

SEASONAL LABOUR MIGRATION IN TELANGANA – A STUDY OF**MAHABUBNAGAR DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Labour migration which is defined here as a movement of human beings away from home, undertaken with the intention of finding employment. The other fields of voluntary migration (education and marriage) as well as distress migration are considered only in those cases where they are not clearly separated from labour migration. The focus is on the economic and social repercussions of labour migration on the families and communities staying behind. Moreover, the extent, nature, characteristics and pattern of migration have been evolving over time. Seasonal or short duration migration is certainly not a new phenomenon in India. The magnitude of rural labour circulation 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. The present study focuses on examining the nature and characteristics of seasonal migrant households and based on a primary level survey conducted in three mandals of Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh in 2012. It reveals that migration from the village is essentially seasonal and cyclical in nature, and differs for both rural and urban migrants.

Keywords: Destination, Distress, Employment, Migration, Migrants earnings, Occupation, Seasonal migration, Wage rate.

Introduction

Migration comprises a multitude of physical movements in space and time. It is a process which is spatially subdivided into sending areas, routes of migration and receiving areas. With regard to the motivations of migrants, three types of migration can be distinguished: enforced migration, voluntary migration and distress migration. The first is decided upon by external powers. Resettlement programmes of governments for instance fall into this category. The second is the outcome of a decision-making process of migrants and their families. Migration due to drought, crop failure and famine is, among other causes covered by this category. AcharyaBinoy (1987), 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. 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) 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). 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.

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). Smita (2007) discussed 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.

Migration of Labour in India:

The problem of seasonalisation in agro-based industries can be found in a large number of countries. Firstly, we have to define seasonal factory, seasonal factory is one which normally works for more than half the days of the year. The main feature of nearly all the seasonal factories is that the workers are still agriculturists and the great majority live in their village homes. The workers are generally quite unorganized and wages tend to be low. There are some of the important key questions, we need to seek answers like, (i) who are the migrant workers? (ii) Why do they migrate from their native places? (i) Where do they migrate? What is the status of migrant labour in respect of labour standards in India? Do they know about their labour rights? In this context, the present study 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 2012 from three mandals in Mahabubnagar District of Andhra Pradesh state. The survey enumerated all the households in the village.

Official Estimates of Migration

The two main sources of data on migration are the National Census and the National Sample Survey (NSS) and most estimates of migration are based on these. The total population of India at the last Census was over a billion. According to the National Census for 2011, 30% of the population or 307 million were migrants. Of these, nearly a third had migrated during the previous decade. It is topical to note at the outset that both the National Census and the National Sample Survey (NSS) use definitions of migration that are not employment related. These are change in birthplace and change in last usual

place of residence. Secondly they give only the main reason for migration and thus miss secondary reasons which are often work related particularly in the case of labour, third they count migrant stocks and not flows which are actually more important for policy and finally, they seriously underestimate between SCs and Non SC/ST groups was particularly high in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan with poverty disparity ratios of 5.31, 3.98, and 3.72 respectively. Thus, poverty among the SCs was about five times higher in Punjab, about four times higher in Haryana, and about two and half times higher in Rajasthan than the rest of the Non SC/ST population (Thorat and Mahamallik, 2005) categories of work that employ migrant workers. The findings of the Census and NSS on migration must be viewed against this backdrop.

Migration and improved living standards

Qualitative accounts of the impacts of migration on household and individual wellbeing and wealth vary. But on the whole, migration money can help the household to maintain or improve its food consumption and even lead to greater investment in health, education and productive assets. In Jharkhand, 98% of migrants reported an improvement in their lives because of migration (Dayal and Karan, 2003). Migrant households have a better diet and spend on average 15% more on food than non-migrating households. Roughly 13% of those owning five to 20 acres of land spent their additional income on productive uses. Migration has enabled some poor households to preserve their wellbeing rank. Qualitative data collected by Shah and Sah (2004) in a village in Bhadwani district show that migration helped landless households to maintain their standard of living over a decade. The researchers assessed the change in wellbeing rank over 10 years and found that 55% of the original 180 households had retained their original wellbeing status (including those that were already poor), 7% had experienced an improvement and the remaining 38% had deteriorated in status. The analysis suggested that i) improvement was generally associated with access to irrigation through private sources or obtaining a salaried job; ii) deterioration owed largely to division of landholdings and, at times, to indebtedness and; iii) some households, especially the landless, could retain their wellbeing status in the better-off or medium categories owing to migration (Shah and Sah, 2004: 259).

