**STATUS PAPER ON MIGRANT LABOURERS IN TAMIL NADU**

**Introduction**

Tamil Nadu can be called a ‘mobile society’ and Tamils were the forerunners of the Indian’s migrant labourers. In 1830s large number of Indians mostly Tamils were forcibly taken to lands like West Indies and other Asian and African workers and made them to work as indentured labourers in British plantations. In the later stages, large number of workers left Tamil Nadu and moved to places like Malaysia, Singapore and Gulf by getting inspired from the Economic miracle that happened in those countries which all happened because of those migrant workers.

According to Tamil Nadu Migration Survey (TMS) emigrants from Tamil Nadu around the world are around 2.2million and return emigrants are around 1.3million with Chennai placed on top with 3.2lakhs and Nilgiris being the lowest with 5868 (TMS, 2015). One out of 10 households in Tamil Nadu has one or more emigrants. Coastal districts of Tamil Nadu have the highest intensity of migrant households with Sivaganga on Top with 167 out of 1000 households in the year 2007-2008.

Tiruchirapalli, Karur, Namakkal, Perambalur, Erode are among the top 10 districts when ordered by rate of interstate migrants as a per cent of total population. Migration into 3 districts, which constitute a part of the Chennai Municipal Corporation, is because of the urbanisation in the state and the concentration of more livelihood opportunities in and around Chennai.

The education statuses of most of the emigrants are of secondary-level and the reason is because that, for many manual labour/ office assistant positions, the minimum qualification is completion of 10 years of schooling/10th std and about 32.6 per cent of male emigrants fall under this category

**Types of works taken by migrant labourers**

The most sought-after occupation taken up by migrants is engineering with 13.2 per cent which is of skilled work. But next to that is the construction labouring which is of 11per cent. This is the top occupation of return out-migrants with 18.2 per cent share of total ROM population. Other desirable occupations that are being taken up are manufacturing labourer with 5.5 per cent, Business with 5.4%, Defence with 4.9%. Motor vehicle driver with 9.6 % and Agriculture/Animal husbandry labour with 7.2%. Most of these works that are being taken up by the migrant workers are from unorganised sectors and even the organised works are being converted to unorganised works so that the employers who are giving work don’t have to show an account of it and pay tax for the same. Some of the prominent unorganised works that are being taken up are like small scale marginal farming, leather works, weaving, and brick kiln and stone quarry works. As per National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSW), 30 million workers in India are migrant labourers. These kinds of works prove that the labour market in India is undergoing tremendous transformation which includes, growth of informal sector activities, deterioration in quality of employment (in terms of job security, terms and conditions of work), weakening of worker organisations and collective bargaining institutions, marked decline in social security etc. to a big extend, these transformations are strongly related to the on-going globalisation process and the resultant efforts on the part of employers to minimize the cost of production to the lowest level.

**Remittance**

Every year, India receives a large number of money in the form of remittance. According to World Bank, India receives the highest amount of remittance in the world in 2015 with 72 billion dollars. As of 2007-08, Tamil Nadu was 3rd on the list of state’s international remittance with a total of Rs 17,277 crores. Tamil Nadu reflects the dominance of Rural-Urban migration by indicating a significantly lower amount of inter-state remittance when compared with West Bengal and Bihar where out-migration is high. The total remittance to Tamil Nadu in 2014 was Rs.61,843 crores and this places the state in the 3rs position among the Indian states (Non-Resident Tamils and Remittance: Results from Tamil Nadu Migration Survey, 2015). Major use of the remittance by the households was for their subsistence. 85% of the households received remittance for their day-to-day needs. Medical expenses are very high so 50% of it goes for that. And other major issue is debt. So the only solution to resolve the problem of debt is the remittance to the households.

**Push factors or reason for migration**

It has been observed that majority of the internal migration in India takes place from rural to urban areas and the main reason for migration among male is the lack of employment in rural areas which makes them to move to urban areas and for females, the reason is mostly marriage. Some of the key reasons for migration are like work, business, and education, marriage, moved after birth, moved with house hold. Majority of internal migration is from rural to urban and the reasons for this are like scarcity of cultivated land, low, agricultural productivity, concentration of rural economy mostly on agriculture etc., other reasons are like unavailability of enough job opportunities, lack of better educational opportunities, poor medical care, loss of wealth, pollution, poor housing, natural disaster etc.,

**Portability of identity**

The identity of a person is multi-dimensional and consists of different ingredients like caste, religion, ethnicity, language, etc., and a migrant carried all these identities with him when he migrated from one place to another for his personal reasons. Now comes the complication of acceptance of those identities by the people who belong to that new place. Few accept and few don’t. This is because of the fear of invasion of other practices to which they might not be compatible with. Apart from these social identities, their legal identities are also being denied by the contractors but according to “The Hindu” article, the government has promised that soon they will be provided with identity cards which will ensure the safety of the migrants. This identity card will also contain the details of the contractors.

