CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Migration is a movement which involves a person or a group of persons to move from one place to another, thus changing one’s place of living especially for a limited period of time. It is a selective process and takes place at different levels. However, it can be applied more widely to include temporary changes involving seasonal and daily movements. As said by Afşar (2000), the term ‘migration’ encompasses diversified forms of territorial mobility. These forms involve a large spectrum of movement ranging from commuting, temporary absence from home place for a couple of days to several years, seasonal migration to permanent relocation. She argued that along the continuum of commitment, seasonal or shuttle migrants (seeking temporary construction work or other urban unskilled jobs to augment their agricultural income), along with short term visitors (coming to cities for shopping, touring or visiting relations) and return migrants should be included in the population typology. This is because they are considered to be the ones who maintain continuous links between urban and rural areas, besides constituting a large part of the de facto population at any time in urban areas. Thus “individuals or groups who are temporary or transient migrants to a new place are termed as floating population” (Hudson, 1997). These people are dynamic and risk-bearing persons who have high capacity to detach themselves from traditional surroundings and adapt themselves to unfamiliar environments. Thus the floating population can also be defined as migrants who are temporary or
transient in nature and who move individually or in groups to a new place for employment, education, business, service or varied other purposes for a certain period of time and who usually have a strong bond with their native place. They stay in new places temporarily, which may be seasonal or periodic and among them are return migrants who are very much important as they come back to the place of origin after an unspecified stay away from it. The seasonal or circular migration refers to a short-term stay of under a year in another location, as this movement is made primarily for employment purposes (well-paid work) by those at the subsistence level. As mentioned by Dharmaraj (1993), in the urbanization process, the majority of the migrants consist of a floating population, never striking deep roots in the city and ever anxious to rush back to their village home to attend some harvest or other seasonal purposes. Selier (1988) used the term ‘circular migration’ usually referring to a type of mobility intermediate between commuting and lifetime migration. People leave their homes temporarily to work elsewhere. If that period is very short, the term “commuting” is used.

To understand the pattern of floating population and its impact are an important part of spatio-demographic analysis. Their numbers have tended to increase at a tremendous rate especially in the larger cities of the developing countries. In China, the floating population has increased from 70 million in 1993 to 140 million in 2003, exceeding 10 percent of the total population and accounting for about 30 percent of the rural labour force. Their direction is generally from countryside to cities, or from the underdeveloped regions to the developed regions.
In case of Chittagong, which is the second largest city in Bangladesh, it has a population estimated to be 3.6 million. It is growing at a rate of 4.5 percent where more than 60 percent of the city dwellers are migrants from the neighbouring districts. They are attracted to what is perceived as better living conditions and job opportunities in the urban area.

In India as well, it being a developing country, the volume of floating population in the large urban centres is increasing at a rapid pace. These ‘floaters’ come mainly from rural areas to urban centres and their flow is often related to urbanization and industrialization. Urbanisation in any area leads to migration of people and these two concepts are so closely inter-related that they are the most important indicators of economic development and social transformation of a region. Better employment opportunities constitute the most important factor that encourages these people to migrate to nearby cities. The present pattern of urbanization in India is adding a new dimension to the rural—urban relationship and the Indian cities are exerting a tremendous influence on its rural periphery in various dimensions. Chennai, the fourth largest city of India, has a floating population of one million and an annual increase of 200,000 people. Again, Bangalore city, the IT hub of India is home to an estimated floating population of 10,000 expatriates, probably more than any other metro in India.

Guwahati, the capital city of Assam, located on the southern bank of River Brahmaputra, is the premier city in the entire Northeast India. Being the largest urban centre of this region, it is responding well to the new form of urbanization mainly after the shifting of the state’s capital from Shillong to Dispur in 1972. Due
to the rapid growth of industrialization, trade and commerce, development of transport network in association with other socio-cultural activities, the city is growing at a tremendous rate. The population of the city has shown an accelerating rate increasing to 8,09,895 (GMC area) in 2001 from 5,84,342 in 1991. This unprecedented rise in the population of the city can mainly be attributed to the extension of the municipal area and also to the immigration of industrial workers after the establishment of a large number of industrial concerns in and around the city. Moreover, the low sex ratio in the city (839 females / 1000 males in 2001) also confirms the higher rate of flow of male migrants.

In the present study region, i.e., Guwahati, generally the better economic opportunities motivate and force people from different areas around it to move to it as a floating population. These people come not only from the immediate periphery or different parts of Assam, but also from distant places like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir etc. and even from Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. Poverty and unemployment mainly compel and push these floaters to leave their native places. There is another group, i.e. the small and marginal farmers along with the agricultural labourers who also migrate to the city, as the tiny size of their holdings is unable to provide them adequate sustenance. Moreover, due to lack of different services and amenities like higher education, medical facilities, sophisticated technology, means of communication, etc., the youth are compelled to move from the immediate neighbourhood to the nearby city. Such types of temporary migration is limited generally within 100-150 kms. distance zone from the city like Nagaon, Barpeta, Mangaldoi,
Baihata Chariali, Rangia, Hajo, Palasbari, etc. as these places are well connected to the city by a good transportation network. Besides voluntary migration, forced migration is caused due to natural disasters and also extremist activities and insurgency.

On the other hand, the pull factors which attract these temporary migrants to the city are better job prospects, educational facilities, social security, more reliable sources of employment and even better services in health and housing in the city.

