

Seasonal Employment and Urban Migration of Tiruvannamalai District in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Since the mid-1990s, migration of workforces from rural to urban areas has accelerated in south India accompanied by remarkable urban-based economic development. To investigate the nature of such rural urban migration in detail, especially any differences influenced by economic class, a study village was selected from the Chengam block in Tiruvannamalai District. The most striking finding was that the traditional class structure in rural India based on ownership of farmland was basically unchanged even after non-agricultural jobs became much more important. The study has concluded that though both economic and non-economic reasons are responsible for migration of agricultural labourers, economic reasons are stronger. Not only that, push

forces of migration have been identified more strong than pull forces in catalysing migration. The study has given some policy implications also for consideration of policymakers in Indian agriculture labours.

Key words: rural-urban migration, employment structure, agricultural labourers

I. INTRODUCTION

As regard the wellbeing of agricultural labourers, there are a variety of indicators like employment, wages, consumption, indebtedness etc., on which very substantial information is provided by the well-known official data systems. There is a huge and sophisticated literature on the methodologies of these large scale data systems, quality of information emanating from these, the trends with reference to the above noted variables, and a host of other relevant issues. It is not my objective here to get into a discussion of most of these issues. For instance, whichever analytical perspective one adopts, a significant deceleration in the rate of growth of agricultural output is likely to impact adversely on wages, employment opportunities etc. for agricultural labourers. There is already a substantial literature that has tracked the trends, with reference to most of these aspects, during the reform period. The socio-economic condition of agricultural labourers obviously has complex linkages with the larger structure and pace of economic transformation, and specific public policies addressed at their well-being. However, it is only natural that in a predominantly agricultural country (in terms of occupational structure), well-being of labour in rural areas has a lot to do with the developments in the agricultural sector. It seems evident that the neo-liberal economic regime since the early 1990s has affected the rural economy in a number of adverse ways with ominous consequences for the well-being of agricultural labourers, who in any case are at the bottom of the heap; it may not be an exaggeration to say that the agrarian proletariat is probably trapped for some time now, in one of the most distressing situations since independence. True, the recent National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, whose implementation began in February 2006 on a limited scale, is a most welcome step by the current central government, and the reach of the programmes needs to be up scaled-up and expanded. Apart from its potential contribution to the well-being of rural labourers, its demand-side effect for the economy as a whole is obvious. However, it needs to be kept in mind that the larger picture, in terms of overall economic policies, continues to be unfavorable for Indians rural economy, as the neoliberal assault on it continues. The scramble for resources in rural India – land, forests, mines, water – by national and international capital continues unabated; in fact, in the

tribal dominated central India belt, comprising of parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand, instances of dislocation, land alienation and loss of access to a variety of natural resources for the peasantry appears to have accelerated in the recent years, with obvious ominous consequences for those at the bottom of the rural economy. The reasons for rural migration can be grouped into push factors and pull factors. Several studies in the past, including the seminal paper by Todaro (1969)¹, have tried to explain the migration behaviour in developing countries in terms of push and pull factors. The rural exodus could be attributed to a number of these push-pull factors and hence migration itself was the outcome of the relative strength of these factors. Both of these heads were sub-divided into economic and non-economic factors. Push factors of economic nature were lack of continuous employment opportunities, low wages and the like at origin. The non-economic factors included family feud, social differentiation, etc. Likewise, pull factors of economic nature included high wage and availability of job and the non-economic nature included city attraction, skill development, etc.¹¹ In most developing countries, the wages and incomes of agricultural workers are below urban wages, prompting rural-urban and international migration. However, the very poor are often trapped in rural areas, working seasonally in commercial agriculture. There are sharp contrasts between countries in the status of hired farm workers by commodity and country. For example, in the Philippines, 95 percent of sugar cane workers were reported to be poor, while only 20 percent of tea plantation workers in Sri Lanka were reported to be poor

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are framed for the purpose of present study.

1. To study the socio economic status of landless agriculture labourers in the study Area.
2. To examine the problems of landless agriculture labourers in the study area.
3. To study the respondents' views on persistence of poverty and measures to Eradicate poverty.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated on the basis of content and meaning of the framed objectives and employing appropriate statistical tools tests them.

