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*This Volume is brought out  
in honour of  
My Brother-in-law*

**Sri Kadali Nageswara Rao**

Modekurru Kothapeta Mandal  
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# **Sustainable Development and Strategies of Political Economy**

*Edited by*  
**D. Pulla Rao**



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## Impact of Socio-Economic Variables on the Labour Migration Among Workers in Cardamom Estates

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Migration, one of the three basic components of population growth of any area plays an important role in improving economic and social conditions of people. It is a process through which people move from their place of residence to another more or less permanently for a substantial period of time. Studies on migration reveal that the vital streams of labour migration are rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-urban, urban-rural (Tripathy and Dash, 1997). Among these streams of migration, rural to rural migration within India in the recent decades may be specifically seen as a result of uneven capitalist penetration in to agriculture (Srivatsava, 1998). Out migration of people from rural areas of Theni district of Tamil Nadu to cardamom estates located in Western Ghats has been a regular feature. In an agrarian economy out migration of the labour households is primarily determined by the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the households and patterns of employment (Mahapatra, 1998).

This paper attempts to study the socio-economic background of the labourers who migrated from Theni district to the cardamom estates located in Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu. The significant relationship between the socio-economic variables and their migration is also examined. The objectives of the study are:

1. to examine the socio-economic background of the selected migrants, and
2. to study the influence of the socio-economic variables on the attitudes of the respondents towards migration.

### **Methodology**

A sample of 571 cardamom migrated labourers from Theri district were chosen through multistage sampling technique. The primary data were collected through personal interview method during the period from April 2009 to May 2010. The significant relationship between the socio-economic variables such as age, gender, education etc., of the respondents and their attitudes towards migration has been analysed with the help of chi-square test.

### **Findings**

#### *Socio-Economic Background of the Selected Respondents:*

The socio-economic factors of the cardamom labour migrants such as age, sex, education, religion, marital status, type of family, working status before migration, nature of work before and after migration and membership are identified as important indicators. Classification of the sample respondents based on above said variables is presented in Table-1.

#### **Age**

It is inferred that about 35.90 per cent of the selected respondents fell in the young age group of less than 30 years, 32.4 per cent of them were between the age group of 30-45 years and about 31.70 per cent of the migrants were above 45 years. Thus, the selected respondents are more or less evenly distributed in all the age categories.

#### **Gender**

Migration is generally characterized by male dominated phenomenon (Anubha Ray, 1993). In this study also it was found that majority of the selected migrants (77.9 per cent) are males and only 22.1 per cent of them are female migrants. It is to be noted that all the female respondents were independent migrants. The sole reason for their migration is to support their dependents.

#### **Religion**

Religion-wise classification showed that a considerably larger proportion of migrants (88 per cent) were Hindus and only small proportions were Christians (8.1 per cent) and Muslims (4 per cent).

**Table-1**  
**Socio-economic background of the selected respondents**

SLNo	Particulars	Number of respondents	Percentage
1.	Age		
	1) Less than 30	205	35.9
	2) 30-45	185	32.4
	3) Above 45	181	31.7
2.	Gender		
	1) Male	445	77.9
	2) Female	126	22.1
3.	Religion		
	1) Hindu	502	87.9
	2) Muslim	23	4.0
	3) Christian	46	8.1
4.	Education		
	1) Illiterate	80	14.0
	2) Primary	263	46.1
	3) Secondary	115	20.1
	4) Higher Secondary	113	19.8
5.	Marital Status		
	1) Unmarried	79	13.8
	2) Married	470	82.3
	3) Widow	22	3.9
6.	Type of Family		
	1) Joint	390	68.3
	2) Nuclear	181	31.7
7.	Working Status before Migration	184	32.2
	1) Unemployed	387	67.8
	2) Employed		
8.	Nature of Work before Migration*		
	1) Agriculture	240	62.0
	2) Manufacture	91	23.5
	3) Service	56	14.5
9.	Nature of Work After Migration	355	62.2
	1) Cardamom Field	170	29.8
	2) Factory	46	8.1
	3) Supervisor		
10.	Membership		
	1) Registered	242	42.4
	2) Unregistered	329	57.6

