

The nature, dimensions, causes and implications of in and out migration in North-East India

Arundhuti Patangia^{1,*}, Bimal K. Kar²

¹ T.H.B. College, Department of Geography, India

² Gauhati University, Department of Geography, India

* Corresponding author: arundhutipatangia@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the patterns of inter-state migration (both inward and outward migration within the country) in India's north-east states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. While most of the previous studies of population migration in India were related to international migration, this article focuses on the analysis of trends and spatial variation of inter-state inward and outward migration and associated rural-urban and male-female differentials in the region. The analysis is primarily based on the Census of India data for 2001 and 2011, because the 2021 Census has not been yet conducted in the country.

KEYWORDS

migration; inter-state migration; inward migration; outward migration; place of origin; place of destination; net migration rate; pull factors; push factors

Received: 8 September 2023

Accepted: 22 March 2024

Published online: 9 April 2024

Patangia, A., Kar, B. K. (2024): The nature, dimensions, causes and implications of in and out migration in North-East India. *AUC Geographica* 59(1), 20–34

<https://doi.org/10.14712/23361980.2024.2>

© 2024 The Authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>).

1. Introduction

The process of human migration, which is a universal phenomenon and a key feature of human history, can be considered as one of the most dynamic human activities (Sali and Astig 2015). In simple words, migration is the process of movement of people from one place to another involving change in the place of residence due to a variety of causes. It acts as a factor of redistribution of population over space and time. Sometimes it can be interpreted as a spontaneous effort to achieve a better balance between population and resources. In the words of Lee, migration is a process of change of residence either permanently or semi-permanently.

Indian Constitution provides basic freedom to move to any part of the country, right to reside and earn livelihood of their choices. That is why migrants are not needed to take permission or register at the place of origin as well as at the place of destination (Lusome and Bhagat 2010). India has a long history of internal migration. 2011 Census of India enumerated 450 million internal migrants in the country (based on place of last residence) constituting 37 per cent of its total population (Rajan and Bhagat 2021). The levels of internal migration which can be identified in the country as intra-district, inter-district and inter-state migration. Inter-district migrants account for around 10% of the total population of the country as per 2011 Census. In 2001, inter-state migration stood at 4.1% of the total population of the country (Census of India 2001). It slightly increased to 4.6% in 2011. The process of internal migration in India is facilitated by the economic development (Malhotra and Devi 2016). According to Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF India Representative, internal migration is an integral part of development and it should be recognized as such as an indicator of socio-economic progress (Singh 2016).

From the demographic point of view, North-East India, which is considered as a miniature India, is the home of almost all the ethno-linguistically and religiously major groups of people found in the country. There are eleven major streams and waves of migration which built up the present population of North-East India. Thus, migration played an important role in reshaping the population composition in North-East India. In the context of internal migration, intra-district movement is the dominant stream of migration in North-East India. The North-East India had experienced a large volume of influx from across the international border, as more than 99% of its total boundary is shared with foreign countries (Gogoi et al. 2009). Around 2.5% of the total migrants in North-East India have originated from foreign countries. Apart from the international migrants, North-East India has been the receiver of migrants coming from other states and union territories of the country. Most importantly, despite prevalence of almost similar

trend of birth and death rates as in the country, the considerably high growth rates of population in the region have been contributed by significant volume of migration from within and outside the country as against considerably low mobility of its people to other parts of the country (Sharma and Kar 1997). Increasing regional inequalities and uneven economic development have led to interstate mobility of people within India. Of the total migrants of North-East India, around 3.5% have come to this region from other states of India (Lusome and Bhagat 2020).

The present work mainly focuses on the analysis of the changing pattern of movement of people between North-East India and the rest of the country in both the directions. The analysis of the causes of migration and male-female differential would provide further insight into the prevailing socio-economic condition of North-East India and its different parts. In view of this, the study bears demographic, socio-economic and political significance.

2. The study area

North-East India (the study area), commonly called the 'Land of Seven Sisters', is located between 20°N and 29°30'N latitudes and 89°46'E and 97°30'E longitudes. Although it has become a common practice to include the state of Sikkim, which is a member-state of North-Eastern Council, within North-East India, here this easternmost region of India consisting of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura being contiguous to one another as a region is considered as north-eastern region of India or North-East India. It covers a total area of 255,036 km² representing about 7.3% of India's total geographical area. It is surrounded by the hills and mountains from three sides. Its northern and eastern boundaries are represented by the Himalayas and Patkai Hill ranges respectively. North-East India is surrounded by four foreign countries; viz. China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Towards the west, this region is bordered by plains. To the north of the region lies the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan and Tibetan part of China. It is bounded by Myanmar on the east and West Bengal and Bangladesh on the west. The Arakan Yoma of Myanmar and Chittagong hills of Bangladesh, Tripura Hills and Surma plain of Bangladesh lie to the south and south-west of the region. This region is connected with mainland of India through a very narrow corridor of around 22 km width is called Siliguri corridor.

The total population of North-East India is 45,161,611 as per 2011 Census of India, which constitutes 3.7% of the total population of India. The population density of North-East India is 176 persons per km² as per 2011 Census data. Among the states of North-East India, Assam is the most densely populated with an average population density of

