

Effects of Migration on Socio-Political Attitudes: A Case Study of Udalguri District, Assam

Dr. Maanoranjana Baruah

Assistant Professor

LOKD College, Dhekiajuli

Sonitpur, Assam

Abstract

It is observed that outflow of migration from Assam to some forward provinces of India's like Karnataka, Kerala, Delhi, and Maharashtra is very high, which is very much seasonal or temporary in nature. This migration brings about radical changes towards perception of the people. The study is an attempt to reveal the migrants' political ideology, participation in political life and membership in political parties. Majority of them do not have any interest in politics before and after migration. Efforts also have been made to know the responses from migrants in regard to the views and attitudes of the migrants on important political issues, preferences of political parties, power of the people in democracy and role of press. The study is an effort to highlight the social, political effects of migration as well as to examine changes in attitudes among the migrants especially on education,

Keywords;-*Outflow, migrants, Politics, Democracy etc*

Introduction

Changes in social status are assessed in terms of migrants' perceptions of social mobility and subjective evaluation of living standards. National and international migration can bring economic, social and political benefits if it promotes changes in various social attitudes such as female education, participation of women in labour force, values and religious practices, participation and belief in political process etc. The two dimensions of the status differ from each other. The first reflects the honour or prestige of the households which is determined in the context of social relationships or the group and the second is related to economic empowerment.

Assam is a land of undulated blue hills, green forestry, mighty snow-white river Brahmaputra with its innumerable tributaries, situated between 90-60 degree east longitude and 24-26 degree North latitude. In respect of societal characteristic features or scenario, historically, the society of Assam is apparently heterogeneous in nature; in that, this state is multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-caste, and multi-class and multi-lingual in its composition. Nevertheless, majority of population belongs to cohort of Assamese speaking in Assam. Total population of Assam as on March 2011, stands at 3,11,69,272 out of which 1,59,54,927 are males and 1,52,14,345 are females, where the density of population per square kilometer in the state has gone up to 397 as per 2011 census as against 340 in 2001, with geographical area of 78,438 square kilometers. The literacy rate as per census 2011 for Assam comes to 73.18%, while it is 78.81% for males and 67.27% for females (Economic Survey of Assam 2010-11).¹

Review of Literature

.Rahaman Anisur (2001), Indian Labour Migration to the Gulf: A socio-Economic Analysis, Rajat Publication, New-Delhi, provided an empirical evidence indicating the nature and dimension of the changes that gulf money has bought in the social status and ambience.

Dr; Rao B.V and Reddy A.S.(2004), Migration Flows in Ravirala Village in Warangal District, in “Distressed Migrants Labour in India: Key Human Right Issues” edited by Gopaliyer K., Kanishka Publishers, New-Delhi showed that migration process started in the village in arly 1970s and the motives of migration was heterogeneous in nature.

M.S.A. Rao (1986) conducted a study entitled “Some aspects of Sociology of Migration in India”. In his study pointed that seasonal migration occupies a very important place in migration studies, which is relative to economic and social conditions of the migrants of the place of origin as well as destination.

According to Jan Breman (1985), seasonal migration is the result of increasing pressure on resources in agrarian subsistence in an impoverished milieu , and the lopsided distribution of land ownership , which is inseparable from the pressure .

Mazumdar (2009) conducted a research on “A Study of Brick Industry on Barkhola Development Block of Cachar district of Assam ‘and found that people are becoming conscious of the evil effects of pollution. Different environmental conscious N.G.Os, committees constituted by the government and other agencies have given much stress on pollution free technology.

W.A. Lewis viewed migrations as being closely linked to industrial growth wherein a significant part of labour force could be drawn into industrial sector from the surplus agricultural sector without incurring any loss to the later (Lewis, 1954)

The Todaro model postulates that migration proceeds in response to urban-rural differences in expected incomes rather than the actual earnings and migration will continue until the expected incomes in both the places ie the origin (rural) and the destination and the urban is equal. So, the migration of people is caused by the differences in wage rates between the two regions

Objective of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are to understand and examine the process and factors of migration in Udalguri district, taking the total population of Assam as the universe and to identify issues involved in it. More specifically the study attempts to;-

1. To find out the socio-economic background of the migrants in the study area.
2. To examine the impact of migration on migrant’s families in terms of life chances and life-styles.
3. To examine the socio-Political impact of migration on the migrants and their changing perceptions or attitudes on society and political system.

