

MIGRATION - A NECESSARY EVIL

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AGRICULTURE

The Punjab State is considered as a 'Gulf State' or 'California' of India by the labour migrating from other parts of India. The influx of migrant labour particularly in Agriculture Sector started with the green revolution and picked up subsequently. The reason for increasing influx of labour from other States are:

- Poverty
- Lack of employment opportunities at home states
- Socio economic compulsions of their State
- Numbers of migrant labourers

According to an estimate of PAU in 1995-96, the number of migrant agricultural labourers was 3.87 lacs during lean period and 7.74 lacs during peak period.

The number was one lac during 1978-79 according to an estimate.

The numbers has swelled to several lacs over time.

Economic and social factors motivate people to leave their homes for new destinations and this is true of migrants heading towards Punjab. Besides being part of the family movement, search for employment and matrimonial alliance are two major reasons why men and women migrate into Punjab. While male migration is mainly employment related, female migration is predominantly for marriage.

One of the serious problems Punjab is confronted with at present is the high level of unemployment. The growth of employment has not been commensurate with that of the State domestic product, resulting in underutilization of the labour force.

The problem is not limited to providing employment only. Opportunities are required to meet the backlog of the unemployed and also to adjust the new entrants to the labourforce. The increasing inflow of migrant labour in the Agriculture Sector has both the positive as well as negative aspects. The State has become largely dependent on migrant labour for various agricultural operations.

The migrant labour is available at cheaper cost as compared to local labour, which helps in low cost of agricultural production. With the local labour taking a back-seat, agriculture without migratory labour cannot be possible. The migrant labour acquiring skills in cultivation, absentee farming by the landowners has become very common. Now, there is permanent agriculture labour as well as transit agriculture labour in Punjab.

So far as permanent agriculture labour is concerned, their needs are mostly catered to by the farmers whereas the seasonal labour becomes the cause of many socio economic problems of their maintenance e.g. creation of slums.

The Punjab Agriculture having saturated, the migrant labourers started looking for new employment avenues in the Non Agriculture Sector as well.

The migrant labour has become a significant part and parcel of Punjab culture. The influx of migrant labour has made an adverse impact on the local youth. It has taken deep roots in agriculture in Punjab while the local youth is neither taking to cultivation nor he finds suitable employment in Non Agriculture Sector.

INDUSTRIES

Punjab State has been utilising labour from various neighbouring States of India i.e Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan for various activities such as agricultural, industrial, construction and service sectors. Migration is not a recent phenomenon.

The workforce work due to abject poverty, driven out from the “home” states (Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, J&K and even Haryana) for food, employment, better wages and a better quality of life. Punjab is an attractive destination for these states’ migrants. Several lakh migrants have made Punjab their “second home”. Over the decades, an organized system has been operating to bring migrant labourers to Punjab.

Positive effects of migrant labour on Industrial Sector

- Migrant labour has improved the economic position of the state by acquiring new skills and supply labour to meet increasing demands.
- Out of the Migrant labour, 7.5% labour force fall in the age group of 20 to 40 years. It is only younger labour who are migrant, who are able to work hard. They do more work, which is helpful for the development of the industry.
- Migration of labour has reduced the problem of unemployment of India as Small and large-scale industries are able to provide employment to the neighbouring state’s unemployed labour by giving them employment in industries in Punjab.
- Wage rate of Migrant labour is low as compared to the local labour.

It helps industry of Punjab to use the labour at cheaper rates, which has reduced cost of production.

- Migrant labour may be attributed to better skills attained by them with the passage of time and experience which has resulted in more output in industry.
- Migrant labourers are honest, sincere, trustworthy, loyal and humble, which help development of industry.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF MIGRANT LABOUR ON INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Migrant labour do not have their own houses. They are also not in a position to pay the rent of rented houses because their earning is less and they have to send some savings to home. So they live in the rural/urban areas by making jhugies, which has caused mushrooming of slums in towns/cities. These are centres of crime and disease including AIDS This is a hindrance development of the state.

Migrant labour does not migrate along with his family. His family resides at native town so he has to visit the native town after a short period of time, by taking long leave of one or two months. Some times some of them do not return, which results in change of labour. This affects the industry badly.

Large workforce of men and women has put an additional strain on the existing urban infrastructure and basic civic amenities. It also poses a law and order problem besides adding to the problems of healthcare and human settlement.

The shift to urban pockets from poverty-stricken rural pockets in “home” states is

believed to have “depressed” wages for the “local” job-hunters in Punjab. There is growing apprehension that due to the availability of cheap migrant labour in abundance, there may be a rise in social tensions.

