



**Incorporating Seasonal Migration into Households'  
Livelihoods Strategy:  
Study of Brick Kilns Migratory Households from Balangir  
District of Orissa, India**

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*Disclaimer:*

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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## List of Acronyms

AAY	Antodaya Anna Yojana
BPL	Below Poverty Line
GRS	Gram Rojgar Sevak
KBK	Kalahandi, Balangir, Koraput
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NSS	National Sample Survey
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
OBC	Other Backward Castes
PDS	Public Distribution System
Rs.	Indian Rupees
SC	Schedule Cates
ST	Schedule Tribes
WDC	Watershed Development Committee
WORLP	Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project

## **Abstract**

Can seasonal migration be an alternative households' livelihoods strategy in the semi-arid zones? This study explores the impact of seasonal migration at the household and community level. The study was undertaken in the semi-arid zone of Southwest Orissa (a state of India). Seasonal migration to the brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh (a state of India) is the type of migration this research dealing. Consistent with the livelihoods approach to migration theory, this study found that seasonal migration has overcome insufficiency caused by seasonality, and improved migrants' access to resources. Remittances in the form of advance payment meet the credit needs and improve the credit worthiness of migrant households. Improved wellbeing at the household level creates labour demand in the source and reduces the gap between patron and client relationship.

The study highlights that socio-political institutions influence the benefit of seasonal migration. While ineffective government policy minimizes the benefits of seasonal migration, the benefits of seasonal migration bring positive changes in the social institutions. In order to maximise the benefits of seasonal migration, an enabling environment need to be created through appropriate migration policy.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Over the last fifty years, migration – development nexus has been continuously becoming a subject of debate. Recently, livelihoods approach to migration departs from the narrow understanding of economic impacts, and placed the livelihoods components to understand the wider social and economic context. Since, peoples' access to resources, institutional arrangements are context specific, the outcome of migration is heterogeneous. Therefore, scholars suggest that studies on various forms of migration will contribute towards an appropriate theoretical framework. This study aims to incorporate seasonal form of migration into households' livelihoods strategy and hopes to contribute to the discourse of migration.

## **Keywords**

Households' livelihoods strategy, seasonal migration, access to resources, semi-arid zones, brick kilns, households' credit needs, advance payment, employment opportunities



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

Migration in both forms (domestic and transnational) is universally recognized as an alternative livelihoods strategy for many poor households. Transnational migration of skilled and unskilled labourers has been widely studied and well connected with the macroeconomic stability. At the same time, domestic migration has been either overlooked or attracted little attention from academicians. In case of the seasonal nature of migration, 'the impact has been overlooked by students of migration' (Haberfeld et al. 1999: 473). As a result, 'policy makers perceive population movements as a threat to stability or a challenge to established life style' (De Haan 1999: 4).

The Livelihoods approach accommodates migration as an exit route to overcome shocks, vulnerability and seasonality (Ellis and Freeman 2005). However, in semi-arid zones, many poor households adopted seasonal migration as routine livelihoods strategy during the off-season of agriculture. People remain unemployed after the agriculture season, and in the absence of an appropriate institutional arrangement, seasonal migration plays a vital role to provide gainful employment opportunities. Finally, income from seasonal migration meets the consumption and productive needs and stabilizes households' economy. Outcome of migration is determined 'by peoples' access to resources, the... environment, intra household relations, wider social relations, and not just the productivity and demand for labour in an area' (Deshingkar and Start 2003: vi). Therefore, Deshingkar (2005) argues that, the implication of seasonal migration may be positive for poverty reduction and the millennium development goals, since it involved, poor, low caste and less educated people in India.

Migration for livelihoods is an inevitable phenomenon in Indian context. Two significant causes of migration especially from rural to rural and rural to urban migration are relevant. Firstly, uneven distribution of natural resources leaves many people either landless or marginal farmers. As per the results of NSS (National Sample Survey) 49<sup>th</sup> round survey in India (1998), landownership has a direct relationship with migration. Households having low access to land are more likely to migrate than the households having high access to land. In rural India, still a large group of people depends upon agriculture as their primary source of income. In the absence of irrigation facilities, rainwater plays a crucial role in agriculture productivity and agriculture labour days. The seasonal nature of agriculture keeps many households away from their primary source of livelihood. That resulted in livelihood diversification into the off-farm sector and migration. Secondly, economic reforms took place in India during 1991 in response to the severe crisis in the balance of payments. As a result, India became more open to market forces including foreign direct investment. During the 90s, the overall growth rate was around 6.0 that placed India among the fastest growing developing countries (Union Budget 2000-2001). On the other hand, regional inequalities increased. While industrializa-

tion and the green revolution concentrate in few states like Gujarat, Punjab, Maharashtra; states like Bihar and Orissa are continuously dealing with the curse of poverty. That resulted in migration from underdeveloped region to developed region.

Orissa is one of the poorest states in India as compared to the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh. Human Development Report, Orissa (2004) identified two spatial dimensions of poverty as; it is a rural phenomenon and there is a significant regional variation in the poverty rate. The Southwest region of Orissa is relatively poor. The infamous KBK (Kalahandi, Balangir, Koraput) districts lie in this region. Further, the report characterized this region as 'chronic drought conditions, high level of food insecurity and chronic income poverty resulting in absolute hunger, regular distress migration and periodic allegation of starvation death' (Human Development Report Orissa 2004: 24).

Every winter (November-December) a large group of people from *Balangir* district migrates to work in the brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh. They work in the destination for 6-7 months and return before the rainy season (May-June). This form of migration is termed as distress migration because it is in response to insufficiency and lack of job opportunity. Policy response towards migration is reflected in the form of employment generation schemes from both central and state government. While MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) promises to provide 100 days jobs to one interested member of each BPL (Below Poverty Line) family, AAY (Antodaya Anna Yojana) aims to provide 35 kilograms of rice at a minimum and affordable price. Participatory project like WORLP (Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project) aims to improve the livelihoods of people through watershed development approach. On the whole, government policy is ignoring the contribution of seasonal migration as an alternative livelihoods strategy. Bird and Deshingkar found, migration policy in India is either to reduce migration by creating employment opportunity in the locality or 'non-response' (2007: 5). As a consequence, seasonal migration from Balangir district is increasing even though it is undocumented. Deshingkar (2003) estimated 300,000 people migrate every year from the district of Balangir.

This research paper takes household as a unit of analysis, and attempts to give light on the issue of seasonal migration, and how does it contributes to the households' livelihoods strategy in the semi-arid context. Starting with the analysis of peoples' access to resources, institutional arrangement and livelihood deficiencies this study will further proceed to analyse the history, nature and process of seasonal migration in the sample villages. It will further examine the utilization of earning from migration, and its contribution to the household and community.

Assuming improved living condition at the household level, this research paper argues that seasonal migration is a routine and inseparable livelihood strategy in the semi-arid zones. That generates employment opportunities, meets the credit needs of poor households and minimizes the gap between patron (landlord, moneylenders) and client (landless and marginal farmers) relationship. Unless the institutional arrangements function well, seasonal migration should be promoted as an alternative livelihoods strategy in the semi-arid zones.

## 1.2 Background

Migration is an integral aspect of human existence. However, all forms of movements are not considered as migration. Although social, political, cultural and personal reasons are associated with migration, but migration for economic purpose is considerably attracting attentions from academicians and policy makers. Meanwhile, livelihoods approach considered migration is not just a matter of economic decision rather a social process. Hence, migration is deeply rooted in the culture and society (Ellis 2003).

Migration is categorized into permanent or temporary in terms of its nature. The NSS 64<sup>th</sup> round survey of India (2010) categorized temporary migration on the basis of the duration of staying in the destination. Seasonal migration is temporary in nature and takes place during a particular season of the year. In semi-arid zones, geographical and climatic conditions influence the decision to migrate. 'Erratic rainfall, a poor natural resource base and recurring droughts are such a common phenomenon in these parts that they become overarching context within which migration takes place' (Samal 2006: 75). International migration law defines seasonal worker as 'a migrant worker whose work by its character is dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed only during part of the year' (Perruchoud 2004:59).

In some cases, all the members of a household migrate temporarily or permanently. The NSS 64<sup>th</sup> round survey (2010: H-vi), define migrant household as 'if the entire household, as was being enumerated had moved to the place of enumeration during the last 365 days of the survey, it was considered as migrant household'. Household refers to a group of people who live together and eat from a common kitchen. It was found during the 64<sup>th</sup> round of NSS survey that the main reason behind household migration was for employment related reasons.

Household migration is frequently found in case of seasonal migration to the brick kilns because of the requirement of the condition. The brick kilns industry is 'the moulding and firing of bricks from clay' operates at the outskirts of the habitation (Gupta 2003: 3282). It operates during dry seasons of the year exactly operate after the agriculture season and close before the agriculture season. Therefore, these brick kilns are successfully attracting a large group of seasonal unemployed labourers that represent the weakest section of the rural areas. A group of three labourers formed a brickmaking unit, basically from the same household. According to the division of labour in the unit, the male member digs and mixes the clay and makes bricks with the frame, the female member make clay dough and one male or female member dry the raw bricks under the sun and bring into the brick kilns. Hence, the entire household receives wages from the brick kilns.

Seasonal migration to the brick kilns is termed as distress migration, because brick kilns industries violate all the labour rights, and there is a severe livelihood deficiency in the source of migration. Gupta (2003) in his study found that brick kilns violate the abolition of bonded labour act as the migrants work with below minimum wage for long hour. A similar study was

conducted by Sansristi<sup>1</sup> (n. d.) in Balangir and Nuapada districts of Orissa and found that there are low wages, longer work, and substandard working condition in the brick kilns. Deshingkar and Akter describe 'Brick kilns work has many of the characteristic of bonded labour-restricted freedom, hiring workers against advance, long working hours, underpayment, physical and verbal abuse of the workers by contractors and employers' (2009: 12). Seasonal migration also brings negative impact upon children's education. Smita (2008) found an increased dropout rate among seasonal migrants. Furthermore, she explains that, many rural households are away from their villages after the agriculture season and that 'forced adults to take their children along, making them drop-out of school ...' (Smita 2008: 1).

On the positive side, the brick kilns industries provide job opportunities to a large group of people from the weakest section of the society during the off-seasons. Deshingkar and Start (2003: vi) found improved standard of living among the seasonal migrants of sugarcane cutters, earth workers and agriculture labourers in India. 'Seasonal migration as a livelihoods strategy appears to be most important in rural areas as coping and accumulation for the poor and non-poor alike' (Asfaw et al. 2010: 58). Furthermore, they explain in the context of Ethiopia that seasonal migration is a response to livelihood diversification and a coping strategy with the risk factors in poor and normal agriculture seasons. However, in this case seasonal migration takes place during poor agriculture season because the brick kilns industries in the destination function during dry seasons. In the source, many people become unemployed after the agriculture season. Hence, Deshingkar argues 'although migration is not the ideal solution to employment generation and poverty reduction, it turning out to be an important route out of poverty in places where conventional development efforts have had limited success' (2005: 2).

Many poor households are successfully overcome insufficiency by adopting seasonal migration as a livelihood strategy. Despite such alternative livelihood opportunity, government response is almost negligible. There are no accurate data available on seasonal migration, because it is illegally operated, and therefore undocumented. According to the Labour department, Orissa there were 39268 migrants in 2005. In reality, much more people migrated. For instance, Sansristi (n. d.) in its research found, while more than a million people migrated only 4000 were registered in *Kantabanji* block of *Balangir* district. As per the information of All India Bricks and Tiles Manufacturers' Federation (2007), there are 50,000 brick kilns operating in India. Each kiln employs an average of 100 workers for brickmaking works. Employment opportunities in the brick kilns especially during off-season have the potentiality to improve the condition of poor households if managed properly.

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<sup>1</sup> Sansristi is a local Non-Government Organisation working in the area of migration in Orissa.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

This paper seeks to develop an understanding on the possible contribution of seasonal migration to the brick kilns and aims to reduce the gap between migration policy and the reality.

