

Contemporary Challenges of Interstate Migrant Labourers: A Study of Mahbubnagar District, Telangana, India

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Abstract: *Interstate migrant laborers in India face a multitude of challenges at various stages, particularly in regions like Mahbubnagar District in Telangana State. These challenges include unemployment, lack of skills, inequality, and regional disparity. This study adopts a mixed - methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data from surveys, interviews, and field observations to provide a comprehensive analysis of these challenges. The research underscores the significance of addressing critical issues that impact the lives of migrant laborers and their families. Inadequate living conditions emerge as a major concern, with many laborers residing in cramped and unhygienic spaces. Social and psychological hurdles play a significant role, as migrants often find themselves in unfamiliar cultural settings, grappling with language barriers, and facing discrimination. Children encounter difficulties accessing education and healthcare, impacting their overall development. The study also evaluates government policies aimed at addressing these issues and challenges, but it highlights the obstacles in their effective implementation. Awareness among the laborers regarding these policies is often lacking, and corruption within the system further hinders the benefits reaching those in need. Bureaucratic hurdles also contribute to the issues faced by these workers.*

Keywords: Contemporary challenges, Interstate migrant labourers, Unemployment, lack of Skills, Inequality, Regional disparity, Mahbubnagar District.

1. Introduction

In India, interstate migrant labour moves across 28 states and eight union territories, and the unique the nation's unity in diversity. Each state has a unique identity, geography, and natural resources, leading to wide disparities in development due to regional, geographical, cultural, economic, and political differences. Migration, a common phenomenon, sees people moving for various reasons. An interstate migrant worker is recruited by or through a contractor in one state for employment in another, often without the principal employer's direct knowledge. These workers typically move from their home states to others in search of employment opportunities within India, as outlined in the Inter - State Migrant Workmen Act of 1979. States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, as well as Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka in the south, are significant sources of interstate migrant labour.

Mahbubnagar district in Telangana, historically known as Palampur, is particularly notable for its migrant labourers. Comprising areas like Narayanapet, Vikarabad, Nagar Kurnool, Gadwal, and Wanaparthi, Mahbubnagar was once famous for milk production. The district faces issues like low rainfall, droughts, and incomplete irrigation projects, leading to regional disparities and a lack of development. Consequently, many people from Mahbubnagar migrate to other states for work, facing numerous challenges. Most migrant labourers are employed in construction, brick kilns, stone quarries, and road construction. Recently, unplanned squatter settlements have emerged in construction areas,

leading to significant housing issues for the floating population. This influx often leads to underestimation of demands and inadequate planning of resources and infrastructure, resulting in overburdened infrastructure, unhygienic conditions, and outbreaks of diseases like cholera, tuberculosis, and viral fevers. The district faces several critical problems and challenges related to interstate migrant labour. One major issue is the lack of employment opportunities. The district primarily relies on agriculture, which is seasonal, leaving many without work for significant parts of the year. This results in a high outflow of labourers seeking better job prospects in other states. Migrant labourers often face exploitation and low wages, working in unorganised sectors like construction and factories under harsh conditions with meagre salaries. The absence of adequate regulations and enforcement worsens this problem. Social security is another major issue, as migrant labourers often lack access to healthcare, education, and housing due to their temporary residence status. Language and cultural barriers further isolate them, making it difficult to assert their rights and access essential services. Poor living conditions, including inadequate housing and sanitation, pose significant health and safety risks. The lack of proper housing also affects the education and well - being of their families, especially children. Additionally, limited access to skill development programs restricts their ability to acquire new skills and improve employability, perpetuating their dependence on low - paying jobs and limiting upward mobility.