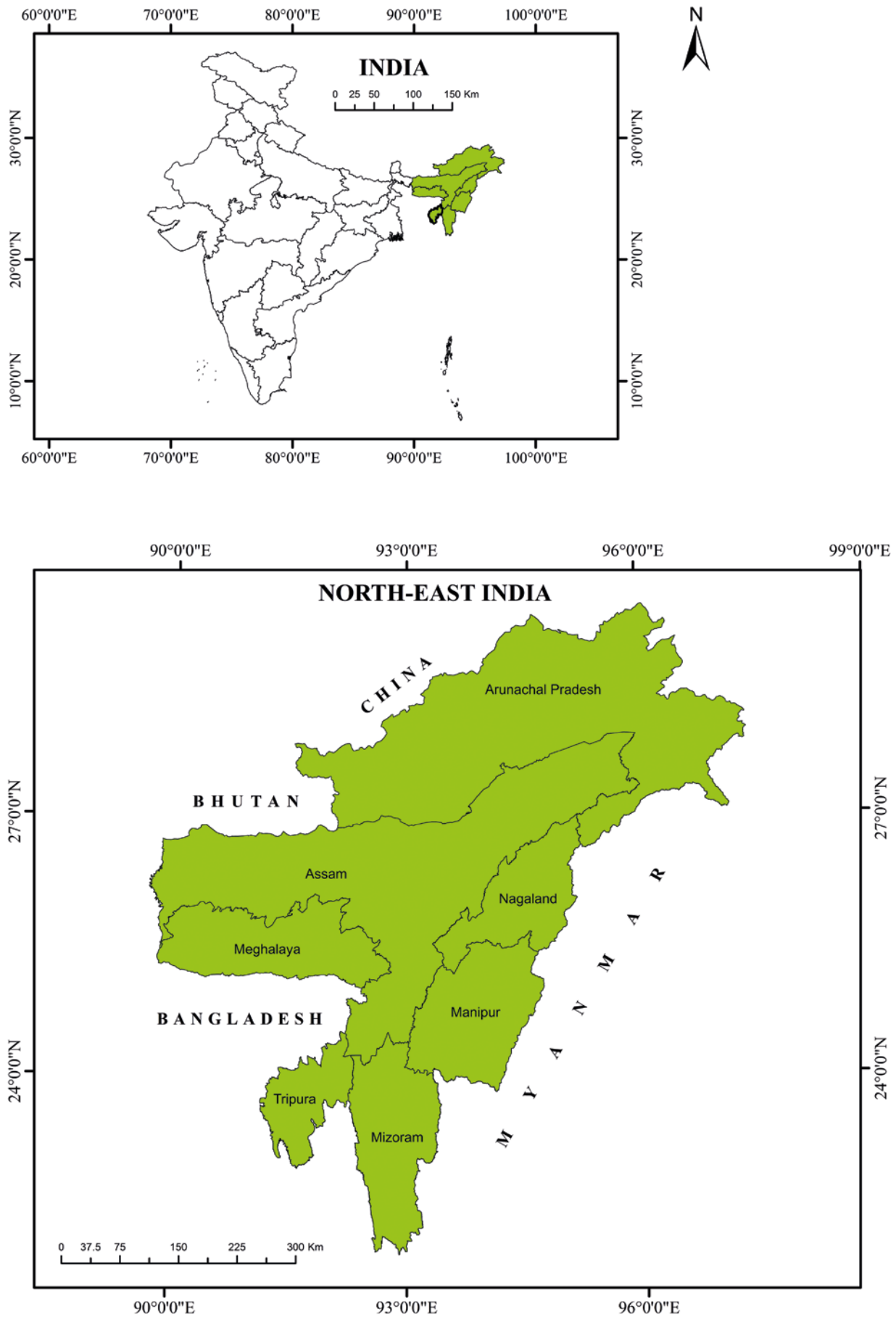


Fig. 1 Location map of the study area (North-East India).
Source: Prepared by the authors.

398 persons per km². With an average population density of 17 persons per km² Arunachal Pradesh is the most sparsely populated state in this region. The sex ratio of North-East India is 960, which is higher than that of the national average (943). Among the states in North-East India, Manipur has recorded the highest sex ratio (985), followed by Meghalaya (989) and Mizoram (976).

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of N-E India. About 65% of the total working population is employed in the agricultural sector. This region accounts for a little over 2.5% of the country's GDP. This region (Fig. 1) is lagged behind in economic development due to rapid growth of population, general poverty, subsistence economic base, low level of resource utilization, recurrence of floods, unemployment, lack of technical and vocational education, lack of entrepreneurship, poor infrastructure, poor marketing facilities, insurgency, and illegal migration from neighboring countries (Taher and Ahmed 1998).

3. Data base and methodology

This study is primarily based on secondary sources of data. Data on migration of North-East India are collected from the Census of India which is considered as one of the most reliable sources of population data in the country. Moreover, unit level data of 64th round of National Sample Survey, 2008–2009 is also considered in this study wherever necessary. In this work, trend of inward and outward migration in North-East India is studied on the basis of migration data available as per place of birth. Reasons for migration are categorized as work, business, marriage, moved after birth, and moved with households. The pattern of male-female composition and rural-urban differentials in inward and outward migration of the study area is also analysed through the data available in Census of India. As 2021 Census has not yet been conducted in the country, the present study involves use of data for only 2001 and 2011. The data so obtained from different volumes of Census of India have been processed, analysed and mapped, as and when necessary, through simple quantitative and cartographic techniques. Spatial variation in net migration rate in North-East India is represented thorough choropleth map prepared in the GIS platform (Arc GIS). Here, Net Migration Rate (NMR) is calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Net Migration Rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of inward migrants} - \text{Total number of outward migrants}}{\text{Mid-year population}} \times 1000$$

The conclusions of the study are merely based on the results derived from data analysis and available relevant literature.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Trend and spatial variation of inter-state inward and outward migration

The history of North-East India can be referred to as the history of migration. The states of North-East India have experienced a large influx of people both internally and internationally. In response to socio-economic changes, the spatial pattern of inward and outward migration in North-East India is witnessing changes over time.

According to 2011 Census, 590,939 people migrated to North-East India from the rest of the country as per record of birth. This number was 591,212 in 2001 (Tab. 1). So far the proportion of such in-migrants to total population of this north-east region is concerned; it witnessed a gradual decline from 1.82% in 1991 to 1.54% in 2001 and 1.31% in 2011. It thus reveals that the volume of in-migrants to the north-east region is on decline, although there has been a notion among the people of the north-east that a large number of people from different parts of the country are pouring into it (Lusome and Bhagat 2010). The implementation of Inner Line Permit (ILP) in some north-eastern states restricts the free flow of migrants to the region. Hence, the ILP is regarded by Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur as a constitutional tool to safeguard their native identities and cultures and to manage the population of their tribes and races within their own state by controlling the arrival of outsiders. The state of Meghalaya has also recently demanded the implementation of ILP in the state (Mahanta 2016). Moreover, the North-eastern people are racially, ethnically and culturally different from the people in the rest of the country. Prevailing cultural gaps, prolonged insurgency, ethnic conflicts may be the reasons behind the gradual decline of migrants to North-East India.

According to Kingsley Davis, the movement of people from one state to another within India is less because of the prevalence of the caste system, traditional values, joint family system, diversity of culture, etc. (Davis 1951). Zachariah also observed less mobility of people from one state to another in India as compared to western countries (Zachariah 1964). As regards the volume of out-migration from the North-East India to other states and union territories of India, it witnessed a decrease from 691,234 to 510,353 during 2001–2011 (Tab. 2). It is thus observed that although there has been decline in the volumes of both in-migrants and out-migrants of the region during 2001–2011, the volume of decline in out-migration has been remarkable (Tab. 1 and Tab. 2). Implementation of MNREGA in rural areas may be one of the reasons behind such a decline in the trend of out-migration from N-E India. Besides, gradual progress of infrastructure and consequent steady socio-economic growth in most parts of the region

has also been no less significant in checking out-migration in recent times. Moreover, in the metropolitan cities like Delhi, racism affects the migrants from North-East India at every stage of life, including house rentals, employment; and promotions (Jaiswal 2017). In the mainland India, people from the North-east are often treated “outsiders”. The North-east region is poorly understood and frequently disregarded by the media, leaving the people of the main land in the dark regarding its customs and culture. According to a North-East Support Center and Helpline survey on North-East Migration and Challenges in National Cities, 86% of North-Easters claimed to have experienced racial discrimination in Indian metropolises based on this kind of cultural profiling in the years 2009–2010. It is not unusual for a North-east Indian to be asked, “Are you from China?” They disparagingly call North-Easterners “chinky” or make other offensive comments. Novel coronavirus reinforces xenophobia and intolerance against North-eastern people. They were subjected to racial profiling and derogatory stereotypes as the “face of coronavirus” during the Covid-19 outbreak in many mainland Indian cities (Haokip 2021). The experience of migrants in these cities is regrettably marred by racism, violence and prejudice that could be the cause of the sharp fall in the trend of out-migration from N-E India to rest of the country.

