

MIGRANT LABOURERS AND THEIR ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN TAMILNADU WITH REFERENCE TO TAMBARAM CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

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ABSTRACT

Migrant is a person who moves from one administrative unit to another. In Indian control these administrative units are generally village in rural areas and town in urban areas. Our study observed that long distance migration from states like West Bengal and Bihar dominated the inflow of migrant workers in recent years. Poor economic conditions along with several other overlapping factors have been identified as the reason of migration, of which the most important are getting better employment, meeting household expenditure and accumulation of savings. The major reason of migration to Tamilnadu is reported as the higher wages, availability of work and better working conditions. This is an endeavour to evaluate and analyse the economic conditions of migrant labourers in Tambaram City Municipal Corporation (TCMC). In this situation, the researcher has approached this subject for the purpose of analysing the migrant labourers living and working conditions and the problems faced by them. An attempt has been made to check whether there is any change in the living condition of the migrant labourers before and after their migration.

Keywords: Migrant Labourers, Conditions and TCMC.

Introduction

Migration is a change in residence from the place of origin to a place destination or a place of new settlement. It means the phenomenon of the flow of people over longer or shorter destination either for temporary or permanent settlement. There are push and pull factors in migration. Pulling Factors may include better education and employment opportunities better health and leisure facilities so on, whereas the pushing factors are non-availability of jobs, poor accommodations and poverty and so on in the place of origins.

Migrants are mainly driven from homes in search of means of earning livelihoods and employed in different kinds of activities. Migrants at the upper end of spectrum are placed in the organized sector where as at lower end they settled as casual labourers or petty traders. Lacking any skills and assets, unorganized workers both in rural and urban areas end up as farm labourers and construction workers or rickshaw pullers or street vendors in urban areas. The migrants and bonded labourers constitute the bottom layer of the working class.

Migration Trends in Tamilnadu

Migration is not merely the physical movements of individuals and groups involve a lot of strain in their social, economic, cultural and other aspect of life. It is a subject of keen interest not only to the demographers but also to sociologist, anthropologist, economist and political scientist movements of people, specially rural people from the land to the cities, from one country to another and from one continent to another is an international phenomenon and not a phenomenon of modern times. It concerns not only developing countries but also those which are highly industrialized and affects not only the more or capitalized countries but also the socialist change of the move or open the voluntary and involuntary nature of the act and destination.

“The socio-economic development of the southern states is considerably higher and that attracts people. Another factor is that because of better education levels and awareness, local residents of these areas get drawn towards better economic opportunities.

Review of Literature

Mann (2009) in his study *“Welfare and Protective Measures Pertain to the Construction Workers in India”* says that normally construction workers are employed through contractors who exploit them for their benefits through their protective enactments for these workers. But ground realities are totally opposite from legal provisions on the subject.

Pillai (2008) in his article in The Hindu, *“Migrant labours makes an impact”* reports that most of the migrants belong to the unskilled category. They are mainly employed as casual labourer on daily wages in hotels, construction industry and the transport sector. The number of migrants has increased phenomenally and there is a dire need to implement laws that ensure their welfare.

Reddy (1998) in his study *“Rural-Urban migration: An Economic Interpretation”* says that rural-urban migration plays an important role in the economic development of developing countries like India and it is socially an advantageous process in which people with relatively low incomes in the rural sector will shift to relatively higher incomes in urban sector.

Statement of the Problem

The economy is capable of providing better wage rates and favourable working conditions for all of its labourers. This has always attracted labourers from other states. In recent past this state faces an increasing inflow of workers and it can cause different kinds of social and political turmoil in the economy and ethnic differences. The migration problems in Bengal, Bangladesh so on are examples of the problem. The necessities for adopting proper guidelines and provision of adequate living condition has been understood same from previous experiences.

Objectives

1. To identify the major factors behind the migration of labourers.

2. To study the difference in income between migrant labourers and local labourers.
3. To compare the economic conditions of migrant labourers before and after migration.

Methodology

The present study is based on both the primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected on the basis of structured questionnaire. The area of study is Tambaram City Municipal Corporation (TCMC). The sample comprise of 75 migrant labourers and 16 local labourers working in construction sites. The collected data is plotted, for which, first the data was grouped under their respective categories and then converted accordingly for further analysis. The researcher experienced several constraints during the data collection period such as non-availability, refusal to co-operate, respondent bias, and language problem. The field work also gave researchers a vast experience and understanding of about the migrants.

Analysis & Discussion

The factors like wages, level of monthly savings, the facilities like medical aid, insurance, transportation, training and the job satisfaction getting from Tamilnadu so on show the economic conditions of migrant labourers in Tamilnadu. The economic conditions including wage rates, expenditure so on and also social conditions like several facilities and living conditions also led them to migrate to Tamilnadu. Ninety six percent of labourers responded that they migrated to Tamilnadu for getting higher wage rates. Availability of work and better working conditions attracted many of the labourers to choose Tamilnadu. Other important factors include no employment availability in their home town and influence of relatives who are working in Tamilnadu.

