

Climate Change, Migration, and Transnationality among Climate Migrants

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Abstract

Climate change is increasingly driving forced migration, as seen in Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The drought-stricken residents have been migrating to Delhi from this region. However, since 2016 migration has become more acute as more and more people are migrating to Delhi seeking employment. This migration process creates a transitory experience, termed "transitionality," which affects migrants' subjectivity. The article explains that transitionality unfolds through three bodily stages: waiting, weariness, and silence. These stages create "zones of indiscernibility" that both enable and constrain migrants, placing them in uncertain subhuman conditions. Ultimately, transitionality embodies the anticipation of the arrival or commonly called "arrival of the arrivant".

Keywords: *migration, transition, transitionality, waiting, weariness and silencing.*

Introduction

Several factors drive human migration across regions; however, climate change–induced forced migration is shaped by distinct dynamics that depend on the specific geographical conditions and nature of climatic changes affecting a given area. The change may vary from reversibility to irreversibility. The severity of climatic conditions is a determining factor for inducing several kinds of migratory patterns, ranging from temporary to permanent. Climate-induced drought, flood, and other natural phenomena cause outflow of the affected population towards more secure urban and semi-urban settlement areas. The urban areas provide employment opportunities for the displaced population. While it looks lucrative, the job market is competitive and does not employ people immediately. Consequently, the migrants live in a phase of transition where they keep waiting for a job. The paper tries to answer the following questions: How does one understand this transition? What does waiting mean to people? How does the phenomenon of waiting affect individuals in transition? To answer these questions and understand transitionality among the migrants, the paper explores the lives of migrants coming from the drought-affected area of the Bundelkhand region. It has three parts. The first section deals with the meaning attributed to climate change by the migrants and the resultant migration. The second section deals with the process of transition, and the third section deals with the processes of transitionality.

This is an anthropological work conducted among migrants arriving from the Bundelkhand areas in Delhi due to long prevailing drought conditions in that area. It was in the month of June that I started the fieldwork that continued for three months, with an abrupt ending for two reasons. First, because of the circular nature of migration, these unproductive days end up in search of alternative avenues of employment. In this critical condition, it became challenging to interview the same set of persons. In the course of my fieldwork, I interacted with at least 30 persons, of whom the names mentioned in the text were migrants, those I became acquainted with due to frequent visits. The major drawback is that I could not interview many women members due to their inhibition of speaking to a male and to instructions from the male members not to interact with strangers. Secondly, it was difficult to understand the Bundelkhandi language, especially when spoken by female migrants. This piece is an initial reflection on transition and transitionality.

Conceptualising transition and transitionality

Transition has several meanings and differs according to disciplinary focus. In medical science, it is generally referred to as “a passage from one life phase, condition, or status to another.” (Chick and Meleis, 1986, p. 239.) According to Wordnet, developed by Princeton University, the word transition has been used in five different senses.

It is understood as a passage from one state of life to another, which is commonly understood as “rites of passage,” highlighting the changes that occur in different stages of life passes through. In another sense, the term means “conversion or transformation” of the self or in the identity of persons. In a third sense, it is used as something happening or in the path of progression. Transition is also about change or something happening. Finally, in music, it means modulation or “change in tone”. It can also mean connection to “what follows, extracting common features.” (Kralik, 2006: P323) The literature on transition thus does not speak of a period of waiting: a liminal condition where things do not progress beyond a point. It is not a successful transition for people who are in a state of limbo and waiting for a productive life and/or mastery over their future life. There is a lack of agency for the climate migrants. This article conceptualises the term transition and tries to explain transitionality as a process of liminality, a state of limbo, and a sense of uncertainty.

Impending Climate Change/Jalavayu parivartan

The Sarai Kale Khan flyover adjacent to the Nizamuddin West railway platform lives up to its nomenclature, sarai, or a rest house for "pathiks" (travelers and/or strangers) and caravans, but now with a different purpose. Early in the morning, emaciated and haggard passengers stream, and the earlier arrived ones found strewn, under the flyover after alighting from the train or buses coming from the Bundelkhand area of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The transit/resting place has doubled up as an auction ground. A group of labour contractors is seen scurrying to negotiate with the hapless migrants who have no option but to depend on these contractors for work.

