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**SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC WELFARE AND INITIATIVES**

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## Contents

1. Status of Education and Employment in Telangana State ----- <i>Dr. D. Suresh</i>	1
2. Performance Appraisal Practices in India ----- <i>Dr. M. Kavitha</i>	10
3. Fort and Defence Mechanism in Kakatiya Dynastry ----- <i>Dr. Kundur Sudhakar</i>	23
4. Value Based Education in Higher Education - A Study ----- <i>Dr. Adulapuram Thirupathi</i>	42
5. Nationalism and Dalit Literature - A Study ----- <i>G. Rajitha Devi</i>	51
6. Multi Pupose Female Health Workers in Health Sector- A Study in Warangal Urban District ----- <i>B. Rama Devi</i>	61
7. Public-Private Partnership in Health Administration- A Study on Aarogyasri in Telangana State ----- <i>Enumula Ankush</i>	69
8. Tribes in Telangana State ----- <i>Kunja Varalaxmi &amp; M. Rajeshwari</i>	89

9. Organization and Working of Urban Health Care System- A Study of Warangal District of Telangana State ----- <i>Varayogula Venkateshwara Swamy</i>	96
10. Women in Work Participation in India ----- <i>Shanganti Swathi</i>	105
11. Demographic Profile of Scheduled Tribes in Telangana State ----- <i>Kunja Varalaxmi</i>	113
12. Human Resource Development in Indian Industries ----- <i>Padakanti Rajendra Prasad</i>	125
13. Migration of Agricultural Labour A Study in Telangana ----- <i>B. Kishan</i>	140
14. Innovative Recruitment Tools & Techniques for Modern Human Resource Team ----- <i>P. Maheshwari</i>	151



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### MIGRATION OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR A STUDY IN TELANGANA



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**Abstract:** Human migration is the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary. An example of "semi-permanent residence" would be the seasonal movements of migrant farm labourers. People can either choose to move (voluntary migration) or be forced to move (involuntary migration). Migrations have occurred throughout human history, beginning with the movements of the first human groups from their origins in East Africa to their current location in the world. Migration occurs at a variety of scales: intercontinental (between continents), intra-continental (between countries on a given continent), and interregional (within countries). One of the most significant migration patterns has been rural to urban migration, the movement of people from the countryside to cities in search of opportunities.

**Keywords:** Migration, Agricultural Labour, Impact

#### Introduction

There are various types of migrations are viz., Internal Migration, External Migration, Emigration Immigration, Population Transfer, Impelled Migration (also called "reluctant" or "imposed" migration, Step Migration, Chain Migration, Return Migration and Seasonal Migration.

According to the migration the peoples are also classified into Emigrant, Immigrant, Refugee, Internally Displaced Person and Migration Stream.

People move for a variety of reasons. They consider the advantages and disadvantages of staying versus moving, as well as factors such as distance, travel

costs, travel time, modes of transportation, terrain, and cultural barriers. The factors are Push Factors, Place Utility, Intervening Opportunities, Distance Decay Pull Factors, Several types of push and pull factors may influence people in their movements (sometimes at the same time), including Environmental, Political, Economic and Cultural.

Human migration affects population patterns and characteristics, social and cultural patterns and processes, economies, and physical environments. As people move, their cultural traits and ideas diffuse along with them, creating and modifying cultural landscapes.

The migration can be measure as In-migration, Out-migration, Gross migration, Net internal migration, Movers from abroad and Net migration

Agricultural labourers who are mostly landless and form a significant section of rural society mainly depend on wage employment in agriculture. Majority of them belong to the category of SCs and STs and are among the worst exploited section of the society. Their income has always been meager, resulting in poor living and heavy indebtedness. Much worse are those who get casual agricultural work merely exist and do not live. Their morning holds no promise for the evening and they can never sleep without tensions for they have no stocks left for the morning. Struggling for their morning and evenings they pass their whole life.

In order to understand the problems of agricultural labour and to formulate an appropriate policy in this regard, it is necessary to identify these labourers. In order to identify it is necessary to define them.

Unlike industrial labour, it is rather difficult to give an exact definition of agricultural labour because, in the absence of a capitalistic type of agriculture in our country, a separate class of workers depending wholly on wages does not exist. Since the line between agricultural labourers and other agricultural groups is subject to a marginal shift, one class overlaps the other; -therefore, it cannot compartmentalize the agrarian society into distinct classes.

