

Determinants and Impact of Migration on Rural Poor: A Case-study of Asansol, an Industrial Zone of West Bengal

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Abstract— Migration, a continuous process of economic development, is an integral part of human history, involves relatively permanent, semi-permanent shift of residence from original place to destination. Migration is mainly caused by push factors at destination (like higher wage, higher income, better job availability, better education, health etc.) and pull factors (like low income, low wage, lack of employment opportunity, drought, natural calamities etc.) with the origin. But the present scenario reveals the fact that the distress and vulnerable conditions of rural poor are forced them to move out of their origin and go far off places in search of alternative livelihood. In this context, our present study tries to make an attempt to examine the main factors responsible for migration in Asansol. We select Asansol as destination place because being next to Kolkata, it is an industrial belt, many people come to Asansol from different parts of West Bengal and neighbour states e.g. Bihar, Jharkhand, UP as well in search of new jobs. We have taken interviews of 160 migrants in our survey area on the basis of Random Sampling Method. Another motive of our present study is to analysis the present status of the migrants after coming in Asansol. We take the help of different tables, percentage and also OLS technique and Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test as the statistical tools for analyzing our results.

Keywords- Migration, push-factors, pull-factors, seasonal, cyclical, distress conditions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a form of movement from one place to other is an integral part of human existence. Movements for purpose for business, travel, tourism can not be considered as migration. But, some movements are relatively permanent and involve a change of residence from one place to another, this is treated as migration. This process may be permanent, semi-permanent and temporary. It can also be viewed as voluntary or forced, legal or illegal.

In human history, migration is a common characteristic which is caused by different reasons --- social, cultural, political, personal and economic factors. Due to the expansion of transport, communication, economic development, urbanization, industrialization a large number of people move from villages to town, from one town to other town and also from one country to another.

The decision to migrate involves 'push factors' which force migrants out of the rural areas as well as 'pull factors' who attracts migrants to urban areas. Otherwise, on the one hand, migration of people is mainly influenced by better employment opportunities, perception of higher wages, better quality of education and health conditions, living conditions of destinations. On the other hand, it is compelled by push or distress factors at origin e. g. general rural poverty, lack of employment, landlessness, low wage rates, agricultural failure, debt, drought, natural calamities etc.

The basic model on rural-urban migration was developed by Todaro (1969) [1], explains it as a response to the expected rather than current income difference between rural and urban areas. In other words, workers will continue to migrate from rural to urban areas unless and until the expected wages earned in the urban areas are equal to the expected wages earned in the rural areas. Many empirical researches have been carried out on this foundation to examine

individuals' motivation to migrate from rural to urban and most of their findings support the evidence of economic considerations as primary motivation.

The **section 2** gives a brief idea about the present background and objectives of our study; **section 3** contains an extensive discussion on review of literature; **section 4** describes questionnaire design and methodology; **section 5** covers the analytical findings of our exercise and finally, **section 6** ends with conclusion and some policy recommendations.

II. PRESENT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In the present context of economic development, globalization, liberalization play important roles in agricultural sector by introducing new technology, capital-intensive techniques mechanization which, in turn, led to increase employment in the country side. As a consequence, a large number of poor farming communities, especially agriculturally marginalized farmers, agricultural labourers are forced to change their home from origin to far off places in search of their livelihood. The integral migrants, more or less are unskilled and semi-skilled from low income group. They could be able to improve their socio-economic positions by taking the decision of migration. A recent report developed by UNDP also reveals the same fact that by migration, majority of the rural poor would be able to spend on health, consumption, other basic necessities and reduce the risk of sliding deeper into poverty.

On the other hand, in the recent years, unemployment, poverty, debt, drought, frequent crop failure, lack of credit facilities in rural areas have been increasing and as a result leading the rural poor in distress conditions. Consequently, the rural poor, mainly small, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers are forced to move out of their origin to other places (other prosperous rural and/or urban areas) in the country in search of employment and better livelihood, but unfortunately

without any guarantee and protection of wages, dignity of labour and life. The growing part of such migration seems to be appeared as temporary, seasonal, circular and cyclical in nature.

