

# Causes and Impact of Agricultural Labour Migration: A Case Study of Ranchi District

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## ABSTRACT

India's economy has always been based on agriculture. The key component in the production of agriculture is laborers in the agricultural sector. The use of human resources is crucial. Due to agricultural workers moving to different regions of the nation to find work, there is an imbalance in the supply and demand for labor. Labor migration is still a significant issue that needs to be tackled in order to stabilize output in a certain area. The rate of labor absorption in agriculture may rise under certain conditions if cultivation is intensified. Migration is, and has been for millennia, a way of life for many poor people all throughout the world. However, globalization has drastically changed the scope of migration because it has made it easier for people to travel and made them more aware of opportunities elsewhere. In Jharkhand and India, seasonal agricultural laborer migration is not a recent phenomenon. During their rule, the British mobilized the labor force for commercial crop cultivation, mining, and other administrative objectives. The socialist-capitalist (mixed economy) model of development was implemented by the Government of India (GOI) through five-year planning after the country's independence. The regional gap is growing as a result of the inadequate agricultural development policies, which is fueling a rise in the seasonal migration of agricultural laborers. The goal of inclusive growth strategy is to integrate underrepresented groups into the mainstream economy, including women, marginalized groups, castes, classes, and tribes.

**Keywords:** Migration, Marginalized Groups, Opportunities, Labor

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term migration was usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of "personal convenience" and without intervention of an external compelling factor. It therefore applied to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to improve their material or social conditions and to improve the prospect for themselves or their family. The United Nations defines migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and business persons would not be considered as migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work in planting or harvesting farm products." Migration refers to the movement of people from one geographical location to another, either on a temporary or permanent basis (Ekong 2003). It is a common observation all over the world that rural-urban migration is a dominant pattern of internal migration. Migration is a selective process affecting individuals or families with certain economic, social, educational and demographic characteristics. People migrate in response to prevailing conditions and the

reasons for it differ from one individual to another. There are two main types of migration: first, internal migration, i.e. migration within one country, and secondly international migration, which means the movement from one country to another. Agriculture labour migration is also one type of labour migration from one place to another place for their livelihood. Agricultural labourers, especially in smaller villages away from towns and cities, are generally unskilled workers carrying on agricultural operation in the centuries old traditional ways. Most agricultural workers belong to the depressed classes, which have been neglected for ages. The low caste and depressed classes have been socially handicapped and they never had the courage to assert themselves. In some parts of India, agricultural labourers are migratory, moving in search of jobs at the time of harvesting. This movement has some time helped them to get the benefits of growth and development.

In Jharkhand rural districts, agricultural labor migration is becoming an increasingly significant factor in daily life. Such movement must now be understood as a fundamental component of rural farming families' coping, survival, and livelihood strategies rather than just an add-on to their primarily agrarian way of life. The essential component in the development of agriculture is laborers. Due to agricultural workers moving to different regions of the nation to find work, there is an imbalance in the supply and demand for labor. Labor migration is still a significant issue that needs to be tackled in order to stabilize output in a certain area.

In the modern world, high unemployment is a problem in most nations as the supply of labor grows faster than the need for it. India is one of these nations. There is currently a 35% labor force excess in the rural sector, which is an issue. The desire to improve their economic and social situation is the fundamental driving reason behind this massive excess of labor's internal migration. Other than unfair distribution and a lack of resources in the community, migration is largely caused by these factors. Despite the fact that migration is a widespread issue on a global scale. According to Sunny (2001), there are possibly more migrant workers in India than any other Asian nation.

The impact of migration on rural employment depends on several different factors. Cross-effects of asset acquisitions, financial transfers, workforce losses, and demographic shifts are influenced by a wide range of interrelated factors. Outmigration may be a solution to secure the livelihoods of the farmers who stay behind and reduce underemployment in agriculture in highly populated areas. Those who are underemployed during the agricultural lean season can find work in towns or in other locations, improving their salaries, allowing for a better deployment of labor thanks to seasonal migration. However, longer-term emigration may deprive rural communities of vital agricultural labor during the growing season. Remittances can somewhat offset the negative effects of outmigration by enabling hired labor to take the place of the lost labor force.

