

Saroj Kumar Dhal

ANTHROPOLOGY OF MIGRATION: FROM TRADITION TO POST-MODERNITY

Abstract

Migration is indeed not a new phenomenon; it is certainly as old as human civilization. It is not merely about biological movement rather something beyond. From the period of antiquity to modernity to post modernity, migration has been a continuous process to understand the demographic structure of any country. It can be looked from both local and global level. The social structures have been hugely influenced by the process of human migration. From Marxian perspective, migration can be interpreted as product of capitalism, how this process has alienated the individual from the native place and attracted towards the industrial cities of capitalism. The narratives associated with migrations are usually mostly economic but in a post modern context such narratives has been changed. The conventional meaning of migration has been deconstructed and leading towards a new meaning or multiple meaning.

Keywords: *Migration, Modernity, Post-modernity, Capitalism, Industrialization, Urbanization.*

Introduction

From antiquity to modernity, migration has been a continuous process in all the society. Sociologists may give sociological explanation, economists may explain this process from economic point of view, and demographers can locate this as a process of population dynamics, likewise different disciplines has tried to give different explanations in different perspectives. Migration is at the heart of early sociological concerns. August Comte's view that human kind gradually evolved from a theological to a metaphysical and finally to a scientific state was based on the idea that greater concentrations of people led to higher and higher stages of civilization. (e.g. Mesopotamia) Comte's eminent successor E. Durkheim, was also concerned with the disruption of 'mechanical' solidarity with the coming up of specialized occupation, a feature of urban society, which one can relate to migration. Urban concentrations produced a new and more specialized division of labour. But he argued, the utilitarians

SAROJ KUMAR DHAL, Department of Sociology, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, India
226007, sarojdse@gmail.com

had over emphasized economic changes at the expense of understanding the moral and legal basis of the new order. Instead of mechanical solidarity, based on blind obedience to custom and tradition urbanized, societies required 'organic solidarity' rooted in a mutual need for each other's services. Durkheim was sensitive to the dangers of unrestrained, hedonistic individualism which, he saw, could never produce social cohesion or a beneficial moral order. But Comte and Durkheim saw the changes which they described in peaceful, evolutionary terms. Marx was probably the first of the great 19th century thinkers to see migration as a more violent process. Detaching the peasant from the soil for industrial purposes was a traumatic business. As he saw it 'great masses of men (were) suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and hurled on to the labor market as free, unprotected and rightless proletarians. The expression "free" proletarians alluded to Marx's idea that labourers were now free from their own means of production and subsistence and 'free' but of necessity required, to sell their remaining possession, their 'labor power' in the market (Cohen, 1996).

Migration is a subject, which touches the boundaries of different disciplines. Hence it is a subject that cries out for an interdisciplinary approach. Each discipline brings something to the table, theoretically and empirically. Anthropologists have taught us to look at networks and transnational communities, while sociologists and economists have tried to find out the causes and consequences of migration from a holistic approach. Anthropologists (Brettell, Caroline, 2003) have brought our attention to look at networks and transnational communities, while economists (Prakash, 1998, Skeldon, 1997, Joseph, 1988, Todaro, 1980) draw our attention to the importance of economic rationality and remittances. Political scientists (Hollifield, 1986) help us to understand the play of organized interests (of migrants) in the making of public policy. Some others in literature like Salman Rushdie (in his novels like *Midnight's Children*, *Satanic Verses* etc) and Arvind Adiga (in his famous novel *The White Tiger*) portray the migrant experience in all its complexity, giving us a much greater empathetic understanding of the hopes and ambitions of migrants. Demographers (Zacharia, and S.Irudaya Rajan 1997, Bhagat, 2010) have perhaps the best macro level empirical grasp on the movement of people across boundaries, and they have the theoretical and methodological tools to show us how such movements affect population dynamics in the sending and receiving societies.

Migration is undeniably a journey during which old values and systems yield to new ones, with varying degrees of resistance, and concomitant stress and strain on the individual, the family and social life (Daniere & Takahashi, 1999). Migrations, in that sense, are a pulse measure for our societies: they reveal tensions and challenges that cannot easily be dismissed. Therefore, migration issues are never sufficiently or adequately addressed when only the migrants themselves are looked at, and not the societal and structural realities

that surface in realities of migration as Leuven's work on Europeans in the context of right to migrate (Leuven, 2008). The work like F. Osella and Katy Gardner's (2004) on Migration, Modernity and Social Transformation in South Asia has given a detailed picture of migration from and within South Asia especially in the context of historical as well as cultural and economic conditions. It is here, at the interstices of practice and representation of popular and institutional narratives, that they find an intimate relation between aspirations to 'modernity' and migration as a vehicle for their possible realization.

Migration and Social Structure

Migration also plays an important role by linking people with spaces and transferring people from places of lower opportunities to those of higher opportunities and a subsequent transfer of resources. The trend of rising unemployment is compounded by the existence of regional imbalances in development within the country, which have collectively accelerated the phenomenon of migration. All theories of migration concede that migration occurs when the region of origin lacks the opportunities which the destination promises. It is inherently a combination of pull and push factors. There are profound relationships between migration and social structure reflecting the varieties of migration types, the complexities of social structure and the reciprocal ways of migration and social structure are interrelated over time, in different societies, for different communities and social groups. Almost every thread of social structure may be linked to migration patterns at macro-and micro-levels of analysis, cross-section ally and longitudinally, with variation over the life cycle, connections to the socio-economic development and relationships to social class. Migration may be linked to social structural changes through the diffusion of new ideas, attitudes and behaviour.

Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihoods is a key feature of human history. While some regions and sectors fall behind in their capacity to support populations, others move ahead and people migrate to access these emerging opportunities. Industrialization widens the gap between rural and urban areas, inducing a shift of the workforce towards industrializing areas. There is extensive debate on the factors that cause populations to shift, from those that emphasize individual rationality and household behaviour to those that cite the structural logic of capitalist development (de Haan and Rogaly, 2002). Moreover, numerous studies show that the process of migration is influenced by social, cultural and economic factors and outcomes can be vastly different for men and women, for different groups and different locations. In recent years, migration from Punjab to other states of India and to countries abroad has become so rampant that its effect is felt in every aspect of life in the state. From low sex ratio to other social and demographic consequences has devalued the heavy remittances coming from other states and countries. Though migration is a global process but it is

influenced by the ways in which local people experience and make sense of their world. Migration brings economic, social and geographical mobility. Yet in other ways it also heightens social and economic dependence. In some cases it binds families together and some other cases it also pulling them apart. It is a central source of advancement and a symbol of power and also resisted through stress upon local sources of power. (Gardner, 1995)

According to Brettell Caroline (2003) moving from one place to another is nearly a major event .It is one those events around which an individual's biography is built. But for a migrant, identity becomes a heated matter and biographies become jigsaw puzzles, whose solutions are difficult and mutable. However, the problem is not the single pieces of this mosaic, but the way they fit in with each other. From identity crisis to health problem is the major setback of the migrant's life. The feelings associated with migration are usually complicated, the decision to migrate is typically difficult to make and the outcome usually involves mixed emotions. Migration is a statement of an individual's worldview and is therefore, an extremely cultural event. But migration is customarily conceptualized as a product of the material forces at work in our society. Hence the migrant is seen either as a "rational economic man" choosing individual advancement by responding to the economic signals of the job and housing markets, or a virtual prisoner of his or her class position and there by subject to powerful structural economic forces set in motion by the logic of capitalist accumulation. (Caroline, 2003) but Breman views the creation of migrant 'wage hunters' as representative symptoms of the larger processes of global capitalistic development resulting in a race to the bottom. Given that capitalistic production is motivated by profit as the only determining factor, it would invariably lead to regional imbalances and employers would hire labour at the lowest available cost. This trend of rising unemployment is compounded by the existence of regional imbalances in development within the country, which have collectively accelerated the phenomenon of migration. All theories of migration concede that migration occurs when the region of origin lacks the opportunities which the destination promises. It is inherently a combination of pull and push factors. Migration within and between countries in the region, is a desperate search for a better life. This intense movement of people is accentuated by the growing mismatch between pockets of economic activity and deprivation brought about by the new global economic order. Migration is a process that is governed by various push and pull factors. In simple terms, push factors force people to move, while the pull factors lure them to seemingly greener pastures. (Breman, 2004) The push factors include: Low agricultural productivity, lack of local employment or opportunities for advancement, landlessness, marginalization, Population pressure, Domestic or community conflict, War, political unrest, natural calamities etc. The Pull Factors include: Rapid urbanization and industrialization, Consumerism and increased access to information. Better opportunities for livelihood, education, improved system of mobility, Spirit of exploration etc. (Todaro, 1980)

Changing Places, People and Social Structure:

Ideas of 'home' and 'belonging' are often highly subjective and conceptual. However, in order to understand what it might mean for people to 'feel at home' or to 'belong' we need to recognise that there must be *something*, *someone* or *somewhere* to belong *to*: a representation of 'home' with which the individual can form an attachment. While this 'thing' can be both material and immaterial (in the sense of intangible, or conceptual), the other receptors of belonging or attachment – people (someone) and places (somewhere) – are usually considered to be inherently material (or tangible) due to their physicality. Such notions of belonging may be particularly important within the context of migration (including forced migration), border change or displacement, which result in people taking their own perceptions and memories of 'home' into new territory. Indeed, various academic literatures have explored feelings of belonging and understandings of home in these contexts, including: place identity and place attachment; identities and belonging; emotions, affect and loss or attachment. I argue that the *process* of attachment is as significant in understanding belonging and a sense of 'home' as either *place* or *people* individually. Belonging is tied up with understandings, constructions and articulations of identities, as well as with place, people, things and experiences. Hazel Easthope's (2009) work on mobility, place and identity, argues that both mobility (including migration) and place are 'fundamental attributes of *all* identities' (Easthope 2009: 78) within contemporary societies. She argues that this is the case, no matter whether we conceive of identities as rooted in place (for example Duyvendak's critique of political instrumentalisation of the 'nation-as-home' [2011]); rooted in the sense of being hybrid and flexible, following Giddens' (1991) and Bauman's (1997, 2001) 'liquid modernity'; dynamic and incomplete (Rutherford 1990); positional in relation to an 'other' (Said 1979); self-constructed within relations of power; or as a combination of various aspects of each (*cf.* Easthope 2009: 62–70).

Human mobility or migration, plays upon borders of nation, language and identity and keeps turning them porous. Deconstructing the structures that play that stigmatise and often marginalise the migrants. It draws attention to the power dynamics between the host and migrant community, which controls and enacts the episodes of hopes, of integration and negation. Concerns emerging with long-settled migrants, issues evolving with the second and third-generation migrant population such as growing up as children in diaspora, succumbing to family expectations as well as the fate of women under anxious and cautious patriarchal customs are also taken up by these papers to show the evolving nature of migrants' concern and ambitions in the host land. As we witness a global increase in migration, as more and more nation-states in Asia, America and Europe reel with the influx of migrants, we also notice the scope of new debates on migration, on possibilities and challenges for inclusive growth and development. These debates though will remain centered around

local resistance against migrants finding a refuge, around the processes of dehumanisation migrants undergo as well as the cultural differences but are also bound to concentrate on the new nuances such processes of resistance and dehumanisation involve (Castañeda Heide, 2016).

Histories of colonial institutionalising of religion into communities and its terrible outcomes in the form 'Partition' seemed repeating themselves once again though in a different form. Terms such as outsider, illegal refugee started making an appearance once again in everyday discourse.

The question of 'identity' is being questioned and debated in modern social theory. One way of life is giving one identity and another way of life is giving another identity, which leads to the identity crisis. The formation and transformation of identity is really a matter of concern and introspection in today's post modern world. (Dhal, 2022) We can explore how interactions between local community members, internal migrants, and external migrants are shaping new forms of social relations as well as new discourses about migration, citizenship, and deservingness. The analysis of such encounters reveals the ways contemporary migration complicates simple binaries of sending and receiving countries of origin and Destination and considers the impact of these flows for the relation between state and civil society.

Conclusion

Migration is an essential and important ingredient of global social change. It is a phenomenon that has been taking place for thousands of years and continues all over the world. It happens when people can no longer sustain themselves within their own milieus. They migrate to places where resources are more easily available as discussed by the push-pull and economic theories of migration. In earlier periods people migrated from one place to another in search of food, shelter, and safety from persecution. Today, people tend to migrate more frequently and long distances too. However, it is not in distress always, rather in search of better career opportunities and better quality of life. Migration is undeniably a journey during which old values and systems may gradually yield to new ones, with varying degrees of enthusiasms and/or resistances, and concomitant stress and strain on the individual and the family in social life. Also it is a social process that is induced, structured, and shaped by the individuals who participate in it directly and indirectly though links with those who migrate. These people: bring their desires, aspirations, needs, incentives, skills, and experiences to the event. What is the purpose of migration for an individual and for a family? People migrate not just to earn money. They migrate with lot of ambitions, aspirations and dreams. People migrate for a sense of purpose and a hope for satisfaction. If migration does not provide this then migration will lose its real value i.e. mobility both in spatial and social sense. If the purpose of migration is achieved then there is often very little left to feel alienation at the place of destination otherwise migrant status will always haunt the individual for a long period

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