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Migrant Workers in Indian Cities

The COVID-19 Pandemic: Migrant Workers in India Project

Executive Summary

This discussion document examines the assimilation of inter-state migrants in India into their host societies and the factors that facilitate and impede this process. While migrant workers face exclusion in urban centres due to a lack of access to basic services and social security and welfare schemes, certain identity markers and the social and economic capital they possess also influences the ease of assimilation. This discussion document analyses four such identity factors, caste, class, education, and language.

Caste identities influence the motives behind why one migrates, which then determine the extent to which migrant workers want to maintain their own identities or assimilate into the culture of the host society. It also determines the degree to which migrant workers are allowed to assimilate into the host society and the barriers they face in this process. Class and education are closely linked as migrants who have had access to little or no education are only employed in unskilled or semi-skilled work. This provides very little economic capital and makes it difficult for them to access services and does not allow for good standards of living. Migrants from higher-socioeconomic classes face less barriers in the assimilation process in comparison to lower classes and the models of exclusionary urbanisation and 'elite capture' that cities follow result in spatial segregation on the basis of class with preference given to higher classes. Communication gaps between locals and migrants due to linguistic differences is one of the biggest barriers to assimilation. Additionally, political dynamics at the macro-scale that are organised around or triggered by linguistic differences invariably impact individual people of specific linguistic groups, especially migrants.

The reliance on social networks and the segregation that occurs in industry and in residence based on these identity markers serve as sources of support and security for migrants but also further reinforce their exclusion. However, while these identity markers act as barriers to integration, they can also be used as effective tools to facilitate assimilation into the host society.

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What drives migration?

Migration is a form of spatial mobility that entails a change of residence across defined administrative boundaries.[1] The number of internal migrants in India has been continually on the rise. Data from the 2011 Census reveals that 45.36 crore Indians are internal migrants, which constitutes 37% of the population.[2]

This is a huge increase from the 2001 Census, which estimated internal migrants in India to be 30.9 crore, or 30% of the population.[3] As these numbers continue to increase rapidly, it becomes imperative to address the challenges faced by internal migrants in assimilating into the host society.

To better understand the phenomenon of migrant assimilation, it is useful to understand the factors that drive migration in the first place.

The categorisation of migrants depends on the parameters used to assess migration. Table 1 elucidates the different types of migrants in India based on four different parameters that are used to assess migration.

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Duration of migration	Short term: Also known as temporary, seasonal, or circular migration, it entails the movement of people out of their hometowns for a few months every year in search of employment. It is generally undertaken by the male member of the family while the rest of the family remains in the hometown.
	Long term: Also known as permanent migration, it entails the movement of people, generally whole families, away from their hometowns and aimed at settling permanently in the host society.
Distance of migration	Intra-state: The movement of people to a different town within their home states.
	Inter-state: The movement of people to a town outside their home states.
Reasons for migration	Employment: The movement of people in search of livelihood.
	Education: The movement of students who wish to study outside of their hometowns.
	Marriage: The movement of people, the majority of who are women, to join or accompany their spouse after marriage.
Streams of migration	Rural to rural: Movement from one rural area to another.
	Rural to urban: Movement from a rural area to an urban area.
	Urban to rural: Movement from an urban area to a rural area.
	Urban to urban: Movement from one urban area to another.

Table 1: Types of migration

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Though ostensibly an economic activity, migration also unfolds within a social context. Multiple social and political factors, including identity markers such as caste, class, language, and education play a role in facilitating integration. This document discusses these in order to understand the lived reality that migrant workers confront in host societies.

What drives migrant assimilation?

Assimilation into the host society is made easier when individuals have access to capital as it serves to enhance standards of living and working. This includes not only economic capital, which entails resources such as money and property, but also social capital, entailing the resources and advantages one has due to the groups and networks they are a part of, and cultural capital, consisting of elements that determine one's class status such as education, skills and mannerisms.[4] Access to these different forms of capital, or the lack thereof, are intrinsically connected as low levels of one form of capital tends to lead to or draw from low levels of other form. This is clearly visible among migrant groups in India, where those who have had access to little or no education, thus having low cultural capital, are only employed in unskilled or semi-skilled work. This provides very little economic and social capital, and hence makes it difficult for them to access many services and amenities. Social networks among migrant workers drive their access to both employment and public services and thus influence their ease of assimilation into the host society. The first document in this series[*] analysed the conditions of systemic exclusion of migrants in urban centres.[5] This document will examine four specific factors that drive migrant assimilation; caste, class, education, and language.