### 1.4 Main research question and sub questions

In order to achieve the objectives, this research has framed following main question and sub questions.

To what extent does seasonal migration contributes to households' livelihoods strategy?

Sub questions are:

1. How does peoples' access to resources influences livelihood strategy?
2. What are the motivation factors behind seasonal migration?
3. How is the process of seasonal migration and who get what?
4. What are the impacts seasonal migrations brings at the household and community level?
5. How does the policy response influence the benefit of seasonal migration?

### 1.5 Research methodology

To answer the posed research questions, this study was based on both primary and secondary sources of information.

#### 1.5.1 Reasons for sample village selection

For the primary sources of information, this study was concentrated in two sample villages of Southwest Orissa namely *Bhalukuna* and *Kharli*. There are multiple reasons behind the selection of these two villages. First, these two villages are in the district of *Balangir*, which is well known for semi-arid nature, and migration to the brick kilns is frequently found. According to the previous estimation, more than a million of people migrate from Balangir district every year to the brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh.

Second, the destination, nature and process of migration are same in these villages, because all of them are brick kilns migrants. In terms of the distance from the main market, *Bhalukuna* village is around 4 kilometres away, and *Kharli* village is close to the market.

Third, both these villages are under one Gram Panchayat<sup>2</sup> and have jointly formed the watershed development committee and implemented the WORLP. Therefore, baseline household survey report is accessible. Almost all the government programs like MGNREGA, AAY, are functioning in these villages. These are useful to assess the institutional contribution and data triangulation.

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<sup>2</sup> Gram Panchayat is the lowest level of local government in India. Typically one or more villages form a Gram Panchayat.

Finally, while working for the WORLP, I am familiar with some people. Therefore, the problem of information sharing to a stranger was minimized.

**Table 1**  
**Households information ethnic group<sup>3</sup> wise**

	SC (Ganda)	ST (Adiba- shi)	OBC (Padhans/Mehers)	OBC (Gau- da)	TOTAL
Bhalukuna	21	25	8	115	169
Kharli	36	64	35	124	259
TOTAL	57	89	43	239	428

Source: Baseline survey (2008-09) of Adhar (a local NGO), (personal interview with the field worker: 10/07/2011)

### 1.5.2 Sources of data

#### Primary data

Primary data was collected from the two sample villages during July- August 2011 through steps. During the initial stage, key informants like WDC (Watershed Development Committee) secretary, GRS (Gram Rojgar Sevak), local government representatives and field staff of NGOs were met to access key information about the selected villages. During this stage, information about people, land, socio-economic conditions, and government provision is listed from the WDC and Gram Panchayat. Afterwards, households were categorized according to their status of migration, landholding and socioeconomic status. On the base of the categorization, it was found that there is four ethnic groups existed in each village. One ethnic group from each village is non-migrants. Therefore, a total of 16 migrant households were selected in both villages that consist 4 households each from SC (Schedule Castes) and ST (Schedule Tribes) and 8 from OBC (Other Backward Castes) by using stratified random sampling method. Equal proportion of households was selected from each village. Half of the migrant households were from landless category and the rest having landownership of less than 1 hectare. Minimum of 5 times migration was the criteria for the respondent of migrant households.

In case of non-migrant household, a total of 8 households were selected (4 from each village). Half of the non-migrants households were landless. Two were big farmers and 2 were small farmers.

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<sup>3</sup> Ganda is the lowest caste in Indian caste system. They are socially and economically backward and live outer part of the village.

Adibashi is the tribal people who are economically backward but live inside the village with upper castes.

Padhans is belonged to the landowner/ upper caste ethnic group in Bhalukuna village. They own 1/3 of the land in the village. Meher belongs to the traditional weaver community and comes under upper caste.

Gauda are upper caste, but many of them are poor. Their traditional livelihood activities are livestock rearing and agriculture.

*Sardars* (labour contractors) are the key actors in seasonal migration process. Three *Sardars* were selected as respondents according to their strong existence in the selected villages.

Non-government organizations are working in this area on development issues. Hence, 2 non-government organizations were selected. On the whole, 29 respondents from four categories were selected and interviewed.

### **Secondary data**

Extensive literature review was undertaken since the research designing on the subject of rural livelihoods and migration. Later, special attention was concentrated on seasonal migration, livelihood strategy and brick kilns migration from semi-arid zones. Along with this, NSS reports, census data, watershed profile, BPL data of Panchayati Raj department, national and international migration reports, and local NGO's publications were taken into consideration.

#### ***1.5.3 Techniques of data collection***

Information was collected mostly in qualitative form. However, quantitative data was used as per the requirement. Two approaches of qualitative interview techniques were used as in-depth interview and observation.

#### **In-depth interview**

A total of 29 in-depth interviews were conducted with semi-structured interview schedule. The head of the household (male *Pathria*) is selected as the respondent because he is the one who actively participate during the migration process. It was same in case of non-migrants sample household. All together 16 interviews with migrants, 8 with non-migrants, 3 with *Sardars* and 2 with experts were conducted. Interviews were conducted individually to avoid external disturbances. Information about access to resources, livelihood options, migration process, nature and duration, involvement and role of actors, investment of earning, institutional provision and its functioning, impact at household and locality were the main components of the interviews.

#### **Observation**

Interviews were conducted in the home or office of the respondents. That gives an opportunity to use the observation skill in the spot. Participant observation is necessary to avoid wrong interpretation of the issues raised by the respondent. In case of migrants and non-migrants, some of the information especially on living standard may not come out frequently, because of the fear of losing government benefits. In this case, information can be re-examined by own observation.

#### **Data analyses**

During the interviews, field notes, semi-structure interview schedule and some cases voice recorder were used as data collection tools. After the completion of daylong interviews, transcriptions were generated from the interview tools. These transcriptions were coded in quantitative forms with the use of MS-Excel and word. The quotes, tables, picture used in this research are the final outcome of the data analysis.

## **1.6 Limitation of the study**

This study concentrates in two sample villages on seasonal migration of brick kilns migrants. The findings of this study may not be applicable to all forms of migration. In terms of geographical coverage, only 2 villages were covered whereas seasonal migration to the brick kilns is frequently prevalence in more than 100 villages of Southwest Orissa.

This study was conducted in the source of migration and attempted to find out the impact it brings at the household level and to the locality. In this way, detail study on working condition, living condition in the destination is excluded from this study.

Some of the practical problems were aroused because of the agriculture season. People were busy in their agriculture field. In that case, interviews were conducted in the night with candle light because of irregular electricity. During the first interview, some of the relatives intervened, but finally this problem was overcome.

There is different forms and nature of seasonal migration in India such as seasonal migration for agriculture work, seasonal migration to the construction site. The coverage of this study is limited to seasonal migration to the brick kilns industries.

## **1.7 Organization of the research paper**

This research paper is organized into seven chapters with the following order.

Following this introduction, chapter two deals with the concepts and the analytical framework of this study. Extensive literature review was conducted in order to develop the concepts and analytical framework.

Chapter three to six concentrates on the empirical findings, analysis and discussion. It includes fieldwork result and secondary information. Four major aspects have been covered as; situation in the source and reasons of livelihood deficiencies, migration process and experience in the working place, impact of migration on the household and community level, and government policies towards migration.

Chapter seven attempt to review the analysis in previous chapters and draw a conclusion.



## Chapter 2

### Concepts and Analytical Framework

#### 2.1. Livelihoods approach to seasonal migration

The term livelihood attempts to capture not just what people do in order to making a living, but the resources that provide them with the capability to build a satisfactory living, the risk factors that they must consider in managing their resources, and the institutional and policy context that either helps or hinders them in their pursuit of a viable or improving living (Ellis 2003: 3).

Access to resources is the precondition for rural households to adopt certain livelihood strategy or combination of livelihood strategies. Resources are broadly categorized into natural, financial, human and social but not limited to other forms of resources people are associated. Natural resources refer to land, water and other natural stocks. Financial resources are related to the credit needs, cash in hand, savings and other economic assets. Peoples' personal skills, physical ability of labour, education and health are the human resources. Social resources are the association, social networks, relationship, and social structure people involved with (Scoones 1998:8). Accesses to resources influence one another. For instance, access to landownership may result in improved financial and social resources. In contrast, less access to natural resources may influence peoples' access to financial and social resources. Hence, rural livelihood strategies are heavily depended upon natural resources (Scoones 1998).

Uncertainty and complexity are closely associated with rural livelihoods. Households are involved with different types of activities in order to make a living. Activities include and not limited to cultivation, collection of forest production, petty business, migration and so on. Livelihood activities are influenced by the internal and external factors. The risk factors that influenced livelihood activities are the vulnerability context. Chambers and Conway (1992) considered shocks and stresses are the precondition of vulnerability. Furthermore, they explain shocks in terms of external unpredictable factors like fires and natural disasters, and stresses as predictable factors like seasonal shortage and declining resources. However, in the rural livelihoods perspective seasonality plays an important role where agriculture is the main source of livelihood.

Peoples' access to resources, vulnerability context and the livelihood activities function in an institutional context and bring either improved or reduced outcomes. According to Scoones, livelihood perspectives start with 'how different people in different places live' (2009: 172). Place and people is jointly the centre of the livelihoods approach that is governed by social and political institutions and influenced by the nature. While Scoones (1998) define institutional context in terms of social institutions and its norms, Ellis (2003) includes government, law, rights and democracy into policy and institutional context. In fact, both social and political institutions are influencing factors for rural livelihoods strategy. At the same time, peoples' livelihoods strategy may influence the institutional context especially the social institutions.

While connecting seasonal migration with the livelihoods approach, I borrowed three arguments from the livelihoods approach to migration and poverty reduction (Ellis 2003). First, seasonal migration is a deliberate households' livelihood strategy. Second, seasonal migration is a social process, and it is a joint livelihood decision of migrants and non-migrants. Third, seasonal migration is a response to the problem of seasonality.

In the migration literatures, there are different types of migration and each type of migration plays multiple roles in reducing households' vulnerability (Ellis 2003). In terms of distance, migration is categorized into domestic and transnational. Migration may be seasonal or permanent according to the duration of staying in the destination. Seasonal migration takes place during a particular season of the year and mostly domestic in types. The frequency of seasonal migration may be 'once in a lifetime, very regular or somewhere in between' (Rogaly et al. 2002: 90). Seasonal migration is found extremely high in remote and dry area in the absence of irrigation and the drought condition (Deshingkar 2003). It serves multiple functions to overcome seasonal shortage at the household level such as coping with the seasonal shortages and accumulation of assets.

Livelihood strategy is defined as a 'strategic or deliberate choice of a combination of activities by households and their individual members to maintain, secure, and improve their livelihoods' (Haas 2010: 244). Livelihood strategies are broadly categorized into agriculture intensification/extensification, livelihood diversification and migration (Scoones 1998). However, Hussein and Nelson (1998: 5) consider migration as a livelihoods diversification strategy. Seasonal migration is sometimes considered as a livelihood diversification in response to seasonality (Ellis 2000). Rural households adopt seasonal migration with the combination of their primary livelihood. However, empirical evidences show that seasonal migration in India is becoming a normal livelihood strategy (see Mc Dowell and De Haan 1997 for example). Hence, seasonal migration in this study is considered as a households' livelihoods strategy rather than a livelihood diversification.

Livelihoods approach recognized migration as a social process rather than a short-term economic calculation (De Haan 1999; Ellis 2003). The decision to migrate involves both migrants and non-migrants in the households and their relationship with wider social network. Relationship within and outside the households is deeply rooted in the society. Therefore, livelihoods approach to migration 'depart from the narrow economics approaches to understand the importance of access to resources as well as the institutional and policy context within which migrants must function...' (Deshingkar and Stark 2003: 3-4).

Along with the primary livelihood, seasonal migration is a central livelihood strategy adopted by many poor rural households in low-income countries. Since migration is a social process and households have its deep root in the society, it is argued that the household is the appropriate unit of analysis.