Although migration of labour has reduced the problem of unemployment in India but it has increased the problem of unemployment in Punjab as small and large-scale industries are employing less local labour because migrant labour is available at cheaper rates. The list of unemployed “local” youth gets longer, the added problems of migrant labour have led to the pressing of the panic button in the state.

Punjab’s suggestion under the “action plan” is that industries getting government subsidies should fix a percentage in jobs for the “local” workforce.

EFFECT OF MIGRATION ON URBAN POPULATION

Punjab is in the midst of urban transition. The urban population of Punjab is 33.92% against 27.82% for the country as a whole. Today one out of every three persons in Punjab is urban by residence. This has resulted in high population density in urban areas. The state has witnessed a rapid growth in urban population due to migration from rural to urban areas in search of employment opportunities; health and education facilities.

At present 80% of urban population is covered under Water Supply scheme and whereas 58% urban population is covered with sewerage facilities and massive financial investment is required to provide 100% water supply & sewerage facilities in the urban areas of the state. Due to fiscal hardships of the State Government over the past decade have already resulted in financial squeeze on Urban Local Bodies, which depend upon devolution of resources from the state for carrying out their various development activities.

The State Govt. has set up “Municipal Development Fund” for creating infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, solid waste disposal, environmental protection and roads etc. in the Municipal towns. Work for water supply in 126 towns and that of providing sewerage facilities in 76 towns has already been initiated under phase - I.

The major concern at present is the critical gap in demand and supply of basic civic services in growing urban areas. Despite augmentation of basic services, housing and urban infrastructure, deficiencies in quantity and quality persist.

In view of the fast changing urban scenario at all levels, infrastructural facilities are needed. But the Urban Local Bodies are not able to provide the infrastructure due to paucity of funds.

The issue needs serious attention so that the problems, which are going out of control, are managed at the earliest. Issues like Mass Rapid Transport system, Drinking Water and Sewage System, Solid Waste Management, Urban Roads and Lighting, Primary Medicine and Sanitation are some of the burning problems related to urban development due to rapid migration of population to the urban areas.

GOI has launched Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission on 3rd Dec. 2006 with the sole objective of integrated development of infrastructure services, effective linkage between asset creation and asset management and to scale up delivery of civic programmes and redevelopment of inner (old) city area to reduce the congestion.

Amritsar and Ludhiana are two of the 63 cities selected under JNNURM by GOI. Funding for these two cities will be on the basis 50:20:30::centre : state: ULB and whereas for other towns and cities the funding pattern is 80:10:10 Centre:State:ULB.

It is hoped that by the end of 11th Five year plan all towns and cities will be covered by

100% water supply and sewerage facilities. Though the State Government is spending huge amount on infrastructural development including civic amenities for the rural masses, the conditions remains static due to the addition in rural population through migration from other States.

The State is in the process of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions by devolving more powers to PRIs, however, that day is not far away when these institutions of self-governance will be dominated by the new entrants/migrants.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The influx of seasonal as well as permanent labour from outside has led to various socio-economic problems in Punjab.

DRUG ABUSE

Nearly 26% youth of below 18 years and 62.6% youth from 19-24 years are in the habit of taking drugs as per survey conducted by IDC (Institute of Development & Communication) Chandigarh in 2001.

A significant number of addicts include labourers, farmers and un-employed students. Not only male, but female farm labour has also switched to drug abuse during harvest season.

ADVERSE SEX RATIO

As per 2001 census, the number of females per 1000 males is as low as 876 in the State. There is further steep decline in the age group of 0-6 at 798 per 1000 male children.

The district wise detail of sex ratio in age group of 0-6 and overall sex ratio as per 1981, 1991 & 2001 census is as under:-

Sex-Ratio (Number of females per 1000 males)

SN	District	0-6 age group		Overall		
		1991 Census	2001 census	1981 Census	1991 Census	2001 Census
1	Amritsar	861	790	871	873	876
2	Bathinda	860	785	864	884	870
3	Faridkot	865	812	882	883	883
4	Fatehgarh Sahib	874	766	-	871	854
5	Ferozepur	887	822	884	895	885
6	Gurdaspur	878	789	907	903	890
7	Hoshiarpur	884	812	915	924	935
8	Jalandhar	886	806	893	897	887
9	Kapurthala	879	785	898	896	888
10	Ludhiana	877	817	859	844	824
11	Mansa	873	782	-	873	879
12	Moga	867	818	-	884	887
13	Mukatsar	858	811	-	880	891
14	Nawanshehar	900	808	-	900	914
15	Patiala	871	777	863	882	868
16	Roop Nagar	884	794	861	870	871
17	Sangrur	873	786	860	870	871
18	Punjab	875	798	879	882	876

Note: The new districts of S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), Taran Taran and Barnala were constituted after the publication of the Report.

