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The Landless Agriculture Labourer's Seasonal Migration and Socio-economic Condition: An Analytical Study of Shiggaon Block-Haveri District

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Abstract:

Landless agricultural labourers are already a socially-economically disadvantaged community as we know. Thus, an attempt has been made to measure the cause-and-effect relationships leading to the migration of the landless according to socio-economic concepts through statistical analysis. An attempt is made in this research paper to know the work trend of landless agricultural labourers, the reason for migration, the distance of migration, and the period/periods of migration.

Keywords: Seasonal, Migration, Destination, Residential, Gender gap, and others.

Introduction

Seasonal migration of landless agricultural labourers in India is a significant socioeconomic phenomenon driven by the search for employment opportunities during off-peak agrarian seasons. These labourers often lacking land ownership, migrate to other places or regions with higher agricultural activity to sustain their livelihoods. A substantial part of the workforce in Karnataka is employed in agriculture, which continues to be the backbone of the state's economy. However, because agricultural activities are seasonal, many labourers experience year-round fluctuations in work prospects seasonal movements have become a common survival tactic of many farm labourers especially those from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. The term "Seasonal migration" emphasizes the transient movement of labourers in the pursuit of employment during the off-seasons for farming or in response to labour demand in various areas or industries. These phenomena are closely related to regional variations in soil fertility, rainfall patterns and agricultural output in Karnataka all of which affect the availability of employment opportunities in rural areas.

There are several significant variations in Karnataka's agriculture farming sector. Landless labourers tenant farmers and small and marginal farmers are frequently at the lower end of the social continuum, with little access to modern agricultural inputs, capital and land. For their sustenance, these labourers usually depend on sharecropping agreements or daily wage rates. A large number of labourers are forced to temporarily relocate employment options during the agricultural restricted employment options during the agricultural off-season.

In rain-fed agricultural districts like North Karnataka, where unpredictable rainfall and drought conditions heighten economic vulnerability, this pattern of seasonal migration is particularly noticeable. Workers from these regions frequently move to urban areas or more affluent agricultural districts in quest of work in Industries like construction, brick kilns, and road construction. This movement is motivated not only by the need for resources and better living conditions but also by economic necessity.

Objectives of the study

1. *Understanding the regional disparities in employment opportunities that drive seasonal migration*
2. *Examine the socioeconomic conditions of migrant agricultural labourers at their place of origin and destination*
3. *Analyse the impact of seasonal migration on household income, Gender relations and working patterns*

Methodology

The study employs **primary data collection** methods to gain insights into the migration patterns and socioeconomic conditions of agricultural labourers. To gather quantitative data, structural questionnaires are administered to migrant agricultural labourers. The survey covers both individual labourers and household units to capture a comprehensive picture of the impact of migration. A random sampling method is used to ensure that the sample is representative of the selected block.

A sample of **"50 landless agricultural labourers from Shiggaon block"** was chosen as study respondents. The study was conducted using SPSS software general statistical tools. Furthermore, the study was taken from **March 2024 to September 2024** and the cross-tabulation and the Chi-Square statistical method describe some of the issues.

Study Area

Shiggaon village location code or village code is 60931 based on data from the 2011 census. In the Haveri district of Karnataka India Shiggaon city is situated. It is located 1 Km from the Shiggaon Sub-District headquarters and 35 km away.

The community occupies 2735. 1 hectare of land in total. There are 2300 individuals living in Shiggaon, 1171 of whom are men and 1189 of whom are women. In Shiggaon City, 77.17 per cent of people are literate, including 81.64 per cent of men and 72.54 per cent of women. About 576 dwellings make up Shiggaon City. Shiggaon locality's pin code is 581205.[1]

Statement of the Problem

To examine the association between 1) Gender and Danger level of the workplace 2) Duration of the migration and Seasonal condition of migration 3) Times of migration and Reasons of migration 4) Destination of the migration and Type of the migration.

