

Full Length Research Paper

Issues of migrant workers in the context of origin and destination - Evidence from a survey in Coimbatore City, India

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The present study attempts to examine the various reasons of migration in the context of migrant's origin and destination. Survey method using snow ball sampling technique, to identify the sample migrant workers in Coimbatore district, India has been adopted. A total of 450 samples, classifying home based workers, regular wage paid workers and casual workers, was chosen for the study. The results of the study indicated that a large percent of respondents perceived their socio-economic position at the destination is moderate whereas low socio economic status is found among most of the casual workers. High cost of living in the study area is the main reason for low economic status of migrants. However, the respondents felt more satisfaction with regard to all the aspects under consideration even though they meet some socio-economic issues in destination as they were highly deprived in the place of origin. Such satisfaction is more in the case of standard of living and social security, family life and economic security and low in their health status and savings.

Key words: Migrant workers, socio-economic issues, home based workers, regular wage paid workers, casual workers, place of origin, place of destination.

INTRODUCTION

One important facet of study on population is the study of migration arising out of various social, economic and political reasons. For a large country like India, the complexity of movement of population in different parts of the country helps in understanding the dynamics of society. The bulk movement of people from socially and economically backward region to be attracted in more prosperous areas in search of employment and better living status has been one of the most common features in the labour market scenario in India (de Haan, 2002).

The migrant workers are largely in the unorganized sector (NCEUS, 2007) comprising unskilled casual labourers, petty traders, small time self employed like cart and rickshaw pullers who either migrate from rural to urban areas or urban to urban areas in search of better employment opportunities mainly as survival strategy. The rural to rural shift mainly comprises agricultural

labourers while the shift to urban areas is mainly the unorganized sector as construction workers or as unskilled workers in industrial units.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Having briefly reviewed the concept of migration in perspectives, an attempt was made to examine the aspects related to migrant workers. Most of the studies dealt were based on the empirical analysis in different parts of the world. The research studies by scholars like Tokri (1984), Tahire (1998), Robert et al. (2004), Zhao (2005), Meiyan (2007), Banerjee (1984), Singh (2007) and Surinder (1987), analysed the pattern of migration mainly from rural to urban. These studies examined the impact of rural to urban such as employment and socio-economic status of migrants in the destination. The

studies explored that large movement of migrants from the rural areas to the city resulted in heavy burden on the existing resources and affected the basic amenities to the residents in the city.

Carla and Charles (1987) assessed the health status of migrant workers. According to them, many farm workers in USA are unaware of health hazards associated with pesticide use. Dental problems followed by eye problems were the highest frequency of diseases of farm workers. Shobana (2001) noticed that a number of women had irritation in the eye and nausea was found among the women migrants in fishing industry.

Few more studies reviewed the issue of remittance of migrants. Nicholas (1993) proposed a challenge that remittance do not create employment opportunities and do not contribute to capital formation in Philippines. Hence at the aggregate level, the remittance do not seem to have the power to reduce any serious burdens on debt etc. Sing (2005) and Samal (2006) disclosed that small remittance provided much needed financial support to household located in a marginal environment suffering persistent drought and distress conditions.

Few studies attempted to analyse the causes of migration. Pandey (1998) studied the reasons and patterns of migrants. The study revealed that rural elites migrate to urban centers for higher education and later, to take up jobs in order to contribute to family capital. Rural poor migrate to big villages, towns and cities in search of better employment opportunities or due to lack of employment opportunities in the local area. Tribals migrate because of growing landlessness and alienation from their land, and because of a denial of usufruct rights in the forest produce.

A significant percentage of women migrated for economic reasons (or) due to associational migration. Zosa (1990) noticed that the search for employment serve as the driving force for urban female migrants in Philippines.

Moreover, few studies have been conducted across the cities of India. The existing studies mostly investigated the aspect of seasonal migration and issues of migrant female worker. Koul et al. (2008) analysed the work dimension of migrant working women in urban slums of Jammu and showed that majority of the respondents (76%) feel that their work had affected their family life as they are unable to take care of their children and household chores properly.

Haberfeld et al. (1999) examined the impact of seasonal migration in Durgapur District. According to the author, migrant labour in this district was a compensating mechanism used by households to reduce their disadvantageous position.