The prevailing gap between in-migration and out-migration of population in the region, which can be better understood through net migration rate per thousand population, is found to be low negative (–2.61) in 2001 and low positive (1.78) in 2011. Among the states in the region, Arunachal Pradesh recorded very high positive net migration rates in both 2001 and 2011 (49.63 and 31.85 respectively), Nagaland with very high negative in 2001 (–49.94) and medium positive in 2011 (12.93), and the remaining with low positive and low negative (Tab. 3). It is thus clear that the contribution of in-migrants to the overall growth of population in Arunachal Pradesh

Tab. 1 State-wise inward migration to North-East India from other states/UTs of India (excluding inter-state migration within N-E India) as per place of birth, 2001 and 2011.

State	Number of in-migrants	
	2001	2011
1. Arunachal Pradesh	65,463	56,400
2. Nagaland	37,554	38,595
3. Manipur	9,395	7,725
4. Mizoram	7,524	6,330
5. Tripura	16,982	36,916
6. Meghalaya	33,037	34,815
7. Assam	421,257	410,158
North-East India	591,212	590,939

Source: Migration Table D-1, India, Census of India, 2001 and 2011.

during 2001–2011 had been quite significant. On the other hand, very high negative net migration as witnessed in Nagaland in 2001 had been indicative of large scale outmigration probably due to the long continued insurgency. A marked alteration in the balance between inward and out-ward inter-state migration is noticed in Nagaland, Tripura and Assam between the year 2001 and 2011. Manipur is the only state of North-East India where inter-state out-migration exceeded the inter-state in-migration in both 2001 and 2011 (Fig. 2). However, some sort of a balance between in-migration and out-migration is somehow maintained in the region.

Variations can be observed with respect to volume of migration from different parts of the country to North-East India. For the purpose of comparison in this respect, India is divided into five zones, viz. **1. Northern India zone** comprising Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi and Chandigarh; **2. Western India** comprising Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep;

Tab. 2 State-wise outward migration from North-East India to other states/UTs of India (excluding inter-state migration within N-E India) as per place of birth, 2001 and 2011.

State	Number of out-migrants	
	2001	2011
1. Arunachal Pradesh	10,969	12,324
2. Nagaland	136,933	13,022
3. Manipur	22,824	29,777
4. Mizoram	5,055	4,343
5. Tripura	25,314	33,913
6. Meghalaya	18,196	19,104
7. Assam	471,943	397,870
North-East India	691,234	510,353

Source: Migration Table D-1, Census of India, India, 2001 and 2011.

Tab. 3 Net migration rate in North-East India at state level, 2001 and 2011.

State	Net migration rate (per thousand population)	
	2001	2011
1. Arunachal Pradesh	49.63	31.85
2. Nagaland	–49.94	12.93
3. Manipur	–6.20	–7.72
4. Mizoram	2.79	1.81
5. Tripura	–2.60	0.82
6. Meghalaya	6.40	5.30
7. Assam	–1.90	0.39
North-East India	–2.61	1.78

Source: Calculated based on Migration Table D-1, Census of India, India, 2001 and 2011.

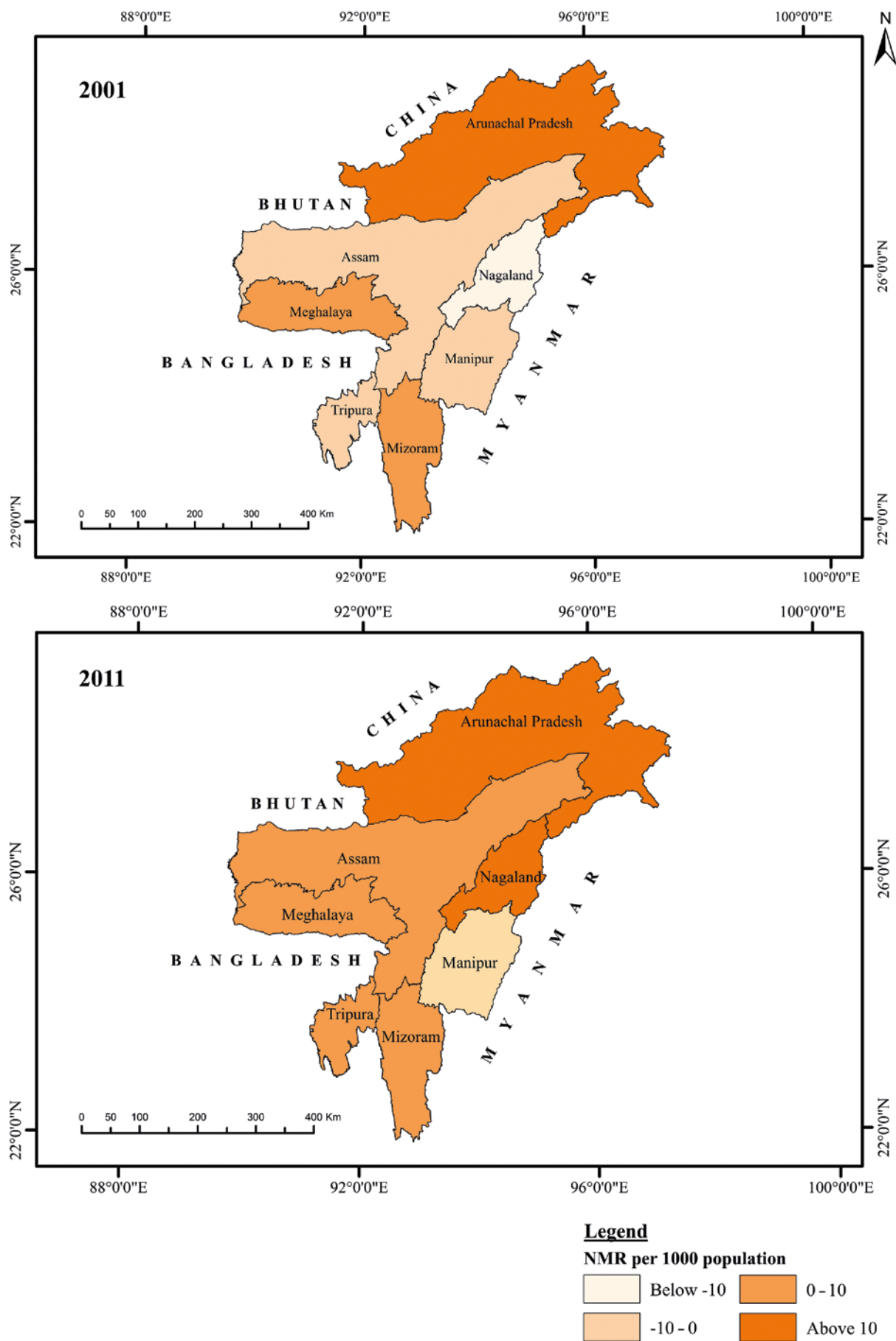


Fig. 2 Net migration rate of North-East India as per place of birth, 2001 and 2011. Source: Prepared by the authors.

3. Central India comprising Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh; **4. Southern India** comprising Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry; and **5. Eastern India** comprising Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Sikkim, West Bengal, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

So far volume of in-migration to the N-E India from different parts of India is concerned; it is found that the states of Eastern India are the major source of in-migrants to North-East India. Among the five regions of India, it contributes to around 68% to the total inter-state in-migrants (excluding inter-state migrants within N-E India) in the year 2001. It further increased to more than 73% in 2011 (Tab. 4). On the other hand, constituting merely 1% of total in-migrants, the volume of in-migration from Western India to the north-eastern region is the lowest.

