



Socio-Economic Implications of Seasonal Migration: An Empirical Study of Tapan Block, West Bengal

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Abstract:

Seasonal migration has emerged as an important means of survival for rural families in economically disadvantaged regions of India. This study examines the socio-economic implications of seasonal migration in Tapan Block, district of Dakshin Dinajpur West Bengal. Focus of the study to analyse the causes, patterns, and impacts of seasonal migration on the economic conditions and social life of rural households. The research is supported by primary data collected through field surveys, structured questionnaires, and interviews with migrant households, supplemented by secondary sources such as government reports and academic literature.

The findings reveal that unemployment, low agricultural productivity, landlessness, and inadequate local job opportunities are the primary factors driving seasonal relocation from the region. Migrants mainly move to urban and industrial areas for temporary work in construction and other informal sectors. Migration contributes to household income through remittances and helps improve consumption and basic living conditions.

The study demonstrates that seasonal migration holds considerable importance in sustaining rural livelihoods but also reflects deeper structural complications such as poverty and inadequacy of local employment. Therefore, strengthening rural development initiatives, generating local employment opportunities, and facilitating social security provisions for migrant labourers are essential for improving the well-being of rural households.

Keywords: Seasonal Migration, Rural Livelihoods, Remittances, Socio-Economic Impact, Dakshin Dinajpur.

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Introduction:

Human migration demonstrates a long historical background that can be attributed to the early development of humankind in the Rift Valley of Africa. Archaeological evidence suggests that between approximately 1.8 million years ago and 5000 B.C., early human species such as *Homo erectus*, *Homo sapiens*, and *Neanderthals* gradually spread from Africa to Europe and other areas within the world. Throughout history, Migration has served an important function in shaping civilizations. For example, the enlargement of Greek colonies and the Enhancement of the Roman Empire were closely connected with population movements. Similar migratory processes were also connected with major civilizations such as Mesopotamian, Indus Valley, Inca, and Zhou.

As stated by United Nations (2020), About 281 million people were staying outside their native country, representing 3.6% of the total population of the world. However, most migration still occurs within national borders. Migration has both positive and negative impacts: while it contributes to economic growth and labour mobility, it may also create social and economic challenges in both origin and destination regions.

1. Meaning of migration:

Donald I. Bogue: “*Migration among human beings in contrast to migration among animals, that, it is a response of human organisms to economic, social and demographic forces in the Environment*”.

Migration can be defined as the movement of individuals from one area to another across geographical boundaries with the intention of settling either temporarily or permanently. Individuals, families, or groups may migrate for multiple reasons, including economic opportunities, education, social change, or personal independence, and not only because of poverty.

Migration has important economic and social consequences. Historically, industrialization encouraged people to move from rural agricultural areas to urban industrial centres and sometimes across national borders. In recent decades, technological and economic changes in regions such as the continents of Asia and Africa along with Latin America have accelerated rural-to-urban migration.

Economists study migration because it affects labour supply, employment patterns, and the enhancement of industry and trade. In consequence, Migration holds considerable importance in shaping economic policies and influencing the broader socio-economic advancement of countries.



2 Types of Migration:

Migration occurs in different forms, even though numerous individuals are not fully aware of its various categories. Some of the most prevalent types are explained below.

2.1. Internal Migration:

Internal migration refers to the movement of population within the territorial limits of a nation, such as within a state, district, or city. It is often described as internal mobility. This type of migration may occur between regions, districts, or states, but it always remains within the borders of a single country. Internal migration includes several forms, some among which are particularly significant.

2.2 Inter-District Migration:

Inter-district migration involves the movement of people between different districts within a state. This form of mobility occurs frequently in various regions of India. For example, individuals from South Dinajpur may migrate to Malda for employment, people from Malda may move to Burdwan for work, and many from Burdwan relocate to Kolkata in pursuit of more favourable job prospects opportunities. Similarly, some residents of Kolkata migrate to Siliguri, illustrating the configuration of inter-district mobility.

2.2.3 Inter-State Migration:

Inter-state migration denotes the relocation of people from one state to another in pursuit of employment, livelihood opportunities, or improved living conditions. Such mobility may be either temporary or permanent in nature. In India, a large proportion of migrants come from states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. Indian states including Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Delhi, where better economic opportunities attract migrant workers.

2.2.4 Short-Term Migration:

Short-term migration involves temporary movement without a permanent change in the usual place of residence. According to NSS 64th round, it refers to persons living away from their usual residence for more than one month but not exceeding six months in a year income generating activity or job search. Such migrants generally work for a limited period and then return home.



