



ISSN: 2230-9926

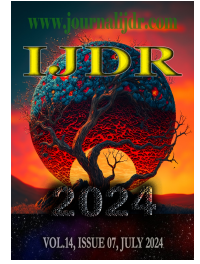
Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research

Vol. 14, Issue, 07, pp. 66277-66279, July, 2024

<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.28522.07.2024>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

RURAL LABOURER OUT-MIGRATION FROM WEST BENGAL: QUEST FOR PEACE AND CONSTANCY IN LIFE

*Rana Mitra

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, Raiganj University Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 27th April, 2024

Received in revised form

28th May, 2024

Accepted 20th June, 2024

Published online 30th July, 2024

Key Words:

Out-Migration, Labourer, Agriculture, Employment, Livelihood.

*Corresponding author: Rana Mitra,

ABSTRACT

Out-migration of labourer from the rural areas is conquered by employment related reasons. Lack of employment throughout the year makes difficulty to survive and labourer are forced to move out with the aim of better employment or stable earnings throughout the year. Reason behind such decision is the hope of stability and peaceful life ahead. This research work explore the facts under this motivational point of view. Migration from villages to the other places for work, increases wage and economic conditions of the migrant workers. This economic improvement and stability in earning bring changes in their behavior and activities.

Copyright©2024, Rana Mitra. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Rana Mitra, 2024. "Rural labourer out-migration from West Bengal: Quest for peace and Constancy in life". International Journal of Development Research, 14, (07), 66277-66279.

INTRODUCTION

Why people used to migrate- It does not have simple reason; in different context people migrate for different reasons. The twenty first century has been experiencing huge migration of people in general and labourer in particular. Migration of people in kind of international got more attraction in the academic discussion as well as policy functions rather than internal migration in the world wide. But reality is that internal migration occurs more than international migration in all its capacity. Type of migration, flow of migration may vary from nation to nation; but economic reason is most similar and common variable in the study of labourer migration. Liberalization of national market increases easy transformation of capital from nation to nation, which further increases labourer mobility within the countries dramatically. Several reports of migration studies have indicated dynamic characters and determinant factors for such mobility. The psychological or motivational factor also left its imprint in the decision making about migration. Apart from the theoretical account labourer migration can be interpreted from the need satisfaction motivational point of view. Maslow's hierarchy of need theory came with the explanation that people are motivated by different needs hierarchy. Physiological needs the first need in the lower strata of need pyramid; which are foods, clothing etc. followed by Social security needs- risk factors of the family or the needs arises from the fear of physiological needs and so on. Such motivational insight and behavioral practice has found in behind of labourer out-migration in India. Desire of a stable life and mitigate the need of substance works

as a motivating factor behind labourer migration. Migration from one region to another region in search of improved livelihoods is a key feature of human nature. (Sanyal & Maity, 2018). Commenting on rural labourer migration, decent employment for all over the year is a basic cause (Islam, Kashem, Morshed, Rahman, & Das, 2019). Cultivation is no longer been a dependent surviving means for the rural people. Liberalization of market causes farming more expensive with controlled capitalist market economy. The price of inputs for the harvesting have gone up and on the other hand, due to the fall in crop prices farmers of the countryside faces huge loses in farming. With this circumstances now a day agriculture growing as a less employment generating sector. Due to these structural changes and economic conditions the life at villages becomes more costly. People from the depressed section in search of alternative way for survival have crossing the boundary of their native places. Nevertheless, the job oriented motive always not a solo cause for migration. The extent of migration depends on many other factors like education, caste, religion, political stability, family background etc. Empirical literature on migration studies shows out-migration of labourer from the rural areas is dominated by employment related reason (Sanyal & Maity, 2018; Ali, 2018; Datta, 2018). Seasonal employment in agriculture is one of the important agrarian tension. Lack of employment throughout the year makes more expensive to survival in rural areas. Consequence of this, labourer are forced to move out with the aim of better employment or stable earnings throughout the year. Motivational reason behind such decision is the hope for stability and peaceful condition in life and livelihood.

The plight of rural labourer out-migration is seasonal or temporary by nature. Geographically these movements are prominent and limited in to inter-state trajectories. Evidences shows male out-migrants are the important labour group in the inter-state labourer migration trajectory in India. The economic compulsion of many of them are as such they simply cannot afford the cost to bring their families to the cities (Datta, 2018). So they just leave their wives, children and parents in their native places. This migrants keeps close contact with their families with the intention to support their family, take responsibility and with the wish to return at home (Agasty, 2018; Datta, 2018). Remittances sent by the migrants has been used in expenditure of food, education, health care and to mitigate the risk factors by the family at origin areas. Studies has proved migrant labourer's remittances bring out them from poverty and improved their livelihood. Another study in India has proven that the participation of one or multiple member from the household in seasonal migration is theorized as a regular strategy to cope with either serious deprivation or to accumulate resources to strengthening the family well-being (Deshinkar, 2010; Deshinker & Start, 2003; Dodd, Humphries, Patel, Majowicz, & Dewey, 2016).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since mid-1980s Indian economies have been experiencing unprecedented structural transition in labour market and occupational patterns from traditional agricultural economy to non-agricultural economy at both national and regional levels. This structural change in Indian labour market has been reflected by massive movement of labourer from rural to urban areas in farm to non-farm activities (Agasty & Patra, 2014). In the post economic reform period, growing economic disparity has probably enlarged inter-state economic inequality. Inter-state migration accounts for a large share of employment related reason from less developed states in India. The rate of poverty among migrant households is lower than non-migrant households in many states. This clearly shows that migration has a positive impact on decreasing poverty and wellbeing of households (Mohanty, Mohapatra, Kastor, Singh, & Mahapatra, 2015).