Discussion and Result

Gender * At the workplace Place Level of Danger Crosstabulation

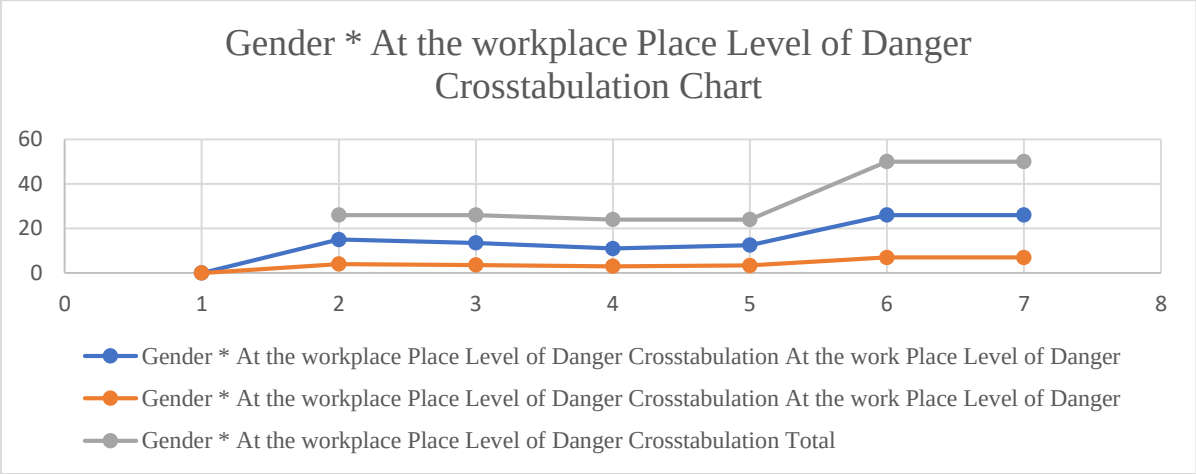
			At the work Place Level of Danger			Total
			Very Danger	Normally Danger	No Danger	
Gender	Male	Count	7	15	4	26
		Expected Count	8.8	13.5	3.6	26.0
	Female	Count	10	11	3	24
		Expected Count	8.2	12.5	3.4	24.0
Total		Count	17	26	7	50
		Expected Count	17.0	26.0	7.0	50.0

Source: Source: Field survey 2024

The given crosstabulation compares Gender (Male, Female) with the nature of the work at the migrated place (very hard, Hard, Normal, Easy) and provides both the observed and expected counts. Likely observed counts of 26 males and 24 females for a total of 50 people. In terms of work difficulty; Backbreaking work is experienced by 6 males and 6 females (12 people in total), and Hard work is reported by 14 males and 12

[1] Census of India data 2011

females (26 people in total). Normal work is reported by 5 males and 5 females (10 people in total). Easy work is experienced by 1 male and 1 female (2 people in total).



Source: Source: Based on the Field survey 2024

Based on the crosstabulation, there seems to be no significant difference in the distribution of males and females across the different categories of work difficulty. The observed counts closely match the expected counts in most cases. A formal statistical test like the Chi-Square test for independence could be applied to confirm whether there is a statistically significant relationship between Gender and the Nature of the work.

Chi-Square Tests						
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	.074[a]	3	0.995	1.000	-------	---------
Likelihood Ratio	0.074	3	0.995	1.000	--------	---------
Fisher's Exact Test	0.417	-----------	----------	1.000	-------	----------
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000[b]	1	0.988	1.000	0.565	0.142
N of Valid Cases	50	-----	----------	------	------	---------
a. 3 cells (37.5%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .96.						
b. The standardized statistic is .014.						

