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**NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF
SEASONAL LABOUR MIGRATION:
A CASE STUDY IN MAHABUBNAGAR
DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

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ABSTRACT

In India, migration from rural areas is an important issue that is gaining more significance year after year. Moreover, the extent, nature, characteristics and pattern of migration have been evolving over time. In fact, the growing part of the migration taking place is seasonal and cyclical in nature. Seasonal or short duration migration is certainly not a new phenomenon in India. However, the magnitude of rural labour circulation is of recent origin, and a direct consequence of structural changes in the economy. Seasonal or circular migration could be largely distress driven and stimulated by the partial or complete collapse of rural employment generation, economic difficulties of cultivation and absence of alternative employment opportunities in underdeveloped regions of the country. In reality, it has become an integral part of livelihood strategies pursued by a large number of poor people living in agriculturally underdeveloped areas. In this context, the present paper focuses on examining the nature and characteristics of seasonal migrant households. It also aims on to evaluate the form of migration, and finally analyses the migrants' wages, work conditions and the expenditure pattern of earnings from migration. The study analysis is based on a primary level survey conducted in mid 2006 in Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, India. The study reveals that migration from the village is essentially seasonal and cyclical in nature, and differs for both rural and urban migrants. Indeed, it is taking place mainly for survival and repayment of debts.

Keywords: Migration, Seasonal migration, Circular/cyclical migration, Survival migration, Employment, Wage rate, Occupation, Destination, Migrants earnings, Distress.

JEL Classification: J6, J31, J38, J62, J64

1. Introduction

Migration is a complex phenomenon and closely related to economic and social factors as well as economic development. The exodus from rural areas is one of the vital issues in India. Because of the ongoing structural changes and consequent alterations in the economy as a whole, the nature, magnitude and pattern of migration have been evolving over time (Reddy, 2003; Srivastava, 2005). There has been growing interest in labour migration as a part of understanding its nature, extent, pattern and direction of transformation process in India. The studies on migration argue that migration is, by and large, closely linked with two basic arguments, that is, people are compelled to migrate due to development-driven factors and/or distress-driven factors. Otherwise, on the one hand, migration of people is mainly motivated by better employment opportunities, higher wages, good quality education and health conditions and better living conditions at destinations. On the other hand, it is impelled by push or distress factors at home such as lack of employment, low wage rates, agricultural failure, debt, drought and natural calamities (de Haan, 1999). In fact, globalization and liberalization has led to the use of new technology in agriculture resulting in increased unemployment in the countryside. Consequently, this has forced large numbers of the poor in labour and farming communities to migrate from their home to far off places in search of employment (Reddy, 2003). By and large, internal migrants are unskilled and semi-skilled workers from lower income groups who could be able to improve their economic position or income scale after migration. A recent report by UNDP exposed the same that without migration a

majority of the poor would not be able to spend on health, consumption and other basic needs, and would face the risk of sliding deeper into poverty (UNDP, 1998, 2009).

On the contrary, in recent years, unemployment, frequent crop failure, indebtedness, inadequate credit facilities, lack of alternative opportunities, droughts and poverty level in rural areas has been increasing, thereby leading to despair or distress conditions in the rural sector. As a result, the rural poor, labour and marginal and small farming communities are on the move, temporarily leaving their homes in search of employment and livelihood in other prosperous rural and/or urban areas in the country (Smita, 2007).

It appears that, the growing part of such migration is temporary, seasonal, circular and cyclical in nature, though destinations may differ. Seasonal migration is certainly not a new phenomenon in India. However, the magnitude of rural labour circulation is of recent origin, and is a direct consequence of structural changes of the economy. Circular migration, much of which is seasonal, is now an integral part of the livelihood strategies pursued by a large number of poor people living in agriculturally marginal areas (Deshingkar et al., 2009). Such migration results mainly from the distress conditions in agriculture which forces the rural poor to move out of their areas to other places without any guarantee and protection of wages, dignity of labour and life (Reddy, 2003).

On the other hand, for many of the poor living in underdeveloped areas, seasonal migration and commuting are the only ways of accessing the benefits of growth in other locations. Migration has helped them in managing risk, smoothing consumption, and earning to invest in a better future (Deshingkar et al., 2009). Breman (1996) argued that seasonal migration within India has often been misunderstood or ignored in public policy in spite of research demonstrating that it is important to the livelihood of large numbers of poor people in various regions.

In her study, Smita (2007) broadly defined seasonal migration on the basis of three elements: (i) a lack of alternatives in origin areas which force entire families to migrate in search of work (ii) work which is based on indebtedness generates little or no surplus for the labourers at the end of the season, and is merely for survival. (iii) work which involves large-scale violation of labour laws. Deshingkar et al. (2009) defined seasonal migration as a temporary move from and followed by return to the normal place of residence, for purposes of employment. This study reveals that some households barely manage to raise themselves above existing survival levels, while others accumulate wealth over time. However, what is clear is that most would be worse off if they were depending solely on local employment.

