficit sector, brings about equality between the two sector. Moreover, it also indentifies two sector rural-urban economy, the former, agricultural sector is characterized by unemployment and underemployment where as the latter, industrial sector is characterized by full employment.

Harris and Todaro model and another neoclassicists as well assume a two sector rural-urban economy, arguing that migrants make a rational decision by moving in the direction where they expect to get the highest benefits or wages, they generally apply equilibrium single equation model. Some independent variables for them are wage/income differentials; employment opportunities; utility maximization and expectation.<sup>9</sup> We will undertake a critical analysis of this chapter.

In the chapter three, We will discuss Neomarxist-Dependency formulations of rural to urban migration. In contrast to most conventional models (We have seen above), neomarxist-dependency authors conceive migration as a socio economic process rather than as an amalgamation of individual movements with specific reasons and motives, which is conditioned by the externally superimposed structural and material forces in which 'the dependent state (using carony's (1984) phrase)<sup>10</sup> plays a decisive role.

In the chapter four, we will try to develop a structural theory of rural to urban migration with help of Indian evidence. Basic assumption acclaims migration (from rural to urban) as a manifestation of, and a necessary response to, the social and spatial, arrangement and rearrangement of the national

economy in which the dependent state plays a determinate role through its control over the social as well as spatial distribution of capital and consequently the development process in the name of systematic planning. Central to this line of argument is that migration needs to be analysed in the context of the existing social formation, whether externally imposed and subsequently internalized or internally existing but externally reinforced. The theory of rural to urban migration outlined here is, therefore, built on the conceptual foundation of two specific components of the existing social formation : the relations of production and uneven geographical development. Though the uneven development process is not independent of the social relations of production it is treated here separately because evolving spatial structure and relations are the key actors that induce migration by geographically separating capital (owner of the means production) from capital-dependent labour.

In the concluding chapter we will critically discuss issues like, Who migrates ? Why migration occurs ? And, what is impact of migration.

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## CHAPTER 1

### A CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

This chapter has two objectives : first to delineate classical school's understanding of how is surplus population generated and how the process of 'labour-transfer' takes place and whether this labour transfer is a sign of prosperity or adversity. Secondly, it aims to explain Marx's view fully.

A study of labour transfer did not constitute a central theme of classical political economy. Nevertheless, economists of this school (Adam Smith, T.R. Malthus and D. Ricardo) shared a common perception of population change in which the quantity of food and other means of subsistence regulated the 'production of men' : increasing it at times of prosperity and decreasing it at times of hardship. Therefore, they envisaged the supply of labour in the long run to be unlimited in the sense that it could be continually recruited to an expanding industrial sector at a constant wage around the subsistence level.

Adam Smith, in his work *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) indentifies genesis of surplus population in rising productivity of labour on the land and in self regulation as well as free and fare operation of market forces. According to Smith's vision of self regulatory and unhampered markets interaction between fertility and trends in real wages was subject to the same principle

which governed the operation of the 'invisible hand' in bringing about the progressive extension of the division of labour, exchange, and the expansion of market in general : The demand for men, like that for any other commodity necessarily regulates the production of men, quickens it when it goes on too slowly and stops it when it advances too fast.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, at times of relative prosperity, when, in his words : '(the demand for labour)' is continuously increasing, the reward of labour must necessarily encourage in such a manner the marriage and multiplication of labourers, as may enable them to supply that continually increasing demand by a continually increasing population.<sup>2</sup> It was this conception of dynamics of population change according to the operation of the law of supply and demand that led Smith to consider the increase of the number of 'inhabitants' of a country to be its most decisive mark of prosperity.<sup>3</sup>

Although, most of the classical political economists shared this extensive formulation of population change, none of them had unanimity in viewing labour transfer as a sign of economic prosperity. Adam Smith peculiarly advanced a theory of labour transfer which was plainly based on the operation of the market : if the quantity of food and necessities determine the 'production of men so must it volume affect their distribution'. This appears from a rising productivity of land, which 'almost in any situation, produces a greater quantity of food than what is sufficient to maintain all the labour necessary for bringing it to market.'<sup>4</sup>

Smith was more concerned with the England of his time. Thereby, his perception and analysis had been moving around classical case of market operation and continuous agricultural advancement in England. In this regard he viewed that 'by the improvement and cultivation of land (due to introduction of fodder/cash cropping such as potato, maize etc, irrigation by making canals) the labour of one family can provide food for two, the labour of half the society becomes sufficient to provide food for the whole. The other half, therefore, at least the greater part of them, can be employed in providing other things, or in satisfying the other wants and fancies of mankind'.<sup>5</sup> He thus provided a legitimate ground for not only possibility but also desirability of channeling the increased powers of labour on the land into other lines of production. Implicit in Smith's theoretical structure of labour transfer as in this passage-are three key issues. Firstly, the rising productivity of labour on the land. To Smith, it was inextricably related to technological progress and associated with that the division of labour. Though, for him, the rate of technological change and its scope in manufacturing unambiguously surpassed that in agriculture, he nevertheless took account of a number of technical advance in English agriculture. The account of net result of these improvements like innovation of fodder crops/cash corps, making and maintaining necessary drains and enclosures which inturn, led to increased production of food with the same amount of land and labour. Moreover, the process which led to improvements in the productive power of labour on the land was accompanied by requisite change in the organisation of production.



Secondly, the notion of 'food surplus' and its 'trade' with the towns occupies a central place in Smith's perception of population change, labour supplies to towns, and the greater 'prosperity of nations'.

There are two ways in which 'food surplus' is linked to Smith's ideas of the division of labour : the individual and the social levels. On the former, he advances the plain observation that 'The desire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the human stomach .... Those, therefore, who have the command of more food than they themselves can consume, are always willing to exchange the surplus'.<sup>6</sup> There after, he projects on to the social plain, what he termed as 'the great commerce of every civilized society'. This very great commerce takes place as the country supplies the town with the means of subsistence and the materials of manufacture. The town repays this supply by the sending back a part of the manufacture produce to the inhabitants of the country .... The division of labour is in this, as in all other cases, advantageous to all the different persons employed in the various occupations into which it is subdivided.<sup>7</sup>

Thereby, the country/town trade, which is itself a product of rising productivity of labour on the land, widens the market, in turn making possible the greater separation and specialization of tasks (division of labour). This sets into motion a process of self-sustained growth and expansion which perpetuates further division of labour and exchange.

Thirdly, Smith's theoretical conception of labour transfer pertained to its mobility or, free circulation of men, 'from employment to employment

and from place to place'. Smith lamented labour immobility in England, 'where it is often more difficult for a poor man to pass the artificial boundaries of a parish than an area of the sea or a ridge of high mountains'.<sup>8</sup>

Despite Smith's vociferous attacks on any institutional impediment in the way of labour mobility, his long term vision of capitalism was highly optimistic. For he was one of the principal representatives of the contemporary emerging bourgeois. That's why he advocated a theory of *Laissez-Fair* for minimal interference of the state in the smooth operation of market and the perennial advancement of capitalist economy.

Although Smith was not explicit on the source of labour transfer from the countryside to urban areas, he left little doubt as to whom he had in mind when he referred to 'the dimension of the number of cottagers and other small occupiers of land : [as] an event which has in every part of Europe been the immediate fore-runner of improvement and better cultivation'.<sup>9</sup>

In this framework labour transfer, too, followed the natural logic of market operation and expansion and manifested its characteristics.

T.R. Malthus, in his *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), shared Smith's concern for food supplies; but rather than stressing the quantity of food. This in turn emanated from a second and more important concern in Malthus : The general conditions governing the 'production' of labour rather than its transfer. In this preoccupation, he developed a general theory of population taking recourse to interplay of forces regulating the relation between labour and its means of subsistence.

He was so aware of increasing population at that time that he even went on to warn that 'the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for men', he further went on to argue that : 'Population, unchecked increases in a geometric ratio. A slight acquaintance with numbers will shew (sic) the immensity of the first power in comparison of the second .... this implies a strong and constantly operating check on population from the difficulty of subsistence .... This natural inequality of the two powers of population, and of production in the earth and that grew law of our nature which constantly keep their effects equal, from the great difficulty that to me appears insurmountable in the way to the perfectibility of society.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, if in Smith it was the rising productivity of labour which propelled labour transfer and economic growth, in Malthus it was the opposite, i.e the want of such productive power, that increased population pressure on the land and arrested future growth potentials. He used the logic of the 'Iron law' to attack 'Poor laws'. Unlike Smith, who had criticized these laws for their checkmating role on the mobility of labour, malthus assailed them for their Lawful impact on population growth.

Malthus, in a passage of his *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (quoted in Meek), stated :

"A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents, and if the society do not want his labour, has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food,

and impart, has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he doesn't work upon the compassion of some of her guests. If these guests get up and make room for him, other intruders immediately appear demanding the same favour."<sup>11</sup>

As Meek has observed, in Malthus, 'not only had the poor no right to relief, but they must also be punished for their poverty'.<sup>12</sup> He waged a relentless campaign against the Poor Laws which in turn exposed particular nature of his theory of population. Despite of controversy-ridden aspect of Malthus's theory of population it remains to prevail alongwith his critics' discussions examining either of the logical or empirical validity of his theory. Thus, we find Malthus was more anxious for increasing population and its adverse effect on forthcoming development of society.

S. Ricardo too didn't make any head way in the direction of discussing labour transfer, for his preoccupation with the 'evils' of overpopulation undermined the same. He attested the essence of Malthusian law of population and used it to formulate a theory of labour supply in the long run. This was based on a mechanism of adjustment between the 'natural price' of labour and its 'market price' (wages). The 'natural price' is that price which is necessary to enable the labourers, one with another, to subsist and to perpetuate their role, without either increase or diminution'. Far from being a psychological minimum, this depends 'on the habits and customs of the people' and, refers

to the different quantities of 'food necessities and convenience of life' in different societies in different points of time, which is required for the upkeep of labourers and their families. 'Market Price' on the other hand, refers to the actual price that labourers receive for their services 'from the natural operation of the proportion of the supply to the demand'.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, Ricardo stated that in the long run 'market-price' would tread towards the 'natural price' of labour as the operation of the law of population (given by Malthus) would ensure that the number of labourers would expand at times of prosperity and diminish under hardship by an amount sufficient to check any real divergence between the two.

There are various points of agreements and disagreements between Malthus and Ricardo. While taking exception to Malthus's utterly pessimistic outlook that saw 'no escape from the weight of his law even for a single country'.<sup>14</sup> Ricardo argued that in countries where fertile land was bountiful, pressure on food supplies could be alleviated by extending the area under cultivation on the one hand, he qualified this law by introducing a distinction between its operation in countries with an abundance of fertile lands and those where all fertile land is under cultivation on the other.<sup>15</sup>

Lastly, Ricardo diverged sharply from Malthus on the important question of rent. Where the latter supposed rent to be a clear gain and a new creation of riches,<sup>16</sup> the former considered the interests of this class to be diametrically opposite to those of capitalists. Such point of variance also seems manifest on the question of the price of grain : the capitalists favoured

a lowering of these (hence of labour costs) via free importation from abroad; while the land lords strongly resisted such a policy.

