

A Study on socio- economic status and factors of Santhal labour Migration in Jharkhand

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Abstract

Any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community as deemed under Article 342 is Scheduled Tribe for the purpose of the Indian Constitution". Like others, Santhal society is not quite static, but dynamic; however, the rate of change is rather slow. That is why they have remained relatively poor and backward compared to others. Therefore, a large number of Santhal labours migrate from Jharkhand to many other states to get different types of employment. Labour migration is a very important social phenomenon in the process of development in India. Many macro level researches shows that there has been an increase in magnitude of labour migration over the years. Since last four decades the Santhal labour or poor santhal tribe of Jharkhand have been migrating for work and employment opportunity in other developed regions, in towns and cities or even in rural areas of other states. The researcher is interested to know the socio-economic status and the basic factors of the migration of the labours of Sahibganj district of Jharkhand state in India.. The paper assesses the socio-economic conditions and the factors of the migration of Santhal labourers.

Key words:-Tribe, Santhal, Labour, Migration, Rural labour migration, Factors of migration.

Introduction :

The word 'tribe' is generally used for a socially cohesive unit, associated with a territory, the members of which regard them as politically autonomous. Different tribes have their own cultures-dialects, life styles, social structures, rituals, values, etc. A tribe is an Indian group which possesses certain qualities and characteristics that make it a unique cultural, social, and political entity. The nature of what constitutes an Indian tribe and the very nature of tribes have changed considerably over the course of centuries, but certain characteristics have remained. Labour is merely defined as a four factors production in the manufacturing process. But in reality "Labour is the source of all wealth; the political economists assert. And it really is the source – next to Nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself" (Engels, 1876). Indian labour can mainly be classified as organized and unorganized labour. The category of organized labour includes those labour where more than ten labourer working under an organization. The unorganized sector is further classified in four categories i.e. (a) occupation (b) nature of employment (c) specially distressed categories and (d) service categories. Government of India also defines unorganized workers as those who are working in the

unorganized household and enterprises, except the regular workers those who are gaining the benefits of social security (NCEUS, 2007).

The word 'migration' is generally used for the movement of people from one place to another. It can be defined as the movement of people from one region to another region of a state or a country by settling temporarily or permanently, for better living conditions. Most of the migrations are due to economic conditions, business opportunities, education, and employment. As our concerned with labour migration, it is defined as the movement of persons from their home State to another State for the purpose of employment. A "migrant worker" is defined in the International Labour Organization (ILO) instruments as a person who migrates from one country to another (or who has migrated from one country to another) with a view to being employed other than on his own account, and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment (Usher : 2004) According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2015), migrant labour as casual and unskilled workers who move about systematically from one region to another offering their services on a temporary, unusually seasonal basis. As labour migration among the poor occurs in most cases due to distress situations.

The migrant labourers belong to a special socio-economic condition and they have to face many socio-economic problems. As labour migration among the poor occurs in most cases due to distress situations; it acquires importance from the policy perspective because labour migrants who keep floating across the span of the country are not protected from the risks and costs associated with labour contracts which are invariably exploitative. Although labour migration occurs even across international borders, the scope of this paper remains limited to the case of only internal labour migration from Bihar to other states of India.

Santhal:

The Santhal tribe also known by the name of 'Santal', 'Saontar' etc. in Santhal Parganas region of Jharkhand. The name 'Santal' spelt in one way or another is an English form adopted from Hindi, which corresponds with the form 'Saontar' used by the Bengali-speaking people. Both name are only applied to the tribe by non-Santhal, and the Santhals do not use them in speaking about themselves except as a concession to foreigners, then they prefer the form 'Saontar'. Both Santhal and Saontar have the same origin according to phonetic law and practice in the different languages (Roy Choudhary : 862-863). The Santhal live in almost all the districts of Santhal Parganas regions.

Tribal faces two types of problems. There are the problems which the tribal folk share with the entire rural population of the country; and there are also problems which are unique to the tribal folk (Majumdar and madan: 233). The former are socio-economic problems and have arisen out the impact of new revenue policies and land tenure system, restrictive forest policies, the application of All-India Civil and Penal Code, industrialization, urbanization, modern economic system etc. Those tribal who have not lived in contact with non-tribal folk have created economic problems for themselves.

Santhal people have a continued contact with outsider non-tribal people from a long time. Contact with a people who came in as rulers and were economically and militarily by far the stronger led to a rigid stratification into the superior alien and inferior native. Contact with non-tribal folk resulted in changes in social and economic organization of Santhal community. The tribals, including Santhal people, are facing many types of socio-economic problems and their problems are not homogeneous (Doshi and Jain :370). The vital social problems of Santhal People are illiteracy, health problems, like epidemic, high infant mortality rate, high maternal mortality rate, malnutrition etc., alcoholism, family disorganization, social deprivation etc. On the other hand the main economic problems which the Santhal people have to face are: unemployment, loss of traditional economic, low income, poor agriculture, land alienation, money lenders' exploitation, indebted etc. These problems are compelling the Santhal labours to migrate outside from their native places.