The increasing volume of floaters who pour blindly into the city poses problems for both the urban citizens and the planners. They have caused additional pressure on the already overstressed urban amenities. The population structure of the city is totally changed. These floaters who come in search of jobs usually settle down in the vacant land including the hillocks, wetlands, both sides of the railway tracks, etc. These people are found to change their houses upto four or five times a year making it impossible for the law enforcing agencies to keep tab on them. The unchecked encroachment of the hills is a major problem as anti-social elements can easily take shelter on the hills taking the advantage of lack of adequate police patrolling in those areas and the lack of motorable roads has complicated matters for the police. The railway tracks have also become the breeding grounds of anti-social elements. Thus to study such a grave problem in recent times, a thorough investigation and observation is very much necessary. This will be of enormous help to analyse the pattern of the floating population and its impact on the concerned city. This work will also enhance the possibility of undertaking some research work on such problem of the Guwahati City and the study for undertaking a similar work for any other urban centre.
1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objectives of the present work are —
❖ to study the geographical background of the city and its neighbouring region.
❖ to study the nodality and significance of Guwahati City in Northeast India.
❖ to delimit the different migration zones around Guwahati in respect of the movement of the floating population.
❖ to examine the “push” and “pull” factors that operates simultaneously in attracting the floating population to the city.
❖ to identify the different groups of the floating population and their distribution pattern in Guwahati City.
❖ to study the socio-economic background and characteristics of the floating population to gain a deeper insight into their migratory behaviour.
❖ to study the impact of this group of population on the city’s environment.
❖ to suggest measures to deal with various problems associated with the floating population of Guwahati City.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the above objectives, the following research questions have been framed for the study:

(i) Whether the intensity of movement of the floating population in this city is inversely proportional to the distance between the source region and destination?

(ii) Whether the poor, uneducated and unskilled group of people mainly migrate to the city?

(iii) Is the process of migration an age – sex selective one?

(iv) Do the different floating population group exhibit a tendency to cluster by their origin, caste, religion and language rather than by occupation?
(v) Whether the floating population are mostly engaged in petty jobs with low income?

(vi) Is there any relationship between the concentration of floating population and the change of socio-economic set up and land use pattern in the city?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It has already been mentioned that the increasing urbanization and industrialization is adding a new dimension to the present pattern of rural - urban relationships, leading to the influx of the floating population to the city. This problem is going to be more pronounced in the near future. Unlike in the Western countries where urbanization and industrialization go hand in hand, here the rural migration is 'pulled' rather than 'pushed'. Indian urban centres have grown in the vicinity of rural backgrounds in contrast to the Western Countries. Hence the rural-urban difference is high which leads to a high migration rate. Under such circumstances it is obvious that the nature of the rural urban relationship will be different from that of the developed countries of the West.

The topic undertaken for research in this study relates to very acute and burning problem in almost all the major cities or urban centres of the developing countries. In case of Guwahati, this high differentiation is causing large scale migration which has become very much evident in recent years. It is stimulated simultaneously by both rural 'push' and urban 'pull' factors. Poverty, unemployment, lack of essential services, food shortage, floods, crop failure, etc. force the rural poor to move to the city. They believe that the city would provide them with one or the other alternative to earn their livelihood rather than to sit idle and starve in their native place. Such huge influx of floaters, which
pour blindly to the city change the entire landscape of the urban centre from the population structure to the landuse pattern and thus leading to the haphazard growth of the city.

A study dealing with such problems will therefore, be of great academic significance and practical utility. Any planning for Guwahati City and its neighbourhood will require a thorough understanding of this group of population. The planning authorities and the policy makers will have to face the uphill task of understanding and managing this group of population as well as undertaking various measures to control their flow and providing them with adequate amenities for a better livelihood. This will help not only in managing the large inflow of this group of people, but also in utilizing them in a proper way since by migrating and working in the city, they can cater to some of the basic needs of the urbanites in different fields.

1.5 METHOD OF STUDY

The main purpose of this segment is to understand the methods used for studying the various aspects dealing with the floating population in Guwahati and their impact on the city’s environment. The discussion which follows, therefore, deals with the selection of the study area, collection of data, analysis of data, preparation of maps, and the methods applied for the study.

1.5.1 SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA

For a problem like the study of the floating population and its impact, the city should be such as to consist of all the basic amenities and functions favourable for attracting the people from the surrounding areas as well as distant areas. Guwahati being the leading urban centre and economic hub of the entire Northeast India, attracts a large number of migrants or floaters from different
areas comprising the peripheral and far flung regions to settle down here.

As has already been mentioned, Guwahati's importance has greatly increased after the shifting of the capital of Assam here, and as a result, its influence on the physical and socio-economic environment of Northeast India has accelerated to a great extent. Guwahati is also a multifunctional city having close relationships in every aspects with the nearby rural areas. Keeping this in view, this city has been selected for the study of the floating population and its impact on the city's environment.

1.5.2 COLLECTION OF DATA

This study incorporates both primary and secondary data in order to draw a clear conclusion about the problem. But the main constraint lies in the fact that secondary information related to this particular group of population is very limited and seriously lacking. Hence those literatures which are somewhat relevant with the problem have been collected from diverse sources. The secondary data is collected from various books, publications, journals, articles, reports, etc. All the general data or information on Guwahati City regarding its location, physiography, landuse pattern, population, transportation network, industry, etc. has been collected from various official records of such offices as Town and Country Planning, Guwahati Municipal Corporation, District Transport Office, District Gazetteers Office, Directorate of Economics and Statistics and ARSAC. The demographic data has been mainly collected from Census reports. Data pertaining to the flow of buses, trains and ferry were taken from the Guwahati Transport Association, Guwahati Railway Station and the Inland Water Transport Department. Various libraries and
institutions were also visited and these include OKD, District Library, Assam Administrative Staff College, Gauhati University and National Library, Kolkata in connection with the study. Besides, internet facilities were also used for collecting the latest information regarding the problem.

In case of collecting the primary data, it was a bit difficult to construct a sampling frame as the relevant secondary data were insufficient and the exact number of floating population in Guwahati City was not known during the primary field survey nor was it found to be mentioned in any secondary sources. In such a situation the best method of sampling is cluster sampling and stratified sampling methods. The floating population coming to the city comprises the people belonging to various backgrounds with different socio-economic characteristics. The first group of floaters are classified based primarily on occupations such as vendors, workers engaged in the unorganized sector, petty businessmen, lower order job seekers, periodic businessmen and service holders. The second category is the short stay floaters who come for various activities and stay in the city for days, weeks, fortnight or a month. The third group comprises the students and last one is the daily commuters. All these categories together form a total of 1000. Specific areas in the three different zones within the city were selected where these people were found or where they tend to settle. For instance, to collect information regarding the vendors, different markets such as Ganeshguri and Beltola in the South, Bamunimaidan (colony market) and Chandmari market in the east, Maligaon and Machkhowa markets in the west were surveyed. Likewise Kachari and Uzanbazar
markets along the riverside towards the north were taken into account.

