

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Migration is the temporary or permanent movement of people from one place to another in order to find work or better living conditions. It can be over a short or long distance, voluntary or forced, national or international. Migration from rural areas to urban areas is a age-long phenomenon. The process of such migration is continuous. The root cause of rural to urban migration is said to be inequality of employment and other opportunities between rural and urban areas. The growth of urbanization happens due to economic growth and development and also the progress of civilization in urban areas. Different types of opportunities like that of employment, better health, better education etc. and various types of amenities such as recreational facilities, safe drinking water, street lighting etc. are concentrated in urban areas. The rural people of working age whether literate or illiterate are paying attention to urban areas with the lure of these opportunities. Among the above noted different types of opportunities, the most important is employment opportunity to the rural young people of working age. In a developing country like India, opportunities in urban areas and its peripheries are not only greater but the levels of income are also much higher.

There are a number of theories of migration. Among of them, the most admired and influential theory of rural-urban migration is that of Harris-Todaro Model (named after John R. Harris and Michael Todaro). The Harris-Todaro Model endeavored to explain the phenomenon of persistence rural-urban migration in developing countries despite the incidence of high unemployment rate in urban centres. To explicate the accelerated rural-urban migration in the face of rising urban unemployment, this model postulates that 'the migration decision' is primarily an economic one and that it acts in response to difference in expected earning between rural and urban areas'(Harris and Todaro,1970). In other words, this model shows off that rural-urban migration will be continued as long as expected wage rate in the urban sector is greater than the wage rate in the rural sector, i.e., $W_u^e > W_r$. Now, in contrast to earlier models of one-way migration, Todaro considered such migration as a two-stage phenomenon. He perceived a dichotomy in urban economy while analyzing rural to urban migration. According to Todaro model of migration, in the first stage, the unskilled

rural workers migrate to an urban area and initially spend a certain period of time in the urban traditional sector. In the second stage, they finally attain jobs in more permanent modern sector. In Todaro's model, the migration decision from rural to urban areas is basically related to two principal variables, viz.: (i) the urban-rural real income differentials, and (ii) the probability of obtaining an urban job. A basic hypothesis of probabilistic migration model of Todaro is that informal sector employment is a transitory staging post for new migrants on their way to formal sector employment. It presumes two permanent sectors in the economy; one is rural sector specializing in the production of agricultural goods and the other is modern urban sector. The urban sector is divided by Todaro into two sub-sectors: (i) modern sector (akin to formal sector), and (ii) traditional sector (similar to informal sector) which includes all the workers not regularly employed in the urban modern sector, that is, explicitly employed, underemployed or sporadically employed and those who are employed in petty retail trades and services.

There are four fundamental characteristics of Todaro migration model. First, migration is stimulated primarily by rational economic considerations of relative benefits and costs, mostly monetary but also psychological. Second, the decision to migrate depends on "expected" rather than actual urban-rural real wage differentials. Third, the probability of obtaining an urban job is directly related to the urban employment rate but inversely related to the urban unemployment rate. Fourth, migration rates in excess of urban job opportunity growth rates are not only possible but also rational and plausible in the face of continued positive urban-rural "expected" income differentials. In Todaro's migration model, "expected" gains are measured by: (i) the difference in real income between rural and urban job opportunities, and (ii) the probability of new migrant obtaining an urban job (Todaro 1976).

By incorporating informal sector into standard expected income Todaro type, Stark model presumes a two-pronged planning horizon that rural-to-urban migrants may consider. According to Stark's model many rural-to-urban migrants rationally, though unwillingly, join the ranks of the urban unemployed since there are fewer high paying formal sector jobs than their numbers in the urban centers. Yet, migrants may willingly remain unemployed for a long period in the towns as most favorable strategy or investment in search of high-paying formal sector jobs. During this period, they may not receive an informal sector job even if it

is available at a competitively determined market clearing wage. They may live in town during this period for job trace depending on their own savings, familial or similar support.

The Stark model assumes that migration decisions are based on a two-period planning horizon that rural-to-urban migrants may think about either of the two competing strategies: (i) join the informal sector in the first period, and while there, search for formal sector employment. If formal sector employment is not tenable in the second period, informal sector employment is sought; (ii) search intensively (full time) for a formal sector opening in the first period. If formal sector employment is not secured in the second period, an attempt is prepared to join the informal sector.

