



E-ISSN: 2664-603X
P-ISSN: 2664-6021
Impact Factor (RJIF): 5.92
IJPSG 2025; 7(9): 322-326
www.journalofpoliticalscience.com
Received: 22-07-2025
Accepted: 24-08-2025

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A Study on the Social Disparities of Migrated Laborers in Tamil Nadu

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2025.v7.i9d.703>

Abstract

This paper deals with social disparities in inter-state migrated laborers. The migrated laborers in various places of Tamil Nadu state have changed and improved only to a meager extent. The city infrastructure, industries and economy of the state have grown to a very large extent because of the contribution made by the migratory work forces. But still the migrants' work force is facing so many social disparity problems like no proper accommodation facilities, discrimination of wages, medical care, safety, etc.

Keywords: Social disparities, Discrimination, Unequal wages

Introduction

The present era is bound with drastic changes in the process of industrialization, globalization and edge over technology, differences in religion, cultural and increase in employment opportunity. Demand for agricultural practices which are getting low also lead to migration. Of all these causes, searching for employment and getting settled where they get enough employment is the prime reason for migration. India accounts for providing job and shelter for many of the migrants, and from India people have migrated to other countries for want of higher income and better employment. But the people who hail from India are more when compared to the people who hail from outside India as all the skillful workers from India are moving out from India. She is facing shortage of skilled employees. After going for sake of employment, people get a permanent residential set up in some country.

Due to migration people get work and that income contributes to the eradication of poverty. The benefit given to the people who have migrated is very selective and cannot be applicable to all members of the country concerned (Centre for Development Research, 2002). Most of the migrated populations are settled in middle income countries and emigration happens in Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Caribbean and the Pacific Atlantic (Kapur, 2003) [7]. The world countries also significantly contribute to the remittance for the migration people, but the contribution is relatively small (Kapur and McHale, 2003) [7]. Poor countries like Somalia receive more number of remittances, and have effect over the wage paid, prices of commodity and employment (Taylor *et al.*, 1999) [11]. It has been realized in the long history that the people with high skill migrate more than the people who have low skill. The international migration has reduced the depth of poverty to the maximum (Teto 2001, Sabates *et al.*, 2005) [9]. Internal migration is a chance for the poor people to move internally and the concept of income redistribution should be ignored or looked over (Deshing Kar, 2006) [1]. The internal migration has helped people to come out of the severity of poverty by investing the income (Du *et al.*, 2005) [2]. Migration creates a negative effect on the concept of income inequality (Lipton, 1980) [8].

Migration made by the people for any purpose relocating to a place permanently or temporally. Such migration can be classified under two categories, *viz.*, the first one may be because of the political process, hindrance due to natural calamities occurrence of war, and the second one is due to look for better earning, to get employment. The migration can be classified into two, *viz.*, movement within countries (in migration or out migration) and migration to other countries (immigration or emigration).

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Statement of problems

There are different set of factors which are responsible for migration of laborers. Migrated laborers face various problems once they shift from their native. This study is intended to bring out the difficulties at the work place, viz., wage discrimination, gender inequality and sexual harassment, unhealthy job relationship and poor living condition of migrated labors. The migrated laborers carry out a wide range of works, large number of Northern and western state labors working in the construction, industries, cotton mills, hotels and other government projects, etc.

Sampling Technique

The study focuses on the migration laborers in Coimbatore at Tamil Nadu. Selection of the respondents is based on Convenience Sampling Method.

Source of Data and Tools

The study is based on primary data. The primary data is collected through prefixed interview schedule which is collected from the migrant workers. Statistical tools frequency analysis used for analyzing the data.

Data Collection and Analysis

The present study has adopted descriptive and analytical method of research. The sources of data are primary and secondary. The primary data was collected through prefixed interview schedule. Through convenient sampling 500 migrant laborers were taken up for the study.

Social Costs

The social costs of migrant laborers are as follows. The out-migration of male members in the family gives rise to feelings of loneliness, psychological trauma and other mental health problems not only among spouses but the aged members of the family as well. Newly married couples feel acute pains of separation, especially in nuclear families. Though this problem is a little less in joint families, social relations suffer in these families as well.

Problems with Regard to Low Wages and Unpaid Work

The most common complaint is with regard to wages. Not only are migrants' wages low, they are often not paid the wages stipulated in the contract. Another comm. on complaint is that they are not paid for some initial periods, ranging from two months to six months.

In 1983 Supreme Court dealt with Public Interest Litigation about Laborers Work Ng On Salal Vs. State of Jammu & Kashmir and Others. The Honorable Justice P.N. Bhagwati's parts of judgments are:

The Engineer-in-Charge (Principal Employers) and the representative nominated by them for witnessing the payments should ensure the payment of wages on account of over time put in by the workmen engaged by the contractors/sub- contractors in time and in full directly to the concerned workmen without any unauthorized deduction whatsoever.

