CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GROWTH OF RURAL NON-FARM SECTOR IN INDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON **MIGRATION**

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Abstract: Agricultural sector in India is suffering from surplus labor and low productivity leading to disguised unemployment. This results in distress migration from rural to urban areas. As a public policy concern, growth of the non-farm sector is seen as a holistic measure to check this type of migration.

An increase in the number of census towns indicates a rise in the non-farm sector. However, the past decade has also witnessed an increase in migration from rural to urban areas. Moreover, the employment in the non-farm sector has remained stagnant during the same period. Several reasons can possibly explain such complexities. Inequalities have remained high in rural areas in terms of income, consumption and social ostracism. Access to credit by rural workforce is challenged by class and caste differences denying benefit to a large portion of rural populace. But increasing numbers of rural youth are also migrating for pursuing higher education. This paper critically analyses the trends in the growth of rural non-farm sector during the past decade and its impact on migration.

Key words: Distress migration, rural non-farm sector, census town, MGNREGA, access to credit, class and caste differences

Introduction

Despite a good record of economic growth, the structural transformation of the Indian economy has been slow, with wide labor-productivity variations between non-agricultural sectors and agriculture. With rapid population growth, the labor force in rural areas is growing fast. Challenged by low productivity and surplus labor, agricultural employment is increasing slowly. Consequently, distress migration from rural to urban areas has been on the rise. This type of migration is referred to as distressed due to several reasons. Firstly, the negligible or zero marginal productivity of labor engaged in agriculture has led to low average income of a rural household creating a pressing need to push out family members from their homes to find other avenues of incomes in urban areas. Secondly, the dearth of job availability in urban areas and the nature of these jobs largely being informal or on contractual has added to the miserable plight of such migrants because of irregularity in remittances sent back home and the high cost of living in urban spaces. A striking finding of the Census 2011 is that for the first time since 1921, urban India added more to its population in a decade than rural India did. A major reason for this can be increase in distress migration from rural to urban

Rural Non-Farm Sector (RNFS) seems as a panacea for addressing this type of migration trend. The sector includes a plethora of diverse non-agricultural activities- mining and quarrying, household and non-household manufacturing, processing, repair, construction, trade and commerce, transport and other services.

By ensuring work for hundred days at an assured minimum wage at the place of residence, MGNREGA is expected to have a substantial impact on distress migration. Though there are no studies estimating the extent of fall in distress migration as a result of the flagship scheme, yet there are a number of studies which have gathered the impression of participants on the impact of MGNREGA on migration. The responses vary across states and districts. The available responses from these surveys from Uttarakhand (Singh and Wauriyal 2008), Odisha (Nayak 2010), Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (Kamath 2008) and Tamil Nadu (IITM 2009) show that, by and large, there has been a fall in this type of migration. Another interesting trend witnessed is a significant increase in the number of Census Towns indicating growth of non-agricultural employment.

However, the employment in the rural non-farm sector has not risen commensurately. Rather, it has actually fallen in case of female rural workers. Moreover, the situation is further challenged by income inequality. The growth of RNFS has resulted in additional income for rural populace but it has not been able to check inequality in terms of income and consumption. In addition to this, rising rural inflation over the years has affected asset quality and diminished real returns on savings. This has made mobilization of funds for non-farm avenues difficult.

Large proportions of rural populace still stand outside the net of formal credit. This is especially true in the case of poor and socially marginalized castes facing grave problem in accessing credit due to low asset valuations along with social ostracism. Provision of credit is a vital source for achieving social mobility. Formal credit can be used to accelerate growth of rural non-farm sector and replace informal credit associated with high interest rate burden. However, flow of credit has not been inclusive. Although there is a lack of empirical studies that examine lower access to credit in rural India based on class and caste differences, yet it has a large bearing on growth of RNFS.

A positive outlook is seen from the trend of fall in rural non-farm employment and migration in favor of education. This movement bodes well for development of human capital and rise in productivity of RNFS.

