Nature and characteristics of labour out-migration from rural Malda district, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Migration of labour has both positive and negative effects on receiving area as well as sending areas. This research work deals with the nature and pattern of labour out-migration from Malda District, West Bengal and working condition at the place of destination. For the study both, primary and secondary data has been used. Primary data are collected through structured, pre-tested household scheduled by adopting multi-stages stratified random sampling technique. The study results that labour-migration is highly exist among socially and economically vulnerable society like Scheduled Caste, scheduled Tribe, Minority and landless section. The nature of migration is seasonal and semi-permanent in character. Mainly young to middle age male are more migratory. The labourers are migrated from the district mainly due to economic push factors *viz.* Low profit of agriculture, lack of non-farm employment opportunities, landlessness, indebtedness etc.

Key Words : Labour out-migration, Nature and characteristic, Working condition, Malda District.

INTRODUCTION

Recently Social Scientists have been paying attention in concentrating and probing on the issues of population dynamics and the problems associated with migration. From the Paleolithic age to the colonial period, a migratory group of people have established a new empire and have colonized many countries (Todaro, 1969). These were happened mainly due to natural environmental factors and party due to political factors. Such international migration has been declining in recent time. Modern migration is generally internal migration or more preciously the migration of labour in response to economic change. Global estimates also report that the size of internal migrants is four times larger than that of international migrants (Human Development Report, 2009). In developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America the migration is the result of high fertility and the lack of proper job opportunities (Haan and Rogaly, 2002).

Continuing interactions between migrants and rural households suggest that a joint-household model would be more appropriate than an individual-level model of migration decisions (Ravenstein, 1885). The perspective that migration is not driven by labour market imperfections only, but by a variety of market failures, including missing or incomplete capital and insurance markets, is a trademark of the more recent New Economics of Migration Labour (NELM) (Stark and Bloom, 1985; Stark, 1991).

The fundamental view of the new economics of labor migration is presented in Stark (1991) and Stark and Bloom (1985). Rather than being entirely the domain of individuals, migration decisions are viewed as taking place within a larger context, typically the household, which potentially consists of individuals with diverse preferences and differential access to income and is influenced by its social milieu

The developing countries are being experienced a high rate of population growth, rapid urbanisation, and growing regional inequality. These regional inequalities induced rural people to reside in urban areas for their livelihood through labours. In this perspective, labour migration is also realised as a transitional step before a permanent change of residence (Gupta and Prajapati, 1998). Moreover, recent trends in labour migration indicate that a growing number of migrants choose to maintain strong links with their villages because of social ties and a long-term intention to look for a better life in the village (Deshingkar, 2006; Deshingkar *et al.*, 2008; Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003). In the economy of rural households of developing countries, labour migration plays an important role in securing household survival as well as providing additional income to household members (Todaro and Maruszko, 1987).

Numerous researchers have been put forward to finding out the nature and process of international and internal migration in India. Many of these are either macro level or bring complexity due to definitional issues of migration and labour migration and inadequate data at the micro level (Rao and Reddy, 2004). The study on migration includes all aspect of migration *i.e.* streams, marriage, education etc., while labour migration confined only economic aspect of migration thereby, economists paid more emphasized on studying labour migration. They represent the migration of labour in the mold of the production function and market economy ignoring the emotional, social and other geographical values. On the other hand, most of the study on labour migration emphasized mainly on the place of destination rather a place of origin. The present study aims to analyze pattern and characteristics of labour out-migration from Malda District, West Bengal,

Objectives :

The present study mainly aims to analyze the Pattern of labour migration from Malda District with the view of following objectives
    1. To study socio-economic condition of migrants of Malda District
    2. To analyse the nature and characteristics of labour migration from the district.
    3. To study the working conditions of the migrated labour at the destination.

METHODOLOGY

This study is basically the empirical investigation about the nature of rural unskilled labour out-migration from Malda District. The study incorporates Malda District in West Bengal. For the purpose of the study total, 200 households (100 households having at least one member as migrant labour and 100 non-migrant households) have been chosen for a personal interview. In an attempt to select a representative sample of village society, a three steps multistage sample techniques have been adopted in the selection of the district as the universe, blocks as a stratum, village panchayat as a primary unit and the number of sample household respondents as an ultimate unit as follows :

Both, the primary and secondary data have been collected for the present study. In order to collect data, a semi-structured pre-tested interview schedule has been used. Before undertaking