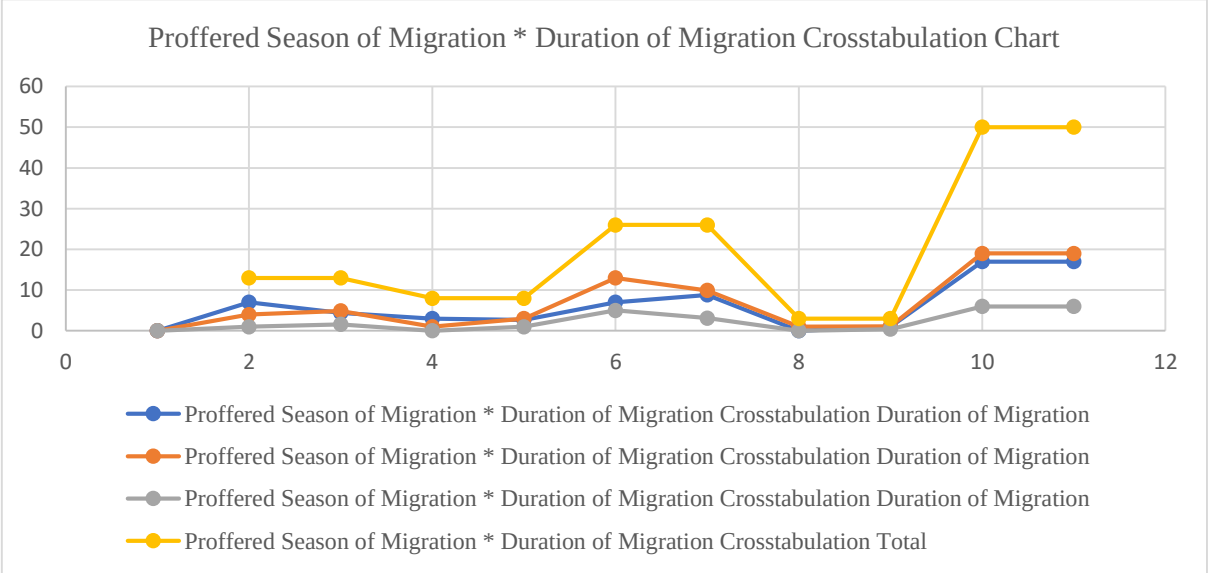
Pearson chi-square test and Likelihood Ratio: Both tests have extremely low values (0.074) with P-values of 0.995 (Asymptotic) and 1000 (Exact). This implies that the distribution of work type between genders is almost identical, confirming no significant relationship; Fisher's exact test with a value of 0.417 and an exact significance of 1000 (Both two-sided and one-sided), this test similarly suggests no dependence between gender and work-type; Linear-by-Linear association value is essentially zero (0.000) with a P-value of 0.988, again indicating no significant trend or association between gender and work difficulty.

Across all tests, the high P-values confirm that gender does not significantly impact the nature of work at the migrated place. The association is not statistically significant meaning both genders experience similar work conditions.

Preferred Season of Migration * Duration of Migration Crosstabulation							
			Duration of Migration				Total
			Less the 3 Months	3 to 6 Months	7 to 10 Months	More than One Year	
Preferred Season of Migration	Summer	Count	1	7	4	1	13
		Expected Count	2.1	4.4	4.9	1.6	13.0
	Monsoon	Count	4	3	1	0	8
		Expected Count	1.3	2.7	3.0	1.0	8.0
	Winter	Count	1	7	13	5	26
		Expected Count	4.2	8.8	9.9	3.1	26.0
	No Preference	Count	2	0	1	0	3
		Expected Count	0.5	1.0	1.1	0.4	3.0
Total		Count	8	17	19	6	50
		Expected Count	8.0	17.0	19.0	6.0	50.0

Source: Source: Field survey 2024

The crosstabulation shows the relationship between the "Proffered season and the Duration of migration". The table presents both the actual counts and the expected counts under the assumption of independence between the two variables.



Source: Based on the Field survey 2024

Dominance of winter: The majority of respondents (26 out of 50) prefer 'winter as their migration season'. Within this group 13 represents prefer staying for 7 to 10 months, while 5 prefer staying for more than a year. This suggests that those who migrate during winter tend to stay longer. Out of the 13 respondents who prefer summer 7 prefer staying for 3 to 6 months. The number of short-term migrants (Less than 3 months) is lower than expected in this group (1 observed vs 2.1 expected). Monsoon is the least preferred because only 8 respondents prefer migrating during Monsoon and of these 4 stays for less than 3 months. The number of short-term migrations during the monsoon is higher than expected (4 observed vs 1.3 expected). A small group (3 respondents) indicated 'no preference for the season and they mostly migrate for short durations (1 less than 3 months or 7 to 10 months).

Chi-Square Tests						
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	21.696[a]	9	0.010	0.009	--------	---------
Likelihood Ratio	21.053	9	0.012	0.018	---------	---------
Fisher's Exact Test	17.129	----------	----------	0.013	---------	--------
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.085[b]	1	0.298	0.322	0.171	0.039
N of Valid Cases	50	----------	--------	-------	------	---------
a. 14 cells (87.5%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.						
b. The standardised statistic is 1.042.						

The Chi-square test results are as follows: Chi-square statistic (X^2): 21.696 degrees of freedom(df) is 9. Since the P-value (0.009) is 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. This suggests a significant relationship between the preferred season of migration and the person's preference for migration seems to influence how long they tend to stay.