Keeping in mind the present/recent background scenario, our two-fold **objectives** in this paper are to find out the (i) determinant factors responsible for labour migration to Asansol from different parts of West Bengal and other neighbour states viz., Bihar, Jharkhand, UP, Orissa.

(ii) whether migration improve their (migrants) economic positions or not.

Accordingly, we set our **hypothesis** as follows:

(i) poverty level, unemployment, agricultural failure, landlessness, natural calamities, debt have no influence on the occurrence of migration in our survey area.

(ii) Income level, expenditure on food, education, health and savings level of the migrants reveal no improvement after migration.

Being the second largest city of West Bengal next to Kolkata, we choose Asansol which is an industrial belt neighbour to the states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, UP. So many people come here to find different jobs opportunities mainly in minings, collieries, railways. Another type of temporary labourers are need in the construction site i.e. real state business. Many labourers for construction come mainly from Murshidabad district of West Bengal. We concentrate on those groups which are marginalized poor, rural, unskilled, semi-skilled and forced to move in Asansol in search of their livelihood. We intentionally avoid those groups of migrants who come to Asansol for white-collar jobs.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A considerable number of studies have been carried out on the labour migration. We now focus on some relevant research works describing the reasons of the labour migration.

Gugler and Flanagan (1978) [2], Fields (1975) [3] and Kelly William (1984) [4] suggested an additional information as compare with the Harris-Todaro model [5]. It emphasizes the differential access to information for rural workers and urban residents, the cost of living and education levels when computing the probability of migrant securing an urban job.

Corden and Findlay (1975) [6] found in their study the importance of capital mobility (i.e. movement of workers to those places where capital is more productive) as a major determinant of labour migration.

Chatterjee (2006) [7] focused on the fact of the nature of labour migration among the poor -- may be voluntary and involuntary as well. The prospective migrants, in most of the cases make the decision of migration on the basis of the estimated expected gains from their movement. But, in some cases their decision could be treated as 'forced migration' due to the factors of poverty, lack of land, borrowing, unemployment (i. e. The push factors).

Bhalla and Hazell (2003) [8] attempt to categorize the whole reasons for labour migration into two groups-- push and pull factors. Low income, dependency on agriculture, high poverty, low literacy rate are the examples of push factors associated with place of origin. On the other hand pull factors associated with the destination are high income, dependency on industry and servicing sector, less poverty, high literacy rate. The higher income and the transformation of an economy from dependency on the agricultural sector to non-agricultural sector

may introduce a high scale of labour migration from rural to urban.

Sahu et al (2011) [9] suggests that whatever be the nature of migration-- domestic or international it has been considered as an alternative strategy of sustenance for livelihood by a large number of poor families. Their movement may be caused either by the push factors (like agricultural failure, unemployment, high level of debt) or by the pull factors (like higher wages, availability of job opportunities). Poor people migrate from rural undeveloped place to booming, intermediate, industrial, manufacturing cities in search of new jobs. Thus, the attempt of the migrants is not only to improve their own livelihood but also to send a considerable share of earned income to their families left behind at origin.

According to the National Commission the seasonal rural labour migration is mainly caused by the unequal development. They comment that the inter-regional disparity among the different socio-economic classes and the development policy adopted since independence are the main responsible factors of the process of seasonal migration.

In tribal regions the factors such as intrusion of outsiders, the pattern of settlement, displacement and deforestation have accelerated the growth of their migration.

Rogaly et. Al (2001) [10] explained in their study work the reasons for migration in West Bengal. They concluded the wage differentials between the source and destination is the main reason for migration. They have further suggested that the absence of employment, low agricultural productivity, education level, age, wealth, land-owned, job opportunities influence the outcome of migration. Moreover, the above factors have important significance on the participation of the individuals and households in migration and thereby supporting social network.