Primary surveys were carried out by visiting both the different households and the respondent’s workplace. To gather information regarding the workers in the unorganized sector, the construction sites, garages, bus stands, restaurants and hotels and even households were surveyed. Household surveys were also carried out in the slums situated along the marshy areas, riverbanks, railway lines, commercial centres and even some residential areas. A large number of floating population reside in these slums. Besides these areas, non-slum areas where floating population is found were also visited in different directions from the city-centre. The newly developed areas of the city such as Sijubari, Hatigaon, Durandha, Lalmati, Baripara, Paschim Boragaon, Jyotikuchi, Dhirenpara, Fatasil Ambari, Jalukbari, Kailashnagar (Pandu), Patharquarry, Mathgharia have absorbed a large number of floating population. As such, altogether 39 areas were selected for the primary data collection including the areas near the city-centre, the intermediate areas as well as the newly developed areas in the peripheral zone of the city. These include the markets, different workplaces, offices, residences, lodges, hotels and the like.

The detailed schedule prepared for interviewing the desired population was partially structured (Appendix-I). There were some open ended questions framed basically to know about their ideas on their neighbourhood, parent organization, employer and the city. The respondent was not necessarily the head of the family (in case of household survey), but any adult member of the household, irrespective of his/her gender, or whoever was
available at home during the time of interview was taken as the respondent for the primary data. The basic aim was to obtain all relevant information regarding social and economic condition of the family as well as the various hardships and problems faced by them. To cross check the situation of that particular area, different people residing nearabout that place were also interviewed with the aim of gathering additional information regarding different problems and the existence of crime and anti-social elements, if any, of that area. Informal discussions and personal observations were also carried out to some extent.

1.5.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The primary data are tabulated and analysed using the SPSS in computer to show the percentage share of the different variables and the specified floating population groups; such as different categories and their level of education and gender, occupation and level of education, distance and gender, distance and marital status, distance and level of education, different categories and social groups, religious groups, age group, linguistic group, gender composition, status of house, family type, distance and category and the like. The results of the analysis are presented in tables and simple cartograms. A comparative study is made between the groups to show the difference in various socio-economic aspects. Since the purpose of the study is to find out the pattern of the floating population and its impact on the city, a base map showing the location, physiography, transportation network, landuse pattern, population density, has been prepared using GIS. Further, to show the socio-economic condition of the Guwahati City, different wardwise population density maps, maps showing scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population, literacy, working
population, gender composition, etc. have been drawn. Besides maps, bar diagrams are also prepared with the help of the primary data showing age group, gender composition, level of education, religious and linguistic compositions, social groups, income, expenditure pattern, and the like. These maps and graphs provide a background to understand the pattern of the floating population in the city and their socio-economic pursuits. To assess the general influence zones of Guwahati City and the interaction of the surrounding areas with it, the Gravity Potential Model (Borah, 1985) and Railey’s (breaking point) Model (Mandal, 1982) has been used. Bus service zone is demarcated to show the commuters zone. Simple cartograms are drawn by taking the floating population groups and the distance they cover (zones of migration) in order to show the distance wise interpretation of the flow pattern.

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The present study incorporates altogether seven chapters. While the first chapter is an introductory one that includes a survey of the relevant literature, Chapter II deals with the historical as well as the geographical background of the study area. The first part of this chapter throws light on the growth and development of this city into an important urban centre of the entire Northeastern region and the second part gives us a detailed summary of all the physical and socio-economic aspects of the city and its environ. Chapter-III delimits the four important zones of migration around Guwahati City into inner, intermediate, outer and distant respectively depending on the distance the floaters cover in reaching the city. Besides this, the second part analyses the various economic, social and other causes related to
the migration which are relevant in studying the pattern of floating population and its impact.

The Chapter IV is devoted to the main theme of the study. This chapter is both descriptive and analytical one as it describes the different groups of floating population who come to the city according to their specific purposes and needs, along with their distribution pattern in the city. Chapter V studies the social and economic characteristics of the floaters in detail such as the age group, gender composition, level of education, religious and linguistic compositions along with different social groupings, marital status, family type, housing conditions and other amenities and features. It also studies the occupation, income level and expenditure pattern of different groups of the floaters. In Chapter VI, the impact of such migration on the city's environment is analysed. Urban and social stress on the amenities like water supply, health, sanitation, electricity etc., housing problems, traffic congestion, employment, environment and land degradation, security of property, transport, social problems like drug addiction, alcoholism, child labour, prostitution, crime, creation of slums, bustees, dilapidated areas, etc. are the major impacts which the study brings to light.

The concluding chapter i.e. Chapter VII summaries the major aspects of the work and attempts to synthesize the findings, and suggest the redefining or modification of the research questions taken in relating to the problem. It also points out the possibilities of undertaking any research concerning this problem of the city as studied here or of any other area so that it could be of great help in both academic and practical field.
1.7 SURVEY OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

The studies pertaining to the pattern of migration of floating population and its impact on the concerned city has been an important theme in the field of Social and Urban Geography. Human population in any given area increases either by excess of births over deaths or by spatial influx of people into the area from other places. Spatial movement of population is taking place from the pre-historic period and many significant events and developments of human civilization could be traced from such type of movements, both at local and global level. Migration of floating population provides a basis for comprehending the changes taking place in the rural urban milieu and rural-urban relationships. The economic, social and cultural relationships between the rural areas and the cities undergoes tremendous change due to such type of movement. Some of these changes might have the effect of accentuating the rural-urban chasm or bridging the gulf between the two areas.

A survey of the studies related to this theme is essential towards understanding the types of work done, the approaches and methods used in studying them, the findings arrived at from the studies and their limitations. It is in this background that a review of studies related to migration of floating population and the impact in the city region is done in this section.

