

ECONOMICS OF MIGRATING VILLAGERS OF SOUTH CHOTANAGPUR REGION OF JHARKHAND: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Present study focuses on seasonal migration from rural areas in South Chotanagpur division of Jharkhand state to the neighboring states, such as Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and Chhattisgarh. South Chotanagpur is one of the backward regions of the state and it has the largest concentration of scheduled tribes. The objectives of this paper are to know the background of the village migrants and to evaluate their level of improvement in their socio-economic-political status after migration. South Chotanagpur region of Jharkhand is agriculturally a dry region and mono-cropping monsoon based agriculture prevails here. The study has covered six villages and is based on primary data collected through field work.

Key words: Migration, Rural-urban

INTRODUCTION

The scheduled tribe population of Jharkhand, especially from its South Chotanagpur region, continues to migrate to neighboring states for their livelihood as they do not get work throughout the year in their native place. In many places, people do not get work even for six months in a year. Landed property belongs to rich landlords while the majority continue to languish in poverty and miseries. One can see the absence of large farmers as there are few landlords and majority of the people are marginal or small farmers. The small and marginal farmers have only arid land in their name and do not get much profit from it. In such a scenario, migration is the preferred option for them for reducing their vulnerability.

Usually, the nature of work done by the migrants is construction work, hotel work, brick-kilns, quarries, plantations and business activities. Further, a large number of seasonal migrants work in urban informal manufacturing construction, services or transport sectors, and are employed as casual labourers, head-loaders, rickshaw pullers and hawkers. Thus, they are engaged in low paid jobs and occupations.

Most of the migrants leave the village around November and return in April/ May to look after their land or parents. But in the face of natural calamities like drought or floods, some families even resort to leaving their lands and are more or less permanently away and come back only to celebrate festivals or family function. Majority of tribal migrants take their family with them to the place of migration.

Present paper aims to analyze seasonal migration from remote tribal villages of South Chotanagpur region of Jharkhand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the early nineteenth century, seasonal and permanent out migration from South Chotanagpur region of Jharkhand was reported. There is evidence of regular seasonal migration to Bengal (Dangling ten gardens) and Assam in post harvesting months (Cutbert, 1847). The extent of migration increased as the years passed (Mohapatra 1985).

Sharma (1997) and Karan (2003) observed that rural poverty, high population density and growth rates, skewed access to productive resources and slow economic growth are among the drivers of migration of Jharkhand to West Bengal, Odisha and Assam.

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Different social scientists in their study have explained the importance of migration as it is a source of employment and household income. It is now recognized that migration is a part of the normal livelihood strategy of the poor (MD Dowell and De Haan, 1997) and does not occur only during times of emergency. According to Davies (1996), the main driver of migration is the worsening situation of dry land agriculture created by draught, crop failure and poor terms of trade.

Haberfeld's (1999) research on migration in Dungapur found that those households that were sending migrants had higher income levels than those not sending migrants. On the other hand, Kothari's (2002) review of migration studies finds that migration can both reduce and perpetuate poverty.

A number of other research studies have been carried to find out the impact of migration, structure of migration, gender migration, and trend of migration among different groups.

STUDY AREA: JHARKHAND

The state of Jharkhand was carved out of the southern part of Bihar state on 15th of November, 2000. Jharkhand is bordered by the states of Bihar on the north, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh on the west, Orissa on the south, and West Bengal on the east. The industrial city of Ranchi is its capital. Its other major cities, all highly industrialized cities of eastern India, are Jamshedpur, Bokaro, and Dhanbad. Jharkhand is known for its mineral wealth and forestry products together with excellent human resources. Forest preserves support populations of tigers and Indian elephants. Most of the state lies on the Chhotanagpur Plateau, which is the source of the Koel, Damodar, Brahmani, Kharkai, and Subarnarekha rivers, whose upper watersheds lie within Jharkhand. Jharkhand has a rich variety of flora and fauna.

Jharkhand has a population of 26.90 million, consisting of 13.86 million males and 13.04 million females. The sex ratio is 941 females to 1000 males. The population consists of 28% tribals, 12% Scheduled Castes and 60% Others. There are 274 persons for each square kilometer of land. However, the population density varies considerably from as low as 148 per square kilometer in Gumla district to as high as 1167 per square kilometer in Dhanbad district. The literacy rate in Jharkhand is only 54.13% (2001) and female literacy rate is still lower at 39.38%.