the main survey, a pre-tested schedule have administered tentatively to five migrant and five non-migrant households in order to test the validity of the schedule. This pre-test interview schedule has helped in the removal of unwarranted and the modified final schedule. Suitable cross checks and rechecks have carried out to minimize bias in the response. Direct Personal Interview method has been adopted to collect the data pertaining to the socio-economic status, factors, remittances and the economic impact of migration and other aspects relating to the overall objectives of the study.
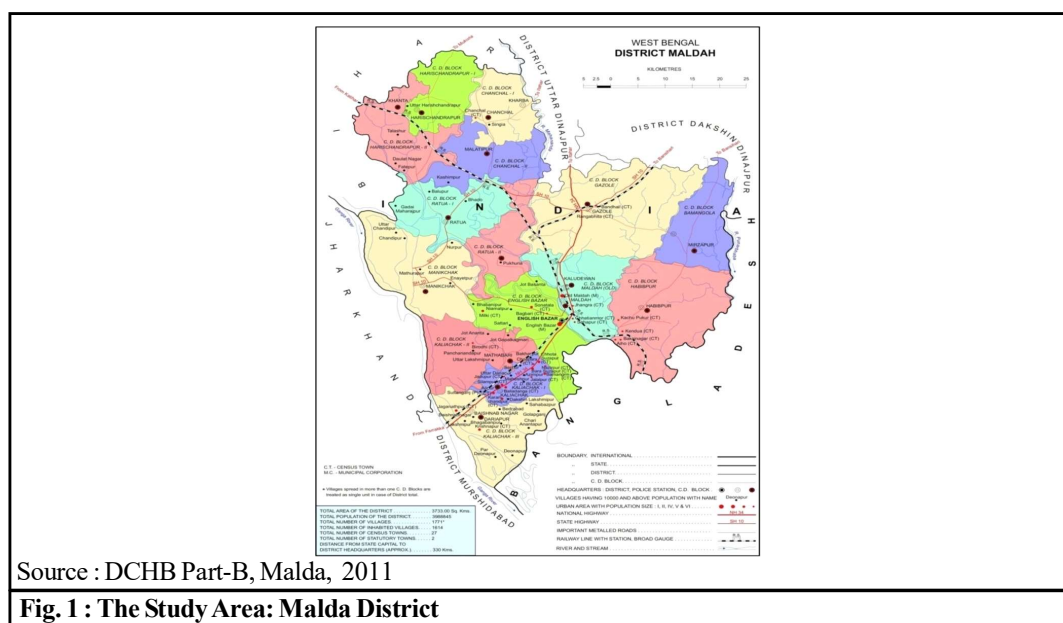
A brief profile about the study area :

The gateway of North Bengal, Malda District once the capital of Gour-Banga with its 3733sq km area lies 347 km north of Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal, which shares 4.21 % of the total geographical area of West Bengal.

The district consists of two subdivisions, that are Sadar and Chanchal, and Englishbazar is the headquarters station of the district as well as the Sadar subdivision. Chanchal Sub-Division which consists of 6 CD Blocks and the Sadar Sub-Division constitutes with 9 CDs.

Physiography :

Physiographically the entire land of the district is classified into Tal, Diara, and Barind. This portion is washed by the waves of the rivers the Ganges, Mahananda, Fulahar, Kalindri and had been the witness of different empires raised, flourished and cast down. The district consists mainly of low lying plains, sloping towards the south with undulating areas on the northeast. The river Mahananda divides the district into two regions-the eastern region consisting mainly of old alluvial and relatively unfertile soil is commonly known as "Barind".

The western region is further subdivided by the river Kalindri into two areas, the northern area is known as "Tal." It is low lying and vulnerable to flood during the rainy season, the southern area consists of very fertile land and is thickly populated, commonly known as "Diara ". The river Ganges is flowing along the south-western boundary of the district. Other important rivers are Kalindri, Tangoan , Punarbhaba, Pagla, and Bhagirathi.

Source : DCHB Part-B, Malda, 2011

Fig. 1 : The Study Area: Malda District

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The climate of the district is rather Extreme-very hot and fuggy during summer season, with abundant rains and moisture in the air throughout the year. Basically, there are four seasons in the year. The cold season start about the middle of November and continues till the end of February. The period from March to May is the summer season. The rainy season starts in June with the coming of south-west monsoons and continues till the middle of September. October and the first half of November constitutes the post monsoons season. The normal rainfall is 1453.1 mm. The maximum precipitation occurs during the period from June to September.

Demography :

As per 2011, the total population of the Malda District is 3,988,845. In 2011, Children under 0-6 formed 15.27 per cent of total population of the District compared to 19.45 per cent of 2001. There was net change of -4.18 per cent in this compared to previous census.
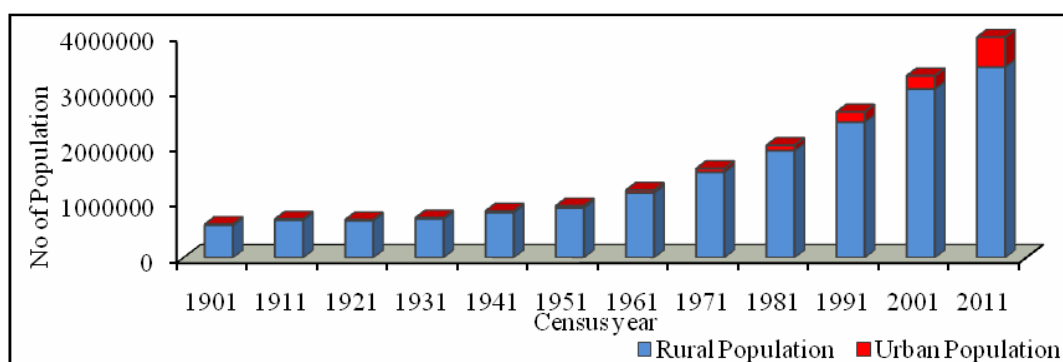