In the end we can discern that despite a common conception of the mechanism of population change, the classical economists were holding entirely different conceptions of the relative significance of population growth and labour transfer. Adam Smith, who laid emphasis on the rising productivity of labour on the land, was unique in offering an integrated vision of labour transfer as an intrinsic element in the rise of the new industrial order in England. This placed labour transfer firmly in the realm of the growing commercial relations between the town and the country, and presented it as a natural consequence of the market. Whereas, in Malthus and Ricardo, by contrast, a discussion of labour transfer was undermined by preoccupation with the harmful effects of population growth, however, with certain variance.

### **Karl Marx**

Marx's way of analysis has two points of similarity with Smith's approach of analysis and holds various points of departure from classical economists as a whole.

Firstly, Marx too acknowledged rising productivity of labour on the land but turned Malthus on his head by arguing that 'it is not population that presses on productive power but it is productive power that presses on population';<sup>17</sup>

Secondly, Marx too incorporated labour transfer into a wider theory of the development of capitalism.

Nevertheless, his approach differed from Smith's and other classicists' in several important respects. Foremost, Marx's predecessors had largely focused on a 'theory of population'. Marx's attention was primarily directed towards determinants of displacement of labour, term used by Marx instead of using migration or labour transfer from rural to urban areas,<sup>18</sup> under capitalism. Secondly, as against his predecessors, he identified two types of surplus population : absolute and relative. Third point of variance between him and classical economists appears in the former's conception of population pressure against the means of production, and the latter's against the means of subsistence.

Fourthly, he identified three sources of surplus population : latent, floating and stagnant. The latent labour reserve comprised all of those who could potentially move to capitalist enterprises (from rural to urban areas). The floating reserve consisted of the jobless urban proletariat; and the stagnant reserve was made up of those endemically unemployed or underemployed (such as artisans and craftsman). A final point of divergence between Marx and classicists was that although Marx's analysis centred on the 'classic' case in England, he projected the historical character and the social conditioning of the mechanism which governed migration from countryside to urban areas.

In course of discussing displacement of labour he said 'The accumulation of capital presupposes surplus value; surplus value presupposes capitalist production; capitalist production presupposes the pre-existence of considerable masses of capital and the labour power in the hands of producers of

commodities'. This, according to Marx, was made possible by the displacement of labour (i.e., labour migration to cities) resulting from 'the expropriation of the agricultural producers, of the peasants, from the soil'.<sup>19</sup> This expropriation and separation of the peasantry and tenant from the objective conditions of labour directed Marx to study firstly, of the development of modern landed property in the countryside (the so-called primitive accumulation), secondly, expansion of capitalist relations of the production in agriculture and thirdly, to an examination of this laws governing the self-expansion of capital in modern industry.

On primitive accumulation, Marx observes that the immediate producer in agriculture, the labourer can only dispose of his own person after he has ceased to be attached to the soil. This, in turn, presupposes the dissolution of all relations 'in which the workers themselves, the living labour capacities themselves, still belong directly among the objective conditions of production, and are appropriated as such'.<sup>20</sup>

Although taking different forms in different societies, the separation of the peasantry from their lands transforms the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, and turns the immediate producers into wage labourers : 'The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production'.<sup>21</sup>

The 'enclosure movement' in England presents a classic form of expropriation, it was forcible usurpation of communal and semi-communal



lands and their conversion into private plots which deprived a great many peasants of their traditional sources of subsistence. This released sizable portions of the agricultural population from the land, increased their compulsion to labour, and pushed down their wages to levels 'not enough for the absolute necessities of life'.<sup>22</sup>

The separation of these peasants and tenants from the objective conditions of labour such as land and other means of subsistence contributed greatly early capitalist development. However, not all labour release mechanisms take the form of direct or institutional expropriation. Firstly, the expansion of capitalist relations in agriculture pauperises important sections of the peasantry in rural areas. The commodification of means of subsistence and their transformation into material elements of variable capital tends to reduce the socially-necessary labour time required for their production. This happens because the revolution in the conditions of landed property is historically accompanied by extensive reorganisations of production as seen in the adoption of improved methods of culture, greater cooperation, and concentration of the means of production which greatly reduce the demand for labour. While enriching some peasants by changing them into successful commercial farmers, this deprives a great many others of their most essential sources of livelihood. This expansion of capitalist relations in agriculture not only did it allow large scale capitalist agriculture and animal farming to develop, but it also turned small-holding peasants into a mass of rural proletariat, ultimately pushing off the land, and thus, setting the process of rural to urban labour migration in motion. This process was facilitated by the growth of

manufacturing in cities, which, in turn, provided means of escape for those freed from feudal bond and expropriated by large capitalist farmers.

Secondly, the separation of agriculture and industry leads to a process of destruction/transformation of the rural crafts. While the primary function of this process is to extend and deepen the home market, its effects on rural artisans are particularly harsh. It's not only due to expropriation (because it changed the peasantry into wage-labourers) but also due to penetration of capitalist products in countryside which rooted out rural industry (artisans and crafts) and set them in the stagnant form of surplus population who had nothing to subsist themselves but to migrate to urban areas where they could sell their labour power (because due to expansion of capitalist relations of production, labour becomes commodity).

The combined effect of primitive accumulation and the subsequent expansion of capitalism in agriculture is to expand wage relations in the countryside, while at the same time diminishing absolutely the numbers employed in agriculture and setting the process of rural to urban migration in motion. Right now, they become free to sell their labour wherever they expect to get more wages. Ironically, such social freedom made labour dependent on capital as it forced labour into a subordinate position in its production relations with capital.<sup>23</sup> This continuous flow of migration from rural to urban areas creates a population 'of greater extent than suffices for the average needs of the self expansion of capital'.<sup>24</sup>

In modern industry, on the other hand, the increase in the organic



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composition of capital leads to the generation of a relative surplus population in its floating form. This happens because, despite an absolute increase in the size of variable capital its relative surplus (compared to constant capital) diminishes progressively in the course of accumulation. Given that, demand for labour is determined by variable constituent of capital alone, a fall in the latter would give rise to a mass of 'relatively redundant labourers' at the industrial pole of accumulation, thus constituting 'a disposable reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost'.<sup>25</sup>

Once reserve army created, it takes on three important functions in the process of capitalist development. Firstly, it comes to constitute labour reservoir on which capitalism relies for its 'unexpected contingencies'. In this respect, reserve army makes it possible for capital to draw its required labour through changing phases of the economic cycle.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, the ready availability of a mass of labourers in reserve exerts a regulatory role in the determination of capitalist wages. These are determined not by the absolute number of workers (as Malthus envisaged), but by the division of the working class into an active and a reserve army 'by the extent to which it is now absorbed, now set free'.<sup>27</sup>

Thirdly, the ready formation of a 'light infantry' of workers-deployed at times of advance and sacrificed under retreat, increases pressure on workers outside the reserve to yield to the demands and conditions imposed by capital.

In this way we find cityward migration, as Marx himself argued, created a consumption oriented home market, a demand for the capitalist farmer's produce as well as industrial goods and commodities which were previously produced by the labourers themselves in the countryside. Migration also stabilized, or even depressed wages in cities, thus allowing the generation of economic surplus (surplus value) in the hands of their employers.<sup>28</sup>

In Sum, Marx examined migration in terms of its production roles. He treated migrants as embodiment of labour and producers of economic surplus, whose destiny was determined by the capitalist demand for labour. Migration surfaced as a systematic, conditioned response to socioeconomic formation and transformations resulting from the advanced process of material production characterized by primitive accumulation followed by capitalist farming in rural areas and increased concentration of capital (manufacturing) in urban areas. Thus increasing spatial segmentation of agriculture and manufacture (or rural-urban), together with concomitant economic changes forced migration flows to urban areas.

With the assertion that Marx's conceptualization is indeed relevant and, if properly formulated, offers a sound theoretical basis for analysing contemporary migration in underdeveloped societies of which India is a unit part. In the chapter four, with the help of Marxist understanding, a structural framework of migration is developed, citing Indian case for theoretical assertion.

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## CHAPTER 2

### NEOCLASSICAL THEORISTS

In this chapter we will, foremost, discuss Ravenstein's laws of rural to urban migration and thereafter our attention will be to dichotomise recent literatures into two parts. In the first part we will find that the decade of 1950 was reigned by the dominant understanding of a prevalence of labour surplus in rural areas, a significant part of which could be drawn into the modern urban industrial sector from the same labour surplus traditional agricultural sector without incurring any loss to the latter. Whereas in the second part we will find that in the subsequent decades, by contrast, the arguments and theoretical justifications for rural to urban migration were brought into question in the face of rapid population growth and rising urban unemployment due to continuous flow of migration and in turn diminishing generation of employment opportunity in urban center. In this phase attention is shifted from redistributing migrant people to controlling its production, diverted attention from removing labour to keeping it on the land, and laying emphasis on rural development so as to divert the rural-urban flow to rural areas.

We can trace out theoretical explanation of rural to urban migration as before as 1880s in Ravenstein's laws of migration.<sup>1</sup> Ravenstein discussed



migration from an eco-behavioural perspective as an individual decision-making process. In which economic motive plays a paramount role in the decision to migrate from areas of low opportunity to areas of high opportunity. Probably, the most characteristic tenet of his laws of migration and analytical approach is the one, in which asserted that no migration "currents can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to 'better' themselves in material aspects".<sup>2</sup> Migration was viewed as a free choice intended to maximise utility out of "scarce resources". He focussed on providing an economic behavioural explanations of why people moved, utilising the "methodological individualist" (see Meilink 1978) approach. While such an approach is useful and provides insights into migration behaviour, it overlooks the need for a commensurate understanding of the prevailing spatial and institutional arrangements of the economy, which condition people's behaviour including migration.

During 1950s, interest in surplus labour and labour transfer was rooted in a wider concern with the sources of economic growth in developing societies.

Nurkse was among the first to cast overpopulation and surplus labour explicitly in terms of the problems associated with capital formation in the developing societies. He utilised the concept of 'disguised unemployment' to describe a situation where 'in technical terms the marginal product of labour over a wide range is zero', employing that 'even with unchanged techniques of production a large part of the population engaged in agriculture could be removed without reducing agricultural output.'<sup>2</sup> The saving potential concealed

in such rural underemployed would thus become apparent when transferred workers were set to work on capital projects: aggregate output would expand without creating undue pressure on food supplies.

Lewis, who has been widely cited in course of discussing the relationship between savings, capital formation and growth. He has registered his name by writing an article in 1954 which is considered as a classic of modern development theory.

The model propounded by Lewis comprised two sectors: a low productivity, subsistence sector, and a high productivity, capitalist sector. The former characterized by 'disguised unemployment' of labour with 'negligible zero or even negative' marginal productivity consisted not only of agriculture as is often thought but included also petty retail trading, domestic service and a whole range of other casual jobs.<sup>4</sup> Here, individuals maintain customary rights determined by the 'code of ethical behaviour' (as in domestic service) or by the average productivity of labour (as on family farms).