Main Reason for the Migration * Times of the migration (Within the 5 Years) Crosstabulation							
			Times of the migration (Within the 5 Years)				Total
			Once	2-3 times	4-5 times	More than ther 5 times	
Main Reason for the Migration	Lack of employment opportunities in the native village	Count	2	2	5	10	19
		Expected Count	1.5	4.9	5.7	6.8	19.0
	Higher wages elsewhere	Count	0	4	4	0	8
		Expected Count	0.6	2.1	2.4	2.9	8.0
	Seasonal employment	Count	2	5	3	2	12
		Expected Count	1.0	3.1	3.6	4.3	12.0
	Family reasons	Count	0	2	3	6	11
		Expected Count	0.9	2.9	3.3	4.0	11.0
Total		Count	4	13	15	18	50
		Expected Count	4.0	13.0	15.0	18.0	50.0

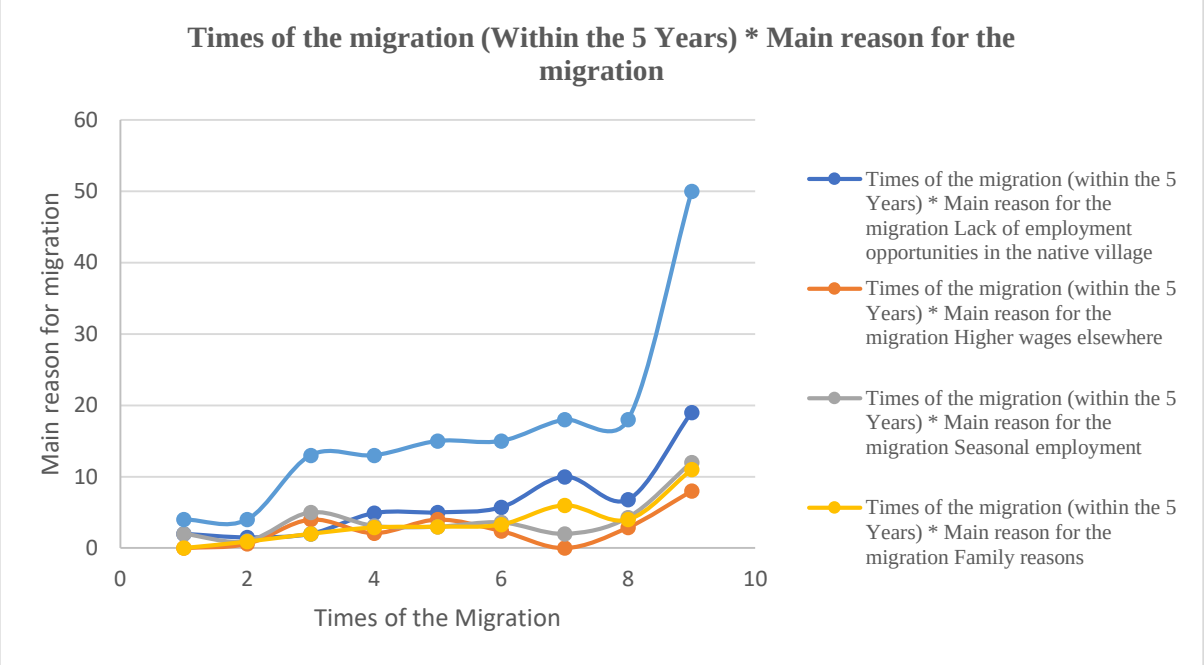
Source: Source: Field survey 2024

Most people who cited “Lack of employment opportunities” as their main reason for migration moved more than 5 times (10 out of 19 people). This is to notify that those facing chronic unemployment in their native village tend to migrate frequently likely to unstable/ temporary employment opportunities in their destinations. People don’t migrate more than five times, suggesting that those migrating for higher wages can find more stable employment after a few moves.

Seasonal employment shows a more even distribution across migration frequencies, with 5 people migrating 2 to 3 times, 3 people migrating 4 to 5 times and 2 people migrating more than 5 times. Individuals may migrate periodically but not every year as part of seasonal work. Seasonal labourers seem to fall between those seeking higher wages and those with no employment opportunities in terms of frequency of migration, indicating a balance between repeat migration for work and relative stability. 6 out of 11 people with family reasons migrated more than 5 times suggesting that family-related migration may be influenced by unstable or changing family circumstances (e.g. caretaking responsibilities, or relating to support extended family). Some people migrated 2 to 3 times (2 people) and 4 to 5 times (3 people) suggesting moving family needs that require occasional but less frequent relocations.