Jharkhand has remained a home to a number of tribal communities since times immemorial. Some of the districts have a predominant tribal population. Jharkhand has 32 primitive tribal groups. These are Asur, Baiga, Banjara, Bathudi, Bedia, Binjhia, Birhor, Birjia, Chero, Chick-Baraik, Gond, Gorait, Ho, Karmali, Kharwar, Khond, Kisan, Kora, Korwa, Lohra, Mahli, Mal-Paharia, Munda, Oraon, Parhaiya, Santal, Sauria-Paharia, Savar, Bhumij, Kol and Kanwar. The state has witnessed migration of people from the adjoining areas of Bihar and West Bengal for the last several decades. Industrial and mining centers like Jamshedpur, Dhanbad and Ranchi have attracted people from all parts of India.

Jharkhand is a rich state of poor people. It has the concentration of some of country's highly industrialized cities like Jamshedpur, Bokaro and Dhanbad. Jharkhand also has immense mineral resources: minerals ranging from (ranking in the country within bracket) from iron ore (1st), coal (3rd), copper ore (1st), mica (1st), bauxite (3rd), Manganese, lime stone, china clay, fire clay, graphite (8th), kainite (1st), chromate (2nd), asbestos (1st), thorium (3rd), yemenite (2nd), sillimanite, uranium (Jaduguda mines, Narwa Pahar) (1st) and even gold (Rakha mines) (6th) and silver and several other minerals. Large deposits of coal and iron ore support the concentration of industries in centers like Jamshedpur, Bokaro and Ranchi. Despite the fact that it has the first Iron & steel factory at Jamshedpur, largest fertilizer factory of its time in India (since shut down) at Sindri, biggest explosives factory at Gomia, first methane gas well, still, it has several towns and innumerable villages with substandard civic amenities. Urbanization ratio is only 22.25% and the per capita annual income is US\$ 90 only.

MIGRATION FROM JHARKHAND

Migration to urban areas forms a livelihood option for thousands of poor here. In a study by Aloka (2008) in 12 villages in Jharkhand, found that one-third of the households had at least one member migrating. Around seventy percent of these were short term migrants who went out during the lean season. Short period migration is lowest from Gumla (56.6 percent) a village dominated by upper castes and highest from Palamau (78.5 percent) a village with a large SC and ST population. In general short-term migration was higher among poorer groups, involving over 80 percent of the landless and 88 per cent of illiterates. Another distinctive feature of this region is the presence of a large number of labour contractors and the role played by them in the migration process. The proportion of migrants sending remittance to the village for the use of those who stay behind and the percentage of the income from migration, which is sent as remittance, also varies by caste and class. Migration has wide ranging consequences on both the migrants and those who stay behind. Around 98 percent of the migrants, without any noticeable regional (district wise) variation feel that their income has increased because of migration.

The wage rate in the village has also increased because of migration, which has benefited all the people of the labour class-both those who migrate seasonally and those who stay behind. Around one third of the migrants reported improvement in their housing condition, 86 percent in the standard of their consumption and more than seventy percent in their expenditure on social occasions. As a result they feel more comfortable in comparison to those who do not migrate. Migration has enabled people to acquire skills and educate their children. 22 percent of the migrants said that they acquired skills such as better methods of cultivation and reported improvement in their agricultural production because of it. There are some adverse impacts of migration as well including a higher work load, exposure to disease, the neglect of children and their education. Migration has a profound impact on women. It affects both those who migrate and those who stay behind in the village. Some women in the sample mentioned that migration has saved their lives otherwise they were heavily dependent on the Sahus (the business man and money lender community) of the village who used to give them loans at exorbitant rates of interest.

Migration creates condition for deep-rooted changes in the social and cultural life of both the migrant community as well as the host community. For over a hundred years, the tribals of Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas region of Jharkhand have been steadily migrating out of their home land in search of new places of livelihood. Because of the development policies of the Government, big dams and industries were established acquiring the lands and forests of tribals which caused crisis of livelihood in Jharkhand. Thus the persons displaced were compelled to migrate to urban areas for their bread and butter at very low wages. Women, who play a very important role in bringing up their family and children, are also adversely affected by these developmental programmes.

Jharkhand still continues to be a source of large-scale out-migration (Ghosh and Sharma, 1995). The tribals, who are one of the most deprived sections of the society, still out-migrate on a large scale from this region. A large number of them are seasonal migrants migrating in the lean season and coming back to the village during the agricultural season. Migration has a profound impact on the tribal economy of Jharkhand. Migration has led to rise in slums, rise in alcoholism, and breakdown of tradition of a cultural society. Apart from this; exploitation of women/tribal migrants, rise in prostitution and public health impacts such as HIV/AIDS are the major adverse impact of migration of labourers from Jharkhand.