Nature of Migration

Rural migrants migrate to villages in Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda districts for agricultural work. They engage in cotton and Beedi making at different rural destinations. First, they work in the cotton fields till the end of that activity, and then shift from cotton to beedi making 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.

Review of Literature

There are several migration theories which discuss the migration process and its economic implications. 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.

Ishtiaque (2011) Studies have shown that both rural poor and non- poor migrate to urban areas examined that the process of rural-urban migration is strongly influenced by the incidence of push factors, while found that migration is influenced by both push and pull factors. According to PEST factors (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) people are more likely to move and he showed that people from south-eastern and north-eastern part are less likely to move to major industrial cities.

Rathaet *al.*, (2011) in her study migration is a decision that impacts the welfare of the household, the home community, and in the end the whole economy in various ways. Both the international and internal migration will work in the same way. The welfare implications of the international migration on the origin country are more often positive and sizable. However, we need ample literature to judge whether the welfare implications of the temporary rural to urban migration is positive and sizable in the context of rural development.

Shaw, (2010) very few have attempted to study internal migration in the context of Sri Lanka and they did not address the economic impact of the internal labour migration and remittances on sending communities. Most of the studies have been attempted to identify the migration patterns and economic and social consequences of international migration in Sri Lanka. 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.

Rokib (2009) studied the socio-economic and demographic consequences of migration based on sample surveys, while he discussed the migration objectives fulfillment of rural-urban migrants' based on case study. It has been found that rural-urban migrants are relatively better educated than the national population found that the rural migrants in the city are hard working and contribute significantly in daily life.

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).

Profile of the Mahaboobnagar District:

Mahabubnagar district which is a part of the Telangana Region. The Telangana Region is most backward in general and Mahabubnagar District is the most backward in particular. The district is derived from its name Mahabubnagar, its headquarters which was named after Mir Mahbub Ali Khan, the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad. The district is divided into five Revenue divisions, sixty four Mandals comprising 1550 Revenue Villages including seventy three uninhabited villages and 1351 Gram Panchayats (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, 2005). Mahabubnagar district has an area of 18,432 sq. km. and a population of 3.56 lakh in 2011. The district is predominantly with rural villages housing a population of 3.1 million. It is the second largest district in the state. Literacy rate is very low at 44.61 per cent as against the state average of 60.5 per cent (Census, 2011). In the Human

development Index of 2001, Mahabubnagar district occupies the lowest position among the 10 districts because of its lowest position in income as well as education. (Subramanyam, 2001:10)

Mahabubnagar is more of a traditional type of Caste society with the dominant Reddy Caste controlling the land and the villages through Gram Panchayat and the traditional village administrative system called Patel-Patwari system. From the 1980s onwards, the conditions started changing with increasing opportunities for education and employment outside the village. In most of the Telangana region, OBCs have emerged as an economic and political force due to these opportunities and the reservations enjoyed by them in the local bodies. With the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993 it gave further scope for members from marginalized communities to enter the citadels of power and expand their political class. Economy of the district is backward and primarily agricultural. Out of a total geographical area of 18.47 lakh hectares, 14.13 lakh hectares is cultivable land and 2.68 lakh hectares is forest land. It has an irrigated area of only 1.47 lakh hectares and the accounts for only eight per cent of the total land and ten per cent of the cultivable area. As mentioned earlier, the district is severely drought prone and its agriculture is mainly rain fed. But the region is close to Hyderabad and migration takes place on a large scale not only to Hyderabad but also to the other parts of the country. Migrants are mostly employed in construction labour in large scale projects like dams and highways (Sainath, 2003, Olsen & Murthy, 1995).

