

URBAN INDIA



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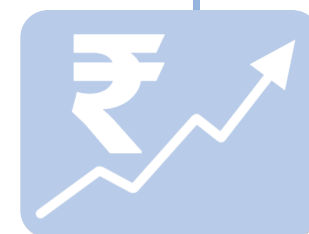


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Special Issue on Migration

Overview of Migration
Seasonal Migration
Gendered Migration
Migrant Child Labour
Job Search and Labour Market Outcomes
Migration and Conflict
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- Full citation for all references and sources must be provided.
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LINKING SEPARATE WORLDS UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF RURAL-URBAN SEASONAL MIGRATION IN INDIA¹

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Abstract

Migration of rural poor to cities is assumed to be one of the biggest factors leading to rapid urban growth. Despite contradicting evidence, the focus of both the urban policies and rural development strategies has been to prevent or reduce rural out-migration. While urban centres are being increasingly exclusionary towards migrants, rural development policies are guided by the assumption that effective and efficient rural development programs with the infusion of technology, finance and better market linkages could reduce population mobility by making villages self-sufficient. In reality, rural citizens are forced to move out of the villages due to the endemic social and ecological challenges faced by them. Based on field studies at source as well as destination, this paper focuses on the experiences of tribal migrants in the state of Madhya Pradesh and argues that this gamut of flawed policies is an outcome of lack of micro-level understanding of seasonal migration.

¹ The present paper is based on the data collected for the research study conducted by Samarthan, Center for Development Support (Bhopal) to inform its program called "Promoting the Rights of the Socially and Economically Deprived Migrant Workers and Strengthening Urban Governance for the Poor in Madhya Pradesh" in 2011. The research study was sponsored by Jamshedji Tata Trust, Mumbai and the technical support was given by Aajeevika Bureau, Udaipur. We would like to thank Mr. Izharuddin Qureshi and Mr. Manohar Gaur of Samarthan (Bhopal) and the field team of Prayas (Chhindwara) for their enormous contributions to this paper.



Introduction

Policy and management responses to increasing urbanisation in India have been rather ad-hoc. Over the years, India has witnessed a more concentrated form of urbanisation, with a few select cities growing larger, with very little geographic dispersion in patterns of urbanisation. Instead of exploring how small and medium towns could play a role in the process of urbanisation, urban management policies continue to focus on larger cities. An orthodoxy that has emerged over time is that, migration of rural poor to the cities is one of the biggest factors leading to rapid urban growth as well as the main reason for urbanisation of poverty. Therefore, preventing migration by keeping migrants home became important and the focus has been on rural livelihoods and poverty alleviation in the belief that rural development programs with the infusion of technology finance and better market linkages could reduce population mobility by making villages self-sufficient.

This policy assumption is based on a narrow appraisal of the process of migration informed by economic theories that focus on the role of regional deprivation and development in migration. They argue that migration is primarily an outcome of unequal regional development patterns that creates a one-way movement of people from less developed rural areas to developed urban areas (Kothari, 2002; McDowell and De Haan, 1997).

Evidence and experiences from the ground tend to disprove many of these assumptions. For example in rain-fed, drought prone landscapes, agricultural production is poor and the ecological conditions do not lend themselves for improvement through any technological interventions. Among socially marginalised communities like tribal people and dalits, general shortages of cultivable land and capital, exclusionary social structures and the lack of skills to engage in non-farm rural activities make them more vulnerable to local livelihood challenges. These underlying factors are rarely addressed by rural development or poverty programmes, hence migration continues to occur despite large investments in rural development.

Moreover, in contrast to the dominant narrative on internal migration that alludes to regional inequalities and one-way migration flows, micro-studies conducted around the 1970s in various rural areas across the country found that large sections of the village population were migrating out of the villages for short durations of period (Rao, 1994; Nelson, 1976) and would return



back to their villages for the rest of the duration of the year. This trend raised issues regarding the belief that migration is largely a one way population flow.

Further, the literatures on migration in developing countries like India have focused on migration as the last resort for survival (Rao, 1994; Ramana Murthy, 1991; Reddy, 1990). These studies found, in the case of Andhra Pradesh, extreme economic and often social hardships drive migration that is being undertaken mostly by landless or land-poor, unskilled and illiterate poor labourers. They identify the deteriorating conditions agriculture created by drought, crop failure and poor terms of trade as the key reasons for migration. More recently, the idea of 'migration as a coping strategy' has gained much attention (Davies, 1996). It is also seen as an act integral to people's survival and livelihood strategies (Mosse et al, 2002; Conroy et al, 2001; Rao, 2001) and not just as a response to emergencies. Rural people engage in strategising of their livelihood options, and based on the use of agency, they determine whether migration would help them cope with a given situation or not (Deshingkar, 2003). Based on her findings from Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, Deshinkar (2003) argued that circular migration in India is increasingly becoming a strategy for survival and coping for not just the poorest but for the rural population in general.