METHODOLOGY

Stage stratified random sampling method was used for selection of the sample. Six villages from three districts, Lohardaga, Gumla and Semdega were selected from the South Chhotanagpur division of Jharkhand as the districts have majority of tribal population and incidence of tribal migration is high in

these districts. From 6 villages the respondents were selected on a random sampling basis. By this method a total of 120 respondents from six villages i.e. 25 respondents from each village were selected. Simple statistical tools were used to analyze the data and draw conclusions.

The study is based on the primary data; the data were collected through an exhaustive field work from the selected respondent in the study area. For the purpose of collection of data, a well structured pretested schedule was prepared and personal interviews were conducted with 150 respondent migrants.

ANALYSIS

To study the status of tribal migrants and to study the type of work, the problem they face, and to evaluate the level of improvement thereafter, it is essential to analyze the background of the migrants. So the present study initially analyzed the age group, education, and the type of household of the migrants and then the post migration status was analyzed.

BACKGROUND OF MIGRANTS

1. **Type of Family:** It was observed that majority of sample who migrated belonged to the category of landless labour or marginal farmer. Table 1, represents the background of the sample migrants.

Table 1: Family Background of the Sample Migrants

Sl. No.	Type of Household	No. of Sample	Percentage
1	Large Farmer	03	2.00
2	Small Farmer	20	13.33
3	Marginal Farmer	69	46.00
4	Landless Labour	58	38.67
	Total	150	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1, shows that majority of sample migrant (46%) were marginal farmers where as 38.67% were landless labourers and 13.33% and 2.00% sample migrants belonged to small and large farmer family, respectively.

The following table provides information on the age group of migrants.

Table No 2 : Age Group of Migrants

Age in Years	Frequency	Percent
16-20	23	15.33
21-25	51	34.00
26-30	29	19.33
31-35	25	16.67
36-40	14	9.33
41-47	6	4.00
48-54	2	1.33
Total	150	100.00

Source: primary data

From the above table, it is clear that out of 150 individuals, 15.33% belong to the age group of 16-20 years, which includes child migrants. The highest and lowest number of migrants was found between the age group of 21-25 and 48-54 years, respectively. The youngest and eldest age of the migrant was around 16 years and 51 years, respectively. The median age group of these migrants was around 27 years. As the age group increases beyond 31-35 years there is a fall in the number of migrants staying in the destination place. Two reasons were mentioned for out migration: first, accumulation of savings and second, age. After the age of 40 years most of these migrants are unable to work for long hours (12 hours). As a result, they return to their villages with or without savings. The youngest migrants, therefore, replace the elder migrants. After a particular period of time when the size of remittance reduces and expenditures increase, the workers decide to pull themselves out of the urban labour markets.

The following table presents information on the migrants' educational level.

Table No 3: Educational Level of the Migrants

Educational level	Frequency	Percent to total
Primary	37	24.67
Middle	47	31.33
Secondary	42	28.00
High	7	4.67
Other	2	1.33
No education	15	10.00
Total	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is clear that 28% of the migrants have a secondary level education. About 30% (31.33%) of the migrants have middle level of schooling, 24.67% have primary level of education and a small percentage have high (4.67%) and other (1.33%) level of education and 10% of them have no education. In conclusion, the general trend is that people who have low level of education tend to be more mobile and end up getting jobs in the informal sector. The same may not be applicable, however, to those who have relatively better education. If the migrant has a low level of education, then she/ he stands no opportunity of getting a job in the formal sector and hence resorts to informal sector for meager sustenance. Srivastava's study (2003) suggests that the bulk of migrant work force in India has little or no education. The findings of his study suggest that the majority of the migrants lack minimum education and hence end up getting jobs in informal sector.

From the above table it is clear that unmarried migrants are more mobile and flexible than a married migrant. The movement of migration among married migrants is restricted at 40.67% but in case of unmarried migrants the movement is about 59.33%. This is higher in comparison to married migrants. Secondly, only 5, 33% migrated with their family. The remaining 94.67% live with their own community people on a shared basis. It is easier for the unmarried people to migrate because of their marital status, the type of jobs they obtain and the nature of jobs, living arrangements and costs involved.

The details of marital status, family migration and child migration at the destination place have been shown in the following table.

Table No. 4 : Details on Marital Status, Family Migration and Child Migration

Migrant marital status	Frequency	% when compared to No. of HH
Married	81	40.67
Unmarried	89	59.33
Migrant family status	8	5.33
Child migration (Children Migrating with Family)		
Yes(children)	49	32.67
No (Adult)	101	67.33

Source : Primary Data

In summary, migration from rural to urban areas is not only stimulated by push factors but is also triggered by pull factors. It is evident from the study that actual urban-rural wage differentials and employment opportunities emerge as important pull factors for out migration, Further, it came to notice that in case of age, over a period of time, workers' productivity tends to decline and these workers are not absorbed into urban labour market. They are usually replaced by a younger generation of workers migrating from various parts of the country. Hence it is obvious that these migrants return home and survive on subsistence farming or enter into non-farming activity at the source place.