Studies on migration of floating population – Patterns and Impacts

Movement of floating population is an important type of internal migration which is taking a massive dimension globally and became a world wide phenomenon. Before the development of agriculture, probably most of the human races migrated seasonally, following changes in natural vegetation and the
movements of food animals. As stated by David Waugh (1995) as early as in 1885, E.G. Ravenstein forwarded seven 'laws of migration' based on his studies within the U.K. Waugh also commented that in 1870's decade, many black farm workers in U.S.A. began to move to the cities to seek work after the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery. During the 1930s, drought and soil erosion in the Dust Bowl of the Midwest caused many farmers to give up their land. There has also been recent waves of immigrants, mainly Hispanics from Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba, and Asians from China, the Philippines, Japan and Korea, and are attracted to urban centres in general and to inner cities in particular. For over a century there has been a drift of people from the north and west of Britain to the south-east of England. The early 19th century was a period of the Industrial Revolution when large numbers of people moved into large urban settlements near the coalfields of northern England, Central Scotland and South Wales, and to work in the nearby textile, steel, heavy engineering and ship-building industries. Carr (1997) too pointed out that the scale of migration is much greater in the developing countries. It usually involves people in the lower income groups who are looking for manual and unskilled works, and is overwhelmingly directed towards the large cities from the surrounding rural areas and small towns. Mandal (2000) also stated that the Third World today is the scene of the greatest movement of people in history, and though the waves of political refugees from the war torn areas are still significant, it is the quieter and spontaneous movement of people from the countryside to the cities which constitutes the mainstream. Hence, the majority of the Third World countries are characterized by rapid urbanization. Much of this growth is greatly
aided by migration from the rural areas. In Latin America, rural-urban migration contributes a much greater component of population increase of the cities. Knox and Marston (1998) threw light on another important aspect of migration. They were of the view that migration does not only involve a permanent change of residence. Temporary labor migration has long been an indispensable part of the world economic order. Individuals who migrate temporarily to take up jobs in other countries are known as ‘guest workers’. In another study, Schwind (1971) pointed out that the basic economic and social motivations to migration apparently do not apply equally to all individuals. Professional workers, high income group and well educated persons are more mobile over long distances than manufacturing, services and trade workers and also the less educated, low-income group. The latter, conversely, are more mobile over short distances. He also opine that the unemployed persons in the working age group are more mobile than the employed persons, who are more mobile than those not in this age group (the very young, housewives, the very old and retired and the least advantaged). Males are somewhat more mobile than females and the single persons are more mobile than the married persons. The studies made by Ronald (1975) reveals that the entire North American continent was first populated by the nomadic people who probably migrated from Asia across the Bering Land bridge, gradually working their way to the tip of Tierr Del Fuego in South-America. Several thousand years later, the continent was again transformed as Europeans started migrating to the New World. Regarding internal migration, Ronald was of the opinion that some of the impacts of such internal shifts are unbalanced sex ratio and rise or fall in income
and education levels. While cities in the United States and other urbanized industrial nations are suffering from overcrowding and inadequate housing and other services, the situation is even worse in many developing African, Asian and Latin American nations. For example Kolkata has grown from less than 850,000 in 1901 to eight million in 1972, mainly due to people flocking the city from the neighbouring rural areas. Crowding is one of the burning problems of these cities. In Tokyo, where there is hardly any space left for houses, part of the problem has been solved by dumping garbage into Tokyo Bay and building houses on top of it. The problem of overcrowding extends even into the schools, seriously overloading the classrooms; and into the streets, creating congestion on mass-transportation facilities – on trains and buses within the city and on the highways, railroads used by the commuters. In his study, Waugh (1995), clearly mentioned that in Brazil and the U.S.A., the minority groups of indigenous people, the Amerindians and Native Americans respectively, have been forced off their tribal lands. In South Africa, under apartheid, the black population were forced to live either in shanty settlements in urban townships or on homelands in rural areas, which lacked resources. In the last few years, an increasing number of people have been forced to move due to so-called “ethnic cleansing policies” enforced by several governments, as in the former Yugoslavia. Waugh also drew arrows in his diagram to show the migration patterns in Tunisia which clearly depicted a greater movement of rural than urban dwellers to the capital city Tunis, travelling short distances.

According to Todaro (1980), rapid urbanization is the consequence of the working of three major factors, namely natural
increase of the urban population, reclassification of the urban areas and rural-urban migration. He pointed out that the most significant long-run contributing factor in increasing urbanization is high rural-urban migration. In the study, the shift from villages to the cities have been termed as the “largest migratory movement in the human history”. Another notable work undertaken by Feng (2000) rests on the general feminist literature on gender and work. The central thesis developed in this work is that one must analyse the intersection of gender, class and place of origin to understand the strategic situation of women migrant workers in Sicheng. This work started as an attempt to investigate Sicheng’s unmarried women migrant workers lived experiences of economic reform in China. The author wanted to understand how these women workers experienced the transition from peasant daughters to factory workers in a time of great political, economic and social changes in China. Mallee (1995), too suggested that the general practice of the local governments is to allow the influx of ‘floating migrants’, because this group is ‘a source of cheap labor without being a great burden on the state budget and because of its slightly ambiguous status, it can be controlled when necessary’. Lewis (1982) lay emphasis, however, on one perspective, the geographical aspects, in his study. Thus stress was placed on spatial patterns and processes involved in human migration.

