

The State of Migrant Labourers in Kaliachak Block-2 Malda District: A Post Covid Study

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Abstract—Kaliachak Block-2 is one of the major blocks in Malda District as well as West Bengal. But migration plays a vital role for the transformation of society. In our country, inter-state and inter-district migrations take place. The main objective of this study is to know the major causes of migrations. After Covid many youths migrated to large urban cities of the Indian Nations like Kerala, Delhi, Mumbai, and Gujarat in search of employment and livelihood. A significant percentage of the male population migrates to other states, with the highest concentration. The labourers migrated from the block mainly due to economic factors, low profit of agriculture, river erosion, landlessness, lack of non-farm employment opportunities, etc. The study explores the social, economic, and mental effects of post-Covid on migrant workers in terms of the role of local politics in socio-economic development. During the Covid lockdown, a vast majority of labourers returned to their hometowns, and many faced severe economic crises and job losses. The nature of migration is short-term, seasonal, semi-permanent, and permanent in character. Migration in Kaliachak Block -2 is largely forced by environmental, geographical, and economic challenges.

Index Terms—Kaliachak Block -2, Migrants, socio-economic development, employment, environment.

I. INTRODUCTIONS

In recent Year, unemployment, lack of alternative opportunities, droughts, frequent crop failure and poverty level in rural areas have been increasing thereby leading to despair or distress condition in the rural sector. After four years of COVID-19, the people has not recovered from the economic devastation. After the global pandemic, the economic condition of the world has completely collapsed. The impact of economic devastation has reached the villages. People are unable to travel to other states for work. The rural economy of West Bengal is dependent on the income

of the migrant labourers to a greater extent. They are failing to send their children to school of their choice. Teenagers are giving up education and moving to other states for work to support their families. The issue of migration is increasing in contemporary times. Before COVID, one family member was enough to support for his family but now it has been very difficult. According to workers their economic condition is very worse than before. The COVID affected labourers have lost their working capacity. They are not able to work. They had to be deprived of permanent work and even lost their jobs. So in recent, all family members are migrated for their livelihood, security and survivability. Migration is the most common phenomenon in Kaliachak Block – II of Malda district. The reason for the growth of migration due to underemployment, crop failure, poverty, hunger, lack of industry, lack of education and high prices of essential commodities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review highlights the distinct areas covered by the many researchers and academicians which may be helpful to understand the issues relating to the present study and also helps to find out the research gap. The basic sources of literature review of my study areas are – published research papers, articles in the journal of national and international repute, books, Government reports, Research agencies report etc. These are discussed below - Santanu and Anupam (2024) explores the ways the COVID-19 lockdown has deepened the existing livelihood insecurities based on the experiences of the interstate migrant workers in Jungle Mahal. Md. Mustaqim and Woheul, (2020) represents how during the outbreak of infectious diseases COVID-19 some restriction is imposed in daily routine. They also talk about how social

distancing norms are used to prevent the spreading of this disease. Due to sudden announcement of lockdown, they are jobless, homeless and hopeless. Das and Saha (2013) in their article describe that developing countries like India, migration is mostly driven by push factors from the place of origin rather than pull factors of the place of destination. People are forced to migrate due to prevailing conditions of poverty, unemployment, natural calamities and under-development in the place of origin. Pranamita and Bhaswati (2021) analyze the trends and patterns of out-migration from the state and to identify the impact of regional disparity on out-migration from the state. It has been observed that the state used to be net positive because more migrants from the eastern and north-eastern states used to reach West Bengal. Prabir (2018) projects that the migrants and their family members have been lagging behind the inclusion in economic and social mainstream and policy initiative throughout the history. Migration has been going parallel to the growth and development. But it should have flexible for households and individuals as well as economies and societies. It is required to be facilitated through a proper development strategy and a coherent policy. Rakhi and Gopal (2022) investigate the recent trend of shifting of the River Ganga, as well as the effects of floods and river-bank erosion on livelihoods of the residents of the riverine areas of Manikchak Block. Apart from that, this article attempts to offer some practical solutions for reducing the impact on residents and improving their living conditions. Dilip (2019) focuses on the socio-economic condition of the migrant workers in Kerala. Poor economic conditions in the native place and high wage rate and better employment opportunities in Kerala have been identified as the main reasons of migration to Kerala. Mr. Arun and Mr. Ajay, (2017) argue that the State will inevitably have to depend on migrant labour and is likely to experience heavy in-migration of labour in future. Swati Ghosh (2015) defines the social and economic desperation at the place of origin most of the time render them to be pushed out as migrants. They bring remittance back to the economy of origin but have little say in how the money's worth is to be realized beyond personal needs. The structural frame of the local economy that promotes out-migration is not always eager to incorporate the drifter. Monalisha Chakraborty and et al. (2020) elaborate on how the lack of regular employment opportunities and low

wage rate in rural as well as urban West Bengal are the dominant reasons for their migration. Their study was an attempt to bridge that evidence gap.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this study are –

1. To Analyze the level and growth of migrant labourers in a post COVID era.
2. Try to know what is the feelings of migrant labourers when they are working in other states.
3. Attempt to identify the Socio-economic and cultural background of migrant labourers.
4. To examine the seasonal pattern of migration in the study area.