In this context, the present paper which is based on a field experience, deals with some of the important migration issues as mentioned above. The main objective of the paper is to examine the nature and characteristics of seasonal migrant households. Secondly, it focuses on evaluating the forms of migration, and finally, it analyses the wage, work conditions and the expenditure pattern of earnings from migration. In order to achieve these objectives, the data for our study was collected from a primary level survey conducted in mid 2006 (May-June) from Akkaram village in Achampet Mandal of Mahabubnagar District of Andhra Pradesh state. The survey enumerated all the households in the village. The present paper is divided into five sections including introduction as the first section. The second section discusses the characteristics of both migrant and non-migrant households. The third section deals with the nature and form of the migration process from the village. The fourth section talks about the migrants' working conditions and expenditure pattern. The final section is the summary and conclusions. The study also supplements the evidence with the help of a few case studies.

1.1. Review of Literature

In this section, apart from presenting literature on migration theories, the study also presents literature in relation to seasonal or circular migration. There are several migration theories which discuss the migration process and its economic implications. The Lewis, Fei and Ranis (1961) theory of migration talks about the dual economy comprising the subsistence agricultural sector characterised by surplus labour and unemployment/underemployment and the modern industrial sector characterised by full employment. In the modern sector, wages are maintained at levels much higher than the average wage in agriculture sector. Lewis (1954) theory says in the case of individual utility maximisation, the decision to migrate to cities would be determined by wage differentials, plus the expected probability of obtaining employment at the destination.

Another important rural-urban migration theory put forward by Harris-Todaro (1970) is that migration is stimulated primarily by economic implications. The theory explains that the decision to migrate would depend upon expected higher wages (real wage differentials) and the probability of successfully obtaining an urban job. Lee (1966), theory argues that migration is due to pull and push factors. Pull factors refer to better employment, higher wages, better life conditions, and good health and education opportunities at destinations. On the other hand, migration is impelled by push (distress) factors at home such as lack of employment, low wage rates, agricultural failure, debt, drought and other natural calamities.

With regard to seasonal/circular labour migration a study by the National Commission on Rural Labour Report (NCRL) in 1991 revealed that there were about 6 million Indians who left their homes seeking employment in other than their native place in India. Most of them are seasonal migrants who belong to Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC), tend to be relatively young, and with low education levels.

It has also been established that scarcity of land and regional disparities are the major factors in the rural labourer's decision to migrate to other areas. Breman (1993) found that the last few decades have witnessed massive seasonal migration of labour force from rural to urban areas. For the poor, the labour class and the marginalised population, migration seems as the only survival option. Lower castes and tribes are disproportionately represented in circular migration streams.

Seasonal/circular migration has played a crucial role in allowing rural people to cope with the consequences of agrarian distress and devastated rural economies in many parts of India. It was suggested that migration helped to raise the migrant household's standard of living (Rao, 1986). The study of Rani and Shylendra (2001) revealed that seasonal migration is mainly due to weak resources, as the cultivable land is small, less fertile and dependent largely on rain-fed cultivation. Moreover, due to inadequate farm and non-farm employment opportunities within the village, most of the households are compelled to migrate during the lean agricultural season to supplement their farm income.

In his study, de Haan (1999) observed that migration is not a choice for poor people, but is the only option for survival after alienation from the land and exploitation in origin places. Hence, in developing countries, the largest proportion of migrants moves between rural and urban areas. Deshingkar et al. (2009) argue that a majority of the seasonal migrants, many of whom are SCs and STs, are poor, and for them migration is a household strategy for managing risk where one or more members of family go away from the village to find work, and that this is a central part of their livelihoods. Whether or not seasonal migration is a coping strategy or becomes more accumulative, depends on a number of factors including improved work availability, rising wages, cutting out intermediaries, and improving skills.

The study by Rafique et al. (2003) exposed that migrants from Murshidabad District of West Bengal are very vulnerable when they

travel to other areas of the state. Seasonal migration has been a response to increasing vulnerability associated with lack of access to land, irrigation water, finance, supportive networks, contacts, and qualifications. There are slightly better-off households that are also migrating, but they are less vulnerable, and may undertake migration in order to save for or invest in a particular purpose. Konsiega (2007) argued that seasonal migration can be an important strategy to cope with poverty for those who are not able or willing to depart permanently to large distances.

Studies on Mahabubnagar, otherwise better known as Palamur District, reveal that there are several systems of seasonal migration from the District (Krishnaiah 1997; Reddy, 2003), where people migrate to engage in activities like private/public project work, construction, migration for agricultural work in irrigated areas and traditional stone crushing work, and this has been transformed over the years. For many of the poor living in the underdeveloped areas of Andhra Pradesh, wage work is very often the key means of livelihood and migration and commuting are the only ways of accessing the benefits of growth in other locations (Deshingkar et al., (2009).

1.2. Profile of the Village

The study village Akkaram is located in Achampet Mandal of Mahabubnagar district in Andhra Pradesh. It is a revenue panchayat village (Village Council) situated far from its Mandal headquarters. Though the village has accessibility to a primary school and post office, however does not have the proper required infrastructure such as transport, communication, health and other basic facilities. The village consists of 200 households with a total population of 1,015 of which 536 are males and 479, females. The village economy mainly depends on agriculture and livestock rearing. The agricultural land is largely sandy in nature. The farmers depend on rainfall for cultivation and the average rainfall in the village is dismal. Thus, the village faces frequent

drought and irrigation sources are very few. The village has one small tank which is completely dependent on rainfall. There are also a few wells and bore wells in this area. The village has a total of 866.2 acres of land out of which 115 acres are irrigated land (counted for both khariff and rabi season). Though farmers grow traditional crops such as bajra, red gram, paddy, jowar etc, cotton cultivation dominates. The agricultural wages were Rs.50 for males and Rs.30 for female labourers. In the village, the main credit supplying sources are formal or institutional like commercial banks and co-operative banks. Apart from this, informal sources of credit are also widespread and include moneylenders, traders, relatives and friends. One of the peculiar features of the village is that work is available only for a few months (June to November) in the agricultural fields. After the monsoon, most of the families, including the landed and landless, migrate in search of employment for the rest of the period. Thus, in the reported year, 431 people migrated from the village to various destinations in the state, of which 206 were male migrants and 225 were female migrants.

