

URBAN INDIA



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Special Issue on Migration

Overview of Migration

Seasonal Migration

Gendered Migration

Migrant Child Labour

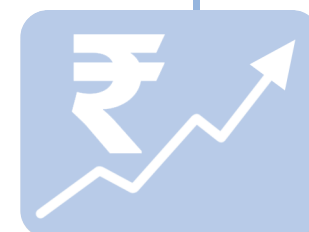
Job Search and Labour Market Outcomes

Migration and Conflict

Legal Aspects of Migration

Book Reviews

Workshops





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Papers sent for publication should not have been published earlier or simultaneously submitted for publication to another journal.

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- Articles should not exceed 8000 words, including notes and references.
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- Graphs and charts need to be prepared in MS Office (Word/Excel) and not in jpeg or other formats.
- Full citation for all references and sources must be provided.
- Articles should be sent by email in MS Word format to the Editor, Urban India along with the declaration that the article is unpublished.
- Authors are requested to provide full details for correspondence (postal and email address).

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MIGRATION STUDY REPORT OF GAISILAT BLOCK OF BARGARH DISTRICT OF ODISHA

Kanhu Charan Majhi, Abhaya Chandra Tripathi, Jadumani Pradhan

Debadatta Club (Bargarh)

Abstract

A number of factors including widespread poverty, frequent natural disaster and lack of non-farm employment have resulted in large scale out-migration from several districts of Odisha to nearby districts of the same state and even other States. However, migration remains seasonal in nature, involving a period of 6-7 months and up to 9 months in a few cases. This paper discusses the nature of temporary migration from the Bargarh district of Odisha and is based on a survey of households in the Gaisilat block of the district.

Introduction

This study of 19 Gram panchayats of Gaisilat Block of Bargarh District reveals that about half of the families migrate out seasonally to work within and outside the State to seek out their living either as contract workers in the brick kiln units or as independent wage workers/self-employed workers in the urban informal sector in relatively developed regions.

Bargarh district is located in the western part of the state of Odisha and comes under the Hirakud command area. As compared to 85 percent in the case of Odisha, 93 percent of the district's population lives in rural areas, which are chronically underdeveloped. Although rural literacy rate in Bargarh district (73.4 percent) lies above that of the state's average (70.2 percent), yet poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition are the fundamental reasons due to which seasonal migration of labour takes place. For example, per capita District Domestic Product in 1998-99¹ in Bargarh was Rs. 4765 as compared to Rs. 5264 in Odisha (Orissa Human Development Report, 2004).

¹ Per capita DDP in 1997-98 is calculated at constant prices of 1993-94.



In Odisha, agriculture remains the main occupation for a majority of the rural masses. But the share of agriculture to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has declined over the years. In 1950, the share of agriculture to GSDP was 70 percent, which dwindled to less than 20 percent in 2009-2010. This may be due to the reduction in arable land, deterioration of land productivity, lack of proper land use planning, and lack of capital and appropriate technology (Mohanty, Pattanaik and Patra, 2014; Bhattacharya and Bhattacharya, 2007). This is also evident once we look at the share of cultivators to total workers in rural areas, which declined from 33.4 to 26.7 percent in the State between, 2001 and 2011. The corresponding figures for Bargarh are 35.6 and 30.3 percent respectively. More rural people have started to work as agricultural labourers. The share of agricultural labourers to total workers in 2001 in Odisha was 39.1 percent, which increased to 43.8 percent in 2011. Bargarh reveals the same trend and here, agricultural labourers increased from 43.6 to 50.6 percent during the same time period. Thus, it can be said that sources of income have become more irregular for the rural people of Bargarh, as a result of which they migrate to other areas for a livelihood.

Other socio-economic parameters in the district also reveal poor development. For example, crude death rate of rural Bargarh in 2013 is 10.1 as compared to 8.5 in Odisha (Annual Health survey 2012 and 2013). However, the district seems roughly to be at par with the state in terms of infant mortality rate (Table 1).