Srivastava (1999) [11] focussed on the fact that migration develops a better awareness among the migrants regarding conditions of work at their ultimate destination. Furthermore, the migrants to move to urban areas gain the knowledge the importance of the education for their children.

Rao's (2001) [12] work on migration on labour in Andhra Pradesh distinguishes between the migration for survival and that for earning additional income. He observed that people in Rayadurga district in Andhra Pradesh take the decision on migration for survival in 1970s but changed their attitude in 1990s. In the later their decision of migration was only because of earning additional wage.

Dashingkar et. Al (2003) [13] pointed out the impact of migration and came to the conclusion that in the short run migration may not be helpful and may be considered as the cause of deprivation of the households' family in the rural economy. But when their remittances are invested in the long run, it improves productivity, create assets and also generates income at the household level.

IV. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Our study work was based on primary data collected from 160 labour migrants in Asansol, an industrial zone of West Bengal. The data are collected from selected 6 different blocks of Asansol by random sampling method. We take face-to-face interview rather any telephonic conversations. The required information was obtained from the respondents on the basis of designing appropriate questionnaire. We arrange the questions

in such a fashion so that it was helpful to find out the answer of our basic objectives. We apply Ordinary Least Square (OLS) and Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test methods/techniques to examine our objectives as well as hypothesis. We also take the comparative analysis between per-migration state and post-migration state of our respondents to search their present states after migration. We also take the help of different tables to analyze our findings.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

The following table shows the age distribution of our sample migrants. We categorize our respondents into different age groups.

TABLE I. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS

Age in year	Frequency	Percentage
15- 20	18	11
21-25	43	27
26-30	35	22
31-35	33	21
36-40	18	11
41-45	08	5
46-50	03	2
51-55	02	1
Total	160	100

Source: Primary data

The **table I** provides information regarding age distribution of the migrants in our study area. The figure reveals that out of 160 migrants 18 (11 %) are belonging to the younger age-group 15-20 years which includes child migrants. Generally, eldest child of a family come for searching jobs, plays the role of 'little father' of their family. Child migrant labour receives less wage as compare to the adult. Therefore, employers (especially in small shops, hotels, temporary food stalls, household servants) are also interested to employ them as they have to pay less. The highest and lowest number of migrants were found between the age group of 21-25 and 51-55 years respectively. The youngest and the eldest age of migration were around 15 years and 55 years respectively. The median age of these migrants was around 28 years. As the age group rises beyond 31-35 years, there is a sharp decline in the number of migrants staying at the destination place. The main reasons behind this out-migration are of two : (i) accumulation of earnings, and (ii) incapability of working hard.

The 1st cause is the outcome of a long term working as a migrant in the labour market and able to save some income which generates assets and therefore trends to a reduction in the intensity of participation in the working force. But the last reason is more important/significant one. After the age of 40 years most of these migrants are not able to work for a long time say 10-12 hours and also unable to do very laborious jobs. Hence, they return to their home with or without savings. The employers are also not interested to take them because of their age or engage them to those jobs which are less paid. The elder migrants are forced to withdraw themselves from the urban labour market because their expenditure exceeds their earnings. As a result younger migrants replace the older migrants.

The figures are quite similar with the other studies and evidence carried out in the literature. For example, a study by Sahu and Das (2011) [9] reveals that the youngest and oldest age of migrants were 18 and 51 years respectively. The median age of these migrants were around 30 years. Another study developed by Prajapati et.al (2013) [14] the youngest and the oldest age of the migrants were 16 and 54 years respectively whereas the median age was about 27 years.

The **table II** represents the data regarding distribution of gender, caste and religion among the migrants.