In the background of the state of West Bengal it is 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 notable feature of this rural urban migration from these districts is that a large portion of these workers are migrating to the towns and cities in other states of India. The most evident reasons are the lack of employment opportunity and poverty of the migrants. But there are also instances where in spite of ownership of reasonable amount of land to eke out a living rural workers are migrating for employment to towns and cities in other states. Thus, it appears to both 'push factors' and 'pull factors' are causing this observed phenomenon of rural to urban migration in West Bengal. Our investigation wants to expose the causes and consequences of such migration and its implications for rural development in West Bengal by making a case study of Cooch Behar district.

It could be mentioned that the district of Cooch Behar selected for our research study is evidently experiencing a high degree of rural-urban migration in recent years. Cooch Behar district comes about the North-Eastern most district of West Bengal. It has a relatively high incidence of poverty and very low level of human development. The beginning of the recent massive rural exodus from this district is just few years ago. Initially, people from rural area of this district are migrated for employment elsewhere in other states of India like Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala and also some major destination states and gradually their number in migration process has multiplied by leaps and bounds. So, the current socio-economic situation in this district is an important reason to select this district for an in-depth study of rural to urban migration and the causes and consequences of such migration.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The research study has the following major objectives:

1. To examine the trend and pattern of rural-urban migration in West Bengal.
2. To explore into the socio-economic causes of migration of rural workers in urban areas in West Bengal.
3. To explore into the socio-economic consequences of migration of rural workers in urban areas in West Bengal.
4. To identify whether rural-urban migration takes place largely due to push factors or pull factors.
5. To suggest right policy prescription for the planning of rural development in West Bengal.

1.3 Research Questions

In our research study, we have tried to find out answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What are the trend and pattern of rural-urban migration in West Bengal and in India over the last couple of years?
- 2) What is the socio-economic background of the migrant workers?
- 3) What are the important causes of migration of people in general and workers in particular from rural to urban areas in the district under study?
- 4) Are the causes mostly similar or different in different villages in the study area?
- 5) Among push and pull factors which are more important for migration?
- 6) Has the rate of migration increased in the last one and half decade?
- 7) What are the trend and pattern of migration with respect to destination, age group, literacy, gender division, employment, wages etc.?
- 8) What are the socio-economic consequences of migration on the migrating households?
- 9) What problems do the migrants at destinations face?

- 10) How do they solve these problems?
- 11) What are the net benefits of migration?
- 12) What are the policy implications of such rural-to-urban migration?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

Following are the major hypotheses which are tested in our research study:

- 1) Mainly workers from weaker socio-economic background migrate from rural to urban areas.
- 2) Push factors are the relatively important determinants of rural-urban migration than pull factors in the study area.
- 3) Urban-rural real income-differential is not the most important cause of rural-urban migration.
- 4) There has been a marked improvement in socio-economic conditions of the families of migrant workers.

1.5 Basic Terms and Concepts in Migration

Migrant and Migration: Migrant is usually defined as a person who has changed his usual place of residence from one migration defining area to another at least once during the migration interval while a migration is defined as a movement from one migration defining area to another during a given migration interval and involving a change of residence.

Place of birth: It is the original place of the migrant where he /she was born and it constitutes the basis of direct method of measuring migration.

Place of last residence: Place of last residence refers to the place where the migrants had last resided before moving to the place of present residence.

In-migrant and Out-migrant: A person who crosses the boundaries of a village/town for the purpose of residing or for some other reasons at the place of enumeration is called an in-migrant while a person moves out from the place of enumeration (village/town) to another

politically defined area (village/town) for usual residence, he or she is termed as an out-migrant.

In-migration and Out-migration: In-migration refers to movement into a particular area, while out-migration refers to movement out of a particular area, both referring to movements within a country, i.e., internal migration.

Internal migration: It includes any movement of persons within the political boundaries of a nation which results in a change of usual place of residence. Thus, it refers to migration of persons within the country.

