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## Pattern Of Agriculture Labour Migration In Mahabubnagar District Of Andhra Pradesh, India

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### **Abstract:**

*In Andhra Pradesh, migration from rural areas is an important issue that is gaining more significance year after year. Moreover, the extent, nature, characteristics and pattern of migration have been evolving over time. In fact, the growing part of the migration taking place is seasonal and cyclical in nature. Seasonal or short duration migration is certainly not a new phenomenon in India. However, the magnitude of rural labour circulation is of recent origin, and a direct consequence of structural changes in the economy. Seasonal or circular migration could be largely distress driven and stimulated by the partial or complete collapse of rural employment generation, the economic difficulties of cultivation and the absence of alternative employment opportunities in underdeveloped regions of the country. In reality, it has become an integral part of livelihood strategy pursued by a large number of poor people living in agriculturally underdeveloped areas. In this context, the present paper focuses on examining the nature and characteristics of seasonal migrant households. It also aims to evaluate the form of migration, and finally analyses the migrants' wages, work conditions and the expenditure pattern of earnings from migration. The study analysis is based on a primary level survey conducted in mid 2010 in Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, India. The study reveals that migration from the village is essentially seasonal and cyclical in nature, and differs for both rural and urban migrants. Indeed, it is taking place mainly for survival and repayment of debts.*

### **1.Introduction**

Migration is a complex phenomenon and closely related to economic and social factors as well as economic development. The exodus from rural areas is one of the vital issues in India. Because of the ongoing structural changes and consequent alterations in the economy as a whole, the nature, magnitude and pattern of migration have been evolving over time (Reddy, 2003; Srivastava, 2005). There has been growing interest in labor migration as a part of understanding its nature, extent, pattern and direction of the transformation process in India. The studies on migration argue that migration is, by and large, closely linked with two basic arguments, that is, people are compelled to migrate due to development-driven factors and/or distress-driven factors.

### **2.Methodology**

The study is conducted in the Yellikal village of the Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. The study village has 200 households. The survey enumerated all the households during the agricultural year 2009-10. Out of the 200 households 114 migrant households and 86 non-migrant households are categorized purposefully. For the purpose of analysis, simple tools like averages, percentages, ratios, etc. were used.

#### *2.1.Characteristic Of Migrant Households In The Study Village*

The study village has 200 households, out of which 114 households or 57 per cent of households took part in migration. The migrant households can once again be divided into two groups based on the area to which they migrated. Among these households, some had members who migrated to rural areas and the others, to urban areas. The study divided households from the village into three categories, namely, rural migrant, urban migrant and non-migrant households. There are 51 households who migrated to rural destinations and 63 households to urban destinations in search of work/employment. In other words, 26 per cent migrated to rural areas while 32 percent of households migrated to urban destinations (see Table 1). What is more important here is that more than half of the households in the village have one or more of its family members migrating outside the village in search of employment. This indicates that a large proportion of households depend on migration and shows how important migration is for them, and it seems to be one of the main sources of livelihood. The study also observed that this exodus is a result of lack of employment; crop failure and lack of alternative opportunities in the agricultural slack period.

Type of Households	Rural migration	Urban migration	Non-migratory	Total
No.of. Households	51(25)	63(32)	86(43)	200(100)

Table 1: Distribution Of Migrant And Non-Migrant Households In The Village

Note: Figures In Brackets Indicates Proportion Of The Households

Source: Field Survey, 2009-10

In the village, 431 individuals from 114 migrant households migrated to other places for work. Out of the total migrants, 38 per cent migrated to rural destinations and 62 per cent to urban destinations. It can be interpreted that employment opportunities are relatively more in urban areas and probably available throughout the year. On the other hand, in rural destinations, work will be available during the agricultural season, and later period there will not be available. Maybe because of this reason some of the migrants opted to migrate towards urban areas.

When we look into the gender aspect, most of the females (52%) migrated to rural destinations and males (48%) predominantly towards urban destinations out of total migrants. Among the rural migrants, females constitute 59 per cent and males constitute 41 per cent. In case of the urban migrants, the males constitute 52 per cent while females constitute 48 per cent (see Table 2). Rural destinations received more female migrants because agricultural activity demands certain skills such as sowing, weeding and harvesting which are traditionally considered as suitable and preferable for females. In the case of urban destinations, there is greater demand for labour in construction work which is heavy, hard and risky and therefore considered more suitable for males than their counterparts. The fact is that urban migration involves long distances and duration of stay at the work site. Another reality is past work experience and contacts with employers also play an important role in deciding the nature of work and destinations the in rural migratory process.

