

Economic Conditions of Migrant Workers Engaged in Knitwear Industry: A Study in Tiruppur District, Tamilnadu

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Abstract: *Migration in Tiruppur is more because it is an industrial area with good job opportunities paying good salary which has continuous flow of income, and sophisticated urban life. Migrant worker from knit wear industry in Tiruppur district are facing many economic problems in day to day life by their staying place and occupational place. Keeping this view, the present study makes an attempt to study the economic aspects of migrant workers engaged in knitwear industry in Tiruppur district of Tamilnadu. The required data for this study were selected from 120 migrant workers engaged in knit-wear industry to get a sample of 30 migrants comprising 15 male and 15 female from each of these four wards giving an area sample of Tiruppur District. It was found that the migrant workers engaged mainly were technically singer, and non-technically helper. Most of the workers worked on an average of 60 to 80 hours per week, and three-fourth of the respondent had saving habits. Better income was found to be thrust pull factor in the destination area as against poverty and debt as push factors in the place of birth. Better work opportunities, long term work contract and family pressure were positively associated with their move to Tiruppur indicating an increase in these variables towards economic satisfaction of the migrant workers. It may be suggested that the workers may be provided equal opportunities for their overall upliftment including education and career development of their children with the help of available and innovative workers' welfare policies.*

Keywords: Economic condition, Migrants, Migration, Tiruppur district, etc.

Introduction and Earlier Literature

In our shrinking world, more and more people will look to migration whether temporary or permanent as a path to employment, education, freedom or other opportunities. Migration is one of the major policy concerns of the twenty-first century as it has significant implications on the socio-economic, health and demographic life of the people. Migration in India is mostly inclined by communal structures and patterns of development. Uneven development of states in India is a main reason for interstate migration. The growth of the rural to urban migration in India is very significant. This increasing volume of migration is creating far reaching changes in the economies of a large number of developing countries. Migration for employment reduces the burden of employment in a particular area or sector and solves the problem of unemployment and disguised unemployment in our country. In India, there has been a steady increase in the

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country in the number of migrants. Whereas in 1961 there were about 144 million migrants by place of birth, and in 2001 Census, it was increased to 307 million. Tamilnadu population represents about 5.96 per cent of the population of India. More people in Tamilnadu have moved from rural to urban areas in the past 10 years as compared to other states, and there are about 4.5 lakh migrants workers in Tiruppur City Corporation (2011 Census).

Migration in developing countries in terms of push and pull factors, respectively. Therefore, the motives of migration are classified as push factors which emphasize on the situation at the origin, that is, place from which migration started. Unemployment, flood, earthquake, drought etc, are the push factors and pull factors which emphasize on the situation at the destination. Pull factors that determine migration such as attraction of city life, for education, health, development of backward community, job opportunities (Todaro, 1976). Rural laborers will be ready to take the risk of migration to the urban area if the distance between the rural and the urban area is small, because, the probability of getting a job in the urban informal sector with higher wages and the travelling cost will also be minimum. But, with an increase in the distance, the worker becomes less interested in migration due to the lower probability of getting a job in the urban informal sector due to lack of information about the jobs and also due to higher travelling expenses (Kundu, 1986; and Ray & Mishra, 2011).

Kainth (2010) reported that age of the migrant workers is considered an important factor which influences their decision to migrate. Generally young people (77 per cent) falling in the age group of 20 to 40 are more mobile. This makes sense in economic terms since the discounted value of the future earnings would be higher for the young people. Sivasubramanian & Mahadevan (2013) found that the most of the migrants are in work place were partiality with native workers, Fixing lower wages and poor interaction and their living place were poor water facility, insufficient doors and windows in room and poor safety. Most of the migrant workers come from rural region to urban region are facing common problems like, low wage rates and poor work conditions, irregular payment or lack of payment for overtime, work without holidays, poor accommodations, lack of health care, food problems, seizure of personal documents, contract substitution or irregular job placement and lack of local language. The condition of women migrant workers also unsatisfactory as the contractors decide the wage paid to them (Mohanraj & Arunkumar, 2013).

Migrant people always depend upon their basic professional skills. Migration from rural villages to urban areas coupled with the inability in securing employment in the formal sector is a major reason for individuals to engage in Knitwear industry. Knitwear industry is one of the most important strategic industries which constitute about 7 per cent of total industrial production in the world and 8.3 per cent of the total trade in industrial materials. Also, occupies more than 14 per cent of the total labour force in the world. It employs about 40 million people in various countries of the world. Most of the knit wear units in Tiruppur district, wages for migrant workers are vary from company to company and sector to sector. Except in a few companies and sectors at a particular period in a year, migrant workers by and large do not get minimum wages. In order to avoid payment of minimum wages and to get extra work in short time, payment by piece-rates and contractualisation of work is gaining ground. The increasing importance of the studies on migrant workers has been emphasized by a series of national and international conferences and seminars. In India, over the past two decades a number of studies have focused on migrant workers (Kauasalya and Amuthalakshmi, (2007); Aloysius, 2010; Kanith, 2010 and Sakthivel and Hariharan, 2015). Keeping these in view, an attempt has been

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made in this paper to study the “The economic conditions of the migrant workers engaged in knitwear industry: A study in Tiruppur district of Tamil Nadu.”

