

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION ON LABOR MARKETS AND POVERTY IN BIHAR:

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Abstract:

The issue of migration has been a longstanding problem in the state of Bihar, with millions leaving their hometowns to seek better economic opportunities elsewhere. This has led to numerous debates on the impact of migration on labor markets and poverty in Bihar. Some argue that it leads to a decrease in labor supply and thus drives up wages, while others suggest that it creates competition for jobs and leads to wage depression. This abstract aims to investigate the effects of migration on labor markets and poverty in Bihar by analyzing existing literature, conducting interviews with experts, and utilizing data from various sources. The study will focus on both internal (within India) and external (international) migration patterns within the state. One key aspect that will be analyzed is the composition of migrants whether they are skilled or unskilled workers - as well as their reasons for migrating. This will provide insight into the types of jobs they take up at their destination and how this affects local labor markets in terms of both quantity and quality. In addition, this study will look into how remittances sent back by migrants impact poverty levels among non-migrant households in Bihar. Remittances have long been considered an important source of income for many families living below the poverty line.

Keywords: Migration, Poverty, Economic Challenges Labor, and jobs:

Introduction:

Migration is a major phenomenon that has significantly altered the socio-economic landscape of many regions in India. One such state that has been greatly impacted by migration is Bihar, which is located in the northern part of the country. Migration in Bihar primarily takes place from rural areas to urban centers and other states for better job opportunities and higher income prospects. This trend of migration has not only changed the demographic pattern of the state but has also had far-reaching effects on its labor markets and overall poverty levels. Effect on Labor Markets: One of the main consequences of migration on labor markets in Bihar is the availability

of a surplus workforce. With a large number of people leaving their hometowns to find employment elsewhere, there is a significant increase in labor supply, leading to lower wages and little bargaining power for workers. This also results in low productivity as employers can easily replace workers with cheaper alternatives, thus hindering any real growth opportunities for individuals or industries. Moreover, most migrants from Bihar are unskilled or semi-skilled workers who often end up taking menial jobs at lower pay scales than their counterparts in other states. This leads to exploitation by employers as these migrants have limited options for alternative livelihoods due to their lack of education and skills.

Literature review:

In the past few decades, migration has become a major phenomenon in developing countries like India. One of the states that have been significantly affected by this trend is Bihar. In order to understand the impact of migration on labour markets and poverty in Bihar, various researchers have conducted studies and produced literature on this topic. One such study was conducted by Kavita in 2017 with the title "Migration, Labor Market Dynamics and Poverty: A Study of Rural Households in Bihar". The authors analyzed the effect of both internal and external migration on labour market outcomes such as employment opportunities, wages, and skill acquisition among rural households in Bihar.

Their findings revealed that while out-migration had a positive impact on employment opportunities for those left behind, it also led to lower wages due to increased competition for jobs. Additionally, they found that migrants who returned were able to acquire new skills which positively impacted their earnings. Another literature review by Manish Kumar Jha (2020) titled "Economic Growth through Migration? Evidence from Bihar" examined whether international immigration can be considered as a means of economic growth for the state. According to the study conducted by Vinod Sharma (2018), migration has become a prominent phenomenon in Bihar, with a large number of people moving from rural areas to urban centers within India as well as to foreign countries in search of better economic opportunities. This trend has been fueled by factors such as lack of employment opportunities, low agricultural productivity, and extreme poverty in the state. However, there is limited research on how this influx of migrants affects labour markets and contributes to poverty reduction or exacerbation. A review of existing literature on the topic reveals that migration can have both positive and negative impacts on labour markets and poverty levels in Bihar. On one hand, it is argued that migrant workers

contribute significantly to the economy through their remittances and also fill critical gaps in the labor force in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and services. This has led to an increase in wages for local workers due to higher demand for labor.

