

FEMALE MIGRATION IN KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION: A DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Kamalika Basu

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Dwijendralal College, Krishnagar, Nadia, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Migration in West Bengal is a historical process that is shaping the demography, culture and economy of the state. Kolkata, the capital of the state has been selected in this paper for discussion as types and factors of migration are truly different in terms of gender division in Kolkata. Male migrants are mostly economic migrant in compare to the females. In and out migration ratios of the females are not only guided by social factors but also by some economic parameters. Marriage is one of the important criteria of female migration. The study attempts to highlight certain demographic characteristics of female migrants of Kolkata along with their pattern and reason of migration with reference to the insights from the census data. The paper mainly deals to recognise the spatial and temporal variation of female migrants of Kolkata and their categorical justification. The work is based on analysis of census data from 1971 to 2011 and also empirical study conducted in 2019.

Key words: Demography, spatial temporal variation, economic migrant, categorical justification

Introduction

Migration is always fascinating issue for the demographers. Elaborate theories have been formulated on the subject and different policy interventions are designed to reduce the effects of migration. Migration and urbanisation are the direct manifestation of the process of economic development in space, particularly in the contemporary phase of globalisation. Rates of international migration are increasing and more than half of the world's population now lives in cities. Migrants make up more than 1 billion population or one seventh of the world's population (UNDESA 2016). Population diversity in the developed countries may be attributed to international migration. Apart from fertility and mortality migration is a dynamic process provides enough data to study the spatial variation and inter regional distribution of population in India.

Migration is an intrinsic part of development and the focus has shifted to female migration, commonly known as feminisation of migration. Female migrants are the most obvious evident of socially guided migration. Although the situation has changed a lot, women still somehow lack a voice in decision making, especially in economic, civil and political fields. The marginalisation of women's concern in the context of migration is related to overall socio-economic status of women, the non-recognition and undervaluation of their work. Large scale female migration is linked to marriage and reasons have curtailed economic significance being attached to the gender dimension of labour migrants.

Review of literature

Since the present work deals with the status of women migrants, works of women migrants in developed and developing countries have been reviewed.

Boyel et al. (2009) found that family migration has a negative impact on women's employment status. Using data from British Household Panel Survey they considered two neglected issues. Firstly, instead of depending on distances moved to distinguish employment related migrations, they used the information on the reasons for moving on gender basis. Secondly, they considered selection effects and the role of state dependence in relation to women's employment status.

Gopalan (2001), report on the status of women in India found marginalisation of women society, exploitation in the economy, denial access to power, exclusion from decision making and brutalising within and outside the household. The report is dived into 12 chapters covering women's health, educational development, roles, right and opportunities of economic participation, women and environment, law and political status, mass media and welfare development.

Ganguly- Scrase (2003) focuses on globalisation in West Bengal, apparent paradox between women's positive perception on empowerment and overall negative impact on structural adjustment of policies on women.

Bhadra Ray (2014), examined the status of women migrants from Bangladesh to West Bengal and Orissa, their socio-economic condition, pattern of establishment, decision and role in the family.

Mukherjee (2001) observed that the migrants are attracted to the largest metropolises. In migration of landless agricultural labourers are occurring from very backward states in India, in migration rate is high in those districts where general literacy rate is high and investment to agriculture is more.

Jafar, K. (2018) examines the role of education as one of the human development indicators, on the role of women migration in Kerala. The dynamics of education and the impact of regional diversity and their effect on female migration ratio of Kerala have been studied in details.

