



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Labour migration influences occupational patterns and the use of agricultural tools: A case study of Santal tribe Mayurbhanj district, Odisha

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Abstract

This paper aims to study the effects of Migration on the transformation of livelihoods of the people of the Santal tribe in the Mayurbhanj District of Odisha. Emerging as one of the main Socio - Economic actions for the majority of people throughout the world, Migration has effectively led to the progression of economic dependencies from traditional agricultural activities to more modern activities. This study grounded in the District of Mayurbhanj examines five blocks with majority Santal population and the effect of migration on their occupational patterns. The findings indicate a shift from agriculture towards more modern methods of occupation such as trade, self employment, service industries and political ventures. Another focus of this study has been to find out the shift in amount of technological usage in Agricultural processes post migration in their respective blocks. The findings indicate an increase in the amount of technology used in agricultural practices after people from the block migrated to other places in search of opportunities and brought back new practices and technologies from cities and towns.

Keyword: Santal Tribe; Labour Migration; Agriculture; Occupation; Technologies

1. Introduction

Labour migration has become a defining feature of socio-economic change in many regions, especially in rural and agrarian societies. The movement of individuals or families in search of better employment opportunities often leads to a shift in traditional occupational patterns. As people migrate, they may move away from farming-based livelihoods and adopt new skills suited to urban or industrial environments. This transition not only alters the workforce composition in their native villages but also impacts agricultural practices. The reduced availability of agricultural labour forces communities to adapt by modifying farming methods and relying more on modern tools and technologies. Understanding the relationship between labour migration, occupational change, and the use of agricultural tools is essential to assess the broader implications for rural development and food security.

Hemram, and Tripathy [8] Socio-economic condition Signifies an economic factors those affect their socio-economic conditions. Santal people are agriculture is their primary occupation. Their life is intimately connected with the forest and their economy. Santal people are like cultural programme music, song and dance different festivals activities, religious belief are highly prized in their culture. Padhan [5] studied rural household migration in Nuapada district, Odisha, using data from 80 households in Sinapali and Nuapada blocks. The study found that most migrants are SC/ST males aged 15-45, driven by inadequate earnings under NREGA. About 31.25% earned between Rs. 15,000-30,000, indicating better income opportunities outside the program. Ratio and percentage methods were used for analysis. Parida and Mishra [11] studied the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities in Mayurbhanj, Odisha, noting their dependence on natural resources and limited mainstream integration. Despite development efforts, disparities persist

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across tribes and genders. While groups like the Santal and Bhumja show some progress, overall development remains uneven, highlighting ongoing challenges in social inclusion. Sadual and Sahoo[7] studied the challenges of urban tribal laborers in Odisha, highlighting issues like unemployment, low skills, poor awareness of welfare schemes, and unsafe work conditions in the unorganized sector. Surveying 500 workers, the study compared legal issues faced by tribal and non-tribal laborers, considering gender differences. It aimed to suggest legal remedies based on judicial rulings and policies. Panda [4] examined the impact of Mother Tongue-Based (MTB) education in tribal schools in Odisha, aimed at reducing dropout rates and improving learning. Despite Odisha's early adoption, challenges like teacher shortages, poor infrastructure, low wages, and difficulty recruiting in rural areas persist. The study calls for better training and resources to enhance the effectiveness of MTB education. Hembram and Mohapatra [10] studied the education of Santal children in Mayurbhanj, Odisha, highlighting its role in preserving cultural identity and promoting integration into modern society. Using primary and secondary data, they found that Santal children show strong interest in modern education, supported by various initiatives. This has fostered socio-cultural progress while retaining traditional values, contributing to their overall development. Pattamajhi and Patra [1] studied the educational status of Scheduled Tribes in Gajapati district, Odisha, using data from Mohana and R.Udayagiri blocks. They found low education levels, poor facilities, and economic insecurity. The study emphasized the importance of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) for improving socio-economic conditions and protecting tribal communities through coordinated efforts. Marandi and Patel [12] studied the effects of seasonal migration on children's education in Jharkhand's Santhal Pargana region. Driven by poverty and food insecurity, migration disrupts schooling and exposes children to unsafe living conditions. Families often migrate together, leaving no caregivers behind, worsening the educational impact. While migration offers short-term relief, it poses long-term risks to children's education and well-being. Nayak and Kumar [6] explored the educational challenges faced by tribal girls of the Oraon tribe in rural India. Using an ethnographic approach, they found barriers such as poverty, early marriage, and lack of role models, while supportive teachers, local language instruction, and family support helped educational success. Applying ecological systems theory, the study showed how individual and societal factors together influence dropout rates. Barik and Paltasingh [2] studied the educational challenges of migrant workers' children in Odisha, noting high dropout rates and poor school attendance despite the RTE Act. Frequent relocations, poverty, language barriers, and inadequate implementation of support schemes like seasonal hostels disrupt their education. The study called for targeted interventions to improve access and learning outcomes for these vulnerable children. Patra[9] conducted a study on Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) in Odisha, which aim to provide quality education to tribal students from classes VI to XII. Surveying principals, teachers, and students, the study found issues with infrastructure, hostels, staffing, admissions, labs, and teaching methods. It highlighted the need for improvements to enhance the effectiveness of EMRS.