Hypothesis

On the basis of the objectives outlined the following hypothesis have been taken;-

1. Lower socio-economic conditions leads to higher migration levels.

2. Migration affects the normal social and political attitudes among the migrants.

Study area & Research Methodology

Udalguri district of Assam has **total population of 831,668** as per the Census 2011. Out of which 421,617 are males while 410,051 are females. In 2011 there were total 168,717 families residing in Udalguri district. The **Average Sex Ratio of Udalguri district is 973**. As per Census 2011 out of total population, 4.5% people lives in urban areas while 95.5% lives in the Rural areas. The average literacy rate in urban areas is 85.1% while that in the rural areas is 64.4%. Also the Sex Ratio of Urban areas in Udalguri district is 960 while that of Rural areas is 973. The population of Children of age 0-6 years in Udalguri district is 113274 which is 14% of the total population. There are 57410 male children and 55864 female children between the age 0-6 years. Thus as per the Census 2011 the **Child Sex Ratio of Udalguri is 973** which is greater than Average Sex Ratio (973) of Udalguri district. The **total literacy rate of Udalguri district is 65.41%**. The male literacy rate is 62.69% and the female literacy rate is 50.14% in Udalguri district.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The secondary data will be collected from various published and unpublished sources. The present study covers the Udalguri district of Assam as sample district because it is one of the crucial district from which migration to other parts of India is taking place. In Sonitpur district there are three sub-division i.e. Tezpur, Bishanath-Charali and Gohpur sub-division. We have selected Tezpur Sub-division, out of the existing three sub-division, on the basis of the highly concentration of Tea-tribe population. In Tezpur sub-division, we have fourteen development blocks, out of six development blocks i.e. Bhergaon, Kalaigaon, Mazbat, Rowta, Khairabari and Udalguri. We have selected 50% of total development blocks i.e. three namely . Rowta development block, Kalaigaon development block and Udalguri development block. Rowta has 14 Gram Panchayats, kalaigaon block has total 16 Gram Panchayats and Udalguri block has 26 Gram panchayats, so total 56 Gram Panchayats, out of which 50% Panchayats are randomly selected as samples, where the investigator made field survey. The survey was carried out in January-July, 2018. The quantitative information will be supplemented and cross-checked through informal interviews, participants- observations and focused group discussion. We will use appropriate statistical and mathematical tools & techniques to classify, tabulate and analyze various problems of the proposed research topic.

Discussion & Analysis

Migration maintains a favorable association with education of children, in post migration period outlook of the people become much more wider, liberal and gradually rigidity in taking decision are narrowing down. They are willing to give their children more freedom in choosing their education line, profession, marriage and others vital decisions of life. The socio-economic and demographic features of the samples in study area has been summarized in table-1

It is apparent from table-1 that 15% of the migrants are illiterate, 56.5% migrants have educational qualification less than 10th standard and 6% only have qualification of above degree or has any other professional qualifications and 18% are females migrants. It is found that 16.5% child labour who are less than 18 years old are also migrants , 56.5% migrants are in age group

18-38 years. Interestingly, 76% migrants are married and 67% have their children at their home in Udalguri district. Out of total migrants 50% are work in factory, 32.5% are in construction activities and only 5% are in other non-governmental official jobs. In respect of earnings, 20.5% earn less than Rs. 15,000/pm, 50.5% earn between Rs. 15,000-35,000/pm, 26% earn between Rs.35,000-55,000/pm and only 3% are earning more than Rs.55,000 per month. So, it is evident that most of the migrants are youths, less educated or lacking of professional qualifications, belong to poor class.

Table-1, Socio-economic and demographic features of the samples

Name of blocks	No. of migration cases	Age level		Education level		Nature of job		Income level	
Rowta	45	Below 18 yrs	8	Illiterate	7	House work	6	Below 15000/month	11
		18-38 yrs	27	Below 10 th class	30	Factory	24	15-35 thousand/pm	29
		38-58 yrs	10	Up to graduate	8	Construction	15	35-55 thousand/pm	5
		Above 58 yrs	00	Above graduate/other professional degrees	0	Others	0	Above 55 thousand/pm	0
Kalaigaon	74	Below 18 yrs	11	Illiterate	10	House work	9	Below 15000/month	14
		18-38 yrs	41	Below 10 th class	43	Factory	36	15-35 thousand/pm	36
		38-58 yrs	21	Up to graduate	16	Construction	25	35-55 thousand/pm	22
		Above 58 yrs	1	Above graduate/other professional degrees	5	Others	4	Above 55 thousand/pm	2
Udalguri	81	Below 18 yrs	14	Illiterate	13	House work	10	Below 15000/month	16
		18-38 yrs	45	Below 10 th class	40	Factory	40	15-35 thousand/pm	36
		38-58 yrs	18	Up to graduate	21	Construction	25	35-55 thousand/pm	25
		Above 58 yrs	4	Above graduate/other professional degrees	7	Others	6	Above 55 thousand/pm	4