The basic definition of agricultural labour was provided by the Department of Census, Government of India. According to the Census of India, 1961, all those workers were included in the category of agricultural labour that worked on the farms of others and received payment either in cash or kind (or both). The 1971 Census excluded those farm workers from the category of agricultural labourers for whom working on the farms of others as a secondary occupation.

Many empirical studies have been done, related to agricultural labourer's problems, in the context of mechanization of agriculture and migration from one place to another. But these studies did not focus on the withdrawal of agricultural labour have become redundant with the passage of time.

The present study selected the problem to prove it in detail by mainly using primary data in five tahsils of five districts in Telangana State.

In the light of the hypothesis, objectives, the sample has been selected for the present study which is deals with the migration of agricultural labour in Telangana State.

Telangana Government has declared of 231 Mandals as Drought Affected Areas. Telangana Government has been reviewing the seasonal conditions from time to time in the State during the South West Monsoon 2015. During the South-West Monsoon period (1.06.2015 to 30.09.2015), the State has received an average rainfall of 610.8 mm as against normal rainfall of 713.6 mm, with a deviation of (-) 14%. Several manuals spread over 7 districts have received deficit rainfall along with severe dry spells that have caused withering and drying up of crops that are likely to result in a drastic yield reduction of several major rainfed crops. Government after careful examination hereby declares the 231 mandals (as in Annexure-II) in 7 districts i.e., Mahabubnagar (64), Medak (46), Nizamabad (36), Ranga Reddy (33), Nalgonda (22), Karimnagar (19) and Warangal (11) as drought-affected mandals.

On the basis of the government declared a simple random sampling technique was followed to choose 210 families belonging to various districts of Telangana state namely Mahabubnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Rangareddy, Karimnagar, and Warangal District.

### **Importance of the Study**

Several studies are concentrated on labour migration with coverage of the states and also national level with special attention of skilled and unskilled labours including with agricultural labour. But no one study has made an attempt on the migration of agricultural labour issue with special reference to Telangana before and after formation. However some studies are conducted on the migration of agricultural labour in the Andhra Pradesh state with the coverage of districts of Rayalaseema, and few districts of Telangana such as Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Nizamabad and Adilabad and these are studied on labours how are not depending on the agricultural sector.

In light of the above discussion, the present study is modest which it deals with the migration of agricultural labour in Telangana State.

### **Hypothesis**

An observation about the farm practices will reveal, the majority of farming activities are confined to a particular season. All crops do not need the agriculture labour uniformly in the different stages of their crop growth. Moreover, where there is adequate rainfall, irrigation work may not be required. If it is summer and crop free period, a farmer may not need more labour. Hence, this uncertainty on labour needs makes the life of agricultural laborers to consider alternate options.

To reduce the migration tendency of agricultural labour from rural another place the central and state governments implementing various policies and programs such as MGNREGA.

*The migration of agricultural labour shows the intensive impact on human lives.*

### **Objectives of the Study**

*In light of the importance and hypothesis of the study, the broad objectives are framed and they are given in the following:*

1. To study the meaning, nature, concept of the migration.
2. To study the migration of its impact on agricultural labour.
3. To examine the socio-economic status of the agricultural labour who are migrated.
4. To trace out the various problems of the migration on agricultural labour.
5. To suggest the appropriate solutions to reduce the migration with special reference to agricultural labour.

### **Research Methodology**

In order to assess the various reasons for which labour migrate from agricultural works, the study was carried out among agricultural laborers in Telangana. The needed data for the present research work has collected through primary and secondary sources.

### **Primary Source**

A simple random sampling technique was followed to choose 210 families belonging to various districts of Telangana state namely Mahabubnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Rangareddy, Karimnagar, and Warangal District.

From these five districts, five tahsils have selected, one from each district were selected using probability proportional to size (area) under wheat and paddy crops. From each selected tahsil, 30 migrant labourers were interviewed making a total sample of 210 families. The data from selected respondents were collected by personal interview method using a specially designed interview schedule. Migration during peak agricultural season being a common feature in the state, all persons who come to Punjab only during peak periods and return to their native places within the same year, were considered as short-term migrants. Persons working permanently with farmers on a yearly contract or year-after-year contract and visit their native place occasionally for a few days were considered as long-term migrants.

### **Secondary Source**

The research work will not be completed with the collection of secondary data. For this purpose the researcher has visited various libraries, government departments

for collection of books, journals, newspaper clippings, official and unofficial documents, report, research works and also visited the various internet sources.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The present study confined to the draught areas which are declared by the Telangana Government as on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The study focused on the migrants who are having the agricultural land but they are migrated to the other areas for livelihood.