Gabe (1999) provides information about China’s population and population control. The author in his book tries hard to understand China’s population problems and policies, however, he has also realized that his information and understanding may be less than he expected. China’s population growth was perceived as a colossal obstacle to the country’s development. The
enormous population had threatened the country’s survival in the past two centuries, and it might again endanger its survival if the population growth is not effectively controlled. It is estimated that Beijing and Shanghai each have a floating population of 2-3 million people. The main reasons behind such huge influx of such population are the widening income gap between rural and urban areas, increasing labour demand in certain economic sectors of big cities and agricultural modernization which inevitably increases the surplus agricultural labour. In a study made in China, the term ‘floating population’ refers to persons staying away from their place of registration without having transferred their hukou (i.e. household registration in urban areas which entitle holders to grain and clothing, rations, housing, health care, salaried employment, unemployment, insurance and pension). There is currently a very large surplus in the agricultural labour force. Poston and Duan (1999) said that a good number of these persons is absorbed in the industrial and service sectors in the large cities of China. These rural labourers are temporary urban migrants and are known in China as the ‘floating population’ or the ‘floaters’. They are locally known as ‘liudong renkou’ meaning floating population or migrants in Chinese language. Li (1996) opined that the floating population is not only made up of rural workers going to cities, but also includes children, aging people and non-agricultural workers who flow from one place to the other, including urban to urban, rural to rural and urban to rural areas. This category would include temporary residents, people on business trips and so on. All floaters are not always on the move; some stay on the same place for years. Such type of transient migrants often take up those works that urban residents do not
often want to do or find it very difficult, dirty, exhausting labour as in construction, street cleaning, recycling garbage, brick laying, repairing items and toiling in sweatshop factories. They work as day labourers and usually gather on street corners early in the morning to compete for jobs.

Another notable work is of Kearney and Miller (1987) which attempts to chart linkages between the massive population changes created by internal migration and the breaking up of families, the increase in self-destructive behavior, and the rise in ethnic tensions. This book probe features of internal migration in Sri Lanka and some of the social and political consequences of these population shifts. It also examines the aspects of certain social developments that have accompanied internal migration in Sri Lanka like unbalanced sex ratio, rising rates of suicide, and increased ethnic conflict. Though they are not the usual subject matter included in studies of internal migration, but the authors felt that they are important topics associated with migration not only in Sri Lanka but probably in many countries as well.

Sandbergen (1995) in his study emphasized on return migration and seasonal migration or circular migration as important categories of temporary moves. The former refers to those who come back to the place of origin after an unspecified stay away from it and the latter one relates mainly to a short-term stay of under a year in another location as it is made solely for employment purposes by those at the subsistence level, it is likely to be repeated at preferred times and is hence also called circular migration or simply as 'the circulation of labour'. Cherunilam (1987) gives an analytical account of the factors behind migration and their consequences and surveys the trends in
national and international migrations. The author highlights the positive and negative effects of migration and suggests measures to regulate migration in the larger social interest. This is a comprehensive work on migration and indeed a valuable source of information on various important aspects and dimensions of internal and international migrations. It provides some conceptual introduction to the subject, examines the causes and consequences of migration and reviews important trends in migration and policy measures adopted by different countries to regulate migration and spatial distribution of population. In his study, Bade (1987) made an useful attempt by explaining and analyzing the chief aspects of migration to and from Germany down to the present day. It traces the effects on the labour market in the host country concerned and draws attention to the social and cultural problems of foreign workers.

White and Woods (1980) in their particular volume seeks to divert the emphasis of geographical enquiry towards the examination of the affect of particular changes in population distribution on the organization of human society. It deals specifically with the economic, social, political and demographic impacts of migration on origin and destination areas, and also with the attitudinal and behavioural influences that mobility can have on the migrants themselves. It seeks to establish answers to questions like— who migrates and why? , what characteristics do migration streams display? and chiefly, what are the geographical impacts of migration? In a special series of World Bank Staff Working Papers on population change and development, Swamy (1985) in his paper makes an assessment of the dimensions of past and present day migration, its determinants ,
the effects on sending countries, costs and benefits and the nature of constraints on free movement of people. Mc Nicoll (1984) in his significant work presented a systematic discussion of the consequences of rapid population growth for economies and social systems. It is concerned principally with growth resulting from mortality decline in the absence of comparable fertility decline. It also put emphasis on growth of population resulting from net migration.

Afsar (2000) in her study attempts to contribute towards the greater understanding of the urbanization process in Bangladesh. Rapid urban transition in Bangladesh and especially the growth of the capital and the only mega city Dhaka, had not only affected the spatial distribution of the population, but exerted profound influence on the economy, society and the polity. The study focuses particularly on the rural-urban migration process explaining the causes of mobility, stability, the consequences flowing from that movement for the wellbeing of migrant and their families and the problems and opportunities generated by rapid rural-urban migration, which are the hallmark of the urbanization process in Bangladesh. The study also shows that rural-urban migration is predominantly a part of family based poverty alleviation strategy in Bangladesh. Begum (1999) in her study incorporates extensive primary data, focussing on the expectations of rural migrants in the city of Dhaka. The aim is also to study the change in expectations after having stayed in the city for twelve to sixteen months. Selier (1988) in his book on rural-urban migration in Pakistan, focuses in particular the city of Karachi. This particular city shows a remarkable yearly influx of migrants mostly from remote and destitute rural areas. This study
concentrates on rural-urban migration, as it is qualitatively the most important due to its pervasive urbanising effect which influences the development as a whole. According to the author, another important dimension is that of time. Migration can occur once in a life-time or be temporary and repetitive. The relationships which the migrants maintain with their places of origin can also vary. For those temporary movements in which a strong bond persists with the rural place of origin is generally expressed by the term “circular migration”. The author also mentioned the importance of those rural-urban migrants who stays in the city with a clear intention for a limited period of time. This period can last for the duration of the working life, after which the migrants wants to return home. These temporary migrants especially maintain close ties with an active interest in their home-place, where many of them leave behind their close relations.

All the above studies, however, related to the rural-urban migration flow in the developed and developing countries, the drift of ruralites to the urban centre were mostly forced migration. Nevertheless, voluntary migration of the people cannot be completely ruled out. The developed countries also experience the out migration of urbanites who move towards the suburbs or the peripheral areas as in the case of London since the mid 1950s. But compared to the advanced countries, the situation is quite different in a developing country like India. The rural depopulation occurs mostly due to the lack of adequate amenities, unemployment, poverty, natural calamities, etc., in the source region and better future prospects and avenues, etc., in the place of destination. The migrants are attracted by the so-called comfortable and sophisticated life of the cities. Large number of these migrants are
from the immediate rural periphery who travel short distances to reach the urban centres. They bring about large scale impacts in the city causing widespread problems. Further, the socio-economic structure in both the urban and rural areas of developing countries is so different from that of the developed countries that models developed there are not suitable or applicable to the Indian situation. Therefore, the migration pattern of floating population in Indian background should be studied in detail along with the impacts it leaves behind, in order to get a clear picture of the whole process. A review of studies on this aspect relating to Indian situations will, therefore, be appropriate here.