METHODOLOGY

The studies, some of which referred previously tended to assess the pattern of migration, health status of migrants, migrant's

remittances and causes of migration. There is divergence of views and approaches on the previous concepts. The present study attempts to examine the various reasons of migration in the context of migrant's origin and destination. As per the census reports of India, Tamilnadu is one among the states reporting higher men and women migration for economic reasons in the intra-state migration category.

Among the Districts in Tamilnadu, Coimbatore district receives large number of migrants from within the state and nearby states as the district is commercially vibrant and trade and development are its nature. Survey method using snow ball sampling technique, to identify the sample migrant workers in Coimbatore district, has been adopted. A total of 450 samples, classifying as home based workers, regular wage paid workers and casual workers, was chosen for the study.

Background profile of the sample respondents in terms of their demographic and socio-economic characteristics would influence their overall behaviour and thereby, it is very much essential to study the same. Moreover, the intention to migrate and/or place to where to migrate and settle as mostly depends on such background characteristics. In view of this, an attempt is made to discuss the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the sample respondents. Information on such characteristics of the respondents is provided in Table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio economic background profile of respondents

Data given in Panel 1 of Table 1 highlight that a little majority of respondents are in the age group of 31 to 40 years closely followed by 20 to 30 years and 41 years and above. The differentials in distribution of respondents by current age across their character of migration are highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Obviously, the mean current age of the self-employed respondents is also higher (38.3 years) as compared to other two type of migrants (34.9 years each), and the ANOVA results in these regard turn out as highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

Considering the number of children by the respondents, more than two-fifths of the respondents have two children at the time of survey, whereas one-fourth of them have only one child and about one-tenth have three or more children. Moreover, slightly more than one-fifth of the respondents do not have children. These respondents are mostly in their younger age group and thereby, recently married. The average number of children of the sample respondents is 1.5 only. The differentials across the character of workers with children turn out as highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Apparently, the mean number of children among self-employed is comparatively higher (1.8) than among those migrants who are engaged as casual workers and regular workers (1.4 and 1.2, respectively).

Data about educational status of the respondents (panel 2 of Table 1) highlight that slightly more than one-third (35%) have attended school for 9 to 12 years (high / higher secondary school), whereas slightly less than one-fourth of them would be able to complete collegiate

Table 1. Percentage distribution of respondents by their background profile across their character of work.

Background characteristics of the respondents	Self-employed		Casual worker		Regular worker		Total	
	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No
1. Current age (in years)								
20–30	24.7	37	38.0	57	32.7	49	31.8	143
31–40	40.0	60	34.7	52	46.7	70	40.4	182
41 +	35.3	53	27.3	41	20.7	31	27.8	125
χ^2 – value; Significance level			12.757;		p< 0.013			
2. Educational status (in years)								
Illiterate	22.0	33	26.7	40	7.3	11	18.7	84
≤ 8	30.0	45	30.0	45	8.0	12	22.7	102
9 –12	37.3	56	40.0	60	28.0	42	35.1	158
13 +	10.7	16	3.3	5	56.7	85	23.6	106
χ^2 – value; Significance level			142.526;		p< 0.001			
3. Birth place of respondents								
Southern districts of TN	41.3	62	50.0	75	38.7	58	43.3	195
Other districts of TN	31.3	47	39.3	59	17.3	26	29.3	132
Nearby states of TN	16.7	25	6.7	10	10.0	15	11.1	50
Other states	10.7	16	4.0	6	34.0	51	16.2	73
χ^2 –value; Significance level			68.003		p<0.001			
4. Total no. of children								
0	15.3	23	24.7	37	23.3	35	21.1	95
1	19.3	29	20.7	31	34.7	52	24.9	112
2	47.3	71	47.3	71	39.3	59	44.7	201
3 +	18.0	27	7.3	11	2.7	4	9.3	42
χ^2 – value; Significance level			33.607:		p< 0.001			
5. Nature of migration								
Migration for survival	15.3	23	24.7	37	23.3	35	21.1	95
Migration for substance	19.3	29	20.7	31	34.7	52	24.9	112
Sponsored migration	47.3	71	47.3	71	39.3	59	44.7	201
Voluntary migration	18.0	27	7.3	11	2.7	4	9.3	42
χ^2 – value; Significance level			42.205:		p< 0.001			
6. Recruitment agency for migration								
Friends and relatives	77.3	116	74.7	112	61.3	92	71.1	320
Contractors	6.0	9	21.3	32	7.3	11	11.6	52
Through advertising	16.7	25	4.0	6	31.3	47	17.3	78
χ^2 – value; Significance level			54.215;		p<0.001			
Total	100.0	150	100.0	150	100.0	150	100.0	450

education and primary and middle school levels. Interestingly, about one-fifth of the migrants are illiterates, who normally engage in causal works. These differentials in the percentages of educational levels across respondents' character of work are observed to be highly significant ($p<0.001$). It is also evident to note that the average years of schooling among regular workers is

much higher (11.8 years) than among those self employed and casual workers; and the ANOVA results too in these regard turn out as highly significant ($p<0.001$).

