

Migration of Santal Labourers from Jharkhand: A Case Study

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Abstract: Labour out- migration among the Santal labourers has been taking place since pre independence period. The Santal tribals lived in the district of Santal Parganas which was a part of Bihar then, which got separated in 2001 and now in Jharkhand. Since the emergence of Jharkhand more than 15 years have passed but economic condition among the Santal tribe has hardly improved. The region is gripped under poverty, illiteracy and under development, which mars the picture from every human development index. This grim situation compels the Santal tribals and other tribal labourers to migrate to other destinations for employment and survival. The present paper is a deeper study about the migration among the Santal tribe. The paper aims to know the causes of migration, impact of migration and also to know the difficulties faced by the Santal migrant labourers.

Keywords: Migration, Santal tribe, labourers, unemployment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a part of human history; nevertheless, the 19th and 20th centuries witnessed population movement on an unprecedented scale [1]. In developing countries like India migration takes place due to push factors like poverty, unemployment, natural calamities and underdevelopment at the place of origin [2]. Rural migration is a survival strategy which is caused by unfavourable economic and social conditions [3]. The impact of migration is mostly positive which can reduce poverty, inequality and contribute to economic growth and development. Remittances are used for various needs and even if not spent directly for productive use such spending can have an overall positive impact at the household level by freeing resources for other productive use [4]. It is found that the scheduled tribe population of Jharkhand continues to migrate to neighbouring states for their livelihood as they do not get work throughout the year in their native place [5].

The Scheduled Tribe population in Jharkhand is 26 per cent of the total population of the state. In total there are 32 tribal groups in Jharkhand but Santal, Oraon, Munda, Ho, Kharia and Paharias are the largest tribes having large population. The Santal tribe is the major tribe in the districts of Dumka, Godda, Sahibganj and Pakur which influences socio- political arithmetic for government planning and policies. In Pakur district tribals are 42 per cent and among them the Santal tribe is 36 per cent. Hence the Santals are dominant group as a tribe and Santali is a dominant language in the district. The Santals economic life is agriculture and 95 per cent of the Santals own land. The livelihood of the Santals is fully dependent on agriculture but agriculture also suffers from traditional mode of cultivation and lack of scientific and modern farming. Thus agricultural activity alone does not support the families of the Santal tribe and the tribe looks for alternative opportunities for earning livelihood. In the absence of industries and other alternative employment opportunity in the district the tribal farmers migrate to neighbouring states or other destinations as general labour force for employment opportunity.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SANTAL MIGRANTS

The Santals have been dwelling in Santal Pargana district since British period. The Santals cleared the thick forest and established villages for themselves during the second half of the 18th Century. The Santals cleared the forest and made cultivable land. The Santals were good in cultivation and agricultural activities. British were able to impose land revenue from the Santals because of the cultivable land they had owned [6]. It has been found that there have been occurrences of drought and famine several times in the past which affected the livelihood of the Santal tribe. In such situation the Santals migrated to Barind land (West Dinajpur in West Bengal) or to Bagri (Murshidabad district) for agricultural work. Large number of them also migrated to other part of West Bengal especially to Burdman district for agricultural works. Since 1970's it became a way of life for many Santal tribals to migrate to West Bengal whenever families faced financial difficulties. Many poor families would lock their houses, entrust their cattle to relatives and migrated to plains of West Bengal for

agricultural works. Almost all Santal tribal households have land for cultivation but due to lack of irrigation facility and financial assistance only one crop is cultivated. Besides agricultural activities other employment opportunity is null in the region. In such a situation migration is the only option for the poor families. It is observed that many poor Santal tribal families continue to migrate every year for the duration of one to three months for employment.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Roy (2016) observed that the Santal Tribal labourers migrated to Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal during the period of British (1891) as labourers to tea garden. The Santal Tribals are now well settled with land and properties in many villages of Jalpaiguri district. The Santal migrant labourers have retained their language, culture and tradition intact [7].

Mishra (2007) found that the Santal tribal were migrated to tea estates of Assam by East India Company and later by the British rulers (1830- 1920) as labourers. The descendents of these labourers are now known as tea tribes. It is found that the tea tribes are till now being exploited by the tea planters and the economic condition of these labourers has not improved much [8].