2. Characteristics of Migrant Households in the Study Village

This section mainly focuses on examining the nature and characteristics of seasonal migration from the study village. The study village has 200 households, out of which 114 households or 57 per cent of households took part in migration. The migrant households can once again be divided into two groups based on the area to which they migrated. Among these households, some had members who migrated to rural areas and the others, to urban areas. The study divided households from the village into three categories, namely, rural migrant, urban migrant and non-migrant households. There are 51 households who migrated to rural destinations and 63 household to urban destinations in search of work/employment. In other words, 26 per cent migrated to rural areas while 32 per cent of households migrated to urban destinations (see Table 1). What is more important here is that more than half of the

households in the village have one or more of its family members migrating outside the village in search of employment. This indicates that a large proportion of households depend on migration and shows how important migration is for them, and it seems to be one of the main sources of livelihood. The study also observed that this exodus is a result of lack of employment; crop failure and lack of alternative opportunities in the agricultural slack period.

Table 1: Distribution of Migrant and Non-Migrant Households in the Village

Type of Households	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Non-Migration	Total
No. of. Households	51 (25)	63 (32)	86 (43)	200 (100)

Note: Figures in brackets indicates proportion of the households.

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

In the village, 431 individuals from 114 migrant households migrated to other places for work. Out of the total migrants, 38 per cent migrated to rural destinations and 62 per cent to urban destinations. It can be interpreted that employment opportunities are relatively more in urban areas and probably available throughout the year. On the other hand, in rural destinations, work will be available during the agricultural season, and later period there will not be available. Maybe because of this reason some of the migrants opted to migrate towards urban areas. When we look into the gender aspect, most of the females (52%) migrated to rural destinations and males (48%) predominantly towards urban destinations out of total migrants. Among the rural migrants, females constitute 59 per cent and males constitute 41 per cent. In case of the urban migrants, the males constitute 52 per cent while females constitute 48 per cent (see Table 2). Rural destinations received more female migrants because agricultural activity demands certain skills such as sowing, weeding and harvesting which are traditionally considered as suitable and preferable for females. In the case of urban destinations,

there is greater demand for labour in construction work which is heavy, hard and risky and therefore considered more suitable for males than their counterparts. The fact is that urban migration involves long distances and duration of stay at the work site. Another reality is past work experience and contacts with employers also play an important role in deciding the nature of work and destinations the in rural migratory process.

Table 2: Distribution of Individual by Migrant Status in the Village

Sex	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Total Migration
Male	67 (41)	139 (52)	206 (48)
Female	97 (59)	128 (48)	(225) (52)
Persons	164 (100)	267 (100)	431 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

Table 3 presents the caste composition of migrants and non-migrant households. There are nine social groups (castes) in the village, in which the Lambadi's form the predominantly large social group and constitute 145 households or 72 per cent of the households. The other predominant social groups in the village are Madigas, Chenchus, Reddis, Kammaris, Mangalis, Goudas, Mudirajs, and Kummaris with 23, 14, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2 and 1 households respectively. In the case of the Lambadi's, 84 households are involved in migration, out of which 34 per cent or 50 households migrated to urban areas and 23 per cent or 34 households to rural destinations. In the case of the Madiga community, there are ten households, out of which eight households migrated to rural areas and two households to urban areas. In the Chenchu community, there are 9 households which migrated, out of which eight migrated to rural areas and one household migrated to an urban area. All of the five Reddi

households have migrated to urban areas. The Gouda caste has not had any migration from the village. The Chenchu and Madigas seem to have a preference for migrating to rural areas, while the rest of the caste groups have a preference for migration to urban areas. Though there are other social groups who have witnessed migration, the most migration-prone communities are STs and SCs which are the most deprived sections of society. This indicates the intensity of issue and how important migration is for those communities in the village. It shows the lack of alternatives in the village and thereby their great dependence on migration earnings for eking out a livelihood.

