



# Landlessness, labour migration and vulnerability: Exploring the socioeconomic challenges of agricultural labourers in Shiggaon block of the Haveri District, Karnataka

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## Abstract:

This study examines the frequency reasons, destinations, nature of work and wages associated with migration over five years among 50 individuals. The findings indicate that migration is primarily driven by economic factors, particularly the lack of employment opportunities in native villages, with 38% of respondents citing this as their main reason for moving.

The study concludes that migration is primarily driven by economic necessity but it often results in low-paying and physically demanding jobs. These findings underscore the need for improved employment opportunities in rural areas and better working conditions for migrants at their destinations to reduce the reliance on frequent migration as a livelihood strategy.

**Keywords:** Migration, Proportion, Agriculture labourers, Working conditions, etc.

## Introduction:

In Karnataka, India, the issue of landlessness and the adverse conditions experienced by agricultural labourers present a multifaceted challenge that significantly impacts the region's economic and social development. The farm sector is a crucial component of Karnataka's economy as it employs a substantial portion of the workforce.(Anand, n.d.). However, the inequitable distribution of land ownership and working conditions for agricultural labourers often exemplifies the existing social and economic disparities.

Agricultural Laborers' Vulnerability to Adversity: Landlessness often leads to labour migration which may further increase vulnerability. Without land or secure jobs, people face higher risks of poverty, exploitation and marginalisation further migration can strain social networks, making agrarians more isolated and vulnerable, and are often part of a larger cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

Agricultural labourers in Karnataka encounter numerous socioeconomic challenges including inadequate remuneration, limited access to resources, and susceptibility to climate change. Research indicates that this demographic is particularly vulnerable, with factors such as cropping intensity, total irrigated area, and commercial crop coverage as primary contributors to agricultural vulnerability.(Pandey & Vijay, 2024).

Furthermore, socioeconomic and livelihood indices demonstrate that elements such as per capita income, population density, and literacy levels are significant factors in determining the overall livelihood vulnerability of Karnataka District (Raju et al., 2017).

## Objectives

- 1) Understand the landless agriculture labourer's type of migration, strong reason and nature of work at migrated places
- 2) Analysis of the landless agriculture labourer's average daily wage at the migrated place, average cost of food consumption and average savings.
- 3) To know about job difficulty levels and inadequate opportunities in their jobs.

## Statement of Problems

To know about the chronological migration of landless agricultural labourers of Shiggaon block, type of (times of) migration, compelling reason for migration, nature of work of labour in places of migration, Destination of migration, average amount of daily wages in areas of migration,

## Methodology:

This research paper comprises primary data collected through '**Direct interviews and focus group discussions**' (FGD) conducted between **April 2024 and September 2024**. Around 50 landless agricultural labourers were interviewed to interpret the research paper's statement of the problem. According to the objectives, the data were analysed using statistical tools (mean, quartile, and cumulative version).

## Study Area

### Geographical, Demographical and Economic factors of the study area:

Shiggaon is a taluka in the Haveri District of Karnataka, India. Its headquarters is in Shiggaon town, and it belongs to the Belgaum Division.

Shiggaon, Savanur, Lakshmeshwar, and Hubballi are cities near Shiggaon. Shiggaon taluka consist of 104 villages and 26 Gram Panchayats Shiggaon(Rural) is the smallest village and Hulgr is the biggest village. It is in the 688m elevation (altitude).

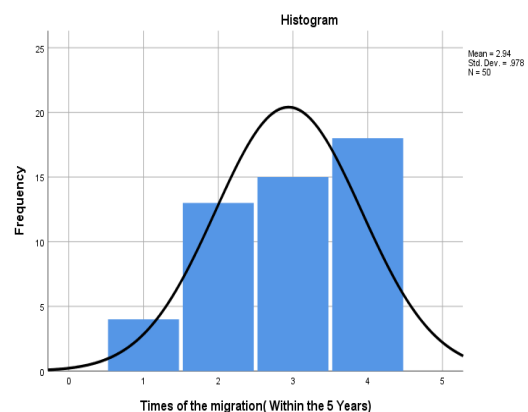
The total population of Shiggaon Taluka is 166,742 living in 29,225 houses, Males are 86,112 and Females are 80,630. A total of 44,651 persons live in town and 122,091 live in rural. At current prices (2021-22) share of the Gross district domestic product (GDDP- in Lakhs) is 256634, and the Net district domestic product (NDDP-in Lakhs) is 224421. At Constant prices (2021-22) Gross district domestic product (NDDP) is 154214, Per capita income is at current prices (2019-20) 110381 and at Constant prices (2019-20) is 75850.

