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Exploring the Reasons for Seasonal Migration from Rural India:
Evidences from the Koraput Bolangir Kalahandi Region of Odisha

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Abstract

The present paper explored the factors causing seasonal migration in rural India. The author analysed the factors responsible for the phenomenon through a sample study comprising 225 migrant households in the backward Nuapada district coming under the infamous Koraput Bolangir Kalahandi (KBK) region of Odisha. He collected primary data for the study from the sample in 2011-12. In the study area the seasonal migration was of distress in nature and was in the direction of informal sectors based in the southern parts of India and occurred to the cities and their peripheries. The study sought to find out whether distress seasonal migration was caused by livelihood distress in the study area. It applied factor analysis to test the null hypothesis. The author compiled the results of factor analysis to draw conclusion. The findings of the study showed that six factors such as 'Poverty and Debt reasons', 'Employment Reasons', 'Economic Upliftment', 'Social Networks', 'Social and Economic Obligations', and 'Inefficiencies in MGNREGA' were significant with perfectly correlated variables. As the variables were correlated with each other, they must not be independent.

Key words: KBK, seasonal migration, distress, informal sector, poverty, bondage

I. Introduction

Seasonal migration of labour from the poverty-stricken rural areas in India has aroused hot debates in the recent discourses on rural livelihood (See for example Meher 2017b; Srivastava 2012). The informal estimates reveal a very high magnitude of seasonal migration from the rural areas in the country, most of which remain unnoticed in Official statistics (Avis 2017). As per the estimates by The Economic Survey of India 2017, the magnitude of inter-state migration in the country annually averaged 9 million between 2011 and 2016. Several push and pull factors cause migration (Lee 1966). The neo-classical model of Todaro views that individual migrants make rational decision for migration responding to the expected differentials in wage between the rural and urban sectors (Todaro 1969). Viewing migrants as rational actors, New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) postulates that relative deprivation, social network and group behavior emerge important factors in migration and the family takes migration decision to maximise its net benefit (Stark and Taylor 1991; Banerjee 1983). Conceptualising migration associated with debt bondage from the lens of Bourdieusian ideas of capital and the 'constrained agency', Deshingkar (2022) shows that the migrants utilise their 'embedded cultural capital' to their advantage while exercising their 'agency' positions. In India, Report of the Working Group on Migration 2017 show that marriage and family related issues are the principal reasons for internal migration (World Economic Forum 2017). The chronically poor undertake migration when they perceive that there is no option left to them to survive with dignity except migration (Mander and Sahgal 2012; Bhagat and Keshari 2010) and often it takes the form of inter-generational mobility (Panda and Mishra 2018). Thus, spatial diversities concerned with livelihood issues and access to resources emerge important in seasonal migration (Harichandan 2010; Castaldo, et al 2012).

Seasonal migration is also viewed in the context of socio-economic transformation including structural and institutional changes involving the pattern of bondage (Bagchi 2014; Breman 1996; Gopalkrishnan and Sreenivasa 2009). Several studies focus on ineffectiveness of intervention for promoting livelihood causing distress seasonal migration from the rural areas (Meher 2017a; Independent Commission for Aid Impact [ICAI] 2013; Smita 2007). Livelihood distress ultimately throws the vulnerable masses into debt bondage through seasonal migration (Meher 2019, 2017b; Shah 2010; Marius-Gnanou 2008) that culminates in cyclical migration.