Owing to sluggish agricultural growth and limited development of the rural non-farm sector, rural people search for alternate livelihood strategies that could help them survive during times of poor agricultural production. Certain sections of the rural population are forced to move out of villages due to the endemic challenges faced by them in their areas. This calls for a reorientation of rural development policies that provide opportunities for people to engage in non-farm activities within the village. At the same time, more inclusive urban policies are needed that look beyond the orthodoxy (Kundu, 2012).

Internal Migration: Analysing the Macro Data

In the absence of a large-scale data collection exercise on seasonal migration per se, it becomes very difficult to engage in an intellectual endeavour to understand its implications on both rural and urban India. The two large sources of data on internal migration are the Census of India and National Sample Survey Organisation's reports related to migration, labour and employment. While both these sources provide some important insights into



patterns and trends of internal migration, it is also important to note that, because these surveys are conducted once in many years, they are unable to capture seasonal migration in which the individuals only migrate out for a few months in a year. For instance, the Census defines a migrant as a person residing in a place other than his/her place of birth (Place of Birth definition) or one who has changed his/her usual place of residence to another place (change in usual place of residence). The NSS confines itself to the usual place of residence (UPR) definition. In both the surveys, a resident is defined as one who has been staying in a location for six months or more (except newly born infants). The Census collects data on the age and sex of the migrant, reason for migration, its duration, place of origin, and the industry and occupation of the migrant; the results are available up to the district level. The NSS also collects additional data on items such as the consumption expenditure of the migrant's household, educational attainment, activity, industry and occupation of the household at the place of origin, as well as remittances.

The 64th Round of the NSS, which is the recent and most comprehensive round on migration, collects data on (i) migrants using the UPR (usual place of residence) approach; (ii) migrant households; (iii) out-migrating individuals; (iv) seasonal or short-duration migrants, that is, those who have migrated out for a period of more than one month but not exceeding six months, for employment; and (v) return migrants. Since the present paper is specifically interested in the issue of short term migration, the NSSO findings pertaining to this would be analysed in some detail here. The information collected during the 64th Round regarding short term migrants was based on the definition that a person who stayed away from the village/town for a period of 1 month or more but less than 6 months during the last 365 days for employment or in search of employment. Thus, by definition of household and household members, such persons were considered as the members of the household from which they had stayed away for such short duration.

Based on this definition it was found that people who engaged in short term migration were only a small percentage of people, who were mainly males. In the entire country, the survey found that the rate of short term migration was 1.7 percent in the rural areas and less than 1 percent in urban areas. The gender-wise data revealed that in rural areas, the rate was nearly 3 per cent for the males and less than 1 percent for females. Since those who had undertaken short-term migration were considered for employment related



purposes only, there is gradual decrease in the rate of short-term migration with the increase in the economic background of the person. Therefore seasonal migration is largely engaged in by rural men who have limited livelihood opportunities

In terms of the destination of these seasonal migrants at a national level, the NSSO data showed that a majority of the short-term migrants had moved within the same state. Among the short-term migrants, for 51 percent of rural males and 69 percent of rural females the destination was the same state. Moreover, a higher percentage of rural male short-term migrants had moved to the urban areas compared to their female counterparts. Nearly 72 percent of male short-term migrants moved to urban areas for from rural areas. For females this figure stood at nearly 42 percent. Nearly 94 percent of male short-term migrants and nearly 75 percent of the female short-term migrants were workers. In rural areas, for both males and females short-term migrants, more than half were casual workers. The share of the rural self-employed males in total short-term male migration was also significant, nearly 32 percent, and rural females who were out of labour force in the usual principal activity status, shared nearly 24 percent of the total short-term female migration. Of all the male short-term migrant workers, nearly 43 percent were engaged in construction while agriculture and manufacturing employed nearly 20 percent and 17 percent of male short-term migrant workers, respectively. Nearly 45 percent of female short-term migrant workers were engaged in agriculture, while construction and manufacturing employed 34 percent and 14 percent of female short-term migrant workers respectively.

As Table 1 suggests, Madhya Pradesh is one of the states that has relatively high seasonal out migration. Despite being endowed with vast natural resources like forests, minerals, rivers, rare and valuable flora and fauna. On the other hand, Madhya Pradesh is one of the poorest and most backward states of the country. According to Madhya Pradesh State Development Report (Planning Commission, 2011), around 35 percent of the state's population comprises of marginalised sections of SCs (15.20 percent) and STs (20.30 percent). The state has 8 predominantly tribal districts. Adivasi/ST population in Madhya Pradesh are extremely vulnerable in the development process, primarily because of poverty, illiteracy, asset/landlessness and their location in environmentally sensitive areas. The process of their integration with the mainstream economy and socio-political system has been slow due to their geographical isolation. As a result, a large portion of the state continues to



depend on the rural-agrarian economy that is, increasingly negatively impacted by the endemic issues related to ecology, climate, variations in the terrain and failure to embrace modern agricultural practices. The state continues to be overshadowed by the historical burden of backwardness which makes