The Engineer-in-Charge (Principal Employers) should immediately direct the contractors/sub-contractors to supplement the existing number of latrines urinals by constructing additional seats wherever required and provide sufficient number of rest rooms so as to meet the

requirement of Section 17 and 18 of the Contract Labor (R&A) Act 1970. Incase the contractors/sub-contractors fail to provide the same within one week, the Engineer-in-Charge (Principal Employers) should take immediate steps to provide the same in accordance with Section 20 of the Contract Labor (R &A) Act, 1970 and recover the amount so incurred from the contractors/sub-contract ors. That every inter-State migrant workmen is paid displacement allowance at the time of his recruitment and the journey fare in accordance with Section 14&15 of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979.

Long Working Hours and No Holidays

Even though the rules stipulate that workers cannot be employed for more than eight hours a day, most of the return migrants say that they are often made to work for 10 to 12 hours a day and not paid any overtime allowance. This is especially the case with domestic workers, most of them women, who are forced to work for more than 12 hours a day. Though migrants are supposed to get at least one holiday in a week, they are often asked to work during holidays also. Domestic workers are often the worst victims of such harsh working conditions. In 1983 Supreme Court deal with public Interest Litigation about Laborers Work Ng On Salal. Vs State of Jammu & Kashmir and Others. The Honorable Justice P.N. Bhagwati flowing part of judgments is that every workmen employed by the contractor/sub-contractor should be given a compulsory weekly off with wages and a compliance report is furnished forthwith.

Poor Working and Living Conditions

Migrant workers are often made to work in a poor working environment. Their living conditions are also poor and unhygienic. As they cannot afford proper accommodation, they often live in places which are not suitable for decent human living.

Sexual Exploitation and Harassment

Women migrant workers usually face problems of sexual harassment in the workplace. Besides, women usually go to some other states as domestic helpers, but they are not trained in modern housekeeping methods and are not familiar with household gadgets, which create problems for them. At work, they often suffer physical beatings, verbal abuse, threats and mental harassment. They are forced to work for long hours and their passports are impounded by their employers.

Equal Wages for all

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provide for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers and for the prevention of discrimination, against women in the matter of employment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. But most of organizations show discrimination of the wages, especially migration workers. They have two types of discriminations. One is difference between regional workers and migrated workers. Most use the migrated labors for cheap rate wages like regional construction workers getting wages for 750 for per day. At the same, time migrated laborers are getting wages just Rs. 350 per day.

Table 1: Awareness of Equal Wage for Men and Women

S. No.	Level of Awareness on Equal Wage for Men and Women	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Not at all Aware	238	47.6
2	Not Aware	194	38.8
3	Neutral	17	3.4
4	Not Aware	22	4.4
5	Highly Aware	29	5.8
	Total	500	100.0

Table 1 explains the awareness on equal wage for men and women. A 47.6 percent of them were not at all aware of equal wages for men and women, 38.8 percent of them were not aware, 5.8 percent of them were highly aware, 4.4 percent of them were not aware and 3.4 percent of them were neutral in their opinion.

Discrimination in Work Spot

It is illegal to discriminate based on religion, gender, race,

or national origin when hiring or in the work spot. It is illegal to discriminate in any facet of employed. They are based on important principles like fairness, respect dignity, autonomy and equality. There are rights help to protect everyone employee within the workplace as they have been incorporated into general employment law. Discrimination is one of the untouchable actions that the human rights are protected by the law for the workers.

Table 2: Discrimination in the Work Spot

S. No.	Discrimination in the Working Place	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	361	72.2
2	No	139	27.8
	Total	500	100.0

It is clear from the above table 2 that majority (72.2 percentage) of the respondents faced discrimination from

co-workers. And the table 3 clearly indicates the type of discrimination in faced by the labours in the work spot.

Table 3: Nature of Discrimination faced in Work Spot

S. No.	Kind of Discrimination	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Inequality wages	216	59.8
2	Gender Discrimination	38	10.5
3	Language	69	19.1
4	Religion	38	10.5
	Total	361	100.0

Table 3 explains the nature of discrimination faced. From the table it is understood that 59.8 percent of them face inequality in wages, 19.1 percent of them face language discrimination. There is gender discrimination and religion discrimination sharing 10.5 percent respectively.

government cannot provide other state regional language schools. This is a very important problem for migrated children. Students studying mother tongue is right. This is one of the reasons for dropout. Especially, seasonal migrated child are mostly affected.

Child Education for Drop Out

Internal displacement or migration results in high drop-out rate among children, migrated laborer families who had migrated to own state. Child migration influences schooling decisions and dropout patterns. In this Tamil Nadu

Not Getting Rental Houses

Most of migrated laborers are facing the problem of getting rental house. Because they have no proper document to show in case they are getting rental house. Rental is too high and also the house is very small with no basic Amenities.