Literature Review

- > Piketty Thomas(2017), suggested that much can be done to promote more inclusive growth in india. Study has focused on the need of democratic transparency on income and wealth statistics to avoid another "black decade" similar to 2000s, during which india entered the digital age but stopped publishing tax statistics. Such data sources are the key to track the long run evolution of inequality and to allow an informed democratic debate on inequality.
- Paridai Keshari Jajati(2015), analyzed the recent trends of non-farm employment in India and to identified the employment generating sectors that would absorb the rapidly growing labor force using various rounds of NSS unit level data. Major findings of the study suggested a structural change in employment has been taking place since 2004-05. Construction services and labor intensive manufacturing sectors together continued to absorb the workers who left agriculture during the post 2004-05 periods. It also evaluated that given the demographic scenario and huge participation in education, about 11 million skilled, 9 million low skilled and 43 million unskilled job seekers are expected to join the labor force by 2019-20. Thus, along with the skill development initiatives, the government has to give top priority for generating employment and service sector.
- V. Sujatha(2014), reviewed and synthesized the role and functions of the non-farm sector in the development of Indian economy and importance of rural non farm sector in the development of rural areas in India. This article also emphasized on the contribution of RNFS in providing employment and income to many rural people. It is also noted that supplementary measures for development of non-farm sector, policy and interventions for creating employment opportunities are an essential pre-requisite. In this regard, the role of the government is crucial for the provision of necessary infrastructure and other support services in the country.
- Reddy .D.Narasimha et'al (2014), evaluated the differentiating impact of MGNREGA on the extent of fulfillment of the basic needs of rural India. This study has disaggregated state level of data to discern the factors that make a difference to the performance of the programme. There is a growing evidence of an increase in agricultural wages across the country over the period 2006-07 and 2011-12, in which the impact of MGNREGA has shown steep increase in female agriculture wage and a substantive decline in the male and female wage gap. This study further suggested the macro level and micro level policy interventions for strengthening rural-urban connectivity, social protection for migrant labor and capacity building programs for skill augmentation.
- Ndabeni. L Lindile(2012), examined the notion of rural-urban linkages and recommended specific policies which can be used to achieve mutually beneficial relationship between urban and rural areas. This research further investigated the impact of rural and urban linkages on reducing the poverty and inequality, enhancing inclusive development and economic growth.
- Dwivedi Ritesh(2012), evaluated how migration is continuing in different parts of India and how it is becoming more and more crucial towards improving livelihood status. In 2004-05, Indian labor force consisted of about 430 million persons growing annually at about 2 %. Laborers and farmers whose income is not enough that they can have a respected life; they are opting to migrate towards cities. As it has been discussed frequently that major migration is due to failure of agriculture as mainstream livelihood activity; policy makers should explore ways and means to re-establish the importance of agriculture in terms of livelihood. To the extent, it seems necessary for marginalized and vulnerable class of the society to migrate and have some respectable livelihood options.
- Pradhan Kanhu(2012), analyzed the unexpected increase in the number of census town, using a hitherto unexploited dataset. The new census town found in study has satisfied the requisite criteria in 2001, mitigating concerns of inflated urbanization.
- Jha Brajesh(2011), investigated the share of non-farm sector in rural workforce. He has adopted a diagnostic approach to problems of non-farm employment using data from the NSS quinquennial survey results on employment, unorganized manufacturing and also the CSO economic census results. The findings suggested an increase importance of distress-related factors in rural diversification. Analysis of different sets of data suggested that the role of agriculture in rural diversification is decreasing over the years. The study finds that agriculture, manufacturing and tourism are the engines of rural growth and development- induced rural diversification in a region warrants growth in one of the above engines. The paper therefore argues for different kind of incentives to encourage manufacturing in rural vicinity.
- Oin Hua(2010), empirically evaluated a conceptual framework incorporating rural household livelihoods as an integrative mediating factor between rural migration and the rural environment in the context of rural to urban labor migration. The analysis was drawn on data collected through household surveys and key informant interviews from four villages which shows that labor - migrant and non labor migrant households differ significantly in livelihood activities including agricultural production, agricultural technology use, income and consumption and resource use and management.
- Rani Uma(2002), attempts to review some of existing theoretical and empirical studies on occupational diversification and rural- urban migration. This study suggested that forces of development and distress are influencing rural occupational structure simultaneously. However, the extent of their influence is difficult to judge from the available evidence. This study has emphasized on the need for a new focus in diversification studies to explain the phenomenon not only in terms of micro level dynamics but also from broader perspective considering various macro processes.

