



HOMELESS PEOPLE IN DELHI (INTERNAL MIGRATION: IS IT THE LOSS OF IDENTITY?)

By Deepanshi Trivedi

From Symbiosis Law School, Noida

ABSTRACT

Internal migration is common practice in India, but is it only beneficial to those middle class or upper middle class who have job with job security or capabilities to buy their resources? Poor families migrating to cities in order to find jobs are often found in helpless situations where they lose everything including their identity and a roof in order to survive in big cities. Government has no check on how many landless or illegal lands acquired live in these cities. How many rights are they not aware of and how many rights are they deprived of? What is the count on their birth and death? All the schemes given by government are ration cards and adhar cards which have their native lands address, they have no access to any schemes.

I have interviewed the slums of Delhi to see what are the present situation is. I have researched this issue with primary data collected by me.

KEYWORDS: SLUMS,
GOVERNMENT, IDENTITY,
MIGRATION, INCOME

ARTICLE

When asked to Rajesh about how many years has he been living in Delhi, he couldn't calculate he replied "zamane ho

Gaye". Sending money to family was difficult to this illiterate person. So he called all his family members here and now only visits his village once a year or more according to capacity to buy ticket. These people are assured that big cities always would provide bigger opportunities of employment and living. But the brutal truth of reality is far different from their perspective, with no place to live permanently and no proper job, it is getting worse to survive in Delhi.

He has been selling balloons and flutes roaming in the city all day. After a lot of hard work and also switching to be part time labour in industries, He barely manages to earn 5000 per month. With onset of apartment trends, their business has gone down drastically because now they are not allowed to enter societies and no one is able to they exist. Also with change in times people prefer buying these things from mall or by ordering online.

With a son who is named NAWAB. He lives on land of some person who doesn't lives in Delhi anymore on small jhopdi made of polythene, sticks and iron or wooden sheets found in garbage. There is no safe drinking water, they buy cans of bottle to drink and use it for washing clothes, utensils and bathing purpose. An organization named rohinhood army comes to this place every Saturday to teach children and have also donated in sending them to school.

There is no adhar card or ration card and they don't get any governmental aid. He has their ration card back in Faizabad (Uttar Pradesh) but which is not giving them any benefit. He has his home back there so he



has got all facilities of house and washroom there but there is no employment there. He and his family has no excess to government health care, they visit private doctors which costs them much higher than their capacity. The little they save goes in travelling back to town or medical emergency and they go back from where he started. Having an identity that shows they are citizen of Faizabad and not of Delhi makes their identity at stake. Living here without identity, shelter, food, sanitation, drinking water or a job that promises all this is like being lost and unrecognized in the high standards living of metropolitan city like Delhi. Delhi to them is like sparkle that appeared to be pure gold and running behind better opportunities and better survival option has lead to getting worse on conditions.

The life of Nazana, a 90 year old beggar at local temple is harder than all. Her husband and elder son died two years ago with swine flu and younger son turned his back towards her and went to Mumbai with his wife. She has no support from her son and no contact with her relatives. "Everyone leaves you in your bad times" she sighs.

Living alone in the house without anything to eat and then paralytic attack made her life no worse than death. She could work with her right side of body paralysed and hence, decided to beg to eat. She moved to Noida from Tajpur (Uttar Pradesh) and continued begging. Now the only possession she has is a blanket which she uses to wrap around in winters and sleep over it in summer. She begs all day and buys food but not all days are good days. She needs medicines at this age, a house and care. She sleeps on roads

and there is no place she can call hers. She cries and prays to god for death but it is not even easy to die. Her health and hygiene are at stake. She has no adhar card or ration card. There is no track of her existence with government. There is no one to help her in this condition. No NGO or any other organization helps her. She is no restricted by area anymore. the only reason why she came here was she believed that people in big cities would have big heart and at least one of them would turn up help her but believes didn't last and now she has given up the hopes on humanity. There is no turning back to old city now and this is where she will die.