A push factor created by unemployment, seasonality and climatic failure in the source and a pull factor of employment in the destination is a common element of seasonal migration. The immediate connection between seasonal migration and livelihoods approach is the response to seasonality. 'Seasonality means that continuous household consumption needs are mismatched with

uneven flow' (Ellis 1998: 11). Ellis (2000) observed that rural labour market is poorly developed in Sub-Saharan Africa and therefore migration is a common response to seasonal changes rather than searching wage employment in the locality.

Seasonality is deeply rooted in agriculture related employment, productivity, landownership and climatic conditions like drought and flood. Therefore, Ellis (1998: 4) explains 'differential access rights to land are often the key determinant of distinct livelihood strategies pursued by poor compared to better-off rural households'. In case of Indonesia, Walker et al. (2001) observes fragmentation of land as the major determinant of changing households' livelihoods strategy. Low agriculture productivity and decreased rate of agriculture related employment influence migration decision. In a semi-arid zone, 'The worsening state of dry land created by drought, recurring crop failures, and a lack of livelihood diversification leads to distress and survival migration' (Samal 2006: 75). Seasonality is ameliorated by seasonal migration in two ways; either by reducing risk or maximizing assets.

One of the main criticisms towards the livelihoods approach to migration is that it is hardly applicable to the transnational form of migration and to the urban households. However, the purpose of this study is concentrated in a rural area and therefore it is appropriately applicable to this study.

## **2.2 Rural households' credit needs and the role of seasonal migration**

The new economics of labour migration explain that, migration is a response to market failure. Market failure includes an absent or ineffective credit and insurance market, which stimulate households for migration to ensure sufficiency as well as insurance against risk (Taylor 1999: 74). In low-income countries, credit is either absent or accessible with high interest rate. In that case migration becomes 'attractive as an alternative source of capital to finance improvement in productivity and ensure stability in consumption...' (Massey et al. 1993: 438).

Ellis (2000: 296) observes credit market failure as one of the key determinant of rural livelihood diversification. While low availability of rural credit is prevalence in Africa, existence of moneylender in Asia put pressure on lenders with heavy interest rate. Rural poor households need a credit in different quantity throughout the year since their income from available livelihood activities is too low to meet the households' expenditure. In the absence of timely credit from formal financial institutions, rural households forced to borrow from the informal institutions/ moneylenders with high interest rate. Gradually, that establishes a sub-ordinate relationship between the moneylenders and the borrowers. The practical problem to establish formal financial institution in a rural area is the high investment cost and the risk of loan default.

The link between seasonal migration and credit worthiness of migrants is not straightforward. While some studies observed improved credit worthiness of migrants, other studies observed increased debt burden. Mosse et al. (2002) study in India, found that credit need is peak during agriculture season among the migrant households, and interest rate was as high as 12.5% per month. Fur-

ther, they explain that access to credit is a big problem for the poorest households, and that stimulate them to receive payment from migration. While improved economic condition was observed in some migrant households, other migrant households were unable to exit from dependency and indebtedness. In case of Western Orissa, Farrington et al. noted that 'moneylenders controlled input and output markets, and monopolized access to external resources such as opportunities for seasonal migratory employment' (1999: 7). Deshingkar (2003) explains, debt cycle as a push factor of migration. Furthermore, she found that people borrow money for investment in agriculture, repayment of previous debt, meeting the social expenses like marriages and festivals, and need money to repay it. Deshingkar et al. (2006) study in Bihar observes that migration reduced 50-75% of dependency level to moneylenders in migrant households of *Muzaffarpur*.

From the discussion, it is clear that informal credit market has a strong existence in the rural livelihoods. People need a credit for varied reasons and indebtedness prompts them towards a change in livelihood strategy. Seasonal migration comes in the first place in semi-arid zones for poor households. However, the extent to which seasonal migration contribute households' credit need and worthiness are not similar in all the migrant households.

### **2.3 The role of social networks in seasonal migration**

The Neoclassical theory of migration argues that migration is an individual decision to gain economic benefit. The theory assumes that migrants have perfect information about the labour market in the destination. In contrast, Network theory of migration argues that, the social relationship between migrants and non-migrants flow information and promote further migration. Network theory considered social capital as the third important resources in migration. Messy et al. define migrants' network as 'sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin' (1993:448). Furthermore, Network theory explains that the decision of pioneer migrants and employers influence later phase of migration. The first migration proved costly in the absence of social network, but in the later phase the cost of migration is declined because of wider social networks. Network theory of migration also supports that, social network decline the risk for the new migrants because of social relationship.

The Network theory of migration is criticized in three aspects. First, it ignores the restriction of migration barriers enacted by the government. Second, it ignores the restrictive behaviour of the pioneer migrants and it is argued that the pioneer migrants may not be supportive towards other social and ethnic groups. Third, network theory mainly concerned about the personal relationship between the migrants and nonmigrants and in this way it ignores the cause and effect relationship simultaneously (Haas 2008).

Going back into the network theory, a discussion on the pioneers of migration is worthwhile. Who are the pioneers of migration? Portes (1979) study in Mexican case found, the originate migration source was not from the backward and rural area. Further he found that most of the migrants were from the

urban area with a high level of education and middle-income group. However, in internal migration the background of pioneers is ambiguous.

Social networks play the important role in seasonal migration and create circular migration. The logic of circular seasonal migration is that, rural market does not provide the necessary resources and therefore rural labours opt for urban capital while maintaining wages and production from farming (Deshingkar 2008). Unlike the transnational form of migration, seasonal migration mostly takes place from the backward and semi-arid zones. Migrants are from both poor and non-poor households and belong to the same community. Asfaw et al. study (2010: 58) in Ethiopia found that many poor and non-poor households are involved in seasonal migration for coping and accumulation strategy. In contrast, Deshingkar and Start (2003) study in India found, lower socio-economic households are more likely to migrate. Furthermore, they found that during the initial phase of migration, employer contact the labourers every year. Gradually, the relationship became stable and migrants do not wait anymore for the call of the employer to migrate. The established relationship between the migrants and the employer has changed the demographic profile of seasonal migrants. Earlier, only male members were migrating but now female and children are also migrating. While social network is existed in the discourse of seasonal migration, the role of pioneers is absent.

Relationship between employers and the migrants also determines whether seasonal migration is for coping or accumulation. Deshingkar and Start (2003) study found, migrants having established relationship with the employers migrate for accumulation. On the other hand, migrants without prior relationship struggle to cope in the destination because of the opportunistic cost.

## **2.4 Impact of seasonal migration in the source and experience in the destination**

Livelihoods approach looks migration as a key livelihood strategy in many poor households of low-income countries. It connects the outcomes into two dimensions. First, households use human resources to reduce *risk, seasonality, and vulnerability* and finally improve their living conditions. Second, remittances transferred by the migrants increase assets, reduce poverty and improve households' living conditions (Ellis 2003). This is in the same line with the new economics of labour migration, which explains that migration not only minimizes risks but also maximizes benefits. Moving further towards the broader perspective, the new economics of labour migration see a positive impact in the source of migration. Taylor (1999) explains that, migration is a result of market failure and the remittances from migration provide financial capital to households and firms experiencing scarce resources. At the same time, he also explains that the impact of migration is differed from place to place.

In contrast to the above discussion, neoclassical theory of migration negatively links migration's impact in the source as well as in the destination. The argument in favour of the negative impact is that over supply of labour will create urban unemployment and drains skills from a rural area and finally impact upon agriculture. Further to this argument, cumulative causation theory of migration links the negative impact into broader perspectives. The fundamen-

tal of this theory is, migration will drain the human resources of the backward rural area, and create inequalities in the periphery. In the later phase, it will increase dependency and further migration to meet new requirements.

Comparing the above optimistic and pessimistic views on migration, the empirical studies found a positive link between migration and development in the source. At the same time there is little evidence on decreased inequalities, because poor push to work in low skilled jobs and rich pull to work in high skilled jobs. The role of migration in poverty alleviation is ambiguous. The reason is, poor are less likely to migrate because of lack access to resources and migration need some initial expenses on transportation, food, housing and so on. Taking account of the study of *Mali*, De Haan and Rogaly (2002) explains that migration can help households to reduce risk and overcome poverty, but at the same time, it can also increase inequalities. The mixed evidence of migration indicates that the impact of migration is context specific.

Seasonal migration is considered as distress and adversely affected on households' poverty, and the community. The argument is that, earning from seasonal migration is mostly used for debt repayment, expenditure in marriages, house construction, and therefore, limited opportunity for productive investment. Gupta (2003) study in the brick kilns of India, observed that migrants receive very less payment, and when they return, only the travelling cost is left with them. He also explains that brick kilns migrants leave in a distress condition and exploited with each form of labour migration laws existed in India. Furthermore, the study explains that advance payment for work receive by the migrants is spent on consumption purposes and that provide little option for investment in productive purpose. Moses et al. (2002) study in Western India found that many of the migrants were still in the debt cycle and migration had no long-term impact on households' poverty reduction. This is in the same line with the cumulative causation theory that migration produces negative impacts in the destination and in the source. The findings of above studies raise one question that, what will the migrants do in the absence of wage labour works and how will they meet their consumption needs without the earnings?

At the same time, positive changes are registered from various studies. Asfaw et al. (2010: 66) study in Ethiopia found positive improvement at the household level with no side effect on agriculture. Furthermore, the study confirms that earning from seasonal migration have an important role on households' well being. Many of the migrant households were able to start a small business in their hometown. Haberfeld et al. study (1999) in India found a similar result on households' well being. This study observes higher income level in migrant households as compared to the non-migrants. The study further found that income from migration contributes 60% of the migrant households' income.

Different forms of seasonal migration have multiple impacts on households' livelihoods. However, one thing common in the seasonal migration literature is migrants live in distress condition in the destination. Deshingkar and Start (2003) explain that, impact of migration is depending upon the established relationship between labourers and the employers. In established form of relationship, the opportunistic cost is decreased. Similarly, Mosse et al

(2002) argue that migration outcomes are depended upon the access to economic and social resources. In this line of arguments, the idea of circular migration seems convincing because regular migration will improve the relationship.

The system approach theory assumes that migration influence ‘social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends...’ (Haas 2008). Mobogunje (1970: 3) explains that a system operates in a special environment; the objects of the environment are changed by the system and the objects also change the system. The system approach theory answers not only cause of migration but also answer the effect of migration. It includes the pattern, determinants, changes in the source and destination of migration.

Moving further from the economic impact of migration, previous studies show that migration also influences the power relation in the community. Haas (2010) argue that migration is a calculative attempt of households to improve their socio-economic status. Breman (1993) study in south Gujarat of India found that migration fill the gap between the landowner and landless. Many landless households in this case were free from patronage by migrating outside the village despite they were employed in low skilled job in the destination. Mosse et al. study (2002) in Western India found that long absent from the hometown marginalizes the migrants from their status, reputation and social position. Failure to attend the local festival leads to the loss of community membership and loss of other social supports from patron. Rogaly et al. study (2002: 99) in Eastern India found significant changes in patron-client relationship and the labour contracting system. In the past, the regional king was the only employer in the village and the labours were totally depended upon him for employment and patronage. Gradually, seasonal migration decreased labourers’ obligation towards the king. Seasonal migration created labour shortage in the village and the king and other big farmers’ forced to change labour contract strategy in favour of the labourers.

## **2.5 Influence of government policies on seasonal migration**

Livelihoods approach placed government policy, rights and duties, laws into the institutional context (Ellis 2003). These are external forces, which either enable or disable the benefit of migration. Furthermore, he observed that migration is either perceived negative or not recognized in the poverty reduction strategic papers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Discourse of migration pointed towards a negligence government attitude towards seasonal form of migration. Therefore, recommendation towards a supportive seasonal migration policy is seen in researches (Bird and Deshingkar 2007; De Haan 1999; Gupta 2003; Mosse et al. 2002). Government in developing countries sees migration as unfortunate and distress. However, various studies show that many poor households have overcome poverty by migrating out. Negative attitude of government reflected in a migration reduction policy through employment generation in the locality or no response at all towards seasonal migration. In case of brick kilns migrants, Gupta (2003) advocates for the maintenance of labour standards and minimum wage guarantee because he observed labour exploitation. Mosses et al (2002) recommend for a socio-economic cost reduction policy instead of a migration reduction policy.

