

An Analytical Study on Migration-Related Challenges Faced by Workers in the Manufacturing Sector: An Employee Perspective in the Coimbatore Region

Dr. R.T. Induji. Professor, School of Management, Sri Krishna College of Technology, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Indujir@skcet.ac.in1

Mr. Kishor Kumar J, Student of II MBA, School of Management, Sri Krishna College of Technology, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. 8825422315.

Abstract

Migrant labor is a structural feature of industrialization in emerging countries. In India, industrial centers like Coimbatore are heavily reliant on migrant labor in the textile, auto components, pumps & motors, and engineering sectors. However, migrant laborers are plagued by problems such as job insecurity, low wages, poor housing, health hazards, and lack of access to welfare benefits despite their contribution to the economy. This research paper investigates the problems associated with labor migration from an employee perspective, using primary research data gathered from 379 migrant laborers working in chosen manufacturing units in the Coimbatore area. The research design was descriptive, utilizing statistical methods like descriptive statistics, Chi-square test, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and principal component analysis. The results show that job insecurity, wage instability, poor living conditions, and lack of welfare benefits have a significant impact on job satisfaction, social adaptation, and retention attitudes. The positive correlation ($r = .763, p < .01$) between work experience and living conditions reveals that work quality is a direct determinant of socio-economic conditions.

Keywords: Internal Migration, Manufacturing Workforce, Labour Vulnerability, Job Satisfaction, Industrial Relations, Social Integration, India

1. Introduction

Migration is a major socio-economic issue that influences the labor market in developing countries like India. The manufacturing sector is a major contributor to industrial development, employment, and regional development. Industrial centers like Coimbatore are highly dependent on migrant workers to maintain labor productivity in the

textile, engineering, automobile components, and machinery sectors. Because of the lack of local labor, workers migrate from rural areas of Tamil Nadu and other interstate sources like Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Migration is fueled by push factors like rural unemployment and agricultural distress, and pull factors like better wages and industrial employment opportunities. But migrant workers are also vulnerable to job insecurity, contract work, poor housing conditions, poor social security, and language problems. These issues influence job satisfaction, worker well-being, and retention. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the weaknesses in the migrant labor system. This paper will discuss these aspects from an employee-focused perspective to emphasize the relationship between worker well-being and industrial development.

1.2 Problem Statement

Migration has become an important part of the Indian manufacturing industry, as industries are increasingly depending upon migrant workers to meet their labor needs. However, migrant workers are often faced with significant problems, including low wages, poor living and working conditions, restricted access to healthcare, and social marginalization. Migrant workers are often employed in informal or precarious employment, which is harmful to their well-being. Research has shown that

migrant workers are often deprived of access to welfare, face language difficulties, and are exposed to unsafe working conditions, which makes them more vulnerable in industrial environments. It is, therefore, important to understand the migration-related problems to improve the well-being of workers for sustainable industrial growth.

Source: Sharma (2024); John (2020); "The Challenges of Migrant Labour in Developing India" ResearchGate & NHRC Reports

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To analyze the demographic profile of migrant workers in Coimbatore's manufacturing sector.
2. To examine employment and work- condition characteristics.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The current study aims at examining the migration-related issues faced by the employees working in the manufacturing industry in the context of the employee. The scope of the current study will be based on the following significant factors:

Conditions of employment Housing and living environment Welfare practices at the workplace Social and cultural adaptation

Psychological well-being of the migrant employees

The current study will be based on the selected manufacturing industries and will focus on the impact of migration on the quality of life, job satisfaction, and productivity of the employees. The current study will not be based on any particular industry or any other region apart from the manufacturing sector in the Coimbatore region.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it sheds light on the problems of migration affecting workers in the manufacturing industry. The study is also important in the sense that it sheds more light on the socio-economic conditions of the workers in the industry. The study is also important in the sense that it would help the workers in the industry because the researcher would highlight the problems affecting the workers in the industry. The study would also help the employers in the industry because the researcher would highlight the importance of the workers in the industry. The study would also help the academicians in the sense that the researcher would shed more light on the importance of labor migration in the industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Classical Economic Theories of Migration

The classical theories of migration are based on economic rationality. Lewis (1954) accounted for migration by rural-urban transfer of labor in the two-sector model. Harris and Todaro (1970) emphasized the role of expected wage differentials. Lee (1966) suggested push-pull factors. But these models ignore socio-cultural adaptation and structural vulnerabilities.