Objective of the Study

- 1) To understand the impact of growth of rural non-farm sector in India on migration.
- 2) To critically analyze the challenges in the growth of rural non-farm employment in India.

Research Methodology and Data Sources

The study is based on the secondary data. The paper has been divided into two parts. The first half consists of journals and researches done on distress migration and growth of rural non-farm sector in India.

Second half of the study consists of unit-level data that has been taken from many rounds of NSSO, the data about the impact of MGNREGA is from government report MGNREGA Sameeksha. The analysis of the study has also focused on 5th and 6th Economic Census of India, data from RBI handbook of statistics on the Indian economy, Census of India 2011 and report from NCAER.

Findings & Analysis

❖ Analysis 1: Growth in RNFS and its impact

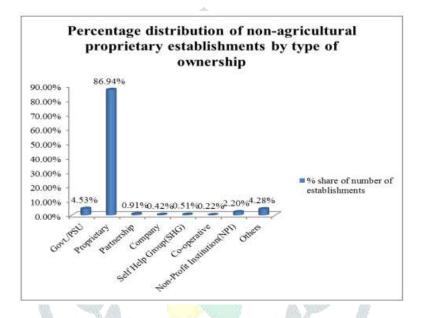
Any improvement in viability of rural farm households requires a significant proportion of their incomes from non-farm sector. Analysis suggests that the share of RNFS in rural workforce has risen. However, productive employment in the rural sector still remains important.

Table 1.1: Growth on non-agricultural establishments in rural India

	Economic Census 2005	Economic Census 2013
Own Account Establishments	13262173	16609685
Establishments with at least one		6100860
hired worker		
All Establishments		22710545

Source: Data from 5th and 6th Economic Census

Table 1.1 observes that during the period between fifth and sixth Economic Census, non-agricultural establishments grew at the rate of 28.97%. Furthermore, as per the sixth Economic Census, the total number of establishments owned by women in India has increased to 8,050,819 out of which 65.12% of were located in rural areas.



Source: 6th Economic Census of India

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of non-agricultural establishments by type of ownership

Figure 1.1 portrays that almost 90% of non-agricultural establishments are proprietorship firms. This indicates low capacity of mobilization of funds as proprietor units in rural areas are small scale units having less viability of raising resources.

Table 1.2: Average daily real wage for rural workers in 2004-05 prices (Rs)

	Rural Male	Rural Female			
Regular salaried					
2004-05	144.93	85.53			
2009-10	165.13	103.31			
Casual workers					
2004-05	55.03	34.94			
2009-10	67.29	45.69			

Source: NSSO report no 515 on Employment and Unemployment in India, 2004-05 and Key Indicators of Employment and Unemployment in India, 2009-10.

Table 1.2 investigates a rise in real income in rural areas for both regular salaried and casual workers.

Table 1.3: Number of Census Towns in India

	Number of Census Towns
Census 2001	1362
Census 2011	3892

Source: Census 2011 data

As per table 1.3, analyzing census 2011 data, the paper observes that there has been almost a three-fold increase in the number of Census Towns (CTs) in India. As per the definition of CT, this clearly indicates rise in labor participation in non-agricultural activities. However, the concentration of CTs is disproportionately high in some states. For instance, West Bengal has the highest number of CTs in 2011, followed by Kerala (461), Tamil Nadu (376) and Maharashtra (278). An in-depth analysis of this disparity points out that a high number of CTs exist close to urban spaces (Class-I Statutory Towns). Other CTs are standalone and isolated and often lie near important industrial units or alongside national highways. The new CTs account for almost 30% of the urban growth in the last decade, with large inter-state variations (Pradhan 2012).

