In any study of population geography of an area, the analysis of migration patterns is of paramount importance. Migration is one of the dynamic aspects of population. It refers to the residential shift of people from one place to another. People move out from areas with inadequate economic opportunities to those providing better employment, higher wages and more conducive social and economic environment. In a way, migration from an area is an index of the pressure of population on its existing resources while in-migration reflects its resource potential.

Migration is a process of redistribution of population. It establishes a more meaningful relationship between population and resource distribution. It has rightly been said that the area from where the people out-migrate, the area to which they migrate and the migrants themselves never remain the same. As such, migration is fundamental to an understanding of the ever changing space content and space relations of an area.

It is a pity that no direct data on migration in Iran are available. The only data available for this purpose pertain to 'place of birth'. The census of Iran classifies the entire population into the following four categories on the basis of their place of birth.
1) born in the enumerated shahrestan,*

ii) born in other shahrestans of the same ostan (province),

iii) born in other ostan and

iv) born in a foreign country.

Although data on place of birth do help in identifying areas of in-migration, these fail to indicate areas of out-migration. These data do not tell anything about the time and motives of migration. These are silent also about the frequency of moves made. Hence observations on migrational patterns inferred from place of birth data would remain highly generalized.

Another difficulty in case of Iran arises from the non-adjustability of population data recorded at 1956 and 1966 censuses. There were several changes in the internal administrative boundaries of the country after 1956, and the 1956 and 1966 census data are not available for comparable spatial units. It is impractical to make a population growth rate map for the 1956–66 decade. If it were possible to prepare such a map, areas with a growth rate lower than the

* In 1966, the country was divided into 146 shahrestans. A shahrestan on an average covered an area of about eleven thousand sq.kms., and had a population of about 0.13 million. The various shahrestans were grouped into 13 ostan and 8 farmandarikol. Each ostan or farmandarikol, on an average, covered an area of nearly eighty thousand sq.kms. and had a population of about 1.2 million.
IRAN
MAP 64

Percentage of Persons Born in Shahrestan of Enumeration to Total Population: 1966
(Data by Shahrestans)

PERCENTAGE
90
80
70
60
Rural Population
Percentage of Persons Born in Shahrestan of
Enumeration to Total Population: 1966
(Data by Shahrestans)
Urban Population
Percentage of Persons Born in Shahrestan
of Enumeration to Total Population: 1966
(Data by Shahrestans)
rate of natural increase could be designated as areas of out-migration, and those with growth rates higher than the rate of natural increase could be called as areas of in-migration. In the absence of population growth rate data, the only way left is to depend exclusively on 'place of birth' data.

**General Patterns**

The 1966 census data revealed that 86.13 per cent of the total population of Iran was born in the same shahrestan in which they were enumerated (Map 64). This percentage was as high as 94.16 in the case of rural areas (Map 65). Even in urban areas, 73.16 per cent of the population was enumerated in the shahrestan of their birth (Map 66). These figures speak of low incidence of migration in Iran. An overwhelming majority of people in Iran spend their entire life in or near the place of their birth. This is true particularly of the people born in rural areas.

This lack of mobility is to be understood in the context of the traditional society and largely subsistence economy of Iran. The Muslim tradition does not forbid marriages of people belonging to the same settlement. Most of the marriages in Iran are solemnized within the village. Rather preference is given to a marriage among close relatives. This is opposite to what is found in many parts of India.
### Table 17
**IRAN**

**Place of Birth for All Areas* : 1966**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>25,143,700</td>
<td>12,997,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in the <strong>shahrestan</strong> of enumeration</td>
<td>21,668,700</td>
<td>11,113,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(86.18)**</td>
<td>(85.5)</td>
<td>(86.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in other <strong>shahrestans</strong> of the <strong>ostan</strong> of enumeration</td>
<td>1,370,900</td>
<td>721,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5.45)</td>
<td>(5.55)</td>
<td>(5.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in other <strong>ostans</strong></td>
<td>2,048,800</td>
<td>1,134,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8.15)</td>
<td>(8.73)</td>
<td>(7.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in a foreign country</td>
<td>55,300</td>
<td>28,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.22)</td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Excludes nomadic population

** Figures in parenthesis are the percentage values.

### Table 18
**IRAN**

**Place of Birth for Rural Areas* : 1966**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural population</td>
<td>15,303,300</td>
<td>7,880,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in the <strong>shahrestan</strong> of enumeration</td>
<td>14,410,100</td>
<td>7,396,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(94.16)**</td>
<td>(93.26)</td>
<td>(94.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in other <strong>shahrestans</strong> of the <strong>ostan</strong> of enumeration</td>
<td>472,600</td>
<td>244,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3.09)</td>
<td>(3.11)</td>
<td>(3.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in other <strong>ostans</strong></td>
<td>410,300</td>
<td>233,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.68)</td>
<td>(2.96)</td>
<td>(2.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in a foreign country</td>
<td>10,300</td>
<td>5,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Excludes nomadic population.

