Migrant Laborer in Agricultural Activities-A Case Study of Haryana State

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Abstract: -

Haryana is a small Indian state. The formation of a separate state brought great impetus to agricultural development. These are abdicators of agricultural development like change in cropping patterns, strengthening of the technical basis of agriculture, the introduction of new seed-fertilizers technology, etc. All these had an encouraging impact on the high growth rate of output and increase in per capita income. This contributed to the rise the wages and employment opportunity for agricultural laborers. It has augmented agricultural labor in rural areas of Haryana from other states. These migrant laborers help to meet the increasing demand for laborers in agriculture and played an important role in the development of agriculture in Haryana. Being more efficient to complete the work within the tighter time, longer working hours, low wages, and easy availability make migrants the first choice of farmers for their agricultural activities. In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the place of origin of migrant agricultural laborers in Haryana.

Keywords: - Labour, Migration, Development, Agriculture, Culture.

Introduction -

Migration is a major demographic process that has been an integral and salient feature of human history since time immemorial. It has been an important means by which human civilization has spread out, enriching cultures, disseminating ideas and generating social, political and economic changes at the places of origin and places of destination. Migration is a spatial movement of people from one place to another in order to get better jobs and status and enhance social status and economic conditions. This process is not new. In early days people would wander from one place to another in forests in search of food, water and better agricultural land. Even people of early civilized area would go to another civilized area of the world partly for trade and partly for investigation. Sometimes they used to invade the countries and conquer them.

Prior to the industrial revolution, man’s mobility was mostly limited but with the industrialization of few nations, means of conveyance expanded and communication facilities increased and these nations started colonizing most parts of the world. The people of undeveloped countries went to such countries to get the education and know technologies. Urbanization also caused another sort of migration and people generally migrate from rural areas to urban areas for getting jobs and enjoying urban life.

Migration assumes special significance in the context of developing societies like India. At that time these societies are in the process of reconstructing their social, political and economic structure. During the colonial period economic development benefited a small section of society. But there was no significant development in Agriculture until the down of 19th century (Dharmalingam, 1991). After attaining independence, India embarked up on its objectives of attaining self-sufficiency in agriculture ie availability of food for every mouth. As a result agricultural growth rate accelerated from about 0.37 percent per annum during pre-
independence period to about 2.7 percent in the post-independence period (Ahlawat, S.R. 1999). As the decades passed by, some states took leap forward in the industrial infrastructure as well as in agriculture. States like Punjab and Haryana attained substantial progress in the agricultural sector and brought India at the level of self-sufficiency. This became possible due to the introduction of new technology in rice and wheat which was termed as the Green Revolution. With the growth of industries and agriculture the economy of these states, employment potential and wage level were relatively higher than adjoining states. This coupled with other social and economic inequalities, led to migration of workers from less developed or underdeveloped states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand to the states of Haryana. This migration is noticed more perceptible during the peaks of harvesting and sowing seasons in agriculture (Singh, P. 1998).

Haryana is a highly agriculturally developed state of India. Developed agriculture attracted the workers of other states. Haryana has experienced 8.3 percent interstate migration of the working population during 2001. The inflow of migrant laborers in Haryana was the highest in the last decade and is surpassed Punjab which experienced 5.6 percent total inflow of the migrant labour (Ahlawat, S.R., 1994). Migration to the state of Haryana is mainly rural-rural inter-state migration. Hence, the state requires an in-depth study to ascertain the major states from more workers are coming in Haryana and responsible factors for choosing Haryana as their place of destination.

Design of Research-

Keeping in view the discovery of new ideas and insights in agriculture particularly after the green revolution and the inflow of migrant labor, the exploratory type of research design has been employed. For the present study multistage purposive sampling was employed. At the first step, the significance of crop productivity in rupees at constant prices and the intensive labour required in major crops is considered. On the basis of crop productivity and major crops all the districts of Haryana were ranked and following three regions were made:

1. **Region A- Agriculturally advanced region** with agricultural productivity more than Rs. 3500 per hectare and gross area irrigated to total cropped area is around 96 percent on an average. wheat, Rice Sugarcane and cotten are the major crops of this region. Fatehabad, Hisar, Jind, Kaithal, Karnal, Kurukshtetra, Sirsa and Yamunanagar are the districts of this region.