It is further observed that among the north-eastern states, Assam is the major destination of migrants coming from different parts of India (other than N-E India), where more than 4.1 lakh in-migrants constituting 69.41% of total in-migrants settled in 2011. It is distantly followed by Arunachal Pradesh, which received 9.54% of the total migrants from other states and UTs of India (outside N-E India) in 2011. On the other hand, Mizoram with 6,330 migrants coming from other states/UTs of India (outside N-E India) records the lowest position (1.07 per cent) in this respect (Tab. 1).

Now, as regards volume of out-migrants from N-E India to different regions of India is concerned, Eastern India is the largest receiver of migrants originated from North-East India due to its proximity and emergence of Kolkata as one of the largest urban agglomerations in the country. The Eastern Indian states are the destination for about 60% of the inter-state out-migrants (excluding inter-state migrants within N-E India) originated from the North-eastern states of India as per 2001 Census data. This figure, however, declined to 47% in 2011 Census. On the

other hand, Southern India received the lowest number of migrants originated from N-E India in 2001. It is found that out of the total inter-state out-migrants (outside North-East India), only 2.87% migrated to Southern India as per 2001 Census, which increased to 13.17% in 2011. With only around 8.83% of the total inter-state out-migrants (outside N-E India), Central India is the lowest receiver of migrants originated from North-East India as per 2011 Census data. It is further observed that unlike other parts of the country, the number of out-migrants from North-East India to Southern and Western India has increased significantly during 2001–2011 due to fast industrialization and prevailing higher wage as compared to other parts of the country, and as a consequence Southern India witnessed a growth of 238% and Western India 107% as against negative growth in the other regions of the country (Tab. 5). So far migration of North-easterners to Southern India is concerned; the state of Karnataka is the largest receiver of migrants. Around 54% of the total migrants to South India from North-East India settled in Karnataka in 2011. Bangalore, the Capital of Karnataka as well as the country's fifth-largest UA, has recorded more than one third of the North-eastern migrants to South India. Here, the majority of N-E migrants are male, i.e. 65% (Census of India 2011). Bangalore, "Silicon Valley of India", probably offers more options that are better suited for men. Due to distance factor, women are less likely to choose Karnataka as their destination. In Bangalore, most of the migrants from the North-East work in both organized and unorganized industries, including retail, hotel, and BPO (Reimeingam 2018). Furthermore, a greater proportion of the migrants arriving in Bangalore comes from urban areas, where people appear to be more informative, educated and affluent. In 2001, about 66 per cent of the migrants from the region to Bangalore originated from urban areas which are increased to 74% after a decade in 2011. Employment is the largest reason for migration with

Tab. 4 Spatial variation in inward migration to N-E India from other parts of India (excluding inter-state migrants within N-E India) as per place of birth, 2001 and 2011.

States of N-E India (place of destination)	Place of origin									
	North India		West India		Central India		South India		East India	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
1. Arunachal Pradesh	6,365	4,454	967	531	12,654	10,197	4,777	3,327	40,700	37,864
2. Nagaland	6,214	4,857	907	397	5,567	4,793	3,586	2,427	21,280	26,121
3. Manipur	2,180	1,500	341	210	1,409	1,028	1,047	365	4,418	4,622
4. Mizoram	869	740	177	105	701	671	832	623	4,945	4,191
5. Tripura	2,181	1,374	357	347	1,789	1,860	855	671	11,800	32,662
6. Meghalaya	5,926	5,460	582	778	3,797	3,775	2,262	2,109	20,470	22,693
7. Assam	47,686	48,140	4,193	3,587	55,575	45,495	14,670	9,451	299,133	303,485
Total	71,421	66,525	7,524	5,955	81,492	67,819	28,029	18,973	402,746	431,638

Source: Migration Table D-1, Census of India, India, 2001 and 2011.

Tab. 5 Spatial variation in outward migration from N-E India to other parts of India (excluding inter-state migration within N-E India) as per place of birth, 2001 and 2011.

States of N-E India (place of origin)	Place of destination									
	North India		West India		Central India		South India		East India	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
1. Arunachal Pradesh	3,005	3,828	685	971	799	1,013	2,566	3,209	3,914	3,303
2. Nagaland	24,010	3,727	707	1,426	8,119	1,001	1,034	2,650	103,063	4,218
3. Manipur	8,837	10,317	2,818	4,012	4,906	1,966	2,728	8,869	3,535	4,613
4. Mizoram	2,598	1,615	592	528	395	393	565	990	905	817
5. Tripura	3,674	4,410	1,552	2,381	2,094	1,387	895	2,738	17,099	22,997
6. Meghalaya	8,110	4,510	1,531	2,258	1,041	1,270	1,379	2,791	6,135	8,275
7. Assam	59,675	71,437	20,219	46,598	103,410	38,052	10,697	45,983	277,942	195,800
Total	109,909	99,844	28,104	58,174	120,664	45,082	19,864	67,230	412,593	240,023

Source: Migration Table D-1, Census of India, India, 2001 and 2011.

a share of about 46 per cent, followed by the education with 17 per cent, movement of family with 16 per cent and the rest for marriage, business and others. The number of persons migrating from North-East to Bangalore for work climbed by 26 percentage points between 2001 and 2011 that highlights the unemployment problem in the place of origin. Another popular destination for North-eastern migrants is Chennai, the fourth largest Urban Agglomeration in India. As per Census of India, 2011, the number of out-migrants from North-East India to Chennai is 4,817, and majority of which are coming due to movement of family.

When the source of out-migration from among the north-eastern states is looked at, although there has been overall decline during 2001–2011 (Tab. 5), the contribution of Assam to the total volume of out-migration to other parts of the country constitutes 78% as per 2011 Census data (Tab. 2).

4.2 Pattern of rural-urban differential in inward and outward migration

The prevalence of less employment opportunities, low wages, lack of basic amenities, lack of educational facilities, etc., acts as the push factors of out-migration from most of the rural areas. In view of this many people migrate from rural to urban areas in search of better employment opportunities, higher income, better wages and better facilities (Sali and Astig 2015). Since the initiation of economic reforms in 1991, India has been experiencing the rapid flow of migration from rural to urban areas (Bhati 2015). The majority of rural youths migrate to urban areas mainly for better education and livelihood (Deotti and Estrusch 2016). In the case of North-East India also, the movement of people from rural to urban areas constitutes the major stream of in-migrants from other parts of the country as per 2011 Census data. Out of the total inward migrants to North-East India from

other parts of the country (outside N-E India), above 63% of migrants are urban-centric (Tab. 6 and Fig. 3). However, when compared between rural to urban and urban to urban in-migration to N-E India, the contribution of rural to urban is more (37.43%) than that of urban to urban (25.68%) with the exception of Mizoram (62.57%). As the tendency of the urban people to move to rural areas is extremely low, the proportion of urban to rural migrants from outside is found to be as low as 6.31 per cent in N-E India. Although the overall pattern of such rural-urban migration is almost the same in N-E India, excepting the state of Tripura, there exist some variations in this respect among the other states of the region. Due to lack of desired level of development of life and living in the urban areas as of Tripura, the urban centric migration in the state is found to be as low as 31%. Among other states, the contribution of urban-centric in-migration from outside N-E India is found to be very high in Nagaland (79%), Meghalaya (77%) and Mizoram (74%) due to fast improvement in urban facilities and better transport connectivity (Tab. 6).