**Comparable Works on Indian Situations**

The study on the migration pattern in general and rural-urban migration stream in particular has been extensively done in India considering different aspects of the broad term ‘migration’ by the authors in their works. A good number of works dealing with this theme or closely allied aspects have been brought to light. Most of them are dealt with the rural migration or clue to rural-urban relationships in India which were studied in macro or meso scale. A very few studies were done in micro level. On the other hand, migration of floating population in different urban centres of India is a very common phenomena in recent years. But relevant studies related to this aspects is very much limited.

Sharat Chandra (1991) in his study of the “Spatial Patterns of Population Mobility in South Bihar Plain” is a pioneering work on migration pattern of people in the region. This study was more concerned with the population migration during specified time – interval. Even inter-district migration pattern also occupies paramount significance. Another principal objective was to study
the processes and factors affecting population mobility in a
developing economy characterized by a high dependency on
griculture. Along with these objectives, the trends of rural-urban
migration in the region was also examined. Some migration
estimates was made to describe the contribution of internal
migration to overall redistribution of population, to indicate the
areas of population gain or loss and to determine the direction and
magnitude of migration streams. The study also examined the role
of migrants in the transfer of culture and other traits of the society.
This study is done more in a macro scale where the minute
features of rural migration remains untouched.

Another study worth mentioning in this line is “Migration
and Mobility : A Sociological Study of Urban Karnataka” by G.K.
Joshi (1989). The main aim of this study was to examine whether
or not the two processes of geographical movement of people
(migration), and changes in their occupational class (mobility) are
in any way related to each other. With this aim in view, he
conceived other objectives such as to study the socio-economic
background of the migrants to analyse the in-migration and the
occupational mobility, to investigate the motives of migration, to
understand the settlement pattern of the migrants and to fill the
research gaps between the need for the knowledge and its
availability in the field of spatial and social mobility. The studies
made by R.N. Prabhakara (1986) in this line entitled “Internal
Migration and Population Redistribution in India, Some
Reflections” was also a work which made an attempt to investigate
only the social and economic consequences of migration in
Karnataka state (India), and its findings were applicable for the rest
of countryside as well. But it has its limitations as it is not
Following these works, many studies on the rural-urban relationships and rurban migration in India were carried out. As cited in J. Borah’s book (1985), another study entitled “Impact of Metropolitan City on the Surrounding Region: A Study of South Kolaba, Maharashtra” by Deshpande and others (1980) attempted to study as to how far the regional hierarchy of towns has been disturbed by the influence of metropolitan Bombay and what are the patterns and implications of the rural to urban migration, i.e., from South Kolaba Region to Bombay. Another work in this line is by D.P. Saxena (1977) named “Rurban Migration in India – Causes and Consequences” where he studied in detail the rural emigration and economic change, employment status and also the economic status of the emigrants. He also developed the phenomena of marginalism and ‘marginal man’ and stated that there are three stages in the development of the rural emigrant as a marginal man. At the first stage when he initially comes into the urban environment, he is comparatively ignorant of the characteristics of town life as well as his new low status. At the second stage, he learns about the difference in his own ways and the ways of the town. He then tries to adapt himself to the new urban situation. In the final stage he either picks up new skills and new ways and settles down in the town or decides to go back to the village of his origin and tries to overcome his marginalism. But in majority of the cases, however, he remains completely indecisive and relegates himself permanently to a marginal status which further intensifies his personal and social disorganization. The author drew conclusion that one finds a gradual improvement
in the economic conditions of the people on the one hand and the other hand, also come across the gloomy fact of the widespread rural indebtedness from which even the emigrant families are hardly free. But this work is done at a macro scale which is more helpful in the study of a national level than the study of migration pattern in small areas or cities. The causes and consequences stated are to some extent general and not easily applicable to different areas.

Another notable work in this field is that of V.S. Gananathan (1959). His paper ‘Some Aspects of Rural-Urban Relationships in India’ dealt with the study of rural settlements around Poona and Madras which experience the urban-pull basically of two important types. The first type is the rural settlement which is constantly and continuously in touch with the big city. This happens largely because of its proximity to the big city and the second type is about those rural settlement which is further away from the city and is not in such daily contact with the big city. The author also remarked that in India, the cities with all its general deficiencies, not only holds its population but also tends to grow beyond its capacities. Once the rural people have tasted the comforts easily available in the city, they can never be happy without them. The big cities have more of these comforts and thus are the main magnets to the growing middle-class in the country. The rich and the poor people feel the same urge to go to the city once they have seen the apparent advantages of urban life. But this work did not clearly state about the impact these rural migrants bring about in the urban centre. Again C.R. Prasada Rao (1969) expressed the general view about the rural-urban migration in his article so as to give us a clue to rural-urban relations in India. He was of opinion that rural-urban migration might set in motion
some aspects which upset demographic and economic balances between localities and the regions, and give rise to problems of rural-urban integration within the regions. It might deplete and depopulate a whole village and swell the population elements elsewhere in an urban area. It also creates new types of settlements like 'slums', 'squatter colonies' or 'delinquent pockets' in a big town or city. The limitation lies in the fact that this article draws heavily on the data made available by different authors and writers and the arguments presented are mainly based on secondary information. Yet the author gave some personal viewpoints and interpretations on the subject.