2. **Region B – Agriculturally semi-advanced region** with its agricultural productivity between Rs. 2500-3500 per hectare and its gross irrigated area is around 75 percent. Rice and wheat contribute fairly well in the state’s grain pool. Sugarcane is the 3rd major crop of this region. Ambala, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Palwal, Panchkula, Panipat, Rohtak and Sonepat are the districts of this region.

3. **Region C- Agricultural backward region** having less than 2500 rupees crop productivity per hectare. Wheat, Bajra and Gram are the major crops of this region. The gross irrigated area is around 51 percent of the total cropped area. Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Mohindergarh, Mewat and Rewari are the districts of this region.

One district was selected from the above three regions with the lottery method. Fatehabad district from Region A, Sonepat district from region B and Mohendergarh district from Region C were selected. The selected districts, besides being at different levels of agricultural development also represents different type of agroecological Zones.
Three villages from each district were selected on the basis of landholdings and population. The selected villages from Fatehabad district were Bhuna, Birdhana and Bhodiakhera. The selected villages of Sonepat district were Majra, Palri and Bali. The selected villages of Mohendergarh district were Siana, Sehlang, and Nautana. These all-selected villages have less population and high landholdings. The selection of migrant agricultural laborers was done on the basis of their availability in the selected villages. All the available migrant agricultural laborers from all nine villages of the three districts were included in the collection of primary data.

**Major Findings-**

A survey was conducted for the collection of primary data during the reaping of Wheat, sowing and reaping of Rice and cutting of sugarcane the data was collected by doing interviews of migrant agricultural laborer with the help of already prepared interview schedule. The collected data was tabulated and analyzed. The major findings of the collected data are given below.

1. **Selected villages and Respondents:**

In nine villages of three regions of Haryana, the interviews of migrant agricultural laborers were made at three points of times as to cover all the agricultural operations during 2010-11. In these three regions total 249 migrant respondents were interviewed. Information regarding the place of destination of respondents is given in table no. 1.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Region A</th>
<th>Region B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bhuna</td>
<td>Birdhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>40 (16.07)</td>
<td>39 (15.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Region)</td>
<td>105 (42.17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Region)</td>
<td></td>
<td>89 (35.74)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued…

Table 1.0

**Distribution of Respondents as per their place of destination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Region C</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Siana</td>
<td>Sehlang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>22 (8.83)</td>
<td>18 (7.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Region)</td>
<td>55 (22.09)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued…

Source - Field Survey

*concluded
Region-wise analysis of migrant agricultural laborer reveals that out of 249 total respondents selected from the study area 105 respondents were selected from region A, 89 respondents from region B and 55 respondents were selected from region C. Out of total respondents maximum 42.17 percent eligible respondents were found in region A, 35.74 percent respondents in region B and least only 22.09 percent eligible respondents were found in region C. This variation in eligible respondents is mainly due to availability of work in the selected regions and villages. In region A, there are 3 to 4 major crops, in region B there are two major crops and in region C there is only one major crop. Conclusively can be said that availability of work for the migrant agricultural labourer is maximum in region A, medium in region B and minimum in region C.

Village-wise analysis of table 1.0 shows that suitable migrant respondents were found a maximum of 16.07 percent in village Bhuna, 15.66 percent in village Birdhana and approximately 10 percent in village Bhodhiakerha of region A. Maximum of 13.25 percent eligible respondents were found in village Bali, 12.02 percent in village Majrai and minimum 10.44 percent in village Palri of region B. In region C, village Siana has a maximum of 8.83 percent, village Sehlang has 7.23 percent and a minimum of 6.03 percent eligible respondents were in village Nautana of region C. In the study area village Bhuna has a maximum, and village Nautana has minimum eligible migrant agricultural respondents.

### Table 2.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of origin</th>
<th>Region A</th>
<th>Region B</th>
<th>Region C</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No of Respondents</td>
<td>No of Respondents</td>
<td>No of Respondents</td>
<td>No of Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Bhuna (21) (52.50)</td>
<td>Birdhana (13) (33.33)</td>
<td>BhodaiKhera (15) (57.69)</td>
<td>Majra (14) (46.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>04 (10.00)</td>
<td>05 (19.23)</td>
<td>00 (00)</td>
<td>00 (00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattisgarh</td>
<td>07 (17.50)</td>
<td>06 (15.38)</td>
<td>00 (00)</td>
<td>09 (30.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>08 (20.00)</td>
<td>12 (30.77)</td>
<td>06 (23.08)</td>
<td>07 (23.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
<td>39 (100)</td>
<td>26 (100)</td>
<td>30 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source - field survey  
Figures in parentheses are percentages