Table 3: Distribution of Households according to Social Group and Migrant Status

Social Groups	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Non-Migration	% of Total Households
Lambada	34 (23)	50 (34)	61 (42)	145 (73)
Chenchu	8 (57)	1 (7)	5 (36)	14 (7)
Madiga	8 (35)	2 (9)	13 (57)	23 (12)
Gouda	-	-	3 (100)	3 (1)
Mangali	-	3 (100)	-	3 (2)
Kammari	-	1 (25)	3 (75)	4 (2)
Kummari	1 (100)	-	-	1 (1)
Mudiraj	-	1 (50)	1 (50)	2 (1)
Reddis	-	5 (100.0)	-	5 (2)
Total	51 (25)	63 (32)	86 (43)	200 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

Table 4 shows the distribution of the number of land-owning households and area of land according to land classification between migrant and non-migrant households in the village. If we look into overall land holding pattern, we find that a major portion of land is concentrated in the non-migrant households. Among the migrant households, 58 urban migrant households own 251 acres, while 47 rural migrant households have 171 acres of land. In the case of urban migrant households, 27 households of small farmers own 111 acres of land, 17 households of marginal farmers own 31 acres, and 12 households of medium farmers own 83 acres of land. The number of medium land-owning households is low, but the land in their possession is larger than that owned by the other groups. In the case of urban migrant households, five are landless. In the case of rural migrant households, a major portion of the land is concentrated in the small farmer group, out of which 19

Table 4: Distribution of Land Owned by different Households

Land Size	Rural Migration		Urban Migration		Non-Migration	
	House holds	Acres	House holds	Acres	House holds	Acres
Land less	10 (20)	-	5 (8)	-	8 (9)	-
Marginal	12 (24)	20.5 (12)	17 (27)	31 (12)	14 (16)	31 (7)
Small	19 (37)	77 (45)	27 (43)	111 (44)	33 (38)	132 (30)
Medium	10 (20)	74 (43)	12 (19)	83 (33)	26 (30)	222 (50)
Large	-	-	2 (3)	26 (10)	5 (6)	62 (14)
Total	51 (100)	171 (100)	63 (100)	251 (100)	86 (100)	445 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

households have 77 acres. There are 12 households in the marginal group with 21 acres, ten households comprising the medium-size group owning 74 acres and five households which are landless households among the rural migrant households in the village.

There is indication that landless marginal farmers tend to migrate to rural destinations. Among the other groups, as the size of land owned increases, there is a trend to migrate to urban areas. The study reveals that owning land is not a significant factor because food grain from cultivation is minimal and not sufficient for the rest of the year. Thus, regardless of owning land, people are forced to migrate for work to supplement their agricultural income during the monsoon season. The study observes that owning land alone is not enough; other resources also play an important role in the decision to migrate.

Out of the 200 households in the village, 104 households reported cultivation as the main occupation, 71 households reported their main occupation as agriculture and 25 households reported occupation as non-farm work within and outside the village. As mentioned earlier, there are only 23 households that are landless, implying that the remaining 48 households not only have land but are also supplying labour in the village labour market. The village has 25 households who are not in farm activity. The large numbers of cultivating households are non-migrants (70 households). Among non-migrants eight labour households and four non-farm households. In contrast, in the case of rural migrants, the number of labour supplying households is greater than the cultivator households; there are 31 households of agricultural labourers while the remaining 18 households are those of cultivators. Among the urban migrants, labour households are greater (32) but there is also a sizeable section of non-farm households (17) (see Table 5). Here, we can argue that a large proportion of migrant households are those with landless poor labour, and marginal and small farmers who are

immensely dependent on earnings from migration as compared with non-migrant households. In other way, cultivating households have the choice whether to migrate or stay at home whereas nonfarm labour households, perhaps on account of seeking employment might migrate to other areas.

Table 5: Occupations between Migrant and Non-Migrant Households in the Village

Occupations	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Non-Migration	Total
Cultivators	18 (17)	16 (15)	70 (67)	104 (100)
Labour	31 (44)	32 (45)	8 (11)	71 (100)
Non-form	4 (16)	17 (68)	4 (16)	25 (100)
Grand Total	53 (27)	65 (33)	82 (41)	200 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

3. Forms of Migration

In this section, we present the nature and forms of seasonal migration from the study village. There are three major forms or channels of migration through which migration is taking place from the village. There are migrants who migrate individually, with whole family and group migration (migrate along with fellow migrants). There are 11 households with individual migrants, 91 households in which all the members of family migrated, while 12 households migrated in a group (see Table 6). It seems that individual migration and family migrations are dominantly towards urban destinations while group migrations are predominantly more towards rural destinations.

Table 6: Unit of Migration and Form of Migration in the Study Village

Modes of Migration	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Total
	Households	Households	Households
Individual	4 (36)	7 (64)	11 (100)
Family	39 (43)	52 (57)	91 (100)
Group	8 (67)	4 (33)	12 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

Table 7 provides information regarding the destination places for migration. There migrant households who migrated towards villages in Guntur (17%), Nalgonda (24%) districts and to nearby villages (4%). And a large proportion of households (55%) migrated to Hyderabad city. The households which migrated to Guntur or Nalgonda are engaged in agricultural activities such as cotton and chilli picking, while 55 per cent of urban migrant households are engaged in various sectors such as construction. We discuss this in detail in the next section. When we look at this in the gender aspect, 139 male migrant and 128 female migrants migrated to Hyderabad, 48 female and 38 males migrated to Nalgonda, 25 males and 35 females to Guntur and 4 males and 14 females to nearby villages. Migrants who migrated to rural areas mainly depended on past work experience and contact with employers, and migrated to work in agricultural fields in nearby Districts and villages. The urban migrants migrated to Hyderabad individually, also with the help of friends and relatives. The study observes that destination selection is largely influenced by the accessibility of the information about work, awareness of life style at work place and experience and suitability of work.

