



Impact of Migration on the Livelihood of Dryland Farmers

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Dryland farming is generally marked by more quantum of risk and migration has become a valid coping strategy to overcome the risks. Migration has profound influence on dryland farmers and a study was conducted to assess the impact of migration in the livelihood of dryland farmers of Tirunelveli district. The respondents of the study constituted 90 dryland farmers. The study revealed that income and employment generated by the dryland farmers after migration increased significantly. The remittances from migration created a positive impact on the migrant's purchase, investment and behavioural domain. Better job opportunities, increased income, increased access to infrastructure facilities and increased security of migrant and family members were the most perceived benefits of migration. Increased monetary demand from family members, deviation from family occupation and cultural differences in the migrated destination were the most perceived problems of migration.

Key words: Impact of migration, Perceived benefits of migration, Perceived problems of migration

Dry land farming is a risky and uncertain enterprise. Farmers in dry land regions are often resource-poor and these regions are usually of low priority when national resources are allocated. Small and marginal farmers in these regions have little surplus income and their livelihood becomes perilous during adverse agricultural situations. The coping strategy adapted by dryland farmers during such problematic situation is to migrate. Circular and internal migration forced by dire economic need has become a common concern in India and is increasing (Bird and Deshingkar, 2009). Migration, thus radically changes the socio-economic and development profile of the dryland areas with far-reaching implications on agrarian economies.

Migration drains more active population from the villages and creates both benefits and problems for the people who migrate and for the areas where people migrate and for the areas where people migrate to. On the positive side, migration may help to reduce pressure on agricultural land and provide opportunities for the rural un-employed and under-employed. It is associated with raising living standards and livelihood prospects at the household and community levels in urban as well as rural areas. On the negative side, some of the semi-skilled population and non-skilled population have moved to the big cities and consequently put pressure on the civic institutions. It might create a far-reaching effect on agriculture, uncertainty in employment and income, insufficient civic amenities etc., (United Nations Population Information Network, 1995).

Usually the migration of agrarian population tends to be studied in narrow disciplinary ways focusing on geographical or demographic aspects mainly at macro level. Only a less is known about how migration is correlated with the livelihood status of dryland farmers, and its impacts on individuals, families and communities. The consequence of rural-urban migration on agriculture is important for the sustainability of agricultural livelihood in the villages (Dugbazah, 2008). Hence, the present study mainly focused on the earthing out the impact of migration on the livelihood of dryland farmers and agriculture on varied dimensions namely income generation, employment generation, nature of purchase, nature of investment, behavioural nature and also perceived benefits and problems of migration.

Materials and Methods

The research was carried out using *ex post facto* research design during 2009-2010 in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Purposive and random sampling methods were employed for selecting the respondents. The data were collected through personal interviews with well-structured and pre-tested schedules.

Tirunelveli district was purposively selected as the percentage of rainfed area contributed to 56.70 per cent and cropping pattern of the district is essentially of the type characterising dry regions. Less prevalence of industries and migration of people towards urban areas hinder the agricultural growth, which is the major threat in this district (Tirunelveli District Agricultural Development Plan,

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2008). The district has 19 blocks, out of which Tenkasi, Senkottai, Radhapuram, Nangunari and Sankarankovil divisions are the rainfed areas of the district. Three blocks were selected purposively based on the area under dry farming and rate of migration. Three villages from each block with maximum rate of migration were further identified using the key informant method. A sample size of 90 migrants was fixed and the list of families with migrants was collected using key informant method for all the villages. Ten migrant farm families from each of the villages were randomly selected as the sample.

Analysis

Paired t-test

Paired t-test was used to test the significance difference between the means of dependent samples which referred to the characteristics of the same set of objects. The equality of means was tested using the following formula.

$$T = \frac{\bar{d}}{S/\sqrt{n}} \text{ a t (n-1) df}$$

where ,

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d_i}{n}$$

$$d_i = x_i - y_i$$

$$S \text{ (Standard Deviation)} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n-1} [\sum d_i^2 - (\sum d)^2]}$$

Percentage analysis

Percentage analysis was used in descriptive analysis for making simple comparisons.