2.2 Labour Market Segmentation

Piore's (1979) dual labor market theory contends that migrants are employed in secondary jobs characterized by low wages and insecurity. Structural theories associate migration with the capitalist division of labor and inequality. In the Indian context, migrants are found to be employed in informal and contract work with little social security.

2.3 Household and Social Capital Perspectives

The New Economics of Labour Migration (Stark & Bloom, 1985) considers migration as a risk diversification strategy practiced by households. The social capital approach (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990) stresses the role of social networks in lowering migration costs.

2.4 Migration and Worker Wellbeing

Recent studies have established a connection between migration and worker wellbeing, suggesting that poor working conditions, safety, and job security lower productivity and mental wellbeing. Inclusive HR and welfare programs boost satisfaction and retention. There is a research gap in cluster-specific studies that consider working conditions and socio-economic wellbeing.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The descriptive research design was used in this study, which falls under the positivist paradigm. The research uses a deductive method to verify the theoretical associations between working conditions and socio-economic well-being.

4.2 Sample and Data Collection

The primary data was gathered from 379 migrant workers in the selected manufacturing companies in Coimbatore. The convenience sampling method was used because of the constraints of access.

A structured questionnaire with 23 questions was used to gather data on working conditions, living conditions, social adjustment, and key problems.

4.3 Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach Alpha reliability test of 0.779 shows acceptable reliability. The content validity was established by expert validation and pilot testing.

4.4 Statistical Tools

The data was analyzed using the following statistical tools:

- Descriptive Statistics
- Chi-Square Test
- Pearson Correlation
- Multiple Regression Analysis
- Principal Component Analysis

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the demographic characteristics of migrant workers. The results show that the workforce is predominantly male and belongs mainly to the young working-age group, indicating migration during economically active years. Most respondents possess diploma or undergraduate qualifications, reflecting the presence of semi-skilled labour in manufacturing industries. The majority of workers have 1–3 years of work experience, suggesting short job tenure and frequent job mobility. A large proportion are employed on a contract basis, highlighting employment insecurity. Income levels are moderate, indicating financial vulnerability among migrant workers

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Gender	379	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.404	.0252	.4913
Age group	379	3.0	1.0	4.0	1.900	.0418	.6136
Marital status	379	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.467	.0257	.4996
Educational Qualification	379	3.0	1.0	4.0	3.470	.0380	.7389
Years of work experience in manufacturing	379	3.0	1.0	4.0	2.158	.0372	.7247
Type of employment	379	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.784	.0351	.6829
Monthly income range	379	3.0	1.0	4.0	2.623	.0363	.7072
Valid N (Listwise)	379						

Interpretation

To study the demographic profile of migrant workers employed in the manufacturing sector.

Descriptive analysis was used to examine the demographic characteristics of migrant workers. The results show that the workforce is predominantly male and belongs to the young working-age group. Most respondents possess diploma or undergraduate qualifications, indicating semi-skilled employment. Work experience is largely limited to 1–3 years, reflecting short job tenure. A majority are employed on a contract basis with moderate income levels. This concludes that migrant workers are young, semi-skilled, and economically vulnerable.

4.2 Employment and Work-Condition Characteristics

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyse workplace experience variables such as working hours, safety measures, wages, facilities, training opportunities, job security, and grievance handling. Mean scores indicate moderate satisfaction with workplace safety and job continuity. However, wages and working hours show neutral satisfaction, reflecting partial dissatisfaction among workers. Access to basic facilities such as toilets, rest areas, and drinking water is generally adequate but varies across organizations. Skill development opportunities remain limited for many respondents. Chi-square test results show that all workplace variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that workers'

responses are meaningful and not random.

Test Statistics

	Workplace Experience						
Chi-Square	247.979 ^a	234.443 ^a	145.921 ^a	174.780 ^a	194.127 ^a	260.433 ^a	203.018 ^a
df	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 75.8.