Lifetime migrant: A person, whose area of residence at the census or survey date differs from the area of his birth or nationality, is a lifetime migrant.

Return migrant: A person who moved back to the area where he formerly resided.

Net migration: Net migration is defined as the net balance between arrivals (in-migration) and departures (out-migration) of a specific area of a state or a country. The value of net migration may be positive or negative. If the in-migrants of a particular area are greater than the out-migrants of that particular area then the value of net migration is positive. On the other hand, if the in-migrants of a particular area are less than the out-migrants of that particular area then the value of net migration is negative.

Migration Streams: Migrants who make tracks from an area of origin and reach at a common area of destination, during a particular migration interval, constitute a migration stream. There are four major migration streams- (i) rural to rural (ii) rural to urban (iii) urban to urban and (iv) urban to rural.

Distress Migration: Agriculture being the principal occupation for rural people of India that provides subsistence to nearly 70 percent of the rural population. The agriculture sector is now stuffed by the agricultural labour pressure and has to face with acute problem of disguised unemployment. Moreover, frequent occurrence of drought due to inadequate irrigation facilities results in abrupt reduction of employment opportunities in this leading sector. Besides, high cost of cultivation, stagnation of productivity and price fluctuations of agricultural products results in loss of livelihood and a fall in income below subsistence level. Under such circumstances, the distressed rural labourers in many instances are compelled to migrate to urban centers for search of employment and better livelihood.

1.6 Some Important Concepts of Rural-Urban Migration: Their relevance, applicability and operationalisation

The following are the some of important concepts which have been used in our research study. The relevance, applicability of these concepts and their operationalisation are briefly explained below:

Rural-urban migration: It denotes migration from rural areas to urban areas temporarily or permanently either for job or for study or for some other reasons. This is a very commonly observed phenomenon among rural population in a developing economy. The predominant cause for such type of migration is due to search of employment in urban centres. The purpose of the present investigation is to study the various socio-economic causes and consequences of such migration.

Push factors: Push factors are those factors that force the individual or group to move voluntarily and in many cases, they are forced because the individual takes risk something if they stay. Those refer like conditions of distress such as low productivity, low income, landlessness, unemployment or underemployment, low wages etc. for which rural people move from rural to urban centers. In the present study an attempt has been made to identify the push factors and their importance that causes rural-to-urban migration.

Pull factors: Pull factors are those factors in the destination that attract the individual or group to leave their home. Those factors are known as place utility which is the desirability of a place that attracts people. Those refer to conditions in urban areas, which lure rural labour to towns and cities. Some of these conditions are better wages with better living conditions, more employment, better employment, better conditions of work, better health and educational facilities etc. In our research study we have made an attempt to find out whether and how many pull factors are in existence that actuate workers to migrate to urban areas. By interviewing either the workers or their family members at origin we have tried to find it out.

Agrarian crisis: In the context of West Bengal it means non-remunerative nature of agricultural activities. Common observation and empirical evidences show that due to very low profitability for most of the farmers agriculture as an occupation is no longer worthy of pursuing. This is one of the hypotheses of our study which is tested.

Expected income: This means the income that is expected to be earned by the prospective migrants from rural to urban areas when they migrate and get some job. In course of our investigation we have tried to find out as to what are the expected incomes of the migrants.

Probability of getting employed: It refers not all migrants would get immediately employed after their arrival in urban centers. Often they might have to wait to get a job/coveted job. We have made an attempt to find out the probability of getting employment by the migrants in the study area.

Inter-state migration: It refers to migration of people from one state to another state within the domestic territory. In many cases, the rural labourers from West Bengal migrate to other states of India for employment. We have identified the states where they migrate and reasons for their preferred destinations.

Intra-state migration: It refers to migration of people within the state. In this case migration may take place within the district or other district of the state. We have also found out the proportion of such migrants in our study and the reasons for such intra-state migration.

Temporary migration: It means migration of the workers for a very short duration ranging from one week to three months. We have investigated the causes of such type of migration.

Semi-Permanent Migration: It means migration of the workers for the medium term ranging from four months to five years. Causes and consequences of such migration have been investigated thoroughly in our research study.