The present study is conducted during 2012-13 in Nuapada, one of the eight most backward districts forming the Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi (KBK) region of Odisha in the eastern coast of India. Given the social and economic constraints defined by several issues including the structural transformations in the rural areas, the paper attempts to explain the factors causing distress seasonal migration of the rural poor as well as their relative importance with the help of the statistical tool 'factor analysis' to explore the occurrence of the phenomenon in the study area in the direction of informal sector outside. The KBK region is fraught with all social and economic evils like illiteracy, lack of awareness, superstition, poverty and deprivation (Sainath 1996). The region comprising almost one-third of Odisha spatially has about 56 percent of scheduled category population. With 78.31 per cent of its population falling below poverty line (Government of Odisha: Economic Survey 2012-13), Nuapada district fares badly in terms of health and education too. Human Development Index (HDI) for health and education are 0.19 and 0.26 respectively (https://www.dailypioneer.com). Seasonal migration out of distress has emerged as a major socio-economic issue, more particularly during the post-globalization period, and its magnitude is not properly reflected through official statistics including decadal population census because of the absence of proper registration of migration (Meher 2017b). Recent outbreak of the pandemic 'COVID 19' has vindicated the horrifying nature of the phenomenon. As studies on distress seasonal migration from the KBK region are limited, the present study using factor analysis to explore the phenomenon is a modest attempt to fill the gap in the literature. The paper is divided into eight sections. The present section gives the introduction with a brief review of important literature, purpose of study and a brief profile of the study area. This is followed by research hypotheses in the second section. The third section presents data and methodology. The fourth section presents socio-economic profile and migration details. The next section deals with the data analysis. The limitations of analysis and implications of the study are given in the sixth and the seventh sections respectively. The final section concludes the paper.

II. Research Hypotheses

In view of the socio-economic and structural conditions in the study area, the null (H_0) and the alternative (H_1) hypotheses framed for the present research study are stated as follows:

H_0: Seasonal migration is not caused by livelihood distress in the study area.

H_1: Seasonal migration is caused by livelihood distress in the study area.

III. Data and Methodology

The data for the present study was collected with the help of a semi-structured questionnaire from a sample of 225 seasonal migrant households in the Nuapada district in Odisha during 2012-13. The sample was selected from 5 villages in each of three blocks, namely Sinapali, Boden and Khariar taking in to account the diversities at block level such as access to irrigation, level of literacy and dominance of scheduled category population. After conducting a pilot study in a village in Sinapali block as many as fifteen variables, such as, insufficient employment, failure of agriculture, failure of NREGA, clearing debt, social obligation like marriage and rituals, construction of home, bullock purchase, land purchase, purchase of consumer durables, expectation of higher earnings, education of children, outside connection, influenced by the social group which he/she belongs to, poverty and expectation of higher level of enjoyment labeled as X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, X_8, X_9, X_{10}, X_{11}, X_{12}, X_{13}, X_{14} and X_{15} respectively were identified for investigation. The responses from the sample households on the relative importance of these variables in causing migration were recorded in 5-point Likert Scale format showing 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' (Table 1). Factor analysis is applied for grouping the observed variables

on the basis of their similarity of characteristics into a smaller number of "super-variables" called factors that are capable of explaining the observed variance in the large number of variables. The analysis shall help to analyse the relative importance of factors and to proceed for possible rejection of the null hypothesis.

IV. Socio-economic Profile and Migration Details of the Sample Households

The sample households belong to the socially and economically vulnerable population comprising Scheduled Tribes (48%), Other Backward Classes (30.7%) and Scheduled Castes (21.3%), who are either landless or marginal farmers and/or work as labourers, and among whom 76 % are Below Poverty Line. Majority (76 percent) of landowners hold either less than or equal to 1 acre of land. Importance of agriculture in their livelihood is obvious from the data, which reveals that 67 percent of them work in their own land, while 84.44 percent work as agricultural labour. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has provided wage employment to only 19 percent households and that too for less than 10 days on average during the year of survey. This vindicates the effectiveness of intervention to fight livelihood insecurity.

Gender dimension of distress migration is precarious. Females dominate the migration stream and 70 percent of the migrants are in working-age group. Majority of them migrate in groups to the brick-kilns located in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to be engaged different tasks. Brick making is entrusted to the 'Pathuria' unit, which normally comprises an adult female, an adult male and a child engaged in softening clay, molding bricks and drying molded bricks respectively (Meher 2017b; Smita 2007). Some are engaged in carrying bricks to the chimney for frying. Unmarried young females are mostly preferred for engagement in brick trucking task during night time (Meher 2017b). Goa and Mumbai are destinations mostly for single males for construction work. About 71 percent of households have out-migrated during the end of Kharif crop in October to December and returned home during onset of monsoon.