Caste

Individuals' caste identities are influential in determining the reasons why one migrates, the pattern of migration that is undertaken, and the consequent assimilation into the host society. Across the country, especially in the rural areas, one's caste determines their social status, the capital they possess, and the networks they have access to. Since the goals of any community are tied to their

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[*]This document is the second part of a three-part project analysing the integration of internal migrants in India into their host societies.

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social capital, caste identity becomes critical in influencing the manner in which migration is used as a strategy to achieve these goals.

Studies of rural communities find that for castes that are presently dominant in any society, migration is used as an "inward looking strategy"[6] where one migrates not to break away from the society but to gather economic or cultural capital that will help them strengthen their hold over the village. The dominant caste is often not the Brahmins as, for instance, in a large part of Maharashtra it is the Kshatriya Maratha community that holds the economic, political, and social power in rural communities.[7] For this community, assimilation into the host society is then perhaps not even desirable as the objective is to return to their own societies where they already possess the security of strong social capital.

In contrast, castes that were once dominant but no longer hold as much power, which largely are the Brahmins, employ migration as an "outward looking strategy"[8] where those who have lost the economic and social capital they once possessed seek to leave the village permanently as they no longer have any incentive to stay. With an increasing disinterest in agriculture and the perception that working as labour is demeaning, these castes prefer to seek opportunities in urban areas and thus are highly inclined towards assimilation in the host society. The lower castes and minority religions, mainly Dalits and Muslims, use migration as a form of "resistance" against the upper castes which, although doesn't outright challenge upper class dominance, allows them to find work outside the traditional power structures of the village.[9] While they too seek to assimilate into the host society, they also strive to maintain their roots in their hometowns, and so their migration patterns are often seasonal or temporary.

While both higher and lower caste groups have incentive to migrate to the cities, National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data shows distinct differences in migration and urbanisation rates of different caste groups, where upper caste groups are more likely to move to and live in urban areas. All-India urbanisation rates for Scheduled Castes (SC's) and Scheduled Tribes (ST's) is 21% and 9% respectively, but is 43% for the General category.[10] This trend is maintained within states too. In Karnataka, rural to urban migration rates are 14% and 16% among SC's and ST's respectively, and is 25% among the General category. In contrast, rural to rural migration is 73% and 78% among SC's and ST's but is only 42% among general category.[11] This implies that assimilation into cities is more difficult for communities belonging to lower castes, leading to them migrating more to other villages than to urban areas.

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While settling into the host societies, new migrants depend on caste networks both for immediate aid in finding employment and residence as well as for other necessities such as security and belongingness in the new space. These networks are strongest among the low-socioeconomic strata, who have limited social and economic capital to depend on.[12] While these networks are beneficial for producing a support structure and maintaining a sense of identity for new migrants in a city, they tend to reproduce cast based work patterns and hierarchies.[13] Since people tend to only enter into occupations that their caste networks are engaged in, this reinforces the limitations of specific castes to certain occupations and the entry into the occupation to only certain castes.

As a result, caste-based work continues in the host society as well. Studies have shown that migrants of higher castes tend to find better jobs than those of the lower castes.[14] This is perhaps because, while strong networks exist among both lower and higher castes, the lower caste networks are hindered by the same historical disadvantages that marked them in the villages where they are discriminated against and are hence only given work that is seen to be demeaning for the upper castes. At the same time, the upper caste migrants, due to the greater social and economic capital they possess, tend to be more educated, hence equipped with knowledge and skills in certain fields, and are able to tap into the demand for these skills in the host society. Due to these factors, lower caste people are concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations in the informal sector.[15] The disadvantage for these communities hence manifests not just as wage differentials but also as unequal access to work.[16]

This has led to a correlation between caste and poverty, where lower caste migrants in cities largely tend to live below the poverty line. Studies have found that among people of similar socio-economic strata, the higher castes have greater well-being in terms of education, health, and employment opportunities.[17] While lower caste migrants are the most disadvantaged, it has been observed that migrants in the general category are likely to find better employment and conditions of living than the local low caste communities of the city by virtue of the education and capital they have access to.

