Impact of Late Census of India 2021 on Migration: A Review Discussion

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Abstract

The Census of India 2021, similar to other national censuses, plays a crucial role in capturing accurate migration data. However, due to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the census experienced significant delays, affecting its impact on migration patterns. This abstract explores the potential consequences of the delayed census on understanding and analysing migration trends in India. The nationwide lockdowns and restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus disrupted the regular timeline of conducting the census. The delayed census raises concerns regarding the accuracy and comprehensiveness of migration-related data. The pandemic-induced disruptions in internal and international migration further complicate the analysis of migration patterns. People's movement was restricted due to travel bans, economic uncertainty, and fear of infection. Consequently, the population shifts and migration trends during the pandemic might not be adequately captured due to the incomplete census data. The potential Impact on data sampling techniques used in the census also warrants attention. The accuracy of population estimates and statistical inferences related to migration may be affected by limited access to certain regions or groups of people during the pandemic. Adjustments and considerations will be essential to account for potential data biases stemming from these limitations.

Keywords: Migration, Urbanization, COVID-19, Women Empowerment, Poverty

Introduction

The United Nations **(UN)** defines the essential features of population and housing censuses as "individual enumeration, universality within a defined territory, simultaneity and defined periodicity"**,** and recommends that population censuses be taken at least every ten years. The Census is necessary since it forms the basis of all the plans and programmes that the government wants to implement. Postponing the Census has immediate and long-term negative consequences for India **(Saikia, 2023)** . The Census offers basic demographic information at the block, sub-district, and city levels. These statistics are required for the establishment of plans, transparent programmes, and strategies for the country's social and economic growth. With the Census's late completion, planners and demographers are having difficulty in predicting population. The last 2011 Census should have been used as the base year for the population projection of 2021, but due to the postponement of the count, the estimation for any district or sub-block level has used the growth rate of 2001-2011, which is good for only one decade; and increasing the time period may result in an incorrect prediction. Every decade, the population situation changes, and the time period even more than ten years can bring significant changes for all population dynamics.

(Saikia, 2023).

Migration is a topic that has virtually always piqued the interest of social scientists as how people moves and the causes and consequences of it. The movement of people is merely one basic way of portraying it. However, there are many studies on this issue, that the meaning of the term "migration" is recognised; but the little attention is devoted to this specific definition. Three fundamental components are necessary to understand the idea of migration definition: Change in residence, spatial boundaries, and time. The UN multilingual dictionary defines "Migration" as a form of spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another, involving a permanent change of residence". Selective migration flows are also regarded to be a fundamental mechanism by which the intended benefits of the target area flow out to attract the migrants.

Of all demographic components, migration is considered to be the most complicated phenomena to be documented. Together with the Census of India, the Civil Registration System, other surveys undertaken by Ministries of the Government of India such as the National Family Health Survey, Longitudinal Aging Study in India, National Sample Survey, and others are used to record the population type and their socio-economic, health and other situations. Yet, relatively few researches and surveys for migration statistics are conducted at the national level. Kerela Migration Study **(KMS)** , Middle Ganga Plains Survey**(MGP)** , and Gujarat Migration Survey **(GMS)** are being done to gain a general understanding of the migratory movement, although each has some limitations. As a result, the Census is the sole source of migration statistics to be reviewed and analysed.

Need of the study

The research is being done in order to understand the aftermath consequences if the Census count continues to postponed.

Objectives

To shed light on the true facts as how the migration data analysis will be affected by the late conduction of Census count unkind to the policy implications in various developmental areas.

To study the impacts that will be seen on socio-economic and policy implementation with the late conduction of Census on migration.

Methodology

It is a review-based paper prepared by studying the existing relevant research papers on the international migrations of India and other various countries; internal migration of India since the first Census of India 1872; and others articles and research papers on the importance of Census which are essential materials for the study. These papers are collected from different national and international journals in the Google

Scholar. The study primarily focussed on the Indian context though many international papers are being studied on migration and Census of other countries.

Results

Internal Migration and international migration:

Census of India 2021 is still underway and final data is not available at this time, it is difficult to make precise prediction about its impact on internal and international migration. The studies point out how difficult is to record the movement of people during the specific period of time. What changes have actually occurred in the internal migration of the country, its trends and patterns over the last decade is very important to know and analysis in the demography. The census data can help identify regions with high population growth or decline, which may impact internal migration pattern. Conversely, regions with declining population may witness outward migration as individuals seek better prospects elsewhere. Although the census primarily focuses on domestic population data, it may indirectly impact international migration patterns. Population trends and demographic information can shape government policies, economic decision making and social welfare initiatives, which can influence the factors that drive international migration. Even, the people from and to aboard is needed to know the migration pattern internationally. Therefore, the need of Census to record the movement is essential for further study.