Implementing and enforcing labour laws and regulations to protect migrant labourers' rights, ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and access to social security benefits is

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crucial. Establishing support mechanisms such as helplines, counselling centres, and information centres can assist migrant labourers in accessing services and addressing grievances. Promoting skill development and vocational training programs can enhance employability and create sustainable livelihood options. Strengthening coordination between sending and receiving states can ensure the welfare and protection of migrant labourers throughout the migration cycle. Investing in infrastructure development, including affordable housing, sanitation facilities, and healthcare centres, can improve living conditions for migrant labourers and their families. The phenomenon of interstate migration in recent decades has reshaped socio-economic dynamics, and Mahbubnagar District in Telangana stands as a microcosm within this larger narrative. Understanding the nuances of the issues and challenges faced by interstate migrant labourers is crucial for designing targeted interventions that enhance their well-being and dignity, calling for collaborative efforts from policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders.

1.1 Objectives

To Study the contemporary challenges of interstate migrant labourers of Mahbubnagar district, Telangana.

2. Literature Review

The study has made a commendable effort to comprehensively review existing literature in the Indian context, from the past to recent years. Its objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by interstate migrant labourers in India. The study presents a concise yet thorough review of the available research on labour migration, offering valuable insights into the experiences and issues faced by interstate labour migrants.

Piyasiri Wickramasekera (2002) The paper examines the trends and issues in Asian labour migration and, the challenges faced by countries and the trade union movement in protecting migrant workers. It discusses problems with current terminology and debunks popular myths about migrant workers. It also highlights the benefits receiving countries gain from migration and identifies the most vulnerable groups of migrant workers that require priority attention. The paper explores the role of trade unions and policy options for protecting migrant workers based on international instruments.

Christina Gabriel et al (2012) The book "Governing International Labour Migration, current issues and challenges and dilemmas" critically examines the changing nature and governance of international labour migration within a globalizing environment. It explores the links between political economy and differentiated forms of labour migration and considers the effects of new social models of inclusion and exclusion on labour migration. The book challenges conventional dichotomies and categorizations in migration studies and regulatory frameworks. It contributes to reframing the study of migration within politics and international relations.

Devki Natu (2022) The paper analysis challenges faced by interstate migrant workers in India. It highlights the

vulnerabilities of these workers, which have been further enhanced by the COVID - 19 pandemic. The paper also examines the problems faced by migrant workers in procuring verifiable proof of identity, which makes them vulnerable to harassment by civic authorities at their destination. The authors have referred to research by the Aajivika Bureau, Udaipur, which points out that a significant number of interstate migrant workers do not possess recognised identity proofs. The growing of interstate migrant workers poses a threat to regionalism in India which faces a threat to the cultural identity of interstate migrants, which regular attacks on them observed in the typically received states.

Vijay Korra (2006) The study focused on the nature and characteristics of seasonal labour migration in Mahbubnagar, Andhra Pradesh. It highlighted the significance of rural Indian migration, often driven by economic difficulties and a lack of alternative opportunities. Migration was found to be seasonal and cyclical, impacting both rural and urban migrants. Push factors like unemployment, low wages, debt, and natural disasters drove migration, while urbanization and globalization contributed to rural unemployment. Unskilled and semi-skilled laborers from poor income groups formed the majority of migrants, with distinctions between rural and urban work. Rural migrants often worked in agricultural fields, while urban migrants engaged in construction, with male dominance in work and wages. The study emphasized the link between migration and regional disparities, driven primarily by economic motives.

Das and Saha (2004) The study examined inter-state migration and regional disparities in India, focusing on how differences between states influence migrant development. Urbanization and economic growth were higher in states with more opportunities, while migration growth was limited from 1991 to 2001. Migration and regional disparities were closely connected, and Lee's theory highlighted development as a migration factor. Poverty and prosperity both prompted migration for survival and improvement. Migration aimed to escape insecurity, seek opportunities, and transition from underdeveloped to developed regions. Planning was not the main driver of migration. The study showed migration's evolving nature and role in balancing population and environment.

