

Impacts of Trends and Causes : On Labour Migration in India



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ABSTRACT

Some of them may be external, while some may be internal. Among all the internal problems, unemployment gains huge importance both in economic theories as well as in terms of policy prescriptions. Every individual wishes to get employed to have a source of more or less steady flow of incomes. Incomes provide purchasing power to individuals and hence they can improve their standard of living. So, if an individual cannot find job in her current location, then she can decide to move out of that place and relocate to some other region in search of employment. This phenomenon is regarded as 'labour migration'. Migration is defined as a move from one migration defining area to another, usually crossing administrative boundaries made during a given migration interval and involving a change of residence¹. In general, the level of development gap between the economies and also between the regions within an economy induces an individual to migrate from a region where opportunity to find jobs is lower to a region where job finding is easier. Migration can be of two types – internal migration (from one region to another but within the same country) and external migration or emigration (from one country to another country). In the global scenario, internal migration seems to be more significant than the external migration.

INTRODUCTION

Impacts of Migration

Migration is becoming a very important subject for the life of cities. Many opportunities and attraction of big cities pull large numbers of people to big cities. Migration can have positive as well as negative effects on the life of the migrants.

Positive Impact

- Unemployment is reduced and people get better job opportunities.
- Migration helps in improving the quality of life of people.
- It helps to improve social life of people as they learn about new culture, customs, and languages which helps to improve brotherhood among people.
- Migration of skilled workers leads to a greater economic growth of the region.

- Children get better opportunities for higher education.
- The population density is reduced and the birth rate decreases.

Negative Impact

- The loss of a person from rural areas, impact on the level of output and development of rural areas.
- The influx of workers in urban areas increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc.
- Having large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities and services.
- is difficult for a villager to survive in urban areas because in urban areas there is no natural environment and pure air. They have to pay for each and everything.
- Migration changes the population of a place; therefore, the distribution of the population is uneven in India.
- Many migrants are completely illiterate and uneducated; therefore, they are not only unfit for most jobs, but also lack basic knowledge and life skills.
- Poverty makes them unable to live a normal and healthy life.
- Children growing up in poverty have no access to proper nutrition, education or health.
- Migration increased the slum areas in cities which increase many problems such as unhygienic conditions, crime, population etc.
- Sometimes migrants are exploited

One major reason for which labourers migrate from one region to another region is in search of employment. Even in a situation where an individual is indifferent between the two regions in terms of employment opportunities still there can be an incidence of migration. In that case, the wage difference between the two regions determines the direction of migration. The labourers migrate from a region of lower wage rate to a region of higher wage rate. The continuous migration creates competition among the potential workers which lowers the wage rate. This process continues unless the wage-gap between the two regions is eliminated. Thus labour migration can achieve balance in the wage rates of the two regions. This phenomenon is known as 'convergence' in literature. But in reality whether this type of inter-regional convergence occurs or not is a highly debatable issue.

Pesants from overcrowded lands in the east of Bengal to Assam was taken place during the first three decades of 20th century. The eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh, eastern Madhya Pradesh and West Bihar were out migrants producing areas in India and it was the region from which a significant proportion of Calcutta's population was resourced during the 19th and 20th centuries (Chattopadhyaya 1987-20).

Other prominent migration flow during the British period was of rural weavers who had become unemployed with the expansion of mills. They were forced to close down their handloom business and had to work in the mills. Other rural artisans also migrated to the cities to work in factories (RCLI 1931:10). The predominance of such rural indentured and semi skilled migrants was of males moving towards. Calcutta and other major industrial centres in northern and Central India. They had migrated mainly from the areas of Bihar, Uttar

Pradesh and Orissa towards west Bengal and Assam in the east; Delhi and Punjab in the North West; Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra in the center and south west; Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, some parts of Kerala and Karnataka in the south (Joshi and Joshi 1976:8).

There was also some inter-state migration between UP and Bihar for employment in the sugar factories. Labour in coal mines in Bihar and West Bengal was recruited from the surrounding villages also from Madhya Pradesh and Allahabad, Kanpur and Lucknow districts of Uttar Pradesh. In Kolar Gold fields, about 90% labour was hailing from Madras and some parts of Andhra Pradesh (Bhagoliwal 1974:28). In the states adjacent to the Himalays like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, workers from the hilly states like J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand were known to move down every winter in search of employment and went back in the summer.

The study has revealed that most of the migrants were in the age of thirties and forties, belonged to general castes with faith in Hindu religion, were mostly illiterates and migrated in the first decade of 21st century. Nearly 62 per cent of the migrants were earning a monthly income of '3000-5000. Low wages and rain fed agriculture in the native place have been found the economic factors leading to migration, while poverty, poor civic amenities, leading a poor life, high aspirations and demonstration effect were social and psychological factors resulting to migration. Before migration, about 23 per cent persons were unemployed and 60 per cent were getting less than 250 days employment per year, but after migration, 41 per cent got more than 300 days of employment and 31 per cent got employment for 250-300 days.

Among various farm operations, migrant labourers were preferred for transplanting of paddy, while for harvesting, threshing, cattle tending, sowing, spraying, hoeing and tractor driving local labourers were preferred by most of the farmers. Also, with migration of labour there was a significant decline in the harvesting of contract of a permanent labourer. Thus, in an overall scenario, migration of labour for agricultural purposes has been found beneficial for the Punjab agriculture, with the exception of increase in crime rate, drug menace and cultural invasion. There is a need of government intervention to get the antecedents of migrant labour verified from their respective native states before employment by the Punjab farmers. The Government of India should also maintain a demographic balance by regulating the inflow of migrants.

References :

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