On the contrary, in the capitalist sector, where profit maximisation motives prevail, workers are employed only up to the point where the wage rate equals the marginal productivity of labour. The minimum to these wages is set by what people can earn outside that sector (i.e. what they would be able to consume if they retained their traditional occupations). Although this sets the floor, actual wages in the capitalist sector have to be higher usually by some thirty percent partly to allow for the higher cost of living in towns, and partly to induce subsistence workers to leave their traditional activities.

Set in this framework, migration of labour from the subsistence-sector, low-paid to the capitalist sector, high-paid increases capitalist production as well as the capitalist profit. Underlying assumption is that profit accumulated will be fully re-invested in the same sector which will further create a demand for surplus labour and will perpetuate migratory motion from rural to urban areas.

The enormous influence of this model in shaping development thinking and policy in the subsequent years was rooted in the very nature of its contribution : the identification of a relatively 'cost free' path to industrial growth.

Lewis model was further developed by Fei and Ranis. In their dual economy framework, too, agriculture is characterized by the existence of surplus-labour described as parasitic, redundant or disguised unemployed whereas in the industrial sector, workers are employed only up to the point where wages equal their marginal productivity. Moreover, the minimum at which labour can be employed is now set by the constant institutional wage in the food sector. This, Fei and Ranis argued, is determined by the entire non economic nexus of mores and relationships; but in practice it is related more or less to the average productivity of the agricultural labour.<sup>5</sup>

Fei and Ranis envisage three stages of labour transfer and its contribution to the development of capitalist sector. In first stage, the marginal product of labour is zero. In second stage the marginal product of labour rises to a positive level, for labour migrated from agricultural sector to capitalist

sector. Further transfer of labourers, who now make a positive contribution to production, would lower the volume of agricultural output and push up the price of subsistence commodities. Finally, stage three is attained with complete commercialization of labour in both sectors: workers receive wages equal to the marginal productivity of labour.

However, we find that Lewis whose principal objective was to explain the reason for the rising share of savings in national income, relied on a more flexible analytical framework in which the tapping of 'unlimited' supplies of subsistence labour provided the basis for the self-expansion of the modern capitalist sector. The mechanism governing this process as well as the social prerequisites for its successful implementation were left largely unexplored.

In the marginalist formulation provided by Fei and Ranis, explicit concern with policy making prevailed but their technicist approach to development was based on rigid institutional assumption about the production and distribution of the surplus product in the food sector.

In 1950s and early 1960s prevalent assumption was that the 'Migration is the vehicle to bring industrial manpower need in cities into correspondence with the surplus labour of rural areas.' Migration was thus assumed to have a positive effect on national development as it provided an outlet for a productive utilisation of underutilized labour. This would raise the capital stock whose reinvestment would generate higher demand for more labour, ultimately creating a labour consumer market and stimulating more production: a process which can be characterized as "positive cumulative causation".<sup>6</sup>

Using a similar logic but looking through a different mirror G. Myrdal countered this argument. He stressed that the movement of labour and capital in the same direction generated the process of negative "cumulative causation", thus producing "backwash effects" in rural areas :

The localities and regions where economic activity is expanding will attract net immigration from other parts of the country. As migration is always selective, at least with respect to the migrant's age, this movement by itself tends to favour the rapidly growing communities and disfavour the others<sup>6</sup>.

Myrdal's argument formed a conceptual basis for the "center periphery" paradigm. To him, while destination areas grew, source regions experienced underdevelopment and impoverishment in the process. The Myrdal model provided a strong rationale for government intervention in the economic growth process to counter the tendency toward the spatial polarization of development. This intervention was carried out in the name of planning, purportedly to achieve "economic growth with social justice" and regional balance. It was the Lewis model alongwith presbisch's (1950) emphasis on national industrialization to counter import dependency, however, that served as the basis for most economic plans of the 1950s and 1960s, which emphasised urban industrial growth. This policy accentuated the separation between labour (rural) and capital (urban) and generated rural-urban migration as a common socio-demographic phenomena.

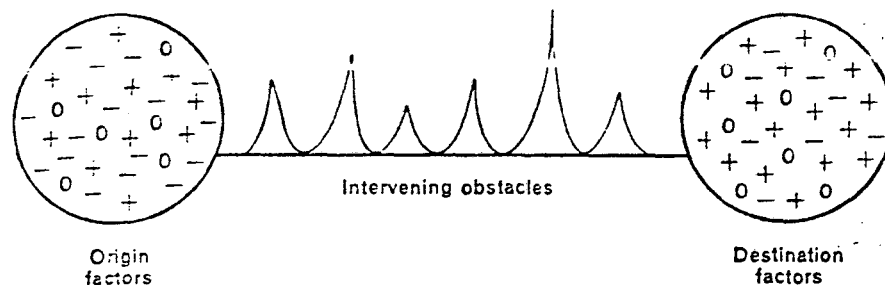
Increasing tides of cityward migration and growing urban unemployment and underdevelopment led to a new generation of studies in the 1960s, notably

the works of sjaastad (1962), Lee (1966), Todaro (1969) and Harris and Todaro (1970). Contrary to Lewis' and Myrdal's paradigms based on classical economics new studies adopted a neoclassical economic behavioural approach.

Sjaastad's human investment theory of migration treats the decision to migrate as an investment decision involving costs and returns distributed over time.<sup>7</sup> The returns are divided into money and non-money components. Although Sjaastad takes into account money as well as non-money costs and benefits, yet in calculating net returns to migration he includes only money costs and non-psychic benefits. He assumes that in deciding to move, migrants tend to maximize their net real life-span incomes and they have atleast a rough idea of what their life-span income streams would be in the present place of residence as well as in the destination area and of the costs involved in migration.

E.S. Lee developed a general schema in 1966 into which a variety of spatial movement can be placed. He divides forces exerting influence on migrant perception into "pluses" and "minuses". The former pull individuals towards them, the latter drive them away. There are "Zeros" also, in which the competing forces are, more or less, evenly balanced. These forces associated with the area of origin and the area of destination are, in their own way, governed by personal factors which affect individual thresholds and facilitate or retard migration.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 1. Origin and destination factors and intervening obstacles in migration



In this diagram (figure 1), every origin and destination area is assumed to have positive forces (the "pluses" in figure 1) which hold people within area or "pull" others to it ; negative forces (the "minuses" in figure 1) which repel or "push" people from the area; or zero forces (the "zeros" in figure 1) which on balance exert neither an attractive nor a repellent force and towards which people are therefore essentially indifferent. The effect of each of these forces will vary with the personality as well as the other individual traits of different people.

The sets of positive, negative and by and large balanced forces ("pluses", "minuses" and "zeros") May be defined differently at both origin and source for different individuals, i.e., one man's plus may be another's zero or even a negative. But there is a general sets of factor towards which most of the people tend to respond in the same way (Job opportunities, Wage differentials, expectation of better amenities and so on).

However, uncertainty, expectations and unexpected risks are some of the decisive element in the migration process which affect the 'perceptions' of destination pluses and minuses.

Meanwhile, Lee introduces the concept of "intervening obstacles" set between all origin and destination points. Few intervening obstacles may provide minor friction (transportation cost, distance, all season roads, etc.). While others may be insurmountable (physical controls over population movements, quotas, by race or national origin).

But in Lee there is no clear differentiation of the model that which plus factors at both origin and destination are quantitatively the most important to different groups and classes of people. Nor does the existence of intervening obstacles help us to know which are major and which are minor. Lee's theory does not provide insights into possible "trade-offs" between plus and minus factors nor the range of possible migration responses to alternative in the magnitude and / or the sign of plus and minus factors.<sup>9</sup> This model overlooks role of any socio-economic and political factors in the migration process and he too identifies migration as the outcome of only an individual's decision to migrate.

In the same decade Todaro resorted to the rationality of individual migrant to explain the forces behind migration, for yet no clear cut theorisation had come up pertaining core questions like why does one decide to migrate, what are basic determinants of migration and so on. Todaro elaborated formal model of migration decision-making in which individuals respond to an evaluation of private costs and benefits of a likely move to urban areas. This evaluation is based on two sets of considerations : the magnitude of rural /urban wage/income differentials and the likelihood of securing a higher paid urban job. If they expect a period of unemployment, before they succeed in obtaining urban employment, this will be duly reflected in a lower expected (rather than actual) earnings in towns. But as long as the "present value" of the net stream of expected urban income over the migrant's planning horizon exceeds that of the expected rural incomes the decision to migrate is justifiable.<sup>10</sup>



Analytically, these studies assume a two sector rural-urban economy arguing that migrants make a rational decision by moving in the direction where ever they expect to get the highest benefits / wages, identify some independent variables such as wage / income differentials; employment opportunities; utility maximization and expectations which have been working as motivating force.

Viewed from this perspective, therefore, migration appears as a succession of movement along an 'equilibrium path' by individuals, who aim to maximise their lifetime or permanent income. Thus basic thrust, these models were possessed with, was to present migration as an individual's rational choice.

The Harris and Todaro model had significant policy implication in that the concept of the expected urban wage is an instrument of explaining the occurrence of both urban unemployment and rural-urban migration at the same time.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the model served as an intellectual justification for state intervention in situations where urban migration was not considered socioeconomically optimal, and laid the logical foundation for rural and regional development to counter urban migration streams.

The interest which has since been generated by this probabilistic approach is best explained by the strength of its paradoxical conclusion : government policies designed to ameliorate urban employment opportunities may infact exacerbate the tide of rural to urban population flow; more appropriate policy would have to take account of improvements in rural incomes or, indeed, a cut in (or a slower growth of) urban wages.<sup>12</sup>

These models did offer an alternative explanation of the reasons for migration, however, missed the most interesting aspects of this process by reducing it to a technical relationship between expected income differentials and the individual's propensity to migrate. This, as we shall discuss, stripped off its inherently contradictory character, historical specificity and richness of forms.

Neomarxist-dependency authors criticise these models by arguing that these models regarding migrants are "atomistic, ahistorical free social agents", which do not accurately reflect the historical reality involved in the process of migration.

Quite clearly, individuals migrate for a number of different causes... Nothing is easier than to compile lists of such 'push' and 'pull' factors and present them as a theory of migration. The customary survey reporting percentages endorsing each such 'cause' might be useful as a sort of first approximation to the question of who migrates. In no way, however, does it explain the structural factors leading to a patterned movement of known size and direction, over an extensive period of time.<sup>13</sup>

The major shortcomings of these models are that explanations of migration are based on the postulates of free choice and economic rationality which veil the much wider reality and socio-spatial context of migration, i.e., how capitalist development and the social relations of production interact to produce and perpetuate migration.

The rationality of migration behaviour asserts "a complementary derivative and dependent rationality"<sup>14</sup> is that it is a direct function of the prevailing socio-economic structure which in most underdeveloped countries is invariably entrenched in the political-economic control exercised by the mutually beneficial alliance between the ruling national compradors and international monopoly capital.<sup>15</sup> Migration behaviour is thus a manifestation of, and a necessary response to, the social and spatial arrangements of the economy in which the state plays a paramount role.