Mean Score

A self - perceived impact framework developed by Olaiywola (2005) was modified and used to ascertain the migrants' perception on benefits and problems of migration. This framework consisted of five dimensions of benefits and problems namely economical, agricultural, personal, cultural and societal. Each dimension has got some statements within itself, representing various degrees of impact. The responses have been collected on a five point continuum with scoring range of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Mean scores have been worked out for each of the dimensions of impact for meaningful interpretations.

$$\text{Mean scores of self perceived impact dimensions} = \frac{\text{Total sum of the score of individual statement in a dimension}}{\text{Total number of respondents}}$$

Results and Discussion

Income generation

The details on income of migrants before and

after migration were gathered from the respondents in terms of rupees. A comparison was carried out between the income before and after migration using paired t-test.

Table 1. Income Generation

Category	Mean	SD	SE
Income generated before migration	2.49E4	9130.297	962.418
Income generated after migration	9.96E4	3540.072	7.466E4
Mean difference	33584.076	3294.576	31255.096

n=90
t-value = 22.662

From Table 1 it could be understood that the difference between the mean values of income generated before and after migration is significantly high. The income of an individual has increased by atleast a fold after migration. Thus the income generated as a result of migration has certainly increased compared to that of income generated before migration.

Employment generation

A comparison was carried out between the employment generated before and after migration interms of number of mandays. The data on employment generated before and after migration was gathered from the respondents and paired t-test was worked out.

Table 2. Employment Generation

Category	Mean	SD	SE
Employment generated before migration	150.78	32.816	3.459
Employment generated after migration	278.33	46.235	4.874
Mean difference	127.556	50.621	5.336

n=90
t-value = 23.905

From Table 2 it could be observed that the difference between the mean values of employment generated before and after migration differed significantly. The respondents reported that on an average an individual was employed for 150 - 180 days after migration, in addition to the on-seasonal (from Nov-Feb) agricultural works in their own fields. Thus the employment generated after migration has certainly increased compared to the employment generated before migration.

Nature of purchase, investment and behaviour

Migration is a coping factor for the dryland farmers which help them to receive monetary returns during adverse agricultural situations. These monetary returns which is otherwise known as the remittance refers to the portion of migrant income that, in the form of either funds or goods, flows back into the home place, primarily to support families back home. The greater share of these monetary flows largely benefits the rural areas. The improved income situation enjoyed by recipients of remittances also brings with it changes in spending habits. Remittances indeed have a positive impact on the migration prospects of potential migrant's economical and psychological status. The impact of migration and remittances on the migrant's economic and personal livelihood is discussed here under.

Table 3. Nature of purchase n=90

Nature of purchase	Number	Percentage
Bought TV	88	97.78
Bought farm implements	20	22.22
Bought cattle/goat etc.	8	8.89
Bought vehicle (four wheeler, two wheeler and cycle)	59	65.56

*Multiple responses

From Table 3 it could be inferred that most (98%) of the respondents purchased televisions. More than half of the respondents (66%) of respondents have purchased vehicles. Few respondents (22.22%) purchased agricultural implements and only a very few (8.89%) have bought cattle or goats etc.

The nature of remittance investments of the migrants are tabulated in Table 4.

Table 4. Nature of investment n=90

Nature of investment	Number	Percentage
Bought land	8	8.89
Bought share	-	-
Constructed / renovated house	11	12.22
Renovated / constructed irrigation structures	5	5.56
Strengthened Bunds	20	22.22
Land reclamation	3	3.33
Started new business/enterprises	3	3.33
Insurance/Savings	47	52.22

From the above table it could be inferred that 52.00 per cent of the respondents invested their money in insurance/savings. About 32.00 per cent of the respondents invested their money on agricultural works like strengthening bunds, renovating or constructing irrigation structures and land reclamation. Few (12%) reported to have constructed or renovated their houses. Less than 9.00 per cent of the respondents bought land and meager (3.33%) started new business.

The behavioural nature of the migrants as a result of migration and migration remittances are expressed in Table 5.

Table 5. Nature of behaviour n=90

Nature of behaviour	Number	Percentage
Increased knowledge, skill	63	70.00
Increased confidence	44	48.89
Higher standard of living	79	87.78
Self empowerment	72	80.00

*Multiple responses

From the above table it could be interpreted that 88.00 per cent of the respondents attained a higher standard of living followed by 80.00 per cent of respondents being self empowered. There was increase in knowledge and skill level for 70.00 per cent of the respondents. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) gained confidence. Thus migration created a positive influence over the behaviour of the respondents' interms of their behavioural domain.