Auction as a process has a role to play in the market. There is a shared agreement on the principles of auctioning among the community of auctioneers. A minimum value is agreed upon before the goods are put under the hammer. It provides legitimacy to the value of goods through a process and principles of fair play. Goods and cattle carry a better value in the auctioning process. The constrained community of migrants has no control over self to determine a fair value of their labour: no probing for a fair price, no search for legitimacy of their value, no exploration into self-interest, and no bargaining for shared agreement. It is always a knock-out auction that carries no legitimacy of the value of labour nor fair play. It is a sheer competition and struggle for existence. The haggling between the migrants and labour contractors is done before the supervisor of a company or a builder reaches the spot.

Informal labour is the basic factor for the growth of cities. Informality is embedded in the process of urbanity. It provides all the comforts of life, helps cities to expand, and provides a basic foundation for labour survival. Market philosophy and practice curtail the collective bargaining power of labour by stressing the principle of minimum.

Labour organisation and less collective bargaining. The more the supply of labour, the more informality and enhanced chances of the sustainability of the market and profit. For cities to expand and sustain a constant flow of informal labour is significant. The constant flow is maintained by the labour contractors who become the nodes and chains of supply. The contractors are the product of the informal labour flow and come up through the economic logic of labour supply. They act as a link between the employer and the labourer.

The chain operates at various levels that expand into the sources of supply. The acute need and various demands of cities compel the contractor to maintain a steady supply source. The contractors maintain the supply chain by creating a hierarchy in the supply chain that penetrates the villages to fill the shortage. The labour sardars in villages bring the landless and seasonal workers to the cities through their contacts, who are hired by the contractors. The contractors maintain the chain and keep it well lubricated through various monetary incentives. The advance payments, recruitment, and supply all create a process of informality and maintenance of the market system. They remain the key to supplying labour to the industry on a long-term basis.

In a city, the labour contractors always remain vigilant, especially during the crisis time. Rather, the critical times become the point of elevation for contractors. They come in hordes to recruit labour for the bridge. There is no quotation, no fixed pre-determined value of labour, as they are not part of any organised trading community. Bargaining happens between two contractors, and the deal is settled by the general agreement reached between a contractor and labour on an equilibrium scale: the contractor looks for a good profit, and labour settles for a day's wage to sustain themselves and for the family members to live for the next day to go to work. Sometimes disequilibrium is achieved where the auctioning and bargaining process leans heavily against the labour, where the auctioned has no of the future, as the life of a labourer is contingent upon several factors.

"Majdoor Majboor," laments Malkhan, a twenty-one-year-old male migrant from Tikamgarh, who has not had a job for the last ten days. "A labourer is helpless: helpless before hunger, helpless from you, and helpless before circumstances. We are surviving on the benevolence of some donor, either an NGO or some compassionate persons who come and distribute food to the migrants. These people have come from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and even from far-off Maharashtra. They are then taken to the states of Kashmir, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Haryana. No one knows what happens to them there."

"There has been no rain for the past four years. The ponds, wells, and even the tube wells have gone dry. The cattle have no fodder and water to drink," laments Mukesh, a twenty-five-year-old who belongs to the Tikamgarh area. Drought has affected many parts of India. But the severity of drought is visible in Chhattisgarh, Marathawada.

and Bundelkhand of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. According to J.S. Samara's report, an inter-ministerial report made public in 2008, Bundelkhand experienced a major drought every 16 years during the 18th and 19th centuries. This frequency increased threefold during the period from 1968 to 1992. After the report's publication in 1992, the region went on to experience 13 further droughts. In particular, from 2004 to 2008, four consecutive droughts ravaged the region. The Down to Earth Report notes that, except for 2013, every year between 2009 and 2015 had a deficit monsoon.

In technical terms, the region is witnessing meteorological, hydrological, and agricultural drought. The cumulative buildup of meteorological droughts has "rippled into hydrological drought with a complex set of highly differentiated adverse impacts and tradeoffs," claims a study conducted by the National Institute of Disaster Management. The situation is even more alarming in the Madhya Pradesh portion of the Bundelkhand region. (NIDM, 2014: P 50-52) Jean Dreze and Yogendra Yadav had taken an initiative and had visited this region to assess the impact of the drought on seven affected districts of Jhansi, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Chitrakoot, Banda, Amirpur, and Mahoba. The survey conducted using certain parameters concluded that the prevailing condition is not drought, it is a famine. (Shah, 2015) The severity of drought was expressed through a prevalent proverb among women folks of Bundelkhand area: "let the husband die, but the earthen pot of water should not be broken."