When enquired about the birth place of respondents (panel 3 of Table 1), it is clear to note that more than one third of respondents hail from southern districts of

Tamilnadu such as Madurai, Tirunelveli, Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram. It is followed by other districts of Tamilnadu (29.3%). The chi-square results turned out as highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

When enquired about the nature of migration (panel 4 of Table 1), it is clear that a simple majority of the respondents mentioned that they have been sponsored to migrate, whereas one-fourth stated that their migration is for the sake of substance and for one-fifth such migration is for the sake of survival. Interestingly, one-tenth revealed that they migrated voluntarily. This pattern is almost same in the case of those who migrated for casual work and regular work than their self-employed counterparts. On the contrary, the percentage of respondents who migrated for self-employment is mostly voluntary in nature than those migrated for other works. The chi-square results also supported these differential patterns at a highly significant level ($p < 0.001$).

Though migration is voluntary and for the purpose of economic reasons, the opportunities would be known to certain members / agencies, which in turn would be learnt by others. When such information is collected from the respondents (panel 6 of Table 1), it can be seen that 'friends and relatives' served as the major agencies of migration, especially in the case of self-employment and casual work.

On the other hand, it is conspicuous to note that while 'contractors' as agency played crucial role for the respondents' migration in the case of casual workers, 'advertisement' played such role in the case of regular work, which is obvious at present day scenario. All these differentials turn out as highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

Socio-economic issues of migrant workers in place of origin

Migrants mostly move to cities for the sake of jobs mainly because they may not get work at their place of origin or the type of work they engaged in may not be suitable for their education and experience. With this background, in this section an attempt is made to understand whether the respondents had worked at their place of origin or not and its relate aspects, in addition to whether they had agricultural land before they migrated and its related issues. Analysis of these aspects have been done and given in Table 2.

With regard to their type of work engaged in (panel 1), slightly more than one-fourth of the total sample respondents, irrespective of their current character of work, reported that they have not worked before marriage at their place of origin. On the other hand, about half of them said that they worked as non-farm labourers and interestingly, the percent engaged in such work was little higher among those who migrated for regular work and casual work as against to those migrated for self-employment. While the percent of those engaged in

agriculture and other works were around one-tenth in the total sample, such proportions were much higher among self-employed than those who migrated for other two categories of works under consideration. Evidently, the chi-square results noticed in this regard are also highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

Data related to possession of agricultural land by the respondents at the place of origin (panel 2) revealed that a greater percentage did not hold any land, whereas about eight and five percent have barely 1 to 3 and 4 acres of land, respectively. When this pattern examine across their character of work, while the percentage of holding agricultural land is somewhat higher (9 and 8%, respectively) among those who migrated for self-employment than those who migrated for regular work (2 and 4%, respectively).

Interestingly, holding of 1 to 3 acres of agricultural land by those who migrated for casual work is also noticed to be fairly higher. All these differential percentages of possession of agricultural land are supported by the chi-square test of significance.

In the modern world, migration takes place not only for the sake of economic reasons, but also poor facilities that exist in the place of origin. Keeping this observation, respondents of the present study have been enquired about their views in rating the facilities that are available in the place of origin and such information is provided in Table 2.

On the whole, the percentages of respondents who stated that facilities like electricity is much higher followed by water, transport and education as 'good', whereas those stated medical / hospital facilities as good is comparatively at a lesser extent. It is also interesting to note that the percentages of respondents who rated all these facilities as 'good' are higher in the case of those who migrated for regular work followed by self-employed as compared to those who migrated for casual work. All these percentage differentials across their character of work turn out significant ($p < 0.001$), except in the case of water facility.

