

Seasonal Migrants and Quality of Life: Sugarcane Cutter Migrants at Destination and Source

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Acknowledging the paucity of studies on quality of life at destination and source (especially) in the case of seasonal migration, the article attempts to (a) assess the disparities in quality of life at destination and source villages, (b) find out the extent of deprivation of quality of life indicators at destination, and (c) look into the violation of human rights at destination. The empirical evidence suggests distressed conditions coupled with the system of advance play crucial role for migration. Savings of a majority of migrants are meagre. Moreover, there is severe deterioration in the quality of life at destination on crucial indicators and human rights are violated. Migrants make the compromise on quality of life as they come to live, i.e., to survive.

Seasonal migration of rural to rural type in India has increased due to a variety of factors. In rich agriculture producing regions, the demand for agricultural labour has increased as local labour is unavailable in large numbers. Therefore, recruitment of labour (especially in gangs) from socially and economically backward regions through the network of contractors/middlemen/*mukadams* is evident in the rural economy. For instance, large numbers of rural poor are hired through middlemen in the rich agricultural areas of Punjab and West Bengal. Further, rural to rural inter-state, inter-district and also intra-district migration for earning livelihood is evident on a large scale. The glaring regional and socio-economic imbalances in rural development, even within state and within district, are responsible for such circular movements of the rural poor. The National Commission on Rural Labour (NCRL), 1991 pointed out that uneven economic development is the major cause of large scale migration in general from

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