Arjan de Haan (2011) The paper discusses the relationship between labour migration and poverty in India, focusing on the migration patterns of deprived social groups and analysing whether migration serves as a route out of poverty. It argues that there is a macro-micro paradox in migration dynamics, with macro data highlighting the better-off groups among migrants and under-recording the migration of the most vulnerable groups. The paper calls for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of migration and emphasizes the need for specific policies for these groups.

C. Annie Jane (2016) The Research Paper analysed the internal migrant labour issues and policies. The labour migration is male mainly domination, as well as the significant female migrant increase in hypermarket showrooms and factories. Most labour migrants have diverse cultures, languages, access to identity, social and political exclusion, housing, and exploitation. Migrant Labour faces

many problems residency, health, violence against women, psychosocial disorders, occupational diseases, and exploitation by an agent.

Praveen Jha's (2016) The study of labour in contemporary India highlights workers' challenges in the current economic landscape. Neo - liberal economic policies have led to labour market rigidities and a lack of implementation of labour regulations. This has resulted in problems related to worker employment and the protection of labour rights. The growing informal sector and low productivity are also concerns. The government must actively address these issues through targeted employment programs like MGNREGA. Trade unions and labour organizations must unite to mobilize unorganized sector workers and defend against the challenges posed by neo - liberal economic policies, especially globally. The focus should also be on empowering women workers in this context.

Ravi Srivastava et al (2020) Industrial relations and Labour laws a confined to an employment relationship. There is an interrelation between employers and employees. This book prioritised employees and employment organisation with the state and labour union derived from Indian constitutional philosophy, particularly the directive principle and the state policy. There is the judiciary system's involvement in enforcing labour laws. There is a need for labour laws, management, and public administration followed by international labour principles and their influence on Indian labour laws.

R. B. Bhagat et al (2020) The paper discusses the challenges faced by migrants during the spread of COVID - 19 in India, including lack of food, basic amenities, healthcare, economic stress, transportation facilities, and psychological support. It highlights the need for immediate measures and long - term strategies to address these challenges, such as improving the public distribution system, strengthening the public health system, integrating migrants with development, decentralizing health services, and supporting return migrants.

Research gap

The existing literature review underscores the abundance of research studies addressing the intricate issues and challenges surrounding interstate migrant labourers. These studies, undertaken by diverse authors, researchers, and experts, offer insights into various dimensions of interstate migrant labour within the confines of the Mahbubnagar District in Telangana State. However, it is worth noting that only a limited number of studies have been carried out within the Mahbubnagar District itself, specifically delving into the characteristics and rationales of migrant labour. Regrettably, most of these studies have narrowly focused on the internal and seasonal

aspects of labour migration, thereby overlooking a comprehensive understanding of the broader phenomenon. This highlights a significant gap in the literature, where scant attention has been paid to the broader context of labour migration. Notably, only a handful of studies have ventured into the realm of labour migration, and these, too, have not been centred around the Mahbubnagar district within Telangana state. Consequently, a conspicuous absence of research prevails concerning the issues and challenges encountered by interstate migrant labourers, specifically in the Mahbubnagar district. This study seeks to rectify this research gap by illuminating the intricate web of issues and challenges that encompass interstate migrant labour within the contours of the Mahbubnagar District in Telangana State. Through comprehensive exploration and analysis, this study aims to spotlight the multifaceted aspects of interstate migrant labour and provide valuable insights into its distinct challenges within this geographic context.

3. Methodology

The study, based on an original survey and telephonic interviews conducted in Gopalpur and Kappeta villages of the Buthpur mandal of Mahbubnagar District, Telangana State, India, offers a detailed analysis of the complexities of interstate labour migration. It specifically focuses on the challenges and issues faced by interstate migrant laborers in households situated in Mahbubnagar District. The research encompasses an assessment of the prevalent forms of migration, a comprehensive examination of laborers' earnings, working conditions, and expenditure patterns related to their migration efforts. The methodology employed in this study relies on a systematic survey approach to gather relevant data for analytical purposes. The core of this study draws extensively from primary data meticulously collected from interstate migrant laborers operating within Mahbubnagar District, with these laborers engaged in various working conditions across different geographical regions. Notably, the primary dataset is derived from a sample of 70 respondents out of the 85 population addresses provided by contractors involved in interstate labour migration, with migrants heading to prominent canters like Chennai, Mumbai, Kadapa, Amaravathi, and Bengaluru.