Within the district of Bargarh, Gaisilat Block is situated in the rain shadow and dry climatic zone. The block is situated near the K-B-K districts, commonly known as Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput districts. Due to recurring drought, this region has a concentration of poor people who are heavily dependent upon agriculture for a living (Orissa Human Development Report, 2004). The loss of crop on one hand and non-availability of alternative sources of employment on the other, leave the small and marginal farmers with little option other than mortgaging (and, often selling) their land to the village landlord. When the crop fails, the farmer has to borrow from the moneylender for immediate consumption. After the moneylender has taken his disproportionate share of the farmer's produce, there is not enough left for the farmer's family to consume till the next harvest. He is thus forced to seek another loan from the moneylender. In this situation, middlemen often compel



the poor farmer to sell his produce at a rate well below what is prescribed by the government. With no alternative avenues of employment, poor farmers are forced to move out to seek livelihood elsewhere.

Table 1: Selected Socio-economic Indicators of Rural Bargarh and Odisha

Rural	Bargarh	Odisha
Total Population*	1331145	34970562
Sex Ratio*	979	989
Literacy Rates *	73.4	70.2
Scheduled Tribe*	20.4	25.7
Scheduled Caste*	20.2	17.8
Total Workers*	53.1	43.2
Percentage of Main workers*	60.4	57.1
Percentage of Cultivators*	30.3	26.7
Percentage of Agricultural Labourers*	50.6	43.8
Percentage of Household Industry Workers*	6.0	4.4
Percentage of Other Workers*	13.1	25.1
Crude Birth Rate@	17.4	20.2
Crude Death Rate@	10.1	8.5
Infant Mortality Rate @	55	56

Source: * Census of India, Provisional Population Totals, Census of India, 2011
@Annual Health Survey, 2012 and 2013

Methodology

A survey of 22,072 households in 19 gram panchayats of Gaisilat Block (listed in Table 2) was carried out in 2011-2012. Details of the members of the family who migrated, destination and duration of migration as well as the type of employment were asked. Focus group discussions were conducted to explore the reasons for migration and experiences at the destination.



Table 2: Operational Areas by Debdatta Club in Gaisilat Block

Serial Number	Grampanchayat Name	Serial Number	Grampanchayat Name
1	Buromunda	11	Jamutpali
2	Chantipali	12	Kandagarh
3	Chikhili	13	Katabahal
4	Dangabahal	14	Kathoumal
5	Firingimal	15	Kundakhai
6	Ganiapali	16	Raisalpadar
7	Gaisilat	17	Sandhibahal
8	Gourenmunda	18	Saradhapali
9	Guderpali	19	Talpali
10	Jagalpat		

Source: Authors', 2011-12

Map 1: Location of Bargarh District in Odisha





Map 2: Location of Gaisilat Block in Bargarh District



Profile of Migrants

The survey found that 66.8 percent of the sample were migrant households, which meant that at least one member from these families was a migrant at the time of the survey.

Household Characteristics at the Source Area

Social Group

The household survey data reveals that the seasonal migrants' households belong to lower social strata of society. Only 1.58 percent of migrants are from the general category upper caste households like Brahmin. The rest are Other Backward Caste² (60.89 percent), followed by Scheduled Tribes (19.94 percent) and Scheduled Caste (17.58 percent).

² Mainly Luhara, Gauda, Teli, Mali, Kumbhar, Kulta etc.



Table 3: A Profile of Migrant Households in Gaisilat Block

	Sample (N)	Figures in percent
Total households	22072	Percent
Migrant Households	14754	66.8
Caste Composition of Migrant Households		
Scheduled Tribe	2942	19.94
Scheduled Caste	2594	17.58
Other Backward Population	8984	60.89
Others	234	1.59
Population		
Total Population	87163	
Migrant Population	47205	54.2
Caste Composition of the Migrants		
Scheduled Tribe	10532	22.31
Scheduled Caste	8225	17.40
Other Backward Population	27867	59.00
Others	581	1.20
Age Groups		
0-14	2710	5.70
15-59	43388	91.90
60 and above	1107	2.40
Male-female Composition		
Male	24231	51.30
Female	20264	42.90
Sex Ratio	836	
Child Migrants	2710	5.7
Source Areas		
Intrastate migration	34132	72.31
Inter-state migration	13073	27.69

Source: Authors', 2011-12



Household Size and Children's Education

The average size of family among the surveyed households is 4.10 persons. At present the children of only 50 percent households have received seventh standard of schooling.