TABLE II. DISTRIBUTION OF GENDER, CASTE AND RELIGION OF MIGRANTS

Distribution		Number of Migrants	Percentage
Gender	Male	122	76
	Female	38	24
Caste	General	08	5
	S T	102	64
	S C	10	6
	OBC	40	25
Religion	Hindu	82	51
	Muslim	58	36
	Others	20	13

Source: Primary data

Out of 160 migrants in our survey area 122 (76 %) are male and 38 (24 %) are female. There is a wage-discrimination between male and female labour migrants are noticeable. Female workers are generally paid less than the male for the similar type of works. They are mainly doing jobs in the construction sites. The lowest number of migrants from general caste 08 (05 %) whereas the highest number from ST having 102 in number (64 %). The migration of OBC is the 2nd highest 40 (25 %). Generally the extent and intensity of poverty which is very much pertinent to ST that increases their mobility. Simultaneously, their 'lower levels of aspirations', 'low paid unskilled jobs' also attribute their higher rate of migration.

The number of hindu migrants are of 82 (51 %) whereas muslims are 58 (36 %) and 38 (13 %) migrants belong to other religion.

In our present study, we found the followings main factors responsible for migration:

- i. survival (proxy for poverty)
- ii. unemployment
- iii. landlessness
- iv. debt
- v. earnings
- vi. agricultural crop failure

All of our sample migrants agree to any of the above as a cause of their movement at the present destination. A few of them have given more than one reason for migration. But we have taken the most important reason as specified by them.

Table III provides the information about their cause of migration.

TABLE III. REASONS FOR MIGRATIONS IN ASANSOL, WEST BENGAL

Reasons	Number of Migrants	Percentage
Survival	55	34
Unemployment	43	27
Landlessness	20	12
Debt	18	11
Earnings	12	8
Agricultural crop failure	12	8

Source: Primary data

Table III shows that survival i.e. the extent of poverty is the main reason for the migration (55). It is followed by the lack of employment opportunities in their home side (43). The third reason shown by the table is nothing but the landlessness (20) which also exhibits the vulnerable conditions of the migrants. The lack of credit facilities in another factor of this migration. The rural poor can not avail banking facilities and for finance they have to depend on money lenders. They charge exorbitant high rates and rural poor fail to recover the loan, consequently they fall into the debt trap. To solve this problem they have to choose to migrate themselves to Asansol. The other two causes attend the same important cause of migration-- earning (12) and agricultural crop failure (12). Migrants come to Asansol to earn some additional income mainly for their daughters' marriage and for education of their children. The another reason of frequent agricultural crop failure reveals the fact that our over-dependency on monsoon and lack of irrigation facility as well.

To find out the level of significance and to explain the causes of migration in our survey area we use Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique.

TABLE IV. SHOWS THE OLS RESULTS

Model for linear regression showing determinants of Migration in Asansol.

Dependent Variable : Migration
 Method : Least Square
 Sample Size : 160
 Included Observations : 160

Explanatory Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Probability
C	8.147	1.01	
X ₁ (survival proxy for poverty)	7.318	0.068	0.000
X ₂ (unemployment)	1.653	0.059	0.000
X ₃ (landlessness)	3.181	0.118	
X ₄ (debt)	1.370	0.163	
X ₅ (earnings)	2.937	0.365	
X ₆ (crop failure)	4.825	0.313	

R-squared 0.432
 Adjusted R-squared: 0.430
 Prob. (F-Statistics): 0.0001
 F-Statistics :122.61

Clearly, poverty, unemployment, landlessness, debt, earnings and crop failure are playing significant role in migration. The probability of accepting the null hypothesis is almost zero. Therefore we choose the alternative hypothesis. All these factors are significant at 1 % critical level. The probability of F-statistics is almost zero which supports the fact that at least one of the factors are significant at 1% critical level. The explanatory variables explain almost 43% variation of the dependent variable. All the co-efficients are positive means higher the poverty, unemployment, landlessness, debt higher will be the migration.

Table V, VI, VII show the monthly income, expenditure on basic goods, education, health, savings of our migrants before and after migration respectively.