Based on the information collected and presented in panels 3 to 5, an overall rating of facilities index has been computed so as to know the respondents' level of rating with the facilities available at their place of origin. For this purpose, a score of '0', '1', and '2' have been assigned to 'very poor', 'poor' and 'good' responses of the individual facilities. The pooled score varies from 0 to 10, based on which the respondents have been categorised into three categories of overall rating of facilities index at the place of origin, viz., 'poor' (scores 0 to 6), moderate 7(to 8) and 'better' (9 to 10), and presented the same in panel6 of Table 4.

The respondents of the present study have been asked the specific reasons for migration from the place of origin (panel 8 of Table 2). As expected, income maximisation is the foremost one (81%) for migrating from place of origin, irrespective of their type of work they have chosen

Table 2. Percentage distribution of respondents on economic status and socio economic issues at place of origin across character of work.

Background characteristics of the respondents	Self-employed		Casual worker		Regular worker		Total	
	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No
1. Type of work engaged in at the place of origin								
Not worked	28.7	43	26.7	40	22.7	34	26.0	117
Non-farm labourers	30.0	45	60.0	90	61.3	92	50.4	227
Agriculture	22.7	34	7.3	11	3.3	5	11.1	50
Others	18.7	28	6.0	9	12.7	19	12.4	56
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			55.545;		p<0.001			
2. Agricultural land (in acres)								
No.	84.7	127	89.3	134	94.7	142	89.6	403
1	8.0	12	8.7	13	2.0	3	6.2	28
2 – 4	4.0	6	2.0	3	0.0	0	2.0	9
5 +	3.3	5	0.0	0	3.3	5	2.2	10
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			18.339;		p< 0.01			
3. Reasons for irregular employment								
Shallow land	23.3	35	8.0	12	12.0	18	14.4	65
Failure of monsoon	29.3	44	46.7	70	16.0	24	30.7	138
Mechanization of agriculture	8.0	12	4.0	6	4.7	7	5.6	25
Size of operational holdings	7.3	11	7.3	11	4.7	7	6.4	29
Diminishes Eco. Amen.	32.0	48	34.0	51	62.7	94	42.9	193
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			60.443;		p< 0.001			
4. Educational facilities								
Very poor	4.0	6	5.3	8	3.3	5	4.2	19
Poor	50.0	75	62.0	93	26.7	40	46.2	208
Good	46.0	69	32.7	49	70.0	105	49.6	223
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			43.357;		p<0.001			
5. Medical / hospital facilities								
Very Poor	6.7	10	8.7	13	5.3	8	6.9	31
Poor	60.0	90	77.3	116	33.3	50	56.9	256
Good	33.3	50	14.0	21	61.3	92	36.2	163
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			74.040;		p<0.001			
6. Transport								
Very poor	2.0	3	4.7	7	6.0	9	4.2	19
Poor	44.0	66	66.7	100	21.3	32	44.0	198
Good	54.0	81	28.7	43	72.7	109	51.8	233
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			66.235;		p< 0.001			
Rating of facilities at the place of origin and reasons for migration								
7. Overall rating of facilities at the place of origin								
Poor	31.3	47	62.0	93	14.7	22	36.0	162
Moderate	43.3	65	24.0	36	31.3	47	32.9	148
Better	25.3	38	14.0	21	54.0	81	31.1	140
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			97.712;		p< 0.001			

Table 2. Cont'd.

8. Reasons for migration									
Income maximisation	75.3	113	82.7	124	84.0	126	80.7	363	
Social conflict / law and order problems	8.0	12	4.0	6	2.7	4	4.9	22	
Life cycle performance and enjoyment	6.7	10	6.0	9	4.7	7	5.8	26	
Friends / family influence economic amenities	6.7	10	5.3	8	2.7	4	4.9	22	
Social status aspiration	3.3	5	2.0	3	6.0	9	3.8	17	
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			11.915;		p<NS				
Total	100.0	150	100.0	150	100.0	150	100.0	450	

at the place of destination. Few have mentioned different reasons for their migration, viz., life cycle performance and enjoyment, social conflict / law and order problems, friends / family influence and economic amenities / social status aspiration (various in the range of 6 to 4% in that order). Among the latter reasons, the percentages mentioned the first three reasons are higher in the case of self-employed than the other two categories of migrants under consideration.

However, all these differentials did not turn out as statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Above all, an overwhelming percent of respondents are not satisfied with the residential nature at place of origin and such proportion of dissatisfaction is somewhat higher among those who migrated for casual work. Among those who are not satisfied, the reasons also have been asked. A large majority of the respondents are not satisfied because of economic reasons, viz., poor economic amenities and low income generation closely followed by poor lifestyle.

