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Significance of household livelihood security of inter-state migrants in elementary occupations in the Chennai metropolitan area

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Abstract

A large influx of inter-state migrants to the Chennai Metropolitan area, one of the regions having avenues for livelihoods in various elementary occupations, has been observed in the recent years. This study attempted to analyse the economic and household enhancements of the inter-state migrant workers working in the Chennai Metropolitan area in Tamil Nadu. Around 477 migrant workers in 21 elementary occupations were interviewed. The result showed that around 71 per cent of them had moderately improved their economic and household situations, next 18.4 per cent of them had highly improved their economic and household status and around 10 per cent of them had low levels of economic and household status.

Keywords: Economic and household enhancement, livelihoods, migrants, sectors, Tamil Nadu

Introduction

Given the fact that one of the crucial aspects of migration is overcoming the poverty situations and ultimately acquiring assets for livelihood security. This is realisable, just, when employment potentialities with better wages exist within a region. Tamil Nadu is one such prospective areas for inter-state migrants to obtain employment. In recent years, the State has witnessed a large influx of the inter-state migrants. Especially the Chennai Metropolitan area ranging across Chennai, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts in Tamil Nadu has the major share of the inter-state migrant population when compared to other areas of the state (Jayapathy, Crossian, Martin, & D'Sami, 2016) ^[5]. This region opens avenues for these migrants to engage in many elementary occupations. The local population who were formerly engaged in these elementary occupations have migrated to other countries for better salaries and in their stead comes inter-state migrants (Rajan & D'Sami, 2017) ^[12]. Obviously, ensuring household livelihood security is the primary intention of migration.

Adequate and sustainable access to income and resources to meet basic needs such as food, potable water, health facilities, educational opportunities, housing, time for community participation and social integration leads to household livelihood security (Frankenberger & McCaston, 1998) ^[4]. This household livelihood security comprises interactions of three fundamental attributes: 1) the possession of human capabilities in terms of education, skills, physical and mental aspects, 2) access to tangible and intangible assets and 3) the existence of economic activities (Chambers and Conway cited in Krantz, 2001) ^[7]. This study attempted to analyse the extent of asset creation by the inter-state migrants engaging in elementary occupations in various sectors in the Chennai Metropolitan area to obtain access to assets.

Overview of literature reviews

The analysis of various issues of out-migration from South Asia showed that out-migration has substantially contributed to economic development through migrant's remittance in the form of foreign exchange reserve (Ahn, 2005) ^[1]. The female out-migration in Kerala led to the improvement of standard of living by migrant's remittance (Reshmi & Unisa, 2013) ^[13]. Another migration study in Kerala projected that a shift has been observed among migrants in Kerala from low-income levels to high-income levels (Saikia, 2015) ^[14]. When observing the seasonal and circular migration in domestic arena, migrants engaged as sugarcane cutters,

earthworkers and agricultural labourers from Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have considerably improved their standard of living (Deshingkar & Start, 2003) [3].

A study of socioeconomic conditions of migrant female teachers in Pune city disclosed that migrant teachers have improved their socioeconomic condition and they did not suffer from problems being experienced by migrant labourers (Jose, 2017) [6]. From the 64th round of the National Sample Surveys 2007-08, Mohanty *et al.* (2016) [8] found that the odds of poor among intra-state migrants are lower than those among inter-state migrants' households. Bhalla and Luo (2017) [2] found that remittances of migrants are far more important in raising living standards of Indian minority migrants (especially Muslims) than their counterparts who are in China. On the whole, rural-to-urban migration tends to enhance livelihoods of minorities in both countries.

Prakash (1998) [11] observed that overall reduction in poverty in Kerala has ensued due to the Gulf migration, which enabled the migrant households to attain higher levels of income, consumption and acquisition of assets. However, concurrently, the Gulf remittances have escalated the prices of land, construction materials, consumer foods and costs on health, education and transport, which largely affecting non-migrant households belonging to poor, middle class and fixed income groups.