Objective

The objective of present research work are-

- To study how out-migration helps rural labourer to improve their livelihood.
- To study does out-migration brings stability in life struggle in rural lifestyle.

METHODOLOGY

This is an empirical study in nature and mixed method strategy has followed for analyzing the facts. This study based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data has collected from the field by considering two case studies. Individual migrant labourer has considered as a case for this study. Both the samples were collected from Cooch Behar district of West Bengal. Cooch Behar district is one of the marginalized district of West Bengal. Geographically this district situated at the northern part of West Bengal and earning source of people relies on agriculture.

The Case Studies: In India inter-state labourer migration follows few corridors, like labourer moved from Bihar to New Delhi, Odessa to Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal to Kerala and West Bengal to Karnataka etc. In this study individual migrant worker has been used as a case. Reason behind selecting these two sample is they are well known by the researcher and the scope of error in facts finding is minimal. One of these two sample worker is working in Kerala and another one working at Karnataka. Details about sample cases are following –

TD: TD is about 25 years old. Last time he used to work at Bengaluru in a construction site. Now he returns at his home after one year of his migration trajectory for arranging and made his house by replacing the previous. In the family he has parents and one elder brother. His brother also a migrant worker; now he working at Jaipur. They have not so many cultivable land, how much they have is near about one ace including their homestead. But major portion of their land is infertile land near a river.

TD first opted out-migration for work while he was reading in class IX almost ten years ago. He said, *our poverty level was in such point that, while I reading in class IX my parents cannot afforded my all books that was needed. For that I faces difficulties at school and private tuitions. That half-pants I used to wear also was managed by many time stitches. I thought, I have done much education and with this I will survive; now I need money for survive and to come out from this poverty. So I quite my school and go to work (Bidesh). Now a day, I earn Rs.750 per day at my work place (Bidesh), it is not possible to earn that much by staying at my village. Another problem in village is that, here wages are lower than there (Bidesh) and all over the year I will not get employment. So it's better for me, that now I working there and after certain time I used to come at home for few days. Sometimes I stay at home for two to three months.*

TD has no plan to stop his migration trajectory immediately. Because, now he earns much better. It helps him to moving out from their extreme poverty. From the earnings, now he is much able to afford what he want, he had buy a wrist-watch of Rs. 500 and one pair of show costs 1000 rupees. In future while he will be able to do something, by which he can survive at home than he will stop his migration trajectory to be settled in his village. During his staying at home, this time TD expressed his desire to build a cement concrete house and a bathroom toilet.

AM: AM is about 23 years old. He quite his study while he failed in class X board exams after multiple attempts. In his family he has one sibling and parents. They have only their homestead and not have sufficient land holdings for cultivation at the village. AM started migrating from last two years. Last time he went to Kerala for work, there he was engaged in a construction work. His father also a migrant worker. AM's father continuing his migration trajectory from last twenty years. AM stay with his father at the work place for 4 to 6 months in a year and there after he returns to home. He said, *I don't like to stay there (at destination place), hard work does not matter but cooking is worst thing for me, which I have to do there. I go to work for helping my father and support my family. Though I have no obligations to go for work there. I just go there because my father is there and wages at Kerala is higher than my village. There I earn 700 to 800 per day.*

DISCUSSION

Land is the basic natural resources and very important asset for the people residing in rural areas. In both the cases cultivable land seems insufficient for depending on it and survive for these households. So both the household sends multiple members to find alternative way for surviving. This evidence has proved the previous study results that scarcity of cultivable land is one of the major cause for rural labourer out-migration in India. (Malhotra, 2015; Haberfeld, Menaria, Sahoo, & Vyas, 1999). Continual growth of population and urbanization may causes the conversion of cultivable land to non-cultivation purposes. One of the main reason for scarcity of cultivable land for a household in rural area remains in the customary practice of handing over the land to the next generation. In West Bengal the followed customary practice itself a process of negation. Suppose 'A' has owned three acre of land and has three child; while these three Acre will transformed to the child, everyone will get one acre of land. So land holding for a house hold decreasing day by day and it impacts on livelihoods. Earning from the lands are not sufficient to meet life coast at villages, people are decides to migrate for earning so that the can manage their households. It's a quest for better life and stable

depending earnings for survival, for that people enters in the migration trajectory. In the context of wages, both TD and AM earns more money by opting out-migration at the destination place in comparison to their respective villages. This extra earnings helps them to move out from the poverty at the origin places. This findings also proved the previous study results that, migration increases the income and well-being of the households through remittances send by the migrant labourer (Mohanty, Mohapatra, Kastor, Singh, & Mahapatra, 2015). Gradual increase of household cost, that rural households are not able to bear with their income at villages, to fix the gap between income and expenditure, rural people who are migrated, shows it for a reason behind their decision.

