



PROBLEMS FACED BY THE MIGRANT WORKERS IN TIRUPPUR DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

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Abstract

In contemporary society, a considerable number of individuals view relocating in pursuit of improved living conditions as an optimal choice. Presently, the employment of migrant workers has become a contentious issue in various Indian states, where workers are compelled to migrate from their hometowns due to a lack of economic development, insufficient agricultural land, caste discrimination, limited job opportunities, low wages, mounting debts, and dire family financial situations. Recently, Tiruppur has witnessed a surge in the influx of migrant workers arriving from different parts of India, particularly to work in the textile industry. Despite the significant employment of migrant workers in the textile sector, the industry falls short in providing them with adequate facilities, job security, and appropriate working conditions. A valuable avenue for research lies in understanding the factors motivating individuals in the Tiruppur region to leave their homes and families in pursuit of better employment opportunities. The investigation will primarily focus on utilizing Cramer's model to explore socio-economic issues and challenges within the textile industry that impact migrant workers.

Keywords: Migrants, Challenges, health conditions, socio-economic, low wages

Introduction

Migration emerges as a crucial means for individuals to enhance their survival in an inherently unequal world, significantly improving income, learning opportunities, and the future prospects for their succeeding generations. This decision to migrate stands as a fundamental element of human freedom, with migrants spanning various professions, from construction workers to IT professionals, relocating either within their own country or abroad. The employment of migrant workers has become a focal point of discussion in many Indian states, driven by factors such as the lack of development, insufficient

agricultural land, caste discrimination, limited employment opportunities, meager wages, mounting debts, and dire economic conditions in their native areas. Migration brings forth natural consequences, including adapting to new localities, cultures, food, and climates. The recruitment of migrant workers is predominantly carried out by private unorganized sectors, representing a crucial aspect of livelihood strategy in India. Tiruppur, in recent years, has witnessed a significant influx of migrant laborers in the textile sector. Unfortunately, these workers often lack adequate facilities and job security, serving as a source of cheap and unregulated labor for industries. Discrimination persists between migrant and local workers, with migrants earning considerably lower daily and monthly wages despite working longer hours. Many migrant workers, lacking education and skills, face challenges in handling modern machinery and equipment, contributing to their lower pay and subjugation in living areas. The issue extends beyond salary disparities, encompassing a lack of basic rights, with numerous migrant workers enduring conditions akin to modern-day slavery.

Statement of Problem

Migrant workers in the Tiruppur District of Tamil Nadu confront a multitude of challenges that impact their well-being and rights. The pervasive issues include substandard living conditions marked by overcrowded and unsanitary accommodations, exploitative labor practices characterized by low wages and extended working hours, limited access to healthcare services, and difficulties in social integration due to cultural disparities and discrimination. Additionally, the absence of robust legal frameworks exacerbates the vulnerabilities of these workers. Urgent attention is required to address these challenges comprehensively, ensuring the establishment of equitable conditions, upholding labor rights, and fostering a supportive environment for migrant workers in the region.

Review of Literature

Barani and Pavithra (2019) conducted a research study aimed at understanding the challenges and advantages experienced by migrant workers. The study specifically explores the cultural disparities encountered by migrant workers and proposes strategies for fostering a more equitable work-life balance. Data was collected from over 500 migrant workers employed in Erode textile mills, with a subset of 65 workers chosen through quota sampling for further investigation. The analysis and interpretation of the data employed the percentage method and the Chi-square test. Findings from the study indicate that migrant workers contend with issues such as low wages, substandard working conditions, a lack of social protection, and instances of social exclusion.

Kanagarathinam and Gunasekaran (2020) in their study titled "A Study on Migration of Labours with Reference to Tiruppur District," Kanagarathinam and Gunasekaran highlight that a significant majority of male migrant laborers secure employment in sectors such as Garments, Textiles, Hotels, and Shops. This is in contrast to female migrants, with a notable concentration of male migrants in the textile industry. The disparity is attributed to men often shouldering greater responsibility in earning income for their families. The study further underscores a noteworthy comparison between temporary and permanent labor migration. It reveals

that the rate of temporary labor migration is seven times higher than that of permanent labor migration in Tiruppur, Coimbatore, and Erode Districts.