Objectives

The primary objectives of this paper are: (1) to study the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the migrant workers engaged in knitwear industry in Tiruppur district; (2) to understand the reasons for migration and to analyze the most influencing factors of migrant workers engaged in knit wear industry in Tiruppur district.

Data and Method

Tiruppur is a city in the South Indian state of Tamilnadu 47 km. from Coimbatore. It is located on the banks of the Noyyal River, which bifurcate the city into roughly two-halves. It is the administrative headquarters of Tiruppur district. Tiruppur is located in a region that was a part of the ancient Chera Empire as well as the Kongu Nadu region. The region came under the control of the British at the conclusion of the Polygar War in 1805. Tiruppur was constituted as a Municipality in the year 1947. It was upgraded to a Special Grade Municipality in 1983 and further upgraded as a Corporation in 2008. The total area of the Corporation is 27.19 km² divided into 60 wards. The total population of the city as per the 2011 census is 444,352. Tiruppur is a major textile and knit wear hub. The textile industry provides employment to over six lakh people and has an annual turnover of 220 billion Rupees. Of this, nearly 120 billion rupees come from exports.

Migration in Tiruppur is more because it is an industrial area with good job opportunities paying good salary which has continuous flow of income, and sophisticated urban life. In Tiruppur city hosiery garments provide jobs to large section of the population. As on 2012, there are about 6,988 knitwear industries employing about 86,405 migrants. Tiruppur City Corporation has been chosen for the present study. The rationale behind selecting the city is that the According to 2001 census, among major city of Tamilnadu the number of total migrant are high in Tiruppur city with 73.8 percent, followed by Gudiyatham 72.4 percent and Sivakasi City with 71.2 percent. Tiruppur city has classified in to four zones namely, Tiruppur North, Tiruppur South, Tiruppur East and Tiruppur West. They are 60 wards in four zones of the City. Out of 60 wards, one ward from each zone will select on the basis of the highest number of knitwear industry. From each of these selected wards, a disproportionate stratified random sample of 30 migrant workers 15 males and 15 females will select so as to get 120 samples in Tiruppur City. Frequency tables with average, percentage and multiple linear regression analysis were calculated in order to analyze the socio-economic conditions of the migrant workers engaged in knitwear industry.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Migrant Workers

It is important to study the socio demographic aspects of the migrant workers before discussing other aspects of the respondents. Table 1 demonstrates the background characteristics of the migrant workers such as age, living arrangement, sex, religion, community, marital status and educational status of the migrant vendors. The result found that there has been majority of the migrant workers engaged in below 25 years age group (56.7%) as followed by above 45 years (17.5%) and 36-45 years age group (15.8%). As far as the gender, migrant workers are equally

distributed. Majority of the respondents were living alone (79.1%) which they are from young age group category followed by living with their family (20.9%). It is important to understand the religiosity of the respondents so that their other characteristics will be implied and assessed very easily. It was found that most of the migrants belonged to Hindu (82.5 %) religion which indicates predominant position of Hindus as it prevails at national level also followed by Muslim and Christian religion. Most Backward Caste (43.3%) and Backward Caste (42.2%) are more or less equally represented in this migrant region. Majority of the migrants were unmarried (69.2%) as compared to unmarried (25.0%). It was interesting to found that more than half of the respondents were completed his high school and above and only 11.7 per cent of the migrant workers are in illiterates. By the place of birth wise concern, majority of the respondents come from outside the districts particularly from Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Viruthunagar districts followed by in and around the districts and outside the state particularly from Kerala, Bihar and Orissa.

Reasons for Migration

Every move of the people either in- migration or out-migration has its own reasons, generally, it is believed that the reasons existing in the rural areas, which compel the rural people to the urban areas, are called as, “push factors”, whereas, the reasons existing in the urban areas which compel the rural people to the urban areas, are called as, “pull factors”. Table 3 reveals that the number of migrants by the reasons for their move to their native place. Majority of the migrant workers those who are engaged in knit wear industry stated ‘better income’ (80.8%) as a main pull factor for moving to their native place to the Tiruppur city followed by better work opportunities (61.7%), family movement (35.0%) and long term work contract (21.7%). If we consider ‘push factor’ is the reason for migration, low wages on previous place (46.7%) and unemployment (39.2%) is the main push factor for moving to their native place to the Tiruppur city followed by poverty (31.7%) and debt at home (22.5%).