Objectives

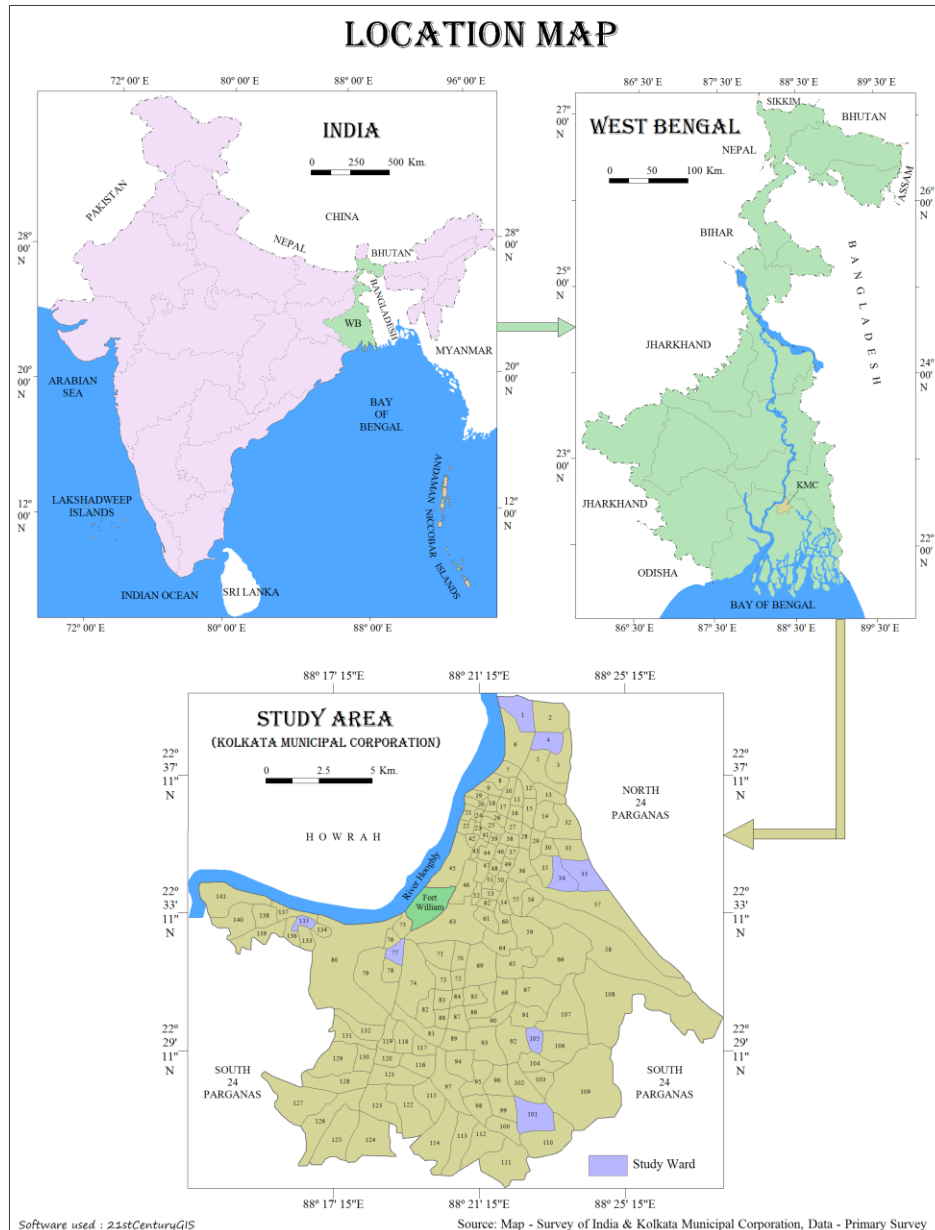
West Bengal has experienced male out migration than female particularly in certain areas. Female migration in Kolkata is highly guided up by social factors. Males are mostly the economic migrants than females. In migration ratio of females is higher in urban Kolkata. Particularly establishment of colonies in Kolkata, since the time of partition of Bengal exhibits a typical social morphology in case of female migrants. Therefore, some specific objectives of this paper to understand the various aspects of female migration in Kolkata are summarized below:

1. To study the trend and pattern of female migration in West Bengal as well as in Kolkata
2. To analyse the reasons behind female migration.
3. To interpret their demographic profile.
4. To illustrate the socio- economic status of the female migrants.
5. Finally, to discuss about their categorical justification.

Data and methodology

Census data is the main source of information. The present study is based on secondary data collected from the migration tables of census reports from 1971 to 2011. The limitation of this study is there should have been some change in secondary data between 2011 and 2019, so a small primary survey has been conducted to get the present generalised picture of female migrants in Kolkata. 8 wards have been selected randomly covering north, south, west and central east parts of Kolkata municipal corporation area. 0.1 % of female population of each of these wards have been selected by purposive sampling to generate the data. Total 149 numbers of female migrants have been surveyed through structured questionnaires and henceforth, cartographic techniques and quantitative methods are used for analysis and interpretation. Mapping has been done by using GIS software.