The data show that economic conditions of migrants improved in the post migration period. Majority of them did agricultural works with their family before migrating. But they did not have a proper income. After migration their income level increased. Many of them did similar work in their native places in very lower wages comparing to wages in Tamilnadu.

Table.1: Wages of Migrant Labourers

Sl. No.	Daily Wages	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 500	0	0
2	500- 700	49	65.3
3	700- 900	26	34.7
4	Above 900	0	0
	Total	75	100

Source: Field data

The selected sample consists of 26 masons and 49 helpers. The masons were given daily wages between 700 to 900 rupees. Helpers in construction sites were given daily wages between 500 to 700 rupees. For these labourers the daily wage is comparatively better than their native place. The income levels of these labourers differ slightly according to the working hours and number of working days in a week. For all of the labourers 8 hours is working hours. Some of them do some extras works according to the type job and employer.

Majority of them do job for 6 days in a week. Some of them do jobs for entire days. That too depends on the jobs. In big construction sites, to complete the construction faster the labourers have to do some extra jobs. They are ready to do these jobs because of the wages they are getting.

Table.2: Savings Pattern of Migrant Labourers

Sl. No.	Savings	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 50%	0	0
2	50%- 60%	11	14.7
3	60%- 70%	43	57.3
4	Above 70%	21	28
	Total	75	100

Source: Field data

Almost all of the migrant labourers do not have any savings in Tamilnadu. The whole amount they get after meeting their expenses will be send to their own home. The savings here refer to the amount they get after meeting their expenses. Majority of the labourers (57.3%) save up to 60 percent to 70 percent of their monthly income after meeting their expenses. 28 percent of the labourers save above 70 percent of their monthly income. 14.7 percent of migrants save up to 60 percent to 70 percent of their monthly income. These amounts saved will be sending to their native places.

This shows that major portion of the income of migrants will be spend or used in their native places. As there is a huge population of migrant labourers in Tamilnadu, a huge amount will of cash will be used in the native place of migrants.

Table.3: Comparison of Income of Local Labourers and Migrant Labourers

Monthly Income Level	No. of Migrant Labourers	Percentage	No. of Local Labourers	Percentage
15000-18000	49	65.3	09	56.25
18000-22000	26	34.7	07	43.75
Total	75	100	16	100

Source: Field data

There is no significant difference in the wage rates of migrant labourers and local labourers for construction works. Both of them get the same daily wages. The huge flow of migrant labourers caused decrease in the local labourers for the construction work. Employers choose migrant labourers for construction works because of their work, less expense so on.

Findings & Suggestions

The data show that economic conditions of migrants improved in the post migration period. Majority of them did agricultural works with their family before migrating. But they

did not have a proper income. After migration their income level increased. Few respondents did similar jobs in their native places in very lower wages comparing to wages in Tamilnadu.

- Government should implement policies regarding the Insurance Coverage of Migrant Workers in sectors which involve high risk factors.
- To enact Employment Guarantee Laws and register all migrant workers under the Inter-State Migrant Workers Act.
- Adequate interventions from the government authorities are required to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the workers.
- Ensure decent working conditions, good rapport between employee and employer and basic amenities in the work place.
- Measures should be taken to control and regulate the inflow of migrants from other states to Tamilnadu.

Conclusion

Tamilnadu with ample opportunities and higher wages is emerging as a hub for unskilled and semi-skilled labour force from other states. In Tamilnadu, there is a boom in construction sector and infrastructure activities.

While existing studies provide evidences for short distance migration from nearby states of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to Tamilnadu, our study observed that long distance migration from states like West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odessa, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh are dominated the inflow of migrant workers in recent years. While about one third of the sample migrants had informal information networks through acquaintances that have already migrated plays role in migration of workers to Tamilnadu. Poor economic conditions along with several other overlapping factors have been identified as the reason of migration, of which the most important are getting employment/better employment, meeting household expenditure and accumulation of savings. The major reason of migration to Tamilnadu is reported as the higher wages, availability of work and better working conditions.

This paper analyzes the economic status of the in-migrant workers in Tambaram City Municipal Corporation. The analysis is based on data from a sample of 75 in-migrants workers in Tambaram, which has been collected through a primary survey. While existing studies provide evidences for short distance migration from nearby states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala to Tamilnadu, our study observed that long distance migration from states like West Bengal and Bihar dominated the inflow of migrant workers in recent years. While about one third of the sample migrants had informal information networks through acquaintances that have already migrated plays important role in migration of workers to Tamilnadu. Poor economic conditions along with several other overlapping factors have been identified as the reason of migration, of which the most important are getting employment/better employment, meeting household expenditure and accumulation of savings. The major reason of migration to Tamilnadu is reported as the higher wages, availability of work and better working conditions.

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