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## MIGRATION AND RURAL LIVELIHOOD IN INDIA

Gundappa<sup>1</sup> and Ashok Antony D'souza<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar Department of Studies and Research in Social Work Tumkur University Tumkur Karnataka , India .

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor Department of Studies and Research in Social Work Rani Channamma University Belagavi Karnataka .

### ABSTRACT

**R**ural migration and its relationship to the rural environment have attracted increasing research interest in recent decades. Rural migration constitutes a key component of human population movement, while rural areas contain most of the world's natural resources such as land and forests. This study empirically evaluates a conceptual framework incorporating rural household livelihoods as an integrative mediating factor between rural migration and the rural environment in the context of rural-to-urban labor migration in India. The economic divide between urban and rural sectors coupled with the unbalanced growth within the rural economy, is a major hurdle in the growth of Indian Economy. The existing government-run employment schemes are subsidized credit based schemes, which are good for any feasible project. However, with the kind of educational and economical background of rural population, there is a need to go a step backward and show them a way to mobilize what they have in terms of possible resources. This paper takes an inductive approach to explore and arrive at a conceptual framework for generating income in the rural

livelihood.

**KEYWORDS:** Migration, livelihood, rural, urban, economic.

### INTRODUCTION :

Migration has been significantly reshaping the traditional social and economic structures of rural communities of this country. The livelihood activities of rural families are no longer confined to farming and are increasingly being diversified through rural-to-urban and international migration. with the development of trade and industry and the awareness produced by the mass media, rural poor are shifting

towards the urban areas in order to improve their living standards and to search for better livelihood opportunities. the lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas and better employment prospects and infrastructure facilities in the urban areas motivate people to migrate to urban areas. In the rural areas, sluggish agricultural growth and limited development of the rural non-farm sector raises the incidence of rural poverty, unemployment and underemployment given the fact that most of the high productivity activities are located in the urban areas - people from rural areas move towards town or cities with a hope to grab diversified livelihood opportunities as the rural poor still consider migration as one of the significant as well as reliable



livelihood coping strategy.

Migration primarily occurs due to disparities in regional development. The causes of migration are usually explained by using two broad categories, namely, push and pull factors. Studies conducted in the sphere of migration in India - found the poverty, job searching and family influence have been the main push factors for out-migration, while availability of better employment opportunity, prior migrants and availability of better educational facilities have been identified as the key pull factors behind migration. To be more specific, for rural India, poverty is still considered to be the main push factor for illiterates and moderately educated migrants. The as per the economists and development experts - migration is essential for development and it is a desirable phenomenon; but what is not desirable is the distressed migration found across the nation resulting in overcrowding of cities and mushrooming of slums. Some states which have higher investment and resources for development experience high in-migration; at the same time, the backward states like U.P, Bihar, M.P, etc are experiencing heavy out-migration. The rural poor from the and backward communities and backward regions such as Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh travel to far distances seeking employment at the lowest rungs in construction of roads, irrigation projects, commercial and residential complexes etc. Hence, there is a need for balanced regional development. More focus for development and investment should be given to those states which are lagging behind in development parameters. During the last ten years, it came into notice through different reports and statistics that the agricultural sector and rural inhabitants in many regions across the country have suffered from continuous neglect and even outright discrimination – brought about by governmental policies and the fact that investments have been dedicated primarily to stimulating growth of the industrial and urban sectors, and more recently the service sector. National and international investments in agriculture and rural development have been decreasing steadily. As far as the issue of policy is concerned, the Indian government has concentrated and has set its investment-priority in cities, neglecting the rural areas. Migration of labourers from rural to urban areas is a reflection of our misplaced development policies; investment in economic growth has been biased toward the capital-intensive urban centres, despite the fact that majority of India resides in the rural areas. Even the little that is spent in villages is wasted in microeconomic interventions to help individual villagers and not the macro-economy of the village as a whole. For instance, the government has no employment generation schemes for cities; yet, there are plenty of jobs and high-paying ones too. On the contrary, for rural India, there are a variety of job creation schemes for the poor but hardly few jobs are available which are well-paid. agriculture is stagnating and may not be able to provide further jobs; but most villages have enough other non-farm resources, like forests, which can be used to generate livelihood opportunities.