Zachariah *et al.* (2001) [16] exposed the findings of the Gulf migration study in two different dimensions. Most of the wives of the Gulf migrants experienced extreme loneliness and were burdened with additional family responsibilities. However, they have gained autonomy, status, management skills and experience in dealing with the world outside their homes. The study of factors responsible for migration of tribal women from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand by Society for Regional Research and Analysis (2010) revealed that more than 90 per cent of the tribal women have improved in terms of income, food and awareness about the outside world. Despite these positive aspects of the migration, they experienced negative consequences such as lower family prestige and detachment of migrant women from family.

The entry of tribal women of Kerala to urban domestic work in Gulf countries has attributed to the transformation in their roles and status in the home community alongside transitions in values, lifestyle and perceptions (Potnuru, 2016) [10]. Mueller and Shariff (2011) [9] examined correlations between the receipt of remittances from internal migrants and human capital investment in rural areas of India. The findings showed that a positive correlation existed between remittances obtained from internal migrants and the school attendance of teens.

Objectives of the study

This study aimed at analysing social and occupational characteristics and classifying economic and household enhancements of the inter-state migrants working in elementary occupations in the Chennai Metropolitan area.

Materials and methods

The descriptive research design is employed to expound on the asset creation and its subsequent impact on the lives of inter-state migrants after the migration. The Chennai Metropolitan area (CMA) having an area of 1189 sqkm, which includes Chennai district, part of Tiruvallur district and part of Kancheepuram district is the field of study. The

CMA is the fourth most populous metropolitan area in India with an estimated population of around 9 million and the thirty-first largest urban area in the world.

The universe of the study population was fixed as 5, 47, 371. Based on the multi-stage sampling methods, 477 respondents were selected from 21 elementary occupations, which was categorised based on the National Classification of Occupations 2015. The inter-state migrant workers are classed into five major occupational sub-divisions excluding the occupational sub-division of agricultural, forestry and fishery labourers and under each occupational sub-division, the corresponding occupational group and the respective occupational types are sorted.

Main findings

Bihar recorded the highest number of migrant workers with 19.5 percent, next Odisha with 17 percent, Assam with 14.3 per cent and Jharkhand with 11.9 per cent. Uttar Pradesh had registered with 7.3 per cent of the migrant workers. From the Southern states, it is only Andhra Pradesh that reported with 7.8 per cent of the migrant workers. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are the Hindi belt states of India. Together with these states accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the migrant workers. The Northeast Indian states, namely, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, jointly constituted around 20 per cent. The migrant workers from West Bengal amounted to 3.6 per cent and from Gujarat recorded 2.5 per cent.

A significant proportion of the migrant workers (73.8%) were in the youth age group of 19 years – 33 years, followed by 13.6 per cent of the migrant workers in the age category of 34 years – 60 years and 12.6 per cent of the migrant workers in the age bracket of 14 years – 18 years. The mean age group of the migrant workers was 26.14 ± 7.26 years.

Table 1: Personal Profile of the Respondents

Personal Profile	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
14 – 18 years	60	12.6	
19 – 33 years	352	73.8	26.14
34 – 60 years	65	13.6	
Year of Migration			
2000 – 2005	21	4.4	
2006 – 2011	51	10.7	
2012 – 2017	405	84.9	
Community			
Scheduled tribes	105	22.0	
Scheduled castes	139	29.1	
Other backward communities	171	35.8	
General communities	62	13.0	
Religious Distribution			
Hindu	334	70.0	
Christian	86	18.0	
Muslim	46	9.6	
Buddhist	11	2.3	
Marital Status			
Unmarried	266	55.8	
Married	194	40.7	
Widow/Widower	3	0.6	
Divorced	4	0.8	
Separated	8	1.7	
Living Together	2	0.4	
Wage			
Less than Rs.322 per day	98	20.5	
Rs.322 – Rs.538 per day	305	63.9	430.13
More than Rs.538 per day	74	15.5	

A larger majority of the migrant workers (84.9%) had migrated to Tamil Nadu during 2012 – 2017. About 15 per cent of the migrant workers had migrated to Tamil Nadu before 2012. Among the migrant workers who had migrated during 2000-2015, more than three-fifths of them were under 18 years of age. Among the migrant workers who had migrated during 2006 – 2011, more than two-fifths of them were under 18 years of age. Among the migrant workers who had migrated during 2012-2017, most of them (66.4%) were in the age group of 18 years – 27 years.