Fig. 2 : Growth of population by rural and urban in Malda District, 1901-2011

As per 2011 census, 86.42 % population of Malda districts lives in rural areas of villages. The total Malda district population living in rural areas is 3,447,185 of which males and females are 1,768,336 and 1,678,849, respectively. In rural areas of Malda district, sex ratio is 949 females per 1000 males. If child sex ratio data of Malda district is considered, the figure is 960 girls per 1000

Table 1 : Demographic situations of Malda District with respect to West Bengal and India, 2011			
Parameters	Malda	West Bengal	India
Population	39,88,845	91276115	1,210,569,573
Population Density	1069	1028	382
Percentage of Urban Population	13.58%	31.87	31.16
Scheduled Caste Population	22.26	23.5	16.6
Scheduled Tribe Population	8.9	5.1	8.6
Minority Population	51.27	25.30	20.20
Growth Rate	21.22%	13.93	17.64
Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	944	950	943
Child Population (%) (0-6 age)	15.27%	11.59	14.6
Child Sex Ratio (0-6 age)	950	956	914
Average Literacy	61.73	76.26	74
Male Literacy	66.24	81.69	82.14
Female Literacy	56.96	70.54	65.46

Source: Census of India, 2011

boys. Child population in the age 0-6 is 530,626 in rural areas of which males were 270,666 and females were 259,960. The child population comprises 15.31 % of the total rural population of Malda district. Literacy rate in rural areas of Malda district is 59.37 % as per census data 2011. Gender wise, male and female literacy stood at 64.19 and 54.29 per cent, respectively. In total, 1,731,677 people were literate of which males and females were 961,409 and 770,268, respectively.

With regards to Sex Ratio in Malda, it stood at 944 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 948. The average national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate. In 2011 census, child sex ratio is 950 girls per 1000 boys compared to figure of 964 girls per 1000 boys of 2001 census data.

The literacy rate is another important dimension to understand the socio-economic condition of the people of the district. Higher literacy rate indicates that the district has a growth potential and it has every possibility to grow in a positive direction. In case of Malda, if we look at the region-wise literacy rate it can be observed that on an average 62% people are literate compared to state average 76%. This indicates a significant low literacy rate in Malda district. Although this percentage is low during 2011 census year, decimal growth rate from 2001 to 2011 is highly appreciable.

Economy :

The economy of the district is basically an agrarian one and ranks as one of the most underdeveloped districts in West Bengal. The backwardness is characterized by low per capita income, low yield per acre of land, backwardness in industrialization, shortage of capital and entrepreneurship, and also the lack of infrastructure and large labour surplus.

According to 2011 census, of the total working population, there are 16.59% cultivators, 35.49% agricultural labourers, 12.79% household industry workers and 35.13% are other workers. Of the total rural workers, 18.87% is cultivators, 40.05% agricultural laborers, 12.80% are household industry workers and 28.28% are other workers. Of the total urban workers, only 1.72% is cultivators, 5.68% is agricultural labourers, 12.72% are household industry workers and 79.88% are other workers.

| Table 2 : Working Population of Malda District, 2011				
Region	Cultivators (%)	Agricultural Labourers (%)	Household Industry Workers (%)	Other Workers (%)
Total	16.59	35.49	12.79	35.13
Rural	18.87	40.05	12.80	28.28
Urban	1.72	5.68	12.72	79.88

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Work participation rate is another area which gives us an indication about the worker's participation in economic activity. Work participation is defined as the percentage of people engage in income generating activity out of the total available population. Work participation rate among the people of a district gives important demographic indicators. Gender differentials in WPR among different social categories in Malda district in 2011 is shown in Table 2.

Land use land cover area represents the distribution of different type of land use the land cover patch in the area. The district has high population concentration and intensive agriculture practices, therefore, agriculture land cover most part of the district. The net sown area of this district is 62.60 % of the reported area which is similar to the West Bengal (62.89 %).

Malda is famous for mango cultivation in large areas come under mango cultivation. Cultivable

wasteland cover and fellow and other than current fellow cover only 0.02 % and 0.08 % indicates very intensive land use practices through in recent decades nonagricultural land use has increased in the district. District cover only 0.45% of forest area, the amount is very low in comparison to West Bengal (13.48%). The low percentage of forest cover in the district is a serious environmental issue.

