

ABSTRACT

TITLE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND OF MIGRANT LABOURERS FROM THE PLAINS TO SIKKIM'S INFORMAL SECTOR: STUDIES ON SINGTAM AND RANGPO TOWNS.

Historical-structuralist paradigm signified migration as remedial process to fight from the misery – caused by the global capitalist expansion and it “is therefore inherently unable to resolve the structural conditions that cause migration” (Hass, 2010: 233). Migration is multidimensional phenomenon with its own complex and unique characteristics. Prime purpose of migration, observed by the NSSO and Indian Census is the economic dualism among the states and also has been influenced by the labour market of the nation. Labour migration defines the mobility of persons from home to destination state for the purpose of employment (Library of congress - Federal Research Division, 2007). There have indeed emerged important critical social and economic issues in the era of globalisation, controlled by ‘push’ and ‘pull’ pressures (ILO 2004) and present in wide geographical contexts.

Internal migration is often believed to be a gradual transfer from rural labour force to utilise its potential in joining the movement of cheaper manpower to fuel a growing post-modern industrial multifaceted economy (Todaro, 1980). This human resources transfer seems to be economically beneficial (Kuznets 1964;1971) by virtue of overcoming incessant crisis to fulfil daily needs in the places of origin in order to maintain reasonably better livelihood which rapidly grows as a result of ‘capital accumulation’ in the new capitalist - liberalised sojourn.

The seed of this episodic movement is bloomed in the eventual event of internal migration. Numerous studies have often documented the fact that throughout the developing world, rates of rural-urban migration continue to run unabated to generate incipient form of blue collar job with wide openings in city’s nook and corner, where this labour is likely to be absorbed (as in Sikkim). Rapid and steady migration serves as the protracted contributing factor to the ubiquitous phenomenon of urban labor as an answer to the infrastructural development projects and ancillary businesses in Sikkim. Internal migration also increases the growth rate of the growing ancillary business as a by-product of development projects that leads to swell the apparent growth of labor supply from the neighbouring plain areas. The key purpose of this dissertation is to highlight the motivations to take migration decision toward different physical setting and also find out the

magnitude of problems faced by the migrants in Sikkim's informal job market.

First chapter of my dissertation is the compilation of back ground study of my research work along with detail discussion of applied research methodologies. This chapter deals with various literatures based on migration studies to identify research gap, objective of this study and also research questions.

It should be borne in mind that migration and job opportunities are inextricably intertwined. It is supposed to be the symptom vis-à-vis a factor contributing to the developing world of global South in particular, and involves the reciprocity between migration and geographic population distribution that facilitates in identifying the pattern of increasing urban marginalism in interstitial spaces. My second chapter describes geographical and over all demographic characteristics to assess the possibilities and job opportunities of migrant labourers from the plains in the host region. The chronological demographic changes ensure the participation rate of migrant labourers from adjacent plain regions. As we know, cartography-based evocative work on the spatial structure of migration represents maximum possibilities to interpretation of various patterns of migration with the help of statistical analysis of the data. In this regard, to get empirical knowledge I have used stratified random sampling method and collected three hundred fifty individual samples from Rangpo and Singtam (one hundred seventy-five from each town).

Migration study has created its own space. It impacts all areas of life – which makes it important to analyse the migration decisions, and knowing theoretical background has become extremely relevant to identify the fundamental reasons behind migration. Different theoretical paradigms have been followed to explore the actual concept of labour migration in Sikkim's informal sector. My third chapter deals with different theoretical discourses to distinguish between labour migrations at various levels of analysis. Important theories on migration and genesis of labour migration have been critically discussed. It has been observed that different proposed theories from different streams are closely linked with each other (geographical, sociological, economics and anthropological) and argue on various perceptions of migration literatures to establish the real reason for labour migration. It has been observed that the core of different theories is not isolated from each other. Migration of labour is an important livelihood approach in India. There are very significant migration flows, in some regions with considerable impacts primarily on individuals, followed by households and regions. The aim of the fourth chapter is to synthesis existing macro (India) views of contemporary migration with its microcosm aspect in Sikkim,

especially in Rangpo and Singtam town and its relationship to development strategies, spatial transformations and other transitional aspects.

Migration has its impacts on every part of life - political, social, or economic, which make the study of migration extraordinary pertinent as well as complex. Globalisation promotes migration as a process of poverty reduction. It has become very essential to discuss about the socio-economic transformation after migration. The fifth chapter explores the socio-economic situation in the host areas. The objective of this chapter is to highlight migration-development nexus under the shade of neo-liberal socio-economic structure. Different hypothesis and their outcomes helped me to understand the real situations of migrant informal labourers in Sikkim. Market-oriented or labour intensive capitalism act as a quasi-forced motivational factor to migrate from rural to urban areas even within the state boundary, but in case of Sikkim, the accumulation of migrant labour is not the dispossession and rehabilitation due the state policy (1961 Act). This study noticed a significant economic differences between pre and post migration situation. Other livelihood parameters are also being studied, though there are various challenges to make a credible assessment of the seasonal, irregular and precarious informal labourers.

The perception that migration is a “problem” to which policies need to provide “solutions” is so deeply entrenched in the prevailing policy language that it is easy to miss the extent to which it is demonstrably inaccurate. The sixth chapter tries to investigate the relation between the work environment of informal migrant labour under the actual or utopian existence of neoliberalism through the prism of structural and policy connections in Sikkim. This chapter also acknowledges the process of internal migration to elaborate the Sustainable Development Goals and the discussions on right-based approach to create the interlink between migrant labour and decent work parameters. This study unfolds a truth, that the control of state on the migrant labour space is always high. Migrant labourer’s collective rights are overlooked by the state of Sikkim. There is a provision for exclusive privilege to the Sikkimese in every spheres of social, economic and political on the basis of Sikkim Subject/Residential Certificate for Sikkimese (SS/COI), provided by the government of Sikkim. Plainsmen informal labourers are treated like foreigners in terms of enjoying the logistical benefits introduced by the government of Sikkim. Vulnerable migrant workers are beneficiaries of the minimum wage implemented by the Sikkim government, but nothing else. There is a necessity for bringing different categories of informal sector under one roof to implements any policy and provide right- based approach.

Neoliberal globalised economy encouraged the migration process (unproductive farmers) from low structural opportunity based areas to urban 'factory gate'. Restricted public policies try to curb these migrants as a part of host's indigenous society which gives effect to achieve migrant's ultimate desire and leads to increase the social inclusion process. Chapter seven focuses on the environmental and socio-cultural processes of adaptation practiced by migrant labourers in Sikkim. Different levels and ostensible strategies are important to understand the social space of migrant labourer in the host state. In Sikkim, some specific difference (SS/COI Certificate for Sikkimese) endorses residual differences as a prominent state strategy which affects their adaptation level, and migrants themselves also identify the extents of assimilation. Entire adaptation process by migrant can be possible when socio-cultural structure of the host region is not rigid and conceived as a two-way process. It has been noticed that migrant labourers are integrating in low-road economy market but inclusion is prohibited in political and civil society.

No single literature might be sufficient to apprehend or decode the complexities related with internal migration and the labour migrants. This dissertation is an attempt to forward the reasons of migration and the inclusive experiences of marginalisation process while crossing the state boundaries.