1. There is significant socio economic difference with respect to problems faced by
Landless agriculture labourers in the study area.
2. There is significant difference with respect to respondents' views on persistence of
Poverty and measures to eradicate poverty.

Methodology

This study aims at analyzing the living conditions of landless agriculture labourers in the rural areas of Tiruvannamalai district. This type of analysis helps the planners to identify the socio-economic causes and associated reasons behind the occurrence of low living conditions among the landless labourers in the study area. This study is primarily analyzing the socio economic conditions in the exploratory framework. Then the household's socio-economic characteristics are correlated with the causes and magnitude of poverty and thereby it gives analytical orientation to this study. Thus, this study is partly exploratory and partly analytical nature. Four villages are selected from Chengam block. The selected villages are Anathavadi, Arasankanni, Melchengam and Melpallipattu. From each village 30 households are selected as sample. Thus totally 120 respondents are selected from the 4 villages by adopting simple random sampling method. Further stratification is also adopted with a view to give relative weight age to their households of different occupational background.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher visited each village and approached the landless labourers. The researcher has collected data from them with the help of well-structured interview schedule. The respondents have extended full cooperation in successful data collection. By and large the responses were good and fair. The collected data were classified and tabulated with the help of a master table. Cross tabulation was made according to the requirement of the situation.

Results and Discussion

In this chapter the social background of daily migrant wage labourers, causes of their migration, awareness of labour law and rights have been described. Also how their socio-economic background are related with the uses of their migration and the awareness of labour law and rights, have been described.

Social Background

It is important to mention the social background of migrant labourers in Chengam block. The social background has been studied as age, religion, caste, education, distance, nature of job, family size, family type, daily income and working days (in a month). The facts on these variables are presented separately as the following:

The below the table shows that out of 120 (100.0%) there are 15 (12.50 %) respondents belong to the age group of 16-25 years. 54 (45.00 %) respondents belong to the age group of 25-35 years, 40 (33.33%) respondents belong to the age group of 35-45 years. 6(5.00 %) respondents belong to the age group of 45-55 years and 5 (4.17%) respondents belong to the age group 55 and above years. Thus, it indicates that majorities (45.00 %) of respondents are in the age group of 25-35 years and lowest numbers (4.17) of respondents are in the age group of 55 and above years. It means that more migrants are of younger (25-35 years) age group.

Age wise Respondents

Table 4.1 Age of Daily Migrant Wage Labourers

Age group of years	No. of Respondents (%)
16-25	15(12.50)
25-35	54(45.00)
35-45	40(33.33)
45-55	6(5.00)
55 and above	5(4.17)
Total	120(100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

Sex Wise Respondents**Table 3.2 Sex Wise Respondents**

Sex	No. of Respondents (%)
Male	74(61.67)
Female	46(38.33)
Total	120(100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

It could be noted that majority of the male respondents' (61.67%) live in the thatched houses, whereas, majority of the female respondents' dwell in the sheet form of houses.

Religion wise Respondents**Table 4.3 Religion wise Respondents**

Religions	No. of Respondents (%)
Hindus	77(64.16)
Muslims	23(19.17)
Christian	20(16.67)
Total	120(100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

The above table shows that out of 120 (100.0%) respondents, there are 77(64.16) respondents belong to Hindu religion, 23(19.17) respondents belong to the Muslims 23 (19.17) and 20 (16.67) respondents belong to Christian religion. Thus, it indicates that majority 77(64.16) of respondents belong to Hindu religion and lower number 20(16.67) of respondents belong to Christian religion. It means that migrant has been there connected with Hindu religion.

Caste wise Respondents**Table 3.4 Castes Caste wise Respondents**

Caste Group	No. of Respondents (%)
FC	3(2.50)
BC	35(29.17)
MBC	39(32.50)
SC/ST	43(35.83)
Total	120(100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

This table shows that out of 120 (100.0%) there are 43 (35.83) respondents belong to SC/ST caste, 39(32.50) respondents belong to MBC, 35(29.17) respondents belong to BC caste and 3 (2.50) respondents belong to FC caste. Thus, the above facts show that the large number ((35.83) of the respondents belong to the SC/ST caste and lower number (2.50) of the respondents belong to FC caste. It means that migrant has been there connected with SC/ST caste.