V. Data Analysis

The responses of the migrants are recorded in Table 1, which reveals the relative importance of the variables influencing migration of households. The preferences for the given variables are given in terms of frequencies. In case of the variables, such as, X_1, X_2, X_3, X_{13}, X_{14}, frequencies for 'strongly agree' and 'agree' are relatively higher. Similarly, in case of X_6, X_9, X_{10}, X_{11} and X_{15} higher frequencies for 'strongly disagree' are recorded. In case of X_4, highest frequency is observed on the response 'strongly agree'. Given the complex nature of responses, it is pertinent to apply factor analysis to the variables for grouping them in to a smaller number of factors such that they can explain the variance among the observed variables. Therefore, data analysis proceeds with the objectives as follows:

i. To make a correlation analysis of the factors influencing seasonal migration.
ii. To determine the underlying reasons responsible for seasonal migration using factor analysis after classifying the variables according to their relative importance for the migrants as per their preferences.

Table 1: Responses of Migrant Households in Likert Scale Format

Variables	Number of Preferences					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
X_1	188 (83.6 %)	12 (5.3 %)	6 (2.7 %)	11 (4.9 %)	8 (3.6 %)	225 (100 %)
X_2	178 (79.1 %)	29 (12.9 %)	11 (4.9 %)	4 (1.8 %)	3 (1.3 %)	225 (100 %)
X_3	175 (77.8 %)	22 (9.8 %)	21 (9.3 %)	7 (3.1 %)	----	225 (100 %)
X_4	193 (85.8 %)	2 (0.9 %)	----	3 (1.3 %)	27 (12.0 %)	225 (100 %)

X_5	48 (21.3 %	4 (1.8 %)	12 (5.3 %)	4 (1.8 %)	157 (69.8 %)	225 (100 %)
X_6	30 (13.3 %)	3 (1.3 %)	1 (0.4 %)	4 (1.8 %)	187 (83.1 %)	225 (100 %)
X_7	3 (1.3 %)	1 (0.4 %)	3 (1.3 %)	63 (28.0 %)	155 (68.9 %)	225 (100 %)
X_8	3 (1.3 %)	1 (0.4 %)	6 (2.7 %)	61 (27.1 %)	154 (68.4 %)	225 (100 %)
X_9	7 (3.1 %)	10 (4.4 %)	37 (16.4 %)	50 (22.2 %)	121 (53.8 %)	225 (100 %)
X_{10}	11 (4.9 %)	8 (3.6 %)	7 (3.1 %)	1 (0.4 %)	198 (88.0 %)	225 (100 %)
X_{11}	3 (1.3 %)	1 (0.4 %)	2 (0.9 %)	31 (13.8 %)	188 (83.6 %)	225 (100 %)
X_{12}	1 (0.4 %)	75 (33.3 %)	39 (17.3 %)	35 (15.6 %)	75 (33.3 %)	225 (100 %)
X_{13}	93 (41.3 %)	94 (41.8 %)	14 (6.2 %)	5 (2.2 %)	19 (8.4 %)	225 (100 %)
X_{14}	195 (86.7 %)	18 (8.0 %)	12 (5.3 %)	----	----	225 (100 %)
X_{15}	----	----	----	----	225 (100.0 %)	225 (100 %)

Source: Field Survey

Table 2: Variance of variables

Variable	**Variance***	**Variable**	**Variance***
X_1	1.017	X_9	1.128
X_2	0.589	X_{10}	1.100
X_3	0.611	X_{11}	0.379
X_4	1.777	X_{12}	1. 617
X_5	2.753	X_{13}	1.328
X_6	1.938	X_{14}	0.260
X_7	0.449	X_{15}	0.000
X_8	0.480		

*Source: Field Survey (*Figures generated by SPSS 16)*

From table 2 it is clear that except the variable X_{15}, all other variables have non-zero variance. Since factor analysis cannot be applied taking variable with zero variance, the variable X_{15} is dropped and only 14 variables (X_1 to X_{14}) are retained to enable the application.