Studies aptly indicate that the costs and risks of migration are heavy, including the risk of disease, injury and not being able to send children to school. Given a choice, migrants would not sacrifice their children's future or their own health, but they are compelled to do so because they cannot look after themselves or their children properly when they migrate. The fault lies with the institutional and policy environment and not with migration per se. Policy responses need to be framed in such a manner that can help the most vulnerable migrants. The emphasis of policy should be on minimising the costs and risks of migration and maximising its returns. At present, migrants cannot access to subsidised food through the public distribution System, which works on residence criteria; they cannot easily access state schools, cheap housing or government health care. So there is an urgent need to reform policies keeping in view these critical issues. at the same time, there is a need to provide migrants with access to information on jobs, wage rates and their rights as well as to promote safe and legal migration, which includes non-discriminatory legislation, policies and practice to protect the human rights and national entitlements of men, women and children who migrate. So it may be concluded that while addressing the complex issues of migration, it is important to take into consideration the growing incidences of poverty among huge sections of the rural population. It is time the high for the government to tackle the poverty of villages rather than the poverty of villagers. villagers cannot get rich so long as villages remain poor, too poor to attract modern industry and commerce. The key is now to ensure and guarantee employment for the rural poor by giving utmost priority to generation of diversified livelihood opportunities in rural India on sustainable manner.

## DEFINING LIVELIHOODS AS CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES

Livelihoods thinking is mainly an offspring of British development think-tank and Organizations (IDS, ODI and DFID, etc.), which was enthusiastically embraced by several important NGOs (for example, CARE, Oxfam) and development agencies such as UNDP, FAO (Alinovi L, et al, 2010). The livelihoods approach owes its origin from several scholars in between 1980s to 1990s. Its emergence had all the qualities of a classic “paradigm shift” (Solesbury, 2003; Eneyew & Bukele, 2013b). The most influential role played by Chambers and Conway in 1992. Their IDS discussion paper changed the nature, perceptions and priorities of rural development policies and practice and put some intellectual appeal among practitioners about integrated rural development. The concept of ‘livelihood’ is widely used in contemporary literatures on poverty and rural development. A popular definition is provided by Chambers and Conway in 1992 wherein a livelihood ‘comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living’. The term ‘capability’ in the definition is derived from Sen (1993; 1997) and it refers to the ability of individuals to realize their potential as human beings. Therefore, capabilities refer to the set of alternative beings and doings that a person can achieve with his/her economic, social and personal characteristics (Dreze and Sen, 1989). The use of ‘capability’ components in the definition of livelihoods is confusing since its meaning overlaps ‘assets’ and ‘activities’. An important attribute of livelihood that is subsumed under ‘assets’ in the Chambers and Conway’s definition is the ‘access’ that individuals or households have to different types of capital, opportunities and services (Ellis, 2000). Access is defined by the rules and social norms that determined the differential ability of people in rural areas to own, control, otherwise claim or make use of resources such as land and common property (Scoones, 1998:8). Not going into the definitional and conceptual difficulties for the present research, following Frank Ellis (2000) ‘livelihood’ may be defined as ‘a livelihood comprises the assets (natural, physical, human, social and financial capital), the activities and the access to those (mediated by institutions and social norms) that together determine the living gained by the individual or household’. According to Adugna Eneyew and Wagayehu Bekele (2001a), livelihood strategies are those activities undertaken by smallholder household to provide a means of living. The way a household copes with and withstands economic shocks depends on the options available in terms of capabilities, assets and activities, i.e., on the household livelihood strategy (Dercon and Krishnan, 1996; Ellis, 1998). Assets are the important constituents of livelihood definition. Different researchers have identified different categories of assets or capitals. Natural capital refers to the natural resource base (land, water, trees) that yields products utilized by human beings for their survival. Physical capital refers to assets brought into existence by economic production processes i.e. tools, machines, land improvements etc. Human capital refers to the education level and skills, knowledge etc. Financial capital refers to stocks of money to which the household has access. This is chiefly to be savings, access to credit or loans etc. Social capital attempts to capture community and wider social claims. However, Moser (1998) defined social capital as reciprocity within communities and between households based on trust deriving from social ties. In livelihood framework, poverty is characterized not only by the lack of assets and inability to accumulate a portfolio of them, but also by the lack of choice with respect to alternative coping strategies. The poorest and most vulnerable households are forced to adopt strategies, which enable them to survive but not to improve their welfare (Hossain, 2005). The ‘assets-mediating-process-activities’ framework for livelihood analysis first of all recognizes that the translation of a set of assets into a livelihood strategy composed of a portfolio of income earning activities is mediated by a great number of contextual social, economic and policy considerations, agro ecology, demography and social differentiation (Ellis, 2000). Scoones (1998) divides these between the two categories of context, conditions and trends on the one hand and institutions and organizations on the other. Livelihood strategies are composed of activities that generate the means of household survival. The interrelationship among context, condition and trends; livelihood resources and institutional and organizational structures results in as identified by Scoones (1998) three types of prime livelihood strategies i.e. agricultural intensification or extensification, livelihood diversification and migration (Figure 1.1). Livelihood diversification occurs more through ‘necessity than choice’. There is wide agreement in the literature that secured livelihoods are closely connected to substitution capabilities amongst assets and activities (Ellis, 2000). Finally, the livelihood strategy outcomes focus mainly on the livelihood security and environmental sustainability aspects. Livelihood security is defined as containing attributes related to reduction of poverty, increased number of man days created, increased well being and capability (Krantz, 2001; Ellis, 2000).