Objectives of the study

Based on the above literature, the following objectives have been framed:

- To identify the profile of migrant workers in Tiruppur District
- To examine the challenges faced by migrant workers in the workplace

Research Design and Methods

This research delves into the challenges and opportunities faced by migrant workers. The reliability and validity of any investigation hinge on the methodical gathering of data and the subsequent analysis. In pursuit of its objectives, this study extensively employed both primary and secondary data.

Sampling Design

The main source of data for this study originates from interviews conducted with migrant workers situated in Tiruppur District of Tamil Nadu. The researchers relied on the assistance of local residents to identify the workplaces and residences of these migrant workers. Subsequently, data will be gathered through visits to either workplaces or homes, depending on convenience. Information pertaining to demographics, household particulars, motives behind migration, information sources, living conditions, current occupational trends, wage and income levels, consumption and savings habits, remittances, and other relevant factors will be collected.

Results and Discussion

This study was conducted in the Tiruppur district of Tamil Nadu, aiming to analyze the migration patterns of workers. Due to challenges in obtaining reliable records, a sample of 280 migrant workers was selected for the study. A preliminary survey indicated that the majority of migrant laborers in Tiruppur originated from Uttar Pradesh, followed by Bihar and Orissa. Specifically, 76 (30.4%) workers were found to be from Orissa, 51 (20.4%) from Uttar Pradesh, 32 (12.8%) from Bihar, and the remaining 12 (4.8%) from Chhattisgarh. The sample was drawn from diverse areas, including urban, semi-urban, and rural regions within the Tiruppur district. To gather information, a meticulously designed Interview Schedule was employed, and the investigator conducted personal interviews with each respondent. The subsequent analysis sheds light on the findings within the study area.

The results of study on “Inter State Migrant Workmen – A Paradigm Shift in Labour Deployment Pattern in Tiruppur District” are discussed and presented in the following heads.

Socio-Economic Profile of Migrant Workers

Profile	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	226	86.9
	Female	34	13.1
	Total	260	100.0
Age Group	18-25	101	38.8
	26-35	67	25.7
	36-45	48	18.46
	Above 45	44	16.9
	Total	260	100.0
Language	Hindi	138	53.07
	Oriya	65	25.0
	Bhojpuri	57	21.92
	Total	260	100.0
Marital Status	Married	154	59.23
	Unmarried	106	40.77
	Total	260	100.0
Edu. Qualification	Illiterate	77	29.61
	High School	129	49.61
	Graduation	54	20.77
	Total	260	100.0
Local Language	Conversational	27	10.38
	Basic	35	13.46
	Very Little	144	55.38
	None	54	20.76
	Total	260	100.0
State	Bihar	167	64.23
	Uttar Pradesh	36	13.84
	Jharkhand	10	3.84
	Delhi	35	13.46
	Chattisgarh	12	4.61
	Total	260	100.0

The table presents a detailed snapshot of the demographic composition of a sample of 260 respondents across various dimensions. In terms of gender, the majority of males at 86.9%, with females constituting 13.1%. Age distribution reveals a predominant representation in the 18-25 age group (38.8%), followed by 26-35 (25.7%), 36-45 (18.46%), and above 45 (16.9%). Language preferences showcase a dominance of Hindi speakers (53.07%), followed by Oriya (25.0%) and Bhojpuri (21.92%). Marital status is divided, with 59.23% of married respondents and 40.77% were unmarried. Educational qualifications vary, with 29.61% were illiterate, 49.61% hold a high school degree, and 20.77% have graduated. Proficiency in the local language indicates that 55.38% possess very little proficiency, 20.76% have none, 10.38% are conversational, and 13.46% have basic proficiency. Geographically, the majority hails from Bihar (64.23%), followed by Uttar Pradesh (13.84%), Delhi (13.46%), Jharkhand (3.84%), and Chattisgarh (4.61%). This comprehensive overview facilitates a nuanced understanding of the diverse characteristics within the surveyed population, encompassing aspects such as gender, age, language, marital status, education, local language proficiency, and regional distribution.