Moreover, the fact that migrants move and use migration as a means to attain their ends does not tell us much about the process of migration, but only about its forms., something that is secondary. Without a careful socio-spatial dialectical analysis, one cannot gain more than proximate or partial explanations of migration. Aforeseen models only reveal migrants' subjective reasons which generate and mould such behaviour. True, migrants are the sole agents of migration but only so far as they are the personification of particular class relations within the prevailing socio-economic formation.

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CHAPTER 3

**NEOMARXIST-DEPENDENCY FORMULATIONS  
OF  
MIGRATION**

In contrast to most of the theories in relation to rural to urban migration propounded by classical and neo-classical economists (conventional political economists), who conceived migration as an amalgamation of individual movement with specific reasons and motives, neomarxist-dependency authors conceive migration as a socio-economic process which is conditioned by the externally superimposed structural and material forces.

In this chapter we will discuss dependency of the most of the Third World countries on developed countries (core) in changing course of history and its sway over periphery, causing underdevelopment (unequal and uneven development) and migration from rural to urban areas.

Neomarxists primarily concentrate on colonial-capitalist penetration into what is generally described as the domestic mode (s) of production in underdevelopment countries. It has been argued that global colonial expansion following the industrial revolution was directly linked to (a) overproduction/under consumption, the falling rate of profits and hence a crisis in capital accumulation and (b) a growing mass of what Marx called the "industrial

reserve army" or "relative Surplus-population" and consequent poverty and social conflicts between capital and labour.<sup>1</sup> Colonialism and colonial migration were viewed as a salvation to these problems for colonialism, to apply Harvey's (1982) phrase, became an external "spatial fix"<sup>2</sup> to Europe's crisis of overproduction and capital accumulation.

In Lenin's (1960) view on the one hand colonialism neutralised competition from other industrial powers by assuring total control over both the raw materials and markets of the colony, on the other it became an outlet for excess capital whose investment in the colonies produced high profits because of their scarce capital, low wages, and cheap raw materials.

Yet, as Marx noted, capital could not be utilized profitably-nor could raw materials be exploited-without the power of labour, without first creating "the social dependence of labour on the capitalists" in the colonies. Hence the key to capital utilization and accumulation was labour exploitation which required "the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil".<sup>3</sup> Various mechanisms were devised to produce (and reproduce) streams of labour migration to serve the monopoly interest of colonial capital concentrated in cities and to some extent mining enclaves and plantation areas. The mechanisms ranged from the forced slave trade to such institutional manipulation as land-grabbing and taxation. We can cite various examples like, in Africa levying 'poll tax', in Egypt "feudal tax farming" and in South Africa we find there was a well established institutionalized system of labour reserves called "Bantustans".

One common outcome of European encroachment no matter who the colonial power was, what form it took and where it occurred-was the emergence of a colonial socio-economic formation in the colonies. As a result the economies of the colonies became characterized by both social and spatial division which were necessary for sustaining labour migration.

Some what contrary to Marx's expectation that European capitalist penetration would dismantle the domestic mode(s) of production, the economies of the colonies exhibited two distinct economic entities : (a) a few "cores" (cities, plantation, and mining enclaves) where the dominant mode of production was capitalist typified by wage relations : these areas were the migration focal points and (b) a vast periphery which was characterized by subsistence production; the periphery was turned into the producer and reproducer of cheap labours. Colonial state policies regarding migration were, however quite specific according to Wallerstein :

The policies of the colonial states (and of the restructured semi-colonial states in those incorporated zones that were not formally colonized) seemed designed precisely to promote the emergence of the very semi-proletarian households which as we have seen, made possible the lowest possible wage-level threshold.<sup>4</sup>

That is colonial policies forced rural households to move and engage in wage labour in cores, while ensuring that labour migrants remained socially and economically tied to their villages (and did not move to cores permanently). This led to the emergence of what can be called semi-proletariat migration.



### **Semi-proletariat Migration**

It is typified by circular movement. Some members of the family were forced to rely on wage labour and others on domestic farming in order to support the whole household. For instance, in Zambia the colonial state instituted a differed wage scheme. Deductions were made from migrants' wages which were sent to them when they returned to their villages. This policy was devised to ensure that migrants worker did return to their villages and that their wives and family members remained behind in the rural areas during their absence to carry on subsistence production.<sup>5</sup> Such a policy fulfilled atleast three objective : (a) production of cheap labour in the peripheral domestic sector, (b) minimization of social cost of labour in the colonial sector and (c) perpetuation of labour as transitory that is dependent on both wage-labouring in the colonial sector and the domestic production in the source.

Most migrants were thus unable to breakaway from what is known as the circular "migratory network", i.e. close ties between migrants and their source areas, and become fully incorporated into the capitalist sector as its permanent labour force. In essence, migration becomes a channel through which surplus value embodied in migrants' labour power is transferred to the capitalist sector (core) from the periphery.

The colonial state's migration policy created a shortage of productive labours within the domestic economy. Such labour scarcity became instrumental in the colony's agricultural underdevelopment as farming became the "domain

of women, the young, aged and ill, and other 'unproductive' persons" whom the colonial state prohibited from migrating with their productive adults.<sup>6</sup> While this type of migration allowed the capitalist sector to take full advantage of migrants during their most productive years, it did not have to bear the costs of raising them through their non or least productive boyhood and supporting them during their old age. Such tasks and costs were assigned to domestic (peripheral) economies which derived little benefit from their adult migrants. The colonial economy also systematically destroyed local handicraft industries, the backbone of both the local forces of production and primitive accumulation, to ensure its monopoly and a regular flow of labour. Such destruction and underdevelopment disintegrated the means of small properties and subsistence operators for their existence hindered the geographical mobility of and hence the creation of stable, controlled labour reserves in areas where capital was concentrated (Marx 1967). The net result : migration was sustained as an on-going process. Harvey carries Marx's argument one step further : "The more mobile the labourer the more easily capital can adopt new labour processes and take advantage of superior locations. The free geographical mobility of labour power appears a necessary condition for the accumulation of capital."<sup>7</sup> Such structural transformations are at the root of the contemporary process of migration in today's underdeveloped societies. As R. Cohen discussed in Swindell :

Transformation of the domestic economy led to chains of proletarianisation and peasantization of the indigenous

population which in many cases resulted in the creation of landless rural dwellers who could only meet the cost demands made upon them by colonial authorities through labour migration. Thus becoming the embryonic proletariat.<sup>8</sup>

The above discourse aptly manifests the Sway capital has over labour in terms of its mobility and employment. The position of labour would be otherwise if they would have been organized which is unlikely scenario in the Third World countries.

Amin (1974), specifically in his historical and contemporary analysis, asserts that the roles migrants fulfil are conditioned by, and depend on, the distribution of capital. He further argues that the causes of migration can't be separated from its consequences since both are the result of the same process. Migration is a product of unequal development, but also perpetuates it as it undercuts the development of local productive forces by removing the most productive segment of the population. This contributes to underdevelopment which, in turn promotes and propagates migration. Thus goes the vicious cycle between migration and underdevelopment.

In the same vein, Portes argues that "labour migration, like related exchanges, does not occur as an external process between two separate entities, but as a part of the internal dynamics of the same overarching world capitalist system."<sup>9</sup>

Most of the Third World countries got independence in the post-2nd war period from the yoke of colonial powers. The latter had a singular goal

that is to transfer their crisis of capital accumulation to, and drain out wealth from, the Third World countries. So as to realise this goal, colonial powers made an alliance with feudal lords, if it (feudalism) was non-existent or in embryonic stage. Colonial powers did their best to intensify feudalism and thereby created an intermediary class as shock absorber. The alliance between production for the capitalist market and the pre-capitalist relations of production resulted in intensified exploitation for the peasants. The combination of low wages and extra economic coercion through feudalism resulted in low prices for the commodities sold on the world market. We find that capitalism, in the third world countries if exists, was not a logical growth out of pre-capitalism via capitalist colonial mode and thus didn't displace previous modes.<sup>10</sup>

### **Contemporary Forms of Dependency**

At the time of independence these states were devoid of capital and advanced technology. What they had; cheap labour, land and natural resources. To be developed they had to have capital and technology for which they had to take resort to their old colonial masters, and they did. Now in changed world a new kind of relationship evolved core-periphery relationship, core countries are capital and technology wielding countries and peripheral countries are embodied with cheap labour, land and natural resources. Now peripheral areas have been incorporated into the world system dominated by technologically advanced capitalist countries. The latter have their own terms and conditions which dictate the third world countries and subjugate them

per se. Underdevelopment is thus the outcome of the logic of international division of labour, which subjects the periphery to metropolitan control. And this very Underdevelopment produces and perpetuates migration.

The chief theorists of the new dependency school are Cardoso, Faletto and Dos Santos who discussed on changing nature of dominance and dependency in post-second World War period. Cardoso and Faletto argue that the analysis of situation of local capitalism in developing countries largely financed through international economic organisations like IMF, IBRD (World Bank) resulting in new social and political relations of dominance which has led to the 'new dependency' theory. Dos Santos who analyses this new dependency largely in terms of increasing investment of multinational corporations (MNCs) in the dependent periphery. He further says that this dependency is :

In the first place, the need to conserve the agrarian or mining export structure generates a combination between more advanced economic centres that extract surplus value from the more backward economic sectors, and also between internal "metropolitan" centres and internal interdependent "colonial" centres. The unequal and combined character of capitalist development at the international level is reproduced internally in an acute form. In the second place, the industrial and technological structure responds more closely to the interests of the multinational corporations than to internal development

needs .... In the third place, the same technological, and economic financial concentration of the hegemonic economies is transferred without substantial alteration to very different economies and societies, giving rise to a highly unequal productive structure, a high concentration of incomes, underutilization of installed capacity, intensive exploitation of existing markets concentrated in large cities, etc.<sup>11</sup>

Some what similar kind of view is given by Cardoso and Falleto (1979) when they argue that MNCs do produce industrialisation but distort the economies of the host countries by forcing an uneven pattern of income distribution to create a limited market for the goods produced. In such an unequal and uneven development which is centered in cities, wage labourers are bound to migrate towards these development enclaves.

In todays changed international situation when peripheral areas have been incorporated into the world-system dominated by Core countries, embodied with advance technology and immense capital, whose penetration creates a series of spatial, sectoral, and class contradictions in the peripheries. Given such contradictions, migration appears less as a series of discrete individual decisions to move towards cities than as a process by which human population take advantage of economic opportunities distributed differently across space.<sup>12</sup>

In the concluding analysis the neomarxist perspective shows that migration is a direct result, and cause of the peripheralization of

underdeveloped societies and the international division of labour orchestrated by monopoly capital. Logically, then as international capital penetration into these societies deepens, their labour migratory process intensifies, moving from an initial stage of low migration to increasing pressure for more and more migration. But migration, once forced or induced becomes a self-perpetuating and self-regulating process of dependency. It emerges as a necessary economic activity, a kind of unavoidable tradition in the face of underdevelopment (uneven development) and rapid population growth.

Such a socio-historical analysis is revealing and valuable; yet this analysis is inapt to unveil and answer the questions of contemporary rural to urban migration in underdeveloped societies. Its preoccupation with the role of external capitalist penetration in migration has overlooked the internal economic structure and dynamic forces that are behind today's on going migration in most of the third world countries. Certainly the role of colonial and neo-colonial penetration has its impact but being only satisfied with its role is something like overlooking the propound reality.