Overall, those who cited "lack of employment opportunities" and "family reasons are more likely to migrate frequently (more than 5 times). This suggests that unstable conditions in the native village (whether economic or familiar) lead to repeated relocations. People migrating for "higher wages" and "Seasonal employment" tend to migrate moderately with many moving 2 to 3 times. These groups seem to experience more stability than those facing unemployment. Though they still relocate periodically for economic opportunities.

Interestingly no one who migrated for higher wages did so only once suggesting that wage-seeking often involves multiple relocations to finding a satisfactory or stable job.



Source: Based on the Field survey 2024

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	15.628[a]	9	0.075	0.070	-------	---------
Likelihood Ratio	19.546	9	0.021	0.040	-------	---------
Fisher's Exact Test	15.136	-------	----------	0.048	-------	--------
Linear-by-Linear Association	.065[b]	1	0.798	0.810	0.423	0.046
N of Valid Cases	50	-------	---------	--------	-------	---------

a. 14 cells (87.5%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .64.

b. The standardised statistic is -.256.

According to Pearson Chi-square test value is 15.628, the degrees of freedom(df) is 9 and the asymptotic significance(2-sided) is 0.075 (P-value 0.075), which is slightly above the common threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. This means that we fail to reject the null hypothesis at the 5 per cent level suggesting that there is no strong evidence of a significant association between the categorical variables. However, the result is borderline and some may argue that it suggests a trend toward significance. Note that the table indicates that 14 cells (87.5%) have expected counts less than 5, which violates the assumption of the Chi-square test that no more than 20 per cent of the cells should have expected frequencies less than 5. This could affect the reliability of the Pearson Chi-square result. The Likelihood ratio Chi-square value is 19.546, degrees of freedom 9, and asymptotic significance (2-sided) is 0.021. The P-value is 0.021, which is less than 0.05, indicating that this test rejects the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is a significant association between

the categorical variables, as per this test. The Likelihood ratio test is more robust than Pearson Chi-square when there are small expected frequencies, which might explain the discrepancy between the two tests. Fisher's exact test is often used when sample sizes are small or when the assumptions of the Pearson Chi-square test are violated. In this case, the test yields a P-value of 0.048. Which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there is a significant association between the categorical variables. Fisher's exact Test is generally considered more accurate than Pearson's Chi-square when expected frequencies are low. The Linear-by-Linear association test examines if there is a linear trend between the two categorical variables. The P-value of 0.798 indicates that there is no significant linear association between the variables.

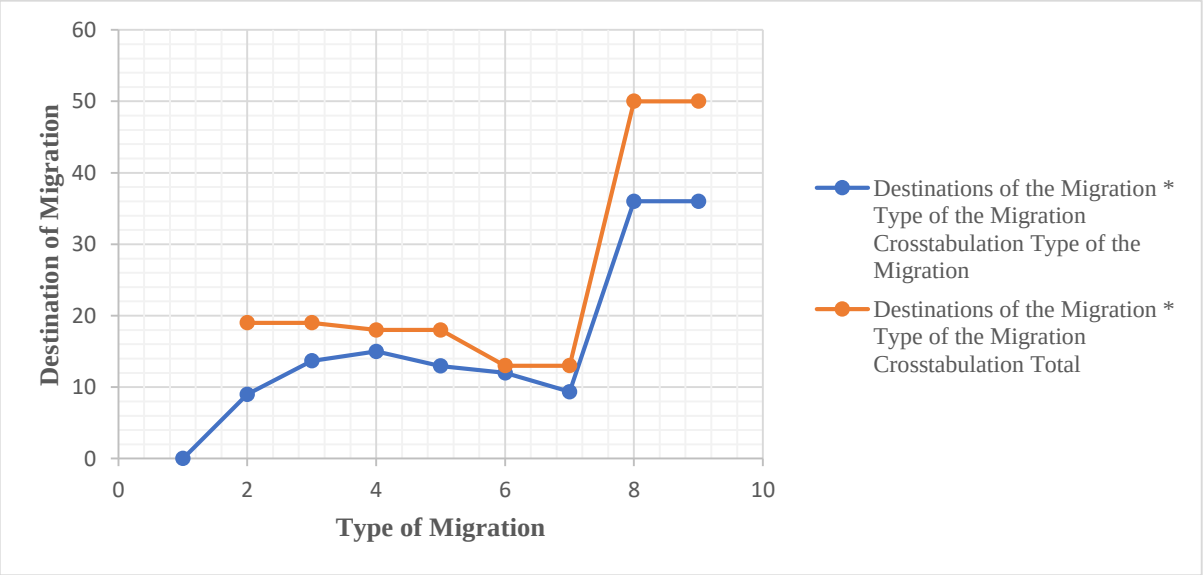
Destinations of the Migration * Type of the Migration Crosstabulation