IV. MALDA

Malda is situated between the latitude and Longitude figures of 24°40'20"N to 25°32'08"N and 88°28'10"E to 87°45'50"E respectively and surrounded by Bangladesh and South Dinajpur in the east, Santal Parganas of Jharkhand state in the west, Uttar Dinajpur in the north and Murshidabad in the South. The district covers an area of 3,733.66 square kilometers (1,441.6 sq mile). Malda is recognized of 12 police station, 15 development blocks, 2 municipalities, 146-gram panchayats and 3701 villages. The district consists with two subdivisions, that is Malda Sadar and Chanchal, and English Bazar is the headquarters station of the district as well as the Sadar subdivision.

V. STUDY AREAS

For my study, I have selected Kaliachak Block - II. The block is under the Malda district in the Indian states of West Bengal. It is covered of 209.17 km² areas and 32.16 % of the total area of the district. It has One Panchayat Samiti, Nine Gram Panchayats, 127 Gram Sansads, 65 Mouzas and 40 inhabited Villages. Mothabari police station serves this Block. Headquarter of this is at Mothabari. Kaliachak Block - II is situated on the bank of river Ganges. Out of the nine-gram panchayats, five have been destroyed due to the soil erosion and flood. As per 2011 census of India, Kaliachak Block -II had a total population of 2,10,105. Approximately 80,000 people are living in this destroyed soil erosion and flood areas. This is Bangitola, Uttar Panchanandaur-I, Uttar

Panchananda-II, Hamidpur, and Rajnagar Gram Panchayats. Almost everyone from this area is going to other states for work like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kerala, Gujarat etc. The main objective of this study is to find the core deference of pre and post COVID-19 migrant workers of Kaliachak Block -II based on recent socio-economic factors. Majority of the workers are currently working without labour

contractor. Every year many people lose their lives while working. There is no Government policy to repatriate workers who die at work outside their states. The family members sold their land and other properties to bring the dead body to home. Although the government extends their hand for help of this family and workers, most of it goes to panchayat members or middleman.