By now it becomes necessary to conduct a careful investigation of the crucial roles played by the dependent state [using Carnoy's (1984) phrase] in order to get a clear understanding of the contemporary process of labour migration in underdeveloped countries.

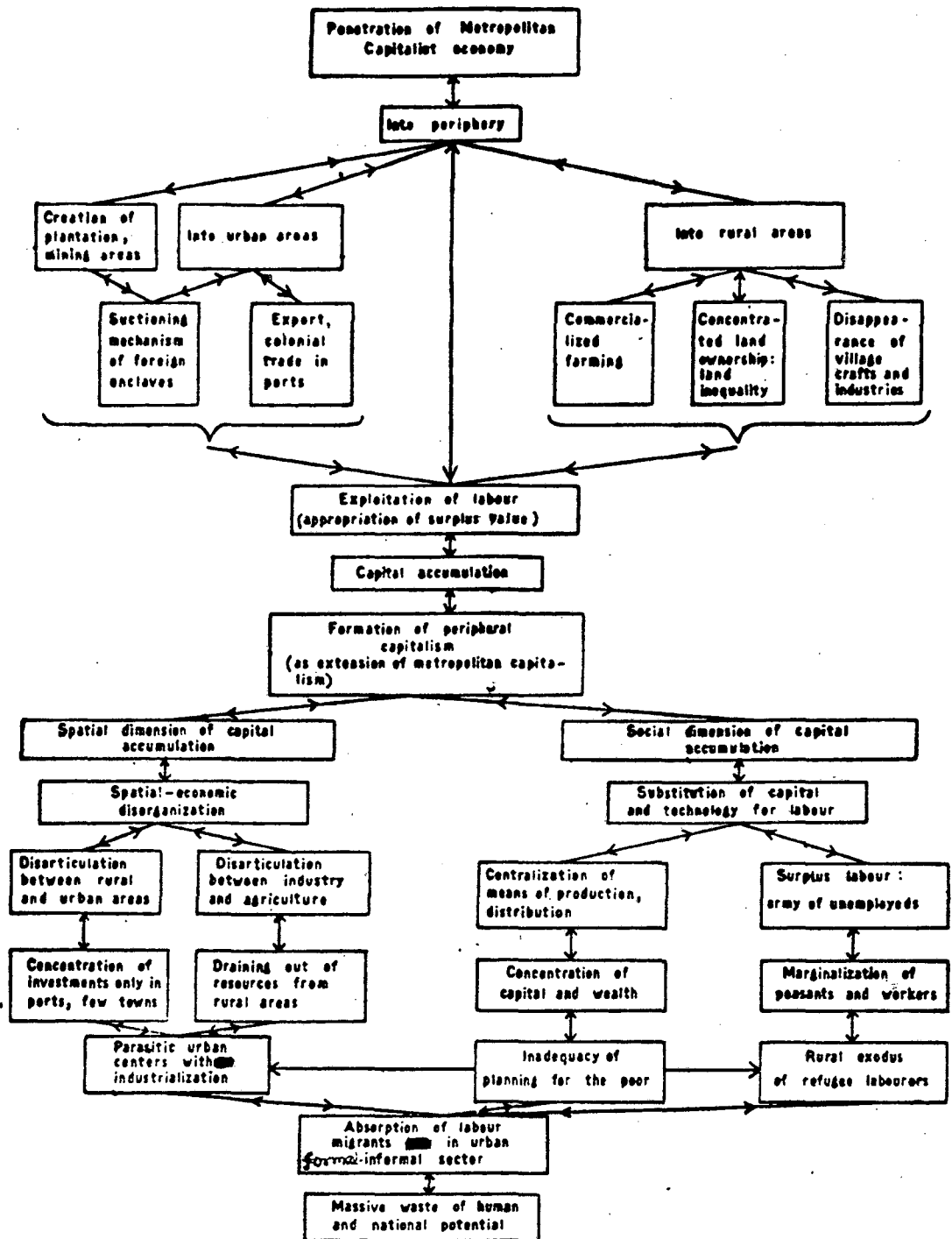


Figure 1. A model of formation of underdevelopment, spatial-economic disorganization and labour migration



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## CHAPTER 4

### A STRUCTURAL THEORY OF MIGRATION

The purpose of this chapter is to develop as well as to validate a structural theory of migration with taking recourse to Indian case as a unit of analysis. An attempt is made here to trace the causes of migration in the socioeconomic conditions of the Indian countryside. We will divide this chapter into two parts. In the first part our emphasis will be on existing social relations of production in India and in the last part on uneven geographical development. Though the uneven development process is not independent of the social relations of production it is treated here separately because the evolving spatial structure and relations are the key actors that induce migration by geographically separating capital (the employer) from capital dependent labour.

#### **Social Relations of production and Migration**

In the process of production people enter into definite social relations of production, in which they occupy certain position and perform certain functions. Labour migrants are an integral part of such relations and, as such, they are viewed not as ahistorical individuals but in terms of their class positions and production roles which are generally fixed.

For any population to remain economically viable (i.e., ability to support, and socially reproduce, itself) it has to participate in the process of material production in some way. People economic viability depends on an ability to exercise the means of production in their possession. But such an ability is not independent of the existing class structure and property relation because control of productive resources almost automatically implies control of economic processes, including social surplus appropriation mechanism<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, economic viabilities of different classes vary in according to class roles and positions, along with availability of economic opportunities within a given locality. And such economic viabilities greatly influence the geographical mobility of labourer from rural areas to urban centers.

Since the changes in the relations of production invariably affect economic viabilities, it is important to first analyze what triggers changes in these relations and how these changes influence labour migration? In the Marxist theory of socioeconomic transformation the social relations of production and the forces of production occupy a prominent place. For Marx maintained, a social order never perishes before all the productive forces have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the womb of the old society<sup>2</sup>.

Now our attention shifts to Indian case. The Indian state has played a key role in bringing about the intended changes that have taken place in the agrarian relations of production after independence. Indian state set up

committees to formulate an agrarian reforms policy. In 1947 itself a congress Economics Reforms Committee was set up which had among its major tasks the formulation of an agrarian reforms policy. In 1949, again, another Committee, namely the congress Agrarian Reforms Committee was constituted. Infact the recommendation of the latter influenced the agrarian reforms policy of the state more than those of any previous Committee. On the recommendation of the congress Agrarian Reforms Committee. Indian state has implemented agrarian reforms, however, half heartedly which can be classified under three Categories (a) abolition of intermediaries, (b) tenancy reforms, and (c) ceiling in land holdings. It will be useful to look at the implementation of the reforms in each of these categories Separately.

**a) Abolition of Intermediaries**

Laws were enacted for the abolition of intermediaries soon after independence and were implemented in a way that the process was largely completed by 1960. The Indian state willed to bring the cultivators directly under itself and so it did. No less than a crore of Cultivators were released from the burden and control of the multilayered intermediaries. Henceforth they paid their taxes directly to the state.

However, the intermediaries were not expropriated completely. They were given handsome compensations, the burden of which was born by the peasantry.

More importantly, these intermediaries were allowed to retain large chunks of land as their private property in the name of 'self-cultivation'. For

example the Zamindars and other intermediaries were to keep all the Sir and Khudkasht land for self-cultivation under the provision of the Zamindari abolition. And this was not all tenants were evicted on a large scale and the land thus acquired was shown as Sir and Khudkasht land. There had been wide debates before the Zamindari laws were promulgated and implemented and invariably these were sufficiently long time gaps between promulgation and implementation of the laws. This gave enough time to the intermediary landlords to evict tenants from large parts of land. All sorts of coercion, intimidation and violence were used for this purpose. Furthermore, there was no ceiling at that time on land holding. So the landlords had no legal limit to how much land they could keep for self-cultivation. All this amounted to continuation in large measures of concentration of land in the hands of landlords. This paved the way for developing capitalists relations in Indian agriculture with the erstwhile Zamindar and other intermediaries forming the dominant part of the agrarian capitalist class in the Zamindari areas.<sup>3</sup>

**b) Tenancy Reforms**

Tenancy reforms have been among those parts of the agrarian reforms which have been aborted more often than they have been implemented. Most of the states enacted tenancy laws during the 1950s and all these laws had similar objectives. They ostensibly aimed at providing security of tenure to the tenants, fixing fair rent, allowing right to resume land for self-cultivation from the tenants upto a limited area and conferring ownership right on the tenants of the land which could not be resumed by the land lords under the

laws. But most of these objectives remain unfulfilled in large measures even today.

The most clear examples of non-implementation of tenancy reforms are in those states where tenancy has been formally prohibited. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka are the major states which have cleared tenancy irrelevant. Tenants in these states cannot derive any benefit from the tenancy laws as they are not recognised as tenants.

The pretext of voluntary surrender of land by the tenants have been and are still widely used to evict them through coercion and intimidation.

The provision of resumption of land for personal cultivation has been extremely used to evict tenants or to threaten them with eviction if they insisted on fixing of fair rent or demanded occupancy rights.

In many states such as Bihar, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh there are no legislations for conferring ownership rights on tenants. In the states, which have such legislations the laws are either not enforced or they have been framed in such a manner that substantial portions of tenants are left outside its purview. Also, in most of the states, it is required that the tenant must be in continuous occupation of the land for a given number of years before he can claim eligibility for conferment of ownership rights. This provision acts as an effective instrument in the hands of the landlord to prevent the tenant from claiming ownership by discontinuing tenancy in reality or simply in papers. The landlords often resort to rotating tenants from plot to plot and from year to year in order to escape the danger of losing

ownership. The landlords have been afraid to loose their land and have reclaimed large parts of it in the name of self-cultivation. In 1950-51, 35.7 percent of total area of operational land holdings accounted for leased in land which in 1981-82 came down to 7.47 percent (National sample survey 37th Round Data). The erstwhile tenants have suffered and their proletarianisation has increased. the point here is that tenancy has reduced consequently and as a result, the agrarian relations have undergone a significant change.<sup>4</sup>

**c) Ceiling on Land-holding**

The congress party in its numerous commission reports had pledged redistribution of land on the basis of "Land to the tiller" principle and later on various planning commission documents recommended land reform through the land ceiling legislations. But this remains the least implemented part of the agrarian reforms, so much so that a meagre one percent of the net operated area had been actually redistributed as a result of implementing the ceiling laws till 1986 (see Table-1). The ceiling laws were enacted in two phases. The first phase of the ceiling laws were enacted in late fifties and early sixties following the recommendations of the Planning Commission panel in land reforms of 1955 and the guidelines laid down later by the second Five year Plan.<sup>5</sup> The Panel on Land Reforms had recommended ceiling laws in order to meet four objectives; to meet the wide spread desire to possess land, to reduce the inequalities in agricultural income and to enlarge the sphere of self-employment. The Panel defined family holding on the criterion that it

should yield a gross income of Rs. 1,600 or a net income of Rs. 1,200 per annum and recommended three times the family holding as the ceiling for an average family of five members. For families with more than five members one additional family holding was allowed upto a maximum six family holding. Furthermore the panel recommended to exempt a number of categories of land from the ceiling laws. Sugarcane forms, orchards, plantation of tea, coffee and rubber, special forms such as cattle breeding and dairy form etc were among the categories of land exempted from ceiling legislation. It should also be noted that whatever, if any, land could be acquired after all these definitions and exemptions the landlords had to be paid compensation for this surplus land.