** Figures in parenthesis are the percentage values.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth for Urban Areas*</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born in the shahrestan of enumeration</td>
<td>7,258,600</td>
<td>3,717,000</td>
<td>3,541,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>(73.76)**</td>
<td><strong>72.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>74.28</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in other shahrestans of the ostan of enumeration</td>
<td>898,300</td>
<td>476,600</td>
<td>421,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>(9.13)</td>
<td><strong>9.31</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.93</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in other ostans</td>
<td>1,638,500</td>
<td>900,800</td>
<td>737,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>(16.65)</td>
<td><strong>17.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.62</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in a foreign country</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>22,600</td>
<td>22,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>(0.46)</td>
<td><strong>0.44</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 19**

**IRAN**

**Place of Birth for Urban Areas* | 1966**


* Excludes nomadic population.

** Figures in parenthesis are the percentage values.

where a marriage is seldom arranged between persons belonging to the same village. The predominance of marriages within the village, as in Iran, limits the scope of migration even at local levels. It is not surprising to find that hardly one out of every twenty persons in the rural areas was enumerated outside the shahrestan of his or her birth.

The immobility of population was also related to continuing subsistence nature of Iran's economy till as late as 1966. The modern developments, in the form of industrial or mining installations, were highly localized and scattered.
in a few areas. Whatever migration took place, it was directed mainly to big cities or oil fields. Such places did attract migration but the number of total migrants made a small percentage in the total population.

Also the pressure of population on resources was not so intense as in many other countries of Asia. This was due mainly to a low density of population. There were not many compelling reasons for out-migration from rural areas. The people were generally satisfied with their traditional, self-contained and subsistence type of life. Moreover, population in many parts of the country was living in relative isolation, unexposed to the new kinds of developments that were taking place in a few areas like Tehran. The lack of transport facilities and high incidence of illiteracy also restrained the mobility of the people.

It follows that the great immobility of Iran's population was related to patterns of marriage, lack of industrialization, relative isolation of many parts of the country and not so severe population pressure on resources in rural areas. Of recent, there has been a tendency toward migration from rural to urban areas, particularly to cities like Tehran. This migration has been stimulated more by pull factors operating in urban areas than by push factors working in rural areas. Towns and cities are becoming centres of attraction because they offer better employment, higher wages and exciting town life.
MAP 67

Percentage of Persons Born in Other Shahrestans of Province of Enumeration to Total Population: 1966
(Data by Shahrestans)

PERCENTAGE

20
15
10
5

CASPIAN SEA

IRAN

PAKISTAN

OMAN SEA
Rural Population
Percentage of Persons Born in Other Shahrestans of Province of Enumeration to Total Population: 1966 (Data by Shahrestans)
MAP 70
Percentage of persons born in provinces other than province of enumeration to total population: 1966 (Data by Shahrestans)
Nearly 5.45 per cent of the population was born in other shahrestans of the same ostan in which they were residing (Map 67). These were the people who were involved in short-run migration. The two sexes showed a little difference in respect of their participation in this migration. Whereas 5.55 per cent of male population was recorded as migrants of this type, the corresponding figure for females was 5.35 per cent (Table 17). The rural and urban areas, however, differed significantly in this respect (Tables 18 and 19). In rural areas, 3.09 per cent of the population was born in other shahrestans of the same ostan (Map 68), for urban areas this figure was 9.13 per cent (Map 69). This means that rural to rural migration was much less than rural to urban migration.

One of the striking features of migration patterns of Iran was the predominance of long distance migration over the short-run migration. The percentage of persons born in other ostans was nearly 8.15 per cent (Map 70) while of those born in other shahrestans of the same ostan was hardly 5.45 per cent. This was the result of a wide distance between the source and the destination areas of migrants. It very much conformed to the concentration of new developments either in the peripheral areas of the country or in Tehran, both of which are distantly located from most parts of the
Rural Population
Percentage of Persons Born in Provinces Other than Province of Enumeration to Total Population: 1966
(Data by Shahrestans)
Iran

Urban Population

Percentage of Persons Born in Provinces Other than Province of Enumeration to Total Population: 1966

(Data by Shahrastans)
country. Equally surprising was a little difference in participation rates of males and females even in this kind of migration. This shows that in Iran till 1966 family migration was much more prevalent than in most of the developing countries where economic migration was largely male-selective. There was, however, a wide difference between rural and urban areas in this regard. In rural areas, hardly 2.68 per cent of the population was born in other ostans (Map 71). The corresponding figure for urban areas was 16.66 per cent (Map 72).