Government response towards seasonal migration is very negligence in India. It is perceived as distress and unfortunate. The result is implementation of development projects to check migration. In reality, encouraging rural employment and reducing migration policy do not stop migration (Bird and Deshingkar 2007). There are no separate data available for seasonal migration, and it is counted in the internal migration category. The migration data show that internal migration is decreasing. However, various field survey reports indicate towards an increased migration rate. The undocumented migration many times resulted in labour exploitation and become a headache for policy makers. It is observed in various studies that, during their staying in the destination migrants do not receive any government benefits. There is also fear of losing government benefits because of long time absent from the hometown. In summary, seasonal migration policy in India is almost absent and that influence the benefit from migration.

## **2.6 Description of the analytical framework**

The analytical framework of this study is based on the livelihoods approach to migration theory. Three dimensions of seasonal migration will be analysed. One is the precondition in the source before migration. Second is the impact at the households and community level. Third is the government policy towards seasonal migration.

Regarding the precondition, access to resources, vulnerability context and available livelihood activities will be analysed to understand the main causes of livelihood deficiencies and seasonal migration. This study further, analyses the migration process and social networks to find out the incentive to migrate.

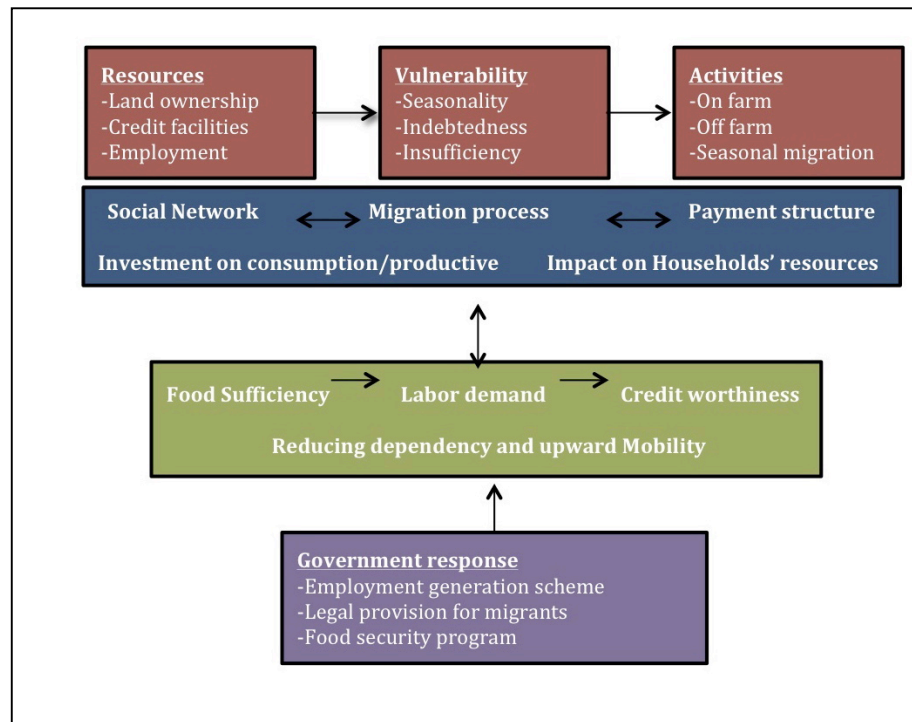
Moving further towards the analysis of impact, this study assesses the investment of earning, labour demand, food sufficiency, credit worthiness, and changing relationship between the patron and client in the source of migration.

The government policy is taken as the institutional context. Employment generation scheme, food security program and legal provision are assessing to know the way it influences the benefits of seasonal migration.

Figure 1 represents the linkage between different aspects of analyses taken into consideration in this research paper. This study was focused in the source of migration and brick kilns streams of migration is the only stream studied. It gives plenty of space for further research in the destination and wider social influence of seasonal migration in the locality.



**Figure 1 Analytical framework**



Source: own construction.

## Chapter 3

### Livelihood activities, deficiencies, and reasons for migration

#### 3.1 Available livelihood activities in the sample villages

Agriculture is predominantly the main source of livelihood and *Kharif* paddy cultivation is the main source of employment in the sample villages. However, there is uncertainty of rain and people experience drought in every alternative year. That resulted in crop failure. In such a situation, while the landowners experience very less production, the landless experience less man-day from agriculture. All the landowner households grow paddy in *Kharif*<sup>4</sup> cultivation and productivity is less than 1.5 tonnes per hectare, which is similar to the estimate of Human development report Orissa (2004)<sup>5</sup>. Minimum wage for agriculture labourer male and female is Rs.60/ and Rs.50/ respectively that is less than the government minimum wage<sup>6</sup>. Few big farmers cultivate winter crops because of very limited irrigation facilities. As per the watershed profile, only 8 hectares of land is semi-irrigated. Maximum land is concentrate in few hands. There are 4 big farmers, 369 small and marginal farmers in these villages. While the 4 big farmers own 20% of the cultivable land, the small and marginal farmers shared the rest 80% of land. The big farmers grow cash crops like cotton, tomato and onion, whereas the small and marginal farmers' cultivation is limited to the *Kharif* paddy.

Petty business is the second preferable livelihood activity. In the village *Bhalukuna*, 4 households are involved in petty business by running grocery shops, whereas 35 households are associated with petty business in *Kharli* village. These 35 households are from the same ethnic group. They are traditionally cloth weaver community. Since there is less demand of handmade cloth, they have diversified livelihood into petty business like selling of vegetables, fish, NTFP (Non Timber Forest Products), and agriculture products. However, 5 households in this ethnic group are still associated with their traditional business.

Both the villages are closed to the forest. In the past, NTFP like Mahua, Char, and firewood were available in plenty of quantity. The ST and some of the OBC households were depending upon those forest products. Gradually, they experienced drought in the forest, and that resulted a change in livelihood. At present, the contribution of forest products towards households' economy is almost nil.

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<sup>4</sup> The rainy season cultivation in India is called as Kharif cultivation. Farmers mostly cultivate paddy in this season.

<sup>5</sup> Human Development Report Orissa (2004) estimated less than 1.5 tonnes Kharif paddy productivity per hectare in the KBK region.

<sup>6</sup> According to The Minimum Wage Act, 1948 and Rules 1954, the minimum wage of unskilled agriculture labour is Rs.90/ per day.

Drought situation arises both in agriculture and in the forest. The forest production is decreasing every year. In the past, forest production was a major source of livelihood for the ST. Subsequently, regular drought in the forest resulted in a mass exodus especially in Paharia (belong to ST) community. (Interview with expert: 04/08/2011).

MGNREGA is the most promising employment generation scheme running in the sample villages. It promised to provide 100 days job to one interested member of each BPL household. This scheme discourages machine work and encourages physical labour. However, profit motive of contractors, lengthy administrative process, irregular work and payment discourage people to be involved in this scheme. Therefore, very few households are benefited from it.

**Table 2**  
**Average man-days in different category of households<sup>7</sup>**

Household category	Man-days (Farming)	Man-days (non-farming)
Landless Migrant	105	35
Landowner Migrant	162	54
Landless non-migrant	156	169

*Source:* own interpretation based on interviews with migrant and non-migrants households (10/07/2011- 17/08/2011).

Table 2 shows that man-days generated from farming are more than double of the non-farming activities. While the landowner non-migrant households access more man-days from farming, the landless non-migrants access more man-days from non-farming activities. In case of landowners, there is an additional source of income from agriculture production, whereas the landless are fully depended upon wage labour. One hand there is scarcity of man-days and, on the other hand there is no production from agriculture creating insufficiency in the landless households. As per the national poverty line price (2004-05) of Rs.356.30 per person/per month for rural area, the landless migrant households are far behind while considering the wage from availed man-days. It is indicated towards a severe insufficiency at the household level. That is the reason why a total of 549 BPL cards has been provided in these villages to access rice at the lowest and affordable price.

Previous studies show similar livelihood activities in the sources of migration. For instance, Deshingkar and Start (2003) study in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh found 78% migration rate in very dry and backward areas because of prolonged drought situation. The regression analysis in their study indicates a direct correlation between land and migration. People with less land are more likely to migrate especially in dry areas of Madhya Pradesh. The study further shows that, an agriculture labourer accesses an average of 35 days work in the *Kharif* agriculture season. The study reveals that return from migration was highest in the villages where job opportunities are limited in on-farm and off-farm sectors.

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<sup>7</sup> Man-days during migration is not included in this table.

### 3.2 Credit needs, sources and its impact upon households' livelihoods strategy

Lack of livelihood opportunities resulted in chronic income poverty, which forced people to go for credit and finally resulted in heavy indebtedness. Formal financial institutions are unable to provide credit to the lowest section because of the fear of recovery. During fieldwork, it was found that not a single migrant household has accessed credit from the banks and no one having an account in the bank. In that case, people forced to borrow from moneylenders. According to the WORLP draft report (2006), 34.16% households of Western Orissa depend upon moneylenders as a source of credit. The interest rate is high as 5% per month for cash credit and 3% per month for the mortgage of valuable assets, which is similar with the findings of WORLP draft report (2006)<sup>8</sup>. While landowner households access credit by the mortgage of assets, landless access cash credit with maximum interest rate. Gradually, the high interest rate exceeds the principle in the long run and it takes long for the poor households to repay. It was found that repayment schedule is lengthy in case of landless households.

Six years back, I borrowed a credit of Rs.20,000/ for my daughter's marriage with 5% of interest rate per month. It took almost five years to repay and get relief from it. When I calculated the amount of repayment it was more than double of the credit I had taken. (Interview with a landless non-migrant: 28/07/2011).

Credit is common in both landless and landowner households. However, the importance and purpose of credit is different. Table 3 shows that landless households borrow money for almost all purposes besides agriculture. Credit for medical purpose is prevalence in all the landless households followed by credit for family marriages. It is surprising to see that half of the landless borrow for food and clothing. On the other hand, landowners mostly borrow for investment in agriculture. In case of landless households, credit for minimum needs is observed.

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<sup>8</sup> Draft Report, Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (2006) registered 60% interest rate per annum in case moneylenders. The report further observed that the interest rate of formal financial institutions was 11%-12%.

**Table 3**  
**Credit purposes for different category of households**

Credit purposes	Landless households		Landowner households	
	Households % use	Credit limit in Rs.	Households % use	Credit limit in Rs.
Medical	100	2000- 5000	0	0
Festivals	50	2000-4000	41.6	3000- 5000
Agriculture	0	0	75	5000- 10,000
Family marriages	91.6	30,000- 50,000	58.3	20,000- 30,000
Gift to relatives	16.6	2000- 3000	0	0
Food and cloth	50	2000- 5000	0	0
Petty business	33.3	3000- 5000	16.6	5000- 10,000

*Source:* Own interpretation based on field interviews.

Meanwhile, the reason for migration is different among landless and landowner migrant households. While insufficiency dominates the reason for migration among landless, loan repayment is the main reason for landowners during their first migration.

**Table 4**  
**Reasons for first migration in landless and landowner households**

Reasons	Landless migrants %	Landowner migrants %
Insufficient food and work	75.00%	25.00%
Loan repayment	25.00%	50.00%
Investment in agriculture	0	25.00%

*Source:* own interpretation based on fieldwork.

