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Social Impact of Migration in Punjab

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Abstract:

The Migration is an equilibrium process which reduces regional disparities at different stages of development and a process which is as old as human civilization with the change in place of residence changes in social life takes place. So, It also brings change in process of social interaction, change in culture and social groups, change in duties, expectations and many other socio-economic challenges. In Punjab, three out of four households include a migrant. The effects of migration an individual's households and regions add up to a significant impact on the national economy and society. Thus the study of migration is linked to economic migration, methodological Problem and conceptual issues. This paper reviews key issues relating to internal labour migration in Punjab. It analyses the patterns, trends and nature of labour migration.

1. Introduction

Migration of the people to big cities takes place from all the corners of the country with different social and cultural background. When such people meet in cities and stop living together a new cosmopolitan culture develops, cities are therefore, known as "melting pot of cultures" Such cultures are moral, liberal, impersonal, self-centered and more materialistic.

There are many definitions of migration According to Lee, "migration is permanent or semi-permanent change of residence." According to weinderg, 'Human migration is change of place permanently or temporarily for an appreciable duration as in case of seasonal worker'.

When migrants move from one place to another, they clearly make demographic and social-economic effects on the donor and recipient population. Migration is a major factor that brings drastic changes in society. Generally migration is considered as a natural phenomenon and migrants are often acknowledged as such people who amongst the most dynamic and entrepreneurial members of society. Largely their roles in society is judged only in economic terms but in some places, migration is becoming a serious problem and even a cause of economic, social and political conflict.

In Punjab the labour migration is mostly influenced by social structures and pattern of development. Uneven development is the main reason of migration along with factors like poverty, landholding system, fragmentations of land, lack of employment opportunities, large family-size and natural calamities. The high-land man ratio, caste system, lawlessness and exploitation at native place speed up the breakdown of traditional socio-economic relations in the rural areas and people decide to migrate to relatively prosperous areas in search of better employment and income.

2. Migration Patterns in India

Migration is one of the common trends in these days. In the same way agriculture labour migration is also common in these days. Labourers face so many problems in his living condition and these problems pull him from his native place and migrate to other places where he gets good employment and income opportunity. The effect of migration are seen in both the societies that people leave are called sending societies and those in which they settle, are called receiving societies.

There are several positive impacts to the origin of the migrants. Socially, those people from the rural regions of the country who leave to the cities come back with better qualifications of employment. From their previous job in the cities, they will become more experienced and more skilled in that particular task. As a result, those migrants will in future be more likely employed to better jobs. Secondly, the people will have better lifestyles due higher income they earn from the jobs compared to the ones they had previously. This means that the people will be able to have better food, housing and education. There are also economical benefits to the place of origin and create incomes for others in the same place. Furthermore, there are demographical and political benefits. The population decreases where the worker come from and prevents overcrowding and over population with limited resources, the people who are left in the origin get access to more resources that they need for living. In addition, the unemployment area in the native region will decrease since majority of the people who were unemployed leave for the cities.

On the other hand, there is impact to the destination, to the cities. To start off, out of the many positive impacts from the migration, a social benefit is of culture diversity. The different traditions that they had in their homes can be brought to the cities by for instance, opening of a restaurant. To add on, there are several economical benefits to the migration. The migrant workers are willing to be hired

even with harsh working environment such as low wages, long working hours dirty jobs, and no working insurance. For example, the migrants have to suffer harsh working environment but still did not hesitate to do the job. The employers can have more benefits by creating more profit with less expenses which as a result, contributes to a faster economic growth. Thirdly, another environmental benefit has increased and develops civil works and infrastructures.

3. The Impact of Migration

3.1. On migrants and their Families

Poorer migrant workers, crowded into the lower ends of the labour market, have few entitlements vis a vis their employers or the public authorities in the destination areas. They have meagre personal assets and suffer a range of deprivations in the destination areas. In the source areas, migration has both negative and positive consequences for migrants and their families.

3.2. Living Conditions

Migrant labourers, whether agricultural or non-agricultural, live in deplorable conditions. There is no provision of safe drinking water or hygienic sanitation. Most live in open spaces or makeshift shelters in spite of the Contract Labour Act which stipulates that the contractor or employer should provide suitable accommodation. Apart from seasonal workers, workers who migrate to the cities for job live in parks and pavements. Slum dwellers, who are mostly migrants, stay in deplorable conditions, with inadequate water and bad drainage. Food costs more for migrant workers who are not able to obtain temporary ration cards.

3.3. Health and Education

Labourers working in harsh circumstances and living in unhygienic conditions suffer from serious occupational health problems and are vulnerable to disease. Those working in quarries, construction sites and mines suffer from various health hazards, mostly lung diseases. As the employer does not follow safety measures, accidents are quite frequent. Migrants cannot access various health and family care programmes due to their temporary status. Free public health care facilities and programmes are not accessible to them

3.4. For Women Workers

There is no provision of maternity leave, forcing them to resume work almost immediately after childbirth. Workers, particular those working in tile factories and brick kilns suffer from occupational health hazards such as body ache, and skin irritation.

3.5. Problems of Children

As there are no creche facilities, children often accompany their families to the workplace to be exposed to health hazards. They are also deprived of education: the schooling system at home does not take into account their migration pattern and their temporary status in the destination areas does not make them eligible for schooling there.

In the case of male-only migration, the impact is on family relations and on women, children and the elderly are left behind. The absence of men adds to material and Psychological insecurity, leading to Pressure & negotiations with wider family.

3.6. Seasonal Migrants

Seasonal or circular migrants by contract are likely to move from place to place in search of employment or to continue to returning to the same place year after year. Such circular flows of migrants encompass migrants who may stay at their destination for six months or more at a time and hence need social services at their destination. Scholars have long characterized this migration as type in which the permanent residence of a person. Many of the women who migrate for marriage are also participants in the market even if their primary reason for migration is marriage. For example migration is a rapidly growing sector that employs women, most of whom are rural to urban, migrants.

Lastly, we can discuss some other negative consequences that is brought to the area of origin by internal migration. Socially, with the husband of the family staying for long terms in the cities to bring income to the family, the divorce rate increases. Consequently, the children grow up with a lack of father figures that they need while growing up. To add on, a negative outcome of internal migration is slower economic growth of the origin. Most of the rural areas that the workers come from are farmland which requires a lot of manual labour that could be provided by men. However, since fathers, sons of the family are the ones who move to the city to get jobs in construction sites and more, the farm lands lack the care and hands that it requires for good results.

In the end we can say that Punjab is losing its expensive human resources. Skilled and trained professionals like (Craftspeople, doctors teachers engineers) are replaced by the manual labour who are illiterates and unskilled labours who are migrating to Punjab are socially backward and belong to very poor families. Lower living conditions of the migrant labour are badly affecting the social life of Punjab and also disturbing its social norms and values. In addition to that, they are the main carrier of cheap drugs and different types of diseases and infections and uneven forms of crime. A basic overview of this phenomenon makes clear that in spite of the vast contribution of migrants to Punjab Economy the social protections available to them still remain sparse.

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