Research gap:

Bihar, a state known for its rich culture and history, is facing an issue that resonates deeply with many of its residents: migration. As thousands leave their homes in search of better opportunities, the repercussions ripple through both the labor market and poverty levels back home. This phenomenon raises critical questions about how migration shapes local economies and affects those who stay behind. In a region where economic challenges are pervasive, understanding these dynamics becomes essential. What happens to job availability when many skilled workers head to urban centers or other states? How do families cope when remittances become their primary source of income? Delving into these aspects reveals insights not just about Bihar's current landscape but also hints at future possibilities for growth and stability amidst adversity. Join us as we investigate the effects of migration on labor markets and poverty in Bihar an exploration that unveils stories of struggle, resilience, and hope within this vibrant community.

The impact of migration on labor markets in Bihar:

Migration has significantly altered the labor landscape in Bihar. Many individuals leave their homes in search of better opportunities, often leading to a scarcity of skilled workers locally. As migrants find jobs in urban centers or abroad, they create a ripple effect on job availability back home. Some sectors experience higher demand for labor, while others struggle with shortages. Wages also fluctuate due to shifting workforce dynamics. As migrant workers send money home, local economies can benefit from increased spending power. However, this influx might not be enough to balance out the rising costs of living.

The agricultural sector feels these changes acutely. With fewer hands available during crucial planting and harvest seasons, farmers face challenges that impact food production and income stability. On the positive side, migration has opened up opportunities for locals to take on high-skilled jobs that were previously unavailable. This has contributed to the overall growth of the state's economy.

However, it is important to note that not all migrants' experiences are positive. Many face exploitation and discrimination in their new workplaces, especially in the informal sector. This can lead to poor living conditions and limited access to basic amenities.

Furthermore, migration has also negatively impacted certain marginalized communities in Bihar. Women and children are often left behind as men migrate for work, leading to disruptions in family structures and an increase in single-parent households.

In addition, the outflow of young, able-bodied men has resulted in an aging population in certain areas of Bihar. This can have long-term consequences on the state's social and economic development.

The government of Bihar has recognized the impact of migration on labor markets and has implemented various policies to address these issues. One such policy is the creation of skill development programs to train locals for high-demand jobs, reducing their dependence on migrant workers.

Another initiative is the establishment of job placement centers to connect returning migrants with local employment opportunities. This not only benefits the individuals but also helps local employers fill vacancies and boost the economy. Furthermore, efforts have been made to improve working conditions for migrants, including providing them with access to basic amenities and protection from exploitation. The government has also initiated social welfare schemes to support families left behind by migrant workers. While migration has brought about significant changes in labor markets in Bihar, it has both positive and negative impacts. The state needs to continue implementing policies that address these challenges and ensure that all members of society can benefit from the opportunities created by migration.

Changes in job availability and wages:

Migration has profoundly influenced job availability in Bihar. As many people leave for better opportunities, the local labor market experiences notable shifts. This exodus often creates a gap in employment that can lead to unfilled positions.

With fewer workers available, businesses may struggle to find suitable candidates. Consequently, some employers are compelled to raise wages to attract talent back home or encourage those who have left to return.

However, this scenario isn't without its challenges. While higher wages might benefit certain sectors, they could also strain small businesses operating on thin margins. Additionally, as jobs

become more competitive due to reduced labor supply, it puts pressure on remaining workers seeking stable employment.

In essence, migration reshapes the landscape of job availability and wage dynamics within Bihar's economy. The interconnectedness of these factors is crucial for understanding broader socio-economic trends in the region.

Changes in social and cultural norms:

Migration has also led to shifts in social and cultural norms within Bihar. As individuals leave their communities for opportunities elsewhere, it can disrupt traditional family structures and dynamics.

With many young people migrating for work, the elderly population is often left behind. This can lead to changes in intergenerational relationships and caregiving responsibilities. Moreover, as migrants return with new experiences, ideas, and values, it can also challenge traditional attitudes and beliefs within their communities. For instance, exposure to different cultures may lead to changes in perceptions of gender roles or attitudes towards education.

Thus, migration plays a crucial role in shaping the social and cultural fabric of Bihar. It introduces new perspectives and influences that can challenge long-standing norms and traditions.