2.2.5 Seasonal Migration:

Seasonal migration involves individuals moving to another place for work during a particular season and return home after the work is completed. This particular form of migration is common in agricultural areas where labour demand increases during sowing and harvesting. States such as West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Odisha frequently experience seasonal labour migration.

2.2.6 Chain migration:

Chain migration refers to a social process in which migrants from a particular region follow earlier migrants from the same area to a specific destination. This destination may be located in another country or in a different place within the same nation.

3. Countries with High Emigration:

3.1 India:

India has one of the largest migrant populations in the world. Internal migration involves hundreds of millions of people, while many Indians move abroad each year for work. Major destinations include the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and Saudi Arabia. Indian migrants are also widely present in countries such as Australia, Canada, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Kingdom.

3.2 Mexico:

Mexico is another major source of emigrants. A large proportion of Mexican migrants live in the United States, forming considered among the biggest immigrant communities there. A large number of migrants migrate in search of work opportunities, often from economically weaker regions, men migrate for work while families remain in Mexico and depend on remittances sent from abroad.

3.3 Russia:

Russia is a significant source of emigrants. Many Russians live in former Soviet republics such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Latvia. Some have also migrated to developed countries, including the United States, mainly for greater employment prospects and improved living standards.



3.4 China:

China is both a prominent source and destination of migrants. Millions of Chinese citizens live abroad, particularly in North America and Europe. In the past few years, several people have also migrated to African countries to work on infrastructure and construction projects. Simultaneously China hosts migrants arriving from surrounding countries such as Pakistan, Korea, and Mongolia.

3.5 Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is regarded as one of the leading countries of international migrants. Many Bangladeshis work abroad, especially in Gulf nations including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait and Oman. Others migrate to Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. Remittances from these workers serve an important function in the country's economy.

4. Top Countries with the Largest Immigrant Populations:

4.1 United States of America:

The United States hosts the largest immigrant population globally, with about 51 million foreign-born residents, representing nearly 19% of global migrants. The country attracts immigrants because of its strong economy, employment opportunities, advanced infrastructure, and quality education system, along with greater social and religious freedoms.

4.2 Germany:

Germany hosts around 13 million immigrants, about 4.8% of the world's migrant population. Its strong economy, developed infrastructure, and high-quality education system make it an attractive destination. The country also encourages skilled migration to support economic growth.

4.3 Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia has nearly 13 million immigrants, forming a large share of its workforce. Many migrants work in construction, services, and the oil sector. Although immigration increased in recent years, the government has introduced policies to regulate migrant inflows.



4.4 Russia:

Russia has over 10 million immigrants, mostly from nearby nations including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine. Many migrate for temporary employment and better economic opportunities.

4.5 United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom hosts about 10 million immigrants. Migration increased significantly after the expansion of the European Union in 2004. Major migrant groups in the UK come from India, Poland, and Pakistan.

5. Features of Migration

The major features of migration may be outlined as follows:

- i. Migration is largely influenced by socio-economic inequalities, and its movement is often regulated by nation-states through laws, policies, and administrative measures.
- ii. Migrants originating from economically weaker regions sometimes face social discrimination, negative public perceptions, and political debates in destination areas.
- iii. The mechanism of globalization has significantly accelerated migration in the last several decades by increasing economic integration and labour mobility.
- iv. Internal migration within national boundaries is more widely practiced than international migration across countries.

6. Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is derived from the relationship among the conceptual variables of cohesion, deprivation, and ambiguity, which help explain migration within a social system. Since these variables operate within society, understanding the social system is essential for analysing migration and its socio-economic impacts in Tapan Block, West Bengal.

The research also applies the Public Choice Approach, especially the institutional perspective. In a democratic country like India, the state operates through organizations responsible for creating and enforcing, and evaluating public policies. Public policies gain legitimacy through legal authority, universal application, and enforcement mechanisms.



According to Thomas R. Dye, governmental institutions represent structured patterns of behaviour that persist over time. Therefore, the institutional approach helps explain how policy frameworks influence migration and address the socio-economic conditions of migrant populations.

7. Review of literature:

The review of literature discussed in detail below:

Tanmay Tumbbe's, name of the book "*India Moving: A History of Migration*" Is a Big Book, the author focuses on first element of the book - How big is the Indian Diaspora? What are the hotspots of emigration in India? How did Indians settle in the French territory of Reunion or find their way to the distant Pacific Island of Fiji? What is the background behind Sikhs settling in Latin America? How did Indians first go to the Middle East? What were the associations between movements of particular communities and the building of economic capital? What are the two constants of the Indian Diaspora? And second part discussed on the great Indian migration wave, as well as 3 to 6 part was discussed merchant and capital, Diasporas and dreams, participation and displacement, migration and development.