Review of literature

Sinha and Mishra (2012) explained that agricultural sector in Jharkhand has not developed due to the absence of irrigation facility. Therefore a major junk of its land produces single crop a year. Thus there is six to seven months of agricultural lean period and small and marginal farmers and landless labourers remain jobless. Thus migration to brick kilns is one of the choices options for poor

households of Ranchi district. Kumar and Bhagat (2012) studied the volume, trend pattern and cause of out migration from Bihar. In the sixties movement was towards north western state like Punjab and Haryana and agricultural developed states. From last two decades the movement of labourers from Bihar is to cities and urban centres. The impact of remittances from migration have helped average migrant households for purchase of food and household goods and also financing for health and education. Factors of migration are always referred as push and pull factors. Push factors which forces one from place of origin and pull factors are which attract one to the place of destination. Migration is a historical phenomenon and migrants move from one place to another in order to have better standard of living than the previous one. Thapa and Yadav (2015) studied the magnitude and characteristics of rural labour migration.

Significance of the study

Many articles has written about labour migration but place and context differ from one to another. The culture and the word view by migrants differ. The social and economic standard of Santhal labourers are different. Therefore, the study can bring new insights and find new problems affecting people's decision to migrate. About the present study area hardly an article is written. The study highlights the socio-economic status of Santhal labourers and factors affecting their migration. It is significant from planner's point of view as well.

Methodology:

The study was conducted in Taljhari block of Sahibganj district in Jharkhand . Three Santhal populated villages were selected for the study. The data was collected from both the sources viz. primary and secondary. The primary data was collected with the help of duly structured interview scheduled. The selection of respondents were made through a random sampling method. A sample of 150 Santhal labour were selected randomly covering the three villages (50 respondents from each village). The secondary data were collected from the Census report and district level offices. The results of the study is presented using the tables. The researcher maintained the scientific attitude during the study.

Area, population, literacy and workers :

Jharkhand, the 28th state of India was carved out of the southern part of Bihar state on 15th Nov 2000.. Jharkhand was brought into existence by the Bihar reorganization Act on November15, 2000. The district of Sahibganj, with a predominantly tribal population is a part of Santhal Pargana division and form the eastern most tip of the division. The Rajmahal and Pakur subdivisions of old Santhal Pargana district were carved out of 17th May , 1983 to form Sahibganj district, subsequently Pakur subdivision of Sahibganj district was varved out on 28th January, 1994 to constitute Pakur District.

The district of Sahibganj lies approximately between 24^o 42' north and 25^o21' north latitude and between 87^o 25' and 87^o 54' east longitude. The geographical area of the district is 1559. 00 sq. Km. It is bounded on north by the river Ganges and district Godda, on the east by Maldah and murshidabad districts of the state of West Bengal and on the west by Bhagalpur and Godda districts.

According to the 2011 Census (District Census- 2011) Sahibganj district has a population of 1,150,038. The district has population density of 719 Inhabitants per square Km. Its population growth rate over the decade 2001- 2011 was 23.96 % . It has sex – ratio females for every 1000 males is 953 and literacy rate is 53.73 % . The Taljhari block belongs to Rajmahal subdivision of the district. It has 273 Gram Panchayats villages having 195 inhabited and 78 uninhabited. The proportion of main and marginal workers is 32.26 per cent and 23.05 per cent respectively. Out of total workers, the proportion of Cultivators is 54.07 % . The percentage of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes population is 6.79 % and 59.44 % respectively. The overall literacy rate in this block is 27.09 % . However, it is 69.68 per cent in case of males, and 30.31 per cent in case of female.

Objectives of the study :

The study has the following objectives:-

1. To find out the socio- economic status of the Santhal migrant labour.
2. To find out the socio-economic problems of the Santhal migrant labour.
3. To find out the factors of their migration.

Hypothesis:

In this study the following hypothesis are formed :-

1. The Santhal labourers face the socio-economic problems like, illiteracy, malnutrition, race – disparity unemployment, low income, indebtedness, poor agriculture, land alienation etc.
2. Many factors are responsible for their out migration.

Findings and Discussion :

The results obtained from the present investigation are presented in Table -1 & Table- 2.

Table – 1
Socio- economic status of the respondents (N-150)

Sl. No	Variables and category	Number	%
I	Age (yrs.)		
	Young (20-35)	56	37.33
	Middle (36-50)	78	52.00
	Old (Above 50)	16	10.67
II	Educational level		
	Illiterate	49	32.67
	Literate	63	42.00
	Primary / Middle	19	12.67
	High School / Inter	14	09.33
	Graduate	05	03.33
III	Family Type		
	Nuclear	141	94.00
	Joint	09	06.00
IV	Family Structure		
	1 to 4 members	07	04.67
	5 to 8 members	114	76.00
	8 & above members	29	19.33
V	Sex		
	Male	100	66.67
	Female	50	33.33
VI	Marital status		
	Married	150	100.00
	Unmarried	00	00.00
VII	Religion		
	Hindu	93	62.00
	Traditional	39	26.00
	Christian	18	12.00
VIII	Family Occupation		
	Cultivator	85	56.67
	Govt. Service	03	02.00
	Household Industry	24	16.00
	Labour (agriculture & others)	21	14.00
	Others	17	11.33
IX	Land holding		
	Marginal (Below 2.0 Acres)	104	69.33
	SM (2.0 & above Acres)	46	30.67
	Without land	00	00.00
X	Family Income		
	0 - 5,000	81	54.00