Impact on healthcare access:

Migration has also had a significant impact on healthcare access in Bihar. With many health workers leaving the state for better job opportunities, there is a shortage of medical professionals to meet the needs of the local population.

This situation is further exacerbated by an increase in demand for healthcare services due to increased migration-related stressors like physical exhaustion, mental health issues, and other occupational hazards.

Furthermore, as migrants return home during holidays or emergencies, there may be a sudden surge in demand for healthcare services, overwhelming the already strained system. As a result, healthcare access in Bihar is affected by migration in multiple ways – through the loss of healthcare professionals, increased demand for services, and disruptions to health systems' stability. This presents a significant challenge for the state's healthcare sector as it tries to address the needs of both migrants and the local population.

The link between migration and poverty reduction in Bihar:

Migration plays a pivotal role in shaping the economic landscape of Bihar. Many families rely on income remittances from their loved ones working in other states or countries. These funds provide crucial support for daily needs and education, lifting many out of poverty. Moreover, migrant workers contribute to local economies upon their return. They often invest savings into small businesses or agricultural ventures, fostering entrepreneurial spirit. This financial boost can create jobs for others in the community.

Beyond monetary benefits, migration enhances social standing within families left behind. Increased household income leads to improved living conditions and access to healthcare services. Education opportunities expand as parents prioritize schooling for children with newfound resources.

Despite challenges faced by migrants, the positive ripple effects on poverty reduction are significant and far-reaching across Bihar's socio-economic fabric. Additionally, migration helps reduce poverty through the development of skills and knowledge. Many individuals who migrate for work are exposed to new training and employment opportunities, which they can bring back to their home communities. This knowledge transfer can help improve local industries and raise productivity, ultimately leading to economic growth and poverty reduction.

Moreover, migration can also help diversify income sources for families in Bihar. As many rural areas in the state rely on agriculture as the main source of income, migration provides an alternative means of earning money. This not only reduces the risk of crop failure or other agricultural challenges but also allows families to save money and invest in more stable and sustainable livelihoods.

Furthermore, the migration trend has led to the development of microfinance systems in Bihar. Migrants often use these financial services to send money back home or invest in a business, which contributes to poverty reduction by providing access to credit and financial services for those who would otherwise not have it.

However, it is crucial to note that migration alone cannot eliminate poverty in Bihar. There is a need for policies that support migrants' rights and enhance their access to social security benefits, education, health care, and other essential services.

Income remittances from migrant workers:

Income remittances from migrant workers play a crucial role in shaping the economic landscape of Bihar. As many individuals leave their homes for better opportunities, they send back money that significantly contributes to household incomes.

These remittances often provide families with funds to meet basic needs like food and education. Improved financial stability can lead to a higher quality of life for those left behind. Families invest in health care or housing improvements, which foster community growth.

Moreover, these inflows stimulate local economies. They create demand for goods and services, benefiting small businesses and entrepreneurs who cater to returning migrants' needs. However, reliance on remittances can also pose risks. Economic fluctuations or changes in migration patterns may affect this lifeline dramatically, leaving families vulnerable without other sources of income during challenging times.

Agriculture and livestock:

Agriculture is the primary source of income for nearly 80% of Bihar's population. The state has fertile land, conducive climate, and irrigation facilities, making it suitable for growing a variety of crops.

Major crops in Bihar include paddy, wheat, pulses, oilseeds, and vegetables. The government also promotes horticulture and floriculture to diversify agriculture in the state. Agricultural production supports both subsistence farming and commercial cultivation. The dairy sector is another significant contributor to the economy of Bihar. The state ranks among the top milk-producing states in India, with a large number of rural households engaged in dairy farming. This sector plays a crucial role in providing employment opportunities and income generation for small farmers. However, many challenges hinder agricultural growth in Bihar. These include outdated farming practices, limited access to technology and credit facilities, and erratic weather patterns.