Of the 477 migrant workers, a considerable proportion of them (35.8%) belonged to other backward communities, 29.1 per cent of them were scheduled castes, 22 per cent of them were scheduled tribes and just 13 per cent of them belonged to open communities. About seven-tenths of the migrant workers were Hindu, 18 per cent of the migrant workers were Christian, 9.6 per cent of them were Muslim and 2.3 per cent of them were Buddhist. A substantial proportion of the migrant workers (55.8%) were unmarried. Around two-fifths of the migrant workers were married. About 3.1 per cent of the migrant workers were not living with their spouses either due to death of the spouses or divorce or separation. More than half of the IMEO had not crossed over secondary school education. About 16.8 per cent of the reached up to higher secondary school education. Around 23.1 per cent of the migrant workers were working as construction labourers, next around one-fifths of the migrant workers were working as machine assistants or helpers. These two categories of occupations itself constituted 42.8 per cent. About 13.8 per cent of the migrant workers were working as helpers and cleaners in other establishments (7.5%) and hotels (6.3%). Subsequently, 5.5 per cent of the migrant workers were engaged as loaders and unloaders, 4.2 per cent of the migrant workers were street vendors in non-food products (such as bedsheets & blankets, bangles, balloons, car accessories, mosquito nets, LED lights, toys), 4 per cent of the migrant workers were security guards, 3.8 per cent were labourers in brick kiln making, 3.6 per cent were kitchen helpers in fast food hotels and 3.1 per cent were labourers in weighing and packing.

A sizeable proportion of the migrant workers (45.1%) had eight hours of work per day. Around 60 per cent of the migrant workers had received their payments on a monthly basis. Around 30.4 per cent of the migrant workers had received their payments on a daily basis. Most migrant workers (63.9%) had earned wages per day in the range of Rs.322 – Rs.538. Around one-fifths of the IMEO had wages less than Rs.322 per day and 15.5 per cent of the migrant workers had wages more than Rs.538. A substantial proportion of the migrant workers (55.8%) had own houses in their native states and 44.2 per cent of the migrant workers were without own houses in their native states. More than three-fifths of them had no agricultural lands in their place of origin.

Of the 477 migrant workers, around 91 per cent of them had no refrigerators in the pre-migration period and about 9 per cent of them had refrigerators. In the post-migration period, around 78 per cent of the migrant workers had not owned refrigerators and about 22 per cent of the migrant workers had owned it. It is obvious that 13 per cent of the migrant workers had brought refrigerators after migrating to the CMA. Around 94 per cent of them had no laptops/computers in the pre-migration period and about 6 per cent of them had laptops/computers. In the post-

migration period, around 86 per cent of the migrant workers had not owned laptops/computers and about 14 per cent of the migrant workers had owned it. It is obvious that 8 per cent of the IMEO had brought laptops/computers after migrating to the CMA.

Of the 477 migrant workers, around 78 per cent of them had no motor two-wheelers in the pre-migration period and about 22 per cent of them had television and its accessories. In the post-migration period, around 62 per cent of the migrant workers had owned motor two-wheelers and about 38 per cent of the migrant workers had not possessed it. It is evident that 16 per cent of the migrant workers had procured motor two-wheelers after migrating to the CMA. Around 98.7 per cent of them had no four-wheelers in the pre-migration period and about 1.3 per cent of them had television and its accessories. In the post-migration period, around 97.5 per cent of the migrant workers had owned four-wheelers and about 2.5 per cent of the migrant workers had not possessed it. It is evident that 1.2 per cent of the migrant workers had procured four-wheelers after migrating to the CMA. Around 99.7 per cent of them had no tractors/trucks/lorries in the pre-migration period and about 0.6 per cent of them had television and its accessories. In the post-migration period, around 98.5 per cent of the migrant workers had owned tractors/trucks/lorries and about 1.5 per cent of the migrant workers had not possessed it. It is evident that 0.9 per cent of the migrant workers had procured tractors/trucks/lorries after migrating to the CMA. Of the 477 migrant workers, around 84 per cent of them had no gold and jewellery in the pre-migration period and about 16 per cent of them had television and its accessories. In the post-migration period, around 76 per cent of the migrant workers had owned gold and jewellery and about 24 per cent of the migrant workers had not possessed it. It is evident that 8 per cent of the migrant workers had procured gold and jewellery after migrating to the CMA. The chi-square test was administered for each of the asset variable in the pre-migration period and each of the acquired asset variable in the post-migration period. All the tests showed that the significant associations exist, implying that the migrant workers who had procured tangible assets after getting occupied in the occupations in the CMA.