Sex	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Total Migration
Male	67 (41)	139 (52)	206 (48)
Female	97 (59)	128 (48)	225 (52)
Persons	164 (100)	267 (100)	431 (100)

Table 2: Distribution Of Individual By Migrant Status In The Village

Note: Figures In Brackets Indicates Proportion Of The Households

Source: Field Survey, 2009-10

## 2.2.Caste Composition Of Migrants And Non Migrant Households.

There are nine social groups (castes) in the village, in which the Lambadi's form the predominantly large social group and constitute 145 households or 72 per cent of the households. The other predominant social groups in the village are Madigas, Chenchus, Reddis, Kammaris, Mangalis, Goudas, Mudirajs, and Kummaris with 23, 14, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2 and 1 households respectively. In the case of the Lambadi's, 84 households are involved in migration, out of which 34 per cent or 50 households migrated to urban areas and 23 per cent or 34 households to rural destinations. In the case of the Madiga community, there are ten households, out of which eight households migrated to rural areas and two households to urban areas. In the Chenchu community, there are 9 households which migrated, out of which eight migrated to rural areas and one household migrated to an urban area. All of the five Reddy households have migrated to urban areas. The Gouda caste has not had any migration from the village. The Chenchu and Madigas seem to have a preference for migrating to rural areas, while the rest of the caste groups have a preference for migration to urban areas. Though there are other social groups who have witnessed migration, the most migration prone communities are STs and SCs which are the most deprived sections of society. This indicates the intensity of issue and how important migration is for those communities in the village. It shows the lack of alternatives in the village and thereby their great dependence on migration earnings for eking out a livelihood.

Social group	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Non-Migration	% of total Households
Lambada	34 (23)	50 (34)	61 (24)	145 (73)
Chenchu	8(57)	1(7)	5(36)	14(7)
Madiga	8(35)	2(9)	13(57)	23(12)
Gouda	-	-	3	3(100)
Mangali	-	3(100)	-	3(2)
Kammari	-	1(25)	3(75)	4(2)
Kummari	1(100)	-	-	1(100)
Mudiraj	-	1(50)	1(50)	2(1)
Reddy's	-	5(100)	-	5(2)
Total	51(25)	63(32)	86(43)	200(100)

Table 3: Distribution Of Households According To Social Group And Migrant Status

Note: Figures In Brackets Indicates Proportion Of The Households

Source: Field Survey, 2009-10

### 2.3. Distribution Of The Number Of Landowning Households

If we look into the overall land holding pattern, we find that a major portion of land is concentrated in the non-migrant households. Among the migrant households, 58 urban migrant households own 251 acres, while 47 rural migrant households have 171 acres of land. In the case of urban migrant households, 27 households of small farmers own 111 acres of land, 17 households of marginal farmers own 31 acres, and 12 households of medium farmers own 83 acres of land. The number of medium landowning households is low, but the land in their possession is larger than that owned by the other groups. In the case of urban migrant households, five are landless. In the case of rural migrant households, a major portion of the land is concentrated in the small farmer group, out of which 19 households have 77 acres. There are 12 households in the marginal group with 21 acres, ten households comprising the medium-size group owning 74 acres and five households which are landless households among the rural migrant households in the village. There is indication that landless marginal farmers tend to migrate to rural destinations. Among the other groups, as the size of land owned increases, there is a trend to migrate to urban areas. The study reveals that owning land is not a significant factor because food grain from cultivation is minimal and not sufficient for the rest of the year. Thus, regardless of owning land, people are forced to migrate for work to supplement their agricultural income during the monsoon season. The study observes that owning land alone is not enough; other resources also play an important role in the decision to migrate.

Land Size	Rural Migration		Urban Migration		Non-migratory	
	Household	Acres	Household	Acres	Household	Acres
Landless	10 (20)	-	5 (8)	-	8(9)	-
Marginal	12 (24)	20.5 (12)	17 (27)	31 (12)	14(16)	31(7)
Small	19 (37)	77 (45)	27 (43)	111(44)	33(38)	132(30)
Medium	10 (20)	74 (43)	12 (19)	83(33)	26(30)	222(50)
Large	-	-	2 (3)	26(10)	5(6)	62(114)
Total	51(100)	171 (100)	63 (100)	251 (100)	86(100)	447 (100)

Table 4: Distribution Of Land Owned By Different Households  
 Note: Figures In Brackets Indicates Proportion Of The Households  
 Source: Field Survey, 2009-10