TABLE V. MONTHLY INCOME BEFORE AND AFTER MIGRATION

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Number of Migrants (before migration)	Number of Migrants (after migration)
<1000	40	05
1000-3000	60	65
3000-4000	30	50
4000-5000	20	20
Above 5000	10	20

Source: Primary data

TABLE VI. MONTHLY EXPENDITURE (ON FOOD, EDUCATION, HEALTH) BEFORE AND AFTER MIGRATION

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Number of Migrants (before migration)	Number of Migrants (after migration)
<1000	50	20
1000-3000	68	30
3000-4000	20	70
4000-5000	12	32
Above 5000	10	08

Source: Primary data

TABLE VII. MONTHLY FAMILY SAVING OF THE MIGRANTS BEFORE AND AFTER MIGRATION

Monthly family saving (in Rupees)	Number of Migrants (before migration)	Number of Migrants (after migration)
<100	72	32
100-200	40	20
200-300	30	70
300-400	15	30
Above 400	3	8

Source: Primary data

In order to test whether there is any significant difference in the level of income, expenditure and savings of the respondents met in the post-migration and per-migration states, the 'Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test' is applied.

Table VIII, IX, X represent the results of Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for income, expenditure and savings level respectively.

For income level

TABLE VIII. SIGNED TEST FOR INCOME LEVEL

Test statistics (b)	
	Income after migration – income before migration
z	-8.293 (a)
Asymptotic significant (2 tailed)	0.000

- (a) Based on negative rank
- (b) Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

Ranks

Income after migration – income before migration		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
	Negative ranks	0(a)	0.00	0.00
	Positive ranks	150(b)	42.20	3570.00
	Ties	10(c)		
	Total	160		

- (a) Income after migration < Income before migration
- (b) Income after migration > Income before migration
- (c) Income after migration = Income before migration

Since the asymptotic significance value is less than 0.05, we reject the **NULL hypothesis** that there is no difference in the income level of the respondents after migration in Asansol. From the **table VIII** it is clear that major of the respondents' income are higher after migration and none of their income is lower in post-migration stage.

For expenditure level

TABLE IX. SIGNED TEST FOR EXPENDITUE LEVEL

TEST STATISTICS (B)

	Expenditure after migration – expenditure before migration
z	-7.719 (a)
Asymptotic significant (2 tailed)	0.000

- (a) Based on negative rank
- (b) Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

Ranks

Expenditure after migration – expenditure before migration		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
	Negative ranks	0(a)	0.00	0.00
	Positive ranks	145(b)	35.30	2556.00
	Ties	15(c)		
	Total	160		

- (a) Expenditure after migration < expenditure before migration
- (b) Expenditure after migration > expenditure before migration
- (c) Expenditure after migration = expenditure before migration

Since the asymptotic significance value is less than 0.05, we reject the **NULL hypothesis** that there is no difference in the expenditure level of the respondents after migration in Asansol. From the **table IX** it is clear that major of the respondents' expenditure are higher after migration and none of their expenditure is lower in post-migration stage.

For savings level

TABLE X. SIGNED TEST FOR SAVING LEVEL

Test statistics (b)	
	Savings after migration – savings before migration
z	-8.283 (a)
Asymptotic significant (2 tailed)	0.000

- (a) Based on negative rank
- (b) Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

Ranks

Savings after migration – savings before migration		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
	Negative ranks	0(a)	0.00	0.00
	Positive ranks	151(b)	20.10	1686.00
	Ties	09(c)		
	Total	160		

- (a) Savings after migration < savings before migration
- (b) Savings after migration > savings before migration
- (c) Savings after migration = savings before migration

Since the asymptotic significance value is less than 0.05, we reject the **NULL hypothesis** that there is no difference in the savings level of the respondents after migration in Asansol. From the **table X** it is clear that major of the respondents' savings are higher after migration and none of their savings is lower.