Joyatri Roy & Paramita Banerjee "*Migration, Mobility and Child Protection Issues in Malda, West Bengal*" the author highlights in this book of introductory chapter A custom called '*Dadon*' that takes women and children to work as labourers in construction sites of Jaipur, Bangalore, Haryana and Delhi. As well as Natural calamities and riverine erosion resulting in substantial land loss. Human displacement because of erosion, leading to widespread resettlement and migration. Further Purpose and Objectives of the present study was to identify intervention focuses for child protection in Malda, along with a measurement of the capacities of local organizations in undertaking the same.

Ben Rogaly, Jhuma Biswas, Daniel Coppard, Abdur Rafique, Kumar Rana, Amrita Sengupta "*Seasonal Migration, Social Change and Migrants' Rights Lessons from West Bengal*" according to authors Migration is of different types, the most prominent being temporary seasonal migration in different parts of India. Seasonal migration of this kind is more common not only across Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, along with West Bengal and Odisha. Part ii are discussed Scale and Structure of Seasonal Migration, so generally people migrate more especially paddy cultivation, jute cultivation, potato cultivation, maize cultivation at this time. It continues in Pattern almost every year. Part iii are described Causes and Consequences of Seasonal Migration, and part iv are describing A Political Approach to Migrants' Rights, here's what the government is offering for seasonal migration, and how to get rid of this seasonal migration.



B. A. Prakash “Gulf Migration and Its Economic Impact” According to B.A. Prakash Immigrants from Kerala It is estimated to be more than 14 lakhs. At present, Kerala receives about Rs 5,500 crore from the Gulf as workers' remittances. The flow of immigration and remittances Kerala's economy has undergone unprecedented economic changes since the mid-1970s. This article discusses in detail the anatomical framework of Part i and the trends in migration and monetary remittances in part ii and the consequences for the labour market in part iii. Part-iv discusses Impact on Consumption and Investment in detail and Part-iv discusses Impact on Poverty and Income Distribution.

Robin Cohen and Zig Layton-Henry, — Gender, Sexuality and Migration in South Africa” In this book author reflect on the long history of the management of gender, sexuality and mobility in the making of the South African nation, tracing examples of how they intersect from early colonization through apartheid to the present day. Through revisiting this theoretical terrain, I show how mobility, sexuality and gender are deeply intertwined and, moreover, the making of the state is closely connected to the management of the seemingly private sphere. Finally, he observes that the making of the nation n South Africa has consistently been a global process with strong investments from the global North.

Ravi Srivastava & Rajib Sutrodhar, “Migrating Out of Poverty? A Study of Migrant Construction Sector Workers in India” The writer focused into the book inter-state migration and as a result, the country’s poverty can be eradicated? as well as he showed that almost one-third of India’s population still lives below the poverty line and a large proportion of poor live in rural areas. The socially deprived groups such as SC and ST and religious minority such as Muslims these are the ones who go to work from one state to another state. India has a long history of internal migration, with urban pockets like Kolkata and Mumbai receiving rural labour mainly from the labour catchment areas like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa in the east and some parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka in the South.

Debasis Chakraborty, “Migration and Urban Informal Sector: A Study in West Bengal” The author examined on Introductory part of the article what is migration? How many types of migration? Why rural area people migrants’ urban area? What are Remittances? Objective, data sources and methodology are addressed in chapter ii & iii. How many ratios of population are migrating from west Bengal to other state in India? And discussed in chapter 4 Household migration decisions making and discussed in chapter 5 out migration and in migration.

Happymon Jacob, “India does have a refugee problem (2021)” *The Hindu* Editorial page ‘the writer in this article focused on Refugee and migration issues in India and Myanmar border. The writer highlighting



ambiguity in the frame work of the foreigner's act 1946 .as well as the writer analyses this article legal moral complexities India, the 1951 refugee convention and its 1967 Protocol. Further this matter is very complicated because NRC and CAA act.

Kamaljit Singh, in his study "Internal Migration in a Developing Economy" on migrants in the Patiala district of Punjab, observed that Internal migration significantly contributes to economic development and has significantly contributed to the modernization of agriculture. However, he also noted that it has led to a rise in child labour within the low-wage informal sector. Singh highlighted that remittances constitute a major source of livelihood for migrant households. He emphasized the need for both the central and state governments to formulate comprehensive policies that adopt a long-term perspective on migration and integrate it as a key element of development planning.