Socio economic issues of migrant workers at place of destination

The primary objective of the present research work is to understand the migration status of the respondents and its selected issues. Keeping this objective in mind, in the present section, an attempt is made to analyse such data (Table 2). Though some factors play important role at the place of origin for migration, the status of living is of paramount importance in place of destination of migrants. One of the major hurdles for migrants at the place of destination, especially in well developed cities, are availing the proper facilities.

The general problems related to housing are: getting a house (on rental basis initially) within their means, nearer to their working place, type of house, etc. In the case of immediate difficulties, in any, faced at the place of destination by the respondents (panel 1 of Table 3), it

may be observed that about half of them felt 'no difficulty' and one-fourth perceived 'housing' was the major difficulty. Few (about 8 to 9% each) informed the difficulties such as water, transport and others in that order. While similar pattern exist across all the categories of workers under consideration, the percentage of respondents who said as 'no difficulty' is conspicuously higher among regular workers followed by those who migrated with the intension of self-employment. In view of this, these differentials in the percentages by their character of work turn out statistically highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

With regard to present nature of dwelling (panel 2), it is evident that more than fifty percent of the respondents are residing in rented houses and slightly more than one-fourth are able to construct their own houses by the time of survey.

On the other hand, slightly higher than one-fifth are living in a temporary / accommodation provided by the employer or contractor. Interestingly, the percentage of those residing in the accommodation provided by the employer or contractor is conspicuously higher among those who migrated for regular work, whereas dwelling in rented houses is prominent in the case of casual workers and self-employed comparing their counterparts.

On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who owned a house is fairly higher among self-employed than the two categories of workers. All these percentage differentials are statistically highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Getting ration card at the place of destination is not an easy task. Generally, a permanent residential address is very much essential for getting such a card, especially for migrants. When the respondents have been asked about the possession of a ration card (panel 3 of Table 3), more than three-fourths stated that they got the card and remaining do not have such a card. The percentage of having ration care is high among self-employed followed by regular workers as compared to casual workers, and these percentage differentials also turn out as highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

Table 3. Percentage distribution of respondents on economic status and socio economic issues at place of destination across character of work.

Socio economic issues at place of destination	Self employed		Casual worker		Regular worker		Total	
	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No
1. Immediate difficulties faced at place of destination after migration								
No difficulty	49.3	74	19.3	29	84.7	127	51.1	230
Housing	32.0	48	41.3	62	3.3	5	25.6	115
Water	10.7	16	6.7	10	8.7	13	8.7	39
Transport	6.7	10	15.3	23	0.7	1	7.6	34
Others	1.3	2	17.3	26	2.7	4	7.1	32
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			185.033;		p<0.001			
2. Present Nature of Dwelling								
Temporary/accommodation by employer or contractor	0.0	0	10.7	16	54.7	82	21.8	98
Rented	59.3	89	65.3	98	31.3	47	52.0	234
Owned	40.7	61	24.0	36	14.0	21	26.2	118
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			155.436;		p<0.001			
3. Have a ration card at the place of destination								
No	13.3	20	32.7	49	24.0	36	23.3	105
Yes	86.7	130	67.3	101	76.0	114	76.7	345
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			15.727;		p<0.001			
4. Is respondent only earning member in the family								
No	53.3	80	71.3	107	18.0	27	47.6	214
Yes	46.7	70	28.7	43	82.0	123	52.4	236
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			88.549;		p<0.001			
5. If no, reason for sending other family member to work								
Insufficient income	46.3	37	45.8	49	59.3	16	47.7	102
To supplement family income	28.8	23	35.5	38	40.7	11	33.6	72
Desire of the concerned person	25.0	20	18.7	20	0.0	0	18.7	40
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			8.709;		p<0.10			
6. Issues in working conditions								
Long working hours	7.3	11	22.7	34	3.3	5	11.1	50
Harsh working	26.7	40	28.7	43	22.7	34	26.0	117
Unregulated working hours	60	90	30.0	45	61.3	92	50.4	227
Hazardous environment	6.0	9	18.7	28	12.7	19	12.4	56
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			55.545;		p<0.001			
7. Type of health problem / illness generally face								
No problem so far	4.7	7	0.0	0	3.3	5	2.7	12
Fever and headache	2.0	3	37.3	56	82.0	123	40.4	182
Skin related problems	70.0	105	38.0	57	8.0	12	38.7	174
Others (sunstroke / asthma)	23.3	35	24.7	37	6.7	10	18.2	82
χ^2 -Value; Significance level			216.867;		p<0.001			

Table 3. Cont'd.