When asked about the reasons for the prevalence of drought, the respondents generally put the blame on the weather god or an inscrutable power that is responsible for this. But Ishrat's answer, "it is jala vayu paribartan," really startled me. Ishrat hailed from the Bundelkhand area. In her early twenties, she was most vocal among the women sitting together and observing children playing around them. For her, jala vayu parivartan is not laced with technical terms, such as canaries of climate change: haphazard distribution of rainfall, deficit in the normal rainfall, late onset of monsoons, early withdrawal of rains, etc.

But for Ishrat the "Climate Change" is the effect of "jala vayu parivartan". Jalavayu parivartan has a social, moral, and religious meaning. It is more of a micro rather than a macro dimension of society. Social relations are no longer humane. The local ambience is full of bitterness. People have become indifferent to the plight of others. There is no respect for human beings and nature. The local environment, especially air and water, is afflicted and pained by such a relationship. This has become a vicious cycle."

Bundelkhand is a contiguous area spanning across thirteen districts -- six districts of Madhya Pradesh - Datia, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Damoh, Sagar, and Chitrakut, and seven districts of Uttar Pradesh, namely, Jhansi, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, and Chitrakut -- is worst affected by drought.

There is no regularity observed in nature. The rain does not come in time, nor the winter," she explains. It is the changes in social environment and relations at the local level that influence climate change at the macro level.

Arjun of Kotra, Tikamgarh, brings in a mythological dimension to the explanatory narrative of jala vayu parivartan.

"You find no vultures now. They have not become extinct. They are hiding at the Amarnath temple. They do not want to see the faces of these corrupt people. This is Kali Yug." He invokes some unspecified purana to highlight the point that in the Kali yug the truthfulness carries no value. Scheming is not punished and has more truth value. "Look at this. Kali yug wants to prove Satya yug to be corrupt," he goes on. "Kali yug was once determined to prove Satya Yug to be corrupt and a liar. Kali Yug requested Satya Yug to accompany him on some pretext. He requested Satya Yug to eat watermelon on their way. While he reached a village nearby, he told the villagers that this was Satya Yug. He has eaten beef, whereas he should be a vegetarian. He is deceiving people. I can prove it. He gave Satya Yug some milk to drink, in which he had put two flies. While Satya Yug found flies in the milk that he was drinking, he vomited, and pieces of red watermelon came out. Kali Yug convinced the villagers that the red pieces they see are beef. From then on, people did not believe Satya Yug. The relations changed. People became corrupt. Even the animals were not spared. In Satya Yug, cows had 16 legs. In the Treta yug, cows had 13 legs. In the Dwapar yug, they had 6, and in the Kali yug, they had only 4. This is the level of downfall that people have witnessed. The needy perish while the corrupt are enriched in this."

It is the moral, social, and political downfall that has brought about climate change and concomitant drought. Jala Vayu Parivartan is a story about neglecting the meeting of Nature and Culture, i.e., it is an anthropogenic explanation of how human climate change is about the collapse of natural history and human history, where humans are central actors in both of these realms. Jalavayu parivartan is not just the passive backdrop where migration occurs, but it is the active agent of migration. It is about the "Idea of Anthropocene," to quote Dipesh Chakravarti's (2009) popular phrase. It is a vicious circle. Jala Vayu Parivartan is altering the social world and which in turn is bringing about climate change. It is the danger that is lurking for the future generation.

Processes of Transition

The Bundelkhand region has been witnessing a kind of exodus. People have been leaving villages with their families. But for the last few years, migration has been at its peak. "Every day you find people leaving villages of Bundelkhand area: trainloads and busloads of them," stated Dharendra Kumar resident of Madanpur Khaddad JJ Cluster of Delhi, who had visited this place to meet one of his acquaintances from the native area. "There is no work. Even the sarpanch has no job. He is requesting the government to provide him with some work. We have two to three acres of land, but we travel to Delhi in search of work. Who wants to come to a city like this? We are here to survive," claims Sunil, who had arrived from Jhansi and was waiting for a bus to reach Uttam Nagar, where he works with a contractor.