Daily Income**Table 3.5 Daily Incomes of Daily Migrant Wage Labourers**

Daily Income (Rupees)	No. of Respondents (%)
60 - 80	64(53.33)
80 -100	25 (20.83)
100 -120	19(15.83)
120 and above	12(10.00)
Total	120 (100.0%)

Source: Field Survey

Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

The above table shows that out of 120 (100%) there are 64 (53.33%) respondents belong to the daily income group of 60-80 rupees, 25 (20.83%) respondents belong to the daily income group of 80-100 rupees, 19 (15.83%) respondents belong to the daily income group of 100- 120 rupees and 12 (10.0%) respondents belong to the daily income group of 120 and above rupees. Thus, it indicates that majorities (53.33%) of respondents are in the daily

income of 60-80 rupees and lower numbers (10.00%) of respondents are in the daily income of 120 and above rupees group. It means that migrant has been there connected with 60-80 rupees daily income group.

Working Days (in a month)

Table 3.6 Working days (in a month) of Daily Migrant Wage Labourers

Working Days (in a month)	No. of Respondents (%)
6 –10 days	16(13.33)
10 -15 days	23(19.17)
15 -20 days	37(30.83)
20 -25 days	25(20.83)
25 and above days	19(15.83)
Total	120(100.00)

Source: Field Survey,

Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

The above table shows that out of 120 (100%), there are 16 (13.33%) respondents belong to the working day group of 6-10 days, 23 (19.17%) respondents belong to the working day group of 10-15 days, 37 (30.83%) respondents belong to the working day group of 15-20 days, 25 (20.83%) respondents belong to the working day group 20-25 days, and 19 (15.83%) respondents belong to the working day group 26and above days. Thus, it indicates that large working day group of (30.83%) respondents are the day of (15-20 days) and the lower number of (13.33%) respondents are the working days group are 6-10 days. It means that migrant has been there connected with 15-20 working group.

Table 3.7 Village Wise Respondents' Views on Measures to Eradicate Poverty

Villages	Assured Irrigation, Watershed Development and Crop Diversification	Multiple Cropping and Dry land Techniques Use During Drought	Development of Activity Diversification through Women Self Help Groups	Self-Employment Generation through Anti-poverty Programmes	Promotion of non-farm Employment of through Rural Industrialization	Total
Anathavadi	4(3.33)	7(5.83)	4(3.33)	9(7.50)	6(5.00)	30(25.00)
Arasankanni	7(5.83)	6(5.00)	7(5.83)	5(4.17)	5(4.17)	30(25.00)
Melchengam	8(6.67)	2(1.67)	8(6.67)	9(7.50)	3(2.50)	30(25.00)
Melpallipattu	8(6.67)	4(3.33)	7(6.67)	5(4.17)	6(5.00)	30(25.00)
Total	27(22.50)	19(15.83)	26(21.67)	28(23.33)	20(16.67)	120(100.00)

Source: Field Survey

Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

In this study respondent 23.33 per cent of them suggest that poverty can be eradicated through self-employment generation with the help of anti-poverty programmes. Out of the total 120 respondents 21.67 per cent of the respondents' suggest that poverty could be eradicate through development of activity diversification with the help of women self-help groups. Moreover, 16.67 per cent of them view that poverty can be eradicated by promoting non-farm employment through rural industrialization. It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that the respondents suggesting self-employment generation through poverty alleviation programme in the first order, the second, practicing multiple cropping and dry land farming development of activity diversification through women self-help groups the third, creation of having assured irrigation, watershed development along with crop diversification the fourth and promotion of non-farm employment through rural industrialization to eradicate poverty the last. In general creation of irrigational infrastructure and employment generation are the common view among the respondents of dry villager.