4. Data Analysis

Data was collected randomly from individuals who had migrated as interstate migrant laborers from the villages of Gopalpur and Kappeta in Mahbubnagar District, which comprises 16 mandals. A random visit was conducted in Buthpur Mandal, where a population of 85 interstate migrant worker families was identified, and out of these, 70 interstate migrant workers responded to the survey.

Table 1.1: Responses of Gender and Community of Interstate Migrant Labourers

Sex	ST		SC		OBC		Others (UR)		Total	Percentage
	R	P	R	P	R	P	R	P		
Male	21	30%	11	15.71%	11	15.71%	0	0	43	61.43%
Female	12	17.14%	9	12.85%	6	8.57	0	0	27	38.57%
Total	33	47.14%	20	28.57%	17	24.28%	0	0	70	100

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

Table 1.1 offers an overview of the demographic distribution based on gender and categories such as Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and others, including total counts and percentages. The sample includes 43 males (61.43%) and 27 females (38.57%). Among them, 33 individuals (47.14%) belong to

ST, 20 (28.57%) to SC, and 17 (24.28%) to OBC, with no individuals categorized as "Others." The dataset highlights a male - dominated gender distribution and a higher representation of Scheduled Tribes, providing valuable insights into the demographic trends and disparities among interstate migrant labourers.

Table 1.2: Responses for Marital status and number of children of interstate migrant labourers

Marital Status	No. Respondents	Percentage	No. Children	No. Respondents	Percentage
Child Marriage	32	45.7%	One child	0	0
Legal Age Marriage	21	30%	Two children	14	20%
Late marriage	0	0	Three children	48	68.6%
Do not Know	17	24.3%	More than three	8	11.4%

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

The above table 1.2 enumerates the responses of the migrant labours as their marital status and having children. Here data shows 32 in which 45.7% percentage of the percentage number of labour married child marriage, 21 in which 30% percentage get legal marriages and 17 in which 24.3% percentage they do not know either child marriage or legal age marriage. Interstate labour migrants had 14, in which 20% have percentage Two children, 48 in which 68.6%having Three children and 8 with in which 11.4% have a percentage having more than three children.

Table 1.3: Responses from interstate migrant labourers for their child education levels

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
No Education	10	14.3%
Primary Education	37	52.9%
Secondary education	22	31.4%
Diploma	1	1.4%
Graduation	0	0
Above graduation	0	0

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

Table 1.3 offers insights into the educational levels of children of interstate migrant labourers, segmented into distinct categories with respective counts and percentages. About 14.3% of respondents indicated no formal education for their children. The majority, 52.9%, reported "Primary

Education," highlighting significant access at this level. Additionally, 31.4% noted their children achieved "Secondary Education," indicating advancement beyond primary education. Only 1.4% reported their children's completion of a "Diploma," signifying limited representation in this tier. This data provides a clear view of educational attainment among children of interstate migrant labourers.

Table 1.4: Responses of interstate labour migration for reasons to migration

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Debt	66	94.3%
Landlessness	50	71.4%
Poverty	68	97.1%
Lack of employment	67	95.7%
Lack of irrigation	67	95.7%
Droughts		

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

The Above table 1.4 shows of the interstate migrant labours reasons for migrating to other states. Here data showing out of 70 responded. As for data, debt responded 66 migrant labour and it is 94.3 percentage, 50 responded it is 71.4 percentage, poverty 68 responded it is 97.1 percentage, Lack of employment 67 responded it is 95.7 percentage and lack of irrigation 67 responded it is 95.7 percentage.

