

Exploring the distribution pattern of rural labour migration and its impact on agriculture

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in villages namely Chengerkuthi Khalisamari, Choto Khalisamari and Jatamari of Coochbehar district of West Bengal to identify the distributional pattern of different types of rural migration and its effects on rural agriculture. The finding of the study indicates that, due to high remunerative and regularity of income the youth and middle age group are more attracted for migration, as a results of it labour crisis becomes an emerging problem of agricultural sector. These consequences results for increasing numbers of farm child labour. Less land-human ratio and high cost of cultivation repeals the rural population towards the bright street light of industrialized urban culture. Due to transformational change of occupation (from monolithic agriculture to versatile urbanized job opportunity) rural-urban type migration is most dominating. The tremendous influx of rural labour migration process radically affects the choice of cropping pattern, investment for agriculture and farm activities, labour sharing pattern of farm ecology. Level of women employment has increased on migrant households, particularly on poor households; however, work load of women has also increased.

Keywords : Changing in cropping pattern, farm child labour, labour shortage, women empowerment

In the recent era, migration is playing a pivotal and critical role in case of sustainable livelihood management in the rural areas of our country. The importance emerges not only from the movement of people between places but also from its influence on the lives of individuals in the rural areas. Broadly migration is a relocation of residence of various duration and various natures (Todaro, 1969; Hariss and Todaro, 1970). But, generally, migration dominates the domain of research and planning as its role in changing the lives of migrant's families both at the place of origin and destination. Four broad patterns of internal migration are: Rural-to-rural migration, Rural-to urban migration, Urban-to-urban migration and Urban-to-rural migration. Within these different streams rural-to-rural and rural to urban migration have been the predominant patterns of migration. The forms of labour migration can broadly be schematized as (i) permanent, (ii) circular or seasonal and (iii) commuting. Within these different forms, seasonal/circular and commuting migration of predominant. The nature of contemporary labour migration can be examined at various levels depending on the degree and extent of vulnerability to which the migrant worker is exposed such as, Migration for survival, Migration for subsistence, Sponsored migration and Voluntary migration. Rural out-migration tends to exert a downward pressure on agricultural labour per capita. The allocation of remittances on agricultural inputs could have increased if proper infrastructure facilities were present in rural areas for faster dissemination of modern agricultural

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technology for increasing agricultural production (Adhikary *et al.*, 2010). Level of women employment has increased on migrant households, which play a vital role for women empowerment particularly on poor households; however, work load of women has also increased (Pradhan and Talukdar, 2014). Many factors have been contributing to this poor performance of agricultural sector but one of the major factors is the rural-urban migration (especially by youths) which involves the shifting of labour force from rural areas to urban centers, in search of employment, better living standard, freedom of religion and others too numerous to mention, one of the factor affecting rural urban pattern of migration is the shortage of agricultural labour supply needed for agricultural production (Acharya *et al.*, 2014). Bull (2001) pointed out that the rural-urban pattern of migration takes more young men than women out of the rural areas, resulting in many women becoming the heads of the household and being responsible for agricultural production. White (2000) pointed out that the youths perform the most tedious jobs in the farm. It is also documented that, in most cases, the works of rural youths include, clearing of the farm, road, clearing of the village streets crops and animal processing, livestock raising artisan production etc. With more youth's migration into urban areas to earn a living, more aged people are now left to accomplish the tasks associated with farming, especially the tasks which are reserved for the youths. Therefore, there is no doubt that the added responsibilities will reduce the agricultural production. Among the factors responsible for the decline of

agricultural production is the case of rural-urban migration which involves the movement (especially the youths) from the rural areas to the urban areas in search of better living such as employment opportunities conducive environment etc. since the youths, who constitute the labour force in the rural areas, are actively involved in the rural-urban migration. Therefore there will be a shift of labour force to the urban centers. With this back drop the objectives of the study is to identify the different distributional pattern of migration in the study area, to recognize the changing scenario of cropping type preference and farm labour sharing pattern as a effect of rural out migration process and to understand the changing pattern of the source of investment in agricultural sectors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to different dimension of migration: rural-rural vs. rural-urban migration

Residential location	No. of respondent	Rural to rural		Rural to urban	
		f	P (%)	f	P (%)
Jatamari	30	10	33.33	20	66
Chengerkuthi Khalisamari	30	7	23.33	23	76.67
Choto Khalisamari	40	5	12.50	35	87.50
Total migrants	100	22	22	78	78