### **Study Area**

From these five districts, five tahsils and from selected, one from each district, were selected using probability proportional to size (area) under wheat and paddy crops. From each selected tahsil, 30 migrant labourers were interviewed making a total sample of 210 families. The data from selected respondents were collected by personal interview method using a specially designed schedule. Migration during peak agricultural season being a common feature in the state, all persons who come to Punjab only during peak periods and return to their native places within the same year, were considered as short-term migrants. Persons working permanently with farmers on a yearly contract or year-after-year contract and visit their native place occasionally for a few days were considered as long-term migrants.

### **Findings**

- Out of the 210 family members, 649 (50.39%) members belong to a male category and 636 (49.60%) members are from female category.
- The data clearly indicates that the majority of the migrants is belonging to young and middle-aged (85.64%).
- Majority of the migrant's families belongs to Hindu religion i.e., 65.23% and next place occupied by the Muslim (2.95%).
- Out of the total percentage, majority of the families are belong to BC (46.61%) and the second place occupied by the STs (20.47%), SCs (17.61%) and 15.71% are OCs. The data clearly indicates that the BCs, STs and SCs are found, majority migrants.
- The data shows that the majority of the migrants are illiterates (64.50%) and only 35.50% are educated among the educated members 29.01% are found educated up to school level and 6.47% are collegiate education.
- According to the above data, it can be said that the majority of the migrants are either studied or dropped their education up to primary and SSC level (17.47% and 11.54%); while only 1.95% of migrant's educated up to degree level.
- Migrants are found as married (82.13%), 2.02% of as widows and 15.83% of areas unmarried.



- Majority of the migrants are having the nuclear family (88.57%).
- Out of the total percentage irrespective of the tahsil, majority of the migrant families are taking shelter in sheds and huts (arranged in open places) i.e., 34.28% and 21.42%; and remaining 21.90% are residing in semi-pucca houses.
- Out of the total percentage, majority of the migrant families are belong to agricultural labours (46.66%) and it is followed by the labour (29.04%), self-employed (10%) and farmers (9.04%).
- Majority of the migrants are depending on labour work (53.33%).
- Out of the total percentage, majority of migrated due to Poverty (88.57%) and it is followed by 77.14% of unemployment, 68.57% of lack of civic amenities, 68.09% of lack of irrigational facilities, 62.38% of for children's education, 61.90% of are due to landlessness, 56.19% of with equal %age smallholdings and indebtedness, 54.28% of due to low wages and 50% of due to crop failure.
- Out of the total percentage, the majority of families are migrated below 6 months period and 6 to 1 year i.e., 31.42% and 20%. It means 51.42% are short term or seasonal migrants and remaining 48.58% are long-term migrants.
- On an overall basis, pre-migration majority of the family are found in the income group below Rs. 150/- per day (75.71%) and after migration, the %age is decreased up to 42.86% and regarding the income group between Rs. 151/- and Rs. 250/- pre-migration found 24.28% and while after is 59.04% the difference increased up 34.76% and 8.09% are earning up to Rs. 251/- to Rs. 350/-.
- Majority of the migrant families are residing in two rooms (59.04%) and 32.85% are residing in one room.
- 96.66% of the families are not having safe kitchen facility.
- 96.66% of the houses are not having ventilation facility.
- 83.33% of the families are depending on public water taps for drinking water.
- 81.90% of the families are not having drainage facility.
- 62.28% are not having the bathrooms and latrine facility.
- Majority of the migrants are not affected by any deceases or other problems (39.52%), but 18.57% are suffered from malaria, and it is followed by serious fivers (14.76%), 11.90% are from chicken gunia, 8.57% are from dengue and 6.66% are hospitalized by hitting the insects due to lack of safety environment of the residence.
- 32.85% of families are not having the gas facility until today.
- Out of the total percentage, the majority of the migrants (62.85%) said that they did not have any and the remaining 37.14% had Bank Accounts.

