ABSTRACT

Migration from one area to another area in search of better livelihoods is a key feature of human history. It can be over a short or long distance, be short-term or permanent, voluntary or forced, national or international. Migration from rural areas to urban areas is an age long phenomenon. The root cause of rural to urban migration is said to be inequality of employment and other opportunities between rural and urban areas. The most admired and influential theory of rural-urban migration is Harris-Todaro Model. Our study is based on this model.

In context of the state of West Bengal it can be observed that rural to urban migration of rural workers is taking place on an unprecedented scale since the last two decades especially from the districts of North Bengal and that of western most districts of West Bengal. The most evident reasons observed in these districts for migration are that of lack of employment opportunity and poverty of the migrants. The district Cooch Behar situated in north-eastern part of West Bengal selected for the study is evidently experiencing a high degree of rural-urban migration in recent years. Inter-state rural-urban migration is mostly observed in this district. Being the remotest district of West Bengal, it has a relatively high incidence of poverty and very low level of human development. So, an in-depth study of rural to urban migration with its causes and consequences is required in this district regarding the current socio-economic situation.

The main objectives of this research study are- (i) To explore into the socio-economic causes of migration of rural workers in urban areas in West Bengal, (ii) To explore into the socio-economic consequences of migration of rural workers in urban areas in West Bengal.

The study involves existing literature, secondary data and primary data. The sources of secondary data on migration are mainly NSSO data of various rounds, the Census Reports of

1991, 2001 and 2011 for the district and the records of Gram Panchayats in the case of selected villages. For collecting primary data, random sampling and purposive sampling techniques have been adopted. The field survey was done in the year 2013 on the basis of collection of household survey data. The data are, therefore, cross-section type data.

The thesis comprises of eight chapters. Chapters I and II describe "Introduction" and "Review of Literature" respectively. The identification of research gap is discussed at the end of the Chapter II. In Chapter III, "Rural-urban migration scenario in India and in West Bengal" has been discussed using secondary data mainly on Census 1991, 2001 and 2011 and also NSSO Reports of various rounds. In this chapter, we have examined the various issues of migration like migration by place of birth and by place of last residence, migration rates, net migration rate of some major states in India, trend and extent of rural-urban migration in India and in West Bengal, etc

In Chapter IV, "Demographic and socio-economic profiles of migrant workers in the study area" have been analysed by using primary data. The major findings of this chapter are outlined in the following way

There is almost symmetrical distribution among population of the sample villages found with respect to its division among adult male, adult female, male child and female child. The major migrant households occupied cultivable land less than one bigha, that is, they might be defined as landless or near landless families. Majority male migrants acted as principal earner of the family by engaging with a number of principal activities in destination areas.

In Chapter V, "Trend, pattern and features of rural-urban migration in the study area" have been examined by using primary data. The core results of this chapter are outlined in the following.

The majority percentages of migrants have migrated outside the state for either in search of employment or in search of better employment opportunity in the destination areas.

Data revealed that most of the migration has taken place through rural to urban stream in industrial sector. Majority of the migrant workers of the surveyed households received wages at destination in the range of Rs 81-100 per day.

In Chapter VI, "Causes of migration – push and pull factors" have been assessed on the basis of primary data. The major findings of this chapter are summarized below.

Regarding the reasons for migration, it could be found that the dominant of migration for villages of the district is that people migrated largely to get better employment. In respect of almost zero waiting period, it could be found that in 99.33 percent cases the migrant workers did not have to wait in the destination to obtain a job and only 0.67 percent cases the migrant workers had to wait to get job.

In respect of comparison of reasons for migration of migrants and reasons for non-migration of non-migrants, the data revealed that the majority percentage of migrants migrated out-side the district or state for in search of better employment. On the other hand, major percentage of non-migrant had small or medium size of agricultural land and that was the most important reason for non-migration

In Chapter VII, "Consequences of migration - costs and benefits" have been explored through field survey data. The core findings of this chapter are outlined in the following.

The majority of the migrants (about 79 percent) in the district earned income in the range of Rs. 2001 to Rs 5000 per month. The highest numbers of migrants (about 63 percent) fell into the

consumption category of Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2000 per month. Most of the migrants sent remittances to their family members in the range of Rs. 5001 to Rs. 10000. The data revealed that the socio-economic conditions of migrant families have been improved by utilizing remittances than that of non-migrant families.

In Chapter VIII, "Summary, conclusions and policy recommendations" have been outlined.

There are four major hypotheses which are tested in the Chapters from IV to VII by analyzing the data on respective grounds with tabular forms and also with graphical presentations.