Table 1.4: Implementation of MGNREGA- a macro picture

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Number of	200	330	615	615	615	615
districts						
covered						
Households	38	65	100	113	119	123
with job cards						
(million)						
Households	2.1	3.4	4.5	5.3	54	50
provided						
employment		0			0.	
(million)	A					
	400				TANK	

Source: MGNREGA Sameeksha

Table 1.5: Share of marginalized groups in MGNREGA employment (%)

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	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	
Women	40	42	49	49	48	48	
Scheduled	36	29	25	21	21	18	
Tribes	***	. 4.4		A.A.	#		
Scheduled	26	27	29	30	31	22	
Castes		. 4.70			-		

Source: MGNREGA Sameeksha

Table 1.4 and table 1.5 comprehend impact on flagship scheme MGNREGA. By ensuring work for 100 days as an assured minimum wage at the place of residence, the government programme intends to address distress migration. The coverage of the scheme has consistently increased over the years. Moreover, almost half of the employment generated is benefitting women workers in rural areas. However, the share of SC and ST in total employment generated under the scheme has declined. This indicates a possibility of social discrimination at the local level and denial of access to benefit from the government programme.

❖ Analysis 2: Slow growth of employment in the rural non-agricultural sector

Table 2.1: Share of employment in various industries in rural India (%)

	2004-05	2009-10
Agriculture and allied	72.7	67.6
Mining	0.5	0.6
Manufacturing	8.1	7.2
Electricity, gas and water supply	0.2	0.2
Construction	4.9	9.4
Trade, hotel and restaurant	6.1	6.4
Transport, storage and communication	2.5	2.9
Finance, real estate, etc	0.5	0.6
Public administration and other services	4.5	4.8

Source: Same as table 1.2

Table 2.1 investigates that although there has been a decline in the share of employment in agriculture which is in line with the progressive structural transformation of the economy, yet there has also been witnessed a fall in share of employment in manufacturing. However, this fall has been addressed by significant rise in construction sector. This trend is observed due to expansion of infrastructure development activities under flagship government schemes.

Table 2.2: Growth rate of employment in non-agricultural sector (%)

	= =					
	Total	Male	Female			
1999-2000 to 2004-05	4.65	4.42	5.76			
2004-05 to 2009-10	2.53	2.89	0.76			

Source: Chandrasekhar and Ghosh, 2011

Table 2.2 shows that there has been a significant fall in employment growth in non-agricultural sector in 2009-10 compared to 2004-05. This fall is the largest in case of female workers.

Table 2.3: Number of persons in rural workforce in India (million)

	Male	Female	Total
2004-05	218.9	124	342.9
2009-10	231.9	104.5	336.4

Source: Same as in table 1.2

Table 2.3 observes there has been a fall in rural employment despite the implementation of MGNREGA. Also, this decline is accompanied by fall in labor force participation rate, particularly by women (Chowdhury 2011).

❖ Analysis 3: Rise in income inequality over the years

Despite the rise in income levels due to increased wage employment under government programmes like NREGA and PMGSY, the income inequality has not fallen. Instead, it has consistently risen since the dawn of this century. In the absence of systematic data on the distribution of income in India, it is to the data on distribution of consumption expenditure that is used for assessing trends in growth and inequality. India's impressive growth record of Per Capita Income over the years has been accompanied by a widening income inequality. The same trend must hold true for growth and distribution of consumption expenditure.

Table 3.1: Rural population and Mean Consumption Expenditure in India

Year	Rural Population (n Rural Per Capita	Gini Index of Inequality
	millions)	Consumption Expenditure	(rural)
		(in 1983 rupees)	
1983	543.3	112.63	0.3162
1987-88	595.2	127.32	0.3016
1993-94	660.9	128.20	0.2855
1999-2000	730.3	141.96	0.2630
2004-05	777.6	148.07	0.3048
2009-10	823.6	163.51	0.2992

Source: Census and NSSO data

As per table 3.1, the annual compound growth rate in per capita consumption was 1.44% in rural India. The Gini coefficient of inequality displays no particular trend of a rise but rather a stagnant nature in rural areas.