**Table 1: State-wise Distribution of Short Duration Out-migrants
(Rural and Urban in Percentage)**

State/All India	Male	Female	Male +Female
Andhra Pradesh	2.0	0.8	1.4
Assam	2.0	0.2	1.2
Bihar	5.7	0.1	3.0
Chhattisgarh	2.3	0.9	1.7
Gujarat	4.3	2.4	3.4
Haryana	0.6	0.2	0.4
Himachal	1.0	0.0	0.5
Jammu	2.6	0.1	1.3
Jharkhand	4.6	0.6	2.6
Karnataka	1.7	0.6	1.1
Kerala	0.9	0.1	0.5
Madhya Pradesh	3.9	1.1	2.6
Maharashtra	1.6	0.8	1.2
Orissa	2.2	0.5	1.3
Punjab	0.7	0.8	0.7
Rajasthan	2.5	0.5	1.5
Tamil Nadu	1.8	0.5	1.1
Uttarakhand	0.8	0	0.4
Uttar Pradesh	2.5	0.1	1.4
West Bengal	4.4	0.4	2.4
All India	2.8	0.5	1.7

Source: Statement 5.1.1, Report No. 533, 64th Round of NSSO Survey, migration in India (2007-2008)*

Note: Short Duration Migrants are those who have moved for employment purposes for more than 1 month but less than 6 months



governance and service delivery in the state contextually challenging, despite the proactive efforts by the government towards poverty eradication. The standard of education, health, livelihood opportunities and other factors that contribute to quality of life are below desirable standards. Seasonal migration in search of livelihood opportunities is a reality in rural Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh is one of the few states where migration is significantly high in rural-rural and rural-urban as well as interstate and intrastate migration streams.

Nearly 71 percent of the population is dependent on agriculture, however the land distribution pattern in the state is highly unequal (MPSDR, 2011). A large portion of the rural population are either landless labourers or small and marginal farmers who find it difficult to invest in their land to improve productivity. Significant population is employed in the primary sector, which lacks in high growth rate. The demographic pressures on land have been increasing significantly in the state and the ecological and environmental crisis have made a large part of the state dry and non-conducive for agriculture. With its share of around 35 percent in GDP, agriculture and its allied activities have to bear the burden of 75 percent of rural workers (Planning Commission, 2011). This over-dependence of the rural villages on agricultural economy and lack of other livelihood opportunities in the villages has made migration a major livelihood strategy among the rural poor.

Seasonal migration has emerged as one of the most significant livelihood strategies adopted among the rural poor in Madhya Pradesh (hence forth MP) predominantly in the form of seasonal mobility of the rural people to other rural or urban centres that have better livelihood opportunities. While the NSSO survey places MP as a high out-migrating state, studies conducted by several researchers (Srivastava, 2005, 1998; Deshingkar et al. 2003) point out that seasonal migration is extremely under-estimated. As cited in Deshingkar (2010), the National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL) estimates circular migrants in rural areas alone to be 10 million (including roughly 4.5 million inter-state migrants and 6 million intra-state migrants). Seasonal migration for employment is growing both in terms of absolute numbers and also in relation to the size of the working population as a whole (Rogaly et al, 2001; Breman, 1996; Rao, 1994; Breman, 1985). Thus the NSSO data fails to provide a complete picture of seasonal migration in terms of magnitude and scale. To understand the reality of seasonal migration and appraise the rural and urban policies, it is imperative to have a localised understanding of



the situation. Questions like, who migrates for short durations, what are the drivers, what are their experiences during migration, what are the challenges they face both at the source and destination are some of the questions that need to be answered to inform policy makers.

Research Objectives

With this background, the present paper uses micro-level data both quantitative and qualitative collected from 17 villages in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh to understand the drivers and the process of seasonal migration. Moreover, the study also captures the experiences of these seasonal migrants from Chhindwara in Bhopal where they work mainly in construction sites. Using this large set of data, the paper aims to:

- To provide a comprehensive and nuanced source-destination analysis of the process of seasonal migration in the state of Madhya Pradesh.
- To draw attention to the challenges faced by the migrant workers and families both in their source villages and destination cities.

Study Design

In order to have a micro-level understanding of seasonal migration in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, a household survey was conducted in 17 Gram Panchayats in the Harrai block of Chhindwara district. The key questions that this research study answers are:

- What is the socio-economic profile of the people who migrate out of Harrai block in Chhindwara District?
- What are the trends in seasonal out-migration?
- What are the source and destination factors that impact seasonal migration from Harrai?

The census method was used to collect data in 2011 from every household on their migration behaviour. The data points were collected using a detailed survey which collected information regarding migration from each household. Such a method helped in understanding the actual percentage of villagers that migrate out; who migrates, the major destinations, nature of work and



other related information. A detailed profile on migration was created over a period of three months in all the 17 gram panchayats for 6119 households. In order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of these migrants in their destination worksite, a randomly selected sample of 396 persons from this block who migrated to Bhopal were interviewed in Bhopal. This was possible through the *Shramik Sahayta Evam Sadharbh Kendras* (henceforth 3SKs) run by Samarthan both in the Harrai Block and in Bhopal through which a detailed census-type database is maintained of all the migrants in the project areas.