Table 7: Destinations of Migrant Households as per Sex

Type of migration	Destinations	House holds	No. of Migrants		
			Male	Female	Total
Rural Migration	Villages in Guntur	19 (17)	25 (42)	35 (58)	60 (100)
	Villages in Nalgonda	27 (24)	38 (44)	48 (56)	86 (100)
	Nearby Villages	5 (4)	4 (22)	14 (78)	18 (100)
Urban Migration	Hyderabad	63 (55)	139 (52)	128 (48)	267 (100)
Total Migration		114 (100)	206 (48)	225 (52)	431 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

Migrants from this village are seen to be mainly migrating for six reasons, namely, survival, employment, debts, marriage, earnings and landlessness. There are a few households, which have given multiple reasons for migration, but we have taken the most important reason as specified by them. If we look into details, large numbers of households migrate for the purpose of survival followed by those that migrated for earnings and because of debts. Out of the total migrants who migrated for survival purposes, 46 per cent migrated to rural areas and 54 per cent to urban areas. While 53 per cent of migrants migrated to rural areas and 47 per cent to urban areas in order to clear debts, 32 per cent of households migrated to rural areas and 68 per cent to urban areas to supplement their income (earnings). There is a pattern that emerges from the study which is that, migrants who have migrated for survival, employment and earnings are mainly heading towards the urban destination, that is Hyderabad. Whereas, migrants who migrated because of debts and for their daughters marriages are largely heading towards rural destinations.

In this village, survival, earnings and debts seem to be the more important reasons for migration, because the village agricultural sector provides less employment and less yields or food grain from cultivation. In fact, the study observed that due to less profitability, crop failure, rain-fed cultivation and drought-like environment which forces them to leave their home and find work in other regions in the off season (see Table 8).

Table 8: Reasons for Rural and Urban Migrant Households in the Village

Reasons	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Total
Survival	23 (46)	27 (54)	50 (100)
Employment	6 (40)	9 (60)	15 (100)
Debts	10 (53)	9 (47)	19 (100)
Marriage	2 (67)	1 (33)	3 (100)
Earnings	8 (32)	17 (68)	25 (100)
No land	2 (100)	-	2 (100)
Grand Total	51 (45)	63 (55)	114 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

In this village, the important and noticeable fact is that most of the rural migrant households return after completion of all agricultural activities at the destination while urban migrants return or migrate on a yearly basis. If urban migrants want to do agricultural work, then they will come back to the village. This is dependent on rainfall and climate as well as other household characteristics. Sometime they return for certain purposes to settle their business (work) in the village, such as

marriages, festivals, lease settlements, etc. Generally, they come back in the summer season to the village but the exact time of their return is uncertain while rural migrants are certain to return after the harvest season.

3.1. Nature of Migration

Rural migrants migrate to villages in Nalgonda and Guntur districts for agricultural work. They engage in cotton and chilli picking at different rural destinations. First, they work in the cotton fields till the end of that activity, and then shift from cotton to chilli picking in the same village or spend some time in neighbouring villages at the destination place. Urban migrants largely migrate towards Hyderabad city in search of work/employment from the village. The urban migrants participate in different kinds of work in the city such as construction of buildings, brick-kilns, poultry farms, auto driving, hamali (load & unload labourers), paper collecting and work in private factory/service as labourers. Unlike urban destinations, in rural areas there is only a single occupation which is agriculture and allied activities.

Overall, 56 per cent of labourers are male and 44 per cent are female migrant labourers working in different urban related activities out of the total (80) urban main workers. Among those largely working in the construction sector, 53 per cent are female labourers and 48 per cent, male labourers. Of the brick-kilns labourers, 52 per cent are male and 48 per cent are female. Fourteen per cent of the male migrants are auto-rickshaw drivers (see Table 9). There are very small numbers of migrant workers in other sectors. Those with basic skills can work in factories and brick kilns and as auto-rickshaw drivers, while those with no particular skill can find work in activities like construction, hamali (load & unload labourers) and paper collection. In fact, the majority of the migrants are seen to be labourers in building construction activity. These illiterate and unskilled migrants belong to deprived communities, however those who have better education and skills are working in

factories and private sector, but they are small in numbers. Interestingly, the proportion of male migrants in construction work is less than that of females, and this could be because they are uneducated, less-skilled and might not have upgraded their skills for working in the urban sector. This suggests that the majority of the illiterate and unskilled migrants enter the construction sector.

Table 9: Occupation of Migrants in Area of Destinations.

Nature of work	Male	Female	Total
Construction Labour	38 (48)	42 (53)	80 (100)
Auto Driver	14 (100)	-	14 (100)
Brick Makers	14 (52)	13 (48)	27 (100)
Poultry	2 (67)	1 (33)	3 (100)
Hamali	1 (100)	-	1 (100)
Factory Labour	8 (73)	3 (27)	11 (100)
Paper collection	-	2 (100)	2 (100)
Grand total	77 (56)	61 (44)	138 (100)

Note: Hamali's are load & unload labourers. Source: Same as Table 1.

Table 10 shows the number of full and partial migrant households from the village according to rural and urban destination. Full migration refers to those households which migrate with all family members, while partial migration refers to those in which one or more members have migrated. A similar pattern is reported both for rural and urban destinations in this regard. If we look into detail in urban migration, 51 per cent of households have migrated with all family members and 49 per cent

households have partially migrated to Hyderabad city. Similarly, in rural migration, 49 per cent households have migrated with full or whole family, while 51 per cent of households have partially migrated from the village. This suggests that half of the migrants households have migrated with the whole family, and hence this points out the severity of the conditions of the households and village economy as a whole. Here, most of the households do not want to migrate with the whole family, the reason being that their children's education is affected, but have no option except to take them along.