Study area for primary survey: In this paper female migrants of Kolkata are the main focus. 8 wards have been selected randomly for field study. Ward no 1 (Cossipur Area) and ward no 4 (Paikpara Area) for northern part of Kolkata, ward no 33(Phoobagan Area) and 34 (Beleghata Area) for central east part, ward no 75 (Khhiddirpore Area) and ward no 135



(Gardenreach Area) for western and ward no 101 (Baghajatin Area), and 105(Garfa , Jadavpur Area) for southern part of Kolkata, are the places of sample survey.

Results and discussion

- Female migrants of Kolkata owe their origin mostly to Bangladesh because partition has its great effect on migration in West Bengal. Rural- Urban and male female distribution of migrants is featured below.

Table- 1: Rural – Urban and Male – Female Migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal

YEAR	1971	1981	1991	2001
Total	2905065	501594	477606	246446
Male (%)	53.82	49.55	49.77	47.47
Female (%)	46.18	50.45	50.23	52.53
Rural: Total & (%)	1690580 (58.19)	276699 (55.17)	300662 (62.95)	159210 (64.61)
Male (%)	52.79	49.64	49.56	47.56
Female (%)	47.21	50.36	50.44	52.44
Urban: Total & (%)	1214485 (41.81)	224896 (44.83)	176944 (37.05)	87236 (35.39)
Male (%)	55.24	49.45	50.12	47.31
Female (%)	44.76	50.55	49.88	52.69

Source: Census of India 1971,1981,1991,2001 Migration table No-Part-IID (i), Part-V (A & B), Table D2

1971 is a land mark in the migration volume in West Bengal. Only Bangladesh contributed nearly 3000000 populations to West Bengal.

- The rising share of female migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal has repercussions on the sex ratio of the migrants.

Table- 2: Sex Ratio of Migrants from Bangladesh to West Bengal

Year	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total	858	1018	1009	1107	946
Rural	894	1014	1018	1103	945
Urban	810	1022	995	1113	947

Source: Census of India 1971,1981,1991,2001, 2011 Migration table No-Part-IID(i), Part-V (A & B), Table D2

N.B.: Sex ratios for 1981 onwards are for 0-9 years

Table 3: Migration Scenario of West Bengal, 2011 Census

Total migrant details of West Bengal				Migrant details from Bangladesh to West Bengal			
Total Migrants	91,276,115	Male	46,809,027	Total Migrants	2,222,091	Male	1,141,821
		Female	44,467,088			Female	1,080,270
Rural	62,183,113	Male	31,844,945	Rural	944,991	Male	485,902
		Female	30,338,168			Female	459,089
Urban	29,093,002	Male	14,964,082	Urban	1,277,100	Male	655,919
		Female	14,128,920			Female	621,181

Source: Census of India, 2011, Table no: D1, D1-51 column

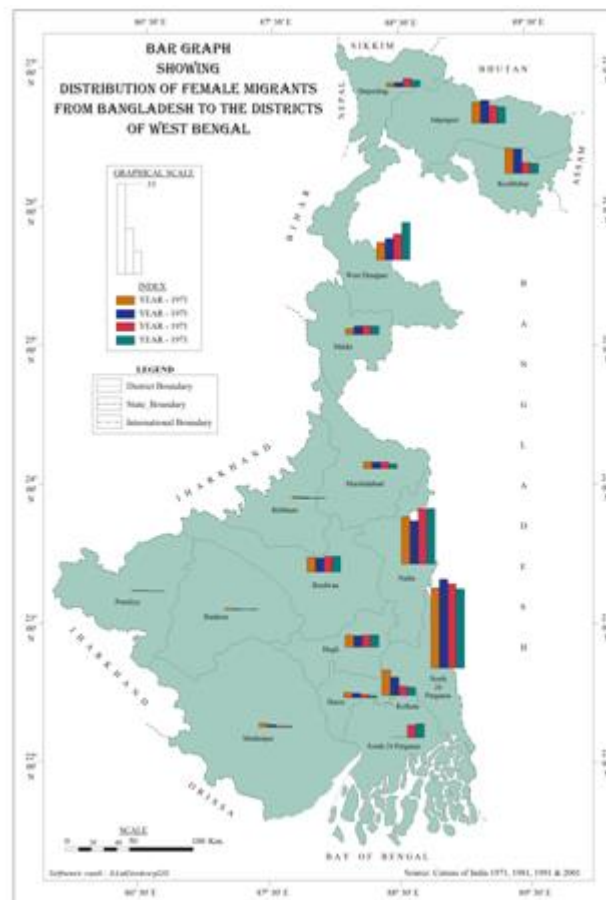
- Proportion of female migrant in West Bengal is higher in the rural areas (68.23%), but movement of Bangladeshi females (57.5%) tends to cluster in the urban areas of West Bengal.
- Reasons for female migration to West Bengal from “countries in Asia beyond India”, are mostly observed are economic, education, family movement, marriage and some other micro factors. Family movement is found to be the most vital cause among all.