Not only do lower caste migrants have unequal access to employment, their labour is also more exploited through a number of mechanisms. These exploitative practices are most prevalent in sectors that are informal and unskilled, which, as discussed previously, mainly contain workers from lower castes. A study conducted in the construction, hotel, and textile industries of

Gujarat, which contain large numbers of Adivasi migrants from Rajasthan, found that historic inequalities were reproduced in the contemporary economy. In all these industries, the managerial roles, which are more profitable and less strenuous, were occupied by local labour or upper caste migrants. The lower castes were limited to work that provided the least remuneration and was the most strenuous and frequently suffered abuse, harassment, and wage disputes at the hand of their employers.[18] This occurs because their kinship networks are not as extensive and do not possess the same capital as upper caste networks. Since managerial positions are occupied by the upper castes, they control the hiring process, maintaining a vicious cycle that confines specific castes to certain roles.

Assimilation into cities is a challenge not only for people of lower castes but also for religious minorities. Many cities are seeing increasing levels of exclusion and segregation in urban spaces based on both caste as well as religion. Sahoo[19] found that disadvantaged castes and religions, mainly Muslims and lower caste Hindus, are concentrated in slums and the poorest neighbourhoods in the peripheries of the city. Compared to upper caste Hindus of the same socio-economic strata living in the core of the city, these disadvantaged groups had significantly less access to municipal services such as health, sanitation, education, and rations. They also face discrimination from many sections of civil society which is worsened by institutional apathy.[20] An example of this can be seen in Figure 4, which illustrates caste based residential segregation in Bangalore, where lower castes are concentrated on the outskirts of cities, and Figure 5, showing spatial segregation of Muslim neighbourhoods in Bangalore. The results of this "exclusionary urbanisation" can be seen in the rate of urbanisation among Indian Muslims, which has been lower than that of the general category Hindus every decade since 1980.[21] Cities are increasingly becoming less welcoming to historically disadvantaged social and religious groups due to both pre-existing prejudices against these groups and a demand for skills and knowledge in labour that these groups do not have access to.

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Fig.4: Caste based residential segregation in Bangalore[22]

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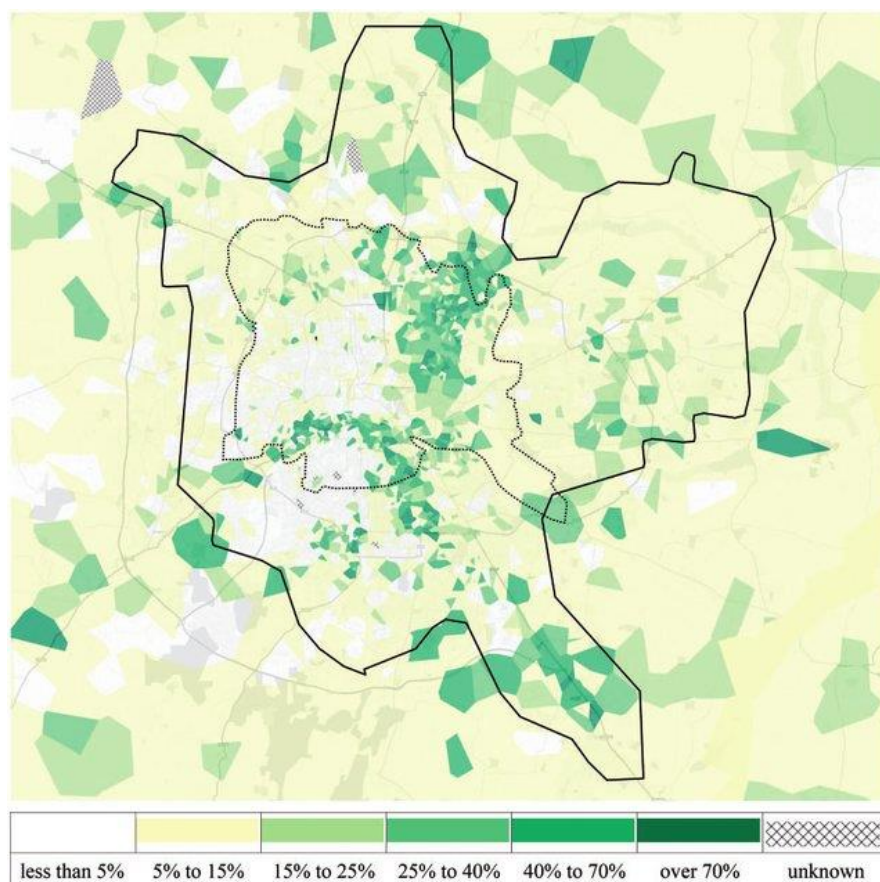| less than 5% | 5% to 15% | 15% to 25% | 25% to 40% | 40% to 70% | over 70% | unknown |