Table 2: List of Gram Panchayats and Households in Chhindwara District, Harrai Sub-District, Madhya Pradesh

Gram Panchayat	No of Households (Samarthan, 2012)	No. of Households (Census 2011)
Banka	435	395
Bichhua	306	312
Budhaina (Bhond)	483	458
Budhaina (Chatti)		384
Churikhurd	368	396
Devari	418	362
Khirda	305	383
Kothiya	436	452
Madai	279	325
Mehanda	362	368
Mohriya	298	306
Moarsani	355	322
Navalpur	425	473
Palani	383	407
Ratamati	295	352
Sagoniya	274	321
Saldhana	325	409
Samardoh	372	340

Source: Samarthan, 2012

Editor's note: The Census 2011 data for the number of households in each Gram Pachayats have been included. This data was unavailable at the time of the field survey.



The Harrai block of Chhindwara district is situated is north-east of the district about 50 Km away from Chhindwara town, which is the district headquarter. It is bordered by Narsinghpur District of MP and dominated by tribal population. Harrai block also has low human development indicators with approximately 54 percent population belonging to the tribal community. Due to its topography and physiographic conditions, the climate of the district is not uniform and so is the case of Harrai block.

Being located in the northern part of the district, on a higher elevation and covered by hills and forests, the tehsil area is relatively cooler with temperature, in winter going, down to as low as 4 degree Celsius. In summer temperature is as high as 42 degree celsius. The Tehsil receives average rainfall of about 1000 mm from largely the south - west monsoon. The land utilization data of the Harrai Block reveals that only 30 percent of the area is cultivated compared to 62 percent for the tehsil and 66 percent for the district. Again, out of the total cultivable area, only 2.80 percent is irrigated in the block as compared to 3.80 percent and 7.10 percent for the tehsil and district respectively. According to Census 2011, the main workforce of rural Harrai is predominantly engaged in agriculture for their source of livelihood. Around 49 percent of the main workforce is cultivators and 43 percent constitute the agricultural labourers in the rural parts of Harrai.

Understanding Seasonal Migration at a Micro-Level: Case of Seasonal Migrants in the Chhindwara-Bhopal Context

Extent of Migration

Extent of migration was determined by conducting census survey of all the households within the selected villages. Interviews were conducted with an adult member of the household. The study defined a household as a migrant household, if one or more member of the household migrated out of his/her village for work for a period of at least 30 days continuously. Analysis of the data on the prevalence of migration reveals that 67.4 percent households are engaged in migration from the project area. There were 4128 households out of 6119 who reported migration during the survey. Panchayat wise details of the number of households covered in the survey and number of households that reported any kind of migration are presented in the illustration below:



Table 3 shows that Harrai has a very high out-migration rate. On an average, 67.51 percent of the households in Harrai block, migrate out of the villages in search of other livelihood opportunities. Three villages—Mohriya, Navalpur and Palani—record 84.60 percent, 81.20 percent, and 81.70 percent respectively. Five villages—Khirda, Kothiya, Madai, Muaarasani and Ratamati—record high out-migration rate with between 70-80 percent of the households

Table 3: Magnitude of Migration in 17 Panchayats of Harrai Block

Panchayat	No. of Households Surveyed ²	Migrants' Households ³		Non-Migrants' Households ⁴		Number of Migrants
		Number	%	Number	%	
Bankan	435	216	49.7	219	50.3	332
Bichua	306	203	66.3	103	33.7	268
Budaina	483	291	60.2	192	39.8	560
ChuriKhurd	368	196	53.3	172	46.7	294
Devri	418	288	68.9	130	31.1	315
Khirda	305	229	75.1	76	24.9	428
Kothiya	436	309	70.9	127	29.1	559
Mahdai	279	210	75.3	69	24.7	303
Mendha	362	242	66.9	120	33.1	426
Mohria	298	252	84.6	46	15.4	522
Muaarasani	355	261	73.5	94	26.5	455
Navalpur	425	345	81.2	80	18.8	669
Palani	383	313	81.7	70	18.3	441
Ratamati	295	226	76.6	69	23.4	418
Sagoniya	274	175	63.9	99	36.1	293
Saldhana	325	188	57.8	137	42.2	234
Samardoh	372	184	49.5	188	50.5	223
Total	6119	4128	67.51	1991	32.5	6740

Source: Authors', 2011*

² Number of Households: The number of households in a panchayat that have been captured in the household listing tool of survey