Characteristics of Migrant Households in the Study area:

The study about the Social organization in Mahabubnagar district which is a newly formed state of Telangana of former combined Andhra Pradesh State. The Telangana region is most backward in general and Mahabubnagar district in particular. The present study was carried out in three mandals of Mahabubnagar district.

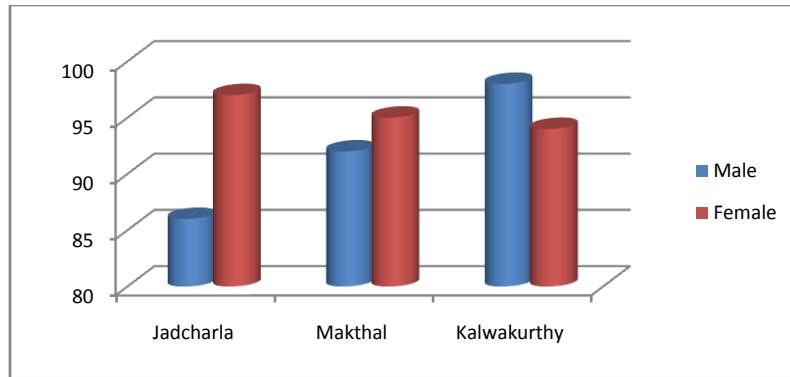
The Distribution of Migrants respondents by Gender:

Gender structure are the basic characteristics of any demographic group which affect not only demographic situation but also social, economic and political structure.

Table – 1
Gender-Wise Distribution of Migrant Respondents

Name of the Mandal	Male	Female	Total	Sex-Ratio
Jadcharla	86 (15.30)	97 (17.26)	183 (32.56)	1128
Makthal	92 (16.38)	95 (16.90)	187 (33.28)	1032
Kalwakurthy	98 (17.43)	94 (16.73)	192 (34.16)	960
Total	276 (49.11)	286 (50.89)	562 (100.00)	1036

(Source Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)



The above table reveals that sex-wise distribution of the total migrant respondents' family members. Out of 562 family members 286 (50.89 per cent) members belong to female category and 276 (49.11 per cent) members are from Male category. Out of 192 (34.16 per cent) members in KalwakurthyMandal there are highest percentage of females than males. From Jadcharlamandal we found that out of 183 (32.56 per cent) members, 86 (15.30 per cent) members are from males and 97 (17.26 per cent) members are from female members category. There are 92 (16.37 per cent) members are from male category, 95 (16.90 per cent) members are from female category to out of 187 (33.27 per cent) family members. We can understand from the above data that there are highest percentage of female members than male members in Jadcharla and Makthal Mandals.

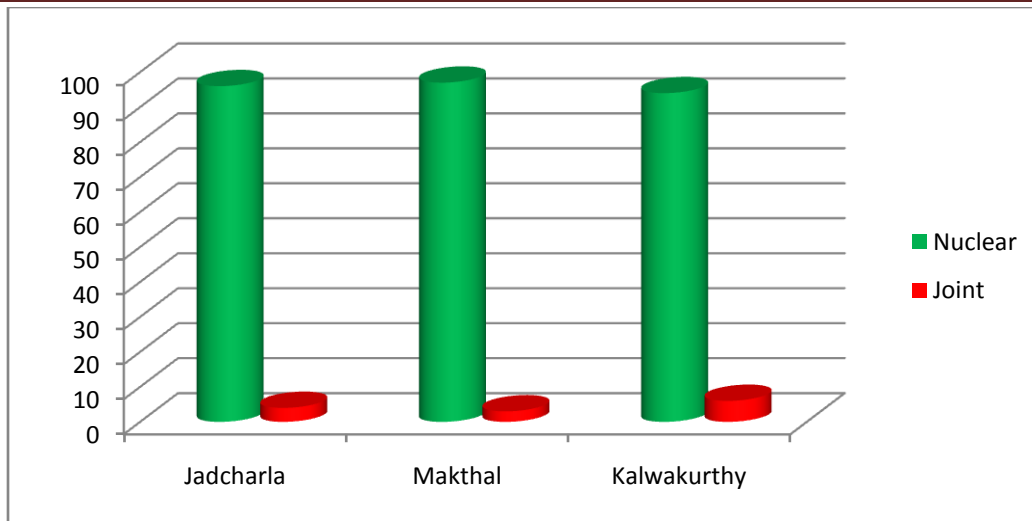
Type of Family:

The family may be organized or varied. People at different cultures organized family in different types such as nuclear families, joint families and extended families. The nuclear family consists of father mother and (unmarried) their children: the joint family comprises father, mother and married sons with their unmarried children, and the extended family contains father, mother and two or more married brothers and their unmarried sons. The two types of families of migrants are given in table –2

Table – 2
Type of Families among Migrant Respondents (at the place of Migration)

Name of the Mandal	Nuclear	Joint	Total
Jadcharla	96 (32.00)	04 (1.33)	100 (33.33)
Makthal	97 (32.34)	03 (1.00)	100 (33.34)
Kalwakurthy	94 (31.33)	06 (2.00)	100 (33.33)
Total	287 (95.67)	13 (4.33)	300 (100.00)

(Source Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)

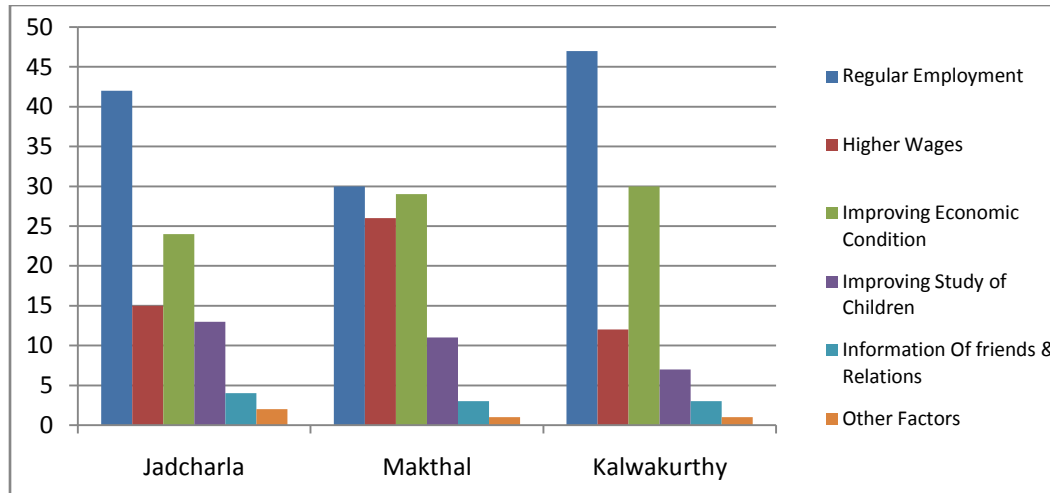


The above table depicts the type of family among respondents in the study area. The type and size of family are the two features which will show an influence on the respondents. It is significant to note that nuclear family system is mostly prevailing in all three Mandals like rest of the society. There are more than 287 (95.67 per cent) respondents' families are under nuclear families. Joint families are very rare even in the rural areas due to the impact of globalization. Out of 300 respondent families, only 13 (4.33 per cent) are under joint families of that Kalwakurthy is the highest and Makthal is the lowest than the other sampled mandals. The nuclear families are more than the joint families in all the mandals. It is welcoming trend in the present era. Why because the nuclear families are one of the root causes to control the over population in the rural areas. It is also symbolic to empowering to whole family and it is not burden to migrate any where in the country. However, we can say that it is welcome trend in the study area in present scenario.

Table - 3
Attracting Factors for Migration Among Respondents

Name of the Mandal	Regular Employment	Higher Wages	Improving Economic Condition	Improving Study of Children	Information of friends & Relations	Other Factors	Total
Jadcharla	42 (14.00)	15 (5.00)	24 (8.00)	13 (4.33)	04 (1.33)	02 (0.67)	100 (33.33)
Makthal	30 (10.00)	26 (8.67)	29 (9.67)	11 (3.67)	03 (1.00)	01 (0.33)	100 (33.34)
Kalwakurthy	47 (15.67)	12 (4.00)	30 (10.00)	07 (2.33)	03 (1.00)	01 (0.33)	100 (33.33)
Total	119 (39.67)	53 (17.67)	83 (27.67)	31 (10.33)	10 (3.33)	04 (1.33)	300 (100.00)

(Source: Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)



The above table shows that 119 (39.67 per cent) of migrants are migrated for regular employment, 53 (17.67 per cent) are for higher wages, 83 (27.67 per cent) are for improving their economic conditions, 31 (10.33 per cent) are for improving status of children, 10 (3.33 per cent) are went to migrate with other factors to Mahabubnagar District.