## 1.2 NEED OF THE STUDY

One of India's states with the most developed agricultural sectors is Jharkhand. With the development of high-yielding crop types and the implementation of new and improved farming techniques, the state's agriculture has experienced exceptional expansion since the middle of the 1960s. The state saw a tremendous growth in the need for farm labor due to the increase in cropping intensity and farm output as well as the shift in cropping pattern towards labor-intensive crops like paddy throughout the late 1970s. Farmers in the state were forced to rely on migrant labor because there was not enough local labor available, especially during the busiest seasons. As a result, Jharkhand experienced a massive

surge in the inflow of labor, mainly from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Rajasthan. Higher earnings and virtually guaranteed employment were initially Jharkhand's main economic draws for farm laborers looking to migrate there. But over time, social variables like caste and the networks of fellow villages began to draw people. Other reasons for their relocation to Jharkhand included the occurrence of floods and droughts, the lack of jobs, poverty, and debt in their home country. In the aforementioned framework, the current study has identified the main barriers encountered by migrant workers in their home country that cause migration and the impact thereof on migrant income and employment patterns. In Jharkhand agriculture, the general attitudes of the farmers regarding their choice for native or migrant labor related different agricultural operations were also investigated.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this paper are

1. To study the Causes and impact of agricultural labour migration
2. To identify whether migration has led to inclusive growth taking into consideration the income and education level of these people.

## 3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To examine the effects of international labor mobility of skilled and unskilled labor on the skilled-unskilled wage inequality in developing economies, Shigemiyabuuchia and SarbajitChaudhurib (2005) develop a three sector general equilibrium structure with diverse trade pattern and imperfection in the unskilled labor market. The analysis concludes that either type of labor's emigration or immigration is likely to have a positive impact on wage inequality. In particular, the impact of skilled labor emigration (or immigration) on relative pay inequality defies logic. For a developing nation like India that is overpopulated, these findings have significant policy consequences.

ManoloAbella (2005) While the expansion of trade may have compensated for prospective labor movements, its overall effects have been to spur economic growth, employment, and social and demographic changes that have led to a labor shortage. Pressure to recruit foreign labor to fill positions that native workers no longer want will intensify as the area economy expands at a rapid rate. Migration "should not be considered as a substitute for economic development in the nation of origin [as] progress ultimately depends on solid domestic economic policy," the 2006 Global Economic Prospects Report of the World Bank states.

On the basis of employees' views, Naresh Kumar and A.S. Sidhu (2005) make an effort to pinpoint the push and pull variables that affect interstate worker mobility. Interviews were conducted with a sample of 200 employees from 25 brick kilns spread over three districts in Jharkhand. According to this study, Jharkhand's industrial growth, improved employment prospects, and comparably higher earnings have emerged as the main inducers of labor migration. However, due to inadequate agricultural land, lack of development, and bad family economics, laborers were compelled to leave their own region. The study also discovered that in the process of migration, economic factors have become more important than non-economic ones. According to the study, labor migration needs to be controlled in light of the urban industrial sector's poor rate of absorption. To reach the public, clear plans that are effectively carried out are required.