8. Research objectives:

- i. To examine the significant factors associated with seasonal in Tapan Block of West Bengal.
- ii. To analyze the socio-economic background of households involved in seasonal migration.
- iii. To evaluate the patterns and trends seasonal labour migration from the study area.
- iv. To study the economic consequences of seasonal migration on migrant households and their livelihoods.

9. Research Questions: the research questions are

- i. What are the primary factors contributing to seasonal migration from Tapan Block, West Bengal?
- ii. What are the patterns, trends, and nature of seasonal migration from Tapan Block?
- iii. How does seasonal migration influence the income, employment, and livelihood conditions of migrant households?
- iv. What is the working environment and living standards experienced by seasonal migrant workers at their destinations?

10. Methods of Study

The present study examines the historical development of migrant populations in Tapan Block using both historical and descriptive approaches. Its primary objective is to analyze the historical background of migration, while the secondary objective is to evaluate government policies and initiatives addressing the welfare of migrant communities. The study first discusses the government's perspective toward



marginalized migrants and then assesses the implementation of related welfare measures. To secure comprehensive understanding, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied. Relevant information is collected from documentary and online sources and systematically analysed. Thus, the research largely relies on documentary analysis to present a structured understanding of migration in Tapan Block.

11. Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative Method:

The research applied a qualitative approach to understand perceptions and experiences related to migration. Primary data were obtained through field surveys and open-ended interviews with administrative officials, Gram Panchayat members, migrant leaders, and local residents, providing insights into the socio-economic effects of migration in Tapan Block.

Quantitative Method:

Quantitative data were collected through a sample survey using a structured questionnaire from 100 randomly selected rural households in Tapan Block, Dakshin Dinajpur district.

Secondary Data:

Additional information was obtained from Government census reports of India reports (1981–2011), NSSO migration reports, and relevant books and academic publications.

12. Causes of Migration and its Socio-Economic Impact in India

Migration denotes a natural process shaped by socio-economic, demographic, political, cultural, and environmental factors. It refers to the shifting of population between different places, altering population distribution and social relations. In India, industrialization has increased rural–urban migration for employment, while marriage, education, and economic opportunities remain important motivating factors.

12.1 Leading factors influencing migration in India:

Unequal employment opportunities across states encourage people to move away from areas with high unemployment to areas offering better jobs. Limited industrial development in major eastern states like West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh contributes to higher migration rates.



Inadequate infrastructure and public services, including transportation, education, and healthcare, also push people from less developed regions. At the same time, agriculturally prosperous states such as Punjab and Haryana attract migrant labourers for seasonal agricultural work.

12.2 Economic Causes:

Economic hardship is one of the key causes of migration. Workers from economically disadvantaged states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha often migrate to developed states such as major states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh in pursuit of employment. Prosperous agricultural regions also attract seasonal labourers.

12.3. Political Causes:

Political and administrative factors also influence migration. States with effective governance and development policies tend to achieve greater economic progress, while regions affected by weak administration or corruption often face slow development. For this reason, many people shift in search of enhanced livelihood opportunities and business opportunities. Political instability may also encourage skilled professionals and students to seek opportunities abroad.

12.4 Social Causes:

Social factors contribute significantly to migration. When individuals from a community settle elsewhere and improve their living standards, relatives and acquaintances often follow. Migration may also occur in search of social dignity, freedom, and better living conditions. Families sometimes relocate to urban areas to ensure better access to education for their children. Marriage is another major cause of migration, particularly among women.

12.5 Environmental Causes:

Environmental conditions significantly influence migration in many parts of India. Floods, cyclones, riverbank erosion, and rising sea levels often damage homes and agricultural land, forcing people to relocate. Similarly, drought-prone regions such as Rajasthan and parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra experience water scarcity, which compels rural populations to migrate.



13. Migration between India and Neighbouring Countries:

Migration in India includes both in-migration and out-migration, which influence the country's social and economic structure. In-migration mainly occurs from neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Afghanistan. Concurrently, many Indians migrate abroad to regions like the Gulf countries, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia for employment and better opportunities.

13.1 Pakistan:

The 1947 partition of India triggered one of the largest population movements in history, displacing millions of people across the India–Pakistan border. Many refugees migrated to India, and migration continued in later decades as several Hindus moved from Pakistan due to religious and social pressures. A large number of these migrants settled in states such as Rajasthan and West Bengal.