Urbanisation:

Urbanisation is found to increase at a very slow rate in the early times but it increased in the recent decade of 2001-2011. Migration is always believed to bring urbanisation; and both are related to each other, therefore, the causes, consequences and the measures of migration and urbanisation is very important for further study in the decadal period of 2011-2021. The census data can shed light on the pace and scale of urbanization in India. This information can influence migration trends as individuals may be motivated to move to urban areas in search of employment, education, health care or better facilities and amenities.

Health Policy and programmes:

The exact population of the country is recorded in the Census. Planners and policy makers depend on the Census for formulating all programmes and schemes. Deficiency in the migration data from the Census has made the policy maker to wait for a long time to formulate and operate programmes and schemes. Census data can aid in understanding the geographic distribution of diseases, health conditions and health care access. This information can assist in formulating targeted health policies and programs to address prevalent health issue and ensure equitable healthcare services across different regions. Census data can highlight disparities in healthcare across and urbanization between different population groups and regions. This knowledge can guide policymakers in implementing targeted interventions and initiatives to reduce these inequalities and promote equitable access to healthcare services. Census-derived migration patterns provide an acceptable data for relative flows found in short-term circulation, analysing with the proper methodology; nonetheless, will help in important assumptions and uncertainties to be addressed in future study.

Socio-cultural and economic factors:

The intermixing of various communities brings diversity, sometimes it may not good but acculturation is a good result. The change within a decade in the social and cultural factors may be diverse in case of language, food habits, etc that will eventually affect the population and their economic perspectives.

Covid-19 and migration:

Migration during Covid-19 was a common sight. The labourers, students, employers, etc have to move to their actual place of residence. Some move back to their own place for work and study and some shifted permanently; therefore, the aftermath results can be best known from the Census report. The nationwide lockdowns and restrictions imposed to control the spread of COVID-19 disrupted he regular timeline of conducting the census. Fieldwork, data collection and enumeration activities were postponed or halted, leading to delays in the completion of the census. The Covid-19 pandemic caused disruptions in internal

and international migration. People's movement was restricted due to lockdowns, travel bans and economic uncertainty. These change in migration patterns may have affected he accuracy off migration- related data gathered during the census.

Women empowerment:

During the last two decades, it is found that the women migration has increased due to opening up of many sectors for the female employment and globalisation; thus, the female migration has increased during the two decades of 1991-2001 and 2001-2011. The change during 2011-2021 decade can be more impactful for the women employment or vice-versa which can be best known from the accurate statistics of the Census of India report.

Labour migration and poverty in India:

According to 2011 Census, out migration of labourer is mostly found in the states like UP, Bihar, etc. because of lack of education, unemployment, inadequate amenities and poverty, etc. It is also found that the large flow of in-migrants labour also creates poverty in-migration states. The trend of labour migration and level of poverty can be best understood from the census report.

State level differentiation and District level analysis:

The inter states variation is a common eye-catching phenomenon. After 2011 Census, many studies were being done on the reasons and results were interpreted on the inter-state and intra-state migration. Likewise, the many further studies could have been done if the Census statistics of 2021 is conducted soon. Ground-level analysis can be done if the data on the migration are present such as the change in the blocks and districts are the prominent field to study and to know the exact several of the population of the particular areas.

Migration of particular committees:

Studies have been done by the scholars and researches on the movement of individuals of particular groups and communities to see the level of development in the particular sectors. The social networks are found to be good for co-villagers and relatives in providing accommodation and search for jobs. The Census report provides the basic requirement of every minor detail study; therefore, the study of a particular communities can be understood from the Census. The change within a decade can be a vast one.

Discussion

Since 1872, the Census of India has provided migration data on the basis of place of birth. Since 1971, the migration data has been collected on the basis of place of last residence and duration of residence at the place of enumeration. Then, since 1981, reasons of migration has been included in the census questionnaire. The Census of India provides the wealth of information on migration data but unfortunately this has been mostly ignored by researchers, in the favour of gathering data supported by other sources **(Bhagat, 2016)** . Under Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation (renamed now as Ministry of Statistical and Program Implementation), National Sample Survey Organization**(NSSO)** , had included a question on migration based on Place of Last Residence as a part of its employment and unemployment surveys. New data sets, such as the National Family Health Surveys, did not consider migration to be a significant variable that may impact health status in general, and reproductive health in particular, and hence did not collect migration data. Furthermore, with the publishing of two rounds of migration data by the National Sample Survey Organisation in 2001 and 2010, the recent decade has witnessed a revived interest in migration research. The estimation of migration is being done by direct and indirect statistical measurement. A good knowledge of migration trends and patterns both internal and international would provide better understanding the nature of population growth and redistribution. It would also throw light on regional disparities, labour market dynamics, modernization, development, and political processes that affect migration. Article 19 of the Indian Constitution ensures freedom of movement and freedom to dwell inside Indian Territory as a basic right of all people. Therefore, research on migration is essential in India from demographic perspective as