Fig. 3 : Distribution of Operational Holdings over size-classes in the district 2014
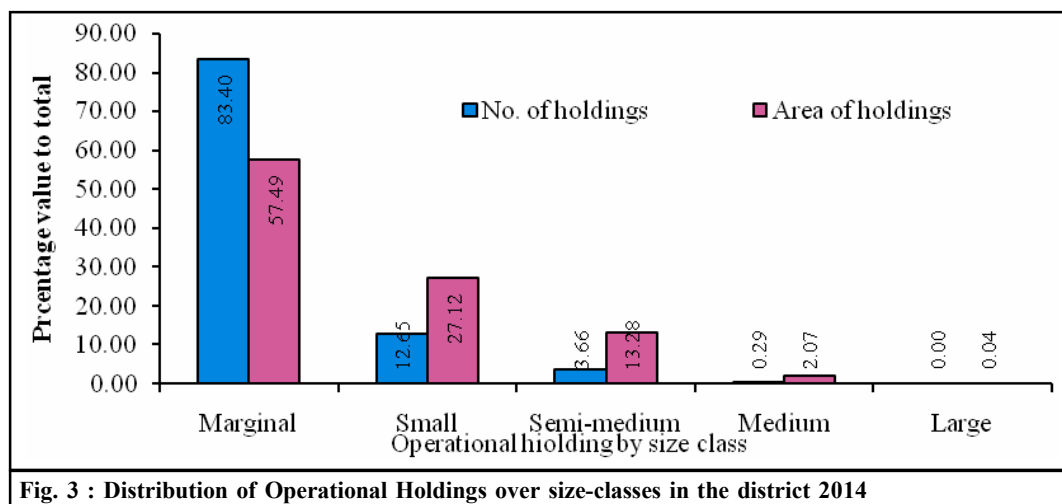
The picture presented in Fig. 3 indicates the size class-wise distribution of operational holdings in Malda District for the year 2014. It is evident that Malda district is marked by the predominance of marginal holdings (below 1 hectare). As high as 83.4 per cent of these holdings consisted of less than 1 hectares each, which, however, accounted for only 57.49 per cent of the total operated area. The rest constituted small (1 – 2 hectare) and semi-medium (2-4 hectare) and medium (4-10 hectare) holdings. The small holding accounts only 12.65 per cent farmer occupies the area of 27.12 per cent of the total area. Only 3.66 per cent semi medium farmer operate 13.28 per cent of the total operated area

Traditionally Malda district is industry backward district with very less concentration of industries. Traditional handicrafts and local villages industries have limited role for the overall economic growth of the district. The absence of heavy industry in the district also affected the employment generation activity in the district. The 2011 census report says that the district has 74 registered factories only and these factories are able to generate 2717 employment. But the positive aspect is that the district has a potential not in terms of heavy industries but in terms of small-scale industries. As mentioned earlier as the district has the climatic advantage to produce quality silk as well as mango; sufficient opportunities are there to develop industries in sericulture and food processing sector. It is quite obvious that if the district has a low potential in terms of heavy industries, then it should focus on small-scale industries where capital investment is low but mostly labour intensive.

This labour intensive industrial sector automatically generates sufficient employment opportunities for the district as a whole. The sectors like food processing, sericulture, pisciculture, honey processing, *bidi* production, tourism industry etc. have huge potential for this type of small-scale industrial growth.

Pattern and characteristics of labor out-migration from Malda district :

Why do people migrate from rural areas? The decision to migrate is often a household rather

than an individual decision. The reasons an individual migrates are to sometimes, due to the 'pull' and 'push' factors, rational choice and social networks. Results of this study revealed that migration occurred in both low agricultural and high agricultural production areas of the district.

Malda District is one of the extreme lower levels of development in terms of economy, education, health and nutrition, sanitation and so on in one hand and Scheduled Tribe and Schedule Caste population comprises a significant portion of the District on the other hand. Gazole, Habibpur and Bamangola Blocks in the district are the more scheduled tribe and scheduled caste dominated Blocks. Due to having lower economic and social development and lower employment opportunity in the district, a significant portion of people of the district migrated to another district of states throughout the year. Due to low productivity in agricultural and monoculture type of agriculture poor economy exist over the years. Therefore off season out-migration is a regular phenomenon in the district as well as in the state. Therefore the magnitude of internal migration i.e. out-migration is quite high and prominent in the district.

From the various survey, it is revealed that majority of migrant workers are scheduled tribe and scheduled caste and minority category. Most of which are landless or very poor economic background and very less educated. It is also noticed that among the non-tribe or having land holding out migrants majority are in short time or circular in nature. Generally, they migrated during the off-crop season and after 6 to 8 month they return their home during plantation of *Rabi* or *Kharif* crops. The labour from Malda district is migrated to several metropolitan cities in all over India. The main destination of the migrants of the surveyed regions is found to be in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kerala, Chennai, and Goa. Migrants are mostly employed in the following subsectors: construction, domestic work, textile, brick-kilns, transportation, mines, quarries, and agriculture.

Here, in this section, an analysis of various nature of labour migration in association to the socio-economic character of migrant and their families are given below.

Typology of migration :

In this section, we have considered the three types of migrants as *the short term seasonal migrant*, *Semi-permanent migrants* and *permanently settled out-migrants*. All persons migrating and return within six months during the last one-year have been considered as a short-term migrant. Persons migrating for a total of six months and more during the last one-year have been considered as a semi-permanent migrant. Permanently migrated person are that person who have been earlier a member of the household but has permanently settled elsewhere along with other family members and maintain some sort of social and economic transactions back to the place of origin through remittance and occasional visits. Migrating households has been defined as those households from where at least one family member report migration.

Migration by age and sex :

Age of a migrant is an important component of the decision to migrate. The following Table 3 revealed that migration starts in from the district in the age of below 15 years. Most of the migrant from the district are aged between 20 - 50 years. The table shows that relatively younger migrant prefer temporary and seasonal migration while older aged migrant prefers semi-permanent to permanent migration. The test of chi-square also shows the association between age of migrant and types of migration. The out-migrant, mainly work as construction workers are overwhelmingly male-dominated. The male worker is accounting as much as 97.33 per cent to the total out-migrant.

