

Joint Forest Management for Decline off Villagers Migration Problem: A Case Study of Three Villages of Central India

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Abstract: *Through migration human being move from one place to another place in pursuit of certain cherished objectives like avenues of better employment, better wages, better working and living conditions, better quality of life and better livelihood. Migration is a problem across the Central India but the worst hit part is Chhattisgarh state from where every year at least 500,000 people migrated to other states for meager daily wages - as laborers at brick kilns or as any alternative source of income domestic helps. Joint Forest Management (JFM) is a collaborative management regime, initiated by the Ministry of Environment of Forests, Government of India in the 1990s building a partnership with the local communities for rehabilitation of the degraded forests, with emphasis on protection, management and development of the forest resources by the tribal communities and the women, following guidelines of the National Forest Policy in 1988. Migration of villagers could be controlled if some sort of alternative income source could be generated in their village. In the three villages of Central India which were previously severely suffered by migration problem but after the implementation of joint forest management programme situation has been changed gradually. The present paper assesses the social and economic situation of people living in Chhattisgarh and the factors responsible for their migration to other areas in search of better livelihood and better quality of life. The study therefore, presents some suggestions in tune with the future demands so as to solve the migration problems of Chhattisgarh.*

Keywords: Migration, Chhattisgarh, Joint Forest Management, Forest Committee

1. Introduction

Migration is an important feature of human civilization. It reflects, human endeavor to survive in the most testing conditions both natural and manmade. Since rural migration (to urban or rural areas, permanent or temporary, internal or international) constitutes a key component of human population movement, and rural areas contain most of the world's natural resources, such as land and forests, rural migration and its relationship to the rural environment have attracted increasing interest in recent research on population-environment linkages [Bilsborrow 2002; Carr 2009].

The nature and pattern of migration varies from one social group of migrants to another because of the fact that the rural migrants are not a homogenous group [Mitra and Murayama, 2008]. According to census of India 2001, Chhattisgarh attains the rank of 8th among top ten states for intrastate migration by last residence. Young people in the working age have a higher propensity to migrate than people in other age groups. Gravity Model argues that migration is directly correlated with population size and inversely correlated with the distance between the origin and the destination regions. Agricultural practices, incomes and assets, and consumption patterns are all critical elements of rural people's livelihood processes. Livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (natural, physical, human, financial, and social), and activities required for a means of living [Carney 1998].

The group of variables that can affect migration flows is quite broad and is related with the quality of life. According to [Adrienko and Guriev 2003], people move from poorer and job scarce regions with worse public goods provision to areas that are richer and more prospering both in terms of employment prospects and public goods