To substantiate the fieldwork findings, Mosse et al. (2002) study in Western India observed that poor households borrow money for food, medical and other emergency needs during the monsoon season with high interest rate (12.5% per month). The study further reveals migration is a means of debt repayment for poor households, where as it works as income accumulation in case of well-off households. While the findings of this study agree with the credit needs of poor households in an emergency, it also shows that both landless and landowner households borrow the maximum amount for social obligation like family marriages. This study further reveals that debt repayment is prevalence in both landless and landowner households, which is contradicting with the findings of Mosse et al. (2002) study.

### 3.3 Analysis and discussion

Access to land and other resource endowment is the key determinant of distinct livelihood strategy (Ellis 1998). A livelihood is disrupted because of shocks and stresses (Chambers and Conway (1992). In this case, insufficient man-days from the available livelihood activities lead to acute income poverty especially in landless households and finally result in seasonal migration for survival. At the same time, regular drought resulted in low productivity and livelihood deficiencies occurred in marginal and small farmers' households.

Secondly, the contribution of high interest rate of credit resulted in indebtedness. While the big farmers produce cash crops to meet the recurring expenditure and sell agriculture production to repay the loan, the landless have the options to sell their labour. The option available for them is to involve in parallel wage labour activities. In the absence of such option, they prefer to move away from the village for survival.

To confirm the result of fieldwork, NSS 64<sup>th</sup> round survey of India (2010) found 55% of rural-urban migration is for employment related reasons. Prior to this survey, NSS 49<sup>th</sup> round survey in India (1998) observed a direct correlation between landholding and migration. As per the data, households' possessed less than 0.01 hectares of land contribute 46.2 % of migration whereas households possessed 8.01 hectares and above contribute only 0.9% (1998: 10). Subsequently, Bhalla and Hazell (2003: 3473) study reveals that there is a sharp decrease in India's agriculture related employment. The study registered 13.7% decrease of agriculture related employment between 1973-74 and 1999-00. 'As a result the manufacturing, trade and transport and service sectors are emerging as an important source of rural employment' (Bhalla and Hazell 2003: 3475).

Indebtedness is not listed as a reason for migration in the NSS survey on migration in India. However, the fieldwork data show that, a significant number of migrant households move first time to repay the loan. Further it shows that credit accessibility from the formal financial institution is absent in case of resource poor households. Deshingkar and Akter (2009) study also observed a direct correlation between credit needs and migration in *Mehabubnagar*<sup>9</sup> of India. This is in the same line with the new economics of labour migration that explains credit market failure is one of the main causes of migration.

To summarise the discussion, this chapter agrees with the importance of peoples' access to resources as the precondition of households' livelihoods strategy. In this case, access to land and productivity, insufficient food, seasonal unemployment and credit were the key reasons for seasonal migration.

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<sup>9</sup> Mehabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh is a drought-prone zone. Migration rate is high in the district and mostly migrants are involved in construction work.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Migration process in the source and experience in the destination**

#### **4.1 Historical background of seasonal migration in the sample villages**

Seasonal migration started from the sample villages in the year 1991, when Niran Bag of Bhalukuna village migrated with his family. It was truly a response to starvation and lack of job opportunity. During 1992-93, while rural poverty rate at the national level was 37.2%, in Orissa it was 49.9% (Human Development Report, Orissa 2004). The spatial dimension of poverty in Orissa concentrates maximum number of poor in the southwest region as compared to the coastal region. Kijima and Lanjouw (2003) noted that poverty in southern and northern region of Orissa was increased as compared to the coastal region during 1990s. These two villages are in the southwest of Orissa and come under the semi-arid zones. Niran Bag explains his experience as following.

I migrated first time during the year Rajiv Gandhi (the 6<sup>th</sup> prime minister of India died in May 1991) assassinated. I was working as a bonded labourer in the house of Padhans (landlord category of the village). The payment was 7 Kilograms of paddy per week. Even though, I worked the whole day in their agriculture field, it was hand to mouth for my five members' family. We were starving for 1 or 2 days in a week. In that situation, one of my relatives came to my home and informed me about brick making work in Andhra Pradesh (destination state). Initially, I was scared to travel a long distance but the situation asked me to take a chance. Finally, I migrated with my family for Rs.300/ of advance payment. During that time Rs.300/ was big money because the rate of broken rice in the destination was Rs.0.50/ per kilogram. Gradually, people from my ethnic group and later other ethnic groups followed me. (Interview with the pioneer migrant: 14/07/2011).

#### **4.2 Migration process and nature of payment**

Migration process starts when the labour agents come to the villages few days before the Nuakhai (new crops eating festival) festival to give advance payment. The employers transfer this advance money to the account of labour agents. Income from migration comes in two forms such as advance payment and return savings. Return saving is paid to the migrants after the deduction of advance at the end of the season, whereas advance payment is paid twice. The first advance payment is paid before the local festival, and the second advance payment is paid before 15 days of migration. This is the time when the labourers are agreed with the terms and condition of brick making literally. Advance payment is paid to a unit of labour (one male for brick making, one female for preparing mud and one male or female for drying). However, four or five labourers can receive advance payment as a unit. Generally, each household work as a unit and the male member receive advance payment. The amount of advance payment is depending upon the perception of the labour agents to-

wards the unit in terms of working potentiality. Before the advance payment, bargaining takes place between labourers and the labour agents about the advance amount, rate of wage per 1000 bricks, weekly payment for food, medical facilities, extra payment and prizes for outstanding work. While other facilities are same, the wage rate differs in terms of the type of brick they produce. While migrants from Bhalukuna village make light bricks, migrants of Kharli village make heavy bricks. Type of brick also determines the range of advance payment.

**Table 5**  
**Advance payment amount and brick making wage rate in sample villages**

Village	1 <sup>st</sup> advance in Rs.	2 <sup>nd</sup> advance in Rs.	Average return savings	Wage rate per 1000 bricks
Bhalukuna	2000- 3000	30,000- 50,000	4000- 5000	160
Kharli	2500- 3000	20,000- 40,000	3000- 4000	110

*Source:* Own interpretation on the basis of interviews.

There is no initial cost paid by the migrants because it is paid either by the labour agents or the employers. On the decided date of journey, either the labour agent himself or his representatives bring a vehicle to the village to bring migrants to the railway station. The labour agent books the ticket in general compartment of the train and finally they move. On the way, the labour agent pays for food and other expenses. When they reached in the destination, the labour agents handed the labourers to employers and reimburse the travelling expenses and come back to their villages. During the initial week of arrival, migrants receive Rs.500/-Rs.600/- towards food expenses from the employers.

The provision of advance payment is observed in other studies. For example, Deshingkar and Akter (2009) found the advance payment system in tribal area of Madhya Pradesh, Mehebnagar of Andhra Pradesh and Western part of Orissa. In case of Western Orissa, (brick kilns migrants) they observed the range of advance payment between Rs.15,000/- Rs.20,000/- and the rate of brick was Rs.175/-Rs.200/-. Overall, the study considered advance payment as exploitative because it is underpayment and pushed the workers into bonded labourers. However, in this study the advance payment is higher because of the bargaining power of the migrants. Advance payment in this case served as supportive credit exactly during emergency. Besides the advance payment, migrants are entitled to receive medical facilities, initial cost on food. Overall, migrants have to spend nothing but just to work hard.

### 4.3 Migrants' experience in the destination

In the destination, migrants live in a distress condition for 6-7 months. They stay near to the brick kilns, which is away from the habitation. There are no basic facilities like drinking water, sanitation, housing and marketing. They work hard in order to repay the advance payment. Minimum hour of work is around 12-15 hours a day. In order to get better weekly payment for food they work hard because it is paid on the basis of bricks they made during a week. Migrants receive Rs.600/- for the production of 10,000 bricks towards weekly food expenses. In fact, they produce more than that. The employer provides medical facilities. Doctors come regularly to the brick kilns to provide treat-



ment. The employers spend up to Rs.20,000/ for the treatment of a migrant. Some of the employers hire teachers from the source to provide education to the migrant children. In reality, children also work in the brick kilns. When migrants returned home, they experience health problems because of hard working in a distress condition. Therefore, it has been criticized that brick kilns violate all the labour laws.

Similar situation in the destination is noted in other studies. Whether it is the brick kilns migrants of Western Orissa or textile migrants of Eastern Orissa, migrants live with minimum basic needs (Deshingkar and Akter 2009). The study further observed longer working hours in the destination. While it was 12-15 hours in case of brick kilns migrants, the textile migrants work 12 hours a day.

#### **4.4 Role of the labour agents**

A verbal contract is compromised between the labour agent and the employer about the percentage of income the employer will give to the labour agent. Last year it was 10% per 1000 bricks. When a labour agent brings 20 units of labour, they are expected to produce around 9000,000 bricks in a season, i.e. 50,000 bricks per day for 5-6 months. In this way, a labour agent without doing any hard work earns Rs. 135,000/ in a season. However, the labour agents have to deal with police, railways and labour department. They have to bribe in order to transport labour because it is illegally operated (not according to the Inter state migration act, 1979). The license holder labour agents also violate the law, because they register for few numbers of labour transportation but in actual it is more than that. The labour agents go to the destination again before one month of the return of labourers. They talk to the migrants about their problems. If any problem found they discuss with employers and settled the issue. Besides this, if the labourers inform about any problem, the labour agents go to the destination and solve the issue. During their last visit of the season, they settled their account and back to home.

The role of labour agents is found as supportive as well as exploitative in a previous study (Deshingkar and Start 2003). The study observed that initially the labour agents of *Chittoor* district (Andhra Pradesh) were having more power on new jobs and wages but gradually they are acting as facilitators. In case of the construction migrants of *Medak* district (Andhra Pradesh), the labour agents were exploitative who take a 15% cut of the wages. However, in this case the labour agents are the key part of the migration network and they receive their income from the employers (not deducted from the wage of migrants). They work as a bridge between employers and the migrants when disputes arise. Since they are from the same village or nearby villages, the chance of being cheated for the migrants is limited.

#### **4.5 Reasons for return migration**

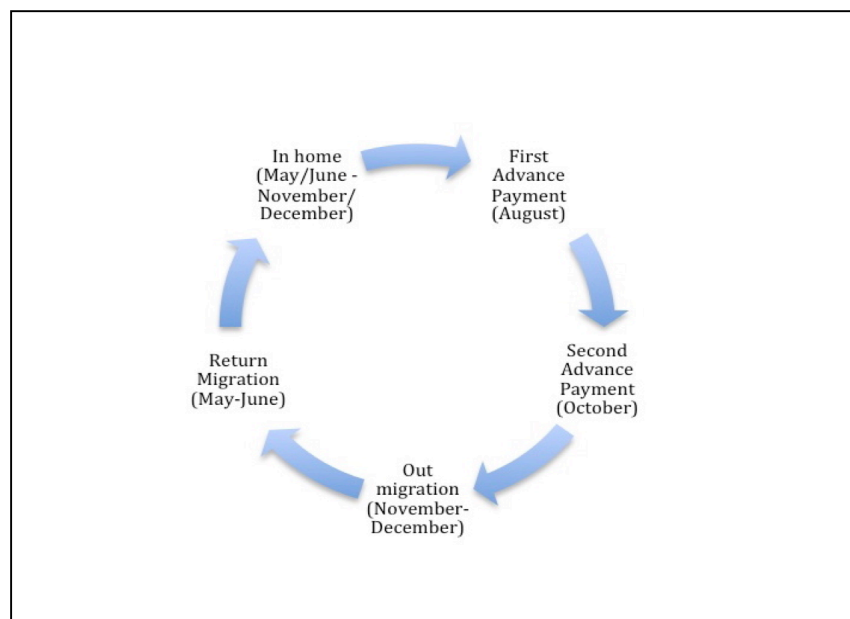
In the source villages, the landless migrants do not avail sufficient work during their staying. Despite such insufficiency, they never prefer to stay permanently in the destination. If they stay permanently in the destination, the cost of labour agent will be minimized and profit for migrants will be maximized. How-

ever, the migrants prefer to return for varied reasons such as; attachment towards relatives and village, no more brick making during the rainy season and return is profitable. The employers in reality get huge profit from brick making and do not count the balance seriously and let the migrants return before the rainy season.