Permanent migration: This refers to migration of the workers for long term ranging from six years and above. Causes and consequences of such migration have been explored deeply in our research study.

Circular migration: Circular migration or the repeat migration is the temporary and usually repetitive movement of workers between home and host areas, typically for the purpose of employment. It represents an established pattern of population mobility. In the case of circular migration, migrants from rural areas commute to urban areas daily to attend their work at urban centers. Incidence and consequences of such migration have been carefully analyzed in the study.

Costs and benefits of migration: Migration involves both costs and benefits. On the cost side the elements are psychological costs like separation from family members and friends - and relations, and then monetary costs like transport cost, living costs etc. On the benefits side there are benefits of better employment, higher wages and income, better facilities of health and education, improvement in general knowledge and awareness etc. All such and more of such plausible costs and benefits have been accounted for in course of study through field investigation.

Origin of migration: This means the place (village) from where the workers migrate. We have found out whether the places of origin of migration are remote areas and areas with problems of lack of employment, low productivity of agriculture, absence of non-farm activities etc.

Destination of migration: It refers to the places (urban areas) where the rural workers migrate. Finding out the destinations of migration of workers are important in view of the fact that these may be indicative of the relative growth and prosperity of the destination towns in terms of employment, income, living condition, different urban amenities etc.

Urban informal sector: It refers to that sector of employment in urban areas where work, employment and enterprises are not bound by formal rules and regulations of the government. It is normally seen that in developing countries, labourers are migrating to towns and cities largely to find out employment in the urban informal sector where terms and conditions of employment are mostly exploitative. One of the crucial areas of investigation of our study is to find out the sector where migrant workers find their jobs and the nature of such employment.

1.7 Plan of the Study

The research study consists of eight chapters. Moreover, these chapters are divided into several sections and sub-sections. A broad outline of each of the chapters is given below:

Chapter-I: Introduction. This chapter deals with the problem under study, objective of the study, research questions, research hypotheses, conceptual framework, justification of the study, research methodology, plan of the study, limitations of the study.

Chapter-II: Review of Literature. A good amount of review of literature on the work already done on the area of research in India and abroad has been accomplished for the study.

Chapter-III: Rural-Urban Migration Scenario in India and in West Bengal. Trends, patterns and extent of rural-urban migration and also reasons for migration have been discussed for India and West Bengal by using secondary data.

Chapter-IV: Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of Migrant Workers in the Study Area. By utilizing field survey data an analysis of the demographic and socio-economic background of the migrant workers has been made.

Chapter-V: Trend, Pattern and Features of Rural-Urban Migration in the Study Area. An analysis of the trends, patterns and characteristics or features of rural-urban migration has been made by utilizing field survey data.

Chapter-VI: Causes of Migration- Push and Pull Factors. This chapter also makes use of primary data to determine the nature and significance of the push and pull factors in causing rural-urban migration in the study area. By analyzing primary data we have tried to find out why there are no cases of migration from some households and also a comparison is made between households having migrant workers and those having no migrant workers.

Chapter-VII: Consequences of Migration- Costs and Benefits. In this chapter an attempt has been made to estimate the costs and benefits of rural-urban migration of workers in the study area. Also, a comparison has been made between households having migrant workers and those having no migrant workers.

Chapter-VIII: Summary, Conclusions and Policy Recommendations. This chapter summarizes the overall findings of the study, draw conclusions and make policy recommendations for formulating/reformulating plans for rural development of the district under study and for that matter for whole of the state of West Bengal.

A selected bibliography has been appended at the end of the dissertation to acknowledge the scholarly debts of the present investigator to the authors of some books, journal articles etc. from which he has developed insight for the progressive work.

1.8 Research Methodology

The research study is based on existing literature, secondary data and primary data collected through field survey and hence the analysis of the existing literature, secondary data and the primary data have been incorporated in our research study. For collecting secondary data and literature we have made use of the library of the University of North Bengal (NBU), Raja Rammohunpur; the National Library, Kolkata; Library of the Center for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata etc. The sources of secondary data on migration are 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. Moreover, relevant data have been collected from Statistical Abstracts and Economic Reviews published by the Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal and Economic Survey published every year by the Government of India. Also, various reports, books, journals, bulletins, unpublished M. Phil and Ph.D. theses and research works of different scholars etc. have been consulted to collect relevant secondary data and information. On the other hand, the primary data have been collected by household survey of selected villages of the study district through structured migration and non-migration questionnaires. We have used tables, figures or diagrams and maps to analyse data to obtain findings of the research study.