Among the migrants, more than half are males and the rest are females. The sex ratio stood at around 836 females per 1000 males. Nearly 60 percent of the migrants belong to Other Backward Caste followed by Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste. Age-specific data reveals that more than 90 percent of the migrants are in the age cohort of 15-59 years, which also happens to be the principal working age. However, migration is very low after 60 years of age. Of all the migrants, slightly less than three-fourth are inter-state migrants and the rest move within Odisha. A snapshot of migrants and their households are given in Table 3.

Incidence of Poverty

As expected the majority of the migrant households (66.84 percent) are listed as BPL (Below Poverty Line) category households. It is further found that although only 14 percent of the households in the sample are listed as above poverty line (APL) category, the rest 20 percent of the households are neither listed as BPL, nor as APL. The survey reveals that 5.74 percent children become migrants in age groups of 6 to 14 years.

Sources of Livelihood

Household survey reveals that none of the seasonal migrant households of the region have any steady and sustainable source of earning so as to keep them above the poverty line. About 75 percent of the families own some agricultural land. The remaining 25 percent are totally landless. However, the average size of land holding is only 1.5 acres.

However, only 18 percent of the seasonal migrant households reported agriculture as their principal means of livelihood. About 72 percent of the households subsist by doing wage work in both agriculture and non-agricultural sector economy and the other 10 percent by pursuing their traditional caste occupations such as pottery, basket and mat making, weaving, petty shop keeping and the like, in self-employed category.



Forced to seek other avenues of earning for subsistence, families do agricultural wage work and collection of minor forest produce like Kendu leaf, Sal seeds, Mahua flower, resins, lac, mango, tamarind, etc. The latter gives a family a meagre income of Rs.2,000-2,500.

Though almost 71 percent of the surveyed families have been covered under the state's different social security programs in the past, the benefits seem to largely go to the well-off through forging of records and false enumeration of BPL households during various rounds of poverty survey. The survey also reported the failure of the MNREGS scheme in the Block, owing to unresponsive government functionaries. The most prominent issues in this regard were the unusual delay in payment of wages, allegedly over 3-4 months, as well as forged muster rolls in the name of fake beneficiaries.

Further, it is important to note that artificial generation of wage employment for the distressed poor families of the region cannot be sustainable in the long run, without the development of local human capital and diversification of occupational skills of people for their absorption in non-farm sector economy on a sustainable basis. Frequent drought leading to progressive diminishing returns from agriculture coupled with the absence of local employment opportunities and debt trap has forced large-scale out-migration of labour from the area. The survey finds that the poorest households in the villages—the landless, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and marginal farmers—move out every year during lean agricultural season to eke out a living elsewhere.

Nature of Migration

The migration pattern is mainly seasonal. The families either wholly or partly migrate to destination areas for a period of 6-7 months and often for 9 months in some families. Such incidences of seasonal migration are noted elsewhere also. A study by Karan (2003) indicates that landless people who also belong to socially backward classes undertake short moves that are seasonal in nature. In contrast, the better-off migrants move over longer distances and also happen to be relatively more educated and can afford the financial costs involved in such a move (Yadava et al. 1996; Connell et al. 1976).



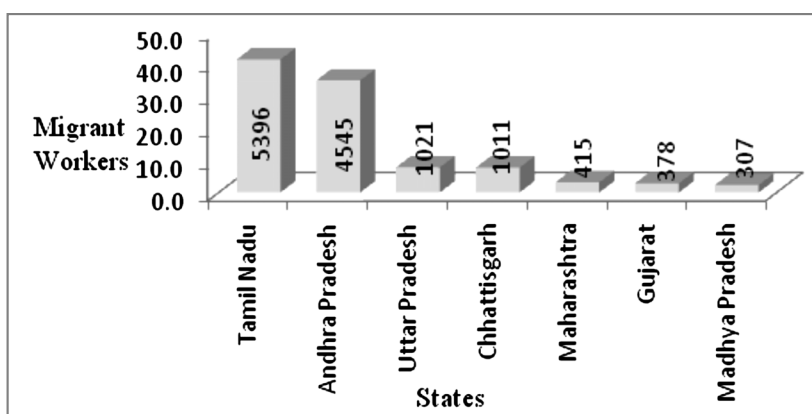
Recruitment Methods

The migrants are recruited through contractors. These labour contractors are mostly local people personally known to the migrant families by virtue of their long years of association with them since the last 18 to 20 years. It is found from the household survey data that around 5 percent of the labour contractors are from the same GP/block area and 10 percent from the same district. A majority of the labour contractors (85 percent) are from near Bolangir district. They act as middlemen for the employers requiring workers for their brick kiln units in places like Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam, Secunderabad, Vijayanagar, Mahbubnagar in Andhra Pradesh, and in other states such as Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, etc.