During last migration, I received an advance payment of Rs.40,000/-. Despite hardworking, I was able to produced bricks of Rs.30,000/-. When the return time came, the employer found Rs.10,000/- of balance on me. However, he did not ask me to work until the balance amount is paid and lets me return to my village. (Interview with one migrant: 27/07/2011).

Seasonal migration takes place during the need, especially when people are free from agriculture work and sitting unemployed. Unlike other forms of migration, seasonal migration to the brick kilns includes no initial investment for migration. All the initial cost is paid either by employers or the labour agents. Therefore, seasonal migration is able to attract a large group of people from the poorest section. The advance payment is provided during the time of need. The labour agents know exactly when people need money. Therefore, the first advance is provided before the local festival and the second advance is paid during the marriage season.

**Figure 2 Migration cycle in the sample villages**



Source: Fieldwork 2011.

Note: Kharif Agriculture season: June –November

Migration season: November/December – May/June

As per the migration list of the WDC, besides two ethnic groups (*Padbans* in Bhalukuna and *Mebers* in Kharli), migration is frequently found in the sample villages. The reason not to migrate is different in each ethnic group. *Padbans* do not migrate because of improved living standard with huge land ownership. The reason, not to migrate in the *Mebers* ethnic community is attached to their traditional livelihood. They are traditionally weaver community and mostly in-

volved in non-farm activities. When the demand of handmade cloth is decreased, most of them diversify into petty business. They are also considered themselves as physically weak and never dared to involve in brick making. It is also a matter of social prestige. Table 6 shows the migrants households from different ethnic groups in the sample villages.

**Table 6**  
**Average representations of migrant households from different ethnic groups last three years**

Village	SC %	ST %	OBC (Gauda) %	OBC (Meheras/ Padhans %
Bhalukuna	85.7	80	59.9	0
Kharli	75	75	59.6	0

*Source:* Migration registers of watershed development committee.

Previous study (Deshingkar and Start 2003) shows that migration rate is high in SC and ST. The study further shows that the poorest migrate rarely. In this case, migration is higher in SC and ST households and they are poorest as well. The findings on households' representation reveal that one ethnic group do not migrate despite being poor. Hence, the logic of poverty is not the only cause of migration. There are social, cultural aspects, which either promote or demote migration

## 4.6 Analysis and discussion

Ellis (2003) explains that the poorest are less likely to migrate because of the initial opportunistic cost involve in migration. However in this case migration is highest in socially and economically backward households (SC and ST) because the employers pay the initial cost. The findings further show that migration is not prevalent in one ethnic group who are poor as well. In this case, the neoclassical thinking of individual decision of migration for economic reason is seemed unconvincing. The findings rather agree with the influence of social institutions in the livelihoods approach.

Seasonal migration takes place when people are seasonally unemployed. The payment structure and the seasons of migration are jointly the motivating factors of migration. While the first advance payment meet the small credit needs, the second advance payment meet the big credit needs. However, Deshingkar and Akter (2009:10) term this advance payment as 'debt-bondage' and link it to underpayment and exploitation. Further they explain that, migrants have to work until the advance payment is paid through work. In contrast to the explanation, the findings show that migrants are not forced to work until the advance payment is paid. The question arise here, how these migrants will meet the credit needs, and the households expenditure without the advance payment? Certainly it will lead to over dependency upon the moneylenders and create starvation condition at the household level.

Migration process, in this case is in line with the social network theory. The pioneer migrant was from the lower socio-economic status (unlike Portes 1979 study in Mexican case) move with his social contact with the middleman. It was a costly decision for him because of the risk to travel a long distance first time. Gradually, his positive experience influenced people from his own

ethnic group, and later spread to other ethnic groups. At present people migrate with the *Sardars* who are from the same locality and familiar to them. *Sardars* earn more than the migrants but they bring information from the destination to the source and ensure work for the migrants before the arrival. The established form of relationship here reduces the risk of initial cost, which is in line with the social network theory.

To summaries, the findings here show that seasonal migration process and payment structure are in accordance with the needs of the migrants households. Social network promote further migration, and it is not necessary that the pioneer be from the better-off household.

## Chapter 5

### Impact of migration at the household and community level

#### 5.1 Impact of migration at the household level

Migration brings both positive and negative impacts at the household level. While migrant households are moving towards sufficiency of food, cloth and shelter, they are affected with health problems and their children are dropping out from schools. The positive and negative impacts are found in the following aspects.

##### 5.1.1 Positive impact

First, migration is able to accommodate a large group of people from the weaker section in employment, especially during off-season of the year. As per the WORLP draft report (2006), wage employment in the villages of western Orissa is available only for three months. The draft further reported, poor households are mostly suffered and forced to migrate. Seasonal migration overcomes the problem of seasonal unemployment and provides regular wage payment. Migrants work in the brick kilns for 6-7 months with regular weekly payment for households' expenses. Most importantly, all the able body of the household found jobs in the brick kilns. Therefore, the man-days generated from migration are more than the villages. When they return to the village, employment opportunity is open in agriculture. The landowner households engage in their own land and the landless engage as daily wage labourers. In this way along with the job opportunity, migration does not affect the agriculture sector in the source.

**Table 7**  
**Comparison of average man-days during migration and non-migration seasons**

Household category	Man-days (non-migration season)	Man-days (migration season)
Migrant	178	462
Non-Migrant	259	299

*Source:* Interviews with migrant and non-migrant households.

Table 7 shows, man-days generated during migration season are higher than the man-days generated in the source. That clearly shows, seasonal migration is replacing agriculture labour work from the main source of livelihood in the migrant households. The wage rate in brick making is almost similar with agriculture labour wage in the source. A unit of labour works 12-15 hours per day to produce 2000-2500 bricks @ Rs.160/ or Rs.110/ per 1000 bricks. When 3 labourers in the unit share the wage, it comes around Rs.8/ to Rs.10/ per hour per labourer. In the source, agriculture labourers work for 7-8 hours @Rs.60/. The wage rate per hour is around Rs.8/. According to this calculation there is a minimum difference in wage. Therefore, wage is not seems to be

the pull factor of migration here. Regularity in job, payment and job for all members of the households are the main pull factors.

Asfaw et al. (2010) study in Ethiopia observed similar link between seasonal migration and employment opportunity. A significant percentage (61.1%) of the respondents migrate for job availability in the destination. The study further shows that migrants receive better payment during migration as compared to the agriculture wage. In this case, migrant households earn more during migration season as compared to the non-migration season, because of the man-days supplemented by other members of the household.

Second, secured employment for 6-7 months resulted in food sufficiency and fulfilment of other requirements. As compared to the reasons for first migration (see table 4 for reference), the reasons for last migration are completely different as shown in table 8. The first migration was a response to insufficiency and loan repayment, whereas in the last migration, it is becoming a routine livelihood strategy in both landless and landowner migrants households. Migrant households have completely overcome food insufficiency.

Rogaly and Coppard study (2003) found similar changed meaning of migration in the *Puruliya* district of West Bengal. The life histories of the respondents in their study show that seasonal migration was started in a response to food insufficiency. Gradually, it became a means of earning and saving. Further, Deshingkar and Start (2003) study in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh found that initially migration was a response to push factors but gradually it became regular and accumulative.

**Table 8**  
**Reasons for last migration**

Reasons	Landless migrant	Landowner migrant
Routine livelihood	50.00%	62.50%
Saving/ spending on family marriages	37.50%	25.00%
Loan repayment	12.50%	12.50%

*Source:* Interpretation of interviews with migrant households.

Third, advance payment from seasonal migration meets the credit need of migrants to a great extent in the absence of credit from formal financial institutions. There are two banks existed within 4 kilometres away from these villages. In case of migrant households, it is difficult to access credit from banks because they do not have valuable assets to mortgage. The landless and marginal farmers need small credit for day-to-day expenses on food, medical, festival, gift to relatives in marriages and wage payment during cultivation. This small credit needs ranges from Rs.1000/ to Rs.5000/. On the other hand, people need a big amount of credit in marriages of their family members. It ranges from Rs.30,000/to Rs.50,000/. Since, financial institutions are unable to meet the credit needs, people frequently borrow from the moneylenders with high interest rate. Advance payment is without interest rate, which save people from indebtedness. The first advance payment meets the credit needs during the festival and the second advance payment meets expenses in marriages. Migrants are also allowed to take advance payment from the labour agents during their need.

Advance payment has improved the credit worthiness of the migrant households. Moneylenders believe that migrants can repay the loan within a year because the advance payment is certain. In case of landless non-migrants, the return from livelihood sources is uncertain, and that resulted in lack access to credit. Since, migrants receive advance payment after 5-6 months of return, they repay the loan within 6 months and that decrease the interest rate. Credit need is the inseparable aspect of both migrants and non-migrants households. In the absence of credit from formal financial institutions, advance payment meets the credit needs and improve credit worthiness. As per the estimation of Lokadrusti (personal interview with the expert of local NGO), 50 million of rupees were paid as advance in the year 2008 in Sinapali block of Nuapada district. That shows the deep financial root of seasonal migration.

Before migration, it was almost impossible to get credit in need. Nowadays moneylenders are ready to give us credit when we need. 5 years back I borrow Rs.30,000/ from the village moneylender with 5% interest rate for my daughter's marriage. I repaid Rs.45,000/ within one year from the advance payment. Since, there is no marriage of my children in the near future; I do not need big credit these days. For a small amount of credit, I inform the labour agent and he gives immediately without interest rate. (Interview with migrant: 12/07/2011).

I am involved in petty business throughout the year. With a very less income, I cannot go beyond the credit of Rs.3000/. It is also very difficult to get. Seven years back, my daughter's marriage was fixed. It was the first marriage in my family. I was desperately needed credit of Rs.30,000/. Finally, one of my relatives became the witness, and I receive Rs.20,000/ from the village moneylender. It took 5 years to repay because of high interest rate. I think the interest rate was more than the amount borrowed. (Interview with non-migrant: 28/07/2011).

The relation between migration and credit worthiness is not straightforward in previous studies. For instance, Mosse et al. study (2002) found that migrants were trapped into indebtedness despite regular migration. On the other hand, Ghate (2005) found improved credit worthiness among the migrants of Eastern Orissa. However, the findings in this study show, migration has not only provided credit but also improved the credit worthiness.

Fourth, income from seasonal migration is used for both consumption and productive purposes. While the landless invest mostly on consumption purposes, the landowners invest in productive purposes. In case of landowners, the income from migration is served as accumulation of assets. This is because of the additional source of income from agriculture. Despite the investment in consumption purposes, migration contributes significantly in the landless households because they started from the lowest level.

Mosse et al. study (2002) observed migration was a coping strategy for the poor farmers, where as it was an accumulation of assets for the better-off farmers. At the same time, the study pointed a reduction of risks in the poor households. The use of income in this case is indicating towards a similar conclusion. Ghate (2005) study reveals that debt repayment, expenditure on marriages and house construction were the main aspects of the expenditure of remittances. Similar purpose of investment is found in this study, which summarise that migrants spend a large portion of remittances on social activities.

**Table 9**  
**Use of income from migration until the date in landless and landowner households**

Investment purposes	Landless migrants	Landowner migrants
Family marriages	100.00%	75.00%
House construction	75.00%	62.50%
Loan repayment	100.00%	50.00%
Land purchasing/ leasing/ live-stock	25.00%	75.00%
Food and cloth	100.00%	25.00%
Investment in agriculture	0	50.00%

*Source:* own interpretation based on interviews.

### *5.1.2 Negative impact*

Migration also brings negative impact at the household level. First, Migrants prefer to move with their small children because they need care from mothers. Therefore, dropout rate in primary school is increasing. Smita (2008) estimated 6 million children are dropout because of seasonal migration in India. However, in some cases migrants leave their children with their old parents to continue education. This is the reason why children are following the same profession when they are adult. It was found that only 2 people from the migrant households are engaged in the organized sector.