- 7.14% of migrants are having Aadhar card neither migrant place nor their own village.
- 36.19% of migrants are not having the voter card invent they are migrated long back.
- 36.19% of migrants are not having the PDCs because these belong to short-term migrants.
- The employment generated programmes are not providing sufficient working days and also the work is not distributing/measuring between the aspirants at their village so they are migrated.
- Regarding spending pattern of earnings more than half % are spending on daily consumption, investment in agriculture, repayment of debts, health care, daughter marriage, well digging, house construction and children education.
- Response majority of the migrants said that they do not have any savings (86.66%) because they are struggling for clear the debts which laid for daughter's marriage, children's education and house construction.
- majority of the migrant had near 15 days per month who are purely depending on unskilled and it is followed by 25 days (74.28%) who are depending on unskilled and in driving field, 20 days (58.09%) who are working as domestic servants and self employed and remaining 55.71% of who are depending on watchmen and attendant work in private offices and in shopping complex and at contractions site.
- Majority of the migrants (54.76%) are not observed any changes in their lives because the earning amount is fulfilling the daily consumptions, indebtedness, children education and other unexpected expenditure, and remaining 45.23% observed some changes in their lives.
- 40.95% are not having the memberships in associations/SHGs/Trade unions because these are short-term/seasonal migrant agricultural labour.
- 40.95% are interested to go back to their negative village when the government will take the necessary initiatives such
  - The living expenses are too much in the migrant place, they are hardly overcrossing the expenses.
  - Sometimes they are not getting the work from two to three or more then in a week hence they are facing a lot of financial and other associated problems. In this situation, no one has given any kind of help at the migrant place.
  - They are unable to take care of their agriculture.
  - The government is neither given a cent land to construct the house, not a constructed house.

- They are residing in congested houses very hardly with their families.
- The government officers are not allotted PDCs.
- The bankers are not favoured to open the bank account.
- The private money lenders are not giving loan to them in an emergency they asked for a guarantee.
- Allot the agricultural land to landless people.
- Facilitate the bank loans to all for self-employment and also for overtaking the agricultural expenses
- Enhance the number of Programmes like MGNREGA.
- The government must take the initiation to prevent/abolish the social stigmas in villages.
- The government must take steps towards the development of the irrigational and drinking facilities in the villages.
- The government must take steps toward the development of small scale industries and training at the village level.
- Linkage loan should enhance all SHP at the village level.

### **Researchers Observations and Suggestions**

The study has revealed that most of the migrants were in the age of thirties and forties, belonged to general castes with faith in Hindu religion, were mostly illiterates and migrated in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nearly 62% of the migrants were earning a monthly income of Rs. 3000-5000. Low wages and rain-fed agriculture in the native place have been found the economic factors leading to migration, while poverty, poor civic amenities, leading a poor life, high aspirations and demonstration effect were social and psychological factors resulting to migration. Before migration, about 23% persons were unemployed and 60% were getting less than 250 days employment per year, but after migration, 41% got more than 300 days of employment and 31% got employment for 250-300 days.

As far as income is concerned, before migration 49% migrants were earning less than ' 10000 per annum, while after migration 34% could earn more than Rs. 50000 and 28% could get between Rs. 40000 and Rs. 50000 per annum. Nearly 58% of long-term migrants sent 50-70% of their income as remittances back home.

A general perception of the farmers regarding the migration of labour was that it has resulted in increased supply of labour, decreased wage rates and increased social tension, crime, drug menace and cultural invasion. Despite this, Telangana farmers preferred migrant labour due to their timely availability, quality of work and low wages. Some farmers preferred local labourers due to their trustworthiness and adjustment for advance payments.

Among various farm operations, migrant labourers were preferred for transplanting of paddy, while for harvesting, threshing, cattle tending, sowing, spraying, hoeing and tractor driving local labourers was preferred by most of the farmers. Also, with the migration of labour, there was a significant decline in the harvesting charges of wheat, transplantation charges of paddy and annual rates of the contract of a permanent labourer.

Thus, in an overall scenario, migration of agricultural labour has been found not beneficial, with the exception of an increase in crime rate, drug menace and cultural invasion. There is a need for government intervention to get the antecedents of migrant labour verified from their respective native villages before employment by the labours. The Government of Telangana should also maintain a demographic balance by regulating the inflow of migrants.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005), a government-sponsored hundred days' employment programme, is pertinent to the seasonal labour movement in the village. Since the employment programme was yet to start during the surveyed year (2006), it was not possible to collect information on it. However, one can broadly say that it has improved consumption level, removed food insecurity, and enhanced expenditure on health and purchasing capacity. These results vary across the households, depending on the number of job cardholders in a household, working days and wages. On the other hand, it has reduced the extent of migration, particularly during summertime. But it could not stop most of the households from migrating during non-MGNREGA period.

On the contrary, the programme has manifold problems such as poor implementation and administration, widespread corruption, the bias in the allocation of work, lack of supervision, manipulation of working days and wages, etc. There is ambiguity about the onset of employment, number of working days and wage rate every year. On the other hand, there is hardly any sustainable asset created under the scheme in the village. If this situation continues, the spirit of the scheme would be in jeopardy. It may neither benefit the rural poor nor be continued for long. Hence, there is a need to remove the obstacles in the implementation of the programme.