Destination Preferred

Out of the total migrant workers, 47205 people migrated to different destinations in Odisha and 13073 are inter-state migrants. Many of the migrants move to Tamil Nadu (41.3 percent) followed by Andhra Pradesh (34.8 percent). Although Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are neighbouring states, they are not preferred destinations owing to the low level of economic development of these two states. The pull effect of Maharashtra and Gujarat seems to decline due to the distance factor from Odisha, as travelling longer distances requires more finance which is difficult to incur by these seasonal migrants (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Preferred Destination of the Migrants



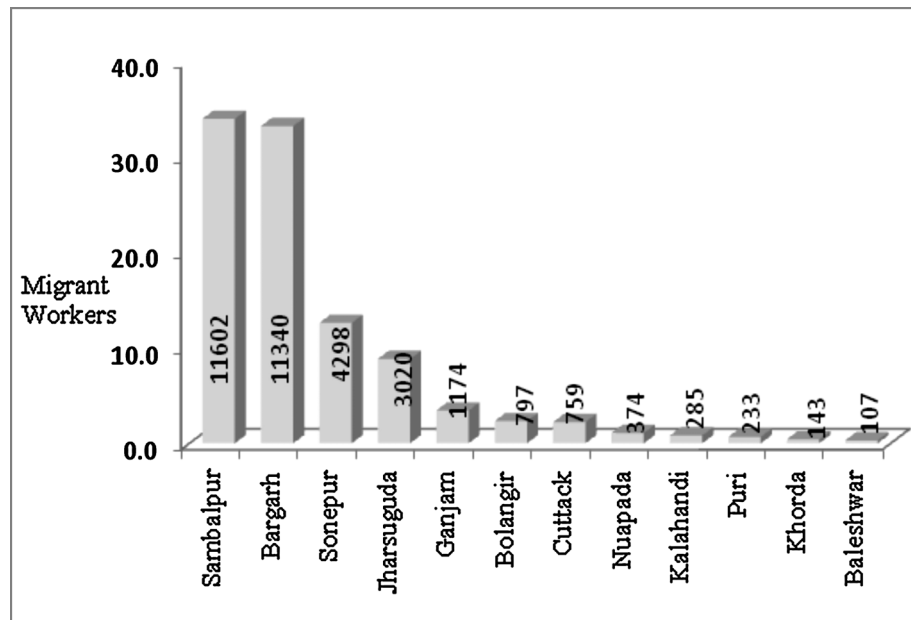
Source: Authors', 2011-12



Within the states certain areas seem to offer more employment opportunities to the migrants than others. For example, out of the total migrants in Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad receives the largest share of migrants, followed by Vishakhapatnam, Anakapalle and Tirupati. In Tamil Nadu, Chennai attracts most of the migrants, while Erode, Perundurai and Tiruvallur are also popular destinations. Migrant households also reported Bhadoi and Varanasi district in Uttar Pradesh, Mahasamund and Raipur in Chhattisgarh, Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra as well as Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh as attractive destinations for employment.

Of the migrants who move within Odisha, Sambalpur (34 percent) and Bargarh (33.22 percent) were the most popular destinations, while Jharsuguda, Sonepur, Bolangir and Ganjam were also popular destination areas (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Intrastate Distribution of Migrant Workers from Gaisilat Block, Bargarh



Source: Authors', 2011-12



Occupational Details

Although the principal means of livelihood in the source area is agriculture, the migrants after arriving at destination completely shift from primary sector to secondary and tertiary sectors. This is especially true in case of inter-state migrants whereby they move into one or other large cities, where agricultural activities have limited scope. For example, in Tamil Nadu most of them are factory workers, security guards or brick-makers. In Andhra Pradesh their main occupation is brick making, factory work, masonry and industrial work. In Uttar Pradesh, they are mainly factory workers. Those who move to Chhattisgarh are primarily scrap workers, vegetable sellers or hotel boys and in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh the migrants are mainly factory workers.