Second, migrants experience health problems after coming back to their villages because of hard work in distress condition. They spend an average of Rs.2000/-Rs.3000/ for medical expenses during the first month of return.

Work during migration is very difficult. If your lifespan is 45 years it will be decreased to 40 years, if you continue migration. (Interview with migrant: 14/07/2011).

## **5.2 Impact at the community level**

Migration has brought both positive and negative impacts at the community level. First, migration creates labour demand in the source and overcome the problem of bonded labour and low wages. During 1990s, the landless households were working as bonded labour in the field of big landowners. When they started migration, people from all categories followed them gradually. Migration becomes a trend among labourers in response to insufficiency. During the following years, they have cash availability at the household level. This created a demand of labour in the source. Nowadays, not a single household is working as bonded labour. There is also substantial increase in the wage rate. It is increased to Rs.60/ for male and Rs.50/ for female in agriculture labour work, which was paid with few kilograms of paddy earlier. This is proved as a good condition in the source especially for the landless and marginal farmers and expected to minimize the gap between rich and poor in the long run.

I am the owner of 12 acres of land and cultivate both Kharif and winter crops. Despite having such a big portion of land, we experience difficulties in alternative year because of drought. In contrast, migrants have secure employment and income for six months. They store agriculture production, save the advance pay-



ment and live six months in the destination. While coming back, they use the stored food, and invest the savings in agriculture, buying and leasing of land. In my experience, they live better than us. (Interview with landowner non-migrant: 24/07/2011).

Previous study (Rogaly and Coppard 2003) in the *Puruliya* district (West Bengal) observed, many of the domestic and manual workers were moving away from working under the patron with little quantity of food grains. The study further shows that seasonal migration created labour demand in the source, and forced the landowners to increase the wage. The study also found that there are still some people who were depended upon the patrons. Similar situation is observed in this study. A large portion of land is still in few hands, and the migrants have to work during the non-migration season. One aspect is certain that seasonal migration has reduced the gap between the rich and the poor.

Second, migration has overcome the caste-based livelihood system to some extent. The first migrant of the sample villages is belongs to SC as per the village caste system is concerned. When he returned successfully, he shared his positive experiences on food sufficiency, regular work with payment. Other households from his community followed him in the subsequent years. Gradually, migration becomes a routine livelihood strategy for the SC. The upper castes perceived migration as an act of lower caste. However, positive impact in migrant households attracted poor people from upper castes to follow. At present migration is not restricted to a particular caste, rather open the door for the household in deficiency.

Third, migration has negatively impact upon the non-farm sector like petty business. More than half of the population migrates from the sample villages. That resulted in scarcity of buyers. Petty businesses in these villages are run in the villages itself and totally depend upon the village buyers. In the absence of such a large group of people, their business doesn't function. However, it improves after migration season.

I have been involved in puff rice production and selling since long, and this is the only source of income for my family. In a normal season, my selling is more than 12 kilograms of puff rice per day with a minimum profit of Rs.60/-Rs.70/-. During migration season, the selling decreases to 4 kilograms per day with just Rs.20/ of profit. Sometime I think to stop the business, but it is better to do something than nothing' (Interview with landless non-migrant: 31/07/2011).

While the impact of migration is negative on the village petty businesses, it proved as positive in the nearby small town. During the informal meeting with some of the businessperson of the nearby town, it was found that selling rate is the maximum during June-July when the migrants returned. Sansristi (n. d.) registered similar finding in Western Orissa. It shows income in the hotels, and railway is increased during migration season.

### 5.3 Analysis and discussion

Livelihoods approach links migration with development into two dimensions such as a reduction of risks and accumulation of assets. The findings show, migrant households were successfully reduced the risks aroused from seasonal-

ity. However, assets accumulation is not frequently found in landless households but observed in landowner households. That indicates pre-conditional assets holding as the context of assets accumulation. Similar findings observed by Haberkamp et al. (1999) in Dungarpur district of India. The study found every hectare of landholding contributes 16% more income in the migrant households. At the same time, they also observed significant changes in migrant households as compared to the non-migrants.

Migrant households are able to overcome the scarcity of credit. It is also improved their credit worthiness. The advance payment meets the credit need, and certain return payment from migration improved credit worthiness. Deshingkar and Start (2003) observed a recycling debt among the brick kilns migrants from Orissa and Bihar. However, the findings in this study show that migrant households have better creditworthiness as compared to the non-migrants.

The findings further disagree with the wage difference logic of neoclassical theory. The wage differences between the source and destination in this case is very less. It is the employment security for 6-7 months that promote migration.

The system approach theory explains, migration function in a system and it also influences the system. Similar to the study of Breman study in Gujarat (1993), migration reduced the gap between landless and landowner in the villages. At present, bonded labour is not existed in the villages. There is a significant level of wage increase in the villages because of the labour demands created by migration, which is similar to the Rogaly et al. study (2002). In case of brick making the advance payment amount is also increasing substantially due to the collective bargaining of migrants. Advance payment has decreased the sub-ordinate relationship between the moneylenders and the borrowers. In this way, seasonal migration overcomes the problem of credit failure to some extent.

The findings further disagree with the cumulative theory of negative impact on agriculture logic. At the same time, it also agrees with the logic of further migration in the periphery. Seasonal migration function during the off-season, and the return migration is certain since brick kilns do not operate in the rainy season. The findings rather agree with the Asfaw et al. (2010) that observed no negative impact on agriculture in the source of migration.

In summary, migration is able to accommodate seasonal unemployed into jobs, meet credit need and reduced dependency level. Finally, fill the gap between landless and landowners and brought upward mobility.

## Chapter 6

### Government response towards migration

#### 6.1 Implementation of development schemes

Government provisions in relation to migration are reflected in two forms; one is to generate employment in the locality and provide food security to the poorest. Second is to enact laws to protect the migrants from exploitation. However, both the attempts are failed to check migration because of the serious drawback in implementation, and indeed people feel better incentives to migrate. Bird and Deshingkar (2007) observed similar policy response in India. Further, they observed that policy response in India was unable to promote or control migration.

MGNREGA is the main employment generation scheme running in the sample villages, to provide job security to the poorest section. However, it is failed to provide job in these villages. The basic principle is to avoid machine work and encourage manual work. The objective is to target the BPL families who are mostly involved in the wage labour activities. During the fieldwork, it was found that the participation of labour in this type of work is very less. Out of the total migrant respondent 41.6% have not worked yet and rest 58.4% have worked with an average of 15 man-days annually. In case of non-migrant respondent, 25% have not worked yet and rest 75% worked with an average of 45 man-days annually. The non-migrants access more man-days because MGNREGA works are carried out during the dry season when migrants are absent. However, the number of man-days generated in the dry season is insufficient to accommodate the large group of migrants. As per the data of Panchayati Raj department (Orissa), until the financial year 2010-2011 a total of 253,549 households were registered but 61,391 households were provided with employment.

It was found that people are not interested to work in MGNREGA. There are various reasons behind it. As it is shown in table 10, the dominant reason is an irregularity of work and payment, followed by machine work in place of manual work. All respondents who have worked found irregularity in work and payment. These labourers are from the poor section of the villages, and they need payment in regular interval to meet households' expenditure. Sometimes the payment takes more than one month, and people prefer not to work further. There is too much administrative work as well.

Sharma (2010) in UNDP discussion paper on MGNREGA found that migration is reduced by the implementation of the scheme in various studies conducted by various organisations. However, in this case migration is increased because of poor implementation strategy.

**Table 10**  
**Reasons behind low participation in MGNREGA**

Reasons	Migrants	Non-migrants
Irregular work and payment	58.40%	62.50%
Not call by the contractors	33.30%	25.00%
Hard work/ no work available after migration	8.30%	12.50%

*Source:* Interpretation of field interviews with migrants and non-migrants.

Two years ago, I did not migrate because of my daughter's wedding. I worked for a period of 20 days in the village road construction, but I received my payment after one and half month. The 20 days of work were also not consistent. The work was interrupted in every three/four days. (Interview with migrant: 27/07/2011).

Unlike the employment generation scheme, food security program has been implemented properly. The most successful program is the provision of rice at the lowest and affordable price. The BPL families are provided with cards, to receive 35 kilograms of rice per month @Rs.2/ per kilogram. According to the BPL data (2002) of Panchayati Raj department Orissa, a total of 549 BPL cards are provided in the sample villages. When migrants are absent in their villages for 6-7 months, they give their cards to the non-migrants to receive rice on behalf of them. However, they pay around Rs.100/-Rs.200/ for it. All the respondents having BPL cards are receiving rice regularly.

The low price rice has substantial impact upon the household expenditure. As food is the leading expenses in landless poor households, the provision of BPL rice decreased the expenditure. At present rice in the village is Rs.10/ per kilogram, and that save Rs.8/ per kilogram on rice. This provision is one of the main aspects of overcoming food insufficiency in the migrant households.

I can experience many changes as compared to 10 years ago. We were starving that time because of very limited job opportunity to meet the expenditure on food. Nowadays, we have cash in hand from migration and the cost of rice from government is remarkably low. (Interview with a landless migrant: 14/07/2011).

Deshingkar and Akter (2009) found migrants were excluded from the government services. The study further shows that seasonal migrants were unable to access the subsidised food through PDS. In contrast, the findings above show that migrants are able to access subsidised food because of the social relationship.

## 6.2 Legal provision for migrants

The Interstate migrant workmen (regulation of employment and conditions of service) Act 1979 is the only act directly connected with the brick kilns migrants. It was implemented to reduce exploitation against migrant workers by providing certain rights. This law says no employer shall employ inter-state migrant workmen unless a certification of registration is provided. The contractors on behalf of the employer need to register and get a license in order to engage labourers. He is obliged to ensure:

- Issuing of passbook with a photo of the migrant with name and place of the establishment, period of work with rate of wages.
- Payment of minimum wages as per the minimum wage Act, 1948.
- Payment of equal wages for migrants in similar nature of work.
- Payment of journey allowance with wages during journey.
- Payments of displacement allowance, suitable accommodation, free medical allowance and protective clothing.

The conditions mentioned above is truly a well thought attempt to protect migrants from exploitation. However, the implementation is very poor. In case of brick kiln migrants, not a single clause is observed. There are two reasons for poor implementation. One is the limitation in the law itself and second is the profit motive of the labour agents.

One of the main limitations of this law is that it is concentrated primarily in the source of migration. However, problems arise mostly in the destination in case of brick kilns migrants. Even though, not a single exploitation case was found during fieldwork, but periodic cases come out in the newspapers related to the brick kilns migrants from other area.

Interstate migrant workmen act is the weakest act in my view. Through out my work with brick kilns migrants, I have come across many exploitation cases and most of those cases take place in the destination. Interstate migrant act is mostly concentrates in the source and therefore it has severe limitation especially in case of brick kilns migrants. (Interview with expert: 25/07/2011).

Another limitation of this act is the problem of coordination. The labour department is solely responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this Act. In case of brick kiln migration, there are other departments like Railway, Agriculture, and Panchayati Raj who are indirectly involved. Therefore, it is impossible for the labour department to implement the act properly. There is the need of coordination among these government departments for implementation. Even though, the law does not restrict people for migration, but it is failed to maximize the benefit from the perspective of brick kilns migrants.

Labour transportation is a business for the labour agents. They try to maximize their benefit from migration. There are two types of labour agents found in the villages. One type of labour agents is with the labour transportation license, and another is without license. Certainly the license holder has a strong bargaining power with employers in terms of migrants' benefit, which was reflected during the interviews with the labour agents. In contrast, labour agent without license has low voice. In case of any accident during migration, license holder agents come forward to fight for the compensation with employers and it is often resulted positive. However, both types of labour agents transport labourers illegally. While, the labour agent without a license is not allowed to transport labourer, labour agent with license transport more than the registered numbers of labourers.