			Type of the Migration		Total
			Alone	With the Family Members	
Destinations of the Migration	village to other districts within the State	Count	10	9	19
		Expected Count	5.3	13.7	19.0
	From village to Urban Areas within the State	Count	3	15	18
		Expected Count	5.0	13.0	18.0
	Village to Other States	Count	1	12	13
		Expected Count	3.6	9.4	13.0
Total		Count	14	36	50
		Expected Count	14.0	36.0	50.0

Source: Field survey 2024

The data provided is a crosstabulation of migration type ("Alone or with the family members) against different migration distributions (e.g. village to another district within the state", Village to urban areas within the state", village to other states). The expected counts are based on the overall proportions of migration types across all destinations, by comparing the expected to the observed village to other districts. More people migrated alone than expected (10 observed vs 5.3 expected). Fewer people migrated with family than expected (9 vs 13.7). Village to urban areas. The actual values align closely with the expected values. Village to other states: Fewer individuals migrated alone than expected(1vs3.6), while more migrated with family members than expected (12 vs 9.4).

Most migrants tend to move with their family members. "Alone migration is more common when moving to other districts within the same state, but significantly less common when migrating to other states "Migrating with family" is much more prevented when moving to urban areas or other states.



Source: Based on the Field survey 2024

Chi-Square Tests						
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	9.524[a]	2	0.009	0.008	-------	--------
Likelihood Ratio	9.737	2	0.008	0.015	------	------
Fisher's Exact Test	8.767	------	---------	0.011	------	-------
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.327[b]	1	0.004	0.005	0.003	0.002
N of Valid Cases	50	------	----------	--------	--------	----------
a. 1 cells (16.7%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.64.						
b. The standardised statistic is 2.886.						

Pearson's Chi-square test value is 2.524, degree of freedom(df) is 0. 009. The Pearson Chi-square test assesses whether there is a significant association between the two categorical variables (type of migration and migration destination). Since the P-value (0.0009) is less than 0.05, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant association between the type of migration (Alone or with family) and the migration destination; the Likelihood ratio value is 9.737, asymptotic significance (2 sided) is that 0.008, This test is similar to the Pearson Chi-square but based on likelihoods rather than counts. It also shows a significant result with a P-value of 0.008, confirming the association between migration type and destination; the Linear-by-Linear association value is 0.004. This suggests a significant linear trend in the relationship between the type of migration and migration destinations; The standardized statistic (2.886) indicates the strength of this relationship with a value this high confirming a strong linear association.

Findings:

1) There is no significant difference in the distribution of males and females across the different categories of work difficulty. For this reason, both men and women engage in similarly demanding work. However, despite women performing work of comparable rigour in the areas where they migrate a noticeable wage disparity exists, with women consistently receiving lower wages compared to their male counterparts.
2) Although there is no strict correlation between the volume and duration of migration among the landless their main reason for migration is typically linked to earning a livelihood. The majority of people migrate due to a lack of employment opportunities and changes in employment patterns and it leads to family poverty Interestingly no one migrates with the expectation of receiving higher wages.
3) The migration of landless people is often influenced by seasonal factors and the duration of their migration. Most migration typically occurs during the winter and summer months, particularly between October/November and February/March. The duration of migration can range from a minimum of about 3 months to a maximum of 8 months, depending on the specific conditions and opportunities available during these periods.
4) Migration patterns whether individual or with family and the distance of migration (Village to village, village to urban, village to District areas, village to other states) are often independent it is observed that those migrating to other districts, typically move with their families, while those migrating to cities or other states from villages tend to migrate alone.

Conclusion:

Looking at the above statistical relationships, it is clear that the landless are facing severe socio-economic problems. As the landless are unskilled workers, they choose jobs from their native place and work from villages to villages, towns, district-wise areas, and outside states because of their economic hardships. Even in-migrant working areas, women face disparity in access to wages compared to men. Landless agricultural labourers stay in their hometowns only during the rainy season and leave their hometowns for at least 3 to 6 to 8 months during the winter and summer seasons. And their men, including women, are found engaged in hard and often unsafe work. Even if they come back to their hometowns, they will not remain economically

strong. Due to indebtedness and spending more on family expenses, the landless again remain in the same financial position.

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