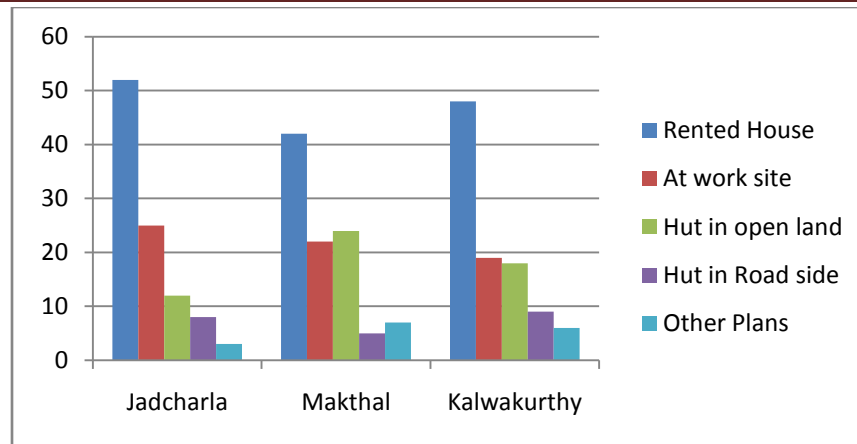
ECONOMIC ORGANISATIONS

Economic organization consists of the ordering and organization of human relations and human efforts in order to procure as many of the necessities of day-to day life as possible with the expenditure of minimum efforts. It is attempted to secure the maximum satisfaction possible through adapting limited means to unlimited ends (needs) in own organized manner. All societies have structured arrangements to provide the material means individual and community life. It is these structured rules that we call an economic system.

Table – 1
Type of Residence of Migrant Respondents

Name of the Mandal	Rented House	At work site	Hut in open land	Hut in Road side	Other Plans	Total
Jadcharla	52 (17.33)	25 (8.33)	12 (4.00)	08 (2.67)	03 (1.00)	100 (33.33)
Makthal	42 (14.00)	22 (7.33)	24 (8.00)	05 (1.66)	07 (2.34)	100 (33.33)
Kalwakurthy	48 (16.00)	19 (6.34)	18 (6.00)	09 (3.00)	06 (2.00)	100 (33.34)
Total	142 (47.33)	66 (22.00)	54 (18.00)	22 (7.33)	16 (5.34)	300 (100.00)

(Source: Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)



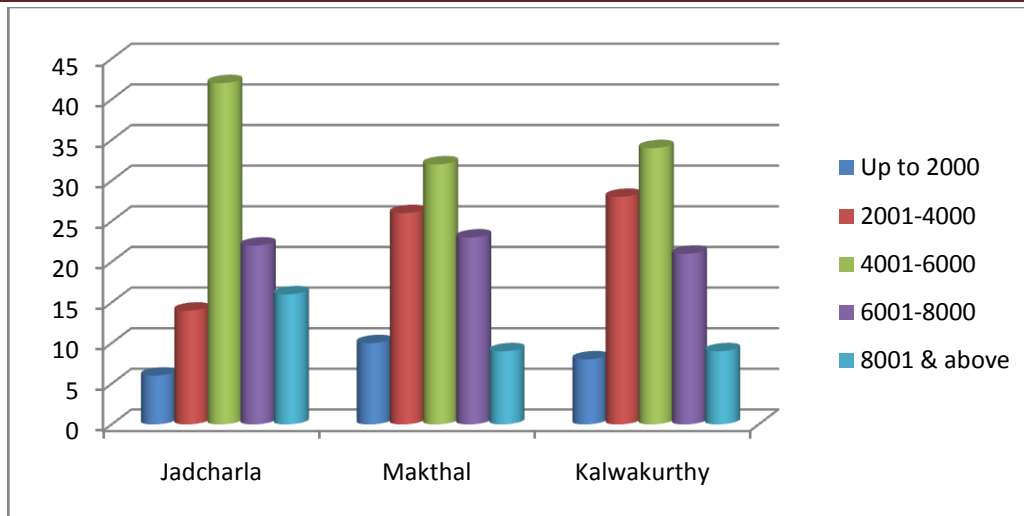
The above table shows that residential status of respondents at work area 142 (47.33 per cent) respondents are live in rented house, followed by 66 (22 .00 per cent) are at work site, 54 (18.00 per cent) are hut in open land, 22 (7.33 per cent) are hut in road side and 16 (5.34 per cent) respondents are other means they stay at friends, relatives houses respectively.