It is the context, the moral depravity, and consequent jal vayu parivartan that has been compelling people to flee. The landless, marginal, small, and semi-medium farmers constitute the majority of migrants. "The average landholding varies from 1-3 hectares of land, sometimes even less. There would be hardly 1% in the village who would be landless. Most of them have land, though small in size," stated Sunil, whose estimate is not far removed from the government calculation. According to the Agriculture Census, 2011, the average operational land holding across all classes in Madhya Pradesh is 0.54ha, and in Uttar Pradesh it is 0.79 ha.

The stratified local power structures engender unfair distribution of resources and welfare benefits of the government. It is not that landless people cannot have land of their own. "Most people who were dependent on the common property of the villages have been taken away by the local government to build gaushalas, and some land is in the custody of babas/mathas, and others have been usurped by the politically connected people. Where is the land left for us?" Arjun of Jhansi exclaimed. Further, according to Mukesh, a 19-year-old boy who has fled his village in Tikamgarh because he failed in the examination, "In some other villages, the common property is encroached upon and is distributed in patches among the influential persons in collusion with the village heads. The landless mainly belong to lower castes."

Those who own land are not devoid of problems. For them destruction and distribution of water sources and neglect of traditional practices is the major concern. Dharmendra states, "There used to be ponds constructed for every four to five bigha of land. But that is not the case now," Many are dependent on irrigation from nearby dams. There are weirs and check dams built on the river Yamuna and its first and second order tributaries, such as, the Betwa, Ken, Baghain, Paisuni and Pahuj.

According to the government sources, the net sown area in Bundelkhand of Uttar Pradesh is 69% and the MP part is 47.2%. The percentage of net irrigated area to net sown area is 44% in Uttar Pradesh and 45% in Madhya Pradesh. In this situation distribution of water is determined by caste and other factors. (Gupta et al, 2014) The prime lands belonging to the well-connected upper caste and influential persons are located near the perennial water sources. Those left out, which include the upper caste poor and lower castes, are dependent on ponds, wells, and other existing water bodies or the newly constructed ones through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme, which was introduced to provide employment in the rural areas. "But now the scheme does not provide work to the rural poor. If there is a big tank is constructed, the local labour is not employed. Heavy machines come and dig the ponds, and they leave," stated Ishrat. Even the ponds constructed remain dysfunctional and unutilised as they are not aligned either to any underground aquifer, which used to be the traditional practice, or to some other water sources, nor are they located in the right places where people would benefit from the storage. Earlier water sources adjacent to the field used to produce crops enough to sustain marginal, small, and semi-medium landholders throughout the year. Any shortage was compensated through income from seasonal migration to Delhi or other areas during the lean season.

The modern practices of agriculture are another reason for adding to the existing problems. Agriculture has become more modernised. The traditional crops like alsin, gram, mustard, and wheat (locally known as gathiya) have long roots and are compatible with arid climatic topography are recently replaced by hybrid seeds and water-intensive crops like soyabean, cotton, and hybrid wheat variety. Even machine ploughing harms soil quality. They are leaving a big fissure for moisture to escape. Agriculture with traditional practices giving way to commercial ones, which is making the marginal, small, and semi-medium farmers resort to borrowing and mortgaging. There are other social functions like marriage, death rituals, and health issues, forcing them to stay local. Borrowing, mortgaging, and crop failure due to prolonged drought are playing havoc in their lives, which is pushing them to look for other sources of income outside the local environment.

What more, the government's welfare measures through the public distribution system is shrouded with various kinds of malpractices? The BPL card which should have been distributed to those below poverty line is availed by the better off in the villages. The ration meant for the poor through this card is siphoned off by the distributors. Whatever is distributed is not sufficient to sustain them through the month. The pension scheme meant for elderly poor people is also availed by the rich and well connected ones. In the reserved panchayat seats the sarpanch has no power. He is manipulated by the upper castes, bureaucrats and powerful people.

According to a survey conducted by the Swaraj Abhiyan in 2016, a movement group led by Yogendra Yadav, "only 59% of the poorest families had an MNREGA job card, while just 42% possess a BPL card. The average foodgrains received from the ration shop is just 25.7kg, and on average, just 9.5 days of MNREGA work has been provided to households since Holi."

For the migrants, the nearby towns, like Jhansi and Chhatarpur, are not a viable option to search for employment. "The people here are not that well off. Even people from the middle-income group prefer to do their own work rather than engage daily wagers. That enables saving from the meager income," states Sunil. There are no big industries to accommodate such a huge labour force. According to the Planning Commission report 2001-02, Jhansi contributed 5.10% of the state's industrial output, while all other districts of the UP Bundelkhand contributed less than 1% of the state's industrial output in 2001-02. Despite having the highest number of sugar factories in Uttar Pradesh, not a single factory exists in the Bundelkhand region. The major labour force is engaged in Beedi making. Some are engaged in stone quarrying and clay excavation in the Betwa and other rivers.