Migrant workers, those workers, who migrate from one area to another area within the state or country in order to get seasonal or temporary or part-time work in different sectors. Migrant workers, who are not organized under any trade unions and their labour standards, are not protected by the government as well as trade unions, these migrant workers are illiterate, ignorant, and belong to a backward community. They do not get minimum wages stipulated under the Minimum wages Act. Today, the real issue is how to extend human rights to all segments of the labour market. There are many groups of workers in the unorganized sector or informal economy, like migrant workers in agriculture, building and road construction, brick kilns, sugar

factories and others, for whom decent work is a very distant goal. The Government of India should ratify all the relevant international covenants that respect the dignity of labour, especially important ILO Conventions No.87. The freedom of association and protection of the right to organize the convention, and the ILO convention 98, the right to organize and collective bargaining convention. Workers, whether industrial workers or employed with the government should have an inalienable right resort to strike. Uniform labour standards in the context of unorganized sector workers, like migrant workers, should be implemented in rural and urban areas of India. It is necessary to protect migrant and other workers in the unorganized sector by International Labour Standards.

The main focus of the study was to examine the seasonal labour migrant's characteristics, nature of work, forms of migration and wage and working conditions at the worksite. The study village witnessed an exodus, which is largely seasonal in nature. From the village, more than half of the households have migrated to other regions after the monsoon or slack season in search of work/employment for a short period. Seasonal migration from the village is basically towards urban and rural areas, in which the urban migration stream is the predominantly large flow from the village. Urban migrants work mostly in the construction of buildings which involves hard work (loading and unloading), risk and long hours of work which obviously needs physical strength, and the urban stream is outnumbered by male migrants. Both rural and urban migrants migrate on a seasonal basis, the only difference being that urban migrants stay longer, that is, for up to one year, while rural migrants stay for less than six months. Half of the migrant households moved with all family members (the whole family) and the rest with either one or more members of the households. The migrants have to live in slums without basic facilities, though rural migrants were better off in this regard. There are wage differences between rural and urban destinations. Urban migrants earn more than their rural counterparts, and it is mainly because urban work is different from rural agricultural work. Thus the villagers travel between village and destinations repeatedly and are unable to come out of this vicious circle. This is taking place due to distress conditions in local agriculture and the labour market. It seems, until and unless there is an improvement in their economic status and resources, and agriculture becomes profitable and viable, they are not going to end migrating to other regions from the village.

This study explored the pattern of agricultural labour migration. It also examined the role of seasonal labour migration on migrant household's resources. It studies revealed that more than half of the households in the village migrated. The migration was more of seasonal and short-term in nature. It led to both rural and urban areas especially the latter. Landless labourers, as well as small and marginal landholding households, were more prone to migrate to rural areas, whereas medium and large landowners chose to work in Hyderabad city. In terms of resource ownership, non-migrant households were at an advantage over their migrants' counterpart. Indeed,

the inadequacy of resources stimulated such households to undertake migration in order to supplement their household income. Further, in both land and lease transactions, non-migrants outnumbered migrant households.

After the return from migration, there was hardly any acquisition of new or additional resources. A majority of the migrant households spent their income on daily food consumption, repayment of old debts and conducting their daughters' marriages. This did not allow them to accumulate additional resources. Thus, seasonal migrant households did not acquire resources due to inadequate earnings, consumption needs, seasonal stay and low wage rates. Obtaining additional resources in bulk is not possible for them by migrating once or twice alone. Hence they continue to migrate on a seasonal basis year after year.

There is a need for government intervention to develop rural India through encouraging the agricultural sector, and implementation of employment scheme and infrastructural development programmes. In doing so, government policies should focus on providing timely crop loans, seed supply, subsidized fertilizers, and minimum support price and extension services. This could redress most of the problems that farmers face today. Second, government employment programmes like MGNREGA should be implemented effectively. Steps should be taken to remove impediments that they face today. Hundred days of work should be ensured and wages paid without delay and deduction. Steps should be taken to create basic and sustainable infrastructure in rural areas. Finally, there should be appropriate policies and regulations to tackle the problems faced by seasonal labour migrants at the destinations. Safe and secure working and living conditions at the destination must be the object of the labour laws. Enforcement of migrant labour laws and protecting the basic human rights of the mobile population must be the foremost priority of the governments, both Central and State. Then only can the safe passage of migrants between the regions and States be ensured?