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# THE MIGRATION OF NORTH EAST PEOPLE TOWARDS CHENNAI - A CASE STUDY

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The North Eastern region is comprised of seven states, which includes Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Sikkim, and they have several borders with countries, namely, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal and Myanmar. Over the past few years, the migration of North East people has increased. Due to economic, political, social and psychological issues an individual is prompted to move from one place to another place. North Eastern people decide to work in Chennai due to many reasons. That includes better infrastructure, improved education facility, employment for all levels, good transportation, friendly working environment that is attractive and lucrative salary. The case study was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The researcher selected North Eastern people from various region of the state who are studying, working and doing business in Chennai. The researcher selected five people randomly and information was collected. Anonymity was maintained in this research. It will be good if the government takes some more initiatives to make the migrants feel more secure to stay in Chennai.

Keywords: North eastern region, Working environment, Education facility, Infrastructure, Good transportation

## INTRODUCTION

The region which is east most in India is North East India. Although it is in isolation from the mainland and under developed economically, it is noteworthy for its political, social, looks and cultural identity. The North Eastern region is comprised of seven states, which includes Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Sikkim, And they have several borders with countries, namely, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal and Myanmar. The diversity of North-Eastern region is incredible as

it is comprised of two hundred communities. Around 4500 kilometres (ninety per cent of its entire area) is shared by the international border with Bhutan, China, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Over the past few years, the migration of North East people has increased. Due to economic, political, social and psychological issues an individual is prompted to move from one place to another place and this is referred as migration. Many people are attracted towards Chennai because of the city offers them with variety of job opportunities across various sectors. And their

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poor economic situation pushes them out of their state in search of opportunities.

North Eastern people decide to work in Chennai due to many reasons. That includes better infrastructure, improved education facility, employment for all levels, good transportation, friendly working environment that is attractive and lucrative salary. People from North East are actually absorbed by Chennai recruiters because compared to Chennai people, The North Eastern employees charge less. But actually the salary what the North Eastern workers receive is high compared to the salary provided in their state.

The migrants have the opportunity to start small business over Chennai because they feel that the city is the best place for their survival. The business includes road side eateries, restaurants, cab company, etc. There are many reasons that provoke North Eastern people to leave their state. That includes natural calamities like erosion and flood, conflicts over ethnicity, armed forces attack, financial problem and agricultural issues. As in most of the areas only agriculture is practiced the income level is less and it stimulates the North Eastern people to look for a change. The study aims in understanding the reasons on why the North Eastern people are leaving their state and how they are adapting themselves in Chennai. The researcher undertook the study because the number of North Eastern people arriving to Chennai keep on increasing for the past few years.

## METHOD

The case study was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The researcher selected North Eastern people from various region of the state who are studying, working and doing business in Chennai. The study area selected was Chennai because

many North Eastern people are arriving to Chennai for work. This is because their wants and desires are not fulfilled in their state and this provoked them to move to Chennai. North East India Welfare Association is established in Chennai because over the past few years the number of migrants entering Chennai increased crossing 10,000. The association takes care the aspects of safety and security of North Eastern people. The researcher selected five people randomly and information was collected. Anonymity was maintained in this research.

## CASE 1

Ms. A, age 22, studying M.Sc in the city college. She is from Manipur. Her Father is a retired government employee. Her mother is a home maker. She has an elder brother working in the army and has a younger brother who is in the final year of schooling. She arrived to Chennai after much struggle in convincing her parents to do her masters here. Though they hesitated initially after her stubbornness they sent her by providing lots and lots of advise as this is the first time she was moving away from her state. Indeed she faced lots of trouble which a new comer will face after reaching Chennai. The first thing is she was the only one North Eastern girl in her batch. This made her to sit lonely in class as she does not know Tamil. For the first two months in fact she thought to return to her state back as she felt so lonely. She face problem with the food too. The ladies hostel where she stayed gave her food but initially she was not able to adopt herself to the taste. She had problems in adjusting with her roommates too. She felt that she was seen awkward by many people due to her way of dressing and language. But since her goal is to score well, and by overcoming all these struggles she came first in the exams. And this made her

popular among her batch. She got new friends. She started adopting to the culture and food habits. And now she feels that Chennai is like her home town and she feels secure to stay over here.