The role of Gram Panchayat and the village development committee is necessary, but they do not take any steps towards the registration of the migrants. There is no restriction for the labour agents. At the same time, migrants are from the lower socio-economic and education status, and therefore they are not aware about the rights provided in the interstate migrants workmen

Act. It was found that not a single respondent is aware about his rights. They simply receive the advance payment, ask for better weekly payment towards food expenses and follow the labour agents to the destination. In the absence of effective policies and institutional arrangement, the benefit from migration is minimised.

### 6.3 Analysis and discussion

One of the main criticisms of livelihoods approach is that it gives little emphasis to the institutional context. However, livelihoods approach to migration recognized the importance of government policy, law and rights as external factors that can influence the benefit (Ellis 2003). Policy response towards migration is based on the neoclassical theory that assume increased unemployment rate in the destination and resource scarce in the source of migration. Therefore, Ellis and Freeman (2005) observed, out of 47 PRSPs (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) migration was absent in 21 and negatively perceived in the rest 27.

In this case, MGNREGA is a direct intervention towards employment creation at the locality to check seasonal migration. Lack of employment opportunities is the precondition for distress migration, but the findings show that despite the creation of employment opportunities there was low participation. That indicates towards faulty implementation, payment system and timing of work. While MGNREGA provides employment to one member of the BPL household, seasonal migration accommodates all the members of the household. That creates a huge difference between staying in the village and going out of the village. Therefore, various studies on migration suggest, instead of checking migration it is worthwhile to reduce the migration cost for greater benefits.

On the other hand, food security program contribute to the well being of households and save the expenses on food. Deshingkar and Start (2003) found, many migrant households in the *Medak* district of Andhra Pradesh mortgage their PDS (Public Distribution System) cards or give card and money to relatives to receive food on behalf of them. In this case, the migrants adopt the later strategy; therefore they access PDS food while absent from their villages.

The legal provision is also insufficient. Even though the interstate migrant workmen Act. 1979 is aimed to maximise the benefit from migration, but it is failed to function effectively. Proper implementation of this act will minimise the negative consequence and maximise the benefits.

In summary, supportive institutional arrangement is the key to maximise the benefit of seasonal migration. It is rightly addressed in the livelihoods approach that the result of livelihood strategy is influenced by the institutional context.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

This research was designed to explore the potentiality of seasonal migration as a routine livelihood strategy in the semi arid zones. Migrant households were treated as a unit of analysis, and non-migrant households were taken as a unit of comparison. Situation in the sending villages, migration process, impact at the household and community level, and government response were the key components of analysis. The study investigated that seasonal migration is a crucial livelihood strategy in the semi-arid zones for the resource poor households. It has improved migrant households' wellbeing by generating working days, reducing insufficiency and vulnerability as it is suggested by Scoones (1998: 5-7) for the analysis of livelihood outcomes. Improved wellbeing at the households' level further extended to influence the social institutions at the community level. However, improper migration policy and government schemes have minimized the benefit of seasonal migration. Therefore, Haberfeld et al. (1999: 488) suggested, unless the government policies benefits the poorest, seasonal migration should be promoted as a free market mechanism.

In semi arid zones, employment opportunities collapse after the agriculture season. That resulted in acute income poverty at the household level, and the immediate response is adoption of additional livelihood strategy. The early investment need in agriculture intensification/extensification and non-farm activities is costly for the poor households. At the same time, seasonal migration offers advance payment, regular work and wage payment with no early investment. The minimised role of opportunistic cost contradicts with the neo-classical assumption that migration is costly for the poor. The study further shows that average man-days generated at the household level during seasonal migration is 462 (see table 7 for reference) which is double of the suggested 200 days a year for minimum livelihood by Lipton (1993). Hence, seasonal migration is becoming the primary source of livelihood in place of agriculture labour work especially for the landless and marginal farmers' households.

Analysis of the reasons for first and last migration pointed out that, seasonal migration was started in a response to insufficiency, but gradually it becomes a routine and inseparable livelihood strategy. The supportive role of pioneer migrant has promoted further migration, which is in accordance with the social network theory. Migration at present is not just a response to shocks rather a calculated livelihood strategy in response to seasonality. While the landless households invest the earning mostly on consumption, the landowner households mostly invest in productive purposes. In both cases, there is a significant level of improvement in the migrant households. Therefore, Very small amount of additional cash can support the poorest moving out of poverty (Ellis 2003). People who were working as bonded labour with few kilograms of paddy and starving few days in a week, are successfully overcome insufficiency of food and scarcity of cash in hand. Finally, that improves the human and social capital of migrant households.

A significant contribution is discovered in case of credit needs. Credit is a recurring need for rural households. People need a credit in small and big amount. Almost all the households borrow money during family marriages and festivals. These social expenditures are unavoidable because it is closely attached with the culture and social obligation. Resource poor households experienced difficulties to get access to credit from the formal financial institutions as well as from the informal institutions. In that case, they borrow money from the informal institutions with heavy interest rate, which forced them into indebtedness for long. The advance payment from seasonal migration proved as ameliorative to indebtedness. While the first advance meets the credit need during the festival, the second advance meets credit need during family marriages. Ellis (2003: 9) argues that 'remittance income may substitute for loans, improving the ability of the family to borrow for productive purposes at a later point of time'. Since, income is certain in migration, it has improved the credit worthiness of the migrant households. That improved migrants' access to financial capital, and minimised the dependency upon the moneylenders.

This study further investigated that, seasonal migration bring changes in the community level. This is in the same line with the system approach theory, which explains that migration operates in the village sub system, and both can influence each other (Mabogunje 1970). In this case, the gap between the landowner and landless, caste based livelihood, is becoming closer. Seasonal migration has created labour demand in the sending villages. The wage in kind (7 kilograms of paddy in 1991) is changed into wage in cash (Rs.60/ for male and Rs.50/ for female at present) and bonded labour is no more existed in the sending villages. Migration is no more attached to the caste based livelihood system rather a response to insufficiency and assets accumulation.

Seasonal migration also brings some negative consequences. Migrants experienced health problems after returned, and spent a portion of their earning on treatment. The children dropout rate is increasing, because migrants prefer to move with their small kids. In the community level, petty businesses are heavily influenced because of the shortage of buyers during migration seasons. Policy response needs to be addressed these negative issues along with the proper implementation of inter state migrants workmen act, so that the benefits of migration will be maximised.

In conclusion, this study is consistent with the logic of livelihoods approach to migration and poverty reduction (Ellis 2003) on the positive link between migration and households' living condition. The theory recognizes migration functions in an institutional context and political institutions influence the benefits of migration. Consistent with the influence of political institutions, this study further shows that the outcomes of migration influence the wider social relationship at the community level. Exploration of the role of social institutions on migration as a livelihood strategy could be a potential area of further research.



## Appendices

### *Appendix- i*

#### **Interview Guide (Migrants' respondents)**

Date of Interview:

Place:

#### **Block A (general profile)**

1. Introducing the purpose of the interview

2. General information of the respondents

a. Name:

b. Age:

c. Sex:

d. Social status: upper caste/ middle caste/lower caste

d. Economic stratum: Below poverty line/ above poverty line

e. Assets: land holding/ livestock/ others

f. Education level: illiterate/ literate/ primary/ secondary

g. Number of household members

Children		Able bodied		Total
M	Female	Male	Female	
ale				

3. Livelihoods options back home (for both male and female members)

a. Agriculture labour days in own field

b. Agriculture labour days in others' field

c. Non farm activities

d. Combination of livelihood activities in different seasons

e. Government employment generation program



### b) Migration process

1. How do you prepare for migration?
2. Who are the people you contact with during migration and their role?  
a) Labour agents'                      b) owner                      c) others
3. Which labour agent you prefer to go with and why?
4. How do you decide your wages and duration of work?
5. How do you travel to your destination and what are the problems you face during travelling?
6. What are the other benefits promised by the labour agents during your contract?
7. Do you experience any variance between the promised facilities and real accessibility?

### c) Working condition in destination

1. How long it takes to start your work after arrive in the destination?
2. How do you manage your food, cloth, shelter, medical facilities and education of your children?
3. Have you ever been exploited by the owner or labour agents (in terms of wage, facilities, etc.).

#### d) Situation after migration

1. When you decide that this is the time to return home?
2. Have you ever considered staying in the destination permanently?
3. Do you experience any adjustment problem in the village after return?
4. How do you spend your earning?
  - a) Advance payment
  - b) Saving after migration
5. Is there any change in your household's conditions?
  - a) Economic
  - b) Social
  - c) Health
  - d) Education

6. Have you ever considered not migrating and thinking about other livelihood options? If yes: what are the reasons

If no: why not

**e) Government provisions during and after migration**

1. What are the government provisions you avail in the destination?

2. Have you ever heard about migrants' rights?

3. What are the government provisions you access during your stay in home?

4. Does it effect when you are away from home?

5. Have you ever work in government and non-government income generation activities?

If yes: why still you prefer to migrate?

If no: why

*Appendix- ii*

**Interview guide (nonmigrants respondents)**

Date:

Place:

**A. General profile**

1. Introducing the purpose of the interview

2. General information of the respondent

a. Name:            b. Age:

c. Sex:              d. Social status: upper caste/ middle caste/lower caste

d. Economic stratum: Below poverty line/ above poverty line

e. Assets: land holding/ livestock/ others

f. Education level: illiterate/ literate/ primary/ secondary

g. Number of household members

Children		Able bodied		Total
Male	Female	Male	Female	

3. Livelihoods options back home (for both male and female members)

h. Agriculture labour days in own field

i. Agriculture labour days in others' field

j. Non farm activities

k. Combination of livelihood activities

l. Government employment generation program

- m. Non government employment generation program
- n. Others
- 4. Annual agriculture/ livestock production
- 5. Available credit sources
  - a. Formal financial institutions      b. village moneylender c. friends
  - d. Mortgage of belongings
- 6. Natural disaster experiences on agriculture

**B. Life history**

- 1. Why do you prefer to stay while others migrate?
- 2. Can you explain me about yours family members involvement in livelihood activities in a year?
- 3. How do you manage your household's expenses after agriculture season?
- 4. What are the services you avail while staying in home?
- 5. Can you compare your household condition with migrants' household and conclude your decision not to migrate is better?

*Appendix- iii*

**Interview guide (labour agents)**

Date:

Place:

**A. General profile**

1. Introducing the purpose of the interview
2. General information of the respondent
  - a. Name:
  - b. Age:
  - c. Sex:
  - d. Social status: upper caste/ middle caste/lower caste
  - d. Economic stratum: Below poverty line/ above poverty line

**B. Life history**

1. When and how did you come into the labour transportation activity?
2. What are the other livelihood activities you are involved throughout the year?
3. How do you prepare for labour transportation?
4. Can you explain your contact with the employers and the steps you are going through?
  - a) Before migration
  - b) During migration
  - c) after migration
5. In what ways you receive your earning?
6. What are the difficulties you experience and how do you manage?
7. What role you play when migrants are in trouble?
8. In your opinion, do migrants get their rights and do you found any changes in migrants' household?
9. Why do you think some people do not migrate?
10. Do you offer any conditions different to other labour agents?

*Appendix- iv*

**Interview guide (experts)**

Date:

Place:

Name:

Organization:

1. Introducing the purpose of the interview.
2. How long and in what aspects have you been working with the migrants? Can you explain your experience?
3. Which categories of people migrate and which category do not migrate?
4. Can you explain their condition before migration?
5. How is the migration process take place (duration of work, wages, travelling, others)?
6. Who are the actors involve in this process?
7. Why people prefer to migrate despite several government and non-government provisions available?
8. How do migrants invest their earning?
9. Can you compare the positive and negative outcomes between migrants and nonmigrants households?
10. In your opinion, what are the major factors responsible for people's decision to adopt migration as livelihood strategy?
11. In what ways the benefit of migration will be maximized and the negative outcomes will be minimized?
12. What's your opinion about the present migration policies (whether it is supportive or discouraging for migrants)?
13. How can policy accommodate seasonal migration as household's livelihoods strategy?



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