Economic Conditions of the Migrant Workers

Occupation is one of the economic aspects of the migrant population, which helps to understand the nature of their economic dependency. Tiruppur district is famous for cotton, textile and knit wear industries. In these type of knit-wear industries, workers are classified in to technical and non technical workers. Technical workers have needed minimum technical qualification and their nature of work is singer, over lock, flat lock and cutting master. Non-technical worker no need any educational qualification and their nature of work is helper, checking, rectifier, packing and ironing. From this type of work engaged majority of them are from migrant workers compare to native workers. It was found that majority of the (25.3%) migrant workers are singer (tailor) followed by over lock (13.2) and cutting master (12.5%) in the technical workers category. From the non-technical works category, more number of migrant workers engaged in helper (10.3%) and checking master (9.4%). By their average earning per month wise concern, technical workers are getting more income than non technical workers. ‘Cutting master’ category occupation was getting more average monthly earning than other technical works and ‘rectifier’ category occupation was getting more average monthly earning than other non technical occupation category. In overall their average earning was more than 10000 per month. It was comparatively higher amount work from native place to migrant place.

Table 4 depicts the economic conditions of the knit-wear industry migrant workers in Tiruppur City. Most of the knit-wear industries in Tiruppur have fixed the regular working hours

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start at 8.30 am and finish at 11.30 pm. Many of these industries adopt one and half shifts, i.e. 12 hours, total intermission hours is one hour. For a week most of the migrant workers work for 60 to 80 hours per week irrespective of Sunday. Most of the non-technical work is running on shift system, some of the technical works running on day time only. It was found that most of the migrants worked for shift system (53.3%) followed by day time (31.7%) and night timings (15.0%). Abort from this many of the migrant workers willing to work over timings while earn more for sending money to their home. More than three-fourth of the respondent have the saving habits and only less than one-fourth of migrant workers are saving more than 3000 rupees per month. Majority of the migrant vendors perceived that their satisfaction of current economic status was no change yet but will become better (55.9%) followed yes it is better now (25.8%).

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis (H₁): *Push and Pull Factors have greater Influence on the Economic Satisfaction of the Migrant Workers*

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis. The results demarcate the relationship between reason for migration (push and pull factors) and economic satisfaction of the migrant workers engaged in knit-wear industry in Tiruppur district. It was found from the analysis that for the **pull factors**, better income (Beta=3.585), family movement (Beta=3.426) and contractor moves (Beta=2.597) are the most positive significant variable to an increase in economic satisfaction of the migrant workers, whereas, the variable specific skilled work requirement found to be most negative significant variable to reduce the economic satisfaction of the migrant workers. In case push factors, poverty and debt at home are the most positive signification variable to an increase economic satisfaction of the migrant workers, whereas, the variable unemployment and floods are most negative significant variable to reduce the economics satisfaction of the migrant workers in knit-wear industry. Variables like better work opportunities, long term work contract and family pressure have also found to be positive (beta value) indicating an increase in these variables towards economic satisfaction of the migrant workers.

Conclusion

Migration has become an important and inevitable process in everybody's life in the modern society in terms of search of livelihood and all-round development of human beings suiting the increasing needs of the modern society. Migration brings about change both desirably and undesirably depending up-on the fulfillment of the needs of the migrants in the place of destination as compared to place of birth. This paper discusses the economic conditions of the migrant workers engaged in Knitwear industry with respect to Tiruppur district of Tamil Nadu. It was found that there has been majority of the migrant workers engaged in below 25 years age group, living alone, belonged to Hindu religion, Most Backward Caste, unmarried, completed his high school and above, from the district outside the study district and also outside the state particularly from Kerala, Bihar and Orissa. The major reason for their migration was stated as 'better income.' The types of work that they were engaged mainly were technically singer, and non-technically helper. The others were over lock, flat lock and cutting master and non-technically helper, checking, rectifier, packing and ironing. Most of the technical workers were earning more income as compared to non-technical workers. Most of the workers worked on an

average of 60 to 80 hours per week. More than three-fourth of the respondent had saving habits. Better income was found to be thrust pull factor in the destination area as against poverty and debt as pull factors in the place of birth. Better work opportunities, long term work contract and family pressure were positively associated with their move to Tiruppur indicating an increase in these variables towards economic satisfaction of the migrant workers. It may be suggested that the workers may be provided equal opportunities for their overall upliftment including education and career development of their children with the help of available and innovative workers' welfare policies.