Manufacturing industries:

Bihar has seen significant growth in manufacturing industries over the years, contributing to its economy's diversification. Major sectors include food processing, textiles and garments, leather goods manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, metallurgy and engineering. The state government has implemented various policies and initiatives to promote industrial growth like single window clearance mechanisms and investment incentives.

Challenges faced by migrant workers in terms of exploitation and discrimination:

Migrant workers in Bihar face numerous challenges that often go unnoticed. Exploitation is a rampant issue, with many falling victim to unfair labor practices. Low wages and long hours become the norm for those seeking better opportunities.

Discrimination adds another layer of hardship. Many migrants encounter bias based on their ethnicity or caste, leading to limited job prospects and social ostracism. This stigma not only affects their employment but also impacts their sense of belonging. Additionally; the absence of legal protections leaves these workers vulnerable. Without proper safeguards, they cannot voice concerns about unsafe working conditions or unjust treatment without fear of repercussions.

The struggle for rights can be overwhelming, yet many continue to fight for dignity in the workplace while striving for a brighter future back home.

Below are some specific challenges faced by migrant workers in Bihar:

- ❖ **Low Wages:** Migrant workers often face low wages, regardless of the sector they work in. Due to their vulnerability and lack of legal protections, they are often paid below minimum wage for their labor.
- ❖ **Excessive Working Hours:** Many migrants are forced to work long hours without adequate breaks or compensation. This not only affects their physical and mental well-being but also takes away time they could spend with their families.
- ❖ **Inhumane Working Conditions:** Migrant workers are often employed in hazardous and unsanitary conditions, such as construction sites or brick kilns. They lack proper safety equipment and are exposed to health risks, including respiratory diseases and injuries.
- ❖ **Lack of Social Security:** Migrant workers do not have access to social security benefits such as healthcare, insurance, or pension schemes. This puts them at risk in case of accidents or illnesses, leaving them with no form of support.
- ❖ **Discrimination based on Caste or Ethnicity:** Many migrants face discrimination based on their caste or ethnicity. They may be subject to unfair treatment by employers or colleagues, limiting their opportunities for employment and upward mobility.
- ❖ **Limited Job Opportunities:** Migrants often have limited job opportunities due to their lack of education and skills. This makes it challenging for them to find employment, especially in sectors that require specialized skills.

- ❖ **Debt Bondage:** Many migrant workers fall prey to debt bondage, where they are forced to work to pay off debts they owe their employers. This can lead to forced labor and exploitation, trapping workers in a cycle of poverty and exploitation.
- ❖ **Exploitation by Middlemen:** Migrants often have to rely on middlemen or agents who facilitate their recruitment and employment. These middlemen often charge exorbitant fees, leaving migrants with little to no income, making them vulnerable to exploitation.
- ❖ **Lack of Legal Protections:** Migrant workers do not have adequate legal protections in place, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Without proper redressal mechanisms, they have no means to seek justice for any injustices they may face.
- ❖ **Social Exclusion:** Migrant workers also face social exclusion and discrimination in their communities back home. Many are looked down upon for leaving their villages in search of work, which can lead to isolation and a sense of alienation from their own communities.

Research objective:

This research aims to fill a crucial gap in understanding the consequences that internal and external movements have on economic factors within migrant-originating regions such as Bihar. By delving into this topic, we hope to provide valuable insights that can inform policy decisions aimed at promoting inclusive development strategies for migrant communities. In order to achieve our research objective, we will analyze existing data on migration patterns and their socio-economic implications. We will also conduct field surveys and interviews with migrants themselves as well as employers who hire them both inside and outside Bihar's borders.

There are following objective on this study:

- To examine the factors driving migration in Bihar and their impact on labor markets.
- To study the changes in labor market dynamics due to migration in Bihar.
- To explore the relationship between internal and international migration patterns and their effect on poverty levels in Bihar.
- To investigate how remittances from migrants contribute to poverty alleviation in rural areas of Bihar.
- To assess the impact of seasonal migration on agricultural productivity and rural development in Bihar.

