

A Study on the Economic Impact of Migration on Unorganized Workers – with Special Reference to Construction Workers in Bangalore City

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Abstract - Migration has been a part and parcel of human civilization. Man has been migrating from one place to another for various socio, economic, cultural & commercial purposes. In India, the backwardness of agriculture, regional imbalance, lack of availability of employment opportunities that fetches decent wages in rural areas forces the unemployed youths to migrate to urban areas and other metropolitan cities in search of jobs. The construction sector is one such sector which provides ample opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers. Moreover, construction sector mainly depend on these migrant workers. These migrant workers seeking jobs in construction sector earn better wages than in their native. The migration towards construction sector improves the economic position of these workers. Construction sector has been growing at a faster rate in India. As the level of growth increases it is also attracting a greater number of workers towards it. On one side there is construction sector and on the other side there are workers depending on this sector. The rise in infrastructural facilities, increase in budgetary provisions by the government, hike in private investments has given a boost to this sector and so is attracting more number of workers towards the sector. Now it is a time to look into the construction sector and its potentiality and conditions of the workers in the industry. There is a need to assess the economic conditions of the construction workers. The present study has made an effort to compare the economic status of these workers before and after migration.

Index Terms - Construction sector, Migration, Workers, Infrastructure, Income.

INTRODUCTION

Existence of Chronic poverty is the major concern for the country and mitigating it has been the core of all developmental efforts. Several poverty alleviation programs initiated by the government have resulted in

the overall development of the poor, but these programs were not able to achieve the targeted success. Lack of capital and inaccessibility to credit is the serious constraint to the development and inhibits poor from responding to the opportunities created by the process of development. Research reports states that for a large section of the unorganized workers, agriculture and construction sectors are the preponderant sources of employment. Social Security Act, 2008 has defined Unorganised worker as ‘a home based-worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganized sector and includes a worker in the organized sector who is not covered by any of the acts mentioned in scheduled II of its Act’ (Government of India). As per a survey carried out by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 2009–10, the total employment in the country was of 46.5 crore comprising around 2.8 crore in the organised and the remaining 43.7 crore workers in the unorganised sector, which amounts to 94% of the total work force. Apart from employing 94% of the work force, unorganised sector is vital as it contributes around 50% of our national GDP. Out of these workers in the unorganised sector, there are 24.6 crore workers employed in agricultural sector, about 4.4 crore in construction work and remaining in manufacturing and service. Indian economy is characterised by the existence of a vast majority of informal or unorganised labour employment. Though the statistical information available on intensity and accuracy vary significantly, the extent of unorganized workers is significantly high among agricultural workers, building and other construction workers and among home-based workers. The present study is an attempt to examine the economic conditions of the migrant construction workers before and after migration. Many push and pull factors are contributing for the migration of the

workers. But the question is whether their migration to construction has improved their economic status is a matter of concern. 400 migrant workers working in the various construction sites in Bangalore were considered. A structured questionnaire was prepared to get the basic details of the workers and to seek information about their wages before and migration. Though the data says their income has increased after migration, there is no much difference in their net wages since they don't possess the BPL card at the work place. It is used in their states and native places by their families and they are forced to buy the provisions at retail stores which is quite expensive.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have already conducted on the migrant labour. Some of the important studies have reviewed and the output of each studies are presented systematically as follows. Dadabhai Naoroji (1888) in his research work clearly identified many issues which were extremely responsible for labour migration in India. The major reasons were landlessness among the economically weaker segment of the society and socially backward in terms of caste and villages affected by famine, decreased number of village industries, marginal farmers with small agricultural holdings and unemployment.

Jayaraman (1979) brought out that variations in land holding alone do not determine the migration response. He observed that agriculture at the place of origin was dependent chiefly on rain and that agricultural activities were at a peak only during the monsoon months. Once the monsoon crop was harvested, agricultural activities nearly came to an end and the incidence of migration became more marked. The households did not have other activities to discourage migration in search of jobs.

Joshi (1989) has made a research study on the basis of field work carried out in the city of Raichur of Karnataka State from the 300 sample families, relating to occupational mobility of migrant labourers. The outcomes of the study discovered that the middle caste and middle-class respondents are more mobile than the other caste and class respondents.

Haberfeld et al. (1999) in their analysis analyzed about the seasonal migrant physiognomies of households of India. The study observed that the household having larger income from the sources of agriculture, a greater

number of working family members and having higher level of education had been seasonally migrated at lesser extent in rural India. It also found that people living in the regions which are developed very less and communities with socially disadvantaged had been affected to short term seasonal migration at larger extent.

Binod Khadria (2006) in his analysis examined the relationship between the poverty and labour migration under the conditions of rising inequalities rapidly in the recent days. Labour migration and poverty had been found much importance under the circumstances of liberalization policy and inclusive growth implementations after 2004 and recent financial crisis in global economy as the study observed.

Priya Deshingkar, Rajiv Khandelwal and John Farrington (2008), they had been identified that the imperative factor for the circular migration in India and its rapid rise were movement of young adults from the stagnant rural areas to swiftly growing urban areas. The sectors such as services, activities taking place in coastal areas, cable networks, construction and maintenance of roads had been attracting the workers as a result labour migration had been gradually increasing at a rapid rate.

Denzil Fernandes and Bindpaul (2011) in their assessment it was found that social networks are playing a crucial role in migrant workers of construction sector to lead decent life in the society. The social networks are connected by the factors such as credit flow, work allocation, admittance into the work, and information of labour market, labour market phases and approachable relations among them.

Ritesh Drivedi (2012) found that the labour migration had been increasing the conditions of the workers across the country of India. It says that the improvement in the conditions of the standard of living of the workers can be up surging by the migration.