Apart from the push factor, there are pull factors as well. In the past, people from this area have been migrating to Delhi and other north Indian cities like Punjab, Haryana, Lucknow, Jammu, Kashmir, and even outside India as well. "They have a well-developed network among themselves," remarked Malkan, who has been visiting Delhi for the last 32 years from Jhansi. He had come first to Delhi with his father when he was twelve years old. Now he is migrating with two sons who are 14 and 10 years old, leaving behind his parents. Till today, he has not become part of the organised workforce nor has he attempted to settle in Delhi. He is a mason by profession and employs three people with him.

There is a thriving labour market in Delhi. The construction labourers from the Bundelkhand area had enjoyed a monopoly in the construction labour market and had kept the construction companies afloat in Delhi. Though relatively organised, they are not unionised. They procure employment from the construction company through a well-established chain of contacts stretching from the construction companies down to the villages where ready-to-move labourers are in perennial supply. The reason for the ready availability of labour is the regular payment, though it is below the minimum wage, paid travelling, and sometimes health expenses coverage by some companies. "Though the minimum wage law is violated, wage is paid regularly, nevertheless. Otherwise, the company would earn a bad reputation, and labourers would turn away from the company," explains Raju Tiwari, a labour contractor who is working with a construction company at Mahipalpur on the Delhi-Gurgaon border.

The monopoly is now lost because of the arrival of more specialised labour from Bihar and skilled and organised labour from West Bengal. The labour from Bihar and West Bengal is preferred by the big construction companies for their ability to work with machines and on high towers. "They have no fear. The Bihari and Bengali labourers come to settle down, but we are not," rued Malkhan. "But labor from West Bengal is the most organised. They register themselves with a private labour firm before leaving for the destination. The companies that want labour have to deposit the full amount well in advance with the firm. Then the labourers are sent for the contract period. If anyone leaves the registered body, send the required labour. Thus, there is a mutual trust between the company and the registered labour company," explained Raju Tiwari.

There is a serious trust deficit between disorganised skilled and semi-skilled labourers and equally unorganised private builders and contractors. Their fear of loss of freedom to bargain with the company about their wage and the confidence of managing a better deal from the unorganised private contractors prevents the skilled and semi-skilled labourers from joining the construction companies. It is this motive that breeds a trust deficit between the private contractors and the skilled labour. While, on the one hand, the fear of untimely departure of the labour during middle of construction prompts the contractor not to pay any advance or full amount to the labor even at his difficult times, on the other hand, the frugal and untimely payment by the contractors compels the labourers to look for other avenues to work or wait patiently for full payment that they rarely receive.

Those who have acquaintances get some jobs, others without relatives or acquaintances struggle back to the same spot with their families, beneath the Nizamuddin flyover, waiting to be hired or auctioned again. They are nowhere to go. They are in a limbo: neither in a secure native place nor fully absorbed in the uncertain urban employment market. They live in abeyance, in interminable "liquid fear": a perpetual tentativeness and uncertainty about themselves, their family, their work, their return, their stay, and their vulnerability. The embryonic process of transition: a suspended condition, uncertainty of stay or flight, rootedness or mobility, that they had entered into at the village got "rhizometrically" cemented here. The flyover became a transit, an intersection of many unfolded paths and a space for migrants entering into a phase of transitionality: a permanent phase of transitoriness across time, space, and cognition.

Understanding Transitionality

How does one explain transitionality? What is its nature? How is it co-terminous with flow? How does it manifest? These are some of the questions that would be answered in this section.