13.2 Nepal:

India and Nepal share an open border that allows free movement of people. This has encouraged continuous migration for employment and livelihood. A significant number of Nepali migrants work in Indian cities and contribute to sectors such as services and hospitality.

13.3 Bangladesh:

Bangladesh remains the largest source of immigrants to India. Many migrants settle in peripheral border states like West Bengal and Assam in addition to major cities. Cross-border migration has also raised demographic and security concerns.

13.4 Myanmar:

Migration from Myanmar occurs mainly through India's northeastern border states. The Rohingya crisis in 2017 led to the arrival of thousands of refugees in India, highlighting humanitarian and security challenges.

13.5 Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Afghanistan:

Migration from Sri Lanka largely involved Tamil refugees during the civil war. Maldivian migration to India mainly occurs for education and healthcare. Afghan migration has increased due to political instability, with many migrants settling in cities such as Delhi.



14. Findings of the Study:

- i. The study indicates a significant insufficient knowledge among rural populations regarding migration-related issues. Evidence from the field survey indicates that the majority respondents possess limited knowledge about migration and its associated socio-economic implications.
- ii. The findings also suggest that government support schemes for migrant labourers introduced by both the central and regional governments are inadequately implemented. Many rural residents remain unaware of these programmes due to insufficient publicity and limited dissemination of information.
- iii. The analysis further reveals that Tapan Block experiences a shortage of employment opportunities relative to its population, along with inadequate staffing in Panchayat and Block-level institutions, which weakens the monitoring and implementation of welfare schemes.
- iv. The research findings suggest that rural communities remain vulnerable due to socio-economic inequalities, inadequate infrastructure, and poor economic conditions, which collectively hinder regional development.
- v. The study indicates that sectors such as agriculture and fishing receive insufficient attention. Scarcity of groundwater restricts cultivation and related activities.
- vi. The findings further show that welfare initiatives aimed at making rural people economically self-reliant remain limited in the area.
- vii. Panchayat and Block institutions are not keeping records of migrant workers properly.
- viii. Even 50 days of the 100-day activities of the government is not done properly.
- ix. There is inadequate in terms of coordination among the employees in three tier level Panchayat system.
- x. Local representatives after winning the votes are always ready to away from the people not in close contact with them as expected.

15. Key Suggestions of the Study

- i. Greater contribution of women to development planning and decision-making should be ensured with the purpose of promote inclusive and balanced rural development.
- ii. Effective coordination between the national and regional governments are essential for the successful formulation and implementation of development programmes.
- iii. Expansion of employment opportunities through adequate recruitment, rural industries, and small-scale enterprises is necessary to reduce unemployment and migration.



- iv. Panchayati Raj Institutions should function with greater transparency, accountability, and active participation of local communities in governance.

16. Limitations of the Study

Research is inherently a complex process, and despite careful planning, certain limitations may remain. The current research emphasizes migration and its socio-economic impact in Tapan Block of Dakshin Dinajpur district, West Bengal. Despite this, the scope of the research is confined to a single block and its eleven Gram Panchayats, which limits the external validity of the findings to other regions.

Although several issues related to rural migration were identified through field surveys, some pertinent evidence could not be obtained from the concerned departments. As indicated by the 2011 Census of India, the population of Tapan Block is 250,504. In the present study, data were gathered from 301 respondents chosen by means of simple random sampling, including public authorities, political representatives, and common residents, using both closed and open-ended questionnaires. The study reflects the perspectives of these groups regarding migration and its socio-economic implications. An enlarged sample size, spanning from 1000 to 2000 respondents, might have provided more comprehensive and representative results.

17. Conclusion:

Seasonal migration has become a key survival strategy for many individuals' rural households in Tapan Block, West Bengal. The study reveals that inadequate job availability and weak agricultural output, and inadequate rural infrastructure are major factors encouraging people to relocate to different regions temporarily in an effort to find work. Seasonal migration often contributes to household income and helps families cope with economic insecurity. However, it also creates several socio-economic challenges, including family separation, disruption of children's education, and insecure working and living conditions for migrant workers. The findings indicate a strong association with rural deprivation and regional development disparities. Therefore, strengthening rural employment opportunities, improving agricultural productivity, and expanding social welfare programmes are essential to reduce migration pressures. Effective policy interventions, along with improved local governance and development initiatives, can have a major impact on enhancing the livelihood security and socio-economic well-being of migrant households in Tapan Block.



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