Table 4: Reasons for female migration to West Bengal from Countries of Asia beyond India, 1981 – 2001

Time Period	Total migrant	Total female Migrants	% of Female Migrants	Reasons of Migration (in %)				
				Economic	Education	Family movement	Marriage	Others
1971-1981	520213	261272	50.22	2.05	0.65	41.86	18.25	37.16
1981-1991	493034	247663	50.23	2.52	0.41	37.79	22.31	36.95
1991-2001	258275	135902	52.61	2.87	0.42	50.68	24.97	20.98

Source: Census of India 1981, Migration Table column 23. Part-V (A & B), 1991 Table D3, 2001 Table D3 (Data are for 0-9 years)

- Distribution of migrants from Bangladesh to whole West Bengal exhibits the fact that North 24 Parganas experienced a bulk of migrant population as a consequence urbanisation rate in North 24 Parganas is highest in compare to the other districts of West Bengal, followed by Nadia.



N.B: Data for undivided 24 Parganas for 1971 and 1981 have been shown in 24 Parganas North. Later data for North and South 24 Parganas have been shown separately in the table for 1991 and 2001. Data available for 1991 and 2001 are actually migrants in the age groups of (0-9 years)

Table 5: Reason for Migration in West Bengal from Other States and Countries According to 2011 Census Reports

Reasons	Total Migrants	Sex	Total	Percentage
	33,448,472	Male	10,240,751	30.62%
		Female	23,207,721	69.38%

Economic	2,017,505	Male	1,735,184	86.01%
		Female	282,321	19.99%
Education	164,084	Male	113,099	86.93%
		Female	50,985	13.07%
Family Issues	6,878,196	Male	3,697,111	53.75%
		Female	3,181,085	46.25%
Marriage	16,562,756	Male	342,940	2.07%
		Female	16,219,816	97.93%
Others	7,825,931	Male	4,352,417	55.62%
		Female	3,473,514	44.38%

Source: D1, D2 Table, Census of India, 2011

- The above census table (2011) clearly portrays the fact that the main migrants in West Bengal are the female migrants and the vital cause of their movement is related to the most obvious social cause that is *marriage*. Other than marriage economic reasons are also important in case the female migrants in West Bengal.

Table 5. Migrants to Kolkata during 1971- 2011

Year	Total population (Lakhs)	Migrant population (Lakhs)	% of Migrants
1971	31.5	10.62	33.86
1981	33.05	9.28	28.08
1991	43.99	7.12	21.06
2001	45.73	8.22	17.98
2011	44.97	8.37	18.61

Source: Census of India (1951-2011)

- The volume of migration makes no remarkable difference in between 2001 and 2011 (0.63% migrant population have increased).