### 3.1 RESEARCH GAP

One of the prevalent trends today is migration. Labor migration in agriculture is prevalent in modern times, too. Agriculture laborers experience a great deal of hardship in their daily lives, which forces many to leave their hometown in search of better employment and financial opportunities. There are many inequalities in Jharkhand, and Ranchi is more affected by the drought, which has caused agricultural laborers to migrate in search of employment. This study focuses on the particular group of migrant workers who have moved for work in the construction industry and seeks to demonstrate how such movement by members of the disadvantaged community has aided in their inclusive development.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was done in Ranchi, where the primary crop rotation is paddy-wheat. The paddy-wheat belt was purposefully chosen since migrant laborers mostly handle the important agricultural tasks, such as paddy transplanting, wheat and paddy harvesting, pesticide spraying, etc. Seven tehsils were chosen from this zone, and from those tehsils, one village from each tehsil was chosen using a probability proportional to the acreage planted in paddy and wheat. A total of 105 respondents, or 15 migrant workers from each chosen village, were questioned. A custom created schedule was used to conduct personal interviews with the chosen respondents to get their data. Short-term migrants and long-term migrants were the two groups into which all respondents were divided. Given that migration during the height of the agricultural season is a typical occurrence in the state, all individuals who visit Ranchi just during these times and leave for their home countries the following year were classified as short-term migrants. Long-term migrants were defined as those who worked with farmers permanently on an annual or recurring basis and occasionally traveled back home for a few days. A separate schedule was created and data from 35 farmers, 5 from each selected village, were collected to study the effects of migrant laborers compared to traditional laborers. The farmers' general perceptions of the impact of the migrant inflow on the supply of agricultural laborers, their wage rates, and the impact on village communities were recorded. The study employed basic statistical techniques including averages, percentages, etc. The existence of a difference in the wage rates for different agricultural operations for local and migrant laborers was determined using the Student's t-test.

### 5. RESULT AND DATA INTERPRETATION

Understanding the socioeconomic background of migrant laborers is the specific topic of the paper, and this study clearly demonstrates that social and economic exclusion in the native population is the primary driver of agricultural labor movement.

**TABLE .1 AGE OF THE LABOURERS**

SL.NO	AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	11-20	15	14.28%
2	21-30	32	30.47%
3	31-40	35	33.33%
4	41-50	23	21.90%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

These laborers have been grouped by age in table 1 above. According to the table, middle-aged people are more inclined to migrate in order to raise their economic standing. 30.47% of laborers are in the 21–30 age brackets, 33.33% are in the 31–40 age brackets, and the remainder are in the low and higher age brackets. The table clearly shows that the migration is quite noticeable in the very productive age range of 20 to 40 years.

**TABLE.2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF GENDER**

SL.NO	GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Male	35	33.33%
3	Female	70	66.66%
	TOTAL	100	100.0%

The data in table 2 above has also been broken down by gender. Men in this group migrate more frequently than women. Additionally, 33.33% of women are typically the dependent wives that accompany their husbands to their places of employment. The majority of the time, they work together with their husbands to increase the family's income, and they have shown a preference for working abroad over at home.

**5.1 FACTORS LEADING TO MIGRATION**

**TABLE-3:FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITHIN-MIGRATION OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERSTORANCHI**

FACTORS	LONG-TERM MIGRATION (N=73)	SHORT-TERM MIGRATION (N=32)	OVERALL (N=105)
<b>ECONOMIC</b>			
Landlessness	37(50.7)	16(50.0)	53(50.5)
Smallholdings	42(57.5)	13(40.6)	55(52.4)
Crop failure	21(28.8)	11(34.4)	32(30.5)
Rainfed agriculture	43(58.9)	20(62.5)	63(60.0)
Low wages	68(93.2)	31(96.9)	99(94.3)
Unemployed	20(27.4)	4(12.5)	24(22.9)
Indebtedness	24(32.9)	17(53.1)	41(39.0)
<b>SOCIAL</b>			
Less civic amenities	60(82.2)	23(71.9)	83(79.1)
Poverty	72(98.6)	18(56.3)	90(85.7)
Unpleasant social relations	5(6.9)	0(0.0)	5(4.8)
Political intimidation	3(4.1)	0(0.0)	3(2.9)
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL</b>			
High aspirations	58(79.5)	23(71.9)	81(77.1)
Poor life	67(91.8)	30(93.8)	97(92.4)
Demonstration effect	49(67.1)	13(40.6)	62(59.0)