We set out to examine whether correlation exists among the variables in the population. For the purpose, we set the null and alternative hypotheses as follows:

H_0: $\rho = 0$, i.e., variables (X_1 to X_{14}) are independent of each other in the population (Population correlation matrix is an identity matrix).

H_1: $\rho \neq 0$, i.e., variables (X_1 to X_{14}) are not independent of each other in the population (Population correlation matrix is not an identity matrix).

Here, the symbols ρ and 0 denote the population correlation matrix and the identity matrix respectively.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.511
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	472.969
	Df	91.000
	Sig.	.000

Source: Table Generated by SPSS 16

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

		Reasons													
		X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8	X_9	X_{10}	X_{11}	X_{12}	X_{13}	X_{14}
Reasons	X_1	1.00	.37	.07	.17	.03	-.03	-.14	-.15	.04	-.21	.06	-.05	.06	.14
	X_2	.37	1.00	.00	.18	-.05	.08	-.04	-.02	-.12	-.13	.06	-.05	.18	-.01
	X_3	.07	.00	1.00	-.09	.04	-.07	.04	-.01	-.04	-.01	-.06	.01	.12	-.05
	X_4	.17	.18	-.09	1.00	.19	.07	-.08	-.07	-.24	-.12	.06	-.17	.04	.80
	X_5	.03	-.05	.04	.19	1.00	-.13	.12	-.01	.07	.08	.01	-.06	-.08	.17
	X_6	-.03	.08	-.07	.07	-.13	1.00	.07	.02	-.03	-.01	.02	.05	.15	.06
	X_7	-.14	-.04	.04	-.08	.12	.07	1.00	.16	.05	.13	.07	.06	.08	-.13
	X_8	-.15	-.02	-.01	-.07	-.01	.02	.16	1.00	.19	.19	.06	-.07	.02	-.12
	X_9	.04	-.12	-.04	-.24	.07	-.03	.05	.19	1.00	.08	.02	.16	.10	-.09
	X_{10}	-.21	-.13	-.01	-.12	.08	-.01	.13	.19	.08	1.00	.07	.00	-.16	-.15
	X_{11}	.06	.06	-.06	.06	.01	.02	.07	.06	.02	.07	1.00	-.05	.00	.02
	X_{12}	-.05	-.05	.01	-.17	-.06	.05	.06	-.07	.16	.00	-.05	1.00	.33	-.15
	X_{13}	.06	.18	.12	.04	-.08	.15	.08	.02	.10	-.16	.00	.33	1.00	.04
	X_{14}	.14	-.01	-.05	.80	.17	.06	-.13	-.12	-.09	-.15	.02	-.15	.04	1.00

Source: Field Survey (Figures Generated by SPSS 16)

Table 3 shows that, for the variables, the values of approximate chi-square by *Bartletts's test of sphericity* with 91 degree of freedom is 472.969, which is significant at the 0.05 ($p=0.000<0.05$) level. Hence, H_0 must be rejected. This follows that there exist correlations among the variables X_1, X_2,…, X_{14}. The value of *'Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin_Measure of sampling Adequacy'* is calculated as $0.511>0.5$. Therefore, factor analysis technique is appropriate for data analysis.

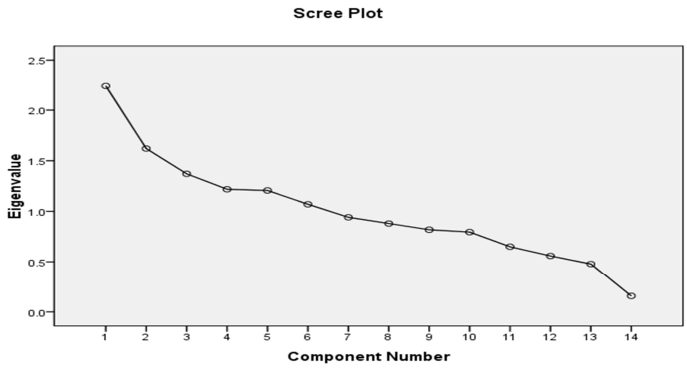
Table 4 reveals that positive correlations exist among the variables X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_9, X_{11}, X_{13} and X_{14}, while, negative correlations exist among the variables X_1, X_6, X_7, X_8, X_{10} and X_{12}. Variables X_1, X_2 and X_{14} have relatively high degrees of correlations and the variables X_1, X_3, X_5, X_9, X_{11}, X_{13} have positive marginal correlations. The variables X_1, X_6 and X_{12} exhibit negative marginal correlations.