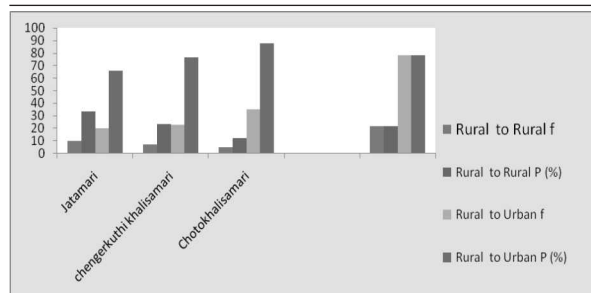


Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents according to different dimension of migration: rural-rural vs. rural-urban migration

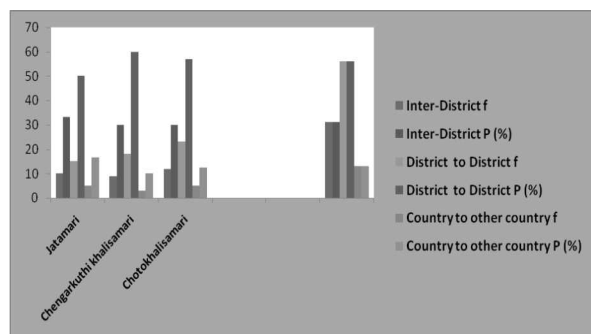


Fig. 2: Distribution of respondents according to different dimension of migration: district and state

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in three villages namely Chengerkuthi Khalisamari, Jatamari, and Choto Khalisamari under Khalisamari Gram Panchayat of Coochbehar district of West Bengal. For analysis of the socio-economic status of migrants household level the data was collected from the migrant individual as well as their family member also. Total number of respondent was 100. State, district, block gram panchayat were selected purposively but villages and respondents were selected by simple random sampling method. Data collection was done through personal interview method with the help of structured schedule. The statistical method used for analysis and interpretation of raw data were mean, frequency and percentage.

It is clearly revealed from the above table that rural-urban type migration is most dominating type of migration in the study area. The study reveals that 78 percent of migrants select the urban site as a migration location whereas 22 per cent of respondents select the rural ones. This clearly indicates that the migration process is not only geographical but also it is occupational. Rural economy is mostly dependent on agricultural sector, there is no such versatility of working sectors. This monolithic occupational scenario (dominated by agriculture) of the rural areas repeals the migrants towards comparatively versatile, diversified urbanized working sectors. The rural sites which are selected by the migrants for migration; in maximum cases those places are comparatively more developed with semi-urban demography than the residential villages.

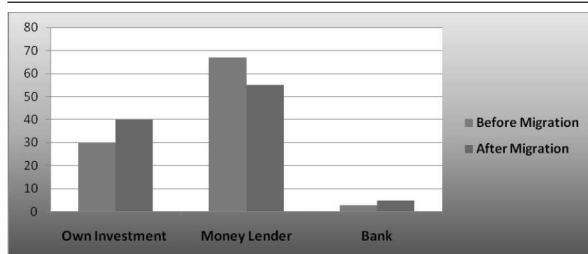
The study finds that most of the migrants (56 per cent) migrate to other districts. It is the fact that the migrants are attracted by the different state capitals to get high ruminative job with regularity of income and high social esteem. Thirty one per cent of migrants migrate in same district for better opportunity of job where as 13 percent of them selected abroad as destination. According to respondents the trend for migrate to abroad is increasing day by day.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to different dimension of migration: district and state

Residential location	No of respondent	Inter-district		District to district		Country to other country	
		f	P (%)	f	P (%)	f	P (%)
Jatamari	30	10	33.33	15	50	5	16.67
Chengerkuthi Khalisamari	30	9	30	18	60	3	10
Choto Khalisamari	40	12	30	23	57	5	12.50
Total migrants	100	31	31	56	56	13	13

Rural out migration and Agriculture**Table 3: Scenario before and after migration: source of money for investment in agricultural sector**

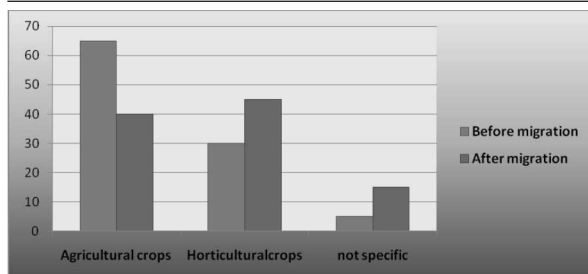
Source of investments	Before migration		After migration	
	f	P (%)	f	P (%)
Own resource	30	30	40	40
Money lender	67	67	55	55
Bank and other institutions	3	3	5	5