Table 10: Distribution of Partial and Full Migration Households in the Village

Type-Migration	Full Migration	Partial Migration	Total Households
Rural Migration	25 (49)	26 (51)	51 (100)
Urban Migration	32 (51)	31 (49)	63 (100)
Total	57 (50)	57 (50)	114 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

Migration can be at different points of time and of different duration for migrants. Table 11 presents information on the time of migration in terms of leaving the village and returning to it. In the case of rural migration, 92 per cent labour and farmers migrated in the month of November, and 7 per cent migrated in the month of October. This is because, in the village, agricultural activities come to an end by late October and November every year. After the completion of agricultural activities, these households move out to work outside the village. These migrants return by the month of March and April. In this, out of the total rural migrant households, only 35 per cent return in the month of March, while 64 per cent return by April. At destination places, the peak

agricultural operation for cotton and chilli crops starts every year in the months after October. Interestingly, those who migrate early return late, and these migrants are worse off in terms of resources than other migrants. Thus, a weak resource base can influence decisions with respect to time of migration and the number of family members that migrate.

Table 11: Time of Going and Return of Migration of Rural Migrants from the Village

Going		Return	
Months	Households	Month	Households
October	4 (8)	March	18 (35)
November	47 (92)	April	33 (65)
Total	51 (100)	Total	51 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

The schedule for the urban migrants is in sharp contrast to that of the rural migrants. Here, in the month of April 40 per cent of urban migrant households have migrated and 38 per cent of households migrated between May to June. In the month of November, 19 per cent of the households migrated (Table has not been presented here). Here, the present study observed that for urban migrants whether to migrate or not, and when to migrate will depend on the rainfall level or monsoon, agricultural instruments including animals, credit availability for agriculture and the household's needs. Thus, based on these factors they decide whether to cultivate or migrate; if not cultivating, they can migrate at any time. Their return to the village from destination will depend not only on this factor but also on other factors such as returning in time to attend social events and festivals.

Table 12: Duration of Stay by Migrants at Destination Places

Type-Migration	0-6 Months	7-12 Months	1-2 Years	3-5 Years	+5 Years	Total
Rural Migration	47 (92)	2 (4)	2 (4)	-	-	51 (100)
Urban Migration	11 (17)	33 (52)	1 (2)	5 (8)	13 (21)	63 (100)
Grand Total	58 (51)	35 (31)	3 (3)	5 (4)	13 (11)	114 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

Table 12 shows the migrants' duration of stay at their destinations. It is clear that the rural migrants' predominant duration of stay at the work site is 0-6 months, and this holds good for nearly 92 per cent out of the total rural migrant households. But in the case of urban migration, it is for 0-6 months for 17.4 per cent, between 7-12 months for 52 per cent and more than 5 years for 21 per cent of the households. On the whole, more than nearly 90 per cent of migrant households are seasonal migrants. Rural migrants return after the completion of agricultural activities at the destination which will end largely at the end of March or April. However, in the case of urban migration, semi-skilled migrants like auto drivers and factory workers, stay longer, but every family visits the village for events such as marriages and festivals. As mentioned earlier, the duration of stay of urban migrants will depend on the nature of the present work and living conditions, savings at destinations, and also the monsoon conditions, possession of agricultural instruments and credit availability at the local village determines their return.

On the whole, rural migrations are for less than six months, while urban migrations are for more than six months, but less than one year. But it will be interesting to see since how many years these migrant households have been migrating from the village. Table 13 presents the information on the first incidence of migration, or in other words, for how many years the migrant households have been migrating. In this,

35 per cent of the rural migrants and 44 per cent of the urban migrants have been migrating for the last 5-9 years. Also, 33 per cent of rural households and 21 per cent of the urban migrants have also migrated since the last 10 years. This suggests that seasonal migration is not a new phenomenon for them, and it becomes routine after the monsoon season. Thus, we would argue that seasonal migration for these villagers is one of the important livelihood sources and becomes a coping strategy in difficult times.

Table 13: First Incidence of Migrant Households over Time in the Village

Type-Migration	1 Year	1-2 Year	5-9 Year	10 Year	16 & above	Total
Rural Migration	3 (6)	8 (15)	18 (35)	17 (33)	5 (10)	51 (100)
Urban Migration	9 (14)	12 (19)	28 (44)	13 (21)	1 (1)	63 (100)
Grand Total	12 (11)	20 (17)	46 (40)	30 (26)	6 (5)	114 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

4. Wage Rates at Rural Destination

Employers provide migrants with transport for reaching the destination and provide them with accommodation facilities. Rural migrant labours work in cotton and chilly picking work in the villages of Nalgonda and Guntur districts. They stay nearby, in the employer's home or close to his fields. They work in the fields from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. These migrants get wages according to the cotton or chilly they pluck (weight) which is measured in terms of kilogram. For each kilogram they get paid Rs.2. In this matter, there is no gender difference. All migrants' get wages according to their ability to pluck the cotton or chilli. Daily average cotton picking is around 20 to 25 kilograms. In

rupees, a single labourer would get around Rs. 50 as a daily wage. Average migrants get daily around 40 to 50 rupees. Thus, a single labourer earns around Rs.4, 000 to Rs. 5,000 in his duration of four to five month of working period. In the case of couples, this will be around Rs.9, 000 to 10,000. Some who work for five to six months earn around Rs.4500 to 5000 as a single person, and in case of couples, it is around Rs.8500 to 11,000, including their expenses at destination. Children and old migrant labourers are those with the lowest- earnings (see Bhaduri et al., 1990).