Data regarding the place of origin of migrant agricultural laborers reveals that the selected migrant respondents belong to Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh. It also reveals that maximum 42.17 percent respondents were from Bihar and 30.12 percent respondents were from utter Pradesh. Nearly three fourth migrant agricultural laborer were from only two states ie. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The rest nearly 14 percent and 13 percent respondents were from Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh respectively. Bihari respondents came from districts of Khagaria, Darbanga, Samastipur and Purnia whereas respondents of Uttar Pradesh were from Bailia, Gonda, Bahraich, Sahajanpur, Khiri, Pilibhit, Jhansi and Zonpur districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh.
Region-wise analysis of migrant agricultural laborer reveals that 42.17 percent respondent migrated in region A, 35.74 percent respondent migrated in region B and 22.09 percent respondent migrated in region C. Out of 105 migrant Bihari agricultural laborers 46.67 percent were observed in region A, 32.38 percent respondent were in region B and 20.95 percent respondent were observed in region C. Respondent from Madhya Pradesh were 47.22 percent in region A, 30.56 percent in region B and 22.22 percent in region C. Respondent from Uttar Pradesh were 34.67 percent in region A, 46.67 percent in region B and 18.66 percent in region C. Respondent from Chhattisgarh were 39.40 percent in region A, 27.27 percent in region B and 33.33 percent in region C.

Village-wise analysis of table 3.1 shows that migrant respondent in village Bhuna of region A were 52.50 percent from Bihar, 20 percent from Uttar Pradesh and 17.50 percent from Chhattisgarh. In village Birdhana of region A, maximum 33.33 percent respondent were from Bihar, 30.77 percent respondent from Uttar Pradesh and nearly 20 percent from Madhya Pradesh. No respondent was from Chhattisgarh in this village. Maximum 46.67 percent Bihari respondent make their place of destination village Majra and 42.30 percent respondent village Palri of region A. In village Bali of region B has maximum 39.39 percent migrant respondent from Uttar Pradesh and 33.33 percent from Madhya Pradesh. In village Siana of region C, maximum 31.82 percent respondent were from Bihar, 27.27 percent respondent from Chhattisgarh and nearly 23 percent respondent from Madhya Pradesh. No respondent was from Chhattisgarh in this village. The place of origin of 44.44 percent respondent observed in village Sehlang from Bihar, 27.2 percent respondent from Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh. In this village no respondent was from Madhya Pradesh. In village Nautana of region C has maximum 46.47 percent migrant respondent from Bihar and equal 26.67 percent respondent from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In this village no respondent was from Chhattisgarh.

Conclusion-

Although Indian states have long shared common political institutions, national population and economic policies on one hand and a wide diversity in geographic, demographic and economic features is also clearly apparent on the other hand. Whereas states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are the largest states in terms of land area while Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have the largest population. Socio-economically and demographically the state like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Bihar are very backward. These states accounted for 39 percent of the total Indian population and 42 percent of the increase in population during the last decade. Nearly 80 percent people of these states are living below poverty line and 70 percent are unemployed. Agricultural development of these states is not in good condition when compared with the state of Haryana due to manyfold causes. The state of Uttar Pradesh has a big chunk of unusable and uncultivable waste land and absence of forests has equally accentuated the problems of flood and soil erosion in its large areas. Population of Uttar Pradesh is growing day-by-day but employment for growing population is not sufficient. Despite rich minerals and agricultural resource base, Bihar is much lagging behind in development due to high population pressure, unequal distribution of land, low agricultural production, shrinking landholdings, repeated floods and droughts, less employment opportunity and low wages for work. The magnitude of the economic development can be realized when it noticed that most of the area of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh is covered with hillocks and forests, the area left for cultivation has also not been put to full use mainly due to paucity of irrigation facilities, nearly half population of the state still lives below the poverty line, three quarters of its adult population still illiterate and that other essential services have yet to reach the remotest corners. These are the major factors which compel their unskilled, poor, downtrodden and illiterate people mainly engaged in agricultural activities to migrate in developed states like Haryana.
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- Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture, Haryana, Chandigarh (Relevant years).