Table 3.2: Inequality by caste-groups in Rural India, 1983

	Standard	Coefficient	Krtscha	Per Capita	Population	Income	IS/PS
	Deviation	of Variation	Index	Consumption	share(PS)	share(IS)	
				Expenditure (in		l , ,	
				1983 rupees)			
SCST	60.21	0.6629	39.91	90.82	0.282	0.231	0.819
Others	132.12	1.1083	146.43	119.21	0.718	0.769	1.07
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Source: NSSO data- 38th and 66th round

Table 3.3: Inequality by caste-groups in Rural India, 2010

	Standard	Coefficient	Krtscha	Per Capita	Population	Income	IS/PS
	Deviation	of Variation	Index	Consumption	share(PS)	share(IS)	
				Expenditure (in			
				1983 rupees)			
SCST	88.78	0.6438	57.16	137.89	0.330	0.278	0.842
Others	259.09	1.4692	380.67	176.35	0.670	0.722	1.08
All	218.82	1.3373	292.62	163.63	1.000	1.000	

Source: NSSO data- 38th and 66th round

Table 3.2 and table 3.3 present caste-based inequality levels by use of three indices- standard deviation, coefficient of variation and Krtscha index- for rural India. Moreover, the ratio of income share to population share indicates relative group disadvantage. A ratio of less than unity for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, for instance, represents a relative disadvantage for the group. Although the ratio improves over the years for SCST and Others, it is difficult to observe any sign of caste-group inclusiveness. A deeper look into the three indices, especially krtscha index (Krtscha, 1994) suggests that overall inequality has increased, both within group and between groups.

Analysis 4: Real per capita income has been adversely affected due to high inflation and it has led to low savings and mobilization of funds. This has increased distress for rural households.

Table 4.1: Household Savings in India (%)

	2009-10	2011-12
Household Savings	25.2	22.3
Financial savings by Households	12	8
Savings by households in physical	13.1	14.3
assets		

Source: RBI handbook of statistics on the Indian economy

Table 4.2: Distribution of Investment (financial) by household (%), 2011-12

	Rural	Urban	All India
Cash at home	15.6	10.3	12.6
Bank deposit	46.9	44.1	45.3
Post office	3.8	2.0	2.8
PPF/PF	13.4	22.3	18.4
Stock market	1.8	3.6	2.8
Insurance	15.3	15.6	15.4
SHGs/Chit funds	2.5	1.8	2.1
Others	0.8	0.3	0.5

Source: NCAER-NSHIE 2011-12

As per table 4.1, it is observed that persistently high inflation since 2009 has led to negative real returns from financial instruments, especially bank and post office deposits. As a result, household savings have fallen. In addition to this, majority of rural household savings go into bank deposits which are not beneficial due to negative returns and only a small percentage of the total household investment goes in mobilizing funds for Self-Help Groups(SHGs) (table 4.2). This leads to low level of credit provisioning making rural households incapable of mobilizing funds for self-employed non-farm sector enterprises.

* Analysis 5: Class and caste differences have influence access to credit in rural areas and have a bearing on distress migration

Flow of credit has not been inclusive in rural India. Around 86.4% of farmers are in smaller farm-size category (less than or equal to 2 hectare) and majority of them are from socially marginalized castes (NSSO 2014). Low valuation of their farm dwellings oust them from loans provided by commercial banks. Also, at all-India level, the market value of owned fixed assets per enterprise was estimated at Rs. 2,31,869 (NSSO 2015 estimates on unincorporated non-agricultural enterprises). This results in non-approval of loan or low value of permitted loan. Moreover, the cooperative banks do discriminate as they are prone to interest group capture at the local level (Jodhka 1995; Kumar 2013). Upper-income class in rural areas tends to influence access to credit from both formal and informal sources.

Caste-based discrimination is significantly seen in the credit allocations. Higher castes are given more credit than lower castes in India (Dreze et al 1997; Sarap 1990). Using national data on household borrowings, it is analyzed that that banks do discriminate between borrowers on the basis of caste in the provision of credit. Weak evidence is found in the case of Commercial banks but cooperative banks provide strong evidence of discrimination in favor of higher-caste groups. However, this type of negative discrimination is visible only in areas where higher-caste dominates and it is insignificant in areas where marginalized class dominate.