Table 5: Communalities

Reason	Initial	Extraction
X_1	1.000	.688
X_2	1.000	.669
X_3	1.000	.654
X_4	1.000	.870
X_5	1.000	.598
X_6	1.000	.561
X_7	1.000	.560
X_8	1.000	.444
X_9	1.000	.733
X_{10}	1.000	.413
X_{11}	1.000	.373
X_{12}	1.000	.611
X13	1.000	.691
X_{14}	1.000	.858

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Source: Field data (Figures Generated by SPSS 16)

Figure 1: Scree Plot



Source: Generated by SPSS 16

We have applied *'Principal Component Analysis'* method for factor analysis. Table 5 presents the *'Communalities',* which show the amount of variance that each variable shares with other given variables. Communality also reveals the proportion of variance explained by the common factors. The diagonal elements in Correlation Matrix in Table 4 show that *communality* for each variable X_1 to X_{14} is 1.000. As revealed by the *'Scree plot',* the number of factors among the 14 principal components having Eigen values greater than 1 is only 6. The total variance explained by each of the 14 components with their Initial Eigen values, Extraction sum squared loadings and Rotation sum squared loadings are presented in Table 6. Each of these 6 factors explains enough total variance and hence can be considered unique. The factors with Eigen values less than 1 are disregarded.

Table 6:Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	2.238	15.988	15.988	2.238	15.988	15.988	1.946	13.898	13.898
2	1.620	11.570	27.559	1.620	11.570	27.559	1.494	10.671	24.569
3	1.371	9.790	37.349	1.371	9.790	37.349	1.479	10.563	35.132
4	1.218	8.699	46.047	1.218	8.699	46.047	1.471	10.510	45.642
5	1.206	8.617	54.664	1.206	8.617	54.664	1.235	8.825	54.466
6	1.070	7.639	62.303	1.070	7.639	62.303	1.097	7.837	62.303
7	.941	6.721	69.025						
8	.880	6.283	75.308						
9	.818	5.844	81.152						
10	.795	5.679	86.831						
11	.650	4.641	91.472						
12	.558	3.987	95.459						
13	.478	3.416	98.876						
14	.157	1.124	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Field data (Table generated by SPSS 16)

Table 7: Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
X_4	.841		.318			
X_{14}	.794					
X13		.663	.448			
X_{12}		.511		-.367		
X_{10}	-.382	-.430				
X_7			.522			.433
X_8	-.314		.446			
X_2	.351	.460		.528		
X_1	.449	.387		.511		
X_{11}				.462		
X_5		-.356			.580	
X_6			.332		-.578	
X_3					.436	.635
X_9	-.352		.329		.345	-.593

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 6 components extracted.

We have selected maximum iterations for convergence as 99 and *'Exclude cases list-wise'* for missing values in the process of extraction and rotation of factors. The absolute value of loadings to each

factor less than 0.3 have been suppressed to limit the variable loadings on the factors in the component matrix and rotated component matrix. The *Component Matrix* in Table 7 gives the result for 6 components extracted. It presents the nature and extent of relationship between the factors with respective individual variables. As the factors are correlated with many variables with loading greater than or equal to 0.1, we need to compute the rotated component matrix to enable interpretation of the factors. Using the *Varimax* rotation method with *Kaiser Normalisation* the *Rotated Component Matrix* is obtained as shown in Table 8. The *Varimax* method of rotation helps to minimize the number of variables that have high loadings on a factor. The rotation converges in 8 iterations. Now, we interpret the factors by identifying the variables with large loadings on the same components. The rotated component matrix shows the following results regarding the loadings of variables on individual components. Variables X_4 and X_{14} have high loadings on Component 1. Variables X_2 and X_1 have high loadings on Component 2. Similarly, higher loadings are found for variables X_8, X_7, X_{10} and X_{11} on Component 3. Variables X_{13} and X_{12} have high loadings on Component 4. Higher loadings on Component 5 are observed in respect of the variables X_6, X_5 and X_9. Lastly, variable X_3 has high loadings on Component 6. Relatively higher loadings of variables on a component, designated as factor, mean relatively higher degree of correlation of variables with the component or factor. The variables explained through each of the 6 separate components can be treated as identical set of variables and are attributed to the corresponding components or factors. Hence, the relevant factors can be interpreted through the six components as given in the table.