³ Migrant households: Households that have at least one member that migrates

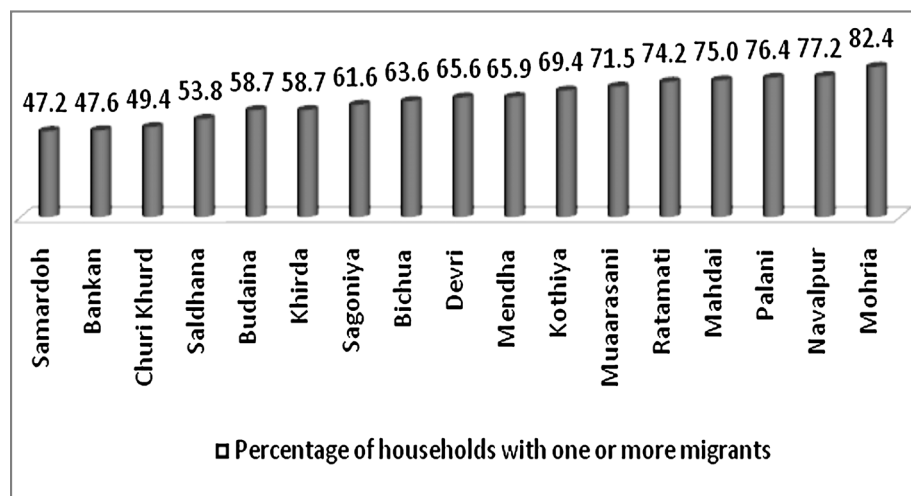
⁴ Non – migrant household: Households that do not have a single member that migrates.



having at least one person who migrates. There are five other villages—Bichhua, Budaina, Devari, Mehanda and Sagoniya—where in 60-70 percent of the households have, one or more people migrating outside the village for work. In Bankan, Churi Khurd, Samardoh and Saldhana, 50-60 percent of the households had one or more members migrating outside the villages.

The table also shows that in many villages, like Khirda, Devari and Kothiya, the number of migrants is more than the number of households surveyed. Clearly, there are a number of households in which more than one member of the household migrates. Thus, family migration or multiple member migration is a significant phenomenon among tribal migrants in Harrai.

Figure 1: Village-wise Data on Percentage of Households with at Least One Seasonal Migrant

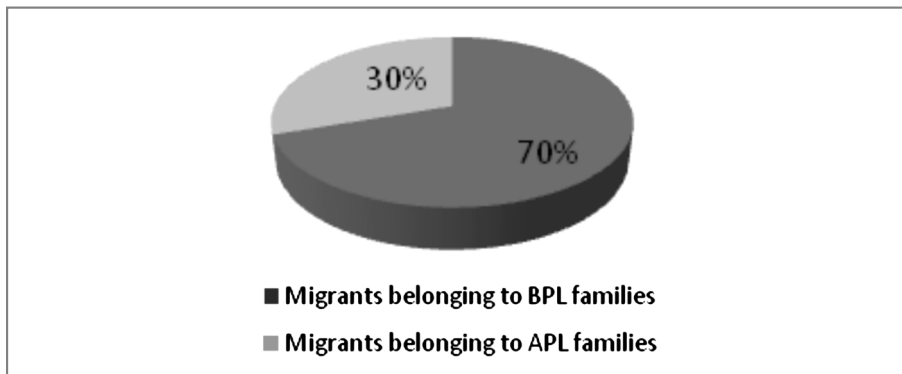


Source: Authors', 2011

While looking at the relation between migration and BPL status it is found that 69.70 percent families who are below the poverty line are engaged in migration.



Figure 2: Poverty and Migration: An Evident Link



Source: Authors', 2011

Migration is therefore, a major livelihood strategy adopted by the rural poor in Harrai block. The fact that a large majority of the migrating families belong to the scheduled tribe and that many of them are landless agricultural labourers substantiates the finding that the poor and the chronically poor sections of the population find migration a viable and alternative source of income. Thus in the case of Chhindwara the argument that there is a strong link between poverty and migration holds true.

Destination and Geographical Spread

According to the NSSO data, majority of the rural migrants in MP migrate to other rural areas within the same district and the next most preferred destinations are also rural areas within MP but outside their districts. This implies that rural migrants in MP prefer to migrate to rural areas and prefer to migrate to destinations that are closer to their source. This preference for rural areas may also be because of the fact that the main source of employment in MP continues to be agriculture. Moreover, they also lack the skills that may be required to get employment in non-farm activities in the urban centres. As a result they migrate to rural areas where they can engage in farm activities which are more seasonal in nature.



Table 4A. Distribution (per 1000) of Migrants by Location of Last Usual Place of Residence for Madhya Pradesh

Migrants	Number
Within District Rural	588
Within MP Rural	210
Outside MP Rural	18
Within District Urban	91
Within MP Urban	42
Outside MP Urban	46
Other Countries	0
All	1000

Source: NSSO 64th Round, 2007-2008

While analysing the geographical spread of the migrants from the project villages, it is observed that for the majority of migrant households (84.3 percent), mobility is limited within MP and most of them (63.8 percent) shift themselves to rural areas followed by 20.4 percent to urban areas, this is consistent with the findings of the NSSO data on the trends in MP.