Transitionality as a flow constantly accompanies the migrants across space and time. It is a multidimensional process of unfolding experience not attached to any transcendent substance or form. It is an experience bordering on multiple assemblages of singular and ordinary perceptions. It makes sense when we understand the relations in practice between conflicting schemes of the experience. It is part of the particularity and change evident in the everyday lived experience of a day, a time of day, and a place. It is about how people respond to the world they 'saw, felt, tasted, touched, thought, imagined, and desired'. Transitionality is symptomatic of a "deeper interrelation of forces within the multiplicity constituted by the minute perceptions and unconscious." The connective processes of "deterritorialisation" and "reterritorialisation" produce transitionality. The connective processes aim at creating an "eternal return" to becoming: a becoming everybody. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987)

Transitionality is itself original, is not produced in the image of some model nor as representative copies or likenesses of more fundamental reality, in the sense that it is neither one of 'joining moments together nor one in which an event is the end of one productive process, to be supplanted or supplemented by the next.' In other words, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) state, it is the beginning, middle, and end in itself. Transitionality is always in the middle, which "moves through" multiple lines of adrift: a rhizomatic existence shaped by "momentary uniqueness of the nexus of forces that preserves a place for discontinuity and change in any direction." Transitionality is thus about production of production: continuous production of 'becoming' to reach a bottomless void or abyss. Becoming itself becomes a flow of affectivity, emotions, leading to form marginal consciousness. Formation of consciousness flowed through interrelated aspects of waiting, weariness, and silence. In this sense, transitionality is a flow that "passes, passes on and passes through the body". (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, P 21)

The quiet days of monopoly in the construction market have gradually declined. Life has turned around, a struggle to become competitive. There is insecurity all around, and they have been confronting the insecurity and uncertainty. Stated Malkhan, "Earlier, we used to get enough work. But there is surplus labour. Not only that the Kejriwal Sarkar is playing is also playing a spoiler. He has also passed a law that all builders and contractors undertaking development work, repairing, or construction have to pay the whole month's wage irrespective of the days that they engage the labour. Both the contractors and the labourers are idling." They are moved by a process of waiting.

The working life of the migrants has changed. "In villages, there would be some odd jobs. No one goes empty stomach, though there is a little hardship experienced due to a lack of water. They always feel secure about the place.

There is always reciprocity in the villages. Neighbours help in case of dire need. There is land that would provide the bare necessities for existence, which may not be enough for all," stated Ishrat. But this condition fell into disuse as long waiting for rain pushed them to consider their future, their family, and their children. There are public conversations around the village about the hardship and people leaving the village. There is also news of getting work in villages, prompting them to be prepared for the eventual flight. The decision to fly was either collective or individual. There is no debate but agreement about the certainty of waiting: to move.

Waiting in transit has acquired a different meaning. Waiting has become static and a loss of control over oneself. It is dependent on various contingent factors. Waiting to be provided with food from some benevolent NGOs, to be provided with daily provisions, water, etc., is a long, tiring, and time-consuming process. Waiting is here, transience and incompleteness. The waiting goes on as there is no relation between the 'ground' and the 'consequent'. The waiting is lived through duration and endured. Duration "becomes an indivisible continuity" as one moment has many aspects. It is like a languid gesture of land having no beginning or end. Waiting was an enchantment before the flight, but it has become a misery unsalvaged. Waiting is not an "integral part of life" nor is it within the "economy of contentment." (Kutlu, quoted in Goka 2025)

It is a 'state of lack' that everybody wants to overcome fast: "expectations become waiting." Waiting under the flyover is not an object-related, non-purposive waiting characterized by un-patterned passage of time: it does not signify the end of the journey or story, but continues through day and night. Nothing moves to an end or objectification. Unlike Penelope's weaving that centers around the invisible power of narratives becoming an end, waiting has become a transversal plain criss-crossed by "lines of flights without any end."

Waiting leads to weariness. It has become, to quote Deleuze and Uhlmann (1995), a "daily attitude of the body... that contains before and after." The tiredness superimposes past and present. It becomes both "a trace of action, converted into malaise or enervation for which the body cannot fully account any longer, and an inscription of expectation." The migrants have witnessed a slow-paced, distended, delayed, and arrested productivity, as "bodies wander, take their time, lose or rather never gain their course, but they act and are acted upon by the weight, gravity, and force of their mobility or immobility". The fatigue passes on and passes through the attenuated bodies attained through wilful effort and labourious actions of the migrants. The tiredness prescribes/or delimits, or forecloses the action. It becomes mutable and captures the collectivity. Prior 'disappointments', 'failures' and an 'economy of loss', and "a reduction or deflation of the aspirational and the aspiratory is modulated in the downward breath, the heaving sigh." (Gorfinkel 2012: P 315)