2. Theoretical framework

This study is situated within the intersection of migration theory, rural livelihood frameworks, and the anthropology of technology use among indigenous communities. To analyse how labour migration affects occupational patterns and the use of agricultural tools among the Santal tribe in Mayurbhanj, this framework draws on three major theoretical constructs: the *Push-Pull Theory of Migration*, the *Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)*, and the theory of *Technological Adaptation in Rural Societies*. Labour migration among the Santal tribe can be understood through the dynamics of "push" factors (unemployment, declining agricultural productivity, land alienation) and "pull" factors (better wages, urban employment opportunities). This framework helps explain why many tribal youth abandon traditional farming occupations and migrate seasonally or permanently. This framework is useful for understanding how migration alters the livelihood assets (natural, financial, human, physical, and social capital) of Santal households. Migration enhances financial capital (via remittances), but often reduces reliance on natural capital (agriculture), leading to shifts in occupational patterns—from farming to wage labour or service-sector jobs. The SLF also sheds light on resilience and coping strategies adopted by families left behind. The use of agricultural tools is not static; it evolves with socio-economic changes. As migrants return with exposure to modern tools or send remittances, families may adopt or abandon certain traditional implements. Labour shortages due to migration also lead to either mechanisation or a shift towards less labour-intensive farming practices. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens to examine how migration impacts occupational diversification and technological change in agriculture within tribal communities like the Santals of Mayurbhanj.

3. Methodology

This study focuses on 100 labour migrants Block: Bahalda, Tiring, Jamda, Rairangpur, Bijatala in District mayurbhanj, Odisha. Both the primary and secondary sources have been utilized in the writing of present article on religion beliefs and practices. The study was conducted using a combination of primary and secondary methods. There are various

methods of data collection such as purposive sampling, personal interviewing, observations, surveying, focus group discussion on labour migrant in santal society.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Occupation

The given table reflects the changing patterns of occupations. This happens as the local people migrate abroad and changed the pre-existing concepts. A short-term and/or long term teaches the migrants to change the profession of their suitability and reliability for their livelihoods.

Table 1 Occupational Structure

	Before migration	Present
Agriculture	100	65
Trade/Business	30	65
Self- Employment	20	40
Organizational Service	0	15
Political	10	30