Authors' Note

This manuscript is the authors' original work, has not been published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

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Appendix Table

Table 1: Socio-Demographic characteristics of the knit-wear industry migrant workers

Socio-demographic Characteristic	Frequency No. (%)
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	60 (50.0%)
Female	60 (50.0%)
<i>Age</i>	
Below 25 Years	68 (56.7)
26 – 35 Years	16 (13.3)
36 – 45 Years	19 (15.8)
Above 45 Years	21 (17.5)
<i>Living Arrangement</i>	
Living alone	95 (79.1)
Living with family	25 (20.9)
<i>Religion</i>	
Hindu	99 (82.5)
Muslim	14 (11.7)
Christen	7 (5.8)
<i>Community</i>	
FC	10 (8.3)
BC	53 (44.2)
MBC	52 (43.3)
SC/ST	5 (4.2)
<i>Marital Status</i>	
Married	30 (25.0)
Unmarried	83 (69.2)
Widowed	7 (5.8)
<i>Educational Status</i>	
Illiterate	14 (11.7)
Primary School	45 (37.5)
High School	47 (39.2)
Higher School	7 (5.8)
Collegiate	7 (5.8)
<i>Place of Birth</i>	
Within the District	31 (25.8)
Outside the District	72 (60.0)
Outside the State	17 (14.2)

Source: Computed from Primary Data.

Note: Figures in parenthesis are percentage to column total

Table 2: Reason for migration of the sample respondents

Reason for Migration	Frequency (%)
<i>Pull Factors</i>	
Better Income	97 (80.8)
better work opportunities	74 (61.7)
Contractor moves	8 (6.7)
City attraction	12 (10.0)
Family movement	42 (35.0)
Specific skilled work requirements	12 (10.0)
Long term work contract	26 (21.7)
Know place	9 (7.5)
<i>Push Factors</i>	
Poverty	38 (31.7)
Fed-up with work in previous place	18 (15.0)
Low wages in previous	56 (46.7)
Droughts prone area	8 (6.7)
Family pressures	19 (15.8)
Unemployment	47 (39.2)
Dept at home	27 (22.5)

Source: Computed from Primary Data.

Note: Figures in parenthesis are percentage to column total

Table 3: Occupational details of the migrant respondents

Nature of work	Frequency (%)	Average earning per month
Technical Workers		
Singar	30 (25.3)	10800
Over lock	16 (13.2)	10164
Flat lock	13 (10.8)	10110
Cutting Master	15 (12.5)	12513
Non-Technical Workers		
Helper	12 (10.3)	6193
Checking	11 (9.4)	8983
Rectifier	8 (6.3)	9950
Packing	7 (5.9)	9405
Ironing	8 (6.3)	9825
Total	120 (100)	10071

Source: Computed from Primary Data.

Note: Figures in parenthesis are percentage to column total

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Table 4: Timing of work, saving habit and economic satisfaction migrant workers

Details of Economic condition	Frequency (%)
Timing of work	
Shift system	64 (53.3)
Night time	18 (15.0)
Day time	38 (31.7)
Saving habits (Per Month)	
<= 1500	41 (34.2)
1500-3000	32 (26.7)
3001+	21 (17.5)
Satisfaction of Current Economic Condition	
Yes, it is better now	31 (25.8)
No change	22 (18.3)
No change yet but will become better	67 (55.9)

Source: Computed from Primary Data.

Note: Figures in parenthesis are percentage to column total

Table 5: Multiple Linear Regression Model

Variables	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.382	.217		6.357	.000
Pull Factors					
Better Income	.678	.189	.266	3.585	.000
better work opportunities	.150	.148	.072	1.018	.310
Contractor moves	.510	.196	.149	2.597	.010
City attraction	-.284	.181	-.093	-1.566	.118
Family movement	.449	.131	.222	3.426	.001
Specific skilled work requirements	-.296	.170	-.099	-1.738	.083
Long term work contract	.149	.131	.069	1.141	.255
Know place	-.036	.194	-.012	-1.188	.851
Push Factors					
Poverty	.409	.131	.211	3.114	.002
Fed-up with work in previous place	-.178	.162	-.075	-1.101	.272
Low wages in previous	-.293	.133	-.143	-2.207	.028
Floods	-1.414	.420	-.181	-3.364	.001
Droughts prone area	-.089	.213	-.031	-.419	.675
Family pressures	.074	.167	.034	.442	.659
Unemployment	-.703	.129	-.363	-5.439	.000
Dept at home	.373	.142	.177	2.619	.009

Note: Dependent variable: Economic Satisfaction; R=0.480; R Square=0.231; Adjusted R Square=0.190; F(5.680) = P=0.000.