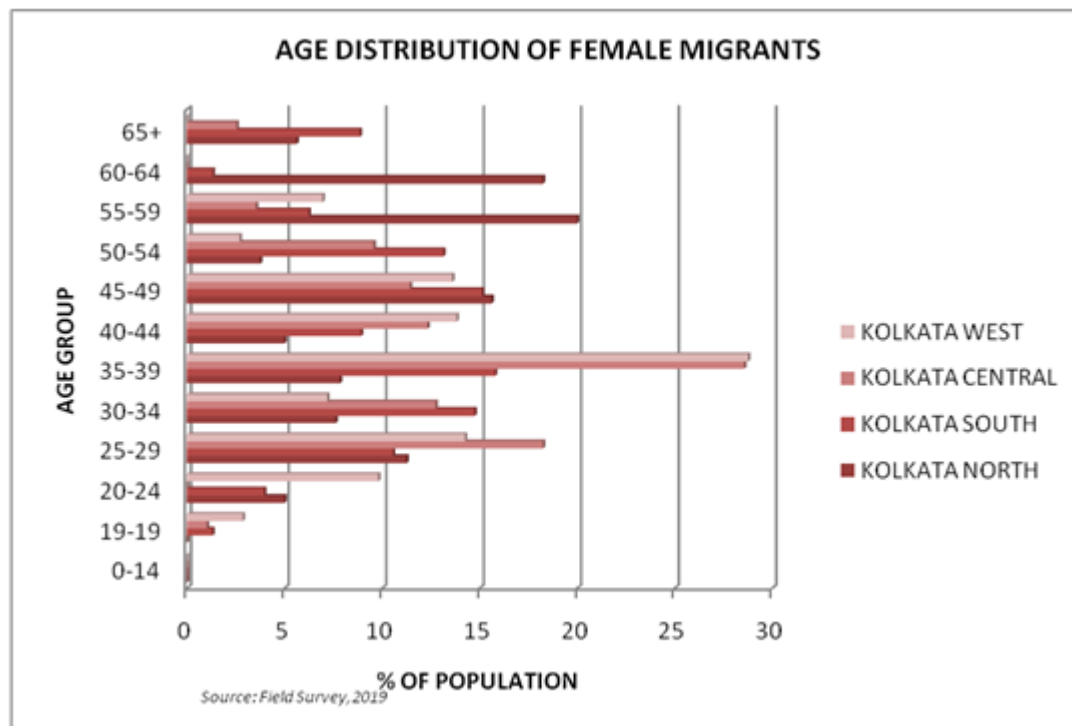
Table 6: Share of Female Migrants in Kolkata (2011)

Total Migrants	Male	% of male migrants	Female	% of female migrants
837,138	440,103	52.57	397,035	47.43

Source: Census of India, 2011 (Table D1)

Sample Survey Analysis on Kolkata Municipal Corporation Area (2019):

- Surveyed female migrants mostly lie under the age group of 25-50, who shared their experience and cause of migration. Family movement and marriage are the two major reasons behind their migration.

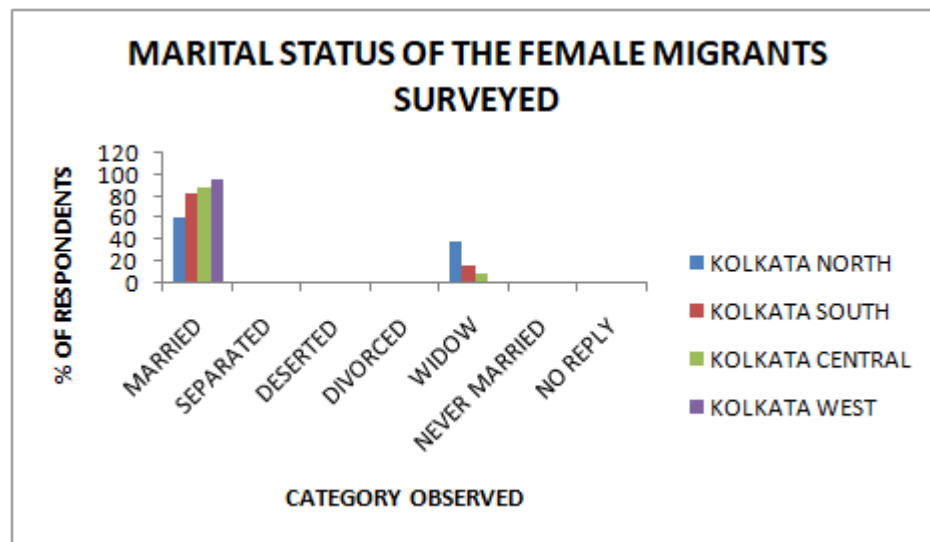


- Caste distribution of the surveyed population portrays that OBC concentration among the female migrants is higher in Kolkata north and west. Pertinently it is important to mention that most of these OBC female migrant belong to Muslim community.