Perceived impacts of migration

Perceived benefits of migration

The migrants were asked to express their perception on the benefits of rural-urban migration. The results are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Benefits of migration as perceived by migrants n=90

Perceived benefits	Mean score
Economic benefit	
Migration helps to get better job opportunity	4.27
Migration helps to get increased income	4.10
Migration has increased the purchasing power	3.93
Migration has increased the savings	3.72
Agricultural benefit	
Migration increases the investment in agriculture	3.58
Migration helps to locate better markets in town for farm products	3.10
Migration helps to introduce new innovative technologies in the village	2.78
Personal benefit	
Migration increases access to infrastructure facilities.	4.05
Migration increases the security of the migrant and family.	4.33
Migration increases the property acquisition	3.52
Migration exposes to new device and how to operate them.	3.56
Cultural benefit	
Exposes our culture to other people	4.38
Helps us to understand others culture	4.34
Societal benefit	
Increases the social respect	4.41
Increases guidance to others	4.01

*Multiple responses

From the above table it can be observed that on the economical front, better job opportunity and increased income were the most perceived benefits. This phenomenon would have been due to the concentration of services, industrial zones, and other socio-economic and cultural services in prime cities and large metropolitan regions.

The most perceived benefit on the agricultural front was 'increased investment in agriculture' and 'locating better markets in towns for farm products'. The remittances brought by the migrant would have been invested effectively in agriculture and the exposure gained by the migrant would have helped them to locate a better market for his farm produce.

On the personal front, 'increased security of the migrant and family' was the most perceived benefit followed by 'increased access to infrastructure facilities'. Migration is a temporary adaption measure taken by the dryland farmers to escape from risk during adverse farming conditions and thus migration would probably secure the livelihood of the migrant and his family. The migrants temporarily move towards cities or towns to seek his fortune and accessing the infrastructure facilities available there would become quite easy.

'Cultural exposure' was the most perceived benefit on the cultural front. People of diverse culture will gather in prime and large metropolitan cities and thus migrants would disseminate their heritage and culture with pride.

'Increased social respect' was the most perceived benefit on the societal front. The remittance brought by the migrant and his property acquisition would probably increase his social respect within his home community. The exposure gained by the migrant would increase his opinion leadership skill and he would effectively guide other people.

Perceived problems of migration

The migrants were asked to express their perception on the problems of rural-urban migration. From Table 7 it could be inferred that on the economical front, 'increased monetary demand from family' and 'requirement of money to depart from house' were the most perceived problems. The change in the spending habit of the family members due to the remittances brought by the migrants would make them demand more.

Table 7. Problems of migration as perceived by migrants n=90

Perceived problems	Mean score
Economic problem	
Waste of money	1.97
Incurs more debt	2.01
Requires more money to depart from house	2.78
More monetary demands from family	3.00
Agricultural problem	
Deviation from family occupation	4.13
Decreases the labour force for farm works	4.10
Personal problem	
Miss family	3.31
Less concentration on family affairs	3.27
Cultural problem	
Miss the family festivals and ceremonies	3.33
Societal problem	
Exploitation by others	2.23
Difficulty in mingling with the people	2.44

*Multiple r

'Deviation from family occupation' was the most perceived problem on the agricultural front. This would happen when a migrant finds a sophisticated job with less work drudgery and sufficient income which might make him to quit agriculture.

On the personal front, 'missing the family' was the most perceived problem. 'Missing family festivals and ceremonies' was the most perceived problem on the cultural front. This would be a problem for the migrants who moved to distant metropolitan cities. Travelling distances and expenses met during the travel would restrict the migrants from visiting their family and home place regularly.

'Difficulty in mingling with the people' was the most perceived problem on the societal front.

Mingling with people of diverse culture and language would be stressful to the migrants until they are familiar to the people and the environment.

Conclusion

The study on impact of migration on the livelihood of dryland farmers revealed that migration to a greater extent created a positive impact over the economical and psychological dimensions of the respondents. Most of the dryland farmers perceived seasonal migration as an opportunity. They conveyed that it allowed them to earn more money when agriculture turns adverse. They considered migration as an opportunity to diversify and exit from poverty. Though the migrants enjoy an increased income status, their investment on agriculture and purchase of agricultural inputs and livestock did not increase significantly. Thus the study also disclosed the truth that migration neither led to agricultural abandonment nor the remittances dedicated to agricultural improvements.

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