4.1. Work Conditions at Rural Destination

These migrants start work daily at 5 o'clock for the preparation of their food for breakfast as well as lunch. They start work in the fields at 6 a.m. and continue till five in the evening, sometimes even later. In between work, they get an hour's break in the afternoon. Rural migrants pick between 25-30 kg of cotton daily. In case of children and elderly persons, it is between 15-20 kg daily. They have to carry their cotton or chilli load to the weighing centre for counting. Most of the migrants expressed satisfaction regarding working conditions at the destinations, but complained about bad weather (hot conditions) during the working period. Almost all the migrants expressed satisfaction about their employers, a few said that some employers cheated them in matters of cotton weight and payments, showed high expenses, and gave less wages at the end of the work. For the return journey, they did not provide any vehicle or money for transportation of the migrants to their place of origin.

4.2. Wage Rates at Urban Destination

Urban migrants are working in Hyderabad city and they are engaged in different types of work like construction, brick-kilns, poultry, auto driving, hamali, paper collecting and factory work. Each labourer's wages differed according to the nature of work. There are wage differences between the male and female workers in the urban sector. A male worker

gets Rs.100 and female gets Rs.80 for construction work. In brick-making work, a male gets Rs.120 and a female gets Rs.100 per day as daily wage. In the case of poultry workers, a monthly fixed salary is reported with males getting around Rs.1800 to 2000 rupees and females, around Rs.1200 to 1500 per month. Auto drivers hire autos on a daily rent basis, paying a rent of Rs.200 to 250 per day. Excluding auto rent charges, they earn Rs. 200 to 300 daily. In case of hamali they earn daily around Rs.100 to 120. In case of paper collection labourers' daily earnings are around Rs.50 to 60. Lastly, private service labourers also get a monthly salary of around Rs.2500 to 3000. Urban migrant factory and private service labourers earn the most, followed by auto drivers, poultry labourers, and those working in brick-kilns, construction, hamali (load & unload workers) and paper collection.

4.3. Work Conditions at Urban Destination

Urban migrants get up at 6 'o'clock and start preparing their breakfast and lunch. They have to search for work at urban labour markets or 'Labour Addas' at 8 'o' clock in the morning. Sometimes, whether they get work or not depends on different factors like nature of work, wage, timing and distance. All these factors work at labour markets or labour addas. Some migrant households complain that sometime they have to wait at labour addas till 12 'o' clock noon. On an average, they get work weekly for a minimum of four to five days and maximum of six days. After the selection of work, employers provide vehicles like lorries and tractors, etc. for transportation to the work place. Some cases employers pay the transport charges. At the work site they have to lift heavy concrete and cement blocks and bricks. This would continue from 9 a.m. 6 or 7 p.m. in the evening. These construction labourers have a lunch break for one hour, their only time to rest during the whole day. In the case of brick making also, labourers face a huge work burden and have to work extra time. In poultry farms, work burden is not much when compared to construction and brick-kiln work. For urban migrants,

the work burden is heaviest in construction followed by brick-kilns, hamali (load & unload workers), and poultry farms respectively. Factory/private service workers in Hyderabad like auto drivers do not face as many problems as the above-mentioned labourers.

4.4. Expenditure Pattern of Migrants Earnings

Table 14 shows the proportion of spending pattern of income which is earned from migration for different purposes among rural and urban migrant households in the village. On the whole, migrant households spend their income largely for consumption purposes. In this, 52 per cent of urban and 48 per cent of rural migrant households spend their income for daily consumption purpose. Secondly, 57 and 43 per cent of the rural and urban migrant households are spending their income on their daughter's marriages. Here, some of the rural migrant households expressed the view that they are migrating to earn enough to conduct their children's marriages. Another major purpose is for the repayment of debts, with 69 per cent of urban migrant households and 31 percent of rural migrant households spending their income on repayment of debts. Further, 57 per cent and 43 per cent of urban and rural migrant households respectively spend on health related matters. There are few migrant households that spend on house construction, digging wells, purchasing animal and agricultural investments respectively. In fact, most of the migrants revealed that if they invest in agriculture, the return will be lower than the cost, and most of the time, they would incur losses. Hence, agriculture is becoming less profitable and sometimes unviable.

Table 14: Expenditure Pattern of Migrant's Households

Spending on	Rural Migration	Urban Migration	Total Migration
	Households	Households	Households
Consumption	24 (48)	26 (52)	50 (100)
Agricultural invest	-	2 (100)	2 (100)
Debts	5 (31)	11 (69)	16 (100)
Health	3 (43)	4 (57)	7 (100)
Marriage	16 (57)	12 (43)	28 (100)
Dig well	1 (33)	2 (67)	3 (100)
Animal purchase	1 (33)	2 (67)	3 (100)
House construction	1 (20)	4 (80)	5 (100)
Total	51 (45)	63 (55)	114 (100)

Source: Same as Table 1.

4.5. Case Studies

Case 1: Vankadavath Mothya is an agricultural labourer aged 35 years who belongs to the Lambadi community in the village. He has a spouse named Jhamku who is 30 years old. They have four children; two boys and two girls. He has two and a half acres of land, the whole of which is dry land. This year he cultivated cotton and bajra as Kharif crops. He gets only 60 kilograms of cotton from one acre and two bags of bajra from one and a half acres of land. He and his wife work in the fields of other people in the village during the agricultural season. After

the monsoon, he migrates alone to Hyderabad for work in the construction sector. Each time he migrates, he stays only one month and then returns home and stays there for some days, only to migrate again. He migrated around ten times from the village to Hyderabad city for work. He also migrates when work is not available in the village even in the Kharif season. He earns around Rs.2000 for each trip. He has been migrating during the last seven years. He has to repay loans of around Rs.8000 to banks, Rs.10000 to moneylenders and Rs.2500 to G.C.C. in the village. He spends most of his income or earnings on consumption and repayment of debts.

Case 2: Kethavth Basha is a 40-year-old urban migrant belonging to the Lambada social group. He has a spouse aged 35 years. They have four children. They migrated three years ago to Hyderabad city for survival. He has seven acres of land, of which one acre is irrigated land (wet) and the rest is dry. For the last three years he has been giving lands for lease to his brother in the village. All his lands are given for lease for Rs.4000 only. He has a well, but it has dried up. Hence they have not cultivated anything from the last three years and have migrated to the city for employment and livelihood purposes. The main workers in his family, apart from himself, include his spouse and daughter. They are working in the urban construction sector for which the daily wages are Rs.100 and Rs.80 for males and females respectively. They work from nine in the morning to six in the evening. They are living in a small thatch hut in a slum area and face great difficulties like lack of space in the hut. They also face water and sanitation problems at the place of stay. Basha has a debt of Rs.8000 only from moneylenders. He migrated because of low output from agriculture and to earn money for conducting his daughter's marriage. Thus, his family migrated for more earnings and as a means of survival. Their return from the destination to the village of origin is uncertain. They expressed that, they would continue as migrants till their time and conditions improve.

5. Summary and Conclusions

The main focus of the study was to examine the seasonal labour migrant's characteristics, nature of work, forms of migration and wage and working conditions at the work site. The study village witnessed an exodus, which is largely seasonal in nature. From the village, more than half of the households have migrated to other regions after the monsoon or slack season in search of work/employment for a short period. Seasonal migration from the village is basically towards urban and rural areas, in which the urban migration stream is the predominantly large flow from the village. The major urban destination is Hyderabad city and migration is dominated by males. Rural migration is towards Guntur and Nalgonda districts and dominated by female migrants. The study learnt that there is a distinction between rural and urban in terms of their work nature. This is determined by many factors such as information regarding work and stay, awareness about lifestyle of destinations, skill, education level and other households' compositions. Nature of work between rural and urban destination differs. Rural migrants work in agricultural fields, like cotton and chilli picking, which is traditionally preferred by and suited for female migrants. Urban migrants work mostly in construction of buildings which involves hard work (loading and unloading), risk and long hours of work which obviously needs physical strength, and the urban stream is outnumbered by male migrants. Both rural and urban migrants migrate on a seasonal basis, the only difference being that urban migrants stay longer, that is, for up to one year, while rural migrants stay for less than six months. Half of the migrant households moved with all family members (whole family) and the rest with either one or more members of the households.

These migrants are predominantly forced to migrate because they cannot survive in the village, and this becomes more difficult after monsoon season due to inadequate yield of food grains from cultivation and lack of employment for rest of the period. Other major reasons are

debt burden, earning for children's marriages and investment in agriculture for the coming season. Most of the migrant households own or hold land and other resources, but still they have to migrate because in the slack season, there is no work or other alternative available locally. They are left with no other option and are thus forced to move out of their homes. It was learnt from the study, that working and living conditions of urban migrants are hard, exhausting, risky and involve long hours. The migrants have to live in slums without basic facilities, though rural migrants were better off in this regard. There are wage differences between rural and urban destinations. Urban migrants earn more than their rural counterparts, and it is mainly because urban work is different from rural agricultural work. There is no wage discrimination in rural destinations, but this problem persists between male and female migrants in urban work. Here, what is more important is that a large proportion of migrants households are spending all their earnings from migration, on consumption, repayment of debts and daughters marriages, and consequently there is little surplus left for investment in productive activities. This is one of the main factors why migration is taking place from the village. People migrate every year after the agricultural season and return before monsoon season begins, and this cycle continues year after year. Thus the villagers travel between village and destinations repeatedly and are unable to come out of this vicious circle. This is taking place due to distress conditions in local agriculture and the labour market. It seems, until and unless there is an improvement in their economic status and resources, and agriculture becomes profitable and viable, they are not going to end migrating to other regions from the village. This points to the need for government intervention for the development of agriculturally dominated rural India through employment and development programmes. Finally, there is a need for appropriate policies and regulations to tackle the problem of distress seasonal migrants, both at origin and destination places.

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