Table 8: Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
X_4	.910					
X_{14}	.908					
X_2		.780				
X_1		.765				
X_8			.654			
X_7			.597			.396
X_{10}			.530			
X_{11}		.352	.432			
X_{13}				.746		
X_{12}				.743		
X_6					-.680	
X_5	.398				.585	
X_9				.475	.485	-.412
X_3						.772

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

Source: Field Survey (Figures generated by SPSS 16)

The above analysis leads us to infer that distress seasonal migration in the study area occurs due to several reasons grouped under the six major factors labeled and renamed as follows:
Factor 1: X_4 , X_{14} (Poverty and debt Reasons);
Factor 2: X_2, X_1 (Employment Reasons);
Factor 3: X_8, X_7, X_{10}, X_{11} (Economic Upliftment Reasons);
Factor 4: X_{13}, X_{12} (Social Network);
Factor 5: X_6, X_5, X_9 (Social and economic obligations), and
Factor 6: X_3 (Inefficiencies in MGNREGA).

The percentages of variance explained by the six components as found earlier can be associated with the six factors. The percentages of variance explained by the factors such as, *Poverty and debt Reasons,*

Employment Reasons, Economic Upliftment Reasons, Social Network, Social and economic obligations and Inefficiencies in NREGA are found as 15.988, 11.570, 9.790, 8.699, 8.617 and 7.639 respectively. This shows the relative importance of various factors in distress seasonal migration. The *Component Score Coefficient Matrix* in table 9 shows the maximum absolute values of loadings of the variables on their respective factors.

Table 9: Component Score Coefficient Matrix

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
X_1	-.031	.520	-.080	.016	.220	-.045
X_2	-.063	.538	.089	-.045	-.146	.097
X_3	-.054	.053	-.033	.018	.136	.696
X_4	.468	.011	.034	-.013	-.055	-.008
X_5	.244	-.051	.157	.045	.467	.196
X_6	.096	-.036	.137	.126	-.548	-.075
X_7	.068	-.047	.416	.085	-.093	.372
X_8	-.003	.067	.451	.002	-.018	-.076
X_9	-.048	.069	.145	.351	.418	-.403
X_{10}	-.024	-.117	.339	-.135	.032	-.004
X_{11}	.011	.291	.337	-.089	-.023	-.190
X_{12}	-.027	-.124	-.110	.513	.023	-.050
X_{13}	.090	.084	.026	.501	-.140	.153
X_{14}	.480	-.089	-.048	.067	.038	-.084

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Component Scores.
Source: Field Survey (Figures generated by SPSS 16)

The Factor Analysis suggests that six factors such as 'Poverty and Debt reasons', 'Employment Reasons', 'Economic Upliftment', 'Social Networks', 'Social and Economic Obligations', and 'Inefficiencies in MGNREGA' are significant with perfectly correlated variables. As the variables are correlated with each other, they must not be independent. Hence, the null hypothesis H_0: $\rho = 0$ is rejected and this automatically follows that we accept the alternative hypothesis H_1. Hence, it can be inferred that the seasonal migration from the study area is due to a number of factors related to livelihood distress. Following discussions throw light upon how the above mentioned factors influence distress seasonal migration in the study area.

