

Migrant Workers in Udupi Taluk

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spinning and manufacturing sectors. In the spinning sector, the private units provided employment at an average of 228.97 days in a year. At the same time, the co-operative units have generated employment at an average of only 151.08 days a year and this difference is found statistically significant. As regards the manufacturing sector, though the private units have provided employment of more number of mandays to workers than the co-operative units, no significant difference is observed.

Average annual sales per ratt/loom: Another important factor that needs special attention while analysing the impact of the working of government agencies is the area of sales. Here average annual sales per ratt in the case of spinning sector and that per loom in the case of manufacturing sector is taken as a variable to measure the impact. The average annual sales per ratt/loom (in quantity) by the sample units is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 reveals that in the case of spinning sector, the private units fared significantly well in average annual sales per ratt (quantity) compared to co-operative units. In this case the average annual sales per ratt in the private sector units is 43.02 quintals, while it is 14.80 quintals in the co-operative sector units.

The analysis of average annual sales per ratt/loom in terms of value also shows (Table 8) that private sector units enjoyed better position both in spinning and manufacturing sectors.

Table 8 denotes that though the private sector units show better performance as regards the average annual sales per ratt/loom in terms of value in the spinning and manufacturing sectors, significant difference between the two groups is observed only in the spinning sector. In the spinning sector, the average annual sales per ratt of the sample private units is Rs 59,602.95 while it is only Rs 13,080.62 in the sample co-operative units. In the case of manufacturing sector, the average annual sales per loom of the sample private units is Rs 1,14,476.24. But it is only Rs 90,179.93 in the co-operative units. However, the statistical test reveals that this difference is not significant.

In order to analyse the impact of the working of the government agencies in the development of co-operatives of spinning and manufacturing sectors, a total of six variables have been studied. Out of the six variables analysed, co-operative units have performed better only in the case of average number of workers employed. Thus, significant positive impact is observed only in one variable. In the case of all other variables such as ROI, average percentage of capacity utilised, average mandays of employment generated, average annual production per ratt/loom, average annual sales per ratt/loom, the private sector units have done better. Hence, it is safe to conclude that the working of the government agencies has not made significant positive impact in the development of coir co-operatives.

Migrant Workers in Udupi Taluk

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The increasing labour migration to Udupi taluk needs to be understood and a long-term strategy evolved to deal with problems it poses.

LABOUR migration has increased considerably in recent decades. The places of destination of these migrant workers are urban areas, particularly the fast developing outskirts of urban areas, where the work potential is very high. As a matter of fact, it is mainly because of economic reasons that the labourers migrate. A large chunk of migrant workers are in the unorganised sector. The construction sector has enormous capacity to absorb unorganised workers.

Udupi taluk in Dakshina Kannada district (Karnataka state) has been witnessing an increasing flow of migrant workers during the last decade. A rough estimate shows that the total number of households of migrant workers in this area is about 8,000-10,000. The total population in these households would be approximately 25,000-30,000. Of this, 18,000-20,000 are workers engaged in different fields in and around Udupi, especially in construction. The male-female ratio in the families of migrant workers is more or less 50:50. The composition of population in migrant families shows that children, young and adult members below the age of 45 years form 80 per cent and the rest is made up of older people. Of the migrant workers 61 per cent (excluding the children who are not of school-going age) are absolutely illiterate. Among the literates, the highest level of literacy in majority of the cases is not more than eighth standard.

The migrant workers in and around Udupi are mainly from other parts of Karnataka (79 per cent) although there are migrants from the nearby states of Tamil Nadu (16 per cent) and Kerala (5 per cent) as well. Some 66 per cent of migrant workers from Karnataka are from a single district, Bijapur, and 90 per cent of Bijapur migrants are from just two taluks – Hungund and Badami. Because of the predominance of the Bijapur workers among the migrants in Udupi, all migrant workers in this area are called Bijapur workers.

The process of migration among the migrant households in the area of study shows three patterns: (a) In the first instance one adult member of the family migrates. He arranges or locates a place for dwelling and such other things to set up his family in the destination. Then at a later stage, he brings the family to stay with him. This

process of migration is observed among 46 per cent of the households. (b) In the first instance a part of the family migrates. After settling in the place of destination, within a short period, the rest of the family is also brought. Among 16 per cent of the households this process of migration is observed. (c) The whole family migrates. This is observed in the case of 38 per cent of the households. The migration pattern in the households shows that: In the case of 89 per cent of the households, only a part of the family has migrated and in 11 per cent the whole family has migrated. Some 52 per cent of the households have migrated permanently and the rest 48 per cent are seasonally migrating households. A majority (96 per cent) of migrants are Hindus – 17 per cent SCs, 63 per cent from backward communities and the rest from the other castes. Most of the migrant households still retain some interest in the form of land or/and house, in their native places.