Meera, 41 year old mother of two kids lives illegally on land of owner of Travel Company. She was married 3 years ago when girls like her go to school. She is house maker with no house. Her husband is a rickshaw puller and 12 years older to her. He barely earns 6000-7000. Because of auto and e-rickshaws anyone hardly prefers rickshaw these days and he doesn't know how to drive auto. She lives where there is no sanitation and has to go to near sewer lines in the morning before people wake up. She gave birth to one child in the house she made out of sticks and polythenes. Second child was born in private hospital where all her savings went and when she caught infection after delivery, she had no money to go to private hospital. Later her uterus had to be removed and for this operation, they had to take loan from local merchant. She has no identity card or ration card. The family gets no aid from government or any organization. She has to buy food and water from store to survive which is beyond their affordability. There is no education in her



family or awareness for family program, this has led her to be mother of two children in mere age of sixteen years and now being unable to reproduce. She lives a dark life of illiterate. She lives under control of her mother in law and has no decision making power of her own. She has no say in the family and is suppressed to do household work. They have their native village in pura (Uttar Pradesh) where they go once in a year.

These are three cases out of fifteen I interviewed. All have very similar outline to migrating to Delhi and the case may differ but they all fall in nearby same class group in terms of earning or standard of living. From survey taken on 15 people living on streets of New Delhi, various results came out, some were majorly shocking. 14 out of 15 people shifted to New Delhi thinking that it will be more employment giving and standard of living would increase. Migration from rural to urban cities is very common in India. Migration of people from one geographic location to another for various reasons is an inevitable phenomenon. Delhi being the Capital of India generates enormous job opportunities for laborers, skilled and unskilled workers. So people who are not paid well or who do not have enough job opportunities in their native land or the ones who are looking for growth and better job opportunities are attracted towards Delhi.

This movement is benefiting migrants in terms of better wages and better lifestyle but this mass migration is somewhere inversely impacting the Capital. Delhi now has more number of slums, unauthorized areas, JJ clusters and jhuggis. It is estimated that

more than half of the population of Delhi resides in unauthorized colonies and slums which lack even basic facility of water and drainage. The crime rate and other social issues have increased manifold in Delhi. Though it cannot be said with certainty that migration is the whole sole reason for all this but definitely there is a connection among all these.

The world's best known demographer Kingsley Davis had in a treatise on India in 1951 regarded the country as a relatively immobile society estimating that three out of every ten Indians migrate internally. But in the last one decade the Capital is seeing increase in influx of people from other States. The widening developmental gap between the rural and urban areas has largely spurred the migration. Low profits in agriculture and high returns from industry are pulling people towards cities. Small cities often have employment but the wages are quite low and job security is major issue. Landless laborers have no other option than migrating because often the land they take rent on proves to give less return from crops or they fail to use proper techniques of production which causes loss. They fail to pay the rent and go in debt. These people live in heavy debt. Like Meera, these people have to take loans to fulfill their basic amenities because the ratio of their earning/income and what they spent/require to spend is quite wide. Loans are also taken from local merchants or moneylender who gives it on high rate of returns. These people have no option but take it. Going to bank is considered a huge task. These people often have no possession to take loans on also it is hard for them to understand the functioning of banks.



Hardship of Delhi- Migration impacts the population size and service provision. Housing for all is coming out as major challenge in the Capital because of increasing migration. Other problems such as lack of basic amenities like electricity, sewerage, sanitation and water supply are associated with this. By 1951 Delhi along with Chennai and Hyderabad became the million-plus cities. In 2001 Delhi had approximately 45 percent migrants.

The problem of street children is also on rise in Delhi and can be linked to migration. When a family moves they bring their children along. Children even move with their friends and sometimes alone. Children leave their homes for different reasons. In Delhi, population of street children is increasing dramatically. These children end up doing odd jobs like rag picking, drug peddling, robbery etc. Girls are even sold and forced to become prostitutes. On the other hand, migrants do not enjoy social security benefits associated with the residence. They are generally treated as second-class citizens and discriminated.

Government and adhar-government has started adhar card system to keep a track of identity and linking it with all the other schemes of government which will help them to validate where and whom the money of scheme is going. In our survey, 10 people had their ration card from the place they belonged and not of here. Also adhar was only with 8 people but with address of their native land and rest didn't bother much of having it. all the schemes of government could not be given in Delhi because government has no track of them living here. 4 people also said they had toilets and house

provided to them by government and there family resides there. There is a big loop in here which is due to no up gradation of identity card. They have become discriminated and they have no voice nor can they participate in voting system of Delhi area despite living here for so many years because they don't have voting card of Delhi. They also don't back to vote in their native land because their going back depends on money they have, also if they go they vote for people they don't know and voting their doesn't not let them exercise their rights. This all have led to putting their rights at stake and their identity being in lost state. They are living their lives in the most miserably way. In country like India where democracy is all talked about, they have no knowledge of what democracy is and what all they have got to enjoy their lives. It is high time they should be made aware of all this, so that they can live their life with dignity.