A study of data in table indicates the village wise respondents' problems of employment and livelihood. It can be assessed with the help of 24 factors on a 5-point rating scale. These include liquor consumption habit reduces household expenditure, inadequate availability of local employment, exploitation of land owning class, low wage to women labour, repayment of household debt, lack of skill to start industries Lack of alternative employment opportunities, lack of bargaining power, difficult to education children, child labour practice, lack of training to do non-agricultural work, increase in the

price of essential commodities, lack of organized labour union, social discrimination, long hours of working, low wage rate, inadequate days of availability of employment through national rural employment guarantee act, difficult to get benefit from the government scheme, difficult to take adequate food, migration in search of employment, working during hard summer season, inadequate income to meet the household needs, inadequate supply of essential commodities through fair price shop, and non-availability of protected drinking water.

Out of the chosen 24 problems of employment and livelihood the respondents rate first order problem of liquor consumption habit that reduces household expenditure as their secure mean score is 4.60 on a 5 point rating scale. This shows the highest level of problem of employment and livelihood. The respondents rate second problem employment and livelihood in terms of inadequate availability of local employment. In this perception, they secure a mean score of 4.16 on a 5-point rating scale. The respondents rate third order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of Exploitation of land owning class as they secure a mean score of 4.07 on a 5 point rating scale. In general, respondents rate fourth order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of Low wage to women labour as they secure a mean score of 4.05 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents rate fifth order employment and livelihood in terms of Repayment of household debt as it secures mean score 4.04 on a 5 point rating scale.

Table 3.8 Village Wise Respondents' Problems of Employment and Livelihood

Variables	Anathavadi	Arasankanni	Melchengam	Melpallipattu	Total
Long hours of working	3.75	3.9	2.75	2.65	3.26
Lack of bargaining power	4.05	4.11	3.95	3.87	4.00
Working during hard summer season	3.15	3.22	2.55	2.69	2.90
Low wage rate	3.91	3.86	2.55	2.66	3.24
Child labour practice	3.44	4.05	3.96	4.05	3.87
Low wage to women labour	4.11	4.22	3.97	3.88	4.05
Lack of organized labour union	3.88	3.99	2.75	2.65	3.32
Inadequate availability of local	4.11	4.22	3.97	3.88	4.16

employment					
Migration in search of employment	3.75	3.50	2.42	2.56	3.05
Social discrimination	3.75	3.90	2.59	2.87	3.27
Lack of alternative employment opportunities	4.11	4.15	3.95	3.87	4.02
Inadequate income to meet the household needs	3.11	2.49	2.69	3.15	2.86
Difficult to education children	4.21	4.33	3.75	3.65	3.98
Difficult to take adequate food	3.42	3.56	2.79	2.66	3.10
Increase in the price of essential commodities	4.15	4.26	3.59	3.6	3.34
Inadequate supply of essential commodities through fair price shop	2.76	2.65	2.44	2.52	2.59
Non availability of protected drinking water	2.26	2.52	1.96	1.89	2.15
Difficult to get benefit from the government scheme	3.49	3.89	2.67	2.45	3.12
Repayment of household debt.	3.75	3.90	4.21	4.33	4.04
Liquor consumption habit reduces household expenditure	4.21	4.31	4.44	4.26	4.60
Exploitation of land owning class	3.99	3.78	4.22	4.31	4.07
Inadequate days of availability of employment through National rural employment guarantee act	3.79	3.52	2.89	2.49	3.17
Lack of skill to start industries	4.12	4.15	3.97	3.89	4.03
Lack of training to do non-	3.9	3.87	3.55	2.49	3.45

