

Impact of Migration on Living Standards of Migrant Workers in Surat City

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Abstract

Migration is a significant socio-economic phenomenon influencing urban development in India. Surat City, a rapidly growing industrial hub in Gujarat, has witnessed a continuous inflow of migrant workers due to expanding opportunities in textile, diamond, construction, and service sectors. This study examines the impact of migration on the living standards of migrant workers in Surat City.

The research is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from migrant workers, while secondary data were obtained from Census reports, government publications, and academic literature. The study evaluates various indicators of living standards such as income, housing conditions, employment, access to healthcare, education, and overall quality of life.

The findings reveal that migration has positively influenced income levels and employment opportunities. However, challenges such as poor housing conditions, inadequate healthcare access, and lack of social security persist. The study concludes that migration improves economic conditions but does not fully ensure improved living standards without proper policy support.

Keywords: Migration, Living Standards, Migrant Workers, Urban Economy, Surat City 1.

1. Introduction

Migration is an important component of economic transformation and urbanisation in developing economies. It refers to the movement of people from one geographical area to another, often driven by economic, social, and environmental factors. Rural-to-urban migration is one of the most common forms of internal migration in India, as individuals seek better employment opportunities and improved living conditions.

Surat City, located in Gujarat, is one of the fastest-growing industrial cities in India. Known for its textile and diamond industries, the city attracts a large number of migrant workers from states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, and Rajasthan. These migrants play a crucial role in sustaining industrial production and contributing to economic growth.

While migration provides opportunities for better income and employment, it does not always guarantee improved living standards. Migrant workers often face challenges such as poor housing, lack of basic

amenities, limited access to healthcare, and absence of social security. Therefore, analysing the impact of migration on living standards is essential to understand the overall wellbeing of migrant workers.

This study focuses on evaluating how migration affects the living standards of migrant workers in Surat City by examining key socio-economic indicators.

2. Review of Literature

Migration has been widely studied in economic literature. Todaro (1969) explained migration as a rational decision based on expected income differences between rural and urban areas. According to this model, individuals migrate when they anticipate higher earnings in urban areas.

Several empirical studies suggest that migration leads to increased income and employment opportunities. However, the improvement in living standards depends on various factors such as job security, access to housing, healthcare, and social services.

In the Indian context, studies have shown that migrant workers often experience economic improvement but continue to face poor living conditions. Many migrants live in slums or informal settlements with inadequate sanitation and limited access to clean water.

Research on Surat City indicates that migration has significantly contributed to industrial growth. However, migrant workers often face challenges related to overcrowding, poor housing, and lack of social protection. This study aims to further explore the relationship between migration and living standards in Surat City.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

To analyse the impact of migration on income levels of migrant workers.

To examine changes in employment opportunities after migration.

To evaluate housing and living conditions of migrant workers.

To study access to healthcare and education.

To assess the overall impact of migration on living standards.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design.

4.2 Data Sources

Primary Data: Collected from migrant workers through structured questionnaires.

Secondary Data: Collected from Census of India, government reports, journals, and previous studies.

4.3 Sample Size

A sample of 120 migrant workers was selected from different sectors.

4.4 Tools of Analysis

Percentage analysis and comparative analysis were used.

5. Socio-Economic Profile of Migrant Workers

Most migrant workers belong to economically weaker sections and have low educational qualifications. They are mainly engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. The majority fall within the working-age group, contributing actively to industrial production.

Income levels are generally low and unstable. A significant portion of income is sent as remittances to their families in their native places.

6. Impact of Migration on Living Standards

6.1 Income Levels

Migration has led to an increase in income levels compared to rural areas. However, income is often irregular and insufficient to meet urban living costs.

6.2 Employment Opportunities

Migrant workers have better access to employment opportunities in urban areas. However, most jobs are in the informal sector with low job security.

6.3 Housing Conditions

Housing remains a major challenge. Many migrants live in overcrowded and poorly maintained areas with inadequate sanitation facilities.

6.4 Access to Healthcare

Access to healthcare services is limited due to financial constraints and lack of awareness. Many workers rely on private clinics or informal healthcare providers.

6.5 Education and Social Development

Children of migrant workers often face difficulties in accessing education due to frequent relocation and financial constraints.

7. Findings of the Study

The study reveals that migration has a mixed impact on living standards. While it improves income and employment opportunities, it does not significantly improve overall quality of life due to poor living conditions and lack of social security.

8. Suggestions and Policy Implications

Development of affordable housing schemes.

Expansion of healthcare services for migrant workers.

Inclusion in social security programs.

Skill development initiatives.

Improvement in urban infrastructure.

9. Conclusion

Migration plays a crucial role in economic development and provides better employment opportunities. However, improving living standards requires more than just income growth. There is a need for comprehensive policies that address housing, healthcare, education, and social security issues.

References

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