**Table 4B: Preferences of Type of Destination
(Rural/Urban and Interstate/Intrastate)**

Destination Type	Percentage
Within District Rural	1.90
Within District Urban	3.10
Within MP Rural	63.80
Within MP Urban	20.40
Outside MP Rural	0.00
Outside MP Urban	10.70
Grand Total	100.00

Source: Authors', 2011

Table 4B shows that other rural districts within MP are the most preferred destination for migrants from Harrai. This is because the skill or experience of

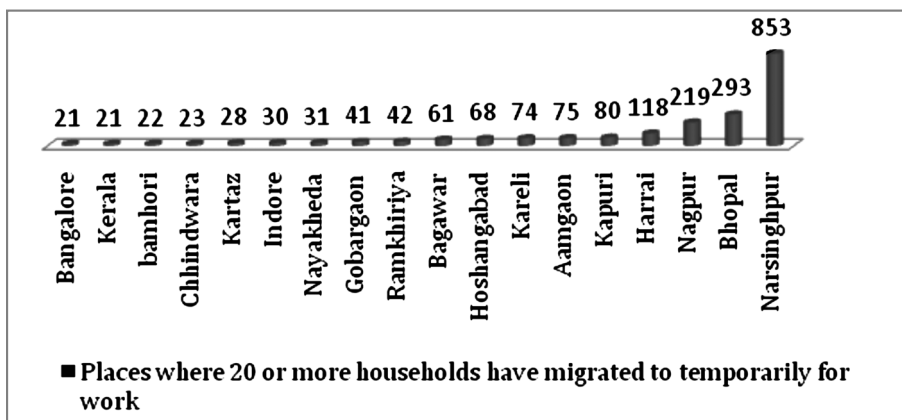


many of the tribal groups from Harrai is in agricultural practices, this makes rural-rural migration and employment in the agricultural sector the most logical choice. This explains why rural poor from Harrai block choose to take up work available in the agricultural sector in the nearby district of Narsinghpur.

Figure 3 depicts key destinations of the migrants' households from the project villages. District Narsinghpur which is bordering district of Chhindwara emerged as the major migration destination. Other than the preference for agricultural work, Narsinghpur's historical links with Harrai also fuels this migration. However the highly seasonal nature of agricultural work means inadequate work and a sizeable population have also migrated to urban areas for construction work.

Bhopal, followed by Nagpur, were found to be the most preferred urban centres for the migrants from Harrai; however it was also found that people in smaller groups also travelled to far away cities in Karnataka and Kerala to work in construction sites and sweet making shops respectively. Bhopal and Nagpur large cities closely situated from Chhindwara. These are connected by direct rail. Thus factors like location and mobility seem to play a crucial role in determining the destination for the seasonal migrants.

Figure 3: Major Destinations to which at Least 20 Households have Migrated for Work from Harrai



Source: Authors', 2011

Notes: The break-up of destinations urban/rural and inside/outside MP is given in Table 4B.



The survey identified a total of 45 destinations to which migrant households in Harrai block travelled to for work. This figure compiles data for those destinations where at least 20 migrant households travelled to.

Duration of Stay

The data discussed hereafter is based on the survey of 396 households at the destination, Bhopal. Once migrants reach the destination, the study found that 19.4 percent of people migrate for duration of 1-2 months, 12.2 percent for 2-4 months, 22.7 percent for 4-6 months, 15.7 percent for 8-10 months and 20 percent for 10-12 months. Thus a majority of the people are away from the villages for a duration less than 6 months, which shows increasing seasonality in the nature of migration from these villages. The NSSO 533 round data suggests that out of every 1000 rural migrants in MP only one engages in temporary migration of duration less than 12 months and eighteen engage in temporary migration of duration more than 12 months. This could imply that Harrai witness's very high rate of seasonal migration for long duration in comparison to the average rate of seasonal migration in Madhya Pradesh.

Types of Work at Destination

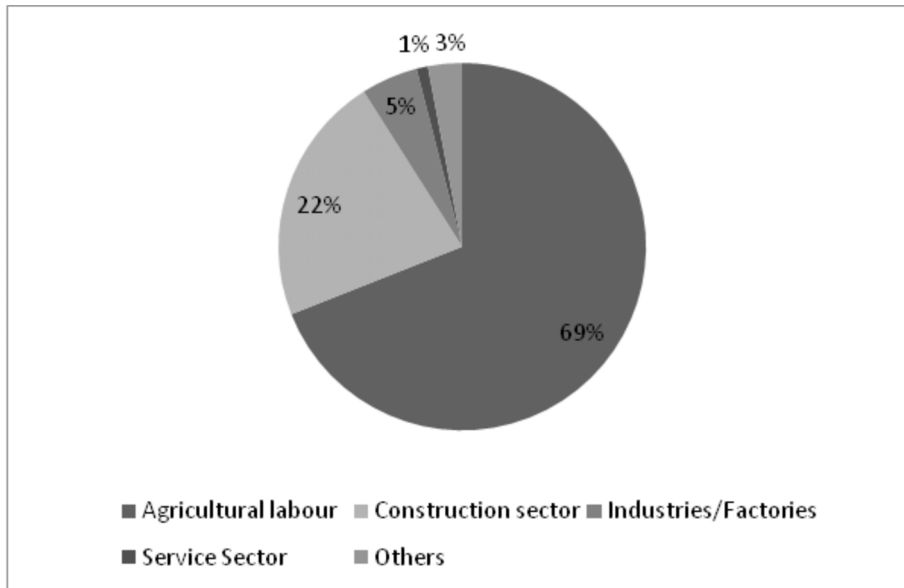
There is a variety of work that the migrants from project area undertake at different destinations. Figure 4 below gives an outline of the occupations that migrants are engaged in. Out of the total migrants, almost 69 percent are involved as agriculture labourers followed by the constructions workers (21 percent) and industry/factory workers (5 percent). There are very few households engaged in service sector like hotels.