well as economic, political, and cultural standpoint. According to 2011 Census, Migrants made up 30.6% of the nation's population in 1971, reaching a peak in 1981 at 30.3%, then falling to 27% in 1991 and then again to 30.14% in 2001.

The female migration will be affected by the late Census can be evidence from the studies that has been conducted earlier. But according to surveys conducted throughout the years, male migration appears to be more prevalent. The problem of female migration is rarely adequately addressed in migration studies. The lack of study on women's migration is linked to a focus on economic theories rather than socio-cultural and family-related reasons. Technological advancement, economic challenges, and a lack of work opportunities drive individuals to move to survive, while globalisation creates demand for females. According to 1991 census, 60% of females migrated due to marriage and the same declined by 1% in 2001 census. Likewise, employment as a reason which constitutes 3.67% in 1991 increased to 4.19% in 2001(**Mahapatro, 2010**) . Higher female literacy and amenities lead to better job opportunities, while caste and minority group membership favours in the increase of migration through the network effect, resulting in 'feminization' of migration.

Male migration is driven by economic resources, inadequate educational and public health infrastructure, and low-skilled labour, which are the main factors contributing to heavy outmigration from the state. According to 2011 Census, among Indian states, Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of inter-states outmigrants – 12.32 million. The reasons of out-migration from Uttar Pradesh reflects the economic dependence on migration in terms of reducing unemployment and gaining remittances. Migrants from Uttar Pradesh prefer industrialised and urbanised states, but their concentration is not uniform across districts.

In case of the total international migrants (in- migrants) as per census 2001 are 51, 55,424. Out of this eastern zone of India had maximum international in-migrants, accounting to 56% of the total as education for the reason of migration. While work and business became a reason for migration among those migrating to western zone of India. As per census 2001, states with high literacy rates expected more interstate migrants coming for education whereas states with high GDP, also expected significant interstate migrants coming for work and business. Among international migrants with work as the reason for migration was more in states with higher GDP as per Census data of India 2001(**Taralekar, 2012**) .

Between 1951 and 2011, the urban population increased sixfold, the level of urbanization rose only from 17 % to 31 %. The urbanisation increased at the slow pace up-to 2001 due to only rural to urban migration but during 2001–2011 the decline in the urban growth rate halted and the level of urbanisation in the country increased from 27.7 % to 31.1 %. The emerging pattern of urbanization during 2001–2011 was driven more by rural-urban re-classification of settlements than to rural-urban migration. The actual scenario of urbanisation comes from Census data which gets proven by the migration pattern analysis of the country.

Conclusion

Since 1872, India has experienced different migration trends and patterns within the decades. The late Census have kept the statistics of India as an unknown book which might show any unexpected results in the coming times. Migration has variety of effects on women, children, elderly parents and gender relations within households and all these effects are still understudied. Globalization will inevitably lead to a rise in migration in the coming years, which will continue to grow and if the right policies are not in place to support the integrated development of cities like Mumbai, then it would pose an issue. Short distance migration is often found for women in the earlier where the reasons for migration for them was only marriage but with time, the development of policies, the scope for their living has increased and so the Census will help to know the accurate data for policy implication and programmes. Some regions may have more out migration than the other so the policy for those regions will be varied and likewise the movement of particular age group will also define how the migration pattern is and help in the policy development. The Census data is also used to study the energy consumption of a particular area, the transport and communication system, etc. for the policy makers to analyse the unique programme development. The Census data has been created to fulfil the demands of the population, users and the stakeholders which reflects the relevancy

of information. The census determines the accuracy, accessibility, interpretability, and timeliness. The late count in the national context will have restrictions on the data that is be gathered. Before COVID 19, a new technology called the Cross-Platform Portal was confirmed to be used to perform the entire process digitally and introduce various modifications to the census-conducting process that would benefit everyone (i.e., citizens, census officers, ministers, etc.). The entire process will be referred to as Mahaganana. But everything is in postpone mode.

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