The second five year plan laid further guide lines about various aspects of the ceiling. But the lands of ceiling were put so high that there was not going to be much surplus available even if the laws were to be implemented honestly and efficiently. The ceiling levels ranged from 22 to 274 acres in Andhra Pradesh, 22 to 336 acres in Rajasthan 10 to 132 acres in Gujarat, 27 to 216 acres in Karnataka, 30 to 60 acres in Punjab and Haryana, 18 to 126 acres in Maharashtra so on. These high ceilings were fixed on Individual basis and not on the family basis in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Only in Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan the ceiling were put on the basis of considering the family as an unit. Bihar and Madhya Pradesh recognised even those land transfers which were made after enforcement of the Bill.<sup>6</sup>

The second phase of land ceiling laws started with the setting up of



Central Land Reforms Committee in August 1971 and a High Powered Committee in June 1972. The recommendations made by these committees were reviewed in Chief Ministers' conference on ceilings on Agricultural Holdings in July, 1972. These recommendations wipe out shortcomings of previous one. But all these recommendations remain without success<sup>7</sup>. The fact that land-reforms remained as much a farce even after the second phase of ceiling legislation is presented eloquently by the data in Table-1. The all India figure for area declared surplus is less than 2 percent of the net operated area but not all of this surplus was distributable. The distributable surplus was only 1.2 percent and the surplus actually distributed was 1.1 percent of the net operated area as upto June 16, 1986.

**TABLE-1**  
**Implementation of Land Ceiling : 1986**

State	Area declared surplus as a percentage of net operated area	Percentage of area declared surplus but not available for distribution	Distributable surplus area as a percentage of net operated area	Surplus area actually distributed as a percentage of net operated area
Andhra Pradesh	3.0	64.3 (60.1)	1.1	1.0
Bihar	1.2	23.2 (99.6)	0.9	0.7
Gujarat	1.0	46.0 (86.6)	0.5	0.4
Haryana	1.4	13.6 (100.1)	1.2	1.2
Karnataka	1.0	60.8 (100.0)	0.4	0.4
Kerala	2.9	49.3 (46.1)	1.5	1.4
Madhya Pradesh	0.6	42.3 (76.8)	0.3	0.3
Maharashtra	1.3	16.2 (64.2)	1.1	0.9
Orissa	1.2	15.6 (78.7)	1.0	1.0
Punjab	1.4	29.3 (100.0)	1.0	1.0
Rajasthan	1.2	34.4 (49.5)	0.8	0.8
Tamil Nadu	0.9	24.8 (65.7)	0.7	0.6
Uttar Pradesh	1.1	31.6 (26.0)	1.0	0.0
West Bengal	0.6	28.0 (52.5)	6.0	6.3
All India	1.8	34.5 (58.5)	1.2	1.1

Source : Ministry of Agriculture Govt. of India, 1986.

**Note :** (i) The area declared surplus and surplus area actually distributed are progressive total brought upto June 16, 1986, but the net area figures are for 1980-81.

(ii) The figures in the paranthesis in column 3 show the area involved in litigation as a percentage of area declared surplus but not available for distribution.

It is absolutely clear that Indian state has been least interested in redistribution of land through land reforms. This can again be understood only interms of its strategy to deliberately keep the land distribution unequal so that it may facilitate the transformation of the relatively larger land holders into capitalist landlords.

Now we turn to analyse agrarian relations as they exist in India today and understand the strategy of the Indian ruling classes which they have adopted to suit their class interests.

### **Land Relation : Distribution of Ownership Holdings**

We will present the data collected by National Sample Survey (NSS) on landholdings and tenancy in five different rounds which together cover a period of almost 30 years (8th round in 1953-54, 16th round in 1960-61, 17 round in 1961-62, 26th round in 1971-72 and 37th round in 1982).

In Table-2 We have presented the cumulative distribution of households and the area owned by them. This clearly shows the changing pattern of land ownership as well as the grass inequality that still persists in this distribution. In 1982, close to 50 percent of the households owned less than an acre and

all of them together owned less than 3 percent of the total agricultural land. 92 percent of the household owned less than 10 acres and their share in the total land was only 52 percent on the other hand the top 8 percent of households owning more than 10 acres accounted for as much as 48 percent of the land. Even among them those owning more than 30 acres each accounted for only 1 percent of the households but their share in the total land was as much as 15 percent of the total.

In Table-3 we have shown the percentage change in the number of households in the different categories as well as in the areas owned by these categories. From these two tables we note a few clearly visible features of the changes in the distribution of ownership holdings.

Firstly, between 1953-54 and 1961-62. We notice a significant reduction (by 42 percent) in the proportion of land less households. The reduction continues upto 1971-72 although writes decelerating rates. However between 1971-72 and 1982 there is a sharp rise of 40% in the proportion of landless households.

Secondly, there is a clearly visible reduction in the proportion of the large holdings and there is even a sharper reduction in the proportion of the area owned by the households.

Thirdly, there is a general trend of increase in the proportion of sub-marginal, marginal and small holdings as well as in the area owned by them.

There are three altogether different causes behind these prominent

features of changes which have taken place in the pattern of land ownership over this period of 30 years.<sup>7</sup>

Firstly, the Zamindari abolition and certain tenancy reforms which took place during the fifties transferred a considerable part of land from Zamindars and from big landowners in the ryotwari even to the landless and the land poor and subsequently followed by meagre transfer of land through ceiling laws and their indirect impact in retarding the concentration of land holdings are solely responsible for the gains made by the landless, Sub-marginal and small households.

Secondly, the fragmentation of holdings due to increase in the number of households results in increasing the proportion of Sub-marginal, marginal and small households as well as in the proportion of area owned by them.

Thirdly, there is the phenomena of increasing polarisation of the agrarian population as the poor get further pauperized and rich get richer. This phenomena is more discernable in the decade between 1971-72 and 1982. During this decade there is a sudden and sharp increase in landless. All these factors can be explained only by the fact that class polarisation in Indian agriculture began to accelerate during the seventies.

**TABLE - 2**

Cumulative percentage distribution of households and area owned (All India)

Size Group by Ownership (Acres)	NSS-8 (1953-54)		NSS-17 (1961-62)		NSS-26 (1971-72)		NSS-37 (1982)	
	House Holds	Are Owned	House Holds	Area Owned	House Holds	Area Owned	House Holds	Area Owned
Land less	23.09	—	4.68	—	9.64	—	4.33	—
Below 0.5 acre	41.10	0.45	37.90	0.54	37.42	0.69	39.93	0.90
Below 1.0 acre	47.26	1.37	44.21	1.59	44.57	2.07	48.21	2.75
Below 2.5 acres	61.24	6.23	66.06	7.50	62.62	9.76	64.64	12.22
Below 5.0 acres	74.73	16.32	75.22	19.98	78.11	24.44	81.34	28.71
Below 7.5 acres	82.55	26.28	83.51	31.55	56.00	37.14	88.61	42.55
Below 10.0 acres	87.23	34.72	88.08	40.52	90.05	46.36	92.12	52.09
Below 15.0 acres	92.28	47.50	93.17	54.49	94.67	60.93	96.02	66.73
Below 20.0 acres	94.94	57.08	95.64	64.15	96.88	70.19	97.66	75.55
Below 25.0 acres	96.40	63.83	97.15	71.75	97.88	77.09	98.57	81.90
Below 30.0 acres	97.40	69.55	98.01	77.08	98.55	81.89	99.01	85.73
Below 50.0 acres	99.06	82.46	99.40	58.87	99.59	92.14	99.76	94.57
All sizes	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source : NSS Reports on Land Holdings.

**TABLE - 3**

Percentage change in the Distribution of Ownership Holdings.

1953-54 to 1982 : All India

Ownership Size	From 1953-54 to 1961-62		From 1961-62 to 1971-72		From 1971-72 to 1982	
	No. of Households	Area Owned	No. of Households	Area Owned	No. of Households	Area Owned
Land less	-42.29	—	-10.73	—	+40.74	—
Sub-marginal	+53.51	+21.51	+17.09	+20.62	+25.37	+32.98
Marginal	+29.34	+28.47	+21.08	+19.20	+24.43	+23.30
Small	+27.48	+27.84	+11.14	+10.05	+13.62	+12.52
Medium	+16.66	+15.20	-0.20	-1.70	+6.17	+4.31
Large	+0.84	-9.82	-15.55	-20.16	-10.79	-14.78
All holdings	+13.97	+4.07	+8.24	-7.03	+19.76	0.11

Source : Report on Land holdings from the NSS rounds.

## Distribution of Assets Other Than Land

The distribution of assets other than land is even more unequal than is the case with land. This shows that the class differentiation in the countryside is much sharper than what is indicated by land distribution. In more recent times there has been a rapid increase in the value and importance of non-land means of agricultural production. This we shall see more clearly when we deal with the question of development of the productive forces in agriculture and particularly the increasing incidence of capitalist farming.

There is little data available about the distribution of non-land agricultural assets. The only source available to us in the result of a survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of India in 1971 which, as cited in the sixth plan (1980-85) Document, gives the distribution of all rural assets including land, houses and movable property. These data give a gross, rough picture of distribution of assets for 1961 and 1971.

In Table-4 we see that the bottom 30% of the households were owners of only 2.1% of the total rural assets in 1971 while the top 30% of the households owned 81.9% of the total assets out of these the bottom 10% owned 0.1% while the top 10% owned 51%. The lower 70% of the rural households owned in 1971 only 18.2% of the total assets. As we have seen above the inequality in the distribution of land has undergone small changes in the decades after 1971-72. One can be certain that non-land assets which have increased tremendously in value and relative importance in the later decades have accrued mostly to the top percentile groups of the rural households.

**TABLE-4****Distribution of Assets in Rural Areas**

Percentile group of Rural households	Percentile share of Assets in	
	1961	71
Lowest 10%	0.1	0.1
Lowest 30%	2.5	2.0
Middle 40%	18.5	16.1
Top 30%	79.0	81.9
Top 10%	51.4	51.0

Source : RBI Survey cited in the Sixth Plan (1980-85) Document.

Thus the inequality of total assets distribution has certainly become much more acute than was the case in 1971.

**Development of Agrarian Productive Forces**

The development of agrarian productive forces is visible through the considerable increase in gross agricultural production as well through the changes in the methods of agricultural production resulting in increased productivity.<sup>8</sup>

This fact is clearly visible from the data on productivity given in Table-5. The per hectare yield of food grain has increased from 522 Kg in 1950-51 to 1380 Kg. in 1980-81. The productivity has made most rapid progress in the case of wheat (from 663 Kg per hectare in 1950-51 to 2281 Kg per hectare in 1990-91), while rice to has registered on increase only a little less spectacular than wheat (from 668 Kg per hectare in 1950-51 to 1740 Kg per hectare in 1990-91). The productivity has increased equally significantly in the cases of coarse cereals and most other crops. The cases of pulses and of groundnuts are the exception where the increase in productivity in relatively modest. In

this context it should be noted that not all of the increase in productivity, is due to the promotion of "green revolution" methods. The productivity registered significant increases even before that i.e. in the period between 1950-51 and 1960-61. For example the yield per hectare increased from 522 Kg in 1950-51 to 710 Kg in 1960-61 in case of total food grain and from 688 to 1013 Kg in case of rice the advent of 'green revolution' has contributed to the increase in productivity only after the sixties.

