

**Title:** Transient Urbanism: Full Family Seasonal Migration to Mumbai from Rural India, Patterns and Implications

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**Theme:** 14. Internal Migration and Urbanisation

## **1. Abstract:**

This paper studies seasonally migrating families as a unit. Although studies have been conducted on family migration at an international level, in-depth knowledge about internally migrating families on this unique seasonal journey is lacking. The phenomena of seasonal migration is common and long-standing in the Indian subcontinent but the act of migrating as a nuclear family and loosing access to assets like free schooling and vaccination for children, safety of home and public distribution system is new. International organisations are well versed in the concept of full family migration in context of family-unification and the legislations related to the same but there is a lack of understanding for internal family-migration in India where the family behaves as an economic unit and faces causes and consequences of migration together. This paper delves into causes of seasonal migration by studying village level economics from the men of the family and the consequences of the same from the women and children by studying vulnerability at the site, school drop-outs, child labour and loss of access to public distribution systems at home.

**Keywords:** *Seasonal migration, Full-family migration, School dropout, Child labour*

## **2. Introduction**

The terms “temporary”, “circular”, “seasonal”, “short-term”, and “spontaneous” migration have been used interchangeably to describe the movement of people from one place to another for a short period of time, traditionally for economic gains. The usual place of residence for the seasonal migrants thus remains unchanged due to the short duration of stay at the place of destination (Bilsborrow, Oberai, and Standing 1984). Seasonal migration has been the drivers of development in many countries like India, Nepal, Sudan, etc (Deshingkar 2006). Migration is, in general, the act of a person moving from one place of habitation to another. Migration is described in demography as a movement that leads to a long-term or permanent shift in one's customary place of residence. According to several definitions, the migration must be of a significant distance and result in the person living in the destination

for a considerable amount of time. Due to data constraints, migration is operationally defined as a move that crosses a designated political boundary or enters a new labour market with the intention of relocating. Internal migration is the movement of people within a nation; migration beyond national borders is known as immigration or emigration (Toney and Bailey, 2014).

Hägerstrand (1969) mentioned that “As a rule, migration of the population is regarded in two ways. In one case, it is considered as a whole, as one of the bookkeeping entries in the total population balance of different areas. In the other case, there is greater detailed interest in mobility as an aspect of individual human behaviour.” Migration within the boundaries of a country is called internal migration and migration that crosses a national boundary is called immigration and emigration. “Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihoods is a key feature of human history” (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003)

One of the main forces for migration is family. Those who relocate because of new or existing family ties are categorised under the phrase "family migration," which has many subcategories. Family migration is commonly defined as the relocation of individuals across national boundaries within the framework of decisions pertaining to their families (Root and De Jong, 1991).

The ILO's Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labour recently estimated that 18 % of children aged 5-14 worldwide are economically active worldwide. 60% of these working children live in Asia. The most difficult job is to define child work and differentiate it with child labour. There are varied and sometimes clashing views among scholars and many organisations while defining and differentiating child work. According to Suda (2011), the term child labour refers to when children is working in any type of work that is dangerous and harmful to children's health or the work hinders their education. For Moyi (2011) child labour refers to low wages, long hours, physical and sexual abuse. According to Edmonds and Pavcnik (2005) child labour is viewed as a form of child labour abuse, when children work in bad conditions and hazardous occupations.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and "Having to work" is the most typical response given by kids when asked why they dropped out of school (Hovdhaugen, 2015). While the number of child laborers decreased somewhat from 2000-2004, a huge number of out-of-school children are child laborers, most of whom work out of poverty ( ).