Family planning-these people have no knowledge of family planning and 9 families I surveyed had more than 3 children. They are not afraid of raising them instead they take it in sense that they would grow up to help them financially and in survival. All of their children rare going to nearby school but education is not taken their so seriously. Their children also work in nearby factories. 2 families who had their kids above age 9 were working in nearby dabba or general store after school. Their parents don't feel anything wrong about it instead it is seen as their responsibility to support their family financially. Girls in these families are married at tender age of 12-13 years like Meera and before that they are told to learn household work and look after family. Only



5 families sent their girls to school rest didn't feel a need to do so. They rather saved that money for their marriage. Girls are told to take care of their siblings. This shows the root of orthodoxy in Indian families and even after so many struggles of women for equal rights but these things still not in the main roots of India. These things tell us need of spreading awareness in such areas about family planning, education and women empowerment.

These people hardly visit their native land and 7 families go once to their town, 4 families go twice and 4 families go according to money they could save, sometimes not going for 2 years. Travelling cost them a lot of money, so they save whole year and then visit their towns. One family whose husband stayed here working as security guard has not gone to his family for last two years because he doesn't get enough leave and going for 2-3 days would cost him a lot. He sends half of his income to his family in native place and rest he keeps with himself for his survival here. Going back to town would mean leaving the job which is risk he can't afford to take.

Medical conditions and their treatment is an expensive business for these families. 13 families in my survey take medicines from veds or local doctors who charge high rates from them and they are bound to pay. In case of very medical emergency, they go to nearby private hospital which leaves them in debts for years. Medical hospitals of government are not given any preferences here and these aids are not used in any way. 2 families who avail these facilities tell us about conditions of these hospitals and tell us medicines are normally not available and

doctors are not available, nurses treat them badly. They often fall ill because of unhygienic conditions they leave in and in cases of epidemic; they tend to lose their lives. They don't have a strong immune system or any nutrition in their body to survive it. Like Nazana's husband and elder son who lost their life due to swine flu and she also got paralytic attack but none of them could be treated better.

These homeless people often come from backward and illiterate background and education is often ignored in such regions. They are son of laborers or poor farmers. They also have been into this business since their childhood. Only two people in our survey had basic knowledge to sign instead of putting thumb impression but their schooling was limited to primary school. Some believe that their children will be first one to earn on ground of being educated. They tell us it is not life they wanted but it is gifted to them by their fate, and conditions have been same since their many generations.

They here have work like laborers and balloon selling, auto rickshaw pullers, staff in housekeeping or daily wage workers. They usually don't get high income. 3000 to 6000 is the variation of income in the survey I took. All these professions don't have a job security and don't promise high income. There is no fixed income. In daily wage working, they work all day long still get charged at rs. 80 per day. All under the schemes like MNREGA where government promises to give 100 days' employment is not given here. These people make their families work with them still they can't meet



their two ends. Their children are involved in employment like restaurant.

There are many NGOs who come forward to help them but all their projects are temporary ones like giving food to them on some event or distributing clothes to them for winters. This in longer term doesn't work because what they need is employment to fulfill their needs. No organization can promise that other than government itself. One organization visits and teaches their children every Saturday. Such organizations are appreciated for their work and these families also look to them for support and help. Much work for human rights but this should be realized that they are also having their rights at stake without identity.

have become hindrance in our ways when they can be used as boon to our society. Every such issue is directly hurting Delhi and its development. Hence migration to Delhi must be checked and steps must be taken to control it.

CONCLUSION

MIGRATION is improvement but when we look at these cases. We see these people live miserable life of hopelessness. Government should take a check on no. of migration and ensure their identity. Employment opportunity should be created and aids should be given to such people. Schemes that are launched in order to curb poverty should also be brought into their notice. Awareness should be spread about sanitation, hygiene and medical aids. This is not the issue to go unnoticed because these people are only counted when population is checked and not when these people require the aid for survival. We have a lot of human resource but it is void until we don't use it in a proper way. We should work in this direction because it is not only matter of country but it is about thousands of people leaving without any identity and lost rights. They are leaving life of second citizens. This is hurting the growth and they