Finding Work

Many migrants do not necessarily leave their source location with the agent who guarantees them employment; instead going to cities to search for the most profitable work through labour markets and agents at the destination. In many cases it was reported that they have to wait for months before they find work or sometimes they find work that would span only for days leaving them unemployed again.



Figure 4: Distribution of Migrants by the Nature of their Work at the Destination



Source: Authors', 2011

Migration Decisions

Much of the literature on migration focuses on the economic and social factors that push a person to migrate out of his place of origin. While the Marxist perspective claims that migration is decision that is forced upon the person by the exploitative social and economic structures in the society. However, the present study finds that the 'agency' of the individual is a crucial factor. In 86.3 percent of the cases, the migrant himself/herself took the decision to migrate after a cost-benefit as well as situational analysis by evaluating what are the expected outcomes of migrating out of their place of origin. Family, relatives and agents play a very small role in deciding whether a member of a given family migrates or not (Table 5).



Table 5: Decision to Migrate

Decision Maker(s)	Frequency	Percent
Decision Made by Self	341	86.30
Decision Made by Agent/Contractor	18	4.60
Family Decision	5	1.30
Advice from Friends and Relatives	31	7.80
Valid Responses	395	100.00

Source: Authors', 2011

Note: Of 396 respondents, 395 surveys were considered valid, one being left out owing to data errors.

The study found (Table 6) that the maximum migrants (60.1 percent) migrate with their families which mostly comprises of male adult, his spouse and children leaving behind elderly members of the family in the village. While in 84 percent of the cases the first visit to the destination in search of work is mostly done alone by the individual, the subsequent visits are in a majority of the cases made with the family. One of the major reasons for this is the lack of support available to the family members at the source especially children. In many cases, the migrants preferred to take their family as women could engage in domestic work in the cities, this provides them an additional source of income.

Table 6: How Many People Migrate with Family?

Type of Migration	Frequency	Percent
Alone	100	25.30
With Spouse	41	10.40
Only Male Adults of the Family	17	4.30
With Family	238	60.10
Valid responses	396	100.00

Source: Authors', 2011



Challenges at Destination

As seen above decisions to migrate to urban areas are often based on optimism; however there are a number of challenges that awaits the migrants and his/her families at the destination. In most cases the migrants are not adequately aware of and not prepared for. For instance, one of the major challenges faced by the migrants is to find a safe and hygienic living area. Since 73.2 percent of the 396 persons interviewed were found to be construction site workers, a majority of migrants (52 percent) stay at the worksite, this invariably results in his exploitation, as the employers make them work for extra hours for the same wages. Moreover, construction worksites are often accident-prone and dangerous especially for children. In some cases, the employers provide the workers with accommodation that is reported to be below standard in terms of availability of basic amenities like water and toilets. In eighteen percent of cases, the migrant families are forced to live in slums where the people are generally denied access to basic services. Thus the three most common areas available to migrant families are mostly unsafe and unhygienic (Table 7).

Table 7: Where Do They Stay During Migration?

Staying Arrangements	Frequency	Valid Percent
Worksite	206	52.0
Accommodation Provided by Employer	91	23.0
Slum	72	18.2
Government Land	14	3.5
Public Places	12	3.0
With Friends or Relatives	1	0.3
Valid Responses	396	100.0

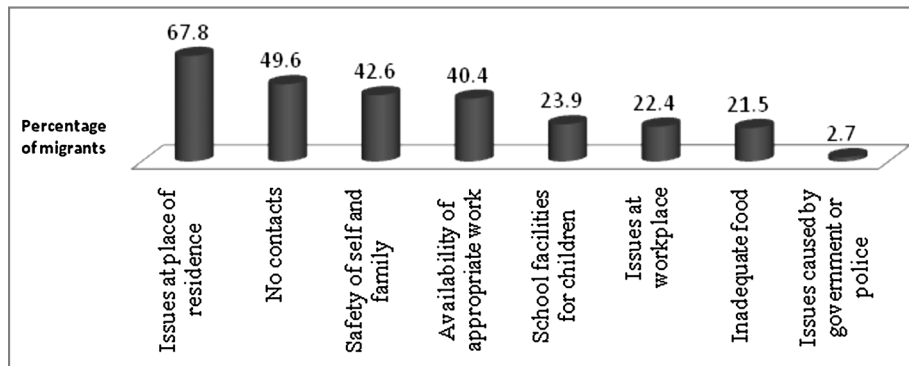
Source: Authors', 2011

During migration, migrants face many issues such as inadequate food, safety of self and family members especially women, poor sanitation and hygiene, lack of toilets, harassment by government or police, inadequate schooling facilities for children and lack of any contact person in the city for help during emergencies (Figure 6). During the survey it was found that 70.3 percent of the migrants were provided with water facilities at work. Here, by water



facilities it is not at all clear whether the water provided at workplace was good enough for human consumption. Migrant workers who work in construction sites are exposed to chemicals and dust. Health related issues were reported by 10.7 percent of the migrants.