It is observed that the organization, structure and bank bureaucracy of cooperative banks in India is captured by interest groups which gain hold of cooperative bank management which in turn influences the latter's lending decisions. Moreover, in some cases, interest rate-differential and disparities in repayment terms is also observed depending on borrower's caste.

Analysis 6: Pursuance of higher education can also be a possible explanation for fall in Labor Force Participation and rise in migration from rural to urban areas

Table 6.1: Percentage of persons reporting attending educational institutions as their Usual Status in the Age Groups 15-19 and 20-24 years in rural areas

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	Rural Male	Rural Female	
Age Group 15-19 years			
1999-2000	41.3	25.8	
2004-05	43.6	31.5	
2009-10	57.3	47.1	
Age Group 20-24 years			
1999-2000	8.6	2.9	
2004-05	9.1	3.9	
2009-10	16.6	7.5	

Source: NSSO data- Key indicators of Employment and Unemployment in India, 2009-10

As per table 6.1, it is observed that rural males and females in the age groups 15-19 and 20-24 years are increasingly pursuing higher education. It may be argued that the fall in LFPR is, to some extent, explained by this movement in favor of higher education among rural youth. But this does not explain the stagnancy in rural employment. Particularly, the case of fall in female LFPR is not fully explained by women pursuing higher education. Other factors are also at play inhibiting women from joining the rural workforce. A positive argument favoring this trend is the increasing realization of importance of education for rural development. What is the exact outcome of this outward movement from rural workforce will be visible in the coming years.

GAPS OF THE STUDY

- 1) NSSO household surveys measure only consumption data and not income. There is limitation to the available data sources. Moreover, there is lack of transparency in income and wealth statistics. Such data gaps need to be holistically dealt with.
- Although there is a lack of empirical studies that examine lower access to credit in rural India based on class and caste differences, yet it has a large bearing on growth of RNFS and distress migration.
- The paper examines the trend of distress migration which is not checked by the growth of rural non-farm sector in India. However, it does not examine the different types of migration patterns- rural to urban, rural to rural and urban to rural. Majority of the migration in India happens from rural to rural.

Conclusive Measure

RNFS is holding a significant role in the development of rural India. It has become an important source for supplementing rural income. Hence, public policy focus should be on designing framework and strengthening institutions responsible for creating employment opportunities in the sector, RNFS also holds vital importance in alleviating rural poverty and checking distress migration from rural to urban areas.

However, the sector is relatively under-researched part of the rural economy. The paper indicated that non-farm income from RNFS accounts for a substantial portion of household income. But there exist wide variations in growth of RNFS across states adding to rural to rural migration. The rise in education opportunities, taken up by rural youth, as an explanation for the fall in non-farm employment bodes well for the realization that education improves prospects of finding employment in well-paid and regular non-farm occupations or the prospects of getting selfemployed in future. It also has a significant bearing on the realization of the benefits of demographic dividend of the Indian economy. Education is immensely important for the upward social mobility of vulnerable sections like women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. These sections are majorly involved in agricultural and non-agricultural works. The Indian government has established a mechanism known as SETU (Self Employment & Talent Utilization) which will be a techno-financial, incubation and facilitation program to support all aspects of startup businesses and other self employment activities.

The flagship scheme MGNREGA has positively contributed towards non agricultural employment generation and raised income of rural households. This has also addressed distress migration. The recently allocated Rs. 6000 crore for the smart cities project would further help sustain non farm sector and accommodate many low skilled workers.

However the Indian fiscal and monetary authority need to check the persistently high rural inflation which adversely affects the real returns to rural populace.

Wealth and credit access also seems to influence growth of non-farm occupations. Lower asset valuations and discrimination in allocation of loans based on class and caste differences stands as an impediment in growth of RNFS. This needs to be checked through identification of such groups and subsidizing the credit allocation through interest-rate waivers and longer terms of repayment. Moreover, lobbying of the cooperative bank management should be addressed by ensuring transparency in dispatch of credit and reasons for disapproval.

The analysis of this paper suggests that the poor are inadequately placed to benefit from RNFS sector due to low education levels, wealth and social status. The indirect impacts of an expanding rural non-farm sector on migration and rural development need to be further examined.

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