### 2.4. Occupation Of Migrant And Non-Migrant Households

Out of the 200 households in the village, 104 households reported cultivation as the main occupation, 71 households reported their main occupation as agriculture and 25 households reported occupation as non-farm work within and outside the village. As mentioned earlier, there are only 23 households that are landless, implying that the remaining 48 households not only have land but are also supplying labour in the village labour market. The village has 25 households who are not in farm activity. The large numbers of cultivating households are non-migrants (70 households). Among non-migrants eight labour households and four non-farm households. In contrast, in the case of rural migrants, the number of labour supplying households is greater than the cultivator households; there are 31 households of agriculture labourers while the remaining 18 households are those of cultivators. Among the urban migrants, labour households are greater (32) but there is also a sizeable section of non-farm households (17) (see Table 5). Here, we can argue that a large proportion of migrant households are those with landless poor labour, and marginal and small farmers who are immensely dependent on earnings from migration as compared with non-migrant households. In other way, cultivating households have the choice whether to migrate or stay at home whereas nonfarm labour households, perhaps on account of seeking employment might migrate to other areas.

Occupations	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Non-Migration	Total
Cultivators	18 (17)	16 (15)	70 (67)	104 (100)
Labour	31(44)	32 (45)	8 (11)	71 (100)
Non-Farm	4 (16)	17(68)	4 (16)	25(100)
Grand Total	53 (27)	65 (33)	82 (41)	200(100)

Table 5: Occupations Between Migrant And Non-Migrant Households In The Village  
 Note: Figures In Brackets Indicate The Proportion Of The Households  
 Source: Field Survey, 2009-10

### 2.5. Forms Of Migration

There are three major forms or channels of migration through which migration is taking place from the village. There are migrants who migrate individually, with the whole family and group migration (migrate along with fellow migrants). There are 11 households with individual migrants, 91 households in which all the members of the family migrated, while 12 households migrated in a group (see Table 6). It seems that individual migration and family migrations are dominantly towards urban destinations while group migrations are predominantly more towards rural destinations.

Mode of Migration	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Total
	Household	Household	Household
Individual	4(36)	7 (64)	11(100)
Family	39(43)	52 (57)	91(100)
Group	8(67)	4 (33)	12 (100)

Table 6: Unit Of Migration And Form Of Migration In The Study Village

Note: Figures In Brackets Indicates Proportion Of The Households

Source: Field Survey, 2009-10

### 2.6. Destinations Of Migrant Households As Per Sex

There migrant households who migrated towards the villages in Guntur (17%), Kurnool (24%) districts and to nearby villages (4%). And a large proportion of households (55%) migrated to Hyderabad city. The households which migrated to Guntur or Nalgonda are engaged in agricultural activities such as cotton and chili picking, while 55 per cent of urban migrant households are engaged in various sectors such as construction. We discuss this in detail in the next section. When we look at this in the gender aspect, 139 male migrant and 128 females

migrants migrated to Hyderabad, 48 female and 38 males migrated to Nalgonda, 25 males and 35 females to Guntur and 4 males and 14 females to nearby villages. Migrants who migrated to rural areas mainly depended on past work experience and contact with employers, and migrated to work in agricultural fields in nearby Districts and villages. The urban migrants migrated to Hyderabad individually, also with the help of friends and relatives. The study observes that destination selection is largely influenced by the accessibility of the information about work, awareness of lifestyle at work place and experience and suitability of work.

Type of migration	Destination	Household	Number of Migrants		
			Male	Female	Total
Rural Migration	Villages in Guntur District	19 (17)	25(42)	35(58)	60(100)
	Villages in Kurnool	27(24)	38(44)	48(56)	86(100)
	Near by Village	5(4)	4(22)	14(78)	18(100)
Urban Migration	Hyderabad	63(55)	139(52)	128(48)	267(100)