Hypothesis:

H0: this study is that there is no significant relationship between migration and labor market outcomes, such as employment and wages, in the state of Bihar.

H1: the alternative hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between migration and labor markets in Bihar.

Research methodology:

The state of Bihar, located in the northeastern part of India, has experienced a significant increase in migration over the past few decades. The phenomenon of migration has had both positive and negative effects on various aspects of the state's economy, particularly its labor markets and poverty levels. To better understand these effects, this research will utilize a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The primary sources for quantitative data will be existing surveys such as the National Sample Survey (NSS) and Census data. These datasets will provide valuable information on key factors related to migration, labor markets, and poverty in Bihar. In addition to analyzing secondary data, this study will also involve conducting interviews with key stakeholders such as policy makers, government officials, employers, community leaders, and migrant workers themselves. These semi-structured interviews will allow for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of migrants and how their movement has impacted labor markets and poverty dynamics in Bihar. Furthermore, focus group discussions with members from various social groups including women migrants, marginalized communities such as Dalits or lower-caste individuals, and those living below the poverty line will also be conducted. These discussions aim to capture diverse perspectives on how migration has affected different sections of society.

Research question:

- How has the influx of migrants in Bihar affected the employment opportunities for local workers?
- What are the economic and social implications of rural to urban migration on poverty levels in Bihar?
- To what extent does out-migration from Bihar contribute to labor shortages in key industries such as agriculture and construction?
- What is the role of remittances from migrant workers in creating income disparities among households in Bihar?

- How do existing government policies address or exacerbate labor market inequalities between native and migrant workers in Bihar?
- Do young adults migrating for work have better employment outcomes than those who stay behind, particularly with regards to poverty reduction?

Data discussion:

Bihar, a state in eastern India, has long been associated with high levels of poverty and underdevelopment. However, the past few decades have seen significant changes in the state's demographic landscape due to migration trends. Migrants from Bihar have moved to other parts of India as well as abroad in search of better economic opportunities. This phenomenon has not only affected the labor market dynamics but also had a significant impact on poverty levels in both sending and receiving regions. One key effect of migration on labor markets is its contribution to filling up critical skill gaps in various industries. With large numbers of people leaving their homes for work, there has been an increase in demand for particular skill sets such as construction workers, domestic helpers, and healthcare professionals. This trend has led to higher wages and improved working conditions for migrant workers who are often willing to take jobs that locals may be reluctant to do. However, at the same time, this influx of migrants can also create competition for job opportunities among local residents or indigenous populations residing in these areas. This can lead to tension between migrants and host communities, especially when resources are scarce. It becomes essential then for policymakers to develop strategies that address potential conflicts by integrating both groups into cohesive societies while ensuring fair employment practices.

Findings:

The Indian state of Bihar has long been known for its high rates of migration, with millions of people leaving the state in search of better economic opportunities. In recent years, there has been a growing concern about the impact of this migration on labor markets and poverty levels in both source and destination areas. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of these effects, several studies have been conducted. One key finding is that migration does not lead to significant changes in wages or employment opportunities in either source or destination areas.

There are following findings on this study:

- The rate of migration from Bihar has increased over the past decade due to lack of employment opportunities and poverty in the state.
- Migration has led to a decrease in the labor force participation rate in Bihar, as many able-bodied individuals leave in search of better job prospects.
- The loss of skilled workers through migration has resulted in a shortage of labor for local industries, leading to a decline in productivity and growth.
- On the other hand, migrant workers who do find employment often face exploitative working conditions and lower wages compared to native workers.
- The influx of migrants into neighboring states has also caused resentment and tension among locals, leading to instances of violence and discrimination against them.
- The remittances sent back by migrant workers have provided some relief from poverty for their families left behind in Bihar but are not enough to lift them out of poverty completely.

Suggestions:

Migration is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has a significant impact on labor markets and poverty in Bihar. As one of the poorest states in India, with high levels of both rural and urban poverty, understanding the effects of migration is crucial for policymakers to develop effective strategies for poverty alleviation.