The following key steps have been followed as parts of the research methodology of this study.

1.8.1 Area of the Study

The area of the study has been the state of West Bengal in general and the district of Cooch Behar in particular.

1.8.2 Universe of the Study

The universe of the study has been the state of West Bengal in India.

1.8.3 Sampling Procedure

The district Cooch Behar has twelve blocks and five sub-divisions. First of all, all the blocks of the district of Cooch Behar have been classified into three groups, viz., developed, moderately developed and backward blocks on the basis of some selected socio-economic indicators like number of primary schools, number of branches of commercial banks and

RRBs, agricultural productivity, cropping intensity, literacy of population, size of agricultural land etc. Then from each block a list of villages having 150 to 200 households have been selected purposively. Thereafter, from those list of villages two villages from each block have been selected. Next, a household census in the selected villages has been conducted to gather some general socio-economic profile of the households and particular information about whether migration of workers has taken place from any household. Thus, we have obtained two types of households - one having no migrant workers and another having one or more migrant workers. Then from each of these two categories of households, 25 households have been randomly chosen from six villages of classified three blocks. Thus, altogether $(25 \times 6) + (25 \times 6) = 300$ households have been surveyed from six villages of three blocks of this district for the purpose of our study. Unit of observation is a single household. The field survey for collection of primary data has been completed in the year 2013 on the basis of household survey through structured questionnaires of migrant and non-migrant households that is the research study bears at micro-level. The data are, therefore, cross-section type data.

1.8.4 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data have been collected for our study. Primary data have been collected from the selected households of selected villages through personal interview with the respondents of the selected households with the help of structured questionnaire made for the purpose. As is obvious, the field survey has been conducted at the places of origin of the migrants. Since out migrants generally visit their family members during festivals like Durga Puja, Dewali, Eid and Holi festivals and during Bengali New year, the timing of household survey has been planned during such festivals. Field survey for non-migrant households of the selected villages has been done in usual time during the survey year.

For collecting secondary data we have made use of the library of the University of North Bengal (NBU), Raja Rammohunpur; the National Library, Kolkata; Library of the Center for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata. The records of Gram Panchayats in the case of selected villages have been collected from the concerned Gram Panchayats offices. Moreover, the relevant data have been collected from various reports, books, journals, bulletins, unpublished M. Phil and Ph.D. theses and research works of different scholars and also from Statistical Abstracts and Economic Reviews published by the Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal and Economic Survey published every year by the Government of India.

1.8.5 Data Collection

Primary data have been collected on various aspects of the respondents like socio-economic and demographic profiles of both migrant and non-migrant households selected, causes of migration, permanence of migration, destination of migrants, nature and type of employment, nature and type of work done at destination, principal sector of work done of non-migrant households, monthly income, consumption and saving of both migrant and non-migrant earners, remittances of migrants, use of remittances, problem faced by migrants at destination, facilitators of migration, status of employment before out-migration, Job Card information of both migrant and non-migrant households, effects of migration, household consumption expenditure of both migrant and non-migrant households, assets and debt information of both migrant and non-migrant households etc.

1.8.6 Data Processing

After the collection of data, these have been processed for appropriate statistical calculations manually by using calculator and also through computer. These data have been tabulated and analyzed to obtain the findings and to arrive at conclusions. Microsoft Excel and especially SPSS package have been used for data analysis. In addition to, the use of simple statistical methods like ratios, percentages, averages, etc. are used in order to get findings of the study.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The study has been conducted in six selected villages of the district of Cooch Behar of West Bengal. For overview of the findings it would have been well again if the data could have been collected from more villages of few districts of the state of West Bengal where migration from rural to urban areas is taken place on an unprecedented scale since the last fifteen to twenty years. Suggestions of the study would be applicable only to the regions with similar socio-economic and demographic conditions of the households.