Ravi Srivastava & Rajib Sutradhar (2016) in their enquiry evaluated the effect of labour migration on their families. Fundamentally the non-migrants are receiving lesser wages compared to the migrants. This process had been stimulating them to migrate to other places. The study found that due to middlemen and collusion among them with employers had been reducing the labour standards and suggested to take suitable measures.

Manu Mohan (2020) in his article he found that, the factors such as higher level of wages and sound climate in Kerala state had been attracting more number of people to migrate towards the state. The study found that growing demand for the housing, rapidly growing construction industry are the main reason for labour migration in Kerala.

RESEARCH GAP

The research works which are carried out by a number of authors stated above are outdated and maximum of the studies are associated to different states and addressed less on comparing the economic status before and after migration. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a realistic investigation on improvement in economic position of migrant construction workers in Bangalore.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To compare the wages per day of the construction workers before and after migration.
2. To assess the improvement in the economic position of migrant construction workers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of research: It is exploratory research.
 Sample size: 400 respondents.
 Locale of the study: Bangalore city.
 Sample Frame: Construction workers migrated to Bangalore.
 Primary Data: The information needed for the study has been collected through structured questionnaire. Direct personal interview and personal observation method has been adopted to elicit the information needed for the study.

Secondary Data: The secondary data needed for the study is collected by referring to various published sources such as articles published in various national and international journals, reports published by the ministry of labour about the labour status, central and state government reports, NSSO reports and mainly website report of Karnataka State construction welfare board and newspaper. Sever books have been referred to get conceptual clarity about the topics.

INTERPRETATION AND INFERENCES

The migrant workers in the construction sector in Bangalore are of two types - inter and intrastate. Most of the migrant workers shared that the main reasons for migration include the following: they are small land holders or landless people; they are not able to find regular work in the local construction sector; they are paid low wages when they work in the local areas; they have very limited resources and are therefore unable to acquire advanced skills for employment; the lure and attraction of the large cities, especially for the youth is irresistible, and also because they do not get proper support from government schemes to enhance their resource base. Even if some of them had land, it was in the dry areas and they could not grow anything except a few stable food crops, and even then, the production was so low that it was sufficient only for their own household consumption. As most of them are illiterate, they are unable to get any jobs other than as daily wage labourers. There is pressure on them to earn money to meet the regular household expenses, for children’s education and for marriages and other family functions. Some of the villagers migrate to the big cities in the hope that they can earn more money in a city and repay the big loans that they have taken to meet marriage and medical expenses. The workers move to these urban areas in anticipation of improving their economic conditions. So, the questionnaire was prepared to get the wage details information before and after migration.

Daily wages of the construction workers before and after migration

Income Level	Before Migration		After Migration	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 200	100	25	18	4.5
200-300	820	20	28	7.0
300-400	92	22.5	38	9.5
400-500	40	10	43	10.8
500-600	30	7.5	90	22.5
600-700	30	7.5	85	21.3
700-800	22	5.5	40	10.0
800-900	8	2	20	5.0
More than 900	0	0	38	9.6
Total	400	100	400	100

Source: Primary Data

ANALYSIS

The average wage per day getting before migrating to the construction sector. It is found that 25 percent respondents are getting ₹ 200-300 wage per day, 22.5 are getting ₹ 300 to ₹ 400, and between ₹ 200 to ₹ 300 wages are taken by 20 percent of them. Note that about 10 percent of them are getting the daily wages of ₹ 400 to ₹ 500. Only 7.5 percent of them have been getting equally the amount of ₹ 500 to ₹ 600, ₹ 600 to ₹ 700 and ₹ 700 to ₹ 800 respectively. 5.5 percent of the construction workers are getting ₹ 700 to ₹ 800 and finally very less amount of 2 percentages of them are getting the wages per day before migration was about ₹ 800 to ₹ 900.

The average wage per day getting after migrating to the construction sector. It is found that 7 percent respondents are getting ₹ 200-300 wage per day, 9.5% are getting ₹ 300 to ₹ 400. Note that about 10 percent of them are getting the daily wages of ₹ 400 to ₹ 500. Only 22.5 percent of them have been getting equally the amount of ₹ 500 to ₹ 600, ₹ 600 to ₹ 700 and ₹ 700 to ₹ 800 respectively. 10 percent of the construction workers are getting ₹ 700 to ₹ 800 and finally 14.6 percentages of them are getting the wages per day after migration was more than ₹ 900 per day.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The study found that before migrating to the construction sector the workers were not even getting a minimum wages of ₹ 558 per day.
2. The study observed that, they are getting a minimum wages per day fixed by the government of ₹ 558 only after migrating to the construction industry.
3. The wage level has seen an improvement after migration but the scope for improvement in net income is not seen among many workers.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The rural economy should be made more vibrant and the investment in the infrastructural facilities should be increased drastically. This will create more employment opportunities at their native and the migration to unknown urban areas is reduced.

2. The One Nation One Ration Card should be implemented seriously in the entire nation so that the migrant worker gets the food items at subsidized rate.
3. The State Welfare Boards like Karnataka State Construction Workers Welfare Board should be made more proactive. The registration of workers to unions and welfare boards should be made mandatory. The awareness camps and registration camps at regular intervals should be initiated.

CONCLUSION

The constitution gives complete freedom for any citizen to move from one part of the nation to another. So the provision for better social, economic position becomes the responsibility of the government. The worker who leaves his native and moves on to the unknown cities should find himself in a better social and economic position. It is high time that the constitutional provisions are implemented effectively for the betterment of the workers. The State governments should join hands with each other to improve the life of these construction workers.

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