Table 1.5: Responses of Kind of shelter and working conditions

Kind of Shelter	No. of respondents	Percentage	Kind of work	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Temporary sheds	17	24.3%	Birks Kiln	5	7.1%
Polythene sheets shed	12	12.9%	Contraction	29	41.4%
Rented rooms	44	62.9%	Road work	8	11.4%
Building			Others	28	40%

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

Above the table 1.5 explaining Approximately a quarter (24.43%) of the respondents, or 17 out of 70, lived in temporary sheds, indicating precarious living conditions among interstate migrant labourers. Around 12.9% of respondents (12 out of 70) reported living in polythene sheet sheds, highlighting the vulnerability of some migrants. The majority, 62.9% (44 out of 70), resided in rented rooms, suggesting relatively stable living conditions, although the quality varied. 62.9% (44 out of 70) of respondents lived in

buildings, which provided more stability and comfort than sheds. Only a tiny fraction, 7.1% (5 out of 70), were employed in brick kiln industries. A significant 41.4% (29 out of 70) of respondents were engaged in the construction sector, which emerged as a significant source of employment for these migrants. Furthermore, 11.4% (8 out of 70) were involved in road construction. Lastly, 40% (28 out of 70) were engaged in various other jobs, including agricultural labour and manufacturing.

Table 1.6: Responses of health issues and courses for health issues

Responses	No. of response	Percentage (%)	Causes	No. of response	Percentage (%)
Yes	66	95.2%	Environmental	57	81.2%
No	3	4.3%	Work Borden	66	94.6%
Do not Know	0	0	Toilet and bath	69	98.6%

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

In the Table 1.6 shows that in 70 responses of interstate migrant labourers mostly people are facing health issues, Toilet and bath specialities issues, work Borden and Environmental issues are causes for health issues.

The above table 1.7 shows as only two participated are skilled labour which is 2.85 percentage and 68 participated are unskilled interstate migrant labours which is shows 97.14 percentage.

Table 1.7: Responses of skilled and unskilled interstate migrant labourers

Item	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Skilled	2	2.86%
Unskilled	68	97.14%

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

This tables says mostly interstate migrant labour are unskilled labours.

Table 1.8: Responses of interstate labour migration facing various issues and challenges

S. no	Particulars	Yes		No		Do not know	
		R	%	R	%	R	%
1	Equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex	11	15.7%	39	55.7%	20	28.6%
2	Proper wages for proper work	2	2.9%	25	35.7%	43	61.4%
3	Hazardous work conditions	64	94.1%	4	5.9%	0	0
4	Health issues at the work place	66	95.7%	3	4.3%	0	0
5	Discrimination at the work place	53	76.8%	6	8.7%	10	14.5%
6	Bonded labour migration	32	45.7%	38	54.3	0	0
7	Security at the workplace	3	4.3%	66	94.3%	0	0
8	Aware of labour laws	2	2.9%	68	97.1%	0	0
9	Toilet facilities at workplace	2	2.9%	67	97.1%	0	0
10	Dignified and safe living conditions	1	1.4%	69	98.6%	0	0
11	Technology has been reduced job opportunities	54	78.3%	2	2.9%	13	18.8%
12	Facing an employment crisis because Technology takes over jobs	61	87.1%	0	0	9	12.9%

Note: Source of data from field survey, November 2023

R= Respondents, % (Percentages)

Table 1.8 highlights the critical challenges faced by interstate migrant labourers. Only 15.7% receive equitable pay regardless of gender, and just 2.9% report fair wages. Hazardous working conditions are acknowledged by 94.1%, and 95.7% raise health concerns. Workplace discrimination affects 76.8%, and 45.7% are bonded labourers. Alarmingly, 94.3% lack workplace security, and 97.1% are unaware of labour laws. Access to restroom facilities is available to only 2.9%, and a mere 1.4% report dignified living conditions. This data underscores the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to improve the lives of these labourers.