Likewise, environmental sustainability refers to enhanced resilience mechanism.

This in turn leads to less impact on livelihood vulnerability and more adaptability to withstand crisis. However, the livelihood framework also indicates the alternative pathways of use of natural resource base without undermining its sustainability character (DFID, 1999). Today, livelihoods approaches are most useful as an analytical heuristic tool (Clark and Carney, 2008). They provide a way to order information and understand not only the nature of poverty, but also the links between different aspects of people's livelihoods. In this way, they help users to understand complex and changing situations (Alinovi L, et al, 2010). They also help to identify the relevance programmes as well as the key opportunities and constraints among the poor in formulating policies. Furthermore, livelihoods approaches still provide essential research tool within social and economic research on poverty, livelihood strategies, vulnerability and resilience mechanism of the poor (Carter and May, 1997; Orr and Mwale, 2001; Barrett et al., 2001; Brown et al., 2006; Devereux, 2006; Ellis and Freeman, 2007; Babulo et al., 2008). As articulated by Moser (1998), such approach seeks to identify what the poor have rather than what they do not have. It also strengthens the poor to think of own initiative solution rather than substitute for, block or undermine them. This framework is thought to be particularly useful as a guide to micro policies concerned with poverty reduction in rural areas also. The framework of this kind not only provides the options for solving the problems of causes and effects in rural poverty reduction, it also suggests a way of organizing the policy analysis of livelihoods (Ellis, 1999). This research is entirely based on such framework of rural livelihoods approaches that identifies the main components of livelihoods of the poor in backward and resource poor region. The study also makes an attempt to encourage thinking on formulating policies which will help the poor to overcome constraints to manage better livelihoods.

## REVIEW ON MIGRATION

For detailed review of migration studies see Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003) and de Haan (2000). 12 Inter-temporal family contract models of migration (Stark, 1980; Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark and Lucas, 1988) view migration as a strategy of spreading risk (Stark and Levhari, 1982) by households and imperfections in rural capital markets (Stark, 1982; Collier and Lal, 1986). The basic premise of these alternative models, which are based on household utility maximization, is that the decision to migrate is not taken by an individual, but the household members also have a role play so. Remittance received from migrants is viewed as an inter-temporal contractual arrangement between the migrant and the family (Stark, 1991). Stark and Lucas (1988) suggest that labour migration by one or more family members can be an effective mechanism to self-finance local production activities and acts as a self insurance against local income risks. Stark and Levhari (1982) also argue that migration has a risk reducing and insurance enhancing effect on production and investment decisions, while Hodinott (1994) models migration as an outcome of a joint utility maximization strategy by the prospective migrant and the other family members. In India, apart from testing the validity of the individual utility maximization behavior and family contracts models, much of the discussion on rural-urban migration tends to concentrate on the attributes, personal motivations, individual characteristics of migrants, and try to seek explanations for the migratory process in terms of such individual expectations and perceptions. Migration studies have focused on determining the relative importance of migration in the framework of push-pull models (of migration) as developed by Lee (1966), which is a logical extension of Todaro-type analysis. Income differentials are seen as the major pull factors, while seasonality, risk, market failures, erosion of assets and landlessness are seen as push factors. Most of the micro studies on migration in India suggest that 'push' factors like inequality in land ownership, poverty and agricultural backwardness (Oberai and Singh, 1983; Dasgupta and Laishlay, 1975; Breman, 1985; Bora, 1996; Lipton, 1980) are mainly responsible for out-migration. It is not our intention to review the vast available literature on the theme of migration but only to indicate how this, as a part of livelihood strategy, could be integrated, in our framework. Who migrates, what pattern and type of migration is generated, what are its consequences-short and/or long term--for the livelihoods of the households essentially depend upon the 'capabilities' and 'asset base' of rural households, overall demand for labour in the village, work situation and conditions of labour at the place of destination and access to job opportunities through information. Given this framework, migration is at best a 'coping mechanism' for poor households by spreading risk spatially and occupationally, whereas for other (better off) households it serves as an appropriate

accumulation strategy. This is best analyzed by taking the household as a unit. Research on the effects of migration on areas origin is relatively scarce, but it is clear that out-migration usually does not radically transform poor areas (Srivastava, 1998). Rather, it may retard the overall development process and impair the whole social fabric as the able bodied male out-migrate in large numbers in search of their livelihoods. This has also been observed in the hill region of Uttaranchal where the net benefits from outmigration turn to be negative (Bora, 1996). Since in most of the cases migration is considered as a distress induced strategy for survival, rather than for effecting a qualitative change in livelihoods. Remittances are viewed as helping to stabilize the petty household at a survival level and hence play the ameliorative role rather than provide a boost to the economies of most households. Similarly, out-migration does not lead to a tightening of the labour market at the source areas (Lieten and Srivastava, 1999). On the other hand, there is also evidence of the replacement of out-migrant male labour by female and even child labour (Srivastava, 1998).