**What is the gap ?  what should be done ? Why NGO need funding support ?**

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|  | **Gaps** | **What should be done** |
| 1. | Seasonal migrants ( Eg.Brick Kilns) are find difficulties in accessing Workers welfare board cards and welfare board benefits | Workers welfare Board – issuing ID card, Renewal, applying and distribution of benefits should be digiatlised. It should be connected with Aadhar card. Any where in India they have to do Regn, renewal and avail benefits. |
| 2. | Seasonal migrants are not able to avail Ration items from Public Distribution Systems( PDS) in Destination Districts/ State | Govt,.issue orders and take digital based initiatives to access PDS items any where in the Country ( seasonal/ temporary/ permanent) |
| 3. | Minimum wages Act and Payment of wages Act and Interstate Migrant Act provisions are not enforced strictly | Officials are to be oriented about the importance of this Act provisions and Review Meetings to be conducted at District and State level ( Qty/ half yearly basis) to review the enforcement status with regard to most vulnerable sectors/ occupations |
| 4. | Adequate Anganwadi / Creche facilities are available in the work places for children | It should be created by the Employers or Govt.  Like SSA, Volunteers to be engaged by the Employers/ Govt. for work season period |
| 5. | Pre-Primary education is not able to available by the children of migrant labourers | Pre- primary education to be ensured by appointing trained Anganwadi/ Creche workers |
| 6. | Migrant workers are not aware about their rights, entitlements and welfare schemes | Govt/ Funding agencies/CSR need to extend funding support to NGOs/ Civil Society Organisations  IEC materials should be printed  Media to be effectively used  Trade Union Leaders need to be trained at Block / District/ State level on this issue and rights – Govt or Funding agencies/ CSR need to be supported  All poverty Alleviation programmes of the Govt should have design for “ Inclusive Development it should includes MIGRANTS” |
| 7. | Lack of proper guidance for migrant families | District Facilitation Centre for Migrants need to be opened in all Districts ( start with Migrant prone Districts) by the Labour Department. This centre shoud have Volunteers for creating awareness and Facilittaing migrant labour workers. Like Para legal Volunteers ( engaged by the District Legal Aid Services Authority- DLSA) this Facilitation centres shall have volunteers ( Paid).  DLSA volunteers also shall be entrusted the task of working with migrant families. |
| 8. | Most of the women from Migrnat families are Anemic and children are malnourished. | Periodical medical/ health awareness and treatment camps to be organised in the work places ( Eg.Brick kilns, stone quarries, construction sites) for the benefit of women and children.  Govt, Funding agencies and CSR – shall support for this through NGOs. |
| 9. | Lack of Awareness on child rights and women rights | Awareness on Child rights and women Rights are to be imparted.  Child line 1098 & Women protection 181 to be popularised in the work places.  Wall writings / hoardings to be displayed in the work places  Psychological counselling and Rehabilitation support to be provided by the Govt/ NGOs. |
| 10. | Employers are need be sensitized periodically | Orientation programmes to be organised for the Employers by the Govt on Labour related Legislations and their duties and Responsibilities |
| 11 | Mainstreaming/ Inclusion of migrant laburers/ families in all Govt. Policies Programmes | In all Govt. Department ( Education, Health, NRLM, MGNREGA, Housing , Pension, Social welfare, Disability welfare ) Review meetings, reporting ( MIS) include one question about—how many migrant families benefitted ? What steps taken for reaching out Migrant families. |

**Interventions by government and NGOs**

* According to the right to education act 2012, the children of the migrant labourers are allowed to get educated in the language that they can understand in.
* Regulation of employment and conditions of services act 1979 makes provision for availing with the onsite services of interstate workers by the contractors/establishments to overcome only the temporary shortage of required skilled workers in the state. The purpose of this act is not to encourage interstate migration of the workers against the interests of local workers as principle employers would have to incur more cost in developing interstate workers.
* NGOs are working individually with migrant workers in certain pockets. It need to be consolidated and do collective basis.

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