Table – 4 : Caste Distribution of Female Migrants in Kolkata

Caste	Kolkata North	Kolkata South	Kolkata Central	Kolkata West
SC	9.13	47.25	32.2	10.8
ST	0	0	2.07	0
OBC	65.64	6.87	12.42	53.0
GEN	25.23	45.88	53.31	36.2

Source: Field Survey, 2019



- Regarding the marital condition of these females, most of them are married; rather marriage is the main cause of their migration.
- Economic condition of these females is summarized by categorising them on the basis of their professional attachment. During the survey some of the slum population and colony area of Kolkata were covered that reveals most of these females are working as daily labours mainly in household activities or as maid servants. Some of them are occupied in market enterprises, like fruits and vegetables selling etc. The Muslim migrants are typically found to be engaged in a distinctive function that is tailoring, “Embroidery and Zari” working. This work is mostly performed from home or from nearby locality. The rest are actually involved in various official jobs. Income slab exhibits their financial condition very well.

- Talking about the origin and nature of female migration, Bangladesh contributed a lot of female migrant to whole West Bengal and step migration was predominant in Kolkata. Partition in Bengal resulted to a huge bulk of female migrants in North 24 Parganas, Nadia and Murshidabad. Later from these areas women have come to Kolkata mainly for economy and few for education. A huge volume of migrants in the socially excluded parts of the city have concentrated directly due to forced migration, family movement and marital reasons. North Kolkata proves this fact. In the last ten years south Kolkata was over populated due to concentration of female migrants from south 24 Parganas. The in migration ratio of south Kolkata is higher in recent years than north Kolkata.

