



# IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN KARNATAKA: A STUDY

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## Abstract:

*The aim of this paper is to know the Impact of Migration on Agricultural Labourers in Karnataka. Migration has a significant impact on agricultural laborers in Karnataka. Karnataka is one of the states in India with a high level of internal migration, as people often move from rural areas to urban centers in search of better job opportunities and improved living conditions. As a result, the agricultural sector in Karnataka has experienced a shortage of labor, leading to a significant impact on agricultural laborers. One of the main impacts of migration on agricultural laborers in Karnataka is the shortage of labor in the agricultural sector. With many agricultural laborers moving to urban centers, farmers are left with a reduced workforce, which can affect the productivity of crops and the efficiency of farming operations. This can result in lower yields and higher costs for farmers, which can negatively impact their income and livelihoods. Another impact of migration on agricultural laborers in Karnataka is the changing nature of work in the agricultural sector. As farmers struggle to find enough labor to work on their fields, they often rely on mechanization and technology to perform tasks that were previously done manually. This can result in a shift in the types of skills and knowledge required for agricultural work, as well as a change in the work environment for laborers. In addition, migration can also lead to changes in the social and economic structures of rural communities. As more people move to urban centers, the social fabric of rural communities can be disrupted, leading to changes in cultural norms and traditions. This can also result in a shift in economic activities, as people who previously worked in agriculture may seek other types of employment. Overall, the impact of migration on agricultural laborers in Karnataka is significant, and it is important for policymakers and stakeholders to address the challenges faced by farmers and laborers in the agricultural sector. This can involve measures such as improving access to education and training, supporting the development of rural infrastructure, and promoting policies that encourage investment and growth in the agricultural sector.*

**Keywords:** *Impact, Migration, Agricultural Labourers, Karnataka etc.*

## INTRODUCTION:

The term migration refers to the people's movement from their native place to a new place, maybe permanently, temporarily or seasonally. The labour market for migrant workers in agriculture is notably disorderly, partly, because such workers' employment relationship is temporary. Karnataka is the eighth largest populated state in the country. About 70 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for livelihood. Labour is one of the most significant factors in determining the national income. Poverty is one of the main hindrances for the growth of any country, but it is a critical phenomenon where a unit of society is unable to achieve the basic requirements of life like food (including water), shelter, clothing, education, sanitation and healthcare. Rural population fails to get any non-farm employment; agriculture is the main livelihood and in this sector seasonal employment is found. Thus, labourers face many problems. Seasonal migration is a fact in rural Karnataka. Migration has become inevitable for people from regions that face usual shortages of rainfall or where population density is high in relation to land. Areas facing unresolved social or political conflicts also become vulnerable to high out-migration. Poverty, lack of local options, lack of local work trigger the situation and result in migration. Agricultural labourers move from one place to another depending on the demand for their labour. The women migrant workers are mainly engaged in nursing, and domestic services. In urban areas, many migrant women work as housemaid. They have their permanent houses in rural areas. They remit money to their family in the villages. Yearly once or twice they visit their native to meet their family members. This type of labour movement is called circular migration. In temporary or circular migration, workers move to their destinations for a limited period of time and after finishing their work they return to their homesteads.

Migration of agricultural labourers from rural areas to urban areas or other states has a significant impact on the agricultural sector of Karnataka. Karnataka is one of the major agricultural states in India, and migration affects the availability of labor in the sector. One of the significant impacts of migration on agricultural laborers is the shortage of labor. As a result, farmers are unable to complete their agricultural activities, such as sowing, planting, and harvesting, on time, leading to a decrease in crop yield. This shortage of labor also leads to increased wages for the remaining laborers, which can be costly for farmers. Another impact of migration is the changing demographic profile of agricultural laborers. The majority of migrants are young men, and their absence from the village affects the traditional division of labor, which relies heavily on women and older people. The absence of young men can also lead to a lack of social and economic support for the remaining family members. The migration of agricultural laborers also affects the social fabric of the village. With the departure of a significant number of young men, the village may lose its vibrancy and social cohesion. Moreover, migration can lead to increased crime rates and social problems in the village. Migration can also affect the health and well-being of agricultural laborers. Migrants often work in poor conditions, which can have adverse effects on their health. Furthermore, migrants may be exposed to different diseases, which can spread to the local population.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The aim of this paper is to know the Impact of Migration on Agricultural Labourers in Karnataka.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is based on secondary sources of data such as articles, journals, books, websites and other sources.

## IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN KARNATAKA:

Migration of agricultural labourers in Karnataka has had significant impacts on both the sending and receiving areas. The agricultural sector in the state is the largest employer, accounting for around 56% of the workforce. The state has seen a substantial increase in rural-to-urban migration, which has resulted in a shortage of labour in the agricultural sector. The impact of migration on agricultural labourers in Karnataka can be examined from different angles:

1. **Reduced agricultural productivity:** The shortage of labour in the agricultural sector has resulted in reduced productivity, as farmers are unable to hire the required number of workers for planting, harvesting and other farm operations. This has led to a decline in agricultural output, which has a direct impact on the income of agricultural labourers.
2. **Increased competition for jobs:** With the influx of migrants into urban areas, there is increased competition for jobs, which puts pressure on agricultural labourers to accept lower wages and poor working conditions. This can have a negative impact on their overall standard of living.
3. **Social and economic changes:** Migration has led to changes in the social and economic structure of rural areas. In many cases, the migration of young people from rural areas has resulted in a decline in traditional agricultural practices, as there is a shortage of labour to carry out these practices. This has led to a shift towards commercial agriculture, which has had an impact on the local ecosystem and the livelihoods of agricultural labourers.
4. **Changes in the rural-urban divide:** Migration has led to changes in the rural-urban divide, with urban areas becoming more important economically, socially and politically. This has led to a decline in the importance of rural areas, which has had a negative impact on the status of agricultural labourers.
5. **Remittance economy:** Migration has also resulted in the growth of a remittance economy, where migrant workers send money back to their families in the rural areas. This has had a positive impact on the standard of living of some agricultural labourers, but it can also lead to a dependency on remittances, which can have negative impacts in the long term.
6. **Gendered impacts:** Migration has different impacts on men and women in rural areas. Men are more likely to migrate to urban areas in search of employment, while women are left behind to carry out agricultural work. This has increased the workload of women and put pressure on them to manage both domestic and agricultural work.