A fatigued body becomes relational as well as dependent. "Weariness resides at the 'crossroads', between labour and fatigue, where labour falls into fatigue", to quote Ronald Barthes. "It is the paradoxical infinity of weariness: the endless process of ending." (Barthes, Quoted in Gorfinkel, 2012: P 315) Weariness is co-extensive with labour: through immeasurable weariness, one completes the task. Weariness is thus the tangibility of the infinitely liveable as that which one can live through or endure. Fatigue, as Levinas explains, indicates the "condemnation of being" -- a "being no longer in step with itself" -- and due to this "structure of delay, one for whom to be weary is to be weary of being". (Levinas, 1995, quoted in Gorfinkel, 2012: P 317)

Long weariness has engendered affective silence. Silence is not absent of content, it is rather full of individual/collective enunciation of suffering and pain. As Dharmender mentioned, "I sleep there in the park on a bench, looking at the sky, till Rajesh calls me for dinner... I keep talking to myself in solitude. I had brought my wife here to accompany me, but I did not like the way she mingled with the males.... I took her home and left her there forever. I thought that this was the right place for her. She does not deserve my company. I kept thinking that when I sacrificed everything for her, she never acknowledged those efforts." The silenced or the "unsayable" now got publicly articulated.

Constant suffering has resulted in emotional hardening or numbness. Ishrat recounts with a stolid face about the fear loitering behind the "shadows of silence". "He (eldest son) came back home from the school, vomited and dropped dead in front of me. Now I am scared about my second son. Constantly worried about him. I pray nothing happens to him." Ishrat has entered into a state of "liquid fear", tentativeness of existence. Liquid fear is a risk condition where spatial and temporarily uncertainties about everyday life get denser. It creates a condition where, with the advance of spatial distance from home condition the temporal distance grows. As the temporal distance grows, so does the impenetrability of the future, that notoriously unknowable, 'absolute' other. (Bauman, 2006)

For many gathered under the fly over it has become a "strategy of reticence", to unsettle the collective consciousness about the "injustice and unreasonableness" treatment and exclusion meted out to them by the institutions, governments, and the public. For the migrants, the silence has become a strategy for shelter from power. "The police harass us. It would come at night and force us to leave this place. But where would we go? When they shout at us, we keep silent. People come and take photos, assure us, and subsequently forget about us. How often would we narrate the same story? We have become tired of everything," spoke Malkhan.

Transitional among migrants means their entering into the "zone of indiscernibility": between man and animal. Gilson "Everyone who suffers is a piece of meat", to use Baconian metaphor. This understanding becomes, to use Deleuzian terms, a "moment of true becoming": a 'deep identity' of becoming. Becoming does not represent a phase between two states or a range of terms or states through which something might pass on its journey to another state. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) Rather than a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular goal or end-state. "Majdoor Majboor" reflects the true becoming. It seems that it is a state of "eternal return": a unique confluence of invisible forces that enable the migrants to move towards no particular end or outcome. They are willingly or unwittingly becoming part of the 'flowing' productive machine that is shaping their existence and subsistence.

Conclusion

This research paper is aimed at providing a narrative about climate change manifested in the form of a lingering famine-like situation that compelled the unskilled, landless, and marginal peasants to migrate and seek employment in Delhi. Employment does not come immediately, especially for unskilled labour. The dependence on various extraneous factors leads to long waiting times in Delhi. The waiting is the phase of transition that the migrants experience, and the vulnerability that they experience during this phase develops subjectivity within them. The subjectivity that they experience is conceptualised as transitionality: not about a physical waiting, the transition, but a cognitive and psychological expectation of things to happen and to become. Transitionality is a passage: a journey that not only channels emotion that "passes, passes on and passes through the body" but also a consciousness flows, which includes waiting, weariness, and silence that are interrelated. Waiting is a loss of self, an essence of lack, and an un-patterned succession of stages of life. Weariness has two by-products manifested through weariness and silences. Weariness is a daily attitude of the body manifested in the everyday life of the migrant through delayed, distended, and arrested productivity. Silence is the last stage of this transitionality. Silence has content. It expresses in collective enunciation of suffering and pain. It is "liquid fear" manifested publicly by the sufferers as if for a storm to arrive: it is all about the arrival of the arrivant.

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Declaration

We, Biswajit Mohanty and Babita Verma, hereby declare that no generative AI was used to write the manuscript or to generate content, data, data analysis, or draw conclusions. AI tools were applied only for grammar improvement/spelling/structural editing.

Moreover, I have mentioned the use of AI wherever used at the end of the manuscript.