So far out-migration from N-E India to other parts of India is concerned, although the urban-centric migration is more prominent (67.88%), the contribution of urban to urban migration is significantly high (43.02%). Migration from this region to large urban centres has occurred mostly for reasons related to education and employment due to a shortage of employment and educational opportunities. There was a turning point in Indian economic history during the early 1990s. The post-Cold War international system, along with political instability and severe financial crises compelled India to liberalize its economy and implement extensive privatization, which accelerated the globalization of its markets (Haokip 2012). Multinational companies were drawn to India as its economy opened up, not just to invest but also to discover a sizable market for its goods. These changes create a lot of opportunities for work in the

Tab. 6 Patterns of rural-urban in-migration from other parts of India to N-E India (as per place of last residence), 2011.

State	Rural to Rural (%)	Rural to urban (%)	Urban to rural (%)	Urban to urban (%)
1. Arunachal Pradesh	31.58	42.42	8.22	17.78
2. Nagaland	13.82	52.99	6.38	26.81
3. Manipur	15.69	38.87	12.83	32.61
4. Mizoram	15.01	12.20	10.22	62.57
5. Tripura	63.73	17.75	4.69	13.83
6. Meghalaya	13.63	46.58	8.94	30.85
7. Assam	31.25	37.16	5.32	26.27
N-E India	30.58	37.43	6.31	25.68

Source: Migration Table D-2, Census of India, 2011.

private sector in urban areas. Thus, rapid migration from North-East India to the mainland urban cities has been occurring since the start of the new millennium (Haokip 2021). Moreover, there are no large-scale industries in the area other than oil mining and plantations in Assam (Lama 2013). A pool of degree holders in the area lack employment opportunities. People are now heavily dependent on public services because self-employment efforts have not yet reached their full potential. This element additionally motivates youth to take competitive exams such as the civil service test. Delhi, the capital city of India, becomes a favoured location for part-time preparation and employment (Singh 2013).

Among the north-eastern states, the proportion of urban-centric out-migration is found to be the highest in Manipur (82.62%), followed by Tripura (78.31%) and Meghalaya (77.36%), and the lowest in Arunachal Pradesh (60.82%) (Tab. 7 and Fig. 3). The prevalence of such a high urban-centric out-migration from Manipur is largely associated with overall human resource development and frequent disturbances. On the other hand, the state of Meghalaya has witnessed the highest rate of urban to urban out-migration (65.87%) from N-E India. Male-female composition in urban to urban stream of out-migration from Meghalaya is to some extent balanced. As per 2011 Census, around 53% of the total urban to urban out-migrants from

this state is female and the remaining 47% are male out-migrants. Movement of family is recorded to be the major cause of out migration of female (48.4%). On the other hand, the significant causes of urban to urban male out-migration from Meghalaya to other parts of the country are found to be employment and movement of family (33.87% and 33.83% respectively) (Tab. 7).

4.3 Pattern of male-female composition in inward and outward migration

As elsewhere, the inter-state in-migration to N-E India appears to be male-dominated. In the year 2001 the male in-migrants to this region constituted around 60% of the total interstate in-migrants from outside N-E India (2001 Census). Although there had been a trend of balancing in male-female composition of in-migrants during 2001–2011 in the region, the proportion of male in-migrants is still found to be as high as around 54% as per 2011 Census data. When compared between the rural and urban areas, the proportion of male in-migrants is considerably higher in the urban areas (56%) as compared to that of rural areas (51%). Among the states of N-E India, the proportion of male in-migrants is found to be the highest in Mizoram (69.76%), followed by Arunachal Pradesh (62.44%) and Nagaland (62.12%), and the

Tab. 7 Patterns of rural-urban out-migration from N-E India to other parts of India (as per place of last residence), 2011.

State	Rural to rural (%)	Rural to urban (%)	Urban to Rural (%)	Urban to urban (%)
1. Arunachal Pradesh	24.89	18.53	14.19	42.39
2. Nagaland	15.51	16.84	15.45	52.20
3. Manipur	9.97	27.17	7.41	55.45
4. Mizoram	16.57	18.03	10.97	54.43
5. Tripura	14.62	21.23	7.07	57.08
6. Meghalaya	9.00	11.49	13.64	65.87
7. Assam	26.04	26.36	8.30	39.30
N-E India	23.31	24.86	8.81	43.02

Source: Migration Table D-2, Census of India, 2011.