Children from low-income families are forced to work, which keeps them from going to school and eventually causes them to drop out. Child work is a problem for society, even in affluent nations like Portugal. Goulart and Bedi (2008) discovered that child work is an obstacle to obtaining universal education, which has an impact on the nation as a whole, in addition to impeding an individual's ability to succeed in school. A student's likelihood of pursuing a higher education is significantly reduced when they drop out of school. As such, not only does the income of a school dropout diminish, but the nation's human capital also decreases, which, over time, impacts economic growth (Glick and Sahn, 2000).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

No single migration theory of migration that explains the theoretical perspective adopted for this paper but a combination of economic, behavioural and social theories. Economic migration theories hold that migration is an act of investing human capital, among economic theories, the theories of Arthur Lewis (1954), describing a two sector economy and Ranis and Fei's (1961) theory of economic development clearly define the rural-urban nature of migration pull discussed in the paper. Wolpert's (1966) Life Cycle approach describes the behaviour of the seasonal migrants and does a better job of explaining the drivers of full family migration. According to social theories, migration is viewed as a social process that highlights the importance of friends, family, and the social network in supporting migrants as they settle and keeps their ties to their place of origin. In the context of internal migration, social network has overriding importance. Family ties, kin and friends, caste and religious groups and affinity of village play significant role in the formation of social network spurring migration. This cumulative method of migration is therefore termed as Cumulative causation theory, after the theories propounded by Gunnar Myrdal (Massey et al, 1993). Social connections in the internal labour market keep the migrant labourers in a generational cycle of poverty.

### **4. Objective**

The main objective of this paper is to determine adequate policies which addresses the causes and consequences of distressed full-family seasonal migration

### **5. Data Source and methodology**

The data used for this paper was derived from both primary and secondary sources ensuring a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon. The primary data was collected from the field with a mixed method approach. Qualitative tools like Key Informant interviews, in-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions have all contributed to narrative building, discourse and content analysis. The quantitative approaches involved collecting information on demography, migration patterns and socio-economic indicators through structured questionnaires.

Along with primary data, the paper draws upon secondary data for reliable and comparable information. Although there is a lack of recent data on seasonal migration, specially on full-family migration, analysis on secondary data, assumptions have been made of Census, NSSO and MIS data to derive outputs.

Through the integration of primary and secondary data sources, this study offers a comprehensive comprehension of impermanent urbanization and its consequences for complete family seasonal migration in Mumbai. By combining data from several sources to assure the validity and trustworthiness of the conclusions, the mixed-methods technique enables a deeper investigation of the subject.

## **6. Findings**

The economic stability and lives of people in rural India are significantly shaped by social stratification, which is based on caste-based groups. For many households, traditional seasonal migration during the Kharif season has become a necessary survival mechanism rather than a discretionary means of producing revenue. This movement is partly caused by the adult population's yearly migration in pursuit of employment due to a cycle of debt to local moneylenders, brokers, and friends. The traditional and optional *Kharif* season migration has become compulsory to survive. Debt from village debt collectors and broker and their acquaintances force the adults to migrate every year. Payment is received based on the quantity of work and a family unit is paid same as an individual. Almost all the seasonal migrants interviewed were landless labourers. Some of them borrowed their neighbours land to cultivate crops and paid a rent at harvest. Others worked on lands owed by the broker in their native place. Some have migrated repeated from one site to the next without visiting their village.

The girls above 7 years were expected to maintain their family rooms/containers while their parents worked. The boys on the other hand are expected to help out the family unit with hard labour. There were no girls older than 16 because they were married or waiting to be married in the villages. Work sites just register the men of the family as a labourer. The women help fulfil the weekly quota of work for pay supervised by village “Munshi” at the site.

From 2020 to early 2022 landless labourers have had little to no income. The families survived by borrowing money from the village money lenders. The tendency for distressed seasonal migration thus increases greatly. Most of the adult male workers had just finished their primary school before dropping out (Class 5). The rest reported dropping out at secondary school or high school (Class 8). All of them started working in labour intensive industries since then.

All of the male migrant labourers started working in labour intensive industries since dropping out of school. The men who had dropped out earlier started their work life through seasonal migration with parents. The men who had dropped out later from school started seasonal migration after marriage as an adult. Women from seasonal migrant families got married when they were teenagers.

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