Figure 6: Major Issues Faced by the Migrant Labourers in Bhopal city



Source: Authors', 2011

The failure to access banking systems and other services is most clearly manifested in their behavioural pattern of sending remittances to their families. A majority of them (79.5 percent) still accumulate the savings and then physically deliver the lump-sum amount to their family members like their old parents or other relatives at the source. One of the reasons mentioned by the migrants during the interviews for this was that since a large number of migrants travel to the destination with their spouse and children, a major part of their earnings are spent in the meeting their family needs. Once their savings accumulate to a considerable amount, then they prefer to take it to their source villages themselves. Or provide for the needs of their family members in their village. If they themselves are unable to visit the source frequently, they send the remittances through friends/relatives who live in their village. Only 6.5 percent of the migrants use bank and post office transfers to send their remittances. This means even today a large majority of the migrants have no access to the banking services and continue to depend on informal means for such services which increases the risk and inconveniences for the migrant workers. A major reason for this is that only a small portion of people living in the rural areas have bank accounts. The concept of banking has still not penetrated into rural regions.

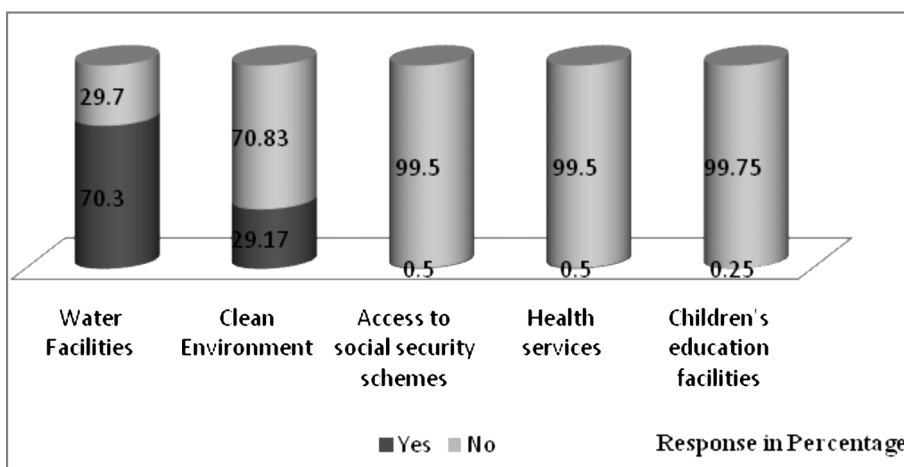


Table 8: Mode of Sending Remittance at the Source Areas

Mode of Sending Remittances	Frequency	Percent
Self	341	86.30
Agent/Contractor	18	4.60
Family	5	1.30
Advice from friends and relatives	31	7.80
Valid responses	395	100.00

Source: Authors', 2011

Figure 7: Access to Basic Services at Workplace as a Migrant Worker



Source: Authors', 2011

The migrant workers have very little or no access to social security schemes, health services and also most importantly the migrating children are deprived of the constitutional right to education. Despite mandatory frameworks for 100 percent enrolment of children in schools, migrant children form a large proportion of the out of school children. A few initiatives have been made under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan to provide residential education to children of migrants for 90 days at the source district. However, the lack of commitment from the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to identify and counsel such families and convince them to enrol their children into hostels while they are away has meant that these provisions exist only on paper.



Conclusion

While there still exist contradicting views on the magnitude, outcomes and impact of rural urban migration in our society, there is a growing body of literature that portrays internal migration as a major part of the livelihood strategies among the rural poor. However, this study finds that migration is one of the most common strategies adopted by the rural people especially when they face challenges that affect their work related to agriculture like lack of irrigation water, extreme climatic conditions. Among tribal communities in Chinddwara, Madhya Pradesh, landlessness is a major reason in India due to which many rural workers who perform manual labour in rural areas prefer doing similar work in urban areas for higher wages. The study found that the decision to migrate is most often made by the migrant himself, which indicates that the agency of the individual and his ability to think rationally, measure the benefits against the cost, evaluate each opportunities based on his/her aspirations and needs is at work rather than the push-pull factors. While migration is found to have improved livelihood opportunities of the people, there are several issues that they face at the destination like difficulty in finding a safe place to live, poor living conditions, unsafe and dangerous working conditions, and lack of access to education and health services. The study also found that migrant workers continue to be excluded from formal financial services, with majority not accessing bank accounts and continuing to use informal services for transferring remittances to the source regions. It is expected that these findings will provide insights to policymakers and practitioners in identifying the key issues that affect migrants and adopt promoting measures, to ensure safe migratory practices.

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