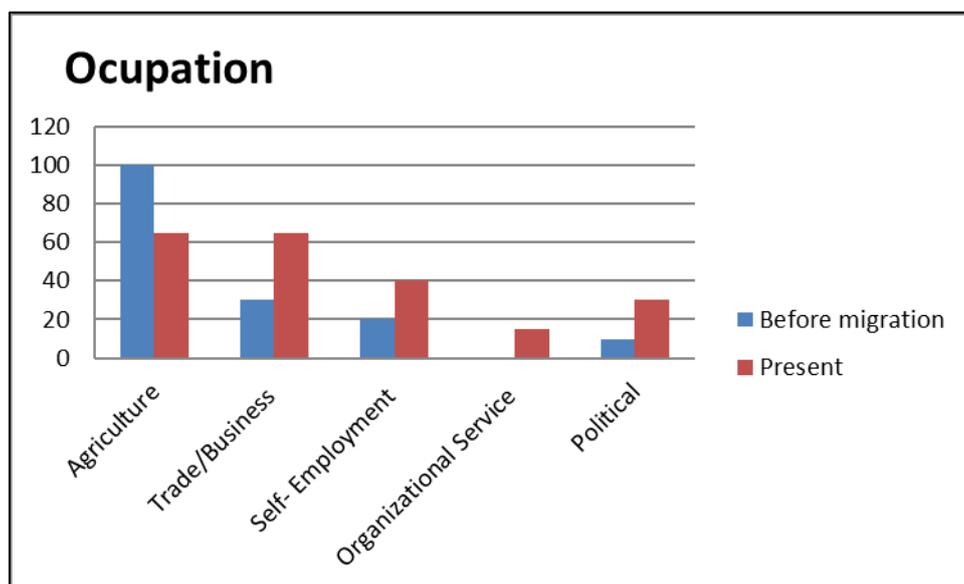


Figure 1 Occupational Structure

4.2. Occupational Patterns Before and After Migration

- **Agriculture:** There is a noticeable decline in agricultural occupations after migration. This suggests that many individuals have moved away from farming, likely due to limited land access or better income opportunities in other sectors in urban or semi-urban areas.
- **Trade/Business :** A significant increase in trade and business activities reflects growing entrepreneurial efforts. Migrants might be starting small businesses or engaging in informal trade to support their livelihoods in their new settings.
- **Self-Employment:** The rise in self-employment indicates that more people are working independently, possibly in services, crafts, or other skilled labor, which provides flexibility and income without relying on formal jobs.
- **Organizational Service:** The emergence of people working in organizations (like private companies, NGOs, or government services) suggests increased access to formal employment opportunities post-migration.

- **Political Involvement:** The growth in political participation indicates greater social engagement and awareness. Migrants may be more involved in local governance, activism, or community leadership in their new locations.

4.3. Agricultural Tools and Techniques Before and After Migration

Traditional Tools and Techniques: There is a considerable decline in the use of traditional agricultural tools and methods after migration. This suggests that migrant farmers or agricultural workers are moving away from age-old practices such as using wooden ploughs, bullock-driven equipment, or manual sowing and harvesting methods.

Modern Tools and Techniques: A significant rise in the adoption of modern tools and techniques (like tractors, threshers, harvesters, chemical fertilizers, and irrigation systems) indicates a shift towards more efficient and mechanized farming. This could be due to exposure to advanced agricultural methods, government support schemes, or the influence of urban and peri-urban farming practices.

Table 2 Agricultural Tools and Techniques

	Before migration	Present
Traditional	100	40
modern	10	65

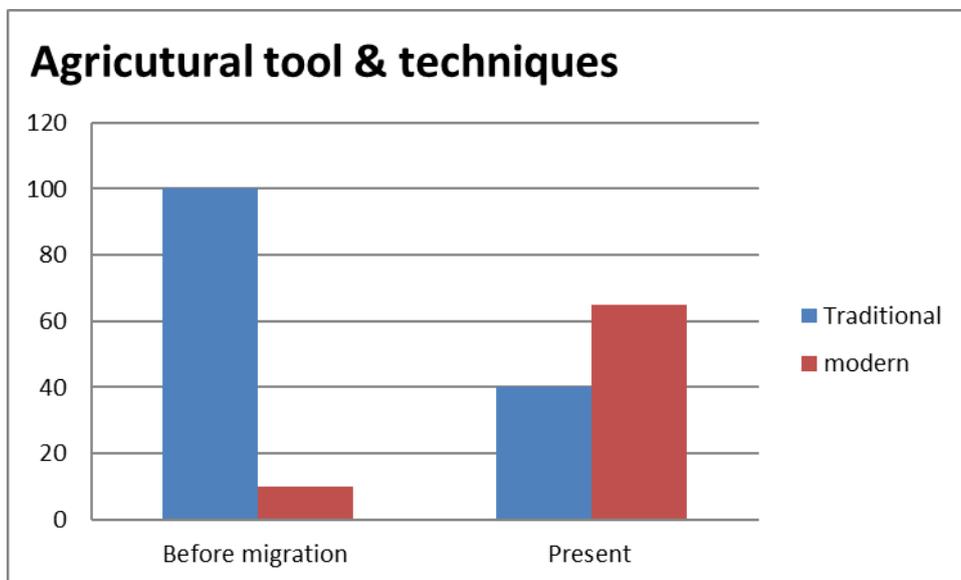


Figure 2 Agricultural Tools and Techniques

This present table indicates the changing patterns of using technologies for agricultural purposes. This is due to the receipts received by the migrants’ families. In absence of males, women take the major responsibilities to cultivate the land, as a result, they alone can not farm and hire either labourers or modern technologies for cultivation.

5. Conclusion

The data reveals a clear shift from traditional agriculture to a more diverse occupational structure after migration. There is greater involvement in business, self-employment, formal services, and political activities, reflecting enhanced economic opportunities, social mobility, and integration into broader societal roles in the post-migration phase. Migration has led to a major transformation in agricultural practices. While traditional methods are declining, there is a noticeable embrace of modern technology in agriculture. This shift likely results in improved productivity and efficiency, but it may also create a disconnect from traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable practices.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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