Table 7: Destinations Of Migrant Households As Per Sex

Note: Figures In Brackets Indicates Proportion Of The Households

Source: Field Survey, 2009-10

### 2.7. Nature Of Migration

Rural migrants migrate to villages in Kurnool and Guntur districts for agricultural work. They engage in cotton and chilli picking at different rural destinations. First, they work in the cotton fields till the end of that activity, and then shift from cotton to chilli picking in the same village or spend some time in neighbouring villages at the destination place. Urban migrants largely migrate towards Hyderabad city in search of work/employment from the village. The urban migrants participate in different kinds of work in the city such as construction of buildings, brick-kilns, poultry farms, auto driving, hamali (load & unload labourers), paper collecting and work in private factory/service as labourers. Unlike urban destinations, in rural areas there is only a single occupation which is agriculture and allied activities. Overall, 56 per cent of labourers are male and 44 per cent are female migrant labourers working in different urban related activities out of the total (80) urban main workers. Among those largely working in the construction sector, 53 per cent are female labourers and 48 per cent, male labourers. Of the brick-kilns labourers, 52 per cent are male and 48 per cent are female. Fourteen per cent of the male migrants are auto-rickshaw drivers (see Table 8). There are very small numbers of migrant workers in other sectors. Those with basic skills can work in factories and brick kilns and as auto-rickshaw drivers, while those with no particular skill can find work in activities like construction, hamali (load & unload labourers) and paper collection. In fact, the majority of the migrants are seen to be labourers in building construction activity.

These illiterate and unskilled migrants belong to deprived communities, however those who have better education and skills are working in factories and private sector, but they are small in numbers. Interestingly, the proportion of male migrants in construction work is less than that of females, and this could be because they are uneducated, less-skilled and might not have upgraded their skills for working in the urban sector. This suggests that the majority of the illiterate and unskilled migrants enter the construction sector.

Name of work	Male	Female	Total
Construction Labour	38(48)	42(53)	80(100)
Auto Driver	14(100)	-	14(100)
Brick Makers	14(52)	13(48)	27(100)
Poultry	2(67)	1(33)	3(100)
Hamali	1(100)	-	1(100)
Factory Labour	8(73)	3(27)	11(100)
Paper collection	-	2(100)	2(100)
Grand Total	77(50)	61(44)	138(100)

Table 8: Occupation Of Migrants In Area Of Destinations

Note: Figures In Brackets Indicates Proportion Of The Households

Source: Field Survey, 2009

### 2.8. Time Of Migration

In the case of rural migration, 92 per cent labour and farmers migrated in the month of November, and 7 per cent migrated in the month of October. This is because, in the village, agricultural activities come to an end by late October and November every year. After the completion of agricultural activities, these households move out to work outside the village. These migrants return by the month of March and April. In this, out of the total rural migrant households, only 35 per cent return in the month of March, while 64 per cent return by April. At destination places, the peak agricultural operation for cotton and chilli crops starts every year in the months after October. Interestingly, those who migrate early return late, and these migrants are worse off in terms of resources than other migrants. Thus, a weak resource base can influence decisions with respect to time of migration and the number of family members that migrate.

Going		Return	
Months	Households	Months	Households
October	4 (8)	March	18(35)
November	47(92)	April	33(65)
Total	51(100)	Total	51(100)

Table 9: Time Of Going And Return Of Migration Of Rural Migrants From The Village

Note: Figures In Brackets Indicate The Proportion Of The Households

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The schedule for the urban migrants is in sharp contrast to that of the rural migrants. Here, in the month of April 40 per cent of urban migrant households have migrated and 38 per cent of households migrated between May to June. In the month of November, 19 per cent of the households migrated (Table has not been presented here). Here, the present study observed that for urban migrants whether to migrate or not, and when to migrate will depend on the rainfall level or monsoon, agricultural instruments including animals, credit availability for agriculture and the household's needs. Thus, based on these factors they decide whether to cultivate or migrate; if not cultivating, they can migrate at any time. Their return to the village from destination will depend not only on this factor but also on other factors such as returning in time to attend social events and festivals.

### 2.9. Wage Rates At Rural Destination

Employers provide migrants with transport for reaching the destination and provide them with accommodation facilities. Rural migrant labours work in cotton and chilly picking work in the villages of Kurnool and Guntur districts. They stay nearby, in the employer's home or close to his fields. They work in the fields from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. These migrants get wages according to the cotton or chilly they pluck (weight) which is measured in terms of kilogram. For each kilogram they get paid Rs.2. In this matter, there is no gender difference. All

migrants' get wages according to their ability to pluck the cotton or chilli. Daily average cotton picking is around 20 to 25 kilograms. In rupees, a single labourer would get around Rs. 90 as a daily wage. Average migrants get daily around 80 to 90 rupees. Thus, a single labourer earns around Rs.5, 500 to Rs. 6,000 in his duration of two to three month of working period. In the case of couples, this will be around Rs.11, 000 to 12,000.