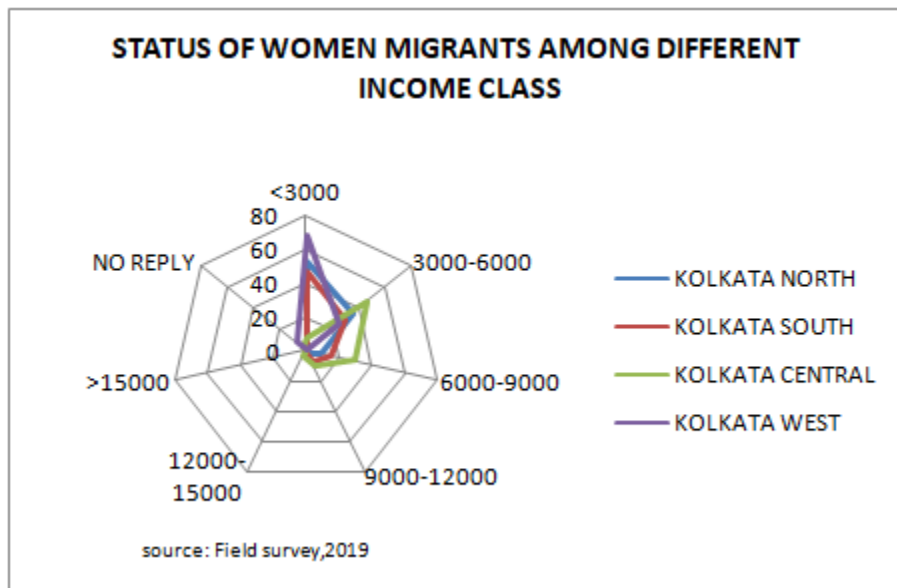


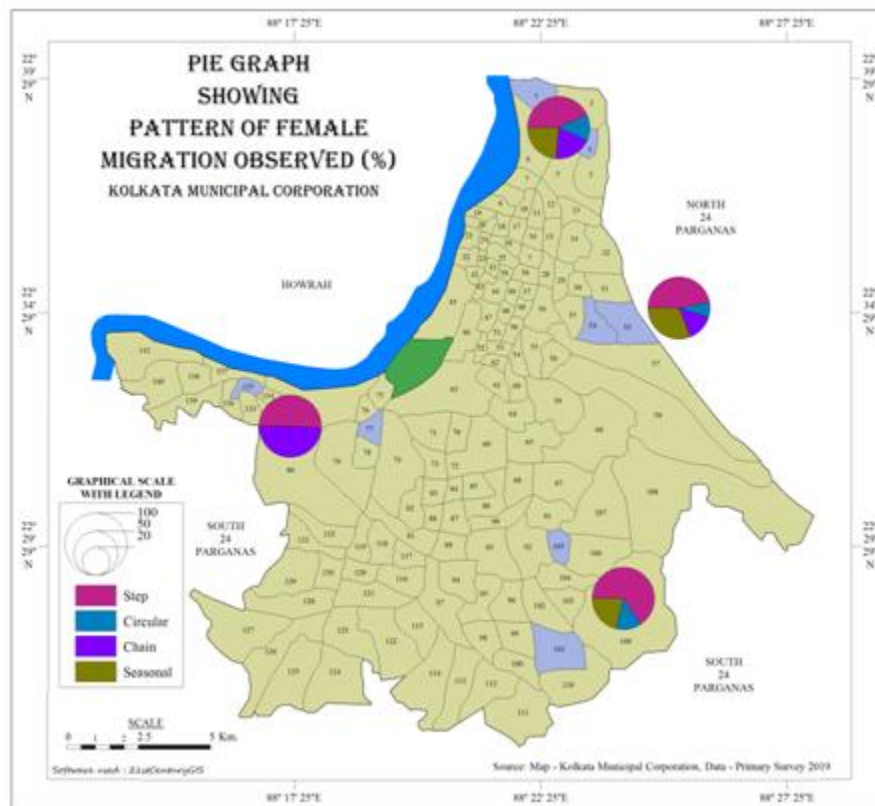
Table – 5: Distribution of % of Female Migrants on the basis of origin

Origin	Kol_North	Kol_South	Kol_Central	Kol_West
Bangladesh	33.06	21.11	51.51	4.86
North 24 Parganas	35.96	3.61	23.24	2.57
South 24 Parganas	2.85	43.24	13.25	0
Murshidabad	13.85	17.01	0	15.26
Nadia	3.20	2.85	0	3.77

Bankura	0	2.60	0	0
Birbhum	0	4.37	0	0
West Medinipur	1.21	0	0	0
East Medinipur	0	0	2.56	3.52
Haora	2.52	5.21	3.33	23.51
Hugli	0	0	3.85	0
Bardhaman	1.21	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	2.65	0	0	19.27
Bihar	3.49	0	2.25	21.3
Gujarat	0	0	0	5.94

Source: Primary Survey, 2019

In compare to northern and southern parts, Western part of Kolkata is found to be affected mainly by interstate migration. Female Migrants of Khidirpore and Gardenreach area are mostly Hindi speaking and their origin owes to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. A few of them have been sheltered due to political unrest in Western India. These female migrants are not economic migrant. In recent years the migration patterns of the women have changed in Kolkata. Education and occupational diversity have acted as pull factors for the female migrants. These have resulted to step migration in Kolkata. Migration pattern observed in Kolkata are generalised on the basis of sample survey conducted in some of the wards of Kolkata.



Summary of major findings

1. Effects of international migration that was observed since the time of partition resulted a huge disparity in the “in and out migration ratio” of the female migrants in Kolkata.
2. Men are mostly economic migrant in Kolkata than females. In recent years though the ratio has changed but disparity is still observed.
3. Education and economy are the secondary cause of female migration in Kolkata. Specially the slums and colony settlement proves that marriage and family movement are the major reasons of migration.
4. The oral interviews have revealed the fact that the most of the female migrants are actually asylee in nature; they have been approved by the Government to stay in Kolkata with voter right. The migrants who have their origin to Bangladesh are IDP, but that is true in case of their ancestors who were forced to migrate in West Bengal in that time. Some of the Muslim migrants of west Kolkata are also sheltered and authorised by Government during political disturbances in Western India.

5. Step migration is the most observed pattern of female migration in Kolkata. These migrants contribute in economic activities and henceforth can be termed as economic migrants too.
6. In recent years the female migrants of lower income group are trying to engage themselves to economic activities of various types.

Conclusion

Migration is a continuous process that is influenced both by development and under development. Study of female migration in Kolkata as well as in India requires much more exploration for the better understanding of their problems. In spite of Government policies and different laws of migration there lies a large gap between the theoretical and practical situation. Kolkata, a fast-growing metro city in India, should experience a true modernisation and women empowerment in case of female migrants.

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