agricultural work					
Total	3.72	3.76	3.27	3.22	3.47

Source: Field Survey, Note: Figures in Parentheses denote percentages

Regarding, Lack of skill to start industries, the respondents' secure a mean score of 4.03 on a 5 point rating scale. It occupies the sixth order problem in employment and livelihood. The respondents rate the seventh order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of Lack of alternative employment opportunities as their secure mean score in 4.02 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents secure 4.00 as mean score on a 5-point rating scale with respect to their problem of employment and livelihood in terms of Lack of bargaining power. It is the eighth level problem of employment and livelihood. The respondents rate the ninth order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of difficulty to educate children as they secure a mean score of 3.98 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents rate tenth order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of child labour practice as they secure a mean score of 3.87 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondent rate eleventh order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of lack of training to do non-agricultural work as they secure a mean score of 3.45 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents secure a mean score of 3.34 on a 5 point rating scale with respect to their problem of employment and livelihood in terms of increase in the price of essential commodities and it occupies the twelfth order of priority of employment and livelihood. The respondent rate the thirteenth order priority to the problem of employment and livelihood in terms of lack of organized labour union as they secure mean a score of 3.32 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondent's rate fourteenth order priority to the problem of employment and livelihood in terms of social discrimination as they secure a mean score of 3.27 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents rate the fifteenth order of problem of employment and livelihood in terms of long hours of working as they secure a mean score of 3.26 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents rate the sixteenth order priority to the problem of employment and livelihood in terms of low wage rate as it secures a mean score of 3.24 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondent's rate seventeenth order priority to the problem of employment and livelihood in terms of inadequate days of availability of employment through National rural employment guarantee act as it secures a mean score of 3.17 on a 5point rating scale. The respondent's rate eighteenth order of problem of employment and livelihood towards difficulty to get benefit from the government scheme as it secures a mean score of 3.12 on a 5-point rating scale.

The respondents give nineteenth order employment and livelihood in terms of difficulty to take adequate food as it secures a mean score of 3.10 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents give twentieth order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of migration in search of employment as it secures a mean score of 3.05 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents secure 2.90 mean score on a 5 point rating scale with respect to their problem of employment and livelihood in terms of Working during hard summer season. This problem is rated as the twenty -first level. The respondents rate twenty second order of problem of employment and livelihood in terms of inadequate income to meet the household needs as they secure a mean score of 2.86 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondent's rate twenty third order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of inadequate supply of essential commodities through fair price shop as it secures a mean score of 2.59 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents give twenty fourth order problem of employment and livelihood in terms of non-availability of protected drinking water as it secure mean score 2.15 on a 5 point rating scale. It is interesting to observe among the chosen villages that the respondents of Arasankannivillage occupy the first position with respect to their overall realization of problems of employment and livelihood as they secure a mean score of 3.76 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents' of Anathavadivillage occupy the second position with respect to their overall realization of problems of employment and livelihood as they secure a mean score of 3.72 on a 5-point rating scale. The respondents' of Melchengam village come to the third position in their overall realization of problems of employment and livelihood as they secure a mean score of 3.27 on a 5-point rating scale. The respondents of Melpallipattu village occupy the last position with respect to their realization of problems of employment and livelihood as they secure a mean score of 3.22 on a 5-point rating scale.

Major Findings

Social Background

- The majority (45.00%) of respondents are in the age group of 25-35 years and lowest number (4.17%) of respondents are in the age group of 55 years and above. It means that more migrants are of younger (25-35 years) age group which is the most productive age group.

- The majority of the male respondents' (61.67%) live in the thatched houses, whereas, majority of the female respondents' dwell in the sheet form of houses.
- The large majority (64.16%) of respondents belong to Hindu religion and lower number (16.67) respondents belong to Christian religion.. It means that largely migrants are Hindus.
- The large segment (32.50) of the respondents belong to the MBC caste and lower number (2.50) each of the respondents belong to FC. It means that migrant in majority belong to MBC caste.
- The majority (32.50) of respondents are SSLC and very small number (2.50)of respondents have any other education. It means that migrants largely SSLC or very less educated.
- The largest segment (33.33)of the migrants come from 10 to 20 Kms distance and smaller number (16.67%) of the migrants come from 20 to 30 Kms, 16 and above Km. It means that larger number of migrants come from nearby (10 to 20 Km.) distance.
- The majority (53.33) of respondents has daily income of 60 to 80 rupees per day and smaller number (10.0%) of respondents has daily income of 120 rupees and above. It means that large majority of migrants get less wages i.e. 60- 80 rupees daily.
- The large number (30.83) of respondents gets work for 15 to 20 days per month and the smaller number (13.33) of respondents get work for minimum 6-10 working days. It means that larger number gets work for 15-20 working days.

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