### 2.10. Work Conditions At Rural Destination

These migrants start work daily at 5 o'clock for the preparation of their food for breakfast as well as lunch. They start work in the fields at 6 a.m. and continue till five in the evening, sometimes even later. In between work, they get an hour's break in the afternoon. Rural migrants pick between 25-30 kg of cotton daily. In case of children and elderly persons, it is between 15-20 kg daily. They have to carry their cotton or chilli load to the weighing centre for counting. Most of the migrants expressed satisfaction regarding working conditions at the destinations, but complained about bad weather (hot conditions) during the working period. Almost all the migrants expressed satisfaction about their employers, a few said that some employers cheated them in matters of cotton weight and payments, showed high expenses, and gave less wages at the end of the work. For the return journey, they did not provide any vehicle or money for transportation of the migrants to their place of origin.

### *2.11. Wage Rates At Urban Destination*

Urban migrants are working in Hyderabad city and they are engaged in different types of work like construction, brick-kilns, poultry, auto driving, hamali, paper collecting and factory work. Each labourer's wages differed according to the nature of work. There are wage differences between the male and female workers in the urban sector. A male worker gets Rs.175 and female gets Rs.150 for construction work. In brick-making work, a male gets Rs.150 and a female gets Rs.125 per day as daily wage. In the case of poultry workers, a monthly fixed salary is reported with males getting around Rs.3000 to 3500 rupees and females, around Rs.2500 to 3000 per month. Auto drivers hire autos on a daily rent basis, paying a rent of Rs.200 to 250 per day. Excluding auto rent charges, they earn Rs. 200 to 300 daily. In case of hamali they earn daily around Rs.150 to 200. In case of paper collection labourers' daily earnings are around Rs.100 to 150. Lastly, private service labourers also get a monthly salary of around Rs.3500 to 4000. Urban migrant factory and private service labourers earn the most, followed by auto drivers, poultry labourers, and those working in brick-kilns, construction, hamali (load& unload workers) and paper collection.

### *2.12. Work Conditions At Urban Destination*

Urban migrants get up at 6 'o'clock and start preparing their breakfast and lunch. They have to search for work at urban labour markets or 'Labour Addas' at 8 'o' clock in the morning. Sometimes, whether they get work or not depends on different factors like nature of work, wage, timing and distance. All these factors work at labour markets or labour addas. Some migrant households complain that sometime they have to wait at labour addas till 12 'o' clock noon. On an average, they get work weekly for a minimum of four to five days and maximum of six days. After the selection of work, employers provide vehicles like lorries and tractors, etc. for transportation to the work place. Some cases employers pay the transport charges. At the work site they have to lift heavy concrete and cement blocks and bricks. This would continue from 9 a.m. 6 or 7 p.m. in the evening. These construction labourers have a lunch break for one hour, their only time to rest during the whole day. In the case of brick making also, labourers face a huge work burden and have to work extra time. In poultry farms, work burden is not much when compared to construction and brick-kiln work. For urban migrants, the work burden is heaviest in construction followed by brick-kilns, hamali (load & unload workers), and poultry farms respectively. Factory/ private service workers in Hyderabad like auto drivers do not face as many problems as the above-mentioned labourers.

## **3. Summary And Conclusion**

The main focus of the study was to examine the pattern of seasonal labour migrant's, nature of work, and wage and working conditions at the work site. 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. The major urban destination is Hyderabad city and migration is dominated by males. Rural migration is towards Guntur and Kurnool districts and dominated by female migrants. The study learnt that there is a distinction between rural and urban in terms of their work nature. This is determined by many factors such as information regarding work and stay, awareness about lifestyle of destinations, skill, education level and other households' compositions. Nature of work between rural and urban destination differs. Rural migrants work in agricultural fields, like cotton and chilli picking, which is traditionally preferred by and suited for female migrants. Urban migrants work mostly in 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 (whole family) and the rest with either one or more members of the households. Most of the migrant households own or hold land and other resources, but still they have to migrate because in the slack season, there is no work or other alternative available locally. They are left with no other option and are thus forced to move out of their homes. It was learnt from the study, that working and living conditions of urban migrants are hard, exhausting, and risky and involve long hours. 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. There is no wage discrimination in rural destinations, but this problem persists between male and female migrants in urban work. People migrate every year after the agricultural season and return before monsoon season begins, and this cycle continues year after year. 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. These points to the need for government intervention for the development of agriculturally dominated rural India through employment and development programmes. Finally, there is a need for appropriate policies and regulations to tackle the problem of distress seasonal migrants, both at origin and destination places.

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