### LIVELIHOODS AND MIGRATION

This section focuses on the issue of migration as a part of the strategies of labour use adopted by rural households in their pursuit of a better livelihood. Considerable literature is now available on migration, which provides some interesting insights into the adopted by individuals, households or communities to upgrade their livelihoods. Migration decisions have been viewed variously as a 'coping mechanism' for poor households and as an 'accumulation . strategy' for the better-off households. The theoretical literature and empirical evidence relating to migration. decisions are grouped into two approaches: (i) individual utility maximisation behaviour (Todaro, 1969; Hariss and Todaro, 1970) and (ii) inter-temporal family contracts (Stark, 1991; Stark and Bloom, 1985; Stark and Lucas, 1988). In the case of the former, the decision to migrate to cities would be determined by wage differentials, plus expected probability of employment at the destination. Rural wages in these models are equal to the marginal of labour (Lewis, 1954; Harris and Todaro, 1970). High rural-urban migration can continue even when high urban unemployment rates exist, which are known to the potential migrants. If the anticipates a relatively low probability of finding regular wage employment in the initial period but expects this probability to increase over time, it would be rationale for him to migrate. The neo-classical model of migration views migratory process as a means of effecting an efficient geographical reallocation of labour based on the private choices of individuals for maximizing returns. It thus ignores the fact that migration is not always based on a strategy of an income maximization, rather it is a survival strategy which is also greatly influenced by many non-economic factors such as pressure of population, inequalities in distribution of land ownership, institutional mechanisms which discriminate in favour of owners of wealth and technological change biased against labour (Oberai and Bilsborrow, 1984).

### Migration in Rural India Some Significant Trends at a Glance

The migration rate (proportion of migrants in the population) in the urban areas (35 per cent) was far higher than the migration rate in the rural areas (26 per cent); however, migration in India is largely confined to within the same state 72 percent of migrant households in urban areas and 78 percent in rural areas have migrated within the same state. Employment seems to be the most important reason for migration; in rural areas, 55 per cent of the households have migrated for employment related reasons. Migration rate in rural areas was lowest among the scheduled tribe (st), nearly 24 per cent. For rural male, migration rate was lowest (nearly 4 per cent) among the 'not literates', and it was nearly 14 per cent among those with educational level 'graduate and above'. Among the migrants in the rural areas, nearly 91 per cent have migrated from the rural areas and 8 per cent have migrated from the urban areas, whereas among the migrants in the urban areas, nearly 59 per cent migrated from the rural areas and 40 per cent from urban areas. The reason for migration for male migrant was dominated by employment related reasons, in both rural and urban areas. nearly 29 per cent of rural male migrants and 56 per cent of urban male migrants have migrated due to employment related reasons. A higher percentage of the persons were found to be engaged in economic activities after migration: for males the percentage of workers have increased from 51 per cent before migration to 63 per cent after migration in rural areas while for females, it has increased from 20 per cent to 33 per cent in rural areas. For rural males, self-employment has emerged as main recourse to employment after migration. the share of self-employment in total

migrants have increased from 16 per cent before migration to 27 per cent after migration, while the shares of regular employees and casual labours remained almost stable, in both before and after migration.

## CONCLUSION

Rural livelihood plays a vital role in the economic development of India, particularly in the rural economy. It helps in generating employment opportunities in the rural areas with low capital, raising the real income of the people, contributing to the development of agriculture by reducing disguised unemployment, reducing poverty, migration, economic disparity, unemployment. Government should go for appraisal of rural livelihood development schemes and programmes in order to uplift rural areas. The rural development programs should combine infrastructure development, education, health services, investment in agriculture and the promotion of rural non-farm activities in which women and rural population can engage themselves. Considering economic, demographic and environmental complementarities that exist between rural and urban areas there is a need to promote rural-urban linkages development approach through transport connectivity. Employment and sustainable livelihood constitute the first entry point for income security and social protection. As Government seeks to strengthen the social protection system, it is necessary to pursue policies which foster economic and development including job creation.

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