**TABLE-4: PERCEPTIONS OF FARMERS REGARDING LABOUR MIGRATION IN RANCHI**

PARTICULARS	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	PARTICULARS
<b>SUPPLY OF LABOUR</b>			
Increase	30		85.7
No change	05		14.3
<b>CHANGE IN WAGE RATE</b>			
Decrease	28		80.0%
No change	07		20.0%
<b>SOCIAL IMPACT OF MIGRANT LABOUR ON VILLAGE COMMUNITY</b>			
Increase in drug menace	13		37.1
Increase in social tension	16		45.7
Increase in crime	15		42.9
Cultural invasion	13		37.1

To fully understand the migration dynamic, farmers’ perspectives on local and incoming migrants was recorded (Table 4). A different timetable was created to determine how farmers felt about the influx of migrants to Jharkhand. Regarding the availability of labor, 87.7% of farmers said that labor migration has increased the supply of labor for agricultural purposes, while 14.3% said there had been no change in the availability of labor. Regarding wages, 80% of farmers claimed a decrease in wages as a result of labor migration, while 20% claimed there had been no change in wages (Table 4).

**TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE**

Particulars	Extent of knowledge/adoption			
	Very low (<25%)	Low (25-50%)	Medium (50.1-75%)	High (>75%)
<b>LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE</b>				
<b>Migrants</b>	40 (38.09)	55 (52.38)	10 (9.52)	00 (0.00)
<b>Non-migrants</b>	03 (2.85)	30 (28.57)	60 (57.14)	12 (11.42)
<b>Level of adoption</b>				
<b>Migrants</b>	25 (23.80)	80 (76.19)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)
<b>Non-migrants</b>	20 (19.04)	40 (38.09)	45 (42.85)	00 (0.00)

The majority of immigrants (52.38%) had low levels of knowledge, while 38.09 and 9.52% had very low and middle levels, respectively, according to Table 5. However, the majority of non-migrants (57.14%) had a medium degree of awareness of agricultural techniques, whereas 28.57, 11.42, and 2.85% had low, high, and extremely low levels of knowledge, respectively. The majority of migrants (76.19%) had low levels of adoption, and the remaining individuals had very low levels. Contrarily, the majority of non-

migrants (42.85%) had a medium degree of adoption, compared to low and extremely low adoption rates of 38.09 and 19.04%, respectively.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Farmers generally believed that labor migration had increased the labor supply, reduced wages, and exacerbated social unrest, crime, the drug epidemic, and cultural invasion. Even yet, Punjabi farmers favoured migrant labor because of their prompt availability, high standard of work, and inexpensive pay. Local workers were favoured by some farmers because they were dependable and flexible with advance payments. Migrant laborers were chosen for planting paddy, while local laborers were preferred by the majority of farmers for harvesting, threshing, caring for cattle, sowing, spraying, hoeing, and tractor driving. The cost of harvesting wheat, planting paddy, and the annual rates of a permanent laborer's contract were significantly decreased as a result of labor migration. Thus, aside from the rise in crime, drug problem, and cultural invasion, it has been determined that labor migration for agricultural purposes is positive for Ranchi agriculture overall. Before migrant workers are hired by Ranchi farmers, government assistance is required to get their antecedents checked in their various home states. By limiting the inflow of migrants, the Jharkhand government should also maintain demographic balance. The rate of out-migration is higher in less developed agricultural areas, and it is especially high among farmers who lack access to land. It is determined that non-migrants had greater understanding of and adoption of various agricultural practices, as well as higher crop yield and productivity when compared to migrants. Few farmers grew a second crop in addition to rice; therefore a large number of small and marginal farmers were unemployed throughout rabi and summer and moved elsewhere in search of work, which is the primary reason for the shortage of agricultural laborers. Jharkhand is primarily an agricultural state. The majority of farmers rely on agriculture for their living. A more manually intensive industry, agriculture depends entirely on labor. That is why migration has an impact on agricultural production and activity. Therefore, there is a need to stop this migration and enhance their current means of subsistence. This can be done by carefully investigating and carefully considering the causes of the migration.

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