

SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE OF LABOUR MIGRATION A STUDY

Russo Rickson B¹ & Sunder Arumugam²

¹*Research Scholar, MSW, Dr. Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi Government Institute for Post Graduate Studies and Research, Karaikal, India*

²*Assistant Professor Social Work, Dr. Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi Government Institute for Post Graduate Studies and Research, Karaikal, India*

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ABSTRACT

The basic essence of migration of laborers' from one place to the other rests in Article 19 (1) (d) under Part III of Indian Constitution which deals with the Fundamental Right to Freedom of Movement.

Migration has continuously been studied as a Historical Process because it involves people's struggle to survive, to escape poverty and other social reasons are included which are simply categorized as the push and pull factors. Untenable progress, poor development and unbalanced development lead to malfunction in the jobs market. There is no doubt that the migrant laborers' contribute to the growth and development of a region where they migrate to. But unfortunately they continue to face various social issues and there is a dent on the social status of migrant laborers'.

One of the serious challenges for realizing constructive development gains is intolerance against migrant workers. And off late, some see or perceive it as an opportunity lost for the laborers' of the local region. But, what is required is the urgent need to provide solutions to change the lives of migrated laborers' in a much dignified manner otherwise inclusive growth shall remain a distant dream.

The authors being from Social Work background would like to present a few social aspects of migration in perspective. Since, migrated laborers' are also a normal human being like others; their sentiments have also been explored to analyze their mentality after having left their family and native place.

KEYWORDS: *Social Issues, Development, Lives of migrants and Social Status*

INTRODUCTION

The present study has been undertaken to understand the nature of work of migrant labourers, their food pattern, their income level, children's education and their social status post migration. Karaikal is a small town/district in the Union Territory of Puducherry. Karaikal district has witnessed inflow of migrant labourers. These migrant labourers are mostly engaged in construction activities and manufacturing concerns (factories) in Karaikal. Thirunallar is a Commune which is famous for Lord Shaneswarar (Saturn) Temple. A good number of factories in Thirunallar attract the most number of migrant labourers. They have settled down in the periphery which is surrounded by many small villages.

A total of 92 samples have been selected through Random Sampling. The primary data have been analyzed to arrive at the discussions which are detailed below tables.

Table No: 1. Table Showing the Age and Migration Period (Duration)

AGE	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	TOTAL
DURATION OF MIGRATION (in years)					
18- 27 Years	58 96.66%	-	-	2 3.34%	60 65.22%
28-37 Years	20 71.43%	8 28.57%	-	-	28 30.44%
48-57 Years	-	2 50%	2 50%	-	4 4.34%
TOTAL	78 84.79%	10 10.87%	2 2.17%	2 2.17%	92 100%

On the whole it is clear that 65.22% of the respondents are aged between 18-27 years, 30.44% of them are aged between 28-37 years of age and 4.34% of them are aged between 48-57 years.

Among those who are aged between 18-27 years, 96.66% of the labourers have migrated between 1-5 years ago and 3.34% have been migrants for 16-20 years.

Among those who are 28-37 years of age, 71.43% of them are migrants for 1-5 years and 28.57% of them are migrants for 6-10 years.

Among those who are aged between 48-57 years, 50% of them are migrants for 6-10 years and another 50% are migrants for 11-15 years.

On the whole 84.79% of the laborers' are migrants between 1-5 years, 10.87% have migrated between 6-10 years, 2.17% are migrants for 11-15 years and a similar 2.17% of them are migrants for 16-20 years.

Table No: 2. Table Showing the Income of the Migrant Labourer and the Type of School of Children

INCOME (monthly)	GOVERNMENT SCHOOL	AIDED SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL	TOTAL
TYPE OF SCHOOL				
Rupees 10,001- 12,000	4 100%	-	-	4 4.35%
Rupees 12,001 – 14,0	4 100%	-	-	4 4.35%
Rupees 14,001 & above	47 55.95%	4 4.76%	33 39.29%	84 91.30%
TOTAL	55 59.78%	4 4.35%	33 35.87%	92 100%

The table clearly indicate that on the whole, 4.35% of the respondents earn between Rupees 10,001 – 12,000 per month as their salary, another 4.35% of them earn Rupees 12,001- 14,000 and 91.30% of them earn Rupees 14,001 and more every month as their salary.

Among those migrant labourers who earn Rupees 10,001- 12,000 have admitted their wards on Government Schools.

Among those who earn between Rupees 12,001- 14,000 have also admitted their children in Government Schools.