## Discussion and Results

### A) Type of the Migration (Times of Migration)

Times of the migration (Within the 5 Years)		
	Respondents	Per cent
Once	4	8.0
2-3 times	13	26.0
4-5 times	15	30.0
More than 5 times	18	36.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2024



This table presents the distribution of migration frequency within five years. Four out of the 50 people or 8%, migrated only once in the last five years; 13 people or 26% migrated two or three times within the five years;

15 people or 30%, migrated four or five times during the same period; 18 people or 36%, migrated more than five time in the last five years.

The total sample size is 50 and, the percentages add up to 100%. The largest proportion of people (36%) migrated more than five times, while the smallest group (8%) migrated only once. This suggests that many of the individuals in the sample have moved multiple times within the five-year window.

**B) Main Reason for the Migration**

Main Reason for the Migration		
	Respondents	Per cent
Lack of employment opportunities in the native village	19	38.0
Higher wages elsewhere	8	16.0
Seasonal employment	12	24.0
Family reasons	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2024

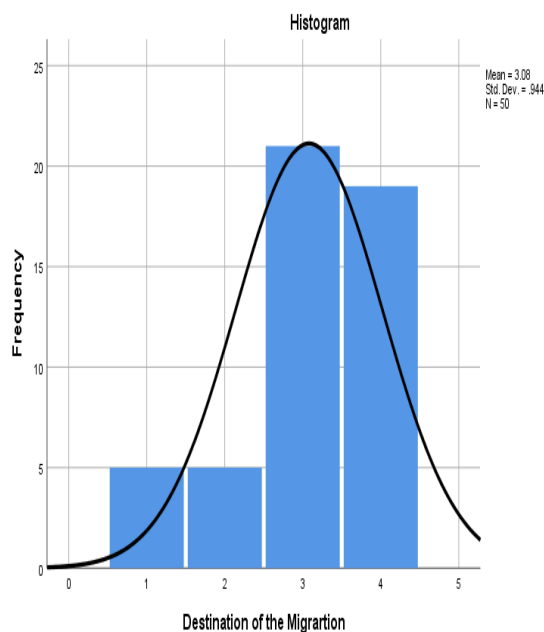
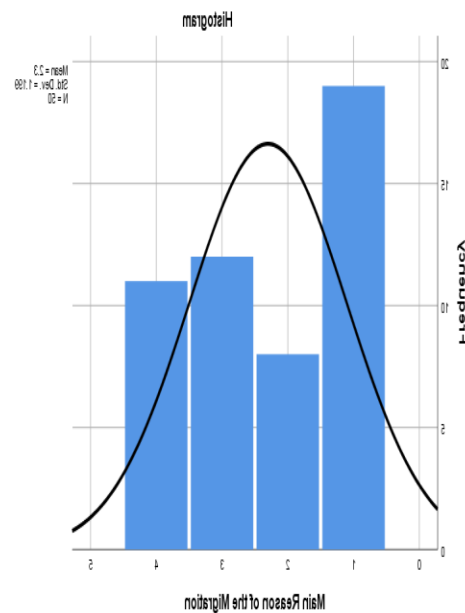
This table presents the main reasons why people in the sample have migrated. The largest group, 19 out of 50 people, or 38%, migrated due to insufficient job opportunities in their home village; 8 people, or 16%, migrated because they found better-paying jobs in other locations; 12 people, or 24%, migrated to seek seasonal employment, likely moving temporarily to follow job availability; 11 people, or 22%, migrated due to family-related factors such as taking care of family needs or family vulnerability.

The most common reason for migration was lack of employment opportunities accounting for 38% of the responses, while higher wages elsewhere was the least frequent reason at 16%.

**C) Destination of the Migration**

Destination of the Migration		
	Respondents	Per cent
10 to 20 Km	5	10.0
50-100 Km	5	10.0
100 to 200 Km	21	42.0
200 to 400 Km	19	38.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field survey 2024



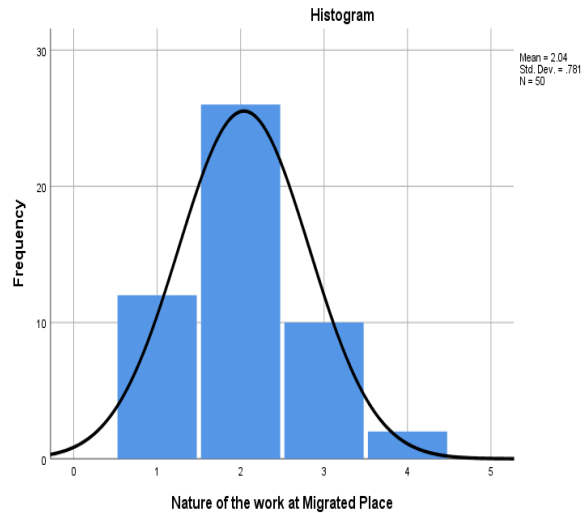
This table shows the distances people migrated from their original location. 5 out of 50 people or 10%, migrated a relatively short distance between 10 and 20 kilometres; Another 5 people or 10%, migrated between 50 and 100 kilometres; The largest group, 21 people or 42% migrated a distance of 100 to 200 kilometres; 19 people or 38% migrated even further between 200 and 400 kilometres.