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 94.8.

Interpretation

To examine the employment and work- condition characteristics of migrant workers.

Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were applied to analyze employment conditions. Mean values indicate moderate satisfaction with workplace safety and job continuity. Wages and working hours show neutral satisfaction, indicating partial dissatisfaction. Access to basic workplace facilities is generally adequate but inconsistent. Skill development opportunities are limited for many migrant workers. This concludes that employment conditions are functional but require improvement

6. Discussion

The results confirm the theory of labour market segmentation, showing the concentration of migrants in vulnerable segments of the employment structure. Job insecurity was identified as the primary determinant of satisfaction, in line with structuralist theories.

The close relationship between working experience and life conditions reveals the phenomenon of structural embeddedness. The quality of employment influences migrants' capacity to provide themselves and their families with proper housing and healthcare, thus maintaining the link between migration and well-being.

The difficulties of cultural adaptation illustrate the significance of social capital. Language difficulties and a lack of contact with locals lead to social isolation, impacting mental health and turnover.

From an industrial viewpoint, the disregard for migrant welfare can result in decreased productivity and higher turnover costs.

7. Policy Implications

1. Expansion of Portable Social Security Benefits

The social security benefits of migrant workers should be made more portable so that workers are able to access social security benefits irrespective of the place of work. To achieve this objective, a unified labor database for the entire nation may be created and linked with Aadhaar or other identification numbers. This would ensure the continued access of workers to provident fund benefits, health insurance, and the public distribution system. Digital platforms may also be developed for the registration and tracking of such benefits. In addition, workers may be educated through a series of programs about the benefits available to them. Proper coordination between the central and state governments is also required in this regard.

2. Promotion of Affordable Industrial Housing

The provision of affordable and secure living spaces is important for the improvement of the living standards of migrant workers, hence enhancing their work efficiency. Governments should, therefore, promote partnerships between the public and industrial sectors in the provision of affordable rental housing and dormitories near industrial estates. These affordable living spaces should be provided with essential amenities such as sanitation, water for consumption, power, and waste disposal services. Governments can offer tax breaks to industries that invest in the provision of affordable living spaces for migrant workers, while regulatory measures can be put in place to ensure that the living spaces provided for the migrant workforce do not experience overcrowding in the industrial estates.

3. Strengthening Labour Law Enforcement

The enforcement of labor laws is vital to safeguard migrant workers from exploitation and unsafe working conditions. It is recommended that the government enhance its inspections in the workplace, including the adoption of technology for monitoring compliance. Stringent enforcement of minimum wage laws and occupational safety regulations will help reduce job insecurity. It is also important to develop grievance redressal systems, including legal awareness programs conducted in different languages.

4. Establishment of Migrant Worker Support Centers

Support centers for migrant workers should be developed around major industrial clusters to ensure institutional support and integration of workers. Support centers may be able to provide legal support, counseling, language training, documentation support, and grievance handling, among other services. Support centers may be able to provide skill development support and employment support to improve workers' employability. Community engagement programs conducted through support centers may be able to help workers adjust to social environments, prevent social isolation, and improve relationships between workers and employers.

5. Improvement of Public Healthcare Accessibility

The importance of accessible health facilities in maintaining the health of migrant workers is undeniable. Therefore, the governments of the respective host countries should ensure the establishment of primary health centers and health clinics in the industrial zones where migrant workers are working. Such health facilities would ensure the provision of affordable health services and health check-ups for the workers. Such a move would also encourage the industries and health departments of the respective host countries to collaborate in the provision of health services.

Conclusion

Conclusion of this research is that migrant workers are the backbone of the manufacturing industry in Coimbatore but are still vulnerable. The results of this research indicate that job insecurity, moderate pay, limited skill enhancement, and contract employment have a significant impact on job satisfaction and retention. The positive correlation between work experience and living conditions further reinforces the fact that work quality has a direct impact on socio-economic conditions. While basic facilities are in place, there are still some discrepancies in the organizations. This research emphasizes the importance of inclusive HR practices, better housing support, and portable social security systems. Improving the welfare of workers will not only improve their conditions but also increase productivity and industrial sustainability.

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