Table - 2

**Distribution of Respondents by Income Levels
(Per Month Before Migration)**

Name of the Mandal	Up to 2000	2001-4000	4001-6000	6001-8000	8001 & above	Total
Jadcharla	6 (2.00)	14 (4.67)	42 (14.00)	22 (7.33)	16 (5.33)	100 (33.33)
Makthal	10 (3.33)	26 (8.67)	32 (10.67)	23 (7.67)	09 (3.00)	100 (33.34)
Kalwakurthy	8 (2.67)	28 (9.33)	34 (11.33)	21 (7.00)	09 (3.00)	100 (33.33)
Total	24 (8.00)	68 (22.67)	108 (36.00)	66 (22.00)	34 (11.33)	300 (100.00)

(Source: Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)



The above table reveals the Income level distribution of the respondents are in Jadcharlamandal the highest number of 42 respondents accounting for 14.00 per cent are earned Rs. 4001-6000 per month followed by 6001-8000 are 22 (7.33 per cent) respondents Rs. 8001 and above are 16 (5.33 per cent) respondents and Rs. 2001-4000 are 14 (4.67 per cent) respondents. The lowest number of 6 respondents accounting for 2.00 per cent are earned Rs. up to 2000 respectively.

In Makthalmandal the highest number of 32 (10.67 per cent) respondents are earned money Rs. 4001-6000 per month followed by 2001-4000 are 26 (8.67 per cent), Rs. 2001-4000 are 26 (8.67 per cent), 6001-8000 are 23 (7.67 per cent), upto 2000 are 10 (3.33 per cent) and 8001 and above are 9 respondents (3.00 per cent) respectively.

In Kalwakurthymandal the highest number of 34 (11.33 per cent) respondents are earned money Rs. 4001-600 per month followed by 2001-4000 are 28 (9.33 per cent), 6001-8000 are 21 (7.00 per cent), 8001 and above are 9 (3.00 per cent) and upto 2000 are 8 respondents (2.67 per cent) respectively. The overall observation is in three mandals the highest income level is in the category of 4001-6000 are 108 respondents (36.00 per cent).

Conclusion

Migrant workers, those workers, who migrate from one area to another area within the state or country in order to get seasonal or temporary or part time work in different sectors. Migrant workers, who are not organized under any trade unions and their labour standards, are not protected by the government as well as trade unions, these migrant workers are illiterate, ignorant, and belong to backward community. They do not get minimum wages stipulated under the Minimum wages Act. Today, the real issue is how to extend human rights to all segments of the labour market. There are many groups of workers in the unorganized sector or informal economy, like migrant workers in agriculture, building and road construction, brick kilns, sugar factories and others, for whom decent work is a very distant goal. The Government of India should ratify all the relevant international covenants that respect the dignity of labour, especially important ILO Conventions No.87. The freedom of association and protection of the right to organize convention, and the ILO convention 98, the right to organize and collective bargaining convention. Workers, whether industrial workers or employed with the government should have an inalienable right resort to strike. Uniform labour

standards in the context of unorganized sector workers, like migrant workers, should be implemented in rural and urban areas of India. It is necessary to protect migrant and other workers in the unorganized sector by International Labour Standards.

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. 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. 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. 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.

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