The majority of people (80%) migrated long distances either between 100 and 200 kilometres (42%) or 200 and 400 kilometres (38%). Only a small portion (10% each) migrated shorter distances (less than 100 kilometres). This suggests that most people were moving relatively far from their original location potentially to seek better opportunities in distant regions.

**D) Nature of the work at Migrated Place**

Nature of the work at Migrated Place		
	Respondents	Per cent
Very Hard	12	24.0
Hard	26	52.0
Normal	10	20.0
Easy	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2024



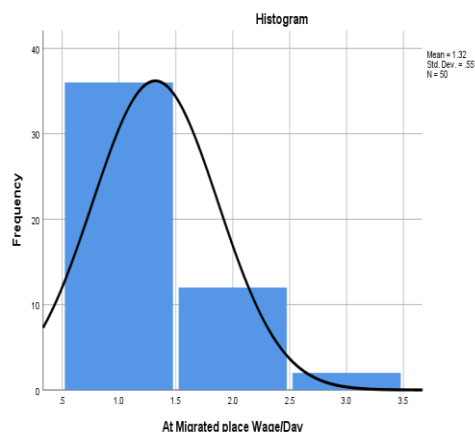
This table shows the perceived difficulty of the work at the destination where people migrated. 12 out of 50 people or 24% found the work at their migrated location to be very difficult; The majority 26 people or 52% described their work as hard; 10 people or 20% found the work to be of average difficulty, neither too hard nor too easy; Only 2 people or 4% considered their work easy.

The largest group (52%) reported their work as hard while another 24% described it as very hard, meaning that 76% of the respondents viewed the job as difficult. Only a small portion found the work easy (4%). This suggests that most people experienced challenging working conditions at their migrated destination.

**E) At Migrated place Wage/Day**

At Migrated place Wage/Day		
	Respondents	Per cent
Less than 300 to 400	36	72.0
More than 400 to 600	12	24.0
More than 600 to 800	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2024



The above table displays the distribution of daily wages earned by people at the places they migrated to. The majority 36 out of 50 people or 72% earned a daily wage in the range of 300 to 400 rupees; 12 people or 24% earned between 400 to 600 rupees per day; Only 2 people or 4% earned more than 600 to 800 rupees per day.

The majority of migrants (72%) earned relatively lower wages (between 300 and 400 rupees per day) while only a small proportion (4%) earned higher wages above 600 rupees per day. This indicates that most of the

migrants were earning wages in the lower range with only a majority benefiting from higher pay at their migrated locations.

### Findings and Suggestions:

1. The largest proportion of people (36%) migrated more than five times in approximately five years, while the smallest group (8%) migrated only once. Many of the individuals in the sample have moved multiple times within the five-year window. Migration of landless agricultural labourers is seen in one form or the other in every village and the policy-makers should make proper plans in this regard.
2. Migration of landless agricultural labour often involves occupational shortages. On the contrary, it is significant that agricultural labourers did not migrate for maximum wages. Landless agricultural labourers mainly migrate from villages to villages, towns, and from villages to districts outside states for occupational opportunities and the migration is temporary.
3. The majority of people (80%) migrated long distances, either between 100 and 200 kilometres (42%) or 200 and 400 kilometres (38%). So, most people were moving relatively far from their original location, potentially to seek better opportunities in distant regions, reducing of migration of agricultural labourers to promote Organic farms because create more job opportunities and policymakers offer other (non-agricultural activities) opportunities.
4. The majority of migrants (72%) earned relatively lower wages (between 300 and 400 rupees per day) while only a small proportion (4%) earned higher wages above 600 rupees per day. It means most of the landless agricultural labourers, regardless of gender, are engaged in very hard work, at least making policies to ensure that men have the right to equal wages for such hard work.
5. As labour migration increases the level of landless livelihoods, the occupational growth of this community may be further minimal, as well as the efficient use of welfare schemes in the economy. A country's accounting measure may not have perfect data and may further hamper the country's economic development at the international level (decline in the International Human Index).

### Conclusion:

The data reveals that migration is largely driven by economic factors, particularly the lack of job opportunities in native villages. Migrants often travel long distances and face challenging working conditions but despite this, many still earn relatively low wages. The majority of migrants move frequently, possibly as part of a seasonal migration pattern and are drawn to locations where they expect better employment prospects even though the work tends to be demanding and the pay modest.

In conclusion, migration for this population is a frequent and necessary means of economic survival but it often results in tough labour conditions and low pay. This highlights the need for improved local employment opportunities and better labour conditions at migration destinations to reduce the frequency of migration and improve the well-being of the migrants.

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