Figure 5: Map of Muslim demography in Bangalore[23]

Many minority social and religious groups often seek to maintain their identities and ensure they do not lose their roots in the process of assimilation into the host society. The priority, in most such cases, is not complete cultural integration into the host society but to maintain and reaffirm one's own cultural identity. For instance, among the Syrian Christian communities who have migrated to urban centres in Kerala, there is a growing anxiety of losing identity due to the "anonymity" and "lack of social distinctions" in the cities.[24] In response to this, family histories are framed as guidelines to preserve one's identity, written from the perspective of a migrant "threatened by non-distinction" in the host society, providing directions to revive social distinctions.[25]

Based on these studies and data sets, it is evident that caste and religious identities are a crucial factor in influencing migrants' assimilation into host societies. On the one hand, it determines the degree of assimilation that the migrant community is aiming for and the extent to which they want to maintain their own identities or assimilate into the culture of the host society. On the other

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hand, it also determines the degree to which they are allowed to assimilate into the host society and the barriers they face in this process.

Class

Like caste, one's class is also a strong marker of one's position in the social hierarchy of a city, which directly influences ease of assimilation. Multiple scholars have argued that the model of urbanisation followed by large urban centres in the country is "exclusionary" at its very core.[26] In cities across India, policies are designed such that poor migrants are discouraged and sometimes even prevented from entering urban centres while affluent migrants are welcomed. This phenomenon is described as "elite capture", whereby cities practice models of urbanisation that deliberately favour people of higher socio-economic strata over the lower strata. This is carried out to make the city appear "polished", so that it can attract global capital and boost its economic growth.[27]

As a result of exclusionary urbanisation, cities also see spatial segregation on the basis of class, where neighbourhoods containing the affluent are well maintained and have unhindered access to resources and public services whereas the poorer neighbourhoods and slums and squatter settlements not only do not have access to many public services but also face discrimination and apathy from public bodies and civic society.[28]

However, while scholars agree that the socio-economic class of a migrant is highly influential in determining ease of assimilation into the host society, where migrants from higher socio-economic strata have a clear advantage in the assimilation process, there is very little scholarship on the process of assimilation for affluent migrants engaged in white collar work. Most studies on migrants are only focused on those belonging to lower socio-economic strata who are employed as unskilled or semi-skilled labour.

Migrant profiles, both at the national level and for specific states, sometimes do not even account for migrants of higher socio-economic strata, or do so in vague and nondescript ways. Table 2 shows the percentage of migrant workers employed in different sectors across India. While unskilled and semi-skilled occupations have been properly elucidated, it is unclear where white collar work would fall, in the following categorisation. It can be assumed that it falls under "other services" or under "non-agriculture" but it is neither clearly demarcated nor divided into further categories as the other industries have been. Moreover,

though the presence of skilled labour can be discerned, albeit unclearly, they are not at all present in any literature on migrant workers and their assimilation into host societies. This could perhaps be because most studies on migrant assimilation view integration into the host society in terms of access to services, amenities, and the basic rights of any citizen, which are issues that do not plague the more affluent migrants. Even studies on assimilation with regard to issues of identity look at more formal markers of identity, such as residence proof, voters ID, and other proofs of identity, which would not be an issue for upper class migrants as their issues of identity are more cultural or psychological than material.

Broad industry division of work	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Agriculture, etc (01-05)	20.0	45.3	23.6	11.2	20.6	12.6
Mining & quarrying (10-14)	1.3	0.8	1.3	0.7	0.3	0.6
Manufacturing (15-37)	17.2	13.9	16.8	26.1	25.5	26.0
Electricity, water & gas(40-41)	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.4
Construction (45)	42.9	33.6	41.6	27.8	10.8	25.2
Trade, hotel & restaurant (50-55)	8.3	1.0	7.3	20.0	7.6	18.1
Transport (60-64)	6.6	0.5	5.7	5.8	0.3	4.9
Other services (65-99)	3.5	4.6	3.7	8.2	34.4	12.2
Non-agriculture (10-99)	80.0	54.7	76.4	88.8	79.4	87.4
All (01-99)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2: Percentage of migrants by industry of work[29]

This shows that the models of exclusionary urbanisation and 'elite capture' that cities follow result in spatial segregation on the basis of class, and that migrants from higher-socioeconomic classes face less barriers in the assimilation process in comparison to lower classes. Upper class migrants appear to assimilate to a much greater degree, thanks partially to their access to public and private services, to the point where they are not exactly considered 'migrants'. This may be a reason why there is little or no scholarship on the process of assimilation for upper class migrants.