5. Discussion

This study focuses on interstate migrant workers from Mahbubnagar District, Telangana. It reveals that most workers belong to Scheduled Tribes (ST), followed by Scheduled Castes (SC), with a few from Other Backward Classes (OBC). Higher caste (UR) individuals are absent in this labour force. Child marriages were prevalent, often lacking clarity on their legality. Family sizes were generally large, with no single - child families. While many children completed primary and secondary education, none pursued higher education, and many had no access to education. Key reasons for migration included debt, landlessness, poverty, unemployment, and inadequate irrigation. Living conditions

for migrant workers were poor, with many residing in rented rooms, temporary shelters, and polythene - covered structures. Their work spanned construction, road development, and other sectors, often under hazardous conditions leading to health issues due to environmental factors, heavy workloads, poor sanitation, and stress. Discrimination and inadequate safety measures were also common. A significant issue was the lack of skill development opportunities, with most workers having no formal training. Challenges in the workplace included gender - based wage disparities, uncertainty about appropriate wages, bonded labour, inadequate security, poor sanitary facilities, limited awareness of labour laws, and substandard living conditions. Technological unemployment was also emerging as a concern. This study highlights the urgent need for a holistic approach to address the diverse needs of interstate migrant workers, ensuring their rights, safety, and well - being.

6. Suggestions and Recommendations

Policymakers can create a more equitable and supportive environment for interstate migrant labourers by implementing targeted policy recommendations. This study highlights the need for a multifaceted approach to address their challenges, focusing on ensuring their well - being, rights, and prospects.

Tailored support programs should be developed for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC) communities, addressing their unique needs in education, skill development, and healthcare. Awareness campaigns in both source and destination areas can educate families about the consequences of child marriages and the importance of legal unions, helping to prevent child marriages and secure legal rights. Family planning resources and reproductive health services should be accessible to manage family sizes and promote informed decisions. Special education initiatives, such as scholarships, mobile schools, and flexible learning programs, can bridge educational gaps for the children of migrant labourers. Information and support centres in source districts can guide prospective migrants on legal rights, safe migration, and employment opportunities. To reduce dependency on migration, livelihood diversification programs promoting local industries, agriculture, and small - scale enterprises should be developed. Collaboration with local governments and NGOs can improve housing conditions, replacing temporary shelters with safer, more hygienic options. Strengthening labour regulations to ensure proper health and safety standards, regular health check - ups, and providing protective gear are essential. Skill development and vocational training programs can enhance employability and opportunities for better - paying jobs. Enforcing equal pay for equal work and educating labourers about their rights under labour laws can combat wage discrimination. Providing social security benefits, such as healthcare, insurance, and retirement schemes, and training in emerging technologies can improve employability. Collaborative efforts between government agencies, NGOs, employers, and communities, alongside robust data collection and monitoring, are crucial for comprehensive policy implementation and addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by interstate migrant labourers.

7. Conclusion

The study on interstate migrant labourers from Mahbubnagar District, Telangana, highlights significant socio - economic disparities and challenges, particularly for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. Key issues include child marriages, limited educational access, and a lack of higher education opportunities. Drivers of migration include debt, poverty, unemployment, and lack of irrigation. Laborers face health hazards, inadequate safety measures, and gender - based wage disparities, exacerbated by a lack of skill development. Policy recommendations focus on targeted support for marginalized communities, awareness campaigns against child marriages, access to family planning, educational initiatives, and improved housing. Strengthening labour regulations, skill development programs, advocating for equal pay, and ensuring social security benefits are essential. Collaboration among government bodies, NGOs, employers, and communities is crucial. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach to protect labours rights and promote well - being. Implementing these recommendations can create an equitable, inclusive environment, fostering a brighter future for labourers and society.

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