With little potential for investment, dependence on debt during the stay at their native villages is obvious that leads to a perennial debt cycle. Livelihood sustainability is not ensured through seasonal migration because it is merely for survival (Meher 2019). Therefore, debt burden threatens livelihood and creates the phenomenon of cyclical migration (Breman 2010; Bird and Deshingkar 2009). Data shows that debt is utilized for meeting consumption needs, expenses on social obligations like marriage and rituals, medical expenses, construction or repair of residential house and to recover the mortgaged land or to purchase an exiguous piece of land, etc., though the importance of each item varies. The stringent norms of credit practiced by the formal credit institutions compel them to embrace the curses of usurious terms of informal credit (Meher 2017b).

Because of the prevalence of the patron-client relationship (Breman 1996) in rural areas, the probability of their migration serves as the non-material collateral to avail debt (Meher 2019). Lenders minimize the risk of lending by considering that migration advance due to be received by the migrant in

his/her next spell of migration can serve as the insurance against such risk. Thus, the credential of the borrower as being a potential migrant is treated as an invisible but important asset for grant of informal credit. This phenomenon describes the inter-linkage between seasonal migration and the rural informal credit. The data reveals the prevalence of three types of informal lending systems in the study area.

43 per cent households borrowed in the range of 1000-5000 INR at 10 per cent monthly rate without requirement of collaterals to meet medical expenses or to begin agricultural operations or observation of festivals. 25 per cent households borrowed money for agricultural purpose, construction/repair of houses and marriage at '50 per cent yearly' rate of interest, locally called *'Dedha Biaz'*. Such loans are granted for a maximum tenure of 9 months, normally for the period from June to March, after which interest is compounded. This leads them to fall in debt trap because they fail to repay within the stipulated period as October-July is normally the seasonal migration period. The debt is repaid, mostly partially, out of the advance received during the next spell of migration.

Nineteen per cent households are found to have borrowed at 2 to 3 per cent monthly rate of interest, locally called *'Suki Biaz'* by depositing collateral in the form of either gold or land or residential house. Normal period of such debt is from June to May. *'Suki'* in local dialect means one-fourth of rupee. This means that 25 paisa is charged for every rupee lent for one year.

The interesting phenomenon is that in order to get relieved from the burden of debt the migrants tie themselves up in debt bondage. On one extreme, there is a capitalist who treats labour as commodity and seeks to extract huge surplus and on the other, local institution of credit reflects market imperfection.

As reported by the migrants, round-the-year employment is not available at their native places due to seasonal nature of agriculture, failure of MGNREGA to provide assured employment and lack of alternative public and private investments for diversification of employment. Agriculture suffers from infrastructural, institutional and technological backwardness besides the erratic monsoon, causing inadequacy of livelihood through it. Field data shows that during the year of survey wage for normal agricultural activity during sowing and harvesting period was 30 INR for male and 25 INR for female for 6 hours of work a day, while for ploughing it was in the range of 50-75 INR for 5 to 6 hours of work. In MGNREGA, only 19 percent households got work and that too for less than 10 days each. It was reported that preparation of fake muster rolls, job card manipulation, involvement of contractors, underpayment of wage, lack of accountability by the GP level functionaries, lack of transparency in execution, lack of round the year work were among the reasons for ineffectiveness of MGNREGA. The wage in MGNREGA was often equated with the wage in informal agriculture as 60 INR for 10 hours/day although the government stipulated minimum wage was significantly higher.

Social network refers to ties and connections, a type of social institution that entails group behavior among the migrants and facilitates migration at various stages. Individual migrants follow the behavior of the social group which they belong to, called the 'reference group' (Stark and Taylor 1991), which displays similarity in social and economic status among individual units. Hence, the attitude of commonness develops among them and help in creation of a strong social network. Group behavior is observed at various stages in migration starting from the recruitment of the migrants until they come back to the origin and it also develops the sense of unionism among them both at origin and destination. However, the network becomes so weak and less effective that it cannot help fight against exploitation by their capitalist masters (Meher 2017b). The power enjoyed by the capitalists does not let them show their strength through formation of union. All these tendencies have their root in the livelihood distress, which causes them to endure the exploitation in whatever form (Breman and Agrawal 2010).