However, poverty at village forced people to move out, and agriculture is not being a surviving means shifts occupational pattern from agricultural activities to non-agricultural activities. This non-agricultural activities are totally informal in nature. Wage rate in agricultural sector is lower than wage in informal sector; which is seen in both AM and TD's responses that they have earns more than their village wages at their respective destination places. By this extra income they reduces their poverty level. Seasonal employment in agrarian economy causes seasonal earnings but in informal activities earnings comes throughout the year. So rural labourers opt out-migration for a stable earnings all over the year. The reason for TD's migration decision and his economic condition before and after decide to migrate shows this migration trajectory increases earning opportunities and economic well-being for the household. So, from this discussion this statement can be established that, migration from villages to the other places for work, increases wage and economic conditions of the migrant workers. This economic improvement and stability in earning bring changes in their behavior and activities. After few years of starting migration these labourer tries to build their house much better than previous. This kind of behavior is shaped by the needs that are arranged in a hierarchical manner as discussed earlier. This also can experienced in TD's response, as he express his desire to build a cement concrete house. However, out-migration brings a change on lifestyle of a migrant household, stability and consistency in lifestyle for left behind family members at villages.

CONCLUSION

Poverty and jobless growth within agrarian economy brings simultaneous crisis in rural socio-economic sphere. Popular way to move out from such crisis used by the rural people is the out-migration. Out-migration brings structural changes in the lifestyle among them, those who opted it. This changes comes in occupational pattern, economic condition, social status and way of thinking etc. Cultural devolution has occur due to the labourer migration from one cultural region to another region; it further changes the daily life. Nevertheless, peace and consistency in life of migrant labourer, for which they move out, stayed with their life as long they continue their migration trajectory.

Because earnings at destination places comes from the informal sector; its basic work nature is temporary. So, while labourer completes their tenure or stop to work, they are not been paid any more in terms of provident funds or any kind of social security. Condition of these workers is hand to mouth, if it get disturbed then their earnings and stability in life hindered.

REFERENCES

- Agasty, M. P. (2018). Migration of Labour and Urban-Rural Linkages: a case study of rural India. *Indian Journal of Economics and Development*, 6(10). Retrieved December 22, 2023, from <https://www.i-scholar.in/index.php/ijed/article/view/176900/164099>
- Ali, M. (2018). Causes and Consequences of Out-Migration : A Study in Murshidabad District, West Bengal, India. *International Journal of Development Research*, 08(01), 18189-18194. Retrieved November 20, 2023, from <https://www.journalijdr.com/sites/default/files/issue-pdf/11842.pdf>
- Datta, A. (2018). Pride and Shame in the City: young people's experiences of rural-urban migration in India. *Children's Geographies*, 1-11. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2018.1495317>
- Deshinkar, P. (2010). *Migration, remote rural areas and chronic poverty in India*. Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Working Paper, 323. Retrieved November 25, 2023, from <http://environmentportal.in/files/poverty%20in%20india.pdf>
- Deshinkar, P., & Start, D. (2003). *Seasonal Migration for livelihoods in India: Coping, accumulation and exclusion*. London: Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved October 29, 2023, from <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08cfd915d622c0016df/WP220web.pdf>
- Dodd, W., Humphries, S., Patel, K., Majowicz, S., & Dewey, C. (2016). Determinants of Temporary Labour Migration in Southern India. *Asian Population Studies*, 12(3), 294-311. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730.2016.1207929>
- Haberfeld, Y., Menaria, R. K., Sahoo, B. B., & Vyas, R. N. (1999). Seasonal Migration of Rural Labour in India. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 473-489.
- Islam, M., Kashem, S., Morshed, S., Rahman, M., & Das, A. (2019). Dynamics of Seasonal Migration of Rural Livelihood; Capital Formation Perspective. *Advanced Journal of Science*, 5(1), 81-92.
- Malhotra, N. (2015). Factors in Internal Labour Migration in India. *ENVISION - International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 9, 47-55. Retrieved 2022
- Mohanty, S. K., Mohapatra, S. R., Kastor, A., Singh, A. K., & Mahapatra, B. (2015). Does Employment-Related Migration Reduce Poverty in India? *Int. Migration & Integration*. doi:DOI 10.1007/s12134-015-0436-y
- Sanyal, T., & Maity, K. (2018). On Labour Migration in India: Trends, Causes and Impacts. *Economic Affairs*, 63(1), 57-69. doi:DOI: 10.30954/0424-2513.2018.00150.8