I Improvement in the adverse Sex Ratio:-

The State Govt, for improving the' adverse sex ratio III, Punjab, has taken following measures:-

- The State is effectively implementing PNDDT (Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique) Act to curb female foeticide.
- The State Government has initiated implementation of incentive based “Balri Rakshak Yojana” (BRY) to tackle the problem of declining sex ration.
- The State Government has ordered to register pregnancies with various levels of medical personnel.
- The State Government has started an awareness campaign to change the mindset of the people and to promote the cause of girl child.
- The State Govt. is also implementing the Janani Surkasha Yojana under which assistance of RS.700/- per birth is given to BPL families upto two births. A road show was undertaken in the rural and urban slum areas of the State for popularization of this scheme.
- According to the findings of the survey conducted in July 2005, in the subcentre level villages (2859), there were 817 girls to every 1000 male in the age group 0-6 as compared to the sex ratio of 798: 1000 in the same age group recorded in 2001.

FEMALE INFANTICIDE

With the Government taking steps to check female foeticide, the trend of female infanticide seems to have increased. This trend is corroborated through a study conducted recently by Rajindra Hospital doctor, Dr Harshinder Kaur. As per data collected from vaccination campaigns of the State for children upto five yeas of age revealed that there are just 700 girls per 1,000 male children. In pediatric wards of government hospitals also just on an average 700 girls are registering against per 1,000 male children. In government schools too the ratio of female children taking admission against the male children is almost the same. The trend is also corroborated through the recent incidents. In the year 2006-07, eight cases of abandoned newborn girl children had been brought to the Government Rajindra Hospital. The influx of labourers has multiplied the problem of female infanticide, as they are poor & illiterate.

EDUCATION

Education is the corner stone of economic, social and cultural development of a country. It has emerged as the most important single input in promoting human resource development, in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress. An appropriate education system cultivates knowledge, better skills, positive values and attitudes among the peoples, especially for those who acquire it. As per 2001 census, the literacy rate in the State was 69.95%, which is marginally higher than the national average of 65.38%. It has an all India rank of 16th on literacy scale among Indian States and UTs. The literacy rates over the years in the state are:-

Literacy Rates by Sex in Punjab (in percent)				
SN	Year	Persons	Males	Females
1	1971	34.12	42.23	24.65

2	1981	43.37	51.23	34.35
3	1991	58.51	65.66	50.41
4	2001	69.95	75.63	63.55
	2011-12(Projected)	81.26	84.80	76.31

Source- Census of India 2001.

The state is yet to achieve 100% Universalization of Elementary Education for all children. The enrollment rate was about 68% in 1999. The drop out rate is about 25% at primary level and 43% at secondary level as on 30/9/2005.

Taking into the account the level of physical financial and social inputs in the field of education, it is expected that decline in the dropout rate would increase at least by 0.02 pp every year. Keeping this assumption in view, the dropout rate would be 30.04 percent during 2006-07, 26.91 percent during 2007-08, 23.04 percent during 2008-09, 18.41 percent during 2009-10, 13.00 percent during 2010-11 and 6.79 percent during 2011-12.

Thus the projected dropout rate at Elementary level for 2011-12 would be 6.79 percent.

DROPOUT RATE

The dropout rate is very high due to migrate labour in the State. The data regarding 2004-05 is given as under:

SN	Head	Punjab	National Average	All India Rank
1	2	3	4	5
1	Dropout rate(2004-05) (in% age)-lto 8 th Class			
	Boys	32.64	50.49	
	Girls	34.82	51.28	
	Total	33.67	50.84	14 th

To bring down the dropout rate, following steps have been taken by State Government-

- * Tuition fee for all the girls has been waived off till class 12th.
- * Free books are provided to all the girls upto class 8th under SSA and upto class 10th to all SC girls,
- * Scholarships/stipends are being provided to girls for pre and postmatric levels, poor and brilliant children and SCs etc.
- * Education Guarantee Centers & Alternative Innovative Education (EGS/ AIE) is a focused effort to mainstream all out of schools children, including those in difficult circumstances, coverage or living in remote areas habitations under SSA .
- * Provision of special facilities like free books, artificial limbs aids etc. for disable children upto class 8th under SSA .
- * Provision of computer education at upper primary level. .Vocationalisation of education at senior secondary stage.
- * Mother teacher Associations have been constituted in all the schools so that the problems/ education of girls is well taken care of.
- * The policy of having at least one female teacher in all the schools and of appointing 50% teachers as females at the time of fresh appointment has also helped in the retention of girls in schools.
- * Marked emphasis is being placed on improvement of infrastructure by building additional,