**Table-5**  
Productivity Measured as Yield it of Major Crops.  
(In Kgs. Per Hectare)

Group/Commodity	1950-51	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91
Total Food grains	522	710	872	1023	1350
Rice	668	1013	1123	1336	1740
Wheat	663	851	1307	1630	2281
Pulses	441	539	524	473	578
Jowar	353	533	466	660	814
Bajra	288	286	622	458	688
Maize	547	926	1279	1150	1518
Oil Seeds **	481	507	579	532	771
Ground nut	775	745	834	736	904
Rape Seed & Mustard	368	467	594	560	904
Sugar cane (Tonnes/hect)	33	46	48	58	65
Plantation Crops					
Tea	846	971	1182	1491	1707
Coffee	298	448	NA	624	NA
Rubber	342	354	653	788	1076
Potatoes (Tonnes/hect)	7	7	10	13	16
Cotton	88	125	106	152	225
Jute	1043	1183	1186	1245	1833

\*\* Includes groundnut, rapeseed and mustard, seasamum, ineseed, castor seed, nigerseed, safflower, sunflower and soyabean.

Source : Directorate of Economics and statistics, Department of Agriculture and cooperation as cited in Economic Survey 1992-93,



Table-6 presents a comprehensive picture of various facts of development of agrarian productive forces between 1951 and 1988. Besides other factors like high yielding variety of seeds, chemical fertilizers, irrigation. We notice the considerable growth which has taken place in agriculture mechanisation and in the area of credit and finance. The total number of tractors which was merely 9 thousand in 1951 had crossed six hundred tractors per lakh hectare by 1988. Similarly, the number of Oil engines per hectare increased from 50 in 1951 to 2400 in 1988 and Electric pumpset from 16 to 3484 per lakh hectare. Electricity consumed in the agrarian sector increased from 1.5 lakh per hectare in 1951 to 196.7 KWH per hectare in 1988. The increase in the credit advanced by Cooperative Banks was even more spectacular. While in 1951 such Banks advanced a total of mere 24.23 crores of Rupees, in 1988 this amount was Rs. 3508.07 crores. By 1988 the Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks were advancing another 3695 crores in short term loans and more than a thousand crores in the form of term loans. These spectacular advance in agrarian productive forces signifies a form of capitalist development in agriculture.

**Table-6**

Agricultural Inputs: 1951-1988

	1951	1961	1971	1981	1985	1988
1. Gross Cropped Area (Million Hect)	131.9	152.8	165.8	1731	180.5	177.0
2. Intensity of Cropping	111.0	114.7	117.8	123.4	125.7	—
3. Gross irrigated Area (Million Hect)	22.6	28.0	38.2	49.6	54.0	N.A
4. Percentage of irrigated Area						
5. Fertilizers Consumed (Lack tonnes)	17.1	18.3	23.0	28.6	20.9	N.A
6. Fert. Comsumed in Kg. Per. hect.	0.69	2.92	21.7	55.16	82.11	87.36 *
7. Tractors No. in Lakh (Per lakh hect.)	N.G.	1.9	13.1	31.8	45.5	48.4 *
8. Oil Engins No. In Lakhs (Per lakh hect.)	0.00	0.31	1.43	5.20	8.15	10.65
	7	20	86	360	452	602
9. Elect. Pumpsets No. In Lakh (Per lakh hect.)	0.66	2.30	—	28.10	35.54	42.50
	50	151	—	16.23	1969	2400
10. Elect. in Agriculture KWH (Per hect)	0.21	2.00	16.20	43.24	53.20	61.67
	16	131	9.77	2495	2947	3484
11. Co-operative credit: Short term (Rs. Crores)	1.5	5.5	27.0	83.8	116.1	196.7
12. Medium term (Rs. Crores)	22.90	182.82	519.34	1526.32	2323.55	2672.23 *
13. Long term credit (Rs. Crores)	—	19.93	58.54	237.27	209.07	233.86 *
	1.33	11.60	100.91	362.72	453.37	551.68 *
Total Rs. (Crores)	24.23	214.35	678.79	2116.31	2995.99	3508.07 *
Commercial Banks & Regional Rural Banks: Short term (Rs. Crores)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	517.00#	1100.00	3695.00 **
Term Loan (Rs. Crores)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	206.37	1262.80	—

Notes: \*—1986-87, \*\*— Includes term loans, # — Excludes RRBs term loans

Sources : Agricultural statistics at a Glance and Basic Statistics 1989 as cited in "Planning for the Millions by Anand Sarup Sulabha Brahme Wiley Eastern Ltd. 1990.

It is quite clear that technological improvements <sup>as</sup> an integral component of the development of productive forces. Whether internally evolving or externally introduced, <sup>they</sup> do impact the prevailing relation of production. Another element which can and often does, alter production relation is a shift from traditional basic food crops to export commodity production such as cash crops. In Indian case we have seen that both of these are present. With regard to labour migration such technological changes and production shifts have important ramification in most underdeveloped societies where farming remain the longest sector despite their drive towards industrial-growth. Eversince independence Indian state formulated various policies like Zamindari abolition, Tenancy reforms, ceiling act etc, alongwith certain structural changes, which have significantly affected the agrarian social relation of production and consequently labour migration in that labour becomes increasingly separated from the objective conditions of production such as land. Moreover introduction of green revolution has a direct repercussion on the agrarian relations of production. Since technologies are not neutral to the existing social structure and property relations they tend to favour those who control the means of production other than labour, especially when they are material-biased and labour saving. As the feudalistic agrarian relations of production in Indian gradually gave way to the capitalistic relations characterized by wage-labour, social class polarisation interms of both economic inabilities and positions became increasingly crystalized. Under the condition of increased class contradiction, the economic viabilities of dominant class enhanced, altering them to consolidate their control over

productive resources, where as the subordinate class is reduced to a mere factor of production becoming ever more dependent on capital, i.e. wage employment which is scarce in the rural sector. Under such circumstances, the economic viability of the subordinate class with insufficient or no land relies on : (1) the ability to sell labour services in the non-farm sector, and (2) the extent to which labour services are viewed as necessary for such agricultural functions as share cropping and other forms of farm help.

While the first option is extremely limited because of the lack of capital investment in non-agricultural activities in rural areas the second option is rapidly decreasing a result of the so- called "land-reform" measures and the introduction of new agricultural technologies, including mechanization. These measures, however, generally fail to produce intended results because they are implemented in a political atmosphere controlled by the dominant ruling class with little interest in altering the statusquo. They do, nevertheless, bring about changes, whether intended or not, in the agrarian relations of production, which negatively affect the economic viability of the subordinate class.

For instance, as we have seen, tenancy rights stipulated in land reform acts generated fear among landlords that they might lose partial control of their land to tenants if they are allowed to cultivate it for a certain period of time. Meanwhile, mechanization and improved technical inputs made available under the rubric of the green revolution or rural-agricultural developments offered landlords a new opportunity to consolidate land and other resources and elevate their economic positions. Land demand increased due to its profitability and population growth, thus pushing its price higher.

Rural indebtedness also increases leading to land sales and ensuing land accumulation in the hands of rich farmers. A combination of land reform measures and agricultural mechanization entices landlords to withdraw their land from the renting and share cropping market and cultivate it themselves by using machines and seasonally hired labour. Such development reduce land accessibility to landless and near landless peasants and, thus, diminish their positions in the agrarian relations of production. Their socioeconomic conditions deteriorate as their farming-tied economic viability evaporates. As a result, they are increasingly forced into a pool of rural "proletarians" and "semiproletarians" whose immediate economic option is to join the ranks of migrants hoping to sell their labour power in areas where capital is concentrated viz. urban centers.

It is the emergence of such a material and class biased socioeconomic structure that generates migration potential which can be triggered into actual migration any time. Specially the class biases in economic viabilities can be translated into a given "choice strategy", in which individuals' socioeconomic decisions reflect the choices (or fetters) available to them in accordance with their class position and roles. While these are several unconstrained choice available to dominant class members, the subordinate class has three main options to improve What Harvey Calls the "conditions of social reproduction".

These options are : (1) to stay and make the best out of the existing relation of production in their localities, i.e. adaptive choice, (2) to stay and revolt against the existing regressive relation and try to transform them into

progressive relations i.e. revolutionary choice, or (3) to migrate to a different socioeconomic environment, i.e., migratory choice.

The migratory choice could take different forms like short-term seasonal, longform circular or permanent migration. In spite of these different forms, migration is a specific socioeconomic strategy. As such the focus now is on explaining why people adopt migration.

### **Uneven Geographical Development and Migration**

It is worth noting that through out history people have opted all three choices. The question of which alternative is more commonly used at a particular time depends on many factors, viz, the nature of the existing socioeconomic formation, historical tendencies and experiences, geographical conditions and development, and ofcourse the availability of different options. One may also observe cases, in which different memebers of household or domestic group simultaneously engage in all three options for social reproduction. Often, they may be found moving in and out of different choices from season to season or from year to year, depending on many situational variables.

Of the three, the adaptive choice is the least risky one, although it rarely improves ones. Socioeconomic condition. On the other hand, the revolutionary choice is perhaps the most difficult and risky because it is a long, enduring process requiring a great deal of collective action, organization, resources and class consciousness. Even though a class struggle does not always turn into a most movement-nor does it necessarily ensure socioeconomic

betterment for the disadvantaged class even if the movement succeeds the choice itself remains popular as attested by revolutionary movements that are going on throughout the world. Infact, the agrarian history of most underdeveloped countries is replete with such movements in what pleasant have a considerably decisive part.

Now we come to the question. Why do people adopt migration? People adopt migration as a viable economic strategy, mainly because it, unlike social adaptation, offers a way out of the existing structural trap and new possibilities to improve their economic conditions without high risks and costs required for revolutionary one. One may plausibly agree that the availability of migration as a safe option undercuts the revolutionary choice. It also poses fetters on class cohesion and class struggles both in source area by removing the potentially most social members of the society and in destination areas where new migrants intensify competition among themselves. In Urban areas they may be used as "Strike breakers" against those workers who are considered "obedient" and defy the statusquo.

Apart from this antagonistic role of migration, no one can deny that migration is a manifestation and open protest against the existing socioeconomic arrangements as well as the capitalist underdevelopment of source areas. It personifies refusal to continue to adapt to the prevailing social relations of production. The systematic production of migration as a labour process, consistently sustained over time and space, requires a socioeconomic system characterized by spatial inequalities. True, some geographical unevenness is

inevitable in every social formation due to certain geological and cultural elements. But, nowhere, are such inequalities more pronounced than international monopoly capital. Such development is not only geographically uneven, but it intensifies spatial inequalities. It perpetuates a situation of both social and spatial monopoly, that is, development at one pole and what sweezy aptly calls "the development of under development" at the other.<sup>9</sup> Employs labour migration in a typical demographic manifestation of capitalist uneven development.