	5000-10000	39	26.00
	10000-15000	16	10.67
	15000-20000	09	06.00
	20000 & Above	05	03.33

Source:- Primary data

Socio- economic status of the respondents :

The socio- economic statuses of Santhals with respect to important personal attributes are presented in Table-1. It can be observed from Table-1 that out of 150 respondents majority (52.00 %) of them were belonging to middle age group (36 -50 yrs.). Regarding education it was observed that more than half of the respondents were illiterate (32.67 %) due to the reason of illiteracy of their parents and society. 12.67 % respondents were belonging to high school / inter level and 3.33 % graduate level of education. The results that majority (94.00 %) of the respondents were belonging to nuclear family due to the social organization of Santhals. Out of the total respondents 66.67 % were male and 33.33% were female. Regarding religion, 62.00 %, 26.00 % and 12.00 % were Hindu Traditional religious group and Christian respectively. With respect to occupation, agriculture was found main the main occupation. Majority (56.67%) respondents were cultivators followed by household industry (16.00%), agricultural and other labourers (14.00%), other workers (11.33%) and Govt. service (2.00%). Out of the total respondents majority (54.00 %) family had a monthly income up to Rs.5,000 and only 3.33 % respondent had a monthly income of Rs. 20,000 and above.

Factors of migration:-

The tribal can be termed a Forest Dependent Population (FDP) (Das and Das : 2000). Traditionally the life of the tribal population was closely associated with their habitat, including the flora and fauna. With due course of time their sole livelihood sources (Land, Forest, Water Bodies, CPRs) have been destroyed with changing development policies of government, rapid industrialization, urbanization and excess pressure of population explosion (Mishra, 2009) There are several factors (Push factors and Pull factors) that forced to the santhal labourers to migrate outside from their native places to urban or industrial areas. The factors have sown in the Table No. 2 below.

Table -2
Push Factors and pull factors for labour migration(N=150)

Push Factors				
Sl. No.	Push Factors	N	NO.	per cent
1	Unemployment or loss of employment	150	149	99.33
2	Low weges	150	135	90.00
3	Poverty & Malnutrition	150	128	85.33
4	Seasonal unemployment in agriculture	150	139	92.67
5	Decline of natural resourses	150	109	72.67
6	Low growth rate in agriculture	150	118	78.67
7	Land alienation	150	101	67.33
8	Indebtness	150	145	96.67
9	Loss of forest rights	150	111	74.00
10	Exploitation by private money landers	150	133	88.67
11	Natural calamity	150	012	08.00
12	Family conflict	150	034	22.67
13	Lack of irrigation	150	126	
Pull Factors				

1	Superior opportunities for employment	150	144	96.00
2	Better job security	150	139	92.67
3	Superior opportunities to earn high income	150	141	94.00
4	Opportunities to obtain desired specialization, skill or training	150	098	65.33
5	Dependency movement like migration of bride or children to join her husband or parents	150	083	55.33
6	Preferable environment	150	097	64.67
7	High wage rate	150	136	90.67
8	Labour demand in urban or industries sector	150	137	91.33
9	Better social status	150	107	71.33

Sources :- Primary Data

Factors of labour migration:-

There are various push factors responsible for migration. A scrutiny of Table 2 indicated that entire respondents ranked unemployment or loss of employment as first as one of the main push factor responsible for migration(99.33%). 90.00 per cent of respondents had low wage as the major reason (push factor) for migration. 85.33 per cent of the respondents migrate due to poverty and malnutrition. Seasonal unemployment in agriculture is also a push factor responsible for migration (92.67%). 72.67 per cent of the respondents migrate due to decline of natural resources. Other push factors that compelled to santhal labourers to migrate are Low growth rate in agriculture(78.67 %), Land alienation (67.33%), Indebtness (96.67%), Loss of forest rights(74.00%), Exploitation by private money landers (88.67%), Family conflict (22.67%) and Natural calamity (08.00%) the lowest.

There are many pull factors of labour migration also. Majority of the respondents (96.00%) ranked superior opportunity for employment and occupation as first as one of the main pull factor responsible for migration. According to 92.67% respondents job security is a major pull factor responsible for migration. The table also depicts that the respondents considered Superior opportunities to earn high income (94.00%), Opportunities to obtain desired specialization, skill or training 65.33 per cent, Dependency movement like migration of bride or children to join her husband or parents (55.33%), Preferable environment (64.67%), High wage rate (90.67%), Labour demand in urban or industries sector (91.33%) and Better social status (71.33%) as the pull factors of their out migration.

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