Among those who earn Rupees 14,001 and more, 55.95% of them have admitted their children in Government Schools, 4.76% of them have opted for aided schools and 39.29% of them have admitted their children in Private Schools.

On the whole, it is found that 59.78% of the respondents have admitted their wards in Government Schools, 4.35% have admitted in Aided Schools and 35.87% of them have admitted their children in Private Schools.

In the Union Territory of Puducherry any individual who has spent Five Years in any of the regions of Puducherry Territory are treated as Residents and hence they are eligible to get admission in any Government Educational Institution (on the basis of merit).

Hence, it is inferred from the analysis that those (migrant labourer) who have completed five years of continuous residence (table no 1) are eligible to admit their children in Government Educational Institution and hence it is they who have admitted their wards in Government Educational Institutions. Moreover, those labourers who earn Rupees 14,000 and more as their salary have the affordability to send their children to Government Schools and it is only these labourers who have admitted their children in Private educational institutions.

Table No: 3. Table Showing The Nature of Work and the Food Pattern of Migrant Labourer

NATURE OF WORK FOOD PATTERN	OWN FOOD PATTERN	ACCUSTOMED TO LOCAL FOOD PATTERN	FOLLOW BOTH PATTERN	TOTAL
Physical Work	-	54 77.14%	16 22.86%	70 76%
Clerical/ Office Work	2 9%	18 82%	2 9%	22 24%
TOTAL	2 2.18%	72 78.26%	18 19.56%	92 100%

On the whole, it is clearly visible that 76% of the migrant labourers are employed in physical work and 24% are employed in clerical/ office related work.

Among those who are engaged in physical work 77.14% of them are accustomed to local food pattern and 22.86% of them follow their own as well as local food pattern.

Among those who are engaged in clerical or office work, 9% of them follow their own food pattern, 82% of them say that they are accustomed to local food pattern and 9% of them follow both the food patterns.

On the whole, 2.18 % of the migrant labourers follow their own food pattern, 78.26% of them are accustomed to the local food pattern and 19.56% follow both food pattern.

The authors would like to throw some more light on the aspect of food pattern of migrant workers. During the interaction with the workers it was conveyed that they wanted to maintain a dietary balance and variations as well as psychological manifestations. It was also understood that over a period of time, the adaptability to local food pattern is also a cause for getting accustomed to local food pattern by the migrant worker. Experts say that a period of three (3) years is sufficient for any person to get accustomed to local food pattern. When consulted, a few experts have opined that there is correlation between the food intake and metabolism. Any sort of change in these processes can be sufficiently attuned to the environment to prevent key perturbations in homeostatically – regulated systems. This particular aspects can also be a scope for further research.

Table No: 4. Table Showing the Nature of Work and the Social Status of Migrant Labourer

NATURE OF WORK SOCIAL STATUS	IMPROVED	REMAINED THE SAME	TOTAL
PHYSICAL WORK	34 48.57%	36 51.43%	70 76%
CLERICAL Or OFFICE WORK	20 90.90%	2 9.10%	22 24%
TOTAL	54 58.70%	38 41.30%	92 100%

On the whole, it is seen that 76% of the migrants are engaged in physical work and 24% are employed in clerical or office related work.

Among those who are engaged in physical work, 48.57% are of the view that their social status has improved and 51.43% of them say that their social status have remained the same.

Among those who are employed in clerical or office work, 90.90% say that their social status have improved whereas only 9.10% of them say it (social status) have remained the same.

On the whole, 58.70% of the respondents are of the opinion that their social status has improved post migration and 41.30% of them say it has remained the same.

CONCLUSIONS

It is a well known factor that workers migrate from rural to urban areas as the differences in the wage rate exist. The other side of the story is that the industrial production and profits are also on the rise and this has increased the demand for workers and hence, migration will also continue as long as surplus workers exist in rural areas.

The authors have also found that older workers migrate in less numbers even after the wage differences exists because, they have a shorter life span remaining and moreover it may cost more in terms of their psychic.

Many studies have also revealed that most of the migration has become an alternative and strategy for the migrants. The findings of the present study are also in line with this aspect. To conclude, the authors would like to highlight a particular point of contention but matches with the findings of many studies that the workers migration is due to many pull and push factor and the most important factor being the need to improve their social status. Around 60% of the respondents of this study has opined that their social status has improved post migration and therefore it can very well be said that their objective of improving the social status is fulfilled post migration. With this sociological perspective, the authors would like to conclude.

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