The Table 4 reveals that majority of out-migrants from the district are male dominated (88.6 %). Only 11.4 per cent migrant from the district is female. The proportion of female is relatively more in a permanent type of migration rather than temporary and semi-permanent migration

Table 3 : Types of labour out-migration by age of migrant of Malda District				
Age of the migrant	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-permanent migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
Below 15 years	5 (3.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (3.6)
16-25 years	23 (16.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	23(14.4)
26-35 years	32 (22.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	32 (22.9)
36-50 years	8 (5.7)	50 (35.7)	0 (0)	58 (41.4)
Above 50 years	0 (0)	9 (6.4)	13 (9.3)	22 (15.7)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (100)
Chi-Square Tests				
Method	Value	D. f	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	179.544	8	.000	Significant at 99 %

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18. Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage value

Table 4 : Types of labour out-migration by sex of migrant of Malda District				
Sex of Migrant	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-permanent migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
Male	61 (49.1)	54 (43.5)	9 (7.2)	124 (88.6)
Female	7 (5.0)	5 (3.5)	4 (2.8)	16 (11.4)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (100)

Figure in parenthesis indicates percentage value

Migration by religion :

Malda District is the habitat of the distinctive religious population. Along with SCs and STs population, a significant portion of Muslim population is being migrated. The out-migration of labour of different religion reflects the same feature like the district. The table 5 shows that out of 140 out-migrants, more than 50 per cent are Hindu community. Among the Hindu migrant, most are migrated on a temporary basis. Followed by Hindu the Muslim migrant comprises a significant proportion (27.1 %).

Table 5 : Types of labour out-migration by the religion of Malda District				
Religions	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-permanent migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
Hindu	38 (27.1)	37 (26.4)	5 (3.6)	80 (57.1)
Muslim	19 (13.6)	14 (10.0)	5 (3.6)	38 (27.1)
Christian	8 (5.7)	5 (3.6)	1 (0.7)	14 (10.0)
Other	3 (2.1)	3 (2.1)	2(1.4)	8 (5.7)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (100)
Chi-Square Tests				
Method	Value	d. f.	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	44.805	6	.056	Significant at 90 per cent level

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18. Figure in parentheses indicates percentage value.

Migration by social categories :

There is a close association between social categories of people and labour out-migration. In general, socially vulnerable and deprived section is prone to out-migrant. A significant portion of the population of the district is SC, ST, and Minority. Poverty exists among then throughout the year which induced to migrate out for unskilled manual labor.

Table 6 : Types of migrants by social categories of Malda District				
Social Categories	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-long term migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
General	8 (5.7)	9 (6.4)	2 (1.4)	19 (13.6)
SC	21 (15.0)	21 (15.0)	7 (5.0)	49 (35.0)
ST	15 (10.7)	10 (7.1)	1 (0.7)	26 (18.6)
OBC-A	21 (15.0)	14 (10.0)	3 (2.1)	38 (27.1)
OBC-B	3 (2.1)	5 (3.6)	0 (0)	8 (5.7)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (140)
Chi-square test				
Method	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	113.744	8	.048	Significant at 95% level

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18. Figure in parentheses indicates percentage value.

The Table 6 depicted that out of 140 migrant, the majority are Scheduled Caste category (35 %) followed by OBC –A (27.1 %). About 18 per cent of migrant are belonged to Scheduled Tribe community. The general caste migrants are seasonal in nature.

Migration by literacy level :

Education highly influenced the migrants to migrate out. In general low educated unskilled worker prefer to migrate seasonally or semi-permanently and higher educated labour seeks to get a permanent job, hence they tend to out migrant permanently. Here in table 7 shows that educational level of the migrants is very low. More than 50 per cent of labour educated up to primary level and

Table 7 : Association between Education level of migrant and migration types				
Education Level of migrants	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-long term migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
Illiterate	17 (12.1)	18 (12.9)	3 (2.1)	38 (27.1)
Up to primary level	19 (13.6)	13 (9.3)	1 (0.7)	33 (23.6)
Up to upper primary level	14 (10.0)	13 (9.3)	5 (3.6)	32 (22.9)
Secondary	4 (2.9)	4 (2.9)	0 (0)	8 (5.7)
Higher Secondary	9 (6.4)	9 (6.4)	0 (0)	18 (12.9)
Higher Education	2 (1.4)	2 (1.4)	3 (2.1)	7 (5.0)
Vocational education	3 (2.1)	0 (0)	1 (0.7)	4 (2.9)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (100)
Chi-Square Tests				
Method	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	49.506	12	.017	Significant at 95% level

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18. Figure in parentheses indicates percentage value.

about 75 per cent of the labour educated up to upper primary level. So they mainly engaged in the low paid unskilled labour market in temporary and semi-permanent basis.

Migration by family income :

There exists a close association between migration and family income. The Table 8 depicts that majority of migrant (65 %) are belongs to a family with low-income group (less the 6000 per month). Permanently settled migrants earn more income than temporary of semi-permanent migrants because the temporary and seasonal migrates spent much money as transport cost and other cost migration then permanent out-migration.