Source: Field survey

\* Total = 387

### **Education**

Education plays a vital role in living conditions of people. It enables a person to understand his surroundings and environment to acquire knowledge for improving his status (Krishna Chand et al., 1998). On the literary front, about 46.1 per cent of the migrants were educated up to primary level followed by 20.1 per cent who has secondary education. The percentage of illiteracy was 14.0 per cent among the selected respondents.

### **Marital Status**

Marital status of the selected respondents reveals that majority of them (84.1 per cent) were married. About 12.1 per cent of them were unmarried migrants. A very small portion of the migrants (3.9 per cent) lost their spouse and live with their children.

### **Type of Family**

Respondents constituting 68.29 per cent belonged to the joint family system. This is more prevalent among the younger age groups.

### **Working Status before Migration**

It was found that majority of the selected migrants were employed (67.8 per cent) before their migration and they migrated due to the lack of continuous employment and low income from employment in their native places. 32.2 per cent of them were unemployed before migrations who are all youngsters.

### **Nature of Work before Migration**

Data on the nature of work before migration indicated that among 387 employed migrants before their migration, 62 per cent were agriculturists followed by 23.5 per cent who were petty manufacturers and only 14.5 per cent of them were working in service related jobs.

### **Nature of Work after Migration**

There are three types of work being done by the selected respondents via, cardamom field work, cardamom factory work and cardamom field supervisor. It is clear that about 62.2 per cent of the migrants were cardamom field workers. Majority of the

young and middle-aged migrants were doing field and factory work. On the other hand, 8.1 percent of the migrants were in the supervisor category.

#### Nature of Membership

Membership in any cardamom estate or labour union in the destination area is an important factor which influences the decision to migrate. Registered member will get non pecuniary benefits provided by the estate owner such as housing, electricity and water supply, vehicles and so on. Among 571 selected respondents 57.6 per cent of them were unregistered labourers and 42.4 per cent of migrants were registered labourers. It should be noted that the migrants should stay minimum of one year in the same destination place in order to get them registered.

#### Impact of Socio-Economic Status on the Migration of the Respondents

An attempt was made to analyse the impact of the socio-economic variables such as age, sex, religion, education, marital status, family type, working status before migration, nature of work before and after migration and membership of the respondents on the nature of migration with the help of chi-square test. The Table 2 shows the results of the analysis.

Table-2  
Socio- economic variables and the calculated chi- squared values

S.No	Socio- economic variable	$\chi^2$ value
1.	Age	30.812*
2.	Gender	23.696*
3.	Religion	0.787
4.	Education	68.120*
5.	Marital Status	2.022
6.	Type of Family	50.606*
7.	Working Status before migration	35.433*
8.	Nature of Work before migration	15.882*
9.	Nature of Work after migration	4.355
10.	Membership	90.179*

\* - Significant at 5 per cent level.

The hypothesis framed for this purpose is

**Ho:** The attitudes of the migrants towards the migration is independent of their socio- economic variables.

It is inferred from Table-2 that the socio-economic background of the respondents greatly influenced their migration. It shows that the variables such as age, gender, education, type of family, working status before migration, nature of work before migration and the membership of the migrants are statistically significant and hence the null hypothesis is rejected which implies that the attitudes of the respondents towards migration are dependent on these variables. The other variables such as religion, marital status and the nature of work after migration are not statistically significant and hence it may be inferred that the migration of the respondents was not influenced by these three variables.

#### **Conclusion**

It is concluded from the analysis that the social and economic conditions prevailed among the migrant households played a very significant role in making the workers to decide upon their movement from their places of origin to different places especially to cardamom estates.

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