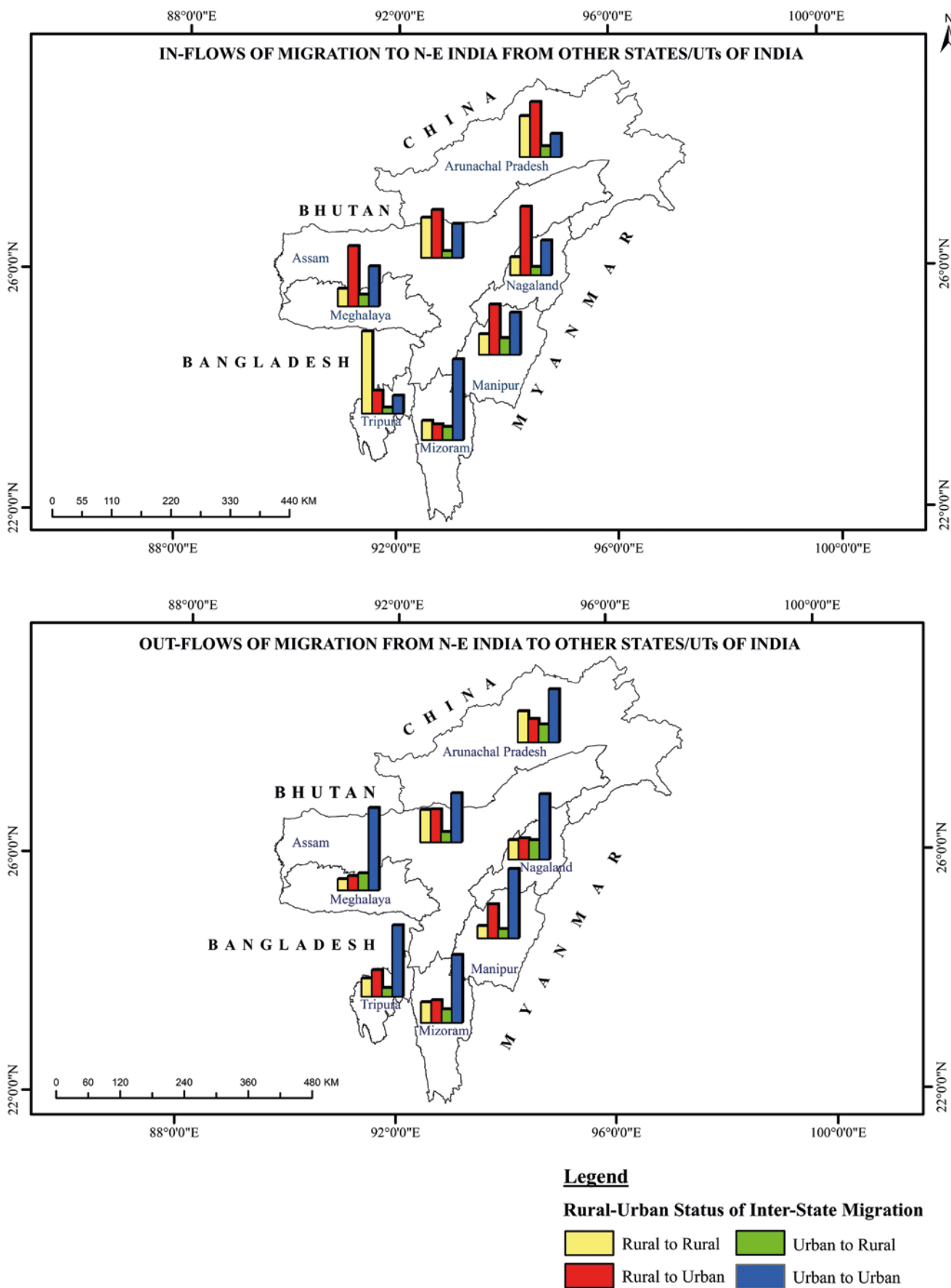


Fig. 3: Rural-urban status of migration flows between N-E India and other states/UTs of India, 2011.
 Source: Prepared by the authors.

lowest and somewhat balanced in Assam (51.94%). Moreover, although the gap between the proportions of male and female in-migrants in the rural areas of the region is quite insignificant, it is more than 67% point in Mizoram (Male: 83.83%; Female: 16.17%), followed by 28.58% point in Arunachal Pradesh, and low negative of -5.5% point in Assam (Tab. 8). The prevalence of such a high proportion of male-selective migration particularly in the states of Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland has been largely associated with in-migration of male workers from outside N-E India for various development activities including construction of roads, etc.

So far male-female composition of out-migration from N-E India is concerned, it is found to be female-dominant with proportion of female out-migrants as 52.06% (2011 Census). It can be associated with the flexibility of gender roles. North-East India has a greater rate of female work participation than the rest of India (Singh 2013). Other than Kerala, North-East India is the only region where female migration has been reported for reasons other than

marriage, such as work and education, in contrast to other regions where "marriage" still predominates as the reason for leaving the state (Mukherjee and Dutta 2017). NSSO (64th Round) 2007–2008 reveals that just 0.70 per cent of female migration is related to employment at national level. While almost 25% of all women in North-East India migrate in search of work. The largest percentage of migration related to employment was recorded in Meghalaya (39.20%), followed by Manipur (27.03%), Arunachal Pradesh (26.20%), and Mizoram (22.40%). Again, only 0.50 per cent of women moved across the country in search of higher education opportunities. Conversely, it is revealed in the North-eastern states that roughly one-fourth of them relocated for higher education. This can be an indication that women in these areas enjoyed greater independence due to the matriarchal nature of many tribal cultures (Bango and Kashyap 2018).

When compared between rural and urban areas in this respect, the proportion of female out-migrants is even higher to the rural areas (59.04%) and

Tab. 8 Pattern of male-female composition in inward migration to North-East India from other states/union territories of India (excluding inter-state migration within North-East India) as per Place of Birth, 2011.

State	Proportion of male and female in-migrants (in %)					
	Total		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1. Arunachal Pradesh	62.44	37.56	64.29	35.71	61.11	38.89
2. Nagaland	62.12	37.88	62.14	37.86	62.11	37.89
3. Manipur	58.82	41.18	58.87	41.13	58.80	41.20
4. Mizoram	69.76	30.24	83.83	16.17	66.30	33.70
5. Tripura	55.90	44.10	57.12	42.88	53.28	46.72
6. Meghalaya	54.05	45.95	52.11	47.89	54.66	45.34
7. Assam	51.94	48.06	47.25	52.75	54.80	45.20
N-E India	54.26	45.74	51.22	48.78	56.13	43.87

Source: Migration Table D-1, India, Census of India, 2011.

Tab. 9 Pattern of male-female composition of outward migrants from North-East India to other states/union territories of India (excluding inter-state migration within North-East India) as per place of birth, 2011.

State	Proportion of male and female out-migrants (in %)					
	Total		Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1. Arunachal Pradesh	54.34	45.66	55.70	44.30	53.43	46.57
2. Nagaland	49.36	50.64	49.06	50.94	49.49	50.51
3. Manipur	51.96	48.04	53.76	46.24	51.61	48.39
4. Mizoram	46.86	53.14	45.99	54.01	47.10	52.90
5. Tripura	51.87	48.13	47.37	52.63	53.00	47.00
6. Meghalaya	46.34	53.66	43.75	56.25	47.02	52.98
7. Assam	47.15	52.85	39.30	60.70	51.28	48.72
N-E India	47.94	52.06	40.96	59.04	51.21	48.79

Source: Migration Table D-1, India, Census of India, 2011.

lower than male to the urban areas (48.79%). However, there exist some variations in this respect between the male and female out-migrants. Although out-migration from the N-E India is largely female-dominant with highest rate from Meghalaya, it is found to be male dominant from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. In the case of urban-centric out-migration, it is male dominant from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Manipur and Assam (Tab. 9). In any case, the prevailing rate of female out-migration from different states of N-E India almost equally with male, if not more in some cases, is indicative of the rise in women's socio-economic empowerment (Mahapatro 2014).

4.4 Causes of inter-state inward and outward migration

Analysis of the reasons behind movement of people from one place to another is one of the most important aspects of migration study, because nobody moves without any cause. Among diverse causes of migration, livelihood insecurity is found to be the leading one (Kumar et al. 2022). So far North-East India is concerned; the major cause of its inter-state migration is recorded as employment (work) and business. Marriage is another significant reason for inter-state migration to N-E India.

As per 2011 Census data, North-East India witnessed as high as 35.29% of in-migrants from other parts of India due to employment and business. Marriage, the second most important cause of inter-state in-migration to this region, constitutes 24.30% of the total in-migrants. The migration due to movement of family has contributed 21.04% of total in-migration in the region (Tab. 10). The contribution of education in this respect is quite insignificant (1.06%), as development of educational infrastructures in the region is still much behind many other parts of the country. The choices for modern education are also very limited in the region.

So far the major causes of in-migration from different source regions of the country is concerned, although the pattern appears to be almost the same for most parts of the country, the contribution of employment and business, and marriage is the highest from Eastern India (37.15% and 25.40% respectively) due to its nearness and socio-cultural similarities with N-E India. On the other hand, the major reason behind migration from western India is found to be movement of family, which contributes to as high as 32.69% of the total in-migrants from the western India (Tab. 10).

The dominant cause of inter-state out-migration from North-East India to other parts of the country is found to be movement of family. It constitutes as

Tab. 10 Causes of inward migration to North-East India from different parts of India (as per place of last residence), 2011.

Region of origin of migrants	Percentage distribution of in-migrants due to different causes					
	Employment and business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Movement of family	Other causes
North India	27.82	1.59	18.25	2.77	25.62	23.92
East India	37.15	0.81	25.40	1.68	19.82	15.14
Central India	32.70	0.97	24.23	1.42	24.05	16.63
West India	22.32	2.92	13.77	2.40	32.69	25.90
South India	33.42	3.90	15.39	1.94	25.59	19.76
All India	35.29	1.06	24.30	1.69	21.04	16.62

Source: Migration Table D-3, India, Census of India, 2011.

Tab. 11 Causes of outward migration from North-East India to other parts of India (as per place of last residence), 2011.