Hardly 0.22 per cent of the total population was from outside the country. Immigration to the country was of very small magnitude. The few immigrants were residing in highly localized pockets like Tehran, Abadan, Khorramshahr, and areas adjoining Iraq. Among the foreign born persons the number of males and females was practically the same. More than 80 per cent of such migrants were confined to urban places.

The above discussion establishes that: (i) Iran's population was highly immobile; (ii) long distance migration was more significant than short-run migration; (iii) immigration to Iran was negligible and (iv) difference in participation rates of males and females in migration was not wide.
Areas of In-migration

As already noted, there are no direct data on in-migration to or out-migration from different parts of Iran. The discussion on migration has to be based on indirect data relating to 'place of birth'. In order to identify areas of in-migration, a map showing the percentage of population born outside the shahrestan was prepared. Shahrestans, in which more than one-tenth of the population was born outside the shahrestan, were noted for in-migration. Considerable in-migration was observed as the characteristic feature of the areas discussed below (Map 73).

A. Tehran and Its Adjoining Shahrestans

This part of the country, with the national capital as the focal point, attracted the largest number of in-migrants. About a half of the total population in Tehran and its neighbouring shahrestans were recorded as migrant. Nearly one-fourth of the migrants hailed from the various shahrestans of Central ostan, about one-fifth from East and West Azerbaijan ostan, and about one-tenth from Gilan ostan (Table 20).

The huge concentration of industries, large scale construction activity and increasing scope of employment in services, transport and trade were mainly responsible for stimulating in-migration. Population of Tehran increased from 1.5 million in 1956 to 2.7 million in 1966.
B. Khuzestan Ostan

Another very prominent area noted for in-migration was the Khuzestan, coinciding practically with the ostan by the same name. This oil home of Iran had about one-third of its total population as migrant. This region is one of the richest in oil in the whole world. Here are located the important oil producing centres of Masjed-e-Soleiman, Ahvaz, Aghajeri, Fazanen, Cachsaran, Lali, and Naft-e-Sefid. A number of petrochemical industries have been installed at places like Bandar-e-Mahshahr, Ahvaz and Abadan. The Abadan refinery ranks among the biggest in the world. The activities related to drilling of oil, manufacturing of petrochemicals, and refining of oil generated a huge reservoir of employment that attracted migrants from various parts of the country. In addition, geologists, engineers and administrative staff were brought from overseas to help in drilling the wells and in construction and maintenance of the oil installations. The number of foreign experts has gone down appreciably during the recent years and most of the operations are now handled by Iranians.

C. Eastern Mazanderan

This area situated to the southeast of the Caspian Sea is one of the most productive agricultural parts of Iran.
Its lowlands are noted for intensive cultivation of rice, maize and cotton, and its high lands for tea plantations and horticulture, especially citrus fruits. These agricultural activities are labour intensive. To meet the demand of additional labour, there has been considerable in-migration from other parts of the country, especially the Sistan region. The reclamation of some agricultural land during recent years also caused inflow from the neighbouring densely populated areas to the west. The strategic location of this region adjoining the U.S.S.R. made it necessary to station a large number of defence personnel who hailed from different parts of the country. They also added to the number of migrants. In 1966, about one-third of the total population was recorded as migrant.

D. Western Mazanderan

While the eastern Mazanderan was famous for its diversified agriculture, the western Mazanderan was noted for a relatively high level of development in both agriculture and industry. The area had a number of industries, including tea processing, rice milling and fruit canning which offered employment to migrants. Having a very favourable location on the Caspian Sea and enjoying a mild climate, the region is developing into a tourist area. Tourism has created new avenues of employment for migrants who accounted for one-sixth of the total population in 1966.
E. Zahedan

This area adjoining both Pakistan and Afghanistan was also vital from the strategic point of view. It required a large number of army men for its border areas. The defence activity involved a lot of construction work on roads and buildings which also caused in-migration. The provincial headquarters of Sistan and Baluchestan is also located in this very area. The opening of a number of government offices created many new jobs which attracted migrants. Migration to this area was, thus, related to defence, construction and administrative activities. More than one-fourth of the total population was recorded as migrant in 1966.