Education

The level of education migrant workers have is also an important influence in determining the ease of their assimilation into host societies. As discussed above, migrants with lower levels of education are employed only in unskilled or semi-skilled work, which provides less social and economic capital and does not allow

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access to many services. Their lack of access is also worsened as they are not prioritised and often discriminated against by public bodies and the local community.

While lower levels of education reduce the chances of finding a well-paying job and decent standards of living, data shows that people who are illiterate or have low levels of education are actually the most likely to migrate, especially from the rural to the urban.[30] This is perhaps because, in the rural economy, they are far less valuable than those who are more educated, and so they hope to find better opportunities outside of their hometowns. In Karnataka for instance, as illustrated by Table 3, 38.2% of all migrants are illiterate, and only 8.1% have completed a graduation or a diploma after schooling.[31]

Distribution of migrants by general educational level for Karnataka state (in percentage)

		Not literate	Literate but below primary	Primary or middle	Secondary and higher secondary	Diploma/ Certificate	Graduate and above	All (Incl.n.r.)
Rural	Male	15.9	9.9	33.0	35.6	2.4	3.1	100
	Female	55.4	7.5	28.9	6.9	0.1	1.2	100
	M+F	49.5	7.8	29.5	11.2	0.4	1.5	100
Urban	Male	11.2	7.0	26.1	26.9	7.4	21.4	100
	Female	23.9	6.8	30.2	27.3	1.9	9.9	100
	M+F	18.7	6.9	28.5	27.2	4.1	14.6	100
R+U	Male	13.0	8.1	28.8	30.3	5.5	14.3	100
	Female	46.4	7.3	29.3	12.8	0.6	3.7	100
	M+F	38.2	7.5	29.2	17.1	1.8	6.3	100

Table 3: education levels of migrants in Karnataka

Since the illiterate and less educated tend to migrate the most, a large segment of migrant populations in cities tend to be of lower education levels. As a result, even within the unskilled and semi-skilled industries, they are at a disadvantage compared to the local population because the locals tend to be more educated and socially and culturally similar to the employers. Studies conducted in Kerala show that Malayali workers in the construction industry are better paid and are employed in higher positions because their relatively higher levels of education makes them more skilled and professional compared to the migrant labourers. They are further protected by labour unions that ensure proper working conditions; a security that is not extended to migrant workers.[32]

The influence of education levels on assimilation is closely linked to the influence of class, perhaps because in India especially the two parameters are closely

connected. Those who are of a higher socio-economic strata are better educated, allowing them to work in skilled jobs that provide a better standard of living and ease of assimilation in comparison to lower socio-economic strata with less education who are confined to unskilled work and lower standards of living. This creates a vicious cycle that produces and reproduces the same inequalities and the disadvantages that are linked to them.

However, while existing levels of education are an indicator of socio-economic strata, standard of living and thus ease of assimilation, the provision of education can be employed as an effective tool to increase assimilation. By designing and implementing education programs that are geared to include the children of migrants, state governments can bring about easier assimilation for at least the second generation of migrants in the state. For instance, the Roshni program in Kerala is designed to bridge the education gap between local and migrant children and to this end, conducts classes in multiple languages.[33] To provide for the needs of migrant children, education programs need to account for not only the language barrier but also multiple other concerns such as managing the diversity and bridging the cultural gaps, develop skills that will be useful in all types of labour markets and not just informal or unskilled labour, and accounting for temporary or irregular durations of stay in the host society.[34] If these aspects are accounted for, education can be employed as an effective tool to bring about greater integration of migrant children into the host society.

It is evident that, like class, one's education directly influences their ease of assimilation into a host society, as high education levels are often linked to higher socio-economic strata, better paying jobs, and better standards of living. However, since the most likely to migrate, especially from rural to urban areas, are the illiterate or less educated, migrant workers in cities tend to be largely uneducated and thus at a disadvantage to local labourers in the same sector. Just as much as the lack of education acts as a barrier to migrant assimilation, the provision of education serves as an effective strategy to improve assimilation into host societies.