Around three-fifths of the migrant workers who were rearing livestock had expressed that their livestock procurement had not improved. Only 8.6 per cent of the migrant workers had improved their livestock procurement. About 147 migrant workers had not reared livestock. Around four-fifths of the migrant workers had not improved their cash savings. About one-fifths of the migrant workers had enhanced their cash savings.

The mean and standard deviation for the computed score of the economic and household enhancement of the migrant workers were 0.21 and 5.37 respectively. Based on the mean and standard deviation, the data were recoded into ordinal variable as low, moderate and high. Of the 477 migrant workers, 71 per cent of them had moderately improved their economic and household situations, next 18.4% of them had highly improved their economic and household status and around 10 per cent of them had low levels of economic and household status. Of the 338 migrant workers who had moderately improved their economic and household status, 67% of them were labourers in the occupational sub-division of construction, manufacturing and transport.

The F test for the mean difference between the score of economic and household enhancement of the migrant workers and the year of migration is statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. The migrant workers who entered the CMA during 2006 – 2011 ($M = 2.4902$) is the highest among the group means. This group has gained moderate levels of economic and household enhancement. The F test for the mean difference between the score of economic and household enhancement of the migrant workers and the religious distribution is statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. The migrant workers who belong to Christianity ($M = 1.7674$) is the highest among the group means. This group has gained moderate levels of economic and household enhancement.

The F test for the mean difference between the score of economic and household enhancement of the migrant workers and the educational status of the migrant workers is statistically significant at 0.01 level of significance. The migrant workers having graduation ($M = 4.8158$) is the highest among the group means. This group has gained moderate levels of economic and household enhancement. The t test for the mean difference between the score of economic and household enhancement of the migrant workers and the gender distribution is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. The migrant workers who are females ($M = 1.6923$) is higher than the male IMEO. The female migrant workers have highly gained moderate levels of economic and household enhancement.

There is a statistically significant difference in the unweighted mean score of the levels of economic improvement between the migrant workers who have low levels of economic and household enhancement and the migrant workers who have moderate levels of economic and household enhancement ($p < 0.01$) and between the migrant workers who have moderate levels of economic and household enhancement and the migrant workers who have high levels of economic and household enhancement ($p < 0.01$). The mean score of the levels of economic improvement of the migrant workers who have high levels of economic and household enhancement ($M = 2.9669$) is the highest than other mean scores of the classification of economic and household enhancement.

There was a statistically significant difference in the unweighted mean score of the extent of mental well-being between the migrant workers who had low levels of economic and household enhancement and the migrant workers who had moderate levels of economic and household enhancement ($p < 0.01$). The mean score of the extent of mental well-being of the IMEO who had low levels of economic and household improvements ($M = 10.0980$) was higher than the mean score of the extent of mental well-being of the migrant workers who had moderate levels of economic and household improvements ($M = 8.8994$).

Conclusion

The analysis of social and occupational characteristics and economic and household improvements of the inter-state migrants working in elementary occupations in the Chennai Metropolitan area disclosed that most inter-state migrants are unmarried youth and most of them migrated during 2012-2017. Most of the inter-state migrants are from the Hindi belt states, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya

Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Most of them are working in the elementary occupations in the construction and manufacturing sectors. After migration to the CMA, the inter-state migrants have moderately improved their economic and household status. A level of significance observed among the inter-state migrants who had acquired assets after engaging in the elementary occupations in the CMA.

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