However, work as agricultural labourers seem to be a viable option for those intra-state migrant workers who had shifted to one or other agricultural rich/irrigated areas. For example, migrants moving to Bargarh, Sonepur, Sambalpur work as agricultural labourers while workers in Jharsuguda, Ganjam, Bolangir, Puri, Baleswar, Kordha are mainly employed in construction sector, brick makers and factory workers. In contrast, migrants in Nuapada and Kalahandi are scrap workers.

The majority of these migrant families work in the construction sector and brick kilns as unskilled labour. It seems that after working in brick kiln units regularly for more than 5-6 years, migrants develop expertise and skill in this trade. Their skill is in greater demand in states like Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu etc. because of the cheap price of their labour and docile behaviour.

Living Conditions

Migration ensures only two square meals a day for the poor worker families at the cost of loss of health and increasing disease burden, loss of children's education, neglect of old and disabled persons at home in wretched condition and excessive work burden. Although in few places the workers are provided with one-room accommodation with minimum civic amenities like water, electricity, toilets and space for cooking, in most of the worksites such facilities do not exist. The workers usually make their own shelter in the worksite by constructing temporary earthen bricks. There is no provision for sanitary



facilities. At many places, they use open/bore wells for bathing, washing and the same water for drinking and cooking purpose. Life remains very hard for the migrant families. They live like animals in temporary houses without any basic need like drinking water provision, electricity, toilets and bathrooms, not to speak of absent crèche and education facilities for small children or absent health care services for the sick.

However, another negative effect of this type of seasonal migration is the continuation of child labour. In brick kilns especially, entire families are engaged and children are preferred as they are light and are less likely to damage bricks while walking over them.

Access to Health Care Services

The access of the poor migrant households to public health care services in the region is very poor. The NRHM (National Rural Health Mission) programme has been striving hard to improve the health status of the population in the backward rural areas. It aims at universal immunization of children from preventable deadly diseases to reduce child mortality rates, to reduce maternal mortality rates by promoting institutional deliveries and to improve the overall longevity and life expectancy rate of population by strengthening public health care delivery services in rural areas. Despite Janani Surakshya Yojana, many pregnant women, due to poor transport networks and bad road conditions, are not able to access services in local Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Health Sub-Centres. It is reported that in many cases the doctors and nurses in the PHCs and Sub-Centres harass the poor women. The majority prefer to use the services of traditional birth attendants for delivery at home instead of visiting the local health centres. Only one PHC and one Community Health Centre (CHC) are functional in Gaisilat Block. Most of the days, doctors remain absent on flimsy grounds. So, the patient goes to Bargarh and Bolangir district hospital, which is at a long distance from Gaisilat. This causes greater numbers of neo-natal deaths, still births and delivery deaths of weak and anaemic women coupled with the problems of frequent pregnancies and gynaecological disorder.

Indebtedness

At present, seasonal migration is the only means available for the distressed poor families in Gaisilat block of Bargarh district of Odisha. To escape from



poverty and subsistence insecurity, seasonal migration has enabled the poor to get adequate wage employment. It also enables them to fulfil their other socio-cultural and urgent needs like marriage of sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, etc., birth and death rituals of family members and medical treatment of the seriously ill persons in the family. It is found that despite higher incomes due to migration, in many households the basic consumption needs of the family left behind in the village are often met from borrowing from the local moneylenders. Money is given at high interest rates of 10 percent per month; it assumes cash flows in the form of advances from the labour contractors during migration season, October/November of the year. It is tragic that this type of borrowing keeps migrant households trapped in vicious circle of poverty despite a steady source of earning.

Conclusion

The above discussion suggests that seasonal migration is the only option for the poor farmers or labourers from agriculturally backward areas. The non-availability of non-farm employment further aggravates the situation. The poor, illiterate migrants move out of their native places to seek work at distant places, especially to other states and are mainly directed towards large cities. Upon arrival in the cities these people are able to find work but have to go through several discomforts like poor working and living conditions. These problems get compounded once the women are pregnant.

In the destination areas, these workers are engaged in secondary and tertiary sectors and work as construction labourers, brick kilns, rickshaw pullers, scrap gatherers. In some cases, where the workers migrate to the agriculturally rich district within the state of Odisha they continue their pre-migration occupation as agricultural labourers. However, it must be borne in mind that most of the workers have learned the skill on job.

Although, the migrant workers face many hardships in the destination, the money earned means a lot to them. By migrating out seasonally, poor households are able to save and remit money, which is used for various purposes, be it for tiding over emergencies or for a marriage in the family.



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