Problems of migrant workers at the workplace

S.No.	Problem	Total Score	Mean Value	Rank
1.	No pay for overtime work	560	2.621	2
2.	Psychological abuse	524	2.004	6
3.	Often feeling nervous or tense at work	456	1.801	9
4.	No medical benefits or insurance	566	2.801	1
5.	Prevalence of inequality among the employees	472	1.921	8
6.	Occupational Hazards, backaches, Lung diseases, eye problems, etc.,	448	1.732	10
7.	Working for a long time without a break	550	2.345	4
8.	Language barrier to understanding the local language	528	2.132	5
9.	Unwillingness or inability to adapt to new technology	522	1.987	7
10.	Providing food with low nutrition	552	2.512	3

The table reveals that migrant workers face critical challenges in the workplace. Foremost, the absence of medical benefits or insurance tops the list, signifying a dire need for healthcare support among migrant workers. Furthermore, the failure to receive payment for overtime work stands as the second-highest concern, emphasizing the economic hardships endured by this demographic. Conversely, occupational hazards, such as backaches, lung diseases, and eye problems, constitute the least prioritized issue among migrant workers. Additionally, the provision of low-nutrition food ranks third, underscoring the importance of nutritional well-being in the working environment. Lastly, the language barrier to understanding the local language ranks fifth, indicating a notable struggle for effective communication within the workplace. These findings underscore the complex array of challenges faced by migrant workers, encompassing issues related to health, compensation, nutrition, and communication.

Suggestions

- Ensure migrant workers receive fair pay, particularly for overtime work, through transparent wage structures and labor practices.
- Provide accessible medical benefits and insurance to address the health concerns faced by migrant workers.
- The establishment of a Digital Migration Hub in Tiruppur by the Central or State Government is imperative. This hub would serve as a comprehensive platform for updating the employment information and skills of migrants, facilitating their job search within Tiruppur.
- To streamline the process, both state and central governments should issue smart cards to migrants, acting as an alternative to traditional identification, employment, and skill cards. These smart cards, obtained from their home state for interstate migrant workers, would generate detailed profiles, encompassing experiences and skills.
- This system aims to address issues such as worker exploitation, job-seeking duplication, social security concerns, and prevent anti-social activities. Ultimately, these initiatives are poised to

benefit not only migrant workers and employers but also contribute positively to the state, nation, and global community.

Conclusion

This study delves into the socioeconomic background, migration motivations, and challenges faced by textile workers, drawing insights from a survey conducted among 260 migrant laborers in Tiruppur District, Tamil Nadu. The sample encompasses both unskilled and semi-skilled workers hailing from Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.

The decision to migrate is driven by factors such as limited job opportunities, the desire to accumulate savings, responsibilities such as marriage and education of dependents, and the aspiration to acquire land or build a home. On the flip side, the allure of higher wages and a favorable working environment in Tiruppur acts as a compelling force for migration. Additionally, the influence of friends and relatives who have previously relocated to Tiruppur plays a significant role in shaping migration patterns.

Despite the relocation, the occupational profiles of migrant workers remain largely unchanged, with nearly all engaged in unskilled labor. Strikingly, none of the migrants are registered with official employment or government agencies; instead, they operate under informal contracts with contractors or textile companies.

Living conditions for these migrants are distressing, as they either cohabit at work sites or rent houses lacking basic amenities such as proper hygiene, sanitation, and safe drinking water. Abiding by the Factories Act, which stipulates an 8-hour workday for the textile industry, migrants adhere to this standard. However, some resort to overtime work to supplement meager wages and enhance their living standards. The obligation to work overtime is particularly evident when workers struggle to meet production targets within the allocated time frame.

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