Source: field Survey

Attitude to Education and occupation

In our study we sought to examine whether attitudes of the migrants to education and occupation in respect of their children have changed in post migration period or not. The table-2 shows that

the most important change that took place in the attitudes of migrants is toward education. Majority i.e. 74% of the respondents understood the importance of education for their children after migration. This study also sought information from the migrant households regarding their aspirations for their children and their attitudes on crucial matters relating to the kinds of education, jobs and choices made by children in employment.

Table-2, Aspirations of Migrants by the type of education for their children

Types of education	No. of cases	%
Professional Education	76	38
10 th /SSC/Technical education	66	33
College education	26	13
As much as children like to learn	32	16
Total=	200	100%

Source: field Survey

Impacts on Socio-Political attitudes

This study attempted to examine the migrant’s political ideology, participation in political life, membership of political parties, exercise of voting etc. The study also seeks to obtain responses from the migrants in regard to the views and attitudes held by them on important political issues such as the democratically elected governments and its polices, preferences of political parties and power of the people in democracy. It is found from the feedback of the respondents that the migrants have no interest in politics both before and after migration, which indicates that there is not much impact on the political behavior of migrants.

As shown in table-3, only 44% of the migrants’ cast their votes in election but 72% have faith in democratically elected governments, 46% know about the various welfare schemes of the government. As Udalguri district falls within the jurisdiction of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTAD) so B.P.F (Bodoland People’s Front) as a political party claims very strong hold, wherein in our survey 32% of the respondents exposing that they cast their votes for BPF party.

We further notice that majority of respondents 57% reported that they were against the donation given to political parties, which clearly reflects their resentment against the political parties. This is also clear that they have lost their confidence in politics. in their mind, politicians approach them when elections are round the corner. As soon as it is over, they disappeared for five years. It is clear that less than 50% of the respondents realized the importance of people’s mandate. Hence, voting for or not voting hardly makes any difference in the fate and welfare of the migrants people. So, in nutshell , a pessimistic outlook prevailing among the migrants regarding political parties and their programmes.

When asked about the role and importance of press in establishing healthy atmosphere and in respect of bringing about political consciousness only 46% admitting the role of press as unbiased and positive. They were critical about the role played by the media in Assam. At the time of crisis, they fell to the victims of partiality.

Table-3, Issues pertaining to political behavior of migrants

Sl. Nos.	Questions	Answers			
		Yes	%	No	%
1	Are you voter?	124	62	76	38

2	Do you cast your vote?		88	44	112	56
3	Do you support democratically elected govt.?		144	72	56	28
4	Are you aware about various welfare schemes and polices of the Government?		92	46	108	54
5	Which party do you prefer more to rule in B.T.A.D.?	BJP	60	30	140	70
		Congress(I)	24	12	176	88
		BPF	64	32	136	68
		AGP	18	9	182	91
		Not interested to share	34	17	186	83
6	Do you support donation collected by political parties		86	43	114	57
7	7. Do you recognize the role of press in establishing healthy society?		92	46	108	54
8	Do you know the name of your local MLAs?		112	56	88	44
9	Do you make conversation among yourself on political issues?		80	40	120	60
10	. Do you want to contest in your local election?		24	12	176	88

Source: field Survey

In brief, it can be said that change was observed towards the political attitudes and behavior of the migrants who have migrated outside of Assam , but this change was not found very significant as in the case of study done in Udalguri district of Assam. It is true that majority of migrants were not interested in political parties and political activities but it cannot be denied that there was no change in their outlook and political consciousness. They became more aware of their political right and duties largely owing to national migration.

Conclusion

In Udalguri district, labourers migrating from the state are normally belonging to the poorer and weaker section of the society and marginal portion are educated youths. They work six months in a year in agricultural and other activities at their home places and most of them then migrate to outside of Assam. Low development, agricultural failure, poverty and environmental conditions such as floods and erosion in their native place were the dominant push factors for migration .Poverty is the major cause of migrating to various places in search of their livelihood and to clear all their debts. There is hardly any change in their economic situation even after entering coming back to home. It is revealed that change in attitudes of migrants and their family members towards society, education, future, political process and political beliefs, occupation etc undergo a positive change. Moreover, their attitudes to marriage, dowry, divorce and medium of education have got changed in post migration period, which is an indicator of the unification with mainstream of nation.

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