## CASE 2

Ms. B, age 25, is from Nagaland and is the eldest daughter of the family with two younger sisters. She is from a middle class family. Her father is a farmer and his income is not sufficient to run the family. So after completing her twelfth standard she travelled to Chennai to support the education and other expenses of the family as her father is old and not able to do farming. She reached Chennai with a belief that she will get the job immediately and stayed in her friend's room who was working in a BPO. Though she tried in the same BPO they demanded a degree, which sadly she did not pursue. After a struggle of 15 days she got a job in the retail store. But the distance between her house where she stayed with her friend and shop was too far. But she did not want to shift because, in the house she can cook whatever she wish to and eat. And the biggest hurdle for her was travelling as she should catch two buses. First few days she went late to the shop and got scoldings too. Then she got adapted to the chennai's traffic and started earlier to avoid scoldings. She used to start by 8 AM and reach home by 9 PM. Language was not a problem to her as she is required to speak only in English. She is happy that she is able to contribute to her family and sister's education. She visits her native once in a year for fifteen days which is like a festival season for her.

## CASE 3

Mr. C, age 22, works in restaurant is from Sikkim. His father dies when he was 6 year old. He has an aged mother and a sister. As his mother

requires medication regularly due to health complications and as his sister is to be married, he came down to Chennai as his earning over there was insufficient to meet their basic family needs. The first problem he faced in Chennai is the scorching heat. That too as he came during May the temperature was unbearable for him. But as his motive is to find a job he focused on that. The money with which he came from Sikkim got over within a week, but still he did not get a job. Since he didn't give money he was asked to leave the mansion in which he stayed. But he did not give up, infact he stayed in platforms for few days and luckily he got a job in the restaurant as a server. His joy was unlimited. He was provide place for staying and food by the hotel. Although he is getting yearly onlce leave he goes only once in two years to his native so that he gets the vacation pay which will be useful for his family. He has got a gang of friends with them he is learning the language and is indeed so comfortable with the city and the work which he is doing.

## CASE 4

Mrs. D, age 30, hails from Arunachal Pradesh. She has a son. Till her husband was fine everything went on well with the family. The moment her husband met with the accident everything collapsed. Since her husband was only the earning member of the family everything became a standstill. His savings were drained for his treatment. Since his spine was affected he was not allowed to strain much. So to take care of her husband and son's needs she reached Chennai. As she had a beautician diploma she was confident that she will get a job. She stayed in a ladies hostel and started asking for job in each and every parlour she could see. And she got a job. In the beginning it was very

difficult for her. Her son was 3 years old. Due to her work schedule she used to talk only once in a day to her son. And he used to cry. But what to do, she did not have any other option as she should be strong to manage her family. She feels that the salary over here is really good compared to the one given in her state. The happiest moment for her is the vacation period when she will go to shopping in Chennai and buy loads of things for her kid and family. She feels that all her struggle over the year will fly off during the vacation.

## CASE 5

Mr. D, age 35, from Tripura. He has a wife and two kids. After completing his schooling he took care of his father's agricultural land. But as it is an ancestral property due to some case the land was taken away from him. He did not know any other job than this. With the little money he had provoked him to travel to Chennai. He stayed in his friend's place for a while. He knows cooking, so he started searching jobs in hotels and restaurants. He got a job in a small restaurant but the earning was sufficient for him. After sending money to his family he saved little. After two years he had sufficient money to start a small eatery in the roadside. He started to sell chaat items and in addition his signature snack momo with different stuffing. It was attracted by many teens and he became so popular in that area.

Now he is planning to open outlets too. He is so happy about Chennai, the warm and friendly atmosphere makes him feel at hometown.

## CONCLUSION

India is a country famous for its unity and diversity. The diversity is in the form of culture, religion, food and dress. In order to fulfill their need, wants and desires the people have no other option than to migrate which is unavoidable. The case study reveals that people migrate to Chennai due to different reasons, like, for higher studies, to run a family and other commitments. Though in the beginning they feel racially discriminated, they tend to adapt to the environment. Tamil Nadu Government is in fact taking lot of steps to make the migrant workers to feel at home and in fact the established association is also helping them for their safe and secure stay. It will be good if the government takes some more initiatives to make the migrants feel more secure to stay in Chennai.

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