F. Mashhad

The shahrestan of Mashhad was also noted for in-migration as about one-sixth of its population had in-migrated from other areas. Mashhad city, with a population of nearly half a million in 1966, was the biggest shrine in the whole country. This shrine city accommodated a large number of people who were engaged in religion and in serving the pilgrims. The city was a centre of attraction for many old people who aspired to breathe their last in this holy city.

G. Areas Bordering with Iraq

West Azerbaijan ostan, the shahrestans of Qasr-e-Shirin in Kermanshah ostan, and of Mehran in Ilam farmanqalikol,
recorded one-tenth to more than one-third of their population as migrants. These shahrestans bordered with Iraq which was not so friendly with Iran. It was necessary to station defence forces in large numbers in this frontier area. The defence personnel hailed from all parts of the country and hence were migrants. The defence of the borders also required a lot of road and other construction activity which also induced in-migration from other areas.

In brief, in-migration was characteristic of several differing kinds of areas. These included the industrializing areas like Tehran capital region, oil rich areas of Khuzestan and agriculturally progressive tracts of east Mazanderan. In-migration to strategic frontier zones was another outstanding feature of internal migration in Iran.

Areas of Out-migration

Data at ostan level only and that also for 1956 were available for identifying areas of out-migration. These data were obtained from Table 17 of the Statistical Yearbook, 1966. Information was available in respect of ostan of birth and residence of the population. The areas discussed below were noted as having experienced considerable out-migration.

A. East Azerbaijan

It was found that East Azerbaijan ostan experienced the largest magnitude of out-migration. Of all the persons
enumerated outside the ostan of their birth, nearly one-fourth belonged to this ostan. About 60 per cent of migrants from here had gone to Central ostan and another 22 per cent to west Azerbaijan. Lying in the junction zone of Iran, Turkey and the U.S.S.R., East Azerbaijan has been famous for its politically awakened, progressive and enterprising people. They had always been migrating in search of economic fortunes. They migrated in very large numbers to Tehran located in Central ostan when it started industrializing at a rapid pace. The region itself had only a few industries. The people depended largely on agriculture which was not in a happy condition. The people had to move to other areas for getting gainful employment.

B. Gilan and Western Mazanderan

The Gilan and the western Mazanderan were other areas to suffer out-migration on a large scale. Almost one-fourth of the persons enumerated outside the ostan of their birth belonged to this densely populated (50 to more than 300 persons per sq. km.) coastal tract along the Caspian Sea. The population in the region has been increasing through centuries and the pressure on land resources mounting. When new employment opportunities became available in Central ostan, many people out-migrated from here. About 80 per cent of out-migrants moved to Central ostan alone.
C. Esfahan

Esfahan was another area to have undergone out-migration on a significant scale. It enjoys a favourable location in relation to Central ostan to its north and Khuzestan to its southwest, both of which were capable of absorbing migrants. About a half of the out-migrants moved to Khuzestan and another 40 per cent to Central ostan with Tehran as its heart. Most of the out-migration took place from the western, densely populated part of Esfahan.

D. Hamadan and Kermanshah

Characterized by a population density twice as high as the national average, Hamadan and Kermanshah was another area to experience out-migration. The out-migration was induced by intense population pressure on land resources and also by close proximity of Central ostan and Khuzestan. More than two-thirds of the out-migrants moved to the former area and nearly one-fifth to the latter.

It follows that out-migration was a typical feature of all the densely populated, rural and agricultural regions of Iran. The out-flow was large particularly from those areas which were located in a convenient proximity to the national capital of Tehran or to the oil fields of Khuzestan.
Conclusions

The following facts clearly emerge from the discussion in this chapter:

1. As in most of the developing countries, Iran lacked internal migration of any significance. With new developments in industry, transport and oil drilling, its mobility has been growing of recent. It was interesting to observe that migration in Iran was not male-selective to the extent it has been in most of the developing countries.

2. Long distance migration was more prominent than short run migration. This was due to highly localized and peripheral location of newly developing areas offering employment opportunities. Most of the in-migration areas in the country were marked by their position on the periphery of Iran.

3. Most of the densely populated areas with continuing subsistence agricultural economy and predominantly rural population experienced out-migration. Out-migration was especially massive from those areas which were close to the national capital of Tehran or to oil fields of Khuzestan.
4. Rural to urban migration on a large scale is only a recent phenomenon in Iran. It has been gaining momentum since 1961-62 when revolutionary land and other reforms were introduced in the country. The pull of the town has been a stronger factor than push from the villages in this process of rural-urban migration.
IRAN
Distribution of Urban Centres by Size of Population: 1966
(Data by Individual Urban Centres)