Table 8 : Relation between family income and types of labour migration				
Monthly income (Rs.)	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-long term migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
Below 1500	10 (7.1)	6 (4.3)	3 (3.1)	19 (13.6)
1500 - 3000	23 (16.4)	16 (11.4)	2 (1.4)	41 (29.3)
3000 - 6000	25 (17.9)	17 (12.1)	0 (0)	42 (30.0)
6000 - 9000	8 (5.7)	13 (9.3)	3 (2.1)	24 (17.1)
9000 - 12000	1 (0.7)	6 (4.3)	3 (2.1)	10 (7.1)
12000 and above	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)	4 (2.9)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (100)
Chi-Square Tests				
Method	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	26.384[a]	10	.003	Significant at 99% level

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18. Figure in parentheses indicates percentage value.

Migration by land holding :

Agricultural land holdings play a crucial role in the pattern of out-migration of labour. The Table 9 revealed that mainly landless (14 %) and marginal land holdings (70 %) do migrate outside of the district for alternative livelihood. It should note that the migrant having landholding are mainly seasonal character because they mainly migrate during off-crop season and return during crop seasons. The result of chi-square also shows highly association between them (Table 9).

Table 9 : Relation between landholdings and types of labour migration				
Size of Land holding	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-long term migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
No land	4 (2.9)	8 (5.7)	8 (5.7)	20 (14.3)
Less than 0.5 hectare	22 (15.7)	26 (18.6)	2 (1.4)	50 (35.7)
0.5 - 1 hectare	24 (17.1)	21 (15.0)	2 (1.4)	47 (33.6)
1 - 2 hectare	17 (12.1)	4 (2.9)	1 (0.7)	22 (15.7)
2 - 5 hectares	1 (0.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.7)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (100)
Chi-Square Tests				
Method	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	36.306	8	.000	Significant at 99% level

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18. Figure in parentheses indicates percentage value

Migration by occupation prior to migration :

In order to understand the nature and pattern of labour out-migration from the district, work of migrant before migration is needed to be known. The Table 10 depicts that one-fourth of the migrant labour worked in his/her own agricultural land prior to out-migration. They are mainly seasonal migrant. About 25 per cent of migrant worked as agricultural labour before migration. 22 per cent of migrant labour cited that they were worked as manual labour before migration. About 14.3 per cent of migrant were student prior to migration. They are mainly semi-permanent migrant and also called educated migrant.

Table 10 : Occupation of migrants before migration from the district				
Occupation before migration	Migration Types			Total
	Short term Seasonal Migrants	Semi-long term migrants	Permanently settled out migrants	
Agriculture in own land	21 (15.0)	16 (11.4)	2 (1.4)	39 (27.9)
Agricultural labour	19 (13.6)	14 (10.0)	2 (1.4)	35 (25.0)
Manual labour	14 (10.0)	15 (10.7)	3 (3.1)	32 (22.9)
Retail business	7 (5.0)	5 (3.6)	2 (1.4)	14 (10.4)
student	7 (5.0)	9 (6.4)	4 (2.9)	20 (14.3)
Total	68 (48.6)	59 (42.1)	13 (9.3)	140 (100)
Chi-Square Tests				
Method	Value	d. f	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Remark
Pearson Chi-Square	25.828	8	.006	Significant at 90 % level

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18. Figure in parentheses indicates percentage value.

Destination of migrant labour :

According to latest NSSO estimates, the construction sector is one of the most predominant sectors employing labour migrants and it is also a sector which has seen a rapid increase in employment in the recent years. The highest percentage of short duration migrants work in the construction sector (36.2%), followed by the agriculture-related sector (20.4%), and manufacturing (15.9%) (Srivastava, 2011). Seasonal migrants constitute a significant proportion of workforce engaged in the construction sectors in cities.

The Malda District Human Development Report, 2006, reports seasonal out-migration in the district to be as high as 90% in certain areas. Mobility and migration of both genders were found to be socially acceptable and regular in the various blocks of Malda district. On an average, out-migration starts from the age of 12 years.

- Agricultural labour is considered to be suitable for girls and young women. This results in girls in the age-group of 12 – 18 years migrating to Burdwan district during the farming seasons to work as daily labourers in cultivation related jobs.
- Boys from the age of 14 onwards start migrating to Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Haryana, and Mumbai to work as construction workers.
- Some girls in the age-group if 12 – 14 are also sent off with agents to work as domestic labour in cities.

Observations from the railway, bus journey it is revealed that from Malda District, a huge number of labour migrated to other states or cities throughout the year. A migrant from Malda district is found in every state and cities all over the country. Some of the major destinations of migration from Malda District are as follows:

Delhi :

Delhi is the first preferable destination of labors from Malda District. In Delhi, workers engaged in small private housing construction projects in localities such as Noida/Greater Noida, Sakarpur, Laxmi Nagar, and DLF Chattarpur Faridabad etc. The construction works in such projects have a low budget and are often executed by unlicensed contractors. Many migrant labours prefers Delhi as a destination because despite low wages people can easily get the job in this big city.

Punjab :

Punjab is most agriculturally developed state in India. During the agricultural season a huge number of migrant labours are absorbed by the state from different states. From the Table 11, it is observed that near about 7.8 per cent of the total migrants out from Malda district are going to Punjab for work.

Goa :

Various studies show there is a substantial number of migrants from Malda district of West Bengal engaged in various work in the construction sectors in Goa. The study of Daniel, 2005, about a migrant worker in the construction industry in Goa, revealed that there were a large number of migrant workers from Malda district. He claimed that eighty per cent of all Bengali workers in the construction sector in Goa came from Malda district alone. Findings from a field study in this study shows that about 5 per cent of total out migrants from Malda District work in Goa.

