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Agrarian Crisis, Unemployment and Rural-Urban Migration: A Study

K. Dhiravidamani

Assistant Professor, Political Science & Public Administrating Wing
Directorate of Distance Education, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, India

Abstract:

Agricultural labourers, poor peasants and other workers in villages took migration ever happening in rural areas of our nation. This migratory movement plays important role in elevating the economic status of this marginalized groups. Agricultural labourers facing many obstacles in their traditional agricultural work. They can not sustain in their livelihood. So they migrate from rural to urban areas for searching jobs.

Keywords: migration, poverty, unemployment, agrarian crisis

1. Introduction

Migrational movements are a product of social, economic, political and physical circumstances in which individuals or groups find themselves. Migration denotes a permanent or temporary change in the place of residence of persons from one place to another. This paper is made an attempt to study about the rural – urban migration in India and also explore the causes of labour migration.

Labour migration may be defined as a form of labour mobility towards districts or states or out side where industry and employment are expanding. In other words, migration may be the phenomenon of the flow of place over shorter or longer distance from one origin to a destination either for temporary or permanent settlement¹. Marxian studies on migration view at, “as a creation of capitalist expansion in productive sectors, industrialization and mechanisms of profit accumulation created a pauperized surplus working class that was forced to migrate to new places².”

2. Migration: India and Third World

The problem of rural to urban migration especially in third world countries, has been a matter of major concern in the recent past. Traditionally, the process of economic development – of industrialization and urbanization have been associated with increasing demand of labour. But it has been found in most third world countries that the supply of labour, stimulated by an exodus from rural areas, has been far in excess of the demand for labour generated by industrialization³.

In India 600 million farmers of which 40 per cent are willing to quit farming for various reasons, mass migration from rural to urban areas has increased rapidly. Between 1991 and 2001, 73 million people have migrated from the rural areas to elsewhere. Mass migration is a phenomenon that is a consequence of various problems namely, health poverty and hunger, water and sanitation, women and children education and employment, environmental problems, resources, industries and corporates, etc. in the rural India⁴.

3. Causes of Migration

Migration may be motivated by various causes among which are personal, political, economic and natural forces. Migration currents acquire significant prominence with technological advance and industrial development since redistribution of population is likely to occur with development. Migration has multiple causes. For individual households, it may be a precursor to more permanent out migration, or an enduring phenomenon in its own right. While the drivers of migration are complex and diverse, important ones include the lack of sufficient local employment (Farm and Non-Farm), land fragmentation and better opportunities in other high productivity and growth sectors⁵. Migration had become a primary survival strategy. The combination of drought and limited land availability constrained income earning opportunities in the villages, yet their populations continued to grow, with continuing high fertility rates among the poorest families. This forced many villages to seek a livelihood elsewhere, mostly in nearby cities⁶.

4. Push and Pull Factors

Many scholars identified, lack of regular employment lack of amenities in rural areas. Non-availability of facilities like good education, health measures, housing, etc. are push factors. Availability of full employment, availability of certain infrastructural facilities etc are pull factors.

According to E.M. Falaris, "Migration caused by industrialization is called pull-migration, and that caused by rural population pressure, or poor economic condition, is called push – migration. There is general feeling that migration is an adaptive mechanism: It is caused by regional imbalances, and it establishes population – resources balances in the sending as well as receiving areas. Moreover, the degree of social inequality at the place of origin is positively correlated with rate of migration."⁷

Pull factors refers to the factors that attract the migrants to the urban areas. These include better income earning opportunities including jobs, the promise of higher expected income, access to public service, better standard of living, marriage and the existence of family and support networks to assist in finding job⁸.

The reasons for migration include both the push factors and the pull factors. The push factors refer to the factors that push the migrants from the rural areas to the urban areas. They involve the problems that the people face in the rural areas due to which they decide to move to the urban areas. These include poverty in rural areas, inadequate non-agricultural products, lack of adequate income, large single of household divisions and sub-division of land holding resulting in small size of agricultural holding low and unstable prices of agricultural products and poor public services⁹.

5. Crisis in Agriculture

Many developing countries, particularly in Asia low agricultural incomes and agricultural unemployment and under employment are the major factor pushing migrants towards areas with greater job opportunism. The Meteorological drought, hydrological drought and agricultural drought causing loss in employment opportunities in rural areas.

Migration of agricultural labour from one place to other in search of employment is a common feature of the Indian Agricultural Scenario. In our country rural to rural and rural to urban migration streams contribute most important streams of migrant labour¹⁰. There have been more people depending on agricultural than land can support, resulting in uneconomic holdings, poverty, unemployment and indebtedness in the villages. Besides, a fairly large class of landless agricultural labourers has long been in existence obtaining a some what precarious living even in good years and subjected to serious hardships in bad years. The number of such labourers has been increasing. The loss of land owing to the accumulation of debt the eviction of tenants due to the desire of landless to increase their own cultivations, quarrels between the tenant – heirs after the death of permanent tenant, have been some of the factors increasing this class.

Agrarian crisis, mainly due to inadequate employment generation in rural areas, vast growth of population large proportion of rural people does not have enough land or the right kind of land to eliminate hunger. Data for the year 1990-91 to 2000 – 2001, reveals that Indian economy as a whole, and agriculture sector in particular, is not growing at a rate that is considered reasonable by reasonable of all sections of the economic especially agriculture production¹¹.

The post liberalization regime began to gradually withdraw subsidies on fertilizer and to rely on the market to determine its price. This resulted in the steep increase in fertilizer prices, driving up the cost of production in agriculture. During 1991-92 to 2008-09 the price of Diammonium phosphate increased about 92.4 percent, the prices of potash increased by 62.1 percent and the prices of urea increased by 67 per cent. The worst impact of this decontrol of fertilizers was the sharp increase in imbalance in the consumption of nitrogen – phosphate – potash ratio causing severe loss of soil fertility¹².

According to the situation Assessment survey of farmers conducted by the National Sample Survey organization (NSSO) in 2003 about 27 per cent of farmers did not like their ancestral profession as it had become unprofitable. About 40 percent of farmers were willing to quit this profession due to non-availability of agriculture. The current situation prevailing in the agriculture sector has been termed as a crisis due to reasons of increased costs of production, poor selling price, decline in investments and capital formations in rural areas, poor access to credit, poor innovation and technological development and information asymmetry¹³.

6. Conclusion

Unemployment and poverty in rural areas are the result of multi-dimensional factors which includes population growth, low rate of investment in agriculture, uneven land distribution, lack of credit facilities rural unemployment. Access to institutional credit can solve the problems of rich peasants but the small and marginal farmers usually borrow from the non institutional sources like money lenders who charge heavy interest.

For several years the rural people in India depends on cultivating land, which generate income for them. This situation now changed and forced them, migrate from their land and settled into the nearby cities. All the factors like health, poverty, hunger, water, sanitation etc., are better off in the cities. So there is migration occurred from rural to urban areas.

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