The following table gives the annual income before and after migration, (last one year) per annum

Table No.5: Income per annum Before Migration

Wages before migration	Frequency	Percent
No wages	82	54.67
1200-2100	41	27.33
2101-4500	14	9.33
4501-10000	6	4.00
10001-36000	7	4.67
Total	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table No. 6: Income per annum After Migration

Wages after migration	Frequency	Percent
24000-36000	10	6.67
37000-45000	16	10.67
45000-51000	33	22.00
57000-64000	41	27.33
65000-75000	31	20.67
78200-95000	15	10.00
>96000	4	2.67
Total	150	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Data on income is based on the last one year. Out of 150 individuals 82 (54.67%) had no wages when they were working in their own field or unemployed. Forty-one respondents (27.33%) had an annual average income of Rs.1200/- to Rs.2100/-. Only a few (4.67%) individuals had income of Rs. 10000/- to Rs. 36000/-. After migration, however, the same set of individuals experience an increased income when compared to the income earned at the source place. Around 27.33% of the migrants have an annual income of Rs. 57,000/- to Rs. 64000/- while 22% of the migrants have an annual income of Rs. 45,000/- to Rs. 51,000/- and 20.67% of them have an annual income of Rs. 65,000/- to Rs. 75,000/-. In most cases it is clear that migrants do experience an increased and constant flow of income which they remit back to their families. Apart from increased income, those migrants who were not employed also got employment opportunities at their destination place. This confirms the view that higher wages and better employment opportunities are the pull factors for migration in the destination place.

Causes of Migration : Our study also analysed the causes of migration and it was found that lack of employment is the major cause of migration. The following table shows the push and pull factors for migration of the respondents.

Table No. 7: Motivation for Migration

Sl. No.	Push factors	% when compared to total No. of Household
1	Unemployment	94.67 (14)
2	Education	21.33 (32)
3	Poor industrial growth	43.33 (65)
4	Repayment, of Debt	47.33 (71)
5	Marriage	28.00 (42)
6	Agricultural Failure	25.33 (38)
7	Natural disaster	1.3 (2)
8	Political instability	4,00 (6)
	Pull factors	
9	Better Wages	36.67 (55)
10	Better Opportunities	12.00 (18)

Source: Primary Data

Note: Figures in parentheses are number of respondents indicating frequency of the listed factors that motivated them to migrate.

The above table shows the various reasons (push and pulls factors) for migration that encourage migration from the source area to the destination points. The major reason for migration was unemployment (94.67%). The next reason for migration was repayment of debt (47.33%) poor industrial growth (43.33%). In the destination place people were attracted to the location due to a better wage rate (36.67%) and employment opportunities (12%). The migrants usually have more than one reason to migrate. Migration does not occur only because of factors like unemployment or repayment of debt but because of confluence of all these factors.

FINDINGS

This paper reveals that the reasons behind migration to neighboring states from rural villages are; lack of opportunities for livelihood at the village level, low wages, better work options at the destination, the availability of surplus labour within the household and such others. Important determinants for migration are poverty, illiteracy, lack of assets, no entitlements to livelihood support from the home area and lack of access to welfare schemes. Seasonal migration of labour for employment has become one of the most durable components of the livelihood strategies of people living in rural areas.

Government has been implementing several programmes to improve the socio-economic conditions of weaker sections in general and migrants in particular. The Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is such a programme which aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. In the state of Jharkhand, MGNREGA continues to suffer from various loopholes; the most glaring ones being, not getting the hundred days of wage employment and irregularities in payment of wages. In the current financial year, of the 32 lakh job card holders, only 30,000 have got the 100 day work which does not even amount to 1 percent of the number. As a natural corollary to the increasing criminalization of this job guarantee scheme, demand for work under it is decreasing. Villagers have now resorted back to migrating to the cities in search of job opportunities. Hence, one of the basic objectives with which MGNREGA was launched; that is, reducing the incidence of migration, has now been destroyed.

In order to minimize the incidence of migration of the respondents it is suggested here that small scale and large scale industries should be established as well as local development programmes should be given top priority.

CONCLUSION

Migration is a livelihood strategy for the marginalized sections of the state, particularly the scheduled tribes. It has wide-ranging consequences on both the migrants and those who stay behind. Though it results in positive externalities as increased socio-economic status, it has some negative impacts as well. The migrants are vulnerable at both the places they migrate to as well as during the journey back and forth. The migrants need support from the government as well as NGOs in the whole process of migration. Nevertheless, adequate steps need to be taken in order to put an end to the phenomenon of migration.

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