Another important study on migration was made by Mandal (2000) who laid emphasis on the relationship between migration and urbanisation in general terms. He was of the view that the high growth of urban population is mainly due to the rural-urban migration. This is a complex process and its effects are multidimensional. In case of heavy and continuous flow of selective migration of young males from rural to urban areas, stagnation of economic growth may take place in the rural and economically depressed areas due to the loss of active labour force. But rapid growth occurs in urban destinations in terms of population and labour force, economic development, morphological structure and functional interactions. This study basically dealt with the general migration pattern – its causes and consequences. Mitra (1997) in his study tried to investigate the relationship between levels of economic development and migration i.e. urbanization and migration which are considered as the most important indicators of economic development and social transformation of a region. His study also incorporated within it
the extent, distance covered, directions of internal migration and
distribution of migrants by duration of residence in lower
aggregative units such as district, urban centres, etc., and also
examines the rate of degree of urbanization especially in the hill
states of Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya. This is basically a
macro level study on the different aspects of internal migration
and urbanization in two broad administrative units. Lamba and
Solanki (1992) too emphasized on the interplay of economic,
social and personal factors including social security which greatly
determines the rural-urban migration in developing countries.
Sinha’s (1971) views on immigration justified the fact that any city
in a developing country grows by two factors: firstly by natural
growth of the population of the city itself and secondly by
immigration which is proportional to the size of the urban centre.
His study focused on the immigration pattern in Bhubaneswar City
which has a large influx of migrants because of two reasons—
firstly being the state capital and secondly, a cosmopolitan nature
of the city. This fact is truly applicable to all urban centres of
developing countries which exerts tremendous urban pull on its
rural periphery.

Another important study related to such migration pattern
of floating population was made by Reddy (1998) on Anantapur
Town of Andhra Pradesh. This type of migration has rapidly
expanded the town with the establishment of hutments on its
outskirts and in the other vacant places. The author rightly argued
that macro level studies are usually done by big organizations
such as Census and NSS (National Sample Survey) who lay more
emphasis on the pattern of internal migration in relation to age,
gender, marital status, residence, movements by distance and
occupations. Most of the urban studies are also related to major cities like Bombay, Kolkata and the like. These studies revealed that unplanned migration of floating population creates urban problems like pollution, poverty, unemployment, etc. As found in the large towns, such type of migration is also evident in small towns which too faces similar urban problems as found in big towns or cities. Katti (1966) made a valuable study on seasonal in-migrants in Rural Shimoga (Mysore State), chiefly the agricultural labourers. According to him, seasonal migrants is one who has moved out during some season/s in the year and who wants to go back to his/her place of origin, irrespective of his/her duration of stay at the place of migration during the year. Such migrants are drawn mainly from the backward and poorer section of the rural society. Their number being small (chiefly the agricultural labourers), however, helps inflating the population in the place of destination.

Zachariah's (1968) study on migrants in Greater Bombay, their demographic, social and economic characteristics, is significant as it analyse the extent to which the migrants differed in their characteristics from the non-migrants living in the city and from the population at the place of origin. There has been considerable differences in the occupational structure as white collared professionals were more among non-migrants and blue collared among the migrants. Besides this, difference also exists in educational attainments among these two sections of people. His another study (1964) regarding internal migration in the Indian Subcontinent during 1901-1931, was basically a historical perspective. The primary objective of this study was to measure and describe the pattern of internal migration in the whole of the
erstwhile Indian Subcontinent. This work is a macro level study where migration is estimated by sex and age for the regions, states and to a limited extent for towns with population of 20,000 or more. The significance of these estimates is to assess the overall population redistribution, to indicate the areas of population gain and loss, to determine the direction and magnitude of migration streams, and to analyse the demographic characteristics of net migration. He also stated that migration is inversely associated with distance and that short distance migration constitutes the majority of the internal migration. This type of migration is urban-oriented, the rural-urban component being the major part of the total migration. He also mentioned that during that period of thirty years, among all the states in the East Zone, Assam gained consistently from Bihar, Orissa, Bengal and other states outside the zone though there was great spatial variation within the same zone.

Rao (1976) studied the problems of population explosion in their broad outline and in global perspective with special attention to India. The concept of population management was introduced which not only embraces merely the population control measures is to be popularized throughout the country, but also encourage the mobility or movement of people within the country to relieve pressure around urban megalopolis and simultaneously filling up the relatively sparsely inhabited border areas. This is a macro level study which easily cannot be applied to small towns and cities. Koteswara Rao (1995) has put great emphasis on the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors in stimulating rural-urban migration both at the areas of origin and destination. This is an important study as it analyses the different factors responsible for such type of
migration in both the urban and rural areas. Venkata Rao (1995) analysed the pattern of internal migration and its relationship with distance, classifying into short (intra-district migration), medium (inter-district migration) and long distance migration (inter-state migration). A study in Ananthapur City of Andhra Pradesh by Rao and Reddy (1995) shows the relationship existing between the income of migrant households and their different occupations which ultimately affects the family income. There is uneven distribution in the annual family incomes of the migrants due to their occupation, wage rates and sector of employment. Gopi (1995) studies the urban and industrial growth in Hyderabad City and put emphasis on industrialization as an inducing factor for large scale migration from rural to urban areas. Modern urbanization depends on industrialization and with time, urban areas become the centre of large population concentrations attracting more and more migrant population. The intensity and volume of such migration is high which can be related more to developing countries where there is widespread under employment and unemployment in the rural areas. Pothana and Reddy (1995) studies in detail the demography of urbanization of Visakhapatnam City i.e. inter-relationships between the urbanization component on one hand and the demographic changes on the other. Mitra (1994) stresses on the urbanization process in developing countries which causes rapid spread of slums not only due to shortage of housing but also for the high rate of flow of the workers who are mainly engaged in the informal economic activities. His study incorporated the important objectives like examining the nature and pattern of urbanization in India, analyzing the employment problems arising in the
cities, the impact of rural-urban migration on employment in the informal economic activities and the link between the rural and urban poverty and also examining the functioning of the slum economy i.e. the link between the informal sector and incidence of urban poverty. This study tries to figure out the link between urbanization, informal sector employment, poverty and slums all being part of the urban economy. Jaganathan (1987) highlighted the availability of surplus labour in the urban centre in Indian subcontinent which slowly shift over into the sector which has been loosely termed as the urban informal sector. This leads to the problems of urban unemployment and underemployment. The consequence being the proliferation of poverty and growth of slums in the city.