**Fig. 3: Scenario before and after migration: Source of money for investment in agricultural sector**

It is clearly shown that before migration, for the investment in agricultural sector 67 per cent of respondent had to depend on money lender, 30 per cent depends on own resources and 3 per cent on banks, whereas after migration the situation become changed. The dependency on money lender decreased. After migration for the investment in agricultural sector 55 per cent of respondent had to

Source of Money for investment in agricultural sector**Table 4: Scenario before and after migration: Source of money for investment in agricultural sector**

Cropping type preference	Before migration		After migration	
	f	P (%)	f	P (%)
Agricultural crops	65	65	45	45
Horticultural crops	30	30	40	40
Not specific	5	5	15	15



depend on money lender, 40 per cent depends on own resources and only 5 per cent on banks and other institution. This change clearly means that migration reduces the dependency on money lender and plays a positive role for self sufficiency. Before migration the principle dominating occupation of the rural area was agriculture. For the regular investment required for agriculture the respondents have to depends on private money lender and banking sectors. As the respondents are small and marginal maximum of them have to depend on private money lender. After migration due to regular remittance automatically the need for taking loan decreased. The findings revealed that after migration the migrant's family becomes more self-sufficient. These findings are similar to the findings of Afsar (1994) and Gardner (1995), which revealed that remittances pay for agricultural production and growing-season consumption, reducing the need to incur debt.

Fig. 4: Scenarios before and after migration: change in cultivation of crop types due to migration in the area

There is a significant change in the crop type preference for cultivation before and after migration. Before migration 65 per cent of respondent are preferred to cultivate agricultural crops where as 30 per cent of them are chosen horticultural crops, 5

percent of respondent are not so specific about their choice. But at present scenario (after migration) according to the respondent 45 percent of them choose horticultural and value added crop, 40 per cent are still choice agricultural crop and 15 per cent are not so specific about their choice. According to respondent's perception due to labour crisis, dependency on farm women and child for farm operations, the migrant's families are trying to avoid high labour intensive agronomical crop cultivation. In absence of main earning male member of family the farmwomen took decision about cropping type preference. Most of the farm women maximum time choose value added horticultural crops like chili, vegetables and other horticultural crops due to comparatively low physical labour required for those crops (according to migrants family perception).

Table 5: Change labour sharing pattern on farming activity: before and after migration

	Before migration		After migration	
	f	P (%)	f	P (%)
Farm man and women	78	78	20	20
Hired Labour	15	15	36	36
Farm women and child labour	7	7	44	44



Fig. 5: Change labour sharing pattern on farming activity: before and after migration

The above table implies that before migration in maximum cases (78 per cent) farm operations were done by farm man and women. Fifteen per cents of respondents indicates the dependency for farming operation on hired farm labour and only seven percent family depends on farm women and labour. After migration as the main earning male member is not involved on agricultural operations dependency on farm women and child labour increased (near about thirty seven percent)

The study reveals that the labour share pattern of farm sector had noticeably changed due to the rural

out migration process. Dependency on hired labour indicates the emerging problem of agricultural labour crisis and this trend is increasing day by day. On the other side the more dependency on farm women have a great impact on women decision making power and empowerment; though due to farm man out migration farm women has to face the excessive burden work which plays a negative impact. This finding is similar to the findings of Bull (2001), who pointed out that the rural-urban pattern of migration takes more young men than women out of the rural areas, resulting in many women becoming the heads of the household and being responsible for agricultural production. Involvements of farm child on farming operation increasing in increasing rate which tends to break the human resource development process and imbalance the social ecology.

Human mobility in its many and varied forms, within and across national borders, is a major characteristic and perhaps even one of the defining features of our contemporary world. People move in ever increasing numbers and for many different purposes related to work, family, social, educational, cultural, business or personal safety concerns; sometimes within their own countries, at other times across the nearest border or perhaps across the world. The study reveals that migration process enhances the qualitative change in cropping pattern, self dependency, and occupational diversity of the rural ecology. It is noticeable due to high remunerative and regularity of income the youth and middle age group are more attracted for migration. As a result labour crisis becomes an emerging problem of agricultural sector. These consequences results for increasing numbers of farm child labour. Less land-human ratio and high cost of cultivation repeals the rural population towards the bright street light of industrialized urban culture. As agriculture is the prime occupation of the rural sectors the migrants are choosing urbanized non organized occupation for regularity of income. That's for the rural-urban migration is most dominating in the study area. For instance, in areas experiencing outmigration of men, women are increasingly becoming farm managers. This can expose them to risks, such as gender-based discrimination when they find themselves in competition with male farmers as well as opportunities, such as greater control over household resources, and improved socio-economic status. Migration of male farmer also increases the farm rural labour.

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