Rao & Mitra (2013) studied the condition of agricultural migrant labourers of Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. The authors observed that labour migration is taking place regularly from Sahibganj district of Jharkhand to Muzaffarnagar of Uttar Pradesh. Agricultural labourers are from poverty stricken district and have no bargaining power for higher wages. The labourers are forced to work for longer hours, up to 18 hours a day but a good portion of their monthly salary goes to the pockets of middlemen or to the agents. At destinations employers prefer migrant labourers because they lack bargaining power but work harder than the local workers [9].

Deogharia (2012) observed that the Tribals of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas have been migrating out of their home land for work and livelihood. Tribals have been the victims of big dams and mining or other developmental projects. Empirically lack of employment opportunities is more prominent reason for out migration. The tribals from this region migrate to urban areas for their bread and butter. Average migration is about 2.3 members per households in villages of Gumla, Semdega, and Lohardaga districts. Labourers from these districts migrate to Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh because of the availability of work [10].

Kumar (2012) found that Scheduled Tribe labourers of South Chotanagpur in Jharkhand continue to migrate to neighbouring states for livelihood throughout the year. At the place of destination they take up different kinds of jobs as construction works, hotel employees, brick kilns, quarry works, plantations and business activities. At some places they are employed as casual labourers, head loaders, rickshaw pullers and hawkers. The pitiable situation is that they are paid less without any social security [5].

IV. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Santals have been migrating to neighbouring states or to other places for many decades in search of employment opportunities during the agricultural lean seasons. Migration has surely helped the Santal tribals to get regular work and income and as a consequence consumption expenditure has increased. But hardly economic development is noticeable among the migrant households. Migration causes many problems to the tribal group. Land degradation takes place due to the neglect by the migrants. Cultivation has become secondary as migrants rely more on migration than on cultivation in their own fields. Migration becomes obstacle in children's education as children are not given enough attention for growth and development. At times migrants become victims of exploitation, human trafficking and sickness. Hence question can be asked whether the impact of migration is positive or negative. Through this paper the researcher attempts to study the different dimensions of migration in Santal Tribal life.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Agricultural labourers are most neglected population who live in rural India. Such groups are unskilled and untrained whose income is very low and live in utter poverty. They mostly belong to Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe [11]. The Santal tribals have been robust farmers yet they are unable to produce sufficient for the family consumption. On the other hand employment opportunity is grim in the region hence the Santal tribals are compelled to migrate for survival and sustenance. According to the census 2011 the total population of Pakur District is 900422 out of which the Santal Tribe population is 317992 which is 83.89 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe population of the district. The total population of Amrapara Block is 65289 out of which Scheduled Tribe population is 53623 and around 85 per cent of Scheduled Tribe population is composed of the Santal Tribe. Therefore if migration is an option by large number of the Santals, it reveals the sorry status of the economy of Amrapara Block. Since it is a remote and inaccessible region very limited articles are available about the economic status of the tribals. This paper is an attempt to study the economic status and opportunities that are available in the region. Thus the study is significant from economical and sociological point of view.

VI. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on primary data. The study was conducted in Paderkola Panchayat of Amrapara Block in Pakur district of Jharkhand. Under Paderkola Panchayat five villages namely Sohorghati, Sijhuwa, Kalajhor, Paderkola and Ambajora were selected for the study. From each village 20 families were interviewed with well structured questionnaire. The data were collected from 100 respondents through random sampling. The data collection was done in the month of January 2018. The collected data were tabulated and average and percentage have been calculated for further interpretation. For analysis, tabulation and hypothesis testing Statistical Package, SPSS 16 has been used. For clarity and better understanding of the study a chart and tables are presented with short explanations.

VII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data were collected from respondents of 100 migrant households who belong to the Santal Tribe. A few important socio economic information namely age, education, gender, years of migration, income and expenditure have been collected. The collected data have been analysed, interpreted and presented through tables and a chart.

A. Age of the migrants

Age is a very important component for migration decision. The migrant families decide considering age who should migrate. It is always the physically strong who are sent outside for work. The table No. 1 reveals the age group of the migrants.

Table No. 1
Age group of Santal migrants

S. No.	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
1	16-25	25	25
2	26-35	33	35
3	36-45	27	27
4	46-55	09	9
5	56-65	06	6
6	Total	100	100

Source: Compiled from Primary data

The Table No. 1 depicts that the Santal migrants' age ranges from 16 to 65. It is found that 85 per cent of Santal migrants belong to the age range of 16 to 45. It is only 15 per cent of Santal migrants who belong to the age range of 46 to 65. It reveals that younger age groups are more prone to migration.

B. Educational qualification of the migrants

Educational qualification is important for migration and kind of job opportunity. The table No. 2 displays the educational qualification of the Santal migrants.