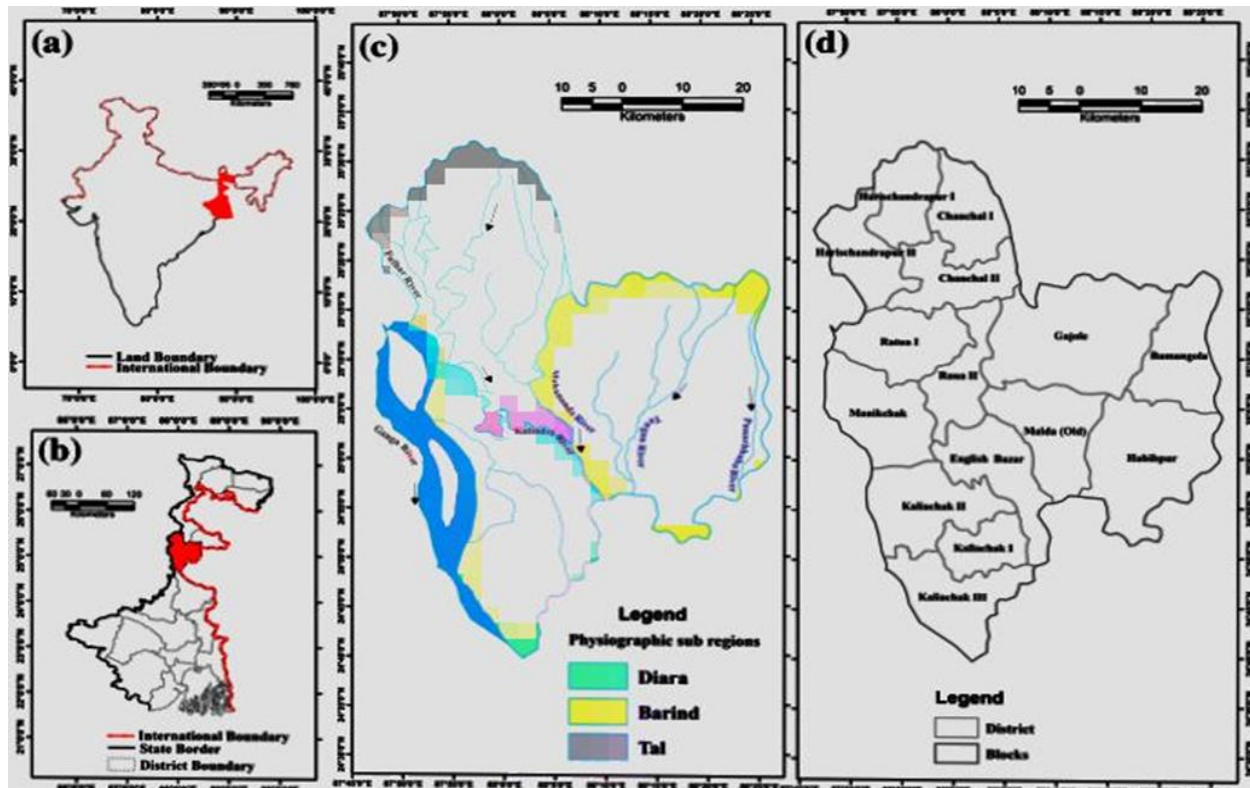


Figure. 1. Maps of Study Area

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary and secondary sources of data. The secondary data will be collected from Census of India 2011, District Survey report of Malda, District Human Development Report (2007), Research paper, journals, Google Scholar, ResearchGate etc. The primary data will be collected through observation, interview, and questionnaire. The study adopts probability simple random sampling techniques for the purpose of data collection. It is based on inductive research approach. For this study will be used both qualitative and quantitative data.

6.1. Demographics:

There are total 300 surveyed household in which 1350 residents have recorded out of total residents. The number of men 473 and boys 216. The number of female 472 and girls 189.

Group	Population Count	Percentage
Adult Men	473	35%
Adult Women	472	35%
Boys	216	16%
Girls	189	14%
Total Residents	1,350	100%

Figure.2. Population counts male and female with percentage form survey

This chart compares the raw numbers of adults and children within the household survey.

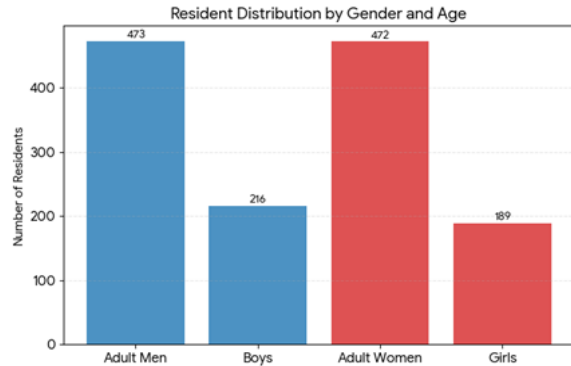


Figure.3. Resident distribution by Gender and Age

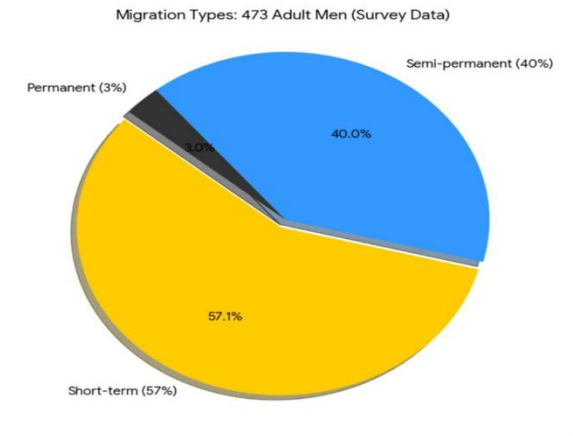
VII. TYPES OF MIGRANT WORKERS

In this study I find out two types of Migrant workers. Like National migrants and international migrants. National migrants are three types of Migrants as the short-term seasonal migrants, semi-permanent magnets and permanent magnets. Who are migrating and return within six months have been considered as a short-term seasonal migrant. Who are migrating and the return more than six months and more during the last one-year have been considered as a semi-permanent migrant. And lastly who are migrating and permanent settled their work places. They visit their home occasionally. International migrants are outside of countries for their work. After three or four years, they are favorably returning to their home. Migration Summary Box (473 Adult Men).

Migration Category	Percentage	Number of Workers	Typical Stay
Short-term	57%	270	1–6 Months
Semi-permanent	40%	189	6–11 Months
Permanent	3%	14	Settled Elsewhere
Total Adult Men	100%	473	—

Figure.4. Types of migrant workers summary box

This pie chart visualizes how the 473 adult men are distributed across migration categories.



VIII. ECONOMIC SECTOR

Kaliachak block - 2 is one of the most under development Block in Malda District. The economy of this block is basically an agrarian. Due to its location on the banks of the Ganges River and areas of flooding, crop yields and agricultural production are not very good. The backwardness is characterized by low per capita income, low yield per acre of land, backwardness in industrialization, shortage of capital and entrepreneurship, and also the lack of infrastructure and large labour surplus. The sector for women works like Bidi worker, sericulture, selling grass and works on other people's land.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

Kaliachak Block II has lowest literacy rates as compared to other Blocks of Malda District. The condition of migrant labourers of this Block is very poor in terms of education, economic condition and employment opportunities. There are some primary school, high school (matriculation school) and higher secondary school under this Block but no CBCS English medium school, college and technical/professional institutions. There is only one rural hospital under Bangitola gram panchayats at Bangitola. Every year, the workers are working on the land across the river like farmers, fisher, boatman etc. They are losing their lives due to boat capsizing, snake bites, and being attacked by various wild animals. Brides become victims of dowry system. There are no other alternative opportunities for quality education and better health care system except the English Bazar Municipality and District hospital. Due to inefficient

government policies and lack of industry the number of migrant laborers is highly increasing in this area. The government needs sustainable and effective policy for the migrant labourers.

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