Chattopadhyaya (1987), a historian, in his study analysed the various issues connected with internal migration in India, with special reference to Bengal proper. According to him, internal migration is characterized by different spatial types of movement, like villagers moving to small towns, sub-divisions or districts and small town dwellers to larger ones. He used the term ‘floating population’ who were obliged to move under economic pressure from a rural area to an urban centre or from one urban area to another. He lays emphasis on the unequal ratio between the male and the female migrants and related the movement of commuters between cities and the adjacent villages or hinterland as part of urban growth. He mentioned the luring factors as employment opportunities, business, marketing, education and other amenities for which people move daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly according to their needs and necessity. Transport facilities enhances such movement, basically for the commuters.
Dharmaraj (1993) in his significant study considered internal migration to be a natural process wherein 'surplus labour' is siphoned off from rural to urban sector. According to him the advent of small scale industries forming the industrial estates has given great fillip to such type of migration in India. This work was an attempt to ascertain the extent of the employment expectation in the industrial estates which had induced the rural-urban migration. The industrial estates of Guindy and Ambattur in Madras act as magnet for attracting migrants and the economic impact of their migration on their standard of living. The author also mentioned that in the urbanization process, the majority of the migrants consist of floating population, who never strike their deep roots in the city and ever anxious to return back to their native place for varied reasons. They have a strong nexus with their villages as seen to be more pronounced in any developing country.

All the above works shows that the study of migration pattern of floating population and its impact is essential for developing various models in analyzing such type of problem and planning and development of the concerned city. To understand such patterns, deep knowledge is required which can be attained by conducting intensive field survey, i.e. collecting primary data along with the available secondary data of the areas. The entire procedure of conducting field survey and collection of secondary information will help immensely in understanding the migration pattern and its impact on the urban centre.
Migration studies in Regional Context

In North-East India, such type of movement of floating population is more common from the rural areas to the nearby urban centres because of high rural urban differentiation, lesser number of service centres and declining rural economy. The states of Tripura and Assam particularly receives huge number of migrants who are generally immigrants coming from the neighbouring country of Bangladesh. They are mostly poverty stricken people who come here in search of jobs and mostly engaged as wage labourers, rickshawpuller and those who assist the masons in some construction works. Little study has been made concerning such large movement of people in this region which requires a thorough study.

Two important works very close to the theme under study is that of “Immigrant population of Assam : An Analytico-Synthetic study with a special reference to Darrang district” by M.C. Bhuyan and “Impacts of immigration in Assam 1872-1947” by N.K. Dhar. Bhuyan (1977) in his study has taken six main immigrant groups coming to the district in different time periods namely, the Tea labours, the East Bengal Muslims, the Bengali Hindus, the Nepalis, the Marwaris and the Hindustanis. He has taken into account two avenues, the first includes their distributional pattern, process of immigration and temporal variation in Assam and the second includes the spatial and socio-economic pattern of the immigrant communities examined at district level (Darrang). In this work, he tried to establish that the various groups of immigrant population have contributed to the overall economic development of the state, the various ethnic and socio-economic distinctiveness of the immigrants has contributed
to the differing socio-economic personality of the different places in the state and the degree of social and cultural integration with the host societies varies according to the immigrant’s socio-economic and cultural background. But the limitations of his work is that he has studied only six particular group of immigrants in the district which is not enough to assess the whole immigration scenario of the district and also the study is done in a meso level which could have given a more clear picture if done on a micro level. The second study deals with the impacts of immigration in Assam during the period, 1872-1947 which is in the pre-independence era. This study was made by Dhar (1981) and the limitation of this work lies in the fact that there has been a huge flow of immigration in Assam after independence and a clear picture of the situation can be attained only if the problem is studied covering the next few decades or the last thirty years are taken into consideration. A study done by Gogoi and Goswami (2004) has examined the illegal immigration from Bangladesh to Assam and analysed the consequences of such type of migration. They estimated a total excess of 7.4 lakh Muslim population in Assam which can roughly be attributed to the illegal immigrants from Bangladesh during 1991-2001 which is quite an alarming fact.

Another significant study made by Saikia (2003) was on the inflow of Bangladeshi migrants in Assam. He stated that India’s northeast is one such area that has traditionally been an attractive destination for the migrants from Bangladesh and Assam is no exception to it. This paper analyses two global processes – international migration and global warming which have significant local impacts. The first part emphasizes on the origin or genesis of
immigration from Bangladesh into Assam and tries to estimate the present magnitude and state policy in tackling the problem. The second section looks at the future implications and the impact of climate change on the immigration pattern. This study gives a clear and comprehensive picture regarding the migration pattern and related problems particular in Assam, both in the pre and post independence era. The study done on a macro level, puts limitation on its application in a micro level like a city. Barua and Baruah (2004) in their study regarding rural-urban migration emphasized on the phenomenon of such type of migration that had taken place and continues till date, despite the existence of substantial urban unemployment. The work also discussed the impact of such migration on urban development and unemployment. This study on Assam during 1981-1991 is been significant as it has focussed on minute details such as intra-district, inter-district, inter-state and international migration pattern. All the states of India are taken into account for examining the magnitude of migrants coming to Assam. This work done at a meso level is very important as it stresses on a strategy that will minimize the rural-urban income differential and result in a sustained development of the rural sector in the long run. The authors demanded for a comprehensive policy that will create more opportunities and infrastructure in the rural sectors, thus refraining the prospective migrants not to move into the cities.

The above analysis thus led to recognize two important facts, while it is a potential field for research from both the academic and practical point of view, the need for intensive studies of the rural areas from where the migrants usually come to an urban centre, is quite imperative for proper understanding
of the migration of floating population to the city and the impact of the former on the latter. Such studies in Assam, basically on floating population is very limited. In Guwahati, too, studies on floating population groups as prospective migrants has remained untouched. The broader attempt on rural-urban migration of people, whether they are floating population or permanent settlers, are usually dealt with in general in all the previous studies. Hence any literature relevant to rural-urban migration causing the movement of floating population to the city is mainly considered in this work. Thus the present study, done on a micro level, will help to understand the pattern of the migration of floating population and its impact in Guwahati City. In near future, more study on floating population in Assam and Guwahati in particular are needed for better planning of both the rural and urban areas by the government and the concerned authorities. Social scientists and scholars contribution in this respect will also be highly significant.

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