VI. Limitations of Analysis

The study has been undertaken in one of the most backward districts of India, where majority of population are illiterate. Therefore, during data collection process, problems were encountered by the researcher, particularly when the respondents were sought data on the number of days of employment in different occupations at the origin. In rural areas, the occupations are informal in nature and employment is erratic. Moreover, conclusion arrived at though application of factor analysis has its own limitations.

VII. Policy Implications

The empirical findings of the present study suggest the need of intervention to address livelihood distress from the rural areas through redesigning the existing welfare programmes. The flagship programmes such as National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and MGNREGA encounter several problems. The intervening mechanism lacks in prior knowledge and information about the type of intervention that the beneficiaries actually need. This problem as well as the adverse selection of beneficiaries creates moral hazard and causes inefficiency in nature and quantity of allocation for the programmes. A proper organization should emphasize upon how properly the needs of the target group is understood and how a programme is effectively wielded. Moreover, the hidden actions by those in the delivery chain deprive them in true delivery of benefits. Therefore, proper monitoring is needed. What people in rural areas really need is sustainability in livelihood, which is understood by its different dimensions, such as building up their strength to address health issues and to meet social obligations in addition to the generation of income (Meher 2017a). Under NRLM, the SHG-bank linkage model may be revisited to address the above dimensions of sustainable livelihood. This means that the programme should be so designed that each of these three aspects of livelihood is properly incorporated as a special target so that sustainability in livelihood can be approached (Meher 2017a). This is claimed so because the data shows that the poor people are found to be spending more on health issues and meeting social obligations, often through debt that cause their high economic vulnerability. Similarly, in case of MGNREGA, there is a need to revise the minimum entitlement besides ensuring good governance in its execution. Meher (2013; 2017b) suggests increasing the minimum entitlement to 200 days a year. Further, the policy should be revised to provide for allocation of the 200 days of guaranteed employment by dividing the allocation evenly over 12 months in a year so that the poor can manage their livelihood round the year through their monthly quota. Such regular access to livelihood will solve the problem of uncertainty in livelihood that causes the poor to migrate being lured by a lump sum amount of advance. Besides, other defects regarding payment of minimum wage and engagement of labour should be taken care of (Meher 2013).

Time has come to realize that the capitalistic nature of development cannot be effective in ameliorating the real problems of the economy, particularly, the issue of employment in the present context, which has bearing on the growth of an economy. If we observe the past trends over the period since the new economic reforms were initiated, there has been a policy bias with a relatively higher focus on expanding the manufacturing sector. In a developing country like India the livelihood issue is more precarious and even more intense among those living in the rural areas where access to information is absent. Further, unskilled labour force is highly found. Therefore, employment generation among the rural unskilled youth and vulnerable groups is needed. This can be done through the promotion of small and cottage industries as well as agriculture. Agriculture should be strengthened through development of proper infrastructure to solve the problem of erratic employment in the rural areas. The growing mechanization in agriculture is no more tenable. There should be initiative at appropriate levels to encourage organic farming and traditional methods of cultivation to enable the resource-scarce farmers to continue farming. Microfinance movement can be extended to agriculture. Besides, there is a need to emphasize upon human resource building giving importance to education, health and information dissemination.

VIII. Conclusion

The study gives insightful results on the reasons for seasonal migration in the KBK region of Odisha. The results of factor analysis reveal that ‘poverty and debt’, ‘employment reasons’, ‘higher income’, ‘social networks’, ‘social and economic obligations’ and ‘inefficiencies in NREGA’ are the significant factors with

perfectly correlated variables. The highest percentage of variance is explained by the factor poverty and debt, followed by employment reasons, economic upliftment reasons, social network, social and economic obligations and inefficiencies in MGNREGA. Thus, we conclude that seasonal migration is induced by the factors related to livelihood distress in rural areas (World Economic Forum 2017). The findings have important policy implications for a developing country like India. There is an imminent need to revitalize agriculture through provision of proper infrastructure and simultaneously, the livelihood generation programmes should be revisited to ensure livelihood sustainability among the rural poor.

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