Place of destination	Percentage distribution of out-migrants due to different causes					
	Employment and business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Movement of family	Others
North India	24.46	6.30	17.65	1.95	34.82	14.82
East India	13.94	1.69	32.41	2.61	30.77	18.58
Central India	18.68	5.38	28.11	1.34	33.00	13.49
West India	42.49	6.76	8.06	2.41	26.08	14.20
South India	42.50	14.67	5.50	1.84	19.31	16.18
All India	23.64	5.30	22.56	2.23	29.75	16.52

Source: Migration Table D-3, India, Census of India, 2011.

high as 29.75% of the total out-migrants, followed by employment and business (23.61%) and marriage (22.56%). The contribution of education (5.30%) as a driver of out-migration is found to be somewhat significant as compared to in-migration (1.06%) (Tab. 11).

The North-eastern region of India has experienced violent incidents and conflicts related to secessionist movements and insurgencies since the country's independence. People from many racial backgrounds, languages, and socio-cultural traditions live in the area have made these issues more complicated. Their demand for ethnic homelands to safeguard and maintain their own culture and identity has therefore sparked conflict, which has resulted in internal displacement (Phukan 2013). The decades-long ethnic hostilities have once again come to prominence due to a flare-up of violence between the Meiteis and the Kukis in the North-eastern Indian state of Manipur, which started in May, 2023 that has resulted in around 200 fatalities and 60,000 displaced inhabitants (The Hindu). Due to prolonged histories of insurgency and a dearth of economic opportunities, North-eastern states have substantial negative factors that are pushing young people from them to other regions of India.

In the areas where insurgencies and wars are prevalent, parents most often send their children out of state to finish their education, not only for security reasons but also to keep them away from joining the local insurgent groups (Hangsing 2023).

The North-Eastern region was declared a "Disturbed Area" under the Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Acts of 1976, and later under the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) of 1958, which finally resulted in a substantial emigration of people as it legitimizes the use of violent means by armed forces to maintain the public order in "disturbed areas" without imposing any time limits in the longevity of its application (Gogoi and Pandov 2022).

So far spatial variation in the contribution of different factors of out-migration from North-East India is concerned, the proportion of out-migration due to movement of family is found to be the highest in North India (34.82%), followed by Central India and East India; in South India and West India due to employment and business (42.50%); in East India due to marriage (32.41%); and in South India due to education (14.67%) (Tab. 11). It means South India and West India owing to massive developments in industrial and IT sectors attract more people from

Tab. 12 Causes of inward migration to North-East India from other states/union territories of India (outside North-East India) as per place of last residence, 2011.

State (place of destination)	Percentage distribution of in-migrants due to different causes					
	Employment and business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Movement of family	Others
1. Arunachal Pradesh	44.13	1.51	9.79	1.85	26.95	15.77
2. Nagaland	42.05	2.11	11.54	1.29	26.06	16.95
3. Manipur	32.69	5.37	14.44	1.57	20.58	25.35
4. Mizoram	45.74	2.72	6.00	1.10	23.18	21.26
5. Tripura	51.70	0.34	7.76	0.42	26.86	12.92
6. Meghalaya	29.70	2.87	19.05	3.25	26.90	18.23
7. Assam	31.40	0.66	30.22	1.91	19.14	16.67

Source: Migration Table D-3, Census of India, 2011.

Tab. 13 Causes of outward migration from North-East India to other states/union territories of India (outside North-East India) as per place of last residence, 2011.

State (place of origin)	Percentage distribution of out-migrants due to different causes					
	Employment and business	Education	Marriage	Moved after birth	Movement of family	Others
1. Arunachal Pradesh	15.87	18.23	9.21	2.53	30.42	23.74
2. Nagaland	21.65	9.56	14.50	3.34	32.32	18.63
3. Manipur	27.25	22.70	7.58	1.45	23.50	17.52
4. Mizoram	23.70	19.60	9.32	1.48	27.52	18.38
5. Tripura	21.75	6.11	18.04	1.85	32.40	19.85
6. Meghalaya	20.96	8.33	13.25	2.17	35.60	19.69
7. Assam	30.87	2.43	21.79	2.02	27.28	15.61

Source: Migration Table D-3, India, Census of India, 2011.

N-E India for employment; East India attracts more out-migration from N-E India for marriage due to nearness and more socio-cultural homogeneity; and South India attracts out-migration of large volume of youths for education due to the availability of modern and diverse educational facilities and associated job opportunities.

4.5 Pattern of spatial variation in the causes of inward and outward migration

So far the causes of migration are concerned; there exists spatial variation with respect to the causes of inward and outward migration in N-E India depending on the prevailing variation in socio-economic conditions in the areas of origin and destination.

Among the states of North-East India, the proportion of in-migrants coming for the purpose of employment and business is found to be the highest in Tripura (51.70%), followed by Mizoram (45.74%), Arunachal Pradesh (44.13%) and Nagaland (42.05%), and the lowest in Meghalaya (29.70%). In the case of marriage as the cause of in-migration, the proportion is found to be the highest in Assam (30.22%) and the lowest in Mizoram (6.00%) (Tab. 12). The contribution of education towards in-migration in different states of N-E India is very insignificant.

Among the various causes of out-migration from the states of N-E India, movement of family, employment and business, marriage and education are considered to be important. On the other hand, among the states of out-migration, Assam witnesses the highest proportion due to employment and business (30.87%); Meghalaya due to family movement (35.60%); Assam due to marriage (21.79%); and Manipur due to education (22.70%) (Tab. 13).

5. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion reveals that although there has been no change in the volume of in-migration from different parts of India to North-East India as against marked decline in the volume of out-migration from the region to other parts of the country during 2001–2011, the net migration rate in the region has become low positive from low negative. The decline in out-migration of population from N-E India in recent times is largely due to increased job opportunities and financial support to the different socio-economically marginalized sections of people under various schemes of the state and central governments including MGNREGA. Among the north-eastern states, while the most populous state of Assam handles around three-fourth of total migration, the sparsely populated hill states like Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland witness considerably high and moderate rate of net migration. As regards the volume and direction of in-migration and out-migration, it has been almost uniformly from and

to Eastern India due to its nearness and the socio-cultural similarity with the majority people of Assam and Tripura. While the pattern with respect to in-migration has remained almost the same, the volume of out-migration to Southern India and Western India has been on the rise due to fast growing diverse job opportunities with consequent decline in out-migration to Eastern India in recent times. In the case of rural-urban migration, the in-migration is dominated by rural population, and out-migration is contributed almost uniformly by both urban and rural population. In gender terms, the in-migration from outside N-E India has been slightly male-dominant, and out-migration has been largely female dominant, and more so from rural areas.

The process of in-migration and out-migration and its volume to and from N-E India is associated with a variety of socio-economic factors including the distance between source and destination. In the case of in-migration it is largely contributed by employment and business, and marriage, while the out-migration from N-E India is caused mainly by movement of family, and employment and business. Among the states of N-E India, while all the states witness very high contribution of employment and business towards the volume of in-migration from outside the region with highest being in Tripura, the contribution of marriage in this respect is also quite significant in the case of Assam. The out-migration from N-E India is caused almost equally by both employment and business, and movement of family for better life and living. Although a large size of youths of N-E India moves out to different parts of the country for education, it is quite significant in the case of Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, a balanced development in all sectors in most parts of the country including its North-East region shall ensure a balanced pattern of in-migration and out-migration to and from the region.