Language

Language is often the biggest barrier inter-state migrants face upon arriving in the host society. As migrants and locals are often unable to understand each other's languages, it leads to an inability for the two to communicate. Even when migrants do learn the language of the host society, it is often limited to what they

require at their workplace and is not sufficient for proper communication in situations outside of work. However, bridging the language barrier is also one of the most effective tools to encourage migrant assimilation and is being employed by a few states to increase assimilation into the host society.

Language acting both as a barrier and a facilitator of assimilation can be clearly seen in migrant experiences in Kerala post 1950. Until 1990, the majority of migrants entering the state were from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, who often knew the language or were able to learn it easily, hence allowing for a smooth assimilation into Malayali society.[35] However, post 1990, the state saw a huge influx of long-distance migrants coming from the North and the North-East of India. Compared to the short-distance Kannadiga and Tamilian migrants, these workers faced huge difficulties in learning the local language and found it much more difficult to assimilate into local society. The communication gap between the migrants and the locals also allowed for the creation of false narratives where migrants are blamed for all the ills of the society.[36] However, there were also concerted efforts carried out by the state and the local community to bridge the socio-cultural chasm between locals and migrants through the use of language. Government schools ensured both Malayalam and Hindi were taught at schools so that children grew up speaking both languages. Local people made efforts to learn Hindi, many shops, bus stands and clinics put up signboards in Hindi, and employers appointed supervisors who could speak in Hindi with the migrant labour. At the same time, migrant workers are also learning Malayalam and participating in local festivals and activities.[37]

As urban centres in India are often multilingual there exists a degree of spatial segregation based on linguistic affinities. This most commonly manifests as residential communities that are formed based on language, and are also often independent of class, caste, religion, and other identity markers that influence segregation. Residing in enclaves composed of people who speak the same language provides migrants with a sense of security, identity, and socio-cultural affinity in the host society.[38] Since linguistic identity allows for the creation of strong bonds between migrants in a host society, it often supersedes other identity markers.

While linguistic enclaves are successful in providing a sense of community and security to migrants in a host society, they create a system of socio-spatial segregation that does not respond well to change or alteration. In Bangalore, for instance, violent manifestations of linguistic identity have occurred in areas of

rapid demographic change, caused by the influx of new migrants.[39] However, in areas of the city where the equations between local people and migrant communities are stable, with both being comfortable with the presence of the other, there have been no instances of violence.[40]

In many cases, political issues, both disputes between different political entities as well as campaigns for political dominance, are either triggered by or organised around linguistic differences. These political dynamics at the macro scale invariably impact individual people of specific linguistic groups, especially migrants. The use of language as a tool to achieve political dominance has huge impacts on migrant communities and their assimilation into the host society. The most prevalent manifestation of this is the "sons of soil" ideology which strives to create vote banks on ethnic and linguistic lines. Politics conducted based on this ideology invariably leads to the exclusion of migrant communities and, in more extreme situations, lead to discrimination and even violence against them.