Kolkata :

A significant number of migrant from Malda District work in Kolkata due to the short distance between Malda and Kolkata. About 11.43 per cent of a total migrant from the district work in Kolkata. Another segment of migrating labour from the district does not prefer Kolkata as a destination because they perceived that opportunity of work at Kolkata is relatively low than other cities and expanse of food and shelter and relatively high in Kolkata.

Kerala :

Kerala is witnessing large inflow of migrant labour from different parts of the country in recent years. Though labourers from states as far as West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa now flock to Kerala. Higher wages for unskilled labour in the state, large opportunities for employment and shortage of local labour, despite the high unemployment rate in the state, led to the massive influx of migrant labour to the state. With signs of rapid growth of state's economy and the increase in activities particularly in the infrastructure and construction sectors, the in-migration in the state is expected to grow faster in the coming years. Nearly 8 per cent of a migrant from the district, work in Kerala.

Bangalore :

Higher wages of unskilled workers, growing infrastructure led better job opportunity in the city attract the migrant labour from another state. In recent, from Malda district, nearly 10 per cent of labour migrates to Bangalore city for the purpose of better employment. On the other hand, international migration from the district is relatively low; only about 2.14 per cent labours migrate to other countries.

Conditions of migrant labour at the destination :

Since the labour from Malda district is work in almost every states all over the country, the characteristics of a various destination place, therefore different according to their regional socio-cultural traits of destinations. Despite having various nature of different destination place, an average picture of working condition at destination place is given below on the basis of the response of the surveyed respondents at the place of origin (Malda District).

Accommodation and facilities

From the Table 11 depicted that the permanent migrant staying with his family resides mainly single room (61.53 %). About 23 per cent of labour staying with family shared house with other migrants.

Table 11 : Mode of accommodation of migrant labour at the destination

Type of Accommodation	Staying with family (Permanent migration)					Staying alone			
	Independent house	Single room	House shared with others	Room shared with others	Total	Single Room	House/room shared with others	Veranda of shops	Total
Number of migrants	1	8	3	1	13	17	100	10	127
Percentage	7.69	61.53	23.07	7.69	100	13.38	78.74	7.87	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18

The migrants who are staying single mainly reside in a room share with another migrant (about 78.74 %). From the answer of the respondent, it is revealed that on an average about 4-5 migrant reside in a single room at the destination. Only 13.38 per cent migrants stay in single room.

In order to understand the other facilities taken by migrant labour at the destination is given below the Table 12. The table shows that more than 80 per cent of migrant share a common toilet and only 7 per cent of migrant used a separate toilet. About 6 per cent of migrant do not use any toilet facility. Mode of drinking water influenced the health condition of the migrants. The table shows more than 90 per cent of migrant uses public tab as a source of drinking water. Only 2 per cent migrant used drinking water through shopping of packaged drinking water. Nearly 6 per cent of migrant is uses well as a source of drinking water which is very unhealthy.

Table 12 : Another facility of migrant labour at the destination

Type of Amenities	Toilet facility			Source of drinking water				Source of water for another purpose			
	Separate	Common	No toilet	Public tap	Piped water	Well	Shop	Public tap	Piped water	Well	0thers
Percentage	7.0	87.0	6.0	90.0	2.0	6.0	2.0	70.0	8.0	18.0	4.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18

On the other hand, about 70 per cent of migrant used public tap water for other purpose and 8 per cent migrants' uses well as a source for that purposes.

Health-related aspect :

The health of the migrant labour is an important aspect of understanding the situation of labour and nature of work they are doing. Since the migrant labour from the district is socially and economically vulnerable, and they engaged in unskilled, unhealthy, and hard manual work at the destination, and quality of food and nutritional intake is very low, hence, they are often exposed to various health-related diseases.

The following Table 13 shows the various problems faced by migrant labour during last one year. The table depicted that about 70 per cent of migrant suffer from the any of the published diseases in last one year. A maximum number of migrant suffered from hand or leg pain (27.86 %), followed by fever (20.71 %).

Table 13 : Various health problems faced by migrant labour during last one year											
Name of diseases	Fever	headache	Cough	Serious disease	Pain in leg/hand	Stomach pain	Body pain	Back pain	Chest pain	Minor accident	Major Accident	Not diseases yet
No. of migrant	29	25	24	15	39	18	11	9	21	18	5	41
(%)	20.71	17.86	17.14	10.71	27.86	12.86	7.86	6.43	15.00	12.86	3.57	29.29

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18

About 17 per cent of migrant labour suffered from Headache, Cough and Chest pain due to work in the air polluted environment. About 10.71 per cent of migrant reported they have serious health disease during last one year. On an average of 12.86 and 3.37 per cent, migrant got a minor and major accident at the time of work.

Other problems faced by Migrants at the destinations :

The majority of migrants labour is absorbed into the informal sector, which is characterised by low productivity and limited prospects for exiting poverty. Many are adversely mixed into labour markets, by middlemen and contractors to maximise their own profits. From this, it can be said that migration can deliver only survival wages.