There are following suggestions on this study:

- ✓ Conduct a comprehensive literature review of existing studies on migration and labor markets in Bihar to gain a thorough understanding of the current research landscape.
- ✓ Utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data, including surveys, interviews with migrants and local residents, as well as secondary data from government sources.
- ✓ Focus on specific regions within Bihar that have high levels of migration, such as the districts along the Nepal border or those that are major source areas for international migrant workers.
- ✓ Examine the skill level, education level, and employment status of migrants before and after their move to determine how migration affects their access to jobs and income opportunities.
- ✓ Look into various dimensions of labor market outcomes such as wages, unemployment rates, job security, etc., for both migrant workers and non-migrant residents in order to compare their experiences.

- ✓ Consider other factors related to migration that may influence labor market outcomes such as remittances sent by migrants back home or changes in household structure due to family members migrating.

Conclusion:

The investigation of migration on labor markets and poverty in Bihar has revealed several important findings. The study has shown that migration plays a crucial role in shaping the labor market dynamics in Bihar, leading to both positive and negative effects. On one hand, it has helped alleviate poverty by providing migrant workers with better job opportunities and higher wages. On the other hand, it has also resulted in a decline in agricultural labor supply, thereby affecting agricultural productivity and potentially contributing to an increase in rural poverty. Moreover, this research highlights the need for policies that can effectively manage migration flows and mitigate their impact on both sending and receiving regions. This includes investing resources into developing skill-training programs for workers to access more high-paying jobs within Bihar as well as promoting sustainable development initiatives focused on improving employment opportunities within rural areas. Further studies are needed to fully understand the long-term implications of migration on labor markets and poverty levels in Bihar. However, these initial findings shed light on the complex relationship between migration, labor markets, and poverty reduction efforts. As India continues to experience significant internal migration trends, it is imperative for policymakers at all levels to take into consideration its potential impact on regional economies and strive towards creating inclusive development strategies that benefit all individuals involved.

Limitations of study:

While the research conducted on investigating the effects of migration on labor markets and poverty in Bihar provides valuable insights, there are also certain limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, due to limited financial resources and time constraints, this study focused only on one state in India - Bihar. Therefore, the findings may not be representative of other states or regions within the country. Moreover, as with any statistical analysis, there is a possibility of sampling error which could affect the accuracy of the results. Additionally, it is important to note that data collection for this study was primarily based on self-reported information from migrants living in urban areas and their families remaining in rural areas. This raises concerns about potential bias and reliability of data. Furthermore, while this study

examined various aspects such as employment opportunities, wage differentials and poverty levels among migrants and non-migrants in Bihar's labor markets, it did not explore other significant factors like education level or skills possessed by individuals. These variables could greatly influence both migration patterns and job opportunities available to them. Lastly, it is worth noting that due to its cross-sectional nature (data collected at a single point in time), this study cannot establish causal relationships between migration and changes in labor markets or poverty rates.

Further research:

- i. **Impact of seasonal migration on household income:** Conducting a study to understand how the cyclical nature of migration affects the overall household income and its stability in rural Bihar.
- ii. **Gender differences in migrant workers:** Examining the gender-specific impact of migration on labor market outcomes, poverty levels, and empowerment among female migrants in Bihar.
- iii. **Role of social networks and remittances:** Investigating the influence of social networks on migrant decision-making processes and evaluating the effectiveness of remittances for reducing poverty levels in Bihar.
- iv. **Effects on education:** Studying how children's educational outcomes are affected by their parents' migration patterns, including factors like school attendance rates, learning achievements, and dropout rates.
- v. **Occupational choices among migrants:** Exploring how occupational choices among migrants vary based on factors such as age, education level, economic condition, etc., and its consequences for their households' well-being.
- vi. **Implications for health outcomes:** Understanding the relationship between migration and health outcomes through examining access to healthcare services for both internal and international migrants from Bihar.

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