References

- Bango, M., Kashyap, G. C. (2018): Changing trends in work participation of tribal women by education in some selected states of India. *International Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Studies* 3(2), 53–59.
- Bhagat, R. B., Keshri, K., Ansary, R. (2018): Internal migration in India: Intensity, flows and impact. In *Comparing Internal Migration in the Countries of Asia* Conference, Asian Demographic Research Institute, Shanghai University, Shanghai, China, July. Available online https://www.researchgate.net/profile/R-Bhagat/publication/334494446_Internal_Migration_in_India_Intensity_Flows_and_Impact/links/5d2e0806a6fdcc2462e60f42/Internal-Migration-in-India-Intensity-Flows-and-Impact.pdf (accessed on 20 July 2021).
- Bhati, R. K. (2015): A Study of Rural to Urban Migration in India. *ASM's International E-Journal on Ongoing Research in Management and IT*, X, 371–379.

- Davis, K. (1951): *The Population of India and Pakistan*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 127–165. Available online <https://www.milbank.org/wp-content/uploads/mq/volume-30/issue-02/30-2-The-Population-of-India-and-Pakistan-by-Kingsley-Davis.pdf> (accessed on 20 July 2021).
- Deotti, L., Estruch, E. (2016): *Addressing rural youth migration at its root causes: A conceptual framework*, Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO]. Available online <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5718e.pdf> (accessed on 26 June 2023).
- Gogoi, J. K., Goswami, H., Borah, K. C. (2009): *Problems of border areas in North East India: Implications for the thirteenth finance commission*. Department of Economics, Dibrugarh University: Dibrugarh, India. Available online https://fincomindia.nic.in/archive/writereaddata/html_en_files/oldcommission_html/fincom13/Discussion/report14.pdf (accessed on 25 August 2021).
- Gogoi, P., Pandov, P. (2022): A study about the implementation of AFSPA against ethnic clashes of North-East India. *NeuroQuantology* 20(16), 3863–3868, <https://doi.org/10.48047/NQ.2022.20.16.NQ880390>.
- Hangsing, L. (2023): *Re-Interpreting Home and Identity: An Ethnographic Study of the Kuki Migration in Delhi* (Doctoral dissertation, Ambedkar University Delhi). Available online https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lunpithang-Hangsing/publication/374117321_Re-Interpreting_Home_and_Identity_An_Ethnographic_Study_of_the_Kuki_Migration_in_Delhi/links/650e7ac082f01628f03d3000/Re-Interpreting-Home-and-Identity-An-Ethnographic-Study-of-the-Kuki-Migration-in-Delhi.pdf (accessed on 14 December 2023).
- Haokip, T. (2012): Political integration of northeast India: A historical analysis. *Strategic Analysis* 36(2), 304–314, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2012.646508>.
- Haokip, T. (2021): From 'Chinky' to 'Coronavirus': racism against Northeast Indians during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Asian Ethnicity* 22(2), 353–373, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2020.1763161>.
- Jaiswal, N. (2017): 'Insurgency' There and 'Identity' Here: A Study of Northeast Indian Migrants in Delhi, M.phil Dissertation, Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. Available online <https://www.kuas.cu.ac.jp/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/10-3.Neha-Jaiswal.pdf> (accessed on 14 December 2023).
- Kumar, S., Sati, V. P., Singh, R., Roy, C. (2023): Patterns and drivers of internal migration: insights from Jharkhand, India. *GeoJournal* 88(5), 4971–4990, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-023-10895-6>.
- Kumar, T. V., Barman, U., Saikia, H. (2022): Perceived Reasons of Interstate Out-migration of Rural Youth. *Multilogic in Science X*(XXXV), 1288–1292.
- Lama, M. P. (2013): Labour and employment in North-Eastern region: challenges and opportunities. *Labour Dev* 20, 1–11.
- Lusome, R., Bhagat, R. B. (2010): *Migration Situation in Northeast India*. K. S. James, Arvind Pandey, D. W. Bansod, Lekha Subaiya (eds) *Population, Gender and Health in India: methods, Processes and Policies*, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2010, 167–190.
- Lusome, R., Bhagat, R. B. (2020): Migration in Northeast India: Inflows, outflows and reverse flows during pandemic. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics* 63, 1125–1141, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41027-020-00278-7>.
- Mahanta, R. (2016): Inner Line Permit as an Instrument of Protecting Identity: Benefits, Costs and its Effectiveness. *Identity Aspirations, Developmental Backlogs and Governance Issues in Northeast India*, 55. Available online https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Madhurjya-Bezbaruah/publication/320107830_Identity_Aspirations_Developmental_Backlogs_and_Governance_Issues_in_Northeast_India_Edited_Volume/links/59ee19c3aca272029ddf61e4/Identity-Aspirations-Developmental-Backlogs-and-Governance-Issues-in-Northeast-India-Edited-Volume.pdf#page=63 (accessed on 8 December 2023).
- Mahapatro, S. (2014): Contemporary patterns and issues of internal migration in India: Evidence from NSSO. In KNOWMAD conference on Internal Migration and Urbanization, Dhaka, May 1st. Available online <https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/Contemporary%20Patterns.pdf> (accessed on 20 July 2021).
- Malhotra, N., Devi, P. (2016): Analysis of factors affecting internal migration in India. *Amity Journal of Economics* 1(2), 34–51.
- Mukherjee, M., Dutta, C. (2017): Migration of north-east women in Delhi: A macro level analysis. *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies* 3(1–2), 95–112, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2394481120170107>.
- Phukan, M. D. (2013): Ethnicity, conflict and population displacement in Northeast India. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 1(2), 91–101.
- Rajan, S. I., Bhagat, R. B. (2021): Internal migration in India: integrating migration with development and urbanization policies. *Policy Brief*, 12, 59. Available online <https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Policy%20Brief%20-%20Internal%20Migrationand%20Urbanization%20-%20India%20Policy%20Brief%2012%20Feb%202021.pdf> (accessed on 20 July 2021).
- Reimeingam, M. (2018): Migration from North Eastern Region to Bangalore: Evidences from Census Data. *Journal of North East India Studies* 8(1), 40–56.
- Sali, R. S., Astige, S. B. (2015): Causes and consequences of migration in India: a sociological perspective. *Golden Research Thoughts* 4(7), 1–11.
- Sharma, H. N., Kar, B. K. (1997): *Pattern of Population Growth in North-East India*. Aijazuddin, Ahmad, Daniel Noin, and HN Sharma, eds. *Demographic Transition: The Third World Scenario*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, New Delhi, India, 1997, 73–93.
- Singh, H. (2016): Increasing rural to urban migration in India: A challenge or an opportunity. *International Journal of Applied Research* 2(4), 447–450.
- Singh, M. A. (2013): Outmigration from North East India: Floating Migrants and Emerging Distinct Identity. *Labour & Development* 22(2), 30–46.
- Taher, M., Ahmed, P. (1998): *Geography of North-East India*, Mani Manik Prakash, Guwahati, India, 248–270.
- Zachariah, K. C. (1964): *A historical study of internal migration in the Indian Sub-Continent, 1901–1931*. Asia Publishing House, Delhi, India, 34–41.