Migrants labour often live in illegal settlements, where they have poor access to water, sanitation, and electricity and face continuous threats of disease, sexual abuse, under payment and police harassment. Migrants are excluded from the ration system because they cannot use their cards outside their home local authority. This means they spend a considerable proportion of their wages on basic food supplies and rents.

When whole families migrate to the destination, children often do domestic works when their parents go out to work, As a result, they often missed out on an education. Migrants do not have adequate access to essential services and amenities such as water and sanitation, healthcare and education.

Migrants labours are generally discriminated against, or sometimes exploited and are generally paid less than non-migrant workers and local worker at the destination. The conditions of work at the destination are remained very poor. The following Table 14 shows the various problems faced by migrant labours at the place of destination.

Table 14 : Problems Faced by Migrant workers who reported having problems

Name of problems	No of migrant	Percentage
Quarrel with local people in worksite/waiting place for work	15	10.71
Blackmailing/torturing by local labourers	10	7.14
Language barriers at the destination	28	20.00
Lack of information about accessing services	13	9.29
Lack of opportunities for work	21	15.00
Higher food and lodging expenses	35	25.00
Adaptation to the local food	39	27.86
Frequent Shifting of the work site	14	10.00
Did not get the wage offered	3	2.14

Source: Field Survey, 2017-18

Return migration :

Majority of migrants out from Malda District returns to their home after a certain period of time. But, the pattern of return migration mainly depended on types of out-migration. The seasonal migrant from the district migrated during lean season of agriculture and come back to the home with remittances during plantation and harvest season of agriculture. After 3 to 4 months they again re-migrated to the destination hence they possess a temporary circular migration.

The semi-permanent migrant does not cite any particular time to come back at home. The only time they preferred to come at home, during the festive season in September – October (usually, Durga puja for Hindus and Eid-ul-Fitr for Muslims) or usually when they got ill; and to send remittance, and to see the family member. Interactions were held with a group of youth who had just returned the night before from construction work in Chennai and were ready to leave again in a couple of days to travel to Delhi for work in a mobile tower setting site. Their tickets have already been bought. All the members of this group mentioned that they travelled for work because being educated they did not get any sufficient job in their native place hence they forced to go out in search of a prestigious job.

MAJOR FINDINGS

From the above analysis, the major findings, as per objectives of the study are shortly given below:

i) The study on nature and extent of labour out-migration from revealed that labour out-migration highly exists in the district dominated mainly by Temporary seasonal migration followed by semi-permanent migration.

ii) Migration starts at age 15 but, most of the migrant from the district are aged between 20 - 50 years. The table shows that relatively younger migrant prefer temporary and seasonal migration while older aged migrant prefers semi-permanent to permanent migration. The test of chi-square also shows the association between age of migrant and types of migration.

iii) Majority of out-migrants from the district are male dominated (88.6 %). Only 11.4 per cent migrant from the district is female.

iv) More than 50 per cent are Hindu community. Among the Hindu migrant, most are migrated on a temporary basis. Followed by Hindu the Muslim migrant comprises a significant proportion (27.1 %).

v) Nature of out-migration by social categories reveals that 35 per cent migrant belongs to SC category followed by Muslim minorities (27.1 %). The ST category constitutes about 18.6 per cent. Remaining 13 per cent migrant belongs to General.

vi) Most of the out-migrant from the district are illiterate (27 %) or less educated 23.6 per cent up to primary level and 22.9 per cent up to upper primary level). They tend to migrant on seasonal and semi-permanent basis while only 5 per cent of a migrant who is higher educated mainly prefer the permanent type of migration.

vii) A migrant from the district mainly belongs to poor family. More than 75 per cent of family earns a monthly income of less than 6000 rupees.

viii) Landless labour and a family member having low land holding are more migratory than the family having more land holding (about 50 %).

ix) The migrants from the district go for work to various metropolitan cities mainly Delhi and engaged in low skilled informal sectors mainly in construction sectors.

x) At the destination, on an average 4-5 migrant labour share a common room, intake relatively low-quality food resultants bad impact on the health of migrant.

xi) The out migrant at the destination faced the problem of the language barrier (20 %, adaptation of local food (27.8 %) and higher food and lodging expanse (25 %)

xii) The out migrant mainly returns their native place mainly during the festive season and some for sending remittance and to see the family member.

Conclusion :

The rural out migration in the context of economic development has emerged as a prominent field of study and investigation. Both causes and consequences of rural out- migration have enormous and in fact get high economic importance. In the words of John Kenneth Galbraith, 'Migration is the oldest action against poverty'. The study suggest that short-term labour migration is an ongoing part of long-term economic strategies in this region of north-east India. Year after year, people migrate for work, typically in the summer, when agricultural work is unproductive. The present study indicates that Malda District has firmly gained from rural out- migration. In the district mainly male member aged between 20-55 year of economically poor and vulnerable household do migrate to the various city across the country. This decision making process is primarily influenced by 'push' and 'pull' factors, which are basically economic phenomena. It has also observed that the influence of 'push' and 'pull' factors on the migrants is determined by the socio- economic conditions of the household of origin. In case of Malda District, low level of development, low level of employment opportunity seems to be reason for migration. The migrants who were 'pushed' came from poorer households with low income and low landholding status, tended to be less educated and unskilled. .Rich are migrant for pull factors while poor are push factors The labour migration of poor is therefore not a choice but the only option for survival.

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