Monthly income is the major determinant for the standard of living. Clearly, migrants' income increases after migration. Their expenditures (includes expenditure for food, education and health) have also raised after coming in Asansol. Not only their earning and expenditure but their family savings also shows an increasing tendency after migration. Since after migration households' income, expenditure and savings contributed a growth, therefore we may conclude the well-being of the migrants' family have been increased.

Therefore we also reject our **2nd null hypothesis** and select the alternative one i. e. Migration have a positive impact on the income, expenditure and savings of the migrants.

VI. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

This work is an attempt to examine the determining factors influence the migration taken place from different zones of West Bengal and the other neighbour states (Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, UP) to Asansol. The survey reports depicts the fact that the main reasons behind this migration to Asansol are:

survival, unemployment, landlessness, debt, earnings and agricultural crop failure. We mainly highlight those sections who are small, poor, marginalized farmers and landless labourers. They are basically having poor educational background, unskilled and semi-skilled and therefore poorly paid. Actually they are compelled to come in Asansol in search of alternative livelihood. So this fact revealed that the above mentioned 'push-factors' are responsible for the recent labour migration in our survey area. These factors are quite similar as found in the other studies in labour migration literature (mentioned earlier in section III).

From our above analysis, it is clear that in our case-study migration to Asansol from different zones of West Bengal as well as other states (like Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, UP) generates a positive consequence of our sample migrants. It not only improves their income but also expenditure on food or basic needs, education for their children, medical treatment for their family members as well. It also improves savings at migrants households' levels and thereby generates a considerable share of assets which is useful for their family. In the present study, we select those migrants who are coming from the vulnerable section of rural poor. Therefore, our findings supports 'necessity of migration' for the marginalized rural poor for their livelihood. The results may give the similar scenario presented by many economists in the literature of migration (as mentioned above in the review of literature).

It also improves the position of women empowerment in the form of women-labour migrants' earnings. It also increases decision making power of the women who are left behind at their original home for a long-term absence of their husbands. But we have to keep in mind that the benefits comes from the migration may be short term duration. Because the relevant migration in our study area are mainly unskilled and semi-skilled. To cope up the long-term benefit, different skilled programmes should be carried out with the help of government and NGOs also.

Migration is a continuous process through the world-wide system. But, over-reliance on integral migration for searching betterment of life and livelihood can not be permanent solution. Basically, developing countries like India have tried to solve the problem by applying three kinds of policy.

Policy-I

A shadow pricing policy attempts to equate marginal rate of substitution in consumption in both sectors by granting wage subsidies to urban firms that agree to reduce the wage, paid to the workers, to the rural wage level (Haris Todaro 1970). this policy is equivalent to giving production subsidies to the agricultural sector in order to equate the marginal rate of production in both sectors (Baghwati, Srinivasan, 1974).

Policy-II

Restricting the flow of labour migration to the booming cities have been applied in many LDCs, but with only short term positive results. This policy also raises the questions of civil liberties.

Policy-III

Implementing labour intensive projects in cities to reduce urban unemployment and poverty. These have led to move to rural urban migration because rural workers interpreted them as signals of higher probabilities of obtaining urban jobs.

Therefore, many observations show a negative argument against migration. They narrated in this way that the problems

of migration is not adding any positive value addition to the poor, rather the cost of shifting or cost of initial settlement at the new places are so high that they are only able to earn a substantial income. Thus, they remain in the same status. The overall view shows it is generally a blend of socio, economic and political factors. The motivation of their movement depends on push and pull factors. Rural push factor like lack of infrastructure, lack of alternative job opportunities, poverty, less income often force them to move out of their origin. Again, if skilled labourers are moved to the cities with the expectation of getting higher chance of job opportunity and higher wage, reduce the potentiality of the future gain in the rural villages. Sometimes, people shift to new urban places, only for attractions even if appropriate facilities are at the home place. As the type of the migration is typical, peculiar in nature, therefore, we have to identify and understand their nature of movements, factors actually affecting their migration decision and accordingly take the necessary steps.

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