The average number of persons in a migrant household is seven, the average number of earning members two. The average earning per day per earning worker is Rs 62. The average number of working days per month per earning member is about 24. Therefore, the income from earning members of a migrant household is roughly Rs 3,000 per month. The earnings of a migrant household provide approximately Rs 14.3 per day per individual. The percentage of earning members among the non-migrated persons is relatively less than the percentage of earning members among the migrated persons. While 60 per cent of the migrant workers are earning, only 44 per cent among the non-migrant workers are earning members. The average earning of a non-migrant earning member is about Rs 770 and that of a migrant earning worker is about Rs 1,500 per month.

Barring exceptions, for almost all the non-migrant workers, the only source of income is agriculture. However, the agricultural work is highly unrewarding in their native places. Of the earning members in the migrant households, 95.5 per cent are daily wage earners, 1.5 per cent are monthly wage earners and 3 per cent are scrap collectors whose earnings depend on the collection of scrap they do. The range of earnings per month of monthly wage earners is between Rs 200 and Rs 1,000. The daily wage earners earn between Rs 50 and Rs 100 per day. In the

case of scrap collectors a day's earning, depending on the quantity and quality of materials collected, ranges between Rs 10 and Rs 150. Some 57 per cent of the migrant workers find jobs in the place of destination throughout the year. However, the rest, 43 per cent are able to get job only in the non-rainy seasons. During monsoons, when the work potential is less in the place of destination, they go to their native places and find agricultural work. The earnings from this would be barely sufficient for them to make ends meet.

Some 71 per cent of the migrant workers in Udupi live in thatched sheds which are put up by them in clusters. There are 14 important clusters of these sheds in and around Udupi and almost all have become slums. The huts were put up by the migrants themselves and the cost involved in putting up a shed is between Rs 250 and Rs 1,000. These sheds are no more than four mud walls, surrounding 60 to 80 square feet area, over which is a sort of roof with whatever material (gunny bags, tin sheets, plywood wastes, palm leaves, polythene sheets) is available on hand. A quarter of migrant families live in the verandahs of the municipal town hall or in some open ground, where they do not have any shelter at all. (In these places, the 'residence' could easily be identified by the three stones, put in a triangular order, meant for cooking purpose). The sources of water for all purposes – drinking, cooking, washing, etc – are public taps and wells, and in a few cases wells in private houses near their dwelling place. The cooking hearth for 58 per cent is three stones placed in triangular order, for 41 per cent the hearth is made of mud and for the rest a kerosene stove. Most migrant households use a kerosene lamp, diesel lamp or candle for light, about 8 per cent of the households can only afford street lights.

The average monthly expenditure of a migrant household is Rs 1,250 with 89 per cent of the households having savings ranging between Rs 100 and Rs 7,000. However, for majority of the households the savings range between Rs 500 and Rs 1,500 only. Only for a few households did savings exceed Rs 1,500. The average household savings workout to Rs 1,750. The most prominent mode of savings is 'safe-keep with the merchants'. Though these merchants do not pay any interest, they readily oblige the depositors by giving back their money on demand at any time. Some 38 per cent of the households have savings in the form of liquid cash with them. Mostly the 'savings' are sent to people in their native places usually to repay some old debts. Some of the savings are for consumption purposes. Some 65 per cent of the migrant households have debts ranging between Rs 100 and Rs 5,000. Banks, relatives, money-lenders and merchants are the major sources of

borrowings. Most of which go to their places of origin to maintain their families as also to pay off old debts. Except a few vessels and a few gold ornaments of insignificant weight and value, migrant households do not possess any movable assets worth the name. The movable assets of most households are not worth more than Rs 2,500. A small proportion of the households purchase lottery tickets regularly. On an average, such households spend as much as Rs 820 per month on lottery tickets. The average spending on daily lottery tickets is Rs 504 and for regular lottery tickets Rs 316 per month per household. About 27 per cent of the family income is spent on lottery tickets.

The aspirations of migrant workers are few and they do not have any long-term vision or perspective of their life. Future expectations and planning for future are conspicuous by their absence in the agenda of the households of migrant workers. This is evident from their attitude towards schooling their children. In the migrant households among the children of school-going age, 38 per cent are not sent to school at all, 14 per cent are drop-outs, and only 48 per cent are in schools. Schooling beyond eighth standard is given only to a few children. Schooling beyond 10th standard is a rarity in this migrant community. Two-thirds of the population belonging to school/college-going age group does not attend schools/colleges. Some of the reasons for not sending children to school are: 'Non-affordability', 'dislocation due to migration', 'the child not interested in studies', 'there is no use educating the female children', 'require person for looking after small children', 'require person for looking after cattle'.

On an average out of every eight children born one dies at a very early stage. Parents' illiteracy and ignorance are the two major reasons for child mortality. Superstitions, self-medication, unhygienic living conditions and malnutrition are the important contributing factors to the high rate of child mortality. Caste and religious consciousness is very dominant among the migrant households covered by this study. Inter-caste marriages are virtually nil. Parents are very particular about their children getting married to partners from the same caste.

The increasing flow of migrants to Udupi taluk is definitely going to pose many socio-economic problems, both for migrants and the local people. Unless the civic and public authorities are able to understand and appreciate the problems of the migrants and the problems created by the migrants and work out a long-term strategy to accommodate, adjust and arrest the growing flow of migrants, the situation may well become unmanageable within a couple of years.

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