One of the states that is most well-known for its "cult of violence against migrants",[41] enacted through the 'sons of soil' ideology, is Maharashtra, where it was carried out by the Shiv Sena party first against South Indian migrants and later against migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Shiv Sena and its supporters used the sons of soil ideology to demand preferential hiring policies for local Marathi people over migrants, creating strong antagonism between the two groups. This grew to form a strong opposition to the entry of migrants into the state, especially those who were poor, refugees, or from different ethnic or religious backgrounds, and even violence against these groups.[42]
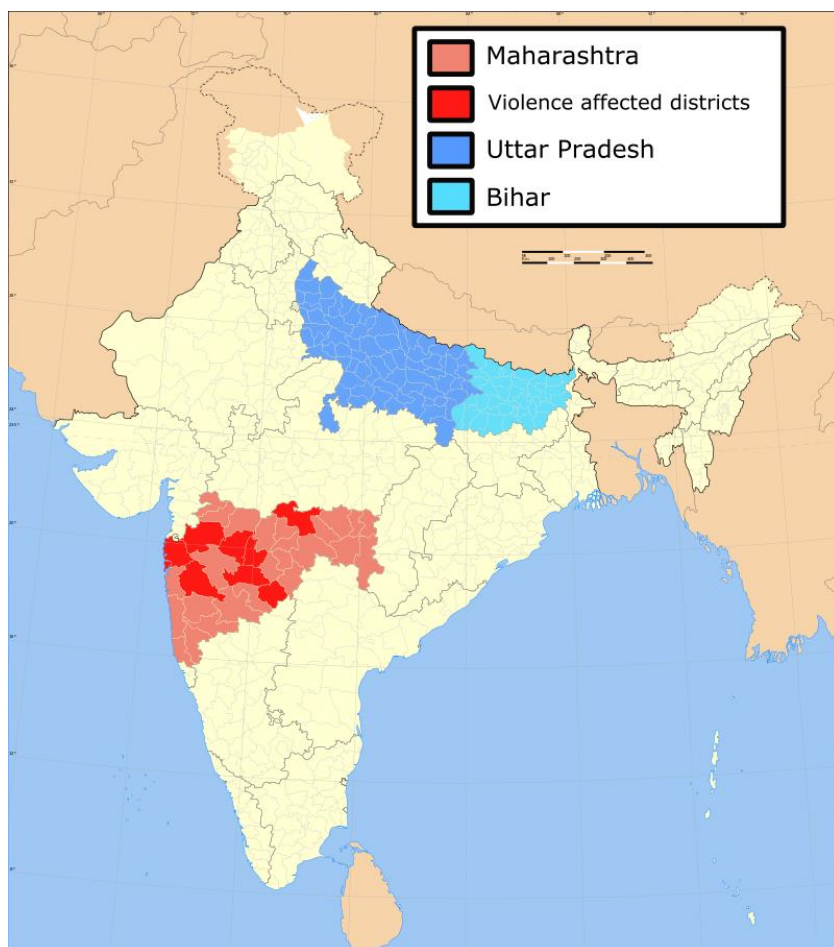
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Fig. 6: Map of districts with violence against migrants from Bihar and UP

In Karnataka, political disputes have manifested as discrimination and violence against migrants of certain linguistic groups. The Karnataka-Tamil Nadu dispute over Cauvery river waters in the 1990s led to an outbreak of violence against Tamilian migrants in Bangalore.[43] In more recent years, the issue that has triggered the most discrimination against a particular linguistic group has been the protests against the use of Hindi initiated in 2017.[44] What began as a political dispute between the central government's "one-nation-one-language" philosophy and the state government's attempt to preserve state identity and language escalated into a series of fights between local people and Hindi-speaking migrants. The centre's push for the use of Hindi across all public sector services resulted in many of these services operating only in Hindi and English, making it difficult for the locals who only spoke Kannada to access them. In response to this, the state government initiated a campaign to bring about the use of Kannada in public services, especially public banks. However, this soon escalated to a movement to eliminate Hindi from all signboards in the city. Shifting from the

language itself to the people who spoke the language, the movement soon began to target Hindi speaking migrants, with many non-Kannada speakers being fired from their jobs.[45]

These cases demonstrate that political issues, both disputes between different political entities as well as campaign for political dominance, are either triggered by or organised around linguistic differences and these political dynamics at the macro scale invariably impact individual people of specific linguistic groups, especially migrants. Migrants are the most affected because the community formation on the basis of linguistic identity that act as a source of security and identity in the host society also create systems of socio-spatial segregation that contribute to their isolation and exclusion from the host society. However, it is also evident that while linguistic differences and language identities serve as an immense barrier to assimilation, language can also be employed as a powerful and effective tool to increase integration into the host society.

Conclusion

This document examines the processes and practices that facilitate the assimilation of inter-state migrants in host societies. While an examination of state policies is outside the scope of this document, multiple social and political factors are discussed, with a focus on the influence of caste and class identity, education levels, and linguistic affinities.

Caste identities determine the degree of assimilation that the migrant community is aiming for and the degree to which they are allowed to assimilate into the host society and the barriers to this process.

Models of exclusionary urbanisation that cities follow result in spatial segregation on the basis of class and favor migrants from higher-socioeconomic classes.

Like class, one's education directly influences ease of assimilation as high education levels are often linked to higher socio-economic strata, better paying jobs, and better standards of living.

Communication gaps due to linguistic differences between locals and migrants is one of the biggest barriers to assimilation. Political dynamics that are organised around linguistic differences invariably impact individual people of specific linguistic groups, especially migrants.

The reliance on social networks in cities, by which both in industry and in residence migrants are segregated according to caste, class, or language, while being sources of support, also reinforce the exclusion of migrant workers. The four markers of identity discussed, while acting as barriers to migrant assimilation, can also be mobilised as effective tools to facilitate the integration of migrant workers into the host society.

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