7. **Health impacts:** The migration of agricultural laborers has also had health impacts. Many migrant workers are exposed to poor working conditions, including long hours and exposure to pesticides and other harmful substances. This can lead to health problems such as respiratory diseases, skin problems, and other illnesses.
8. **Land-use changes:** The migration of agricultural laborers has also led to changes in land use in rural areas. With the decline in traditional agricultural practices, there has been a shift towards commercial agriculture, which has resulted in the conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural uses. This can have a negative impact on the livelihoods of agricultural laborers who depend on agriculture for their income.
9. **Social changes:** Migration has led to changes in the social fabric of rural areas. With the migration of young people to urban areas, there has been a decline in social networks and traditional practices, which can have a negative impact on the overall wellbeing of agricultural laborers.
10. **Government policies:** Government policies related to migration, agriculture and rural development can also have an impact on the livelihoods of agricultural laborers. Policies that support rural development and promote agricultural productivity can help to mitigate the negative impacts of migration on agricultural laborers. Additionally, policies that provide social protection and access to basic services, such as health care and education, can also help to improve the standard of living of agricultural laborers in both sending and receiving areas.
11. **Reduced wages:** With a shortage of labor in the agricultural sector, farmers may offer lower wages to attract workers. This can lead to a reduction in the income of agricultural laborers, which can negatively impact their standard of living.
12. **Increased competition:** As the number of agricultural laborers decreases, those who remain may face increased competition for jobs. This can result in a more competitive and potentially exploitative labor market, where workers are willing to accept lower wages and poor working conditions to secure employment.
13. **Reduced access to social services:** Rural areas may experience a drain of skilled and educated people due to migration, leading to reduced access to social services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.
14. **Environmental impact:** The reduced workforce in the agricultural sector due to migration may lead to the abandonment of farmland or conversion of land to other uses, resulting in environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.
15. **Gendered impact:** Migration can have a different impact on male and female agricultural laborers. Female laborers may face greater difficulty finding work, as gender discrimination may limit their opportunities. Migration can also lead to the breakdown of traditional gender roles, as men who migrate may leave behind women who are expected to take on additional responsibilities in their absence.
16. **Opportunities for entrepreneurship:** Migration can also create opportunities for entrepreneurship and diversification of economic activities in rural areas. For example, those who migrate may return to their

home villages and start new businesses, such as agribusinesses or tourism ventures, which can create new job opportunities and boost local economic growth.

17. **Brain drain:** Migration can lead to a loss of skilled and educated laborers in the agricultural sector, as they may seek employment in other sectors or in urban areas. This can result in a loss of knowledge and expertise, which can negatively impact the productivity and innovation in the agricultural sector.

## CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, migration has had a complex impact on agricultural laborers in Karnataka. While migration can offer new opportunities and higher wages for some, it can also lead to labor shortages, social and economic displacement, and health and safety risks. As such, there is a need for policies that support the social and economic wellbeing of migrant workers and address the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in the context of migration. The pattern of growth in the past two-three decades has steadily widened the gap between agriculture and non-agriculture; between rural and urban areas; and also between the states with good and critical growth indicators. It has steadily concentrated in a few areas and a few states. In India, states like Karnataka, Kerala and Gujarat emerged as promising zones of development, a dynamic often conflated with economic growth, whereas states like Bihar, Orissa and Chhattisgarh are known for appalling growth indicators. Migration of labour from states with critical growth indicators to states with comparatively better growth indicators, often manifested in more and better livelihood options, is a common phenomenon. But intra-state migration within states like Karnataka reflect various complex layers of a socio-economic context that influence labour mobility, including push factors in a comparatively well-to-do state. Like many other Indian states, intra-state migration is not uncommon in Karnataka. The state, however, is primarily known for its pull factors as it draws thousands of labour as well as professionals from other parts of the country every year. Nevertheless, peripheral characteristics are visibly prevalent in this state with dominant features of what might be called the “core” space. Regional disparity has been a political issue in Karnataka and the southern part of the state has been the dominant geopolitical zone of the state. This dynamic is evident in the better quality of basic infrastructure, irrigation facilities, availability of loan etc. in south Karnataka. These factors, essential for overall development of any geopolitical region, are often manifested in push and pull factors and not surprisingly every year thousands of people, especially marginal farmers and landless agricultural labour, migrate from north Karnataka to south Karnataka as well as other states like Goa and Maharashtra. Karnataka’s migration patterns present a good example to research development of “underdevelopment” within a somewhat “developed” geopolitical zone. In other words, studying migration to and from Karnataka could facilitate in understanding the dynamics that manifests/preserves kernels of a marginalized socio-economic context in a well-to-do state like Karnataka that pulls students and professionals from all over the country at a massive scale.

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