Table No. 2
Educational qualification of the Santal migrants

S. No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	48	48
2	I- V	27	27
3	VI- X	17	17
4	XI- XII	8	8
6	Total	100	100

Source: Compiled from primary data

The Table No. 2 displays that 48 per cent of the Santal migrant labourers are illiterate while 27 per cent have studied only up to class 5 and both one and two categories make up to 75 per cent. Only 25 per cent of the Santal labourers have studied class six and above. With this educational level it can be understood that more than 75 per cent are unskilled labourers and therefore there is less possibility of getting employed in more remunerative jobs.

C. Income before and after migration

The data reveal that income has drastically increased after migration. The Table No. 3 presents the income level of the Santal migrant labourers before and after migration.

Table No. 3: Income of the migrants before and after migration

S. No.	Income	Before migration Frequency & Percentage	After migration Frequency, percentage
1	1- 20000	30	0
2	20001- 40000	63	10
3	40001- 60000	7	41
4	60001- 80000	0	18
5	80001- 100000	0	15
6	100001- 120000	0	8
7	120001- 140000	0	1
8	140001<	0	7

Source: Compiled from primary data

The Table No. 3 reveals that before migration the Santal labourers had very low level of income, ranging from Rs. 1 to Rs. 60000. Before migration 30 per cent of labourers had income less than Rs. 20000, but after migration the income level of such migrants have increased above Rs. 20000. After migration, the annual income of 49 per cent of the Santal migrant labourers increased to Rs. 60000 and above.

D. Households Expenditure Before and after migration

As Income increased due to migration, annual expenditure of migrants also increased. The Table No. 4 displays the expenditure before migration and after migration. Before migration the households had less income therefore the expenditure of the households were less. After migration the income increased two times and the households were able to spend more for on different needs of the households.

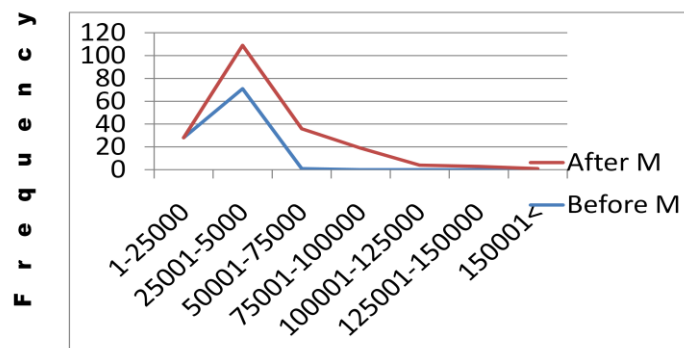
Table No. 4: Expenditure before and after migration

S. No.	Expenditure	Before	After
1	1- 25000	28	0
2	25001- 50000	71	38
3	50001- 75000	1	35
4	75001- 100000	0	19
5	100001- 125000	0	4
6	125001- 150000	0	3
7	150001<	0	1
8	Total	100	100

Source: Compiled from primary data

The Table No. 4 depicts that expenditure for 28 migrants before migration was just in the range of Rs. 1 to 25000 annually. After migration no migrant labourers are within this range.

Expenditure before & after migration



Expenditure range of migrants

Figure 1

Expenditure of the migrants

The figure 1 displays that the expenditure of the migrants before and after migration. The figure clearly displays that the expenditure shot up but very few have the high expenditure which is above Rs. 100000.

Hypothesis Testing: The testing of hypothesis was conducted in order to know whether the expenditure of the migrants has differed as a result of migration.

H₀: There is no difference between expenditure levels before and after migration

Paired sample t test result showed 0.001 of significance level which is less than the table value of 0.05 level, therefore the Null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is understood that expenditure has increased.

E. Gender and years of migration

It was found that 65 per cent of the Santal Tribals have been migrating for 1 to 5 years and 35 per cent of the Santal Tribals have been migrating for 6- 10 years. It was also found that among migrants 98 per cent were male and only 2 per cent were female.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The present discussion gives a picture that due to migration the Santal Tribal labourers' income and expenditure has increased and it is assumed that consumption also has increased. It depicts that there is a positive impact of migration. But other fact is also true that migration is not the best choice but the compulsion. In the region there is lack of employment opportunity. The migration of mass creates labour shortage in the locality and the local land and other resources remain unproductive. Therefore initiative could be taken to develop the region with all economic opportunities and labourers will be able to freely decide where to earn bread butter.

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