Table 4: Problem Faced while Getting Rental House along with the Marital Status

Marital Status	Problem Faced by Getting Rental House		Total
	Yes	No	
Unmarried	123(60.30)	81(39.70)	204
Married	128(57.40)	95(42.60)	223
Widow/ Widower	38(61.30)	24(38.70)	62
Divorced	8(72.70)	3(27.30)	11
Total	297	203	500

Association between the marital status and the problems faced by them while asking for a rental house is explained in Table 4. 60.3 percent of the unmarried migrants, 57.4 percent of the married migrants, 61.3 percent of the widow/widower and 72.7 percent of the divorced migrants have opined that they have faced problems while asking a

house for rent.

No Adequate Living Area

The migrated laborers are mostly staying in temporary house or contractor provided tent. They have no living space. WHO has described a living area that is not more

than 5 workers can stay in 10X10 sized rooms. Another issue which is health-related is most of the migrated people use common toilet for men and women.

Political Motive and Economical Problems for Migration in Tamil Nadu

Controversies witnessed in recent months over the recruitment of non-Tamils in government jobs in Tamil Nadu have triggered a perceptible rise in voices against migrants taking up jobs in the State. The slogans demanding 'protection' of jobs in Tamil Nadu have not only become louder among the Tamil nationalist groups but have found traction even among a section of mainstream political parties. Andhra Pradesh government's recent legislation to reserve 75% jobs in the private sector for locals has only strengthened these voices.

Health and Living Condition

The migrant laborers working in unorganized sectors work and in unhygienic and polluted environment are vulnerable to health problems and sickness. Migrant Laborers who are employed in construction sites, metro projects, quarries and highway projects live in hazardous environment and are vulnerable to air and water pollution leading to kidney and lung disorders. Most live in open spaces or make shift shelters in spite of the Contract Labor Act which stipulates that the contractor or employer should provide suitable accommodation.

Spread of Communicable Diseases

The horrible face of Corona virus is shaking the whole world.

Even developed countries are paralyzed by the assault of the virus. World economy is facing an unprecedented slide. As a result, the price of essential commodities has escalated as never before. In India also, the impact of Covid-19 is peaking at an alarming rate, in this context. The livelihood of the migrant laborers is in a pathetic state. Unfortunately, no State, except Kerala, has maintained a record of these unfortunate souls. As a result, the migrant laborers are facing untold misery.

The plight of the migrant laborers has come to light only now. The bitter truth is that many States come out with contradictory reports about the migrant laborers. It is unfortunate that the migrant laborers, who substantially contribute to building the infrastructure, are begging for bare necessities in this critical juncture.

The present economic crisis, being faced by the countries, is different from the economic crisis faced during wars and natural calamities. The countries affected by the Corona virus are facing an economic crisis practically every day. Travel restrictions are unprecedented. This has resulted in instilling fear in the minds of migrant laborers.

Supply of essential commodities and service sector have been adversely affected. In global economy, chain reaction has come to a standstill. This has resulted in negative impact on global economy. Due to price escalation, compulsory leave to laborers and retrenchment of labor force, economy faces a setback. Developed countries are imposing severe restrictions on export and import of food items and medicine. This has added to the pressure on the already struggling countries.

This complex scenario has resulted in untold miseries to the labor class and their families. The International Labor

Organization (ILO) has pointed out that laborers of the unorganized sector, construction laborers and household laborers are facing unprecedented poverty. To alleviate their sufferings, immediate and firm steps must be taken with the support of international community, says The International Labor Organization.

Exploitation by Agents

Migration flows are mediated by an elaborate chain of contractors and middle men who perform the critical function of sourcing and recruiting workers. The lowest links in this chain are most often older migrants who are part of the same regional or caste-based social network in the rural areas. While these networks do serve the purpose of providing migrants with information and subsequent access to work opportunities, they largely operate in the informal economy. There are no written contracts, no enforceable agreements regarding wages or other benefits, and no commitments regarding regular provision of work. Migrants, completely dependent on the middlemen for information, end up working in low-end, low-value, hard and risky manual labor and are constantly subject to exploitation with little or no opportunity for legal recourse.

Their work lives are characterized by exploitative practices such as manipulation in wage rates and work records, nonpayment or withholding of wages, long work hours, abysmal work conditions, and verbal and physical abuse. Accidents and deaths at workplaces are also extremely common in the construction sector, which is aggravated by the absence of any kind of social protection.

Conclusion

Migration made by the people for any purpose relocating to a place permanently or temporally. Such migration can be classified under two categories, viz., the first one may be because of the political process, hindrance due to natural calamities occurrence of war, and the second one is due to look better earning, to get employment. Overall, the result of this systematic review suggests that the vulnerable social group of the migrated laborers facing problem of inequality wages health and treatment responsibility inequality, political inequality.

Funding Disclosures

I declare that no funding from any agencies has been received for the conduct of this study and/or preparation of this manuscript.

Data Availability Declaration

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The raw data used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Competing Interest Declaration

I declare that I have no competing interests that could influence the interpretation or perception of the research findings.

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