8. Main reason for the health problem generally face								
Problems related to hazardous working conditions	49.0	70	39.3	59	65.5	95	51.1	224
Problems related to unhygienic surrounding	37.1	53	48.0	72	24.1	35	36.5	160
Lack of access to nutritional food	14.0	20	12.7	19	10.3	15	12.3	54
χ^2 - Value; Significance level					22.387;	p<0.001		

With regard to number of earning members in the family (panel 4), in about more than fifty percent of households, respondent is the only person who works and earns money; whereas such percent is strikingly higher among regular workers (82%) as compared to self employed (47%) and casual labourers (29%). These percentage differentials are highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

When the reasons for sending other family members to work among those in whose case another family member works (panel 5), slightly less than fifty percent mentioned 'insufficient income', followed by 'to supplement family income' and the rest 'desire of the concerned person'. More or less, similar pattern exists among all the type of migrant workers under consideration, except that the percentage who stated the first two reasons are little higher in the case of regular workers and thereby, the chi-square test results also turn out as somewhat significant ($p < 0.10$).

With regard to working conditions (panel 6), nearly half of the respondents reported that unregulated working hour is the major difficulty. Of them, the proportion of casual and self-employed workers was relatively higher than regular wage-paid workers. Furthermore, slightly more than one-fourth of the total sample respondents, irrespective of their current character of work, face the difficulty of harsh working. While the percent of those stated long working hours were around one-tenth in the total sample. Evidently, the chi-square results noticed in this regard are highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

Migrant workers, once they reach the place of destination, try to adjust to the urban environment. In this process, their health may likely to be affected. Some may even try to go for regular check-up in order to keep their health in tact. From panel 7 of Table 3, it is evident that a simple majority of the respondents generally fell sick with fever and headache closely followed by skin related diseases and about one-fifth with others like sunstroke, asthma, etc. Hardly 3% of the respondents did not fall prey to ill-health. More or less similar pattern is noticed among casual workers also.

When the respondents have been asked to state the main reason for the health problem generally, they face slightly more than half of them stated 'hazardous working

conditions' is the main reason followed by 'unhygienic surroundings' and the rest one-eighth reported such ill-health problem arises due to lack of access to nutritional food'.

Expenditure pattern and rating of facilities in place of destination

The expenditure pattern of the migrant workers at the place of destination would also be generally on the higher side than their places of origin. Generally, expenditure on various items like recreation, transport, health and medicines, education, house rent, etc. would be comparatively higher than their food and non-food items. The pattern of expenditure may not be same during the whole year. It may be higher during on-season and comparatively less during off-season. The migrants have to equip / adjust themselves for such changes either by changing the expenditure in certain aspects and/or by adjusting the savings during such emergencies.

From panel 1 of Table 4, it is clear that about 14% of the respondents only expressed that there used to be change in their expenditure pattern and such percentage is comparatively higher in the case of self-employed the other two types of migrant workers. These differentials are also noticed to be statistically highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

When the respondents were asked how they would manage such change of expenditure pattern (panel 2), a simple majority replied that they would minimize expenditure on non-food items, closely followed by minimize the expenditure on recreation / luxurious items. About one-fourth of them even go to the extent of minimizing their expenditure on food-based items.

Looking into this pattern across the character of migrant workers, one can notice that the percentages of minimizing the expenditure on food-based items closely followed by non-food based items are much higher in the case of regular workers, whereas the opposite pattern (as noticed in the case of total respondents) is observed in the case of other two types of workers. However, these differentials are not statistically significant, may be

Table 4. Percentage distribution of respondents on expenditure pattern and rating the facilities in the place of destination across character of work.

Rating of facilities at the place of origin and reasons for migration	Self employed		Casual worker		Regular worker		Total	
	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No	Percent (%)	No
1. Change in expenditure during on and off-season								
No	73.3	110	94.0	141	89.3	134	85.6	385
Yes	26.7	40	6.0	9	10.7	16	14.4	65
χ^2 – Value; Significance level			20.519;		p<0.001			
2. If yes, spending pattern during off season								
Minimizing of food based expenditure	20.0	8	22.2	2	43.8	7	26.2	17
Minimizing of non-food expenditure	37.5	15	44.4	4	37.5	6	38.5	25
Minimizing of recreation / luxurious expenditure	42.5	17	33.3	3	18.8	3	35.4	23
χ^2 – Value; Significance level			4.458;		p<NS			
3. Socio-economic position at the destination								
Reasonably high	32.7	49	25.3	28	23.3	35	27.1	122
Moderate	59.3	89	54.0	81	71.3	107	61.6	277
Low	8.0	12	20.7	31	5.3	8	11.3	51
χ^2 – Value; Significance level			24.238;		p<0.001			
4. High cost of living								
No	33.3	4	6.5	2	0.0	0	11.8	6
Yes	66.7	8	93.5	29	100.0	8	88.2	45
χ^2 – Value; Significance level			7.287;		p<0.05			
5. Low income generation								
No	25.0	3	80.6	25	62.5	5	64.7	33
Yes	75.0	9	19.4	6	37.5	3	35.3	18
χ^2 – Value; Significance level			11.750;		p<0.001			
6. Social Isolation								
No	83.3	10	100.0	31	75.0	6	92.2	47
Yes	16.7	2	0.0	0	25.0	2	7.8	4
χ^2 – Value; Significance level			7.189;		p<0.05			

because of small sample size.

It is well known fact that young adults generally migrate to cities for work to improve their socio-economic status as that of in existence at the place of destination. In this process, depending upon their educational qualifications and experience, most of them try to achieve this objective; of course, there are a few who do not enhance their socio-economic status and/or remain, more or less, at the same situation.

Data provided in panel 3 of Table 4 highlight that a large percent of respondents perceived their

socio-economic position at the destination is moderate and slightly more than one-fourth felt that such position is reasonably high, whereas about one-tenth believed that it is relatively low. Differentials in this pattern across character of workers showed that almost similar pattern exist more evidently in the case of regular workers followed by self-employed, whereas among casual workers the percentage of those reported as low socio-economic position is moderately higher. Because of these differentials the chi-square results turn out as highly significant ($p<0.001$). Respondents who ever

reported that their socio-economic position at the destination is low have been asked to state why they feel so. A greater percent of the migrant workers felt that it is so because of high cost of living, whereas slightly more than one-third perceived it due to low income generation and slightly less than one-tenth expressed that it is because of social isolation (panels 4 to 6). By and large, this pattern is mostly same among high cost of living and low income generation and a little higher percentage also felt that social isolation too is one of the causes for such a situation as compared to other two types of migrant workers. The chi-square results turn out as highly significant in the case of the first one ($p < 0.001$), whereas in the case of the latter ones such results are significant at moderate level only ($p < 0.05$).

The following suggestions can help to the socio-economic betterment of migrant workers:

1. The issues of migrant labour can be minimized by the cooperation and coordination between trade unions and other social actors.
2. The government can tackle this homelessness (problem) of migrants by building low – cost flats either for outright purchase or for rent purposes.
3. At the work site at the destination of migrant worker a bank account may be opened in the name of the migrant workmen.
4. Need for creating awareness among the migrants about their duties and responsibilities through training programmes and different publicity measures.
5. Civil supply department should simplify the formalities to issue the ration card. At least they should be issued immediate temporary ration cards.
6. Insurance and other social security benefits should be extended to casual workers.
7. Maintaining register of migrant workers and issuing identity cards by municipality offices.

Conclusion

The migrant workers to the city (place of destination) try to move to improve their socio-economic position.

Initially, they used to live in vulnerable conditions, in terms of housing, food, less savings, etc. It has to be noted that those migrated with an intention of engaged in regular work have better chances of improving their socio-economic position than those migrated for casual work and self-employment.

Though educational background of the migrant workers did not reveal a positive effect on their socio-economic position, in the long run it would be helpful to move from self-employment and casual work to regular work, and thereby, would be helpful in raising their socio-economic position. But this takes some more time in a city like Coimbatore, wherein the cost of living is perceived as very high and thereby, whatever incomes they used to get would be spent for daily necessities rather than

improve their level of education and other aspects like savings, housing, etc.

Given these circumstance, it would naturally tempt to conclude that there is long way to go for the migrants to improve their socio-economic status.

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