As such, why people choose migration as socioeconomic strategy has to be analysed in the context of the development process which in most underdeveloped nations is determined by the state. With fullest realisation that the state in these countries is a dependent entity whose policies and interests are closely linked with those of international monopoly capital (Cornoy, 84) the discourse here focuses on the internal dynamics and impacts of the state's capitalist development policies on rural to urban migration.

Perhaps we are unanimous atleast at his point that the state in nowadays underdeveloped societies is probably the singular most economic actor, with full control over policy-enactment, policy execution and development resources including those made available by international donor agencies. Controlled by the ruling elite intent on protesting and promoting its own class interests, the state itself has become the "State capitalist" or the dominant class, within which indigenous merchant and industrial capitalism may also have say. Yet, in order to legitimize its authority and to remain it intact the state manifests



as if its actions are for common good at the same time as it exercises its power in its own class interest.<sup>10</sup> So as to overcome this contradiction, the state utilizes "developmentalism" as a populist mediator, which has become a dominant economic order.

Ever since second world war industrial West led by US has been univocally propagating recipes for the capitalist development of underdevelopment emerged from colonialism and devised "developmentalism" as an economic ideology to move with.<sup>11</sup> Following such recipes, the policy of capitalist development is carried out, interestingly, through the use of planning : a socialist mechanism first implemented by the Soviet Union. As an institutional approach with a socialist undertone, planning, on the one hand gives credence to the state's claim that its economic policies are designed to achieve social justice with growth; hence, it acts to appease the masses. On the other hand, it allows the state to maintain total control over the sectoral and spatial allocation of development resources, largely made available by either IMF, IBRD or capitalist nations and their agencies in the forms of aid, loans private investments. This internal as well as external resource control enhances the ruling class's political authority and maneuverability.

In the 1950s and 1960s the dependent state applied the logic embedded in the Lewis model as a basis to formulate the economic plans which heavily emphasized urban- industrial growth. In India an improved version of Lewis model came in the form of 'Nehru-Mahalanobis model' which laid emphasis on Urban- heavy industrial growth which heavily dictated second and

subsequent **Five Year Plans** in Indian development policy. This polarized development policy, based on the historical experiences of Western Europe and the United States, further accentuated the existing uneven socioeconomic structure including the geographical division between labour (Country side-(peripheries) or rural areas) and capital (urban areas-center) inherited from the colonial state.

The demographic outcome of such geographically uneven development policy and resultant disparities in spatial economic viabilities is obvious : migration appears as a necessary response to the skewed distribution of capital resources. As labour migration to areas of capital concentration intensifies. The inherently contradictory nature of capitalist development becomes transparent. While capitalist investment in selective locations such as cities may generally lead to high rates of growth and accumulation as exemplified by certain East and Southeast Asian and Latin American nations where monopoly international capital is invested, they fail to create sufficient jobs for the growing migrant labour force. As production becomes capital-intensive to improve labour productivity, capital makes migrant labour dispensable. Improved labour productivity, a blessing for some in terms of increased wages, turns into a curse for many as it saves (i.e., displaces) labour, thus creating an industrial reserve army.

The problem of high urban unemployment/underemployment is an obvious indication of the conflicting class relation between labour and capital with the potential to pose a serious threat to the dependent state's authority

and legitimacy. The state views urban migrants as an economic burden, a social malady, and a political threat. While the advanced European states of 19th -20th centuries could readily deploy colonialism as an external "spatial-fix" to such problems, today's dependent state has to find its "spatial-fix" to the crisis of increased labour mobility and unemployment within its own borders. Under the guidance of such powerful capitalist agents as the World Bank (IBRD), ILO, IMF, it devises a new set of spatial policies, in India there are IRDP, DRDP, TRYSEM and JRY in order to restrict rural to urban migration by economic growth of region and regional employment generation. In essence what we are currently seeing in the state sponsored production (and reproduction) of space, first the city as an agent of capitalist development, and later regional and rural growth poles, wherever feasible, as a spatial fix to the migration and unemployment crisis of capitalist development as these poles are expected to divert migrants away from urban capitalist centers.

Despite the implementation of a series of new spatial development policies to rechannel potential cityward migration to regional growth centers and/or to retain them in rural areas and small towns, rural to urban migration continues in large volumes. Taking India as an example we find that in Table-7 and 8 there has been a continuous increase in the volume of rural to urban migration, as it was 14.6 percent in 1965, in 1971 it increased upto 15.3 percent of the total migration and in 1981 it moved up to 17.5% of the total migration. In tables we find rural to rural migration constitutes huge percentage, but 80% among them are women who migrated due to marriage and in further

10 percent men migrant for marriage and family moved and women for family moved. Thus we find it remains too meagre in comparison to rural to urban migration. The question arises why? the answer lies in the dialectical relation between the social process and the spatial structure. The production of space as a distinct economic entity, viz, the city, expresses the prevailing relations of production.

**TABLE-7**

Percentage Distribution of Migrants : 1961-81

Year	Stream's				
	R-R	R-U	U-R	U-U	T-T
1961	73.7	14.6	3.7	8.0	100.00
1971	70.3	15.3	5.5	8.9	100.00
1981	65.4	17.5	6.0	11.1	100.00

Note— R-Rural U-Urban T-Total

**TABLE - 8**

Percentage Distribution of internal-migrants by reasons of movement, resided Sex : 1981

Reasons	In Rural areas		In Urban-areas	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Employment	19.9	1.3	43.1	4.2
Education	3.9	0.5	6.6	2.4
Family moved	33.4	9.8	27.3	32.5
Marriage	4.8	79.4	1.1	46.6
Other reason	38.0	9.0	21.9	14.3
All	100.0	100.0	100.00	100.00

Source: Proceeding of workshop on migration and Urbanization, March 10-28, 1986, New Delhi, office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India.

But such space once produced, generates its own production dynamism

reacting back upon the social relations of production. Thus the "social relations of production". Soja states "are both spaceforming and space contingent...".<sup>12</sup>

Despite noticeable state endeavours to lure private capital to regional and rural poles, foreign investors, especially MNCs and TNCs, probably the longest source of capital in Third World, continue to invest in already built cities with necessary infrastructure facilities and networks. Other capitalists do the same. Now labour has little choice but follow capital wherever it is located. Consequently large urban areas, the personification of both capitalist development and crisis keep swelling in almost every respect. Under such circumstances, the dependent state is forced to continue to allocate a disproportionate amount of resources to large urban centers at the expenses of the rural-agricultural sectors because that is where its immediate political base as well as economic interests lie.

Thereby, we find that the greater the agglomeration of capital and other development resources in large cities, the larger the volume of rural to urban migration, a process which juxtaposes capital against labour in a series of both class struggle and compromises. Impotency of capitalist planned development is manifest in sorting out tangible spatial solution to the growing socioeconomic crisis of urban labour migration and underemployment.

By now an additional question sprouts; Who will bring about solution of this specific rural to urban migration and open unemployment? Is it state? But why, why should state, if yes, in whose interest, wont it be against herself? Answer seems to be appeared, yes, solution of this problem lies in a

socioeconomic political change led by organized migrants themselves. Implies; "Migration to socioeconomic political change".

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## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION ACCOMPANIED BY CRITICAL ISSUES

The first issue concerns the question of who migrates. This very question relates to migrants' class positions and background. Migration decisions always possess a class bias in terms of choices and motives while migration decision of dominant class migrants manifests this 'strategic choice', for the subordinate class it represents a 'survival move'. Though the underlying motive of both choices may seem to be essentially economic, the difference clearly manifests class distinctions in terms of migrants' respective economic positions, abilities and options.

Here the very term "Strategic choice" implies a wide range of abilities and several economic options, both of which are unavailable or limited to the subordinate class. Thus, their migration, regardless of its form and duration, is a "survival move" an exposition of their actual realization that they are unable to eke out their subsistence either by adapting to the existing social relations of production or of their inability or unwillingness to revolt against the socioeconomic relations exist in their source areas.

In contrary, migrants from dominant class may view migration as a sound economic strategy and decide to migrate to a new area at least for two purposes: First, migration for them serves as a vehicle to expand the



geographical as well as economic sphere of their power base. Therefore, dominant class families, dispatch certain family members to areas where new lands/or opportunities are available. Thus leading to a "migration of dispatchment", Second, migration is a mechanism to minimize potential risks associated with an expanding family size in an economic environment where even dominant class households may find local opportunities too limited for further advancement.

The second issue concerns the question of why migration occurs rather than why individual migrants move. This conceptual distinction of why migration occurs and why individual migrates is deliberate and theoretically essential. But if, for example, a migrant is asked why he migrated, his subjective response will invariably be directed at one of the "proximate" objective conditions that he can immediately visualize or feel rather than the underlying socio-structural process that generates these conditions in the first instance. Thus, individual responses and reasons may, and usually do, vary with migrants (even from the same class) and in accordance to the manifestation of their objective conditions and historical experiences. But the sole causes of migration remain the same and interpretable primarily in conjunction with migrants' class positions because the same socioeconomic structural process can produce several sorts of objective conditions, depending on the demographic structure, historical development, geographical features and specific arrangement of the economy, in which migration occurs and continues. It is precisely for this reason that the process of migration can not be understand and explained in

isolation from the whole gamut of socio-political and economic historical conditions under which it came to exist and perpetuated.

The third issue is directly related to what is impact of migration. Since migration involves the movement of people from different classes, the third question "concerns not the ultimate geographical destination of migrants, but rather the position of the migrant in the relations of production in the destination area"<sup>1</sup>

It has been argued that the kind of migration choice itself (i.e. strategic vs survival), which manifests migrants' class positions and options (or lack of options), generally determines their ability to succeed in the destination. Because of their initial low position and limited access to productive resources, the range of socioeconomic options subordinate class migrants have to alter their class roles via migration will be minimal.

As Baran and Sweezy argue<sup>2</sup>, while few may climb the economic ladder, benefits, that they, as class, derive from migration, no matter where they move, are usually of little economic significance and hence unquickly to have any tangible, long term impact on their class roles and positions and on sustained development. Since they are normally relegated to material jobs; if employed at all, economic returns to their labour are low.<sup>3</sup>

A rapid growth of the "informal sector" in Third World cities is testimony to the fact that while urban migration continues, the majority remain unemployed and underutilized. But dominant class, migrants hold various options and resources in their reach, these migrants generally reassert their

dominant class positions and roles in the destinations, wherever they may be, by employing various mechanism such as "forming marriage alliances, pooling investments and knowledge and strengthening their links with the elite".<sup>4</sup> To them, migration is often rewarding: returns to their labour are comparatively higher as they tend to occupy better jobs and/or engage in other economic activities.

In a situation of stiff competition between the dominant class migrants and the subordinate class for the limited opportunities, it is the dominant class that usually tends to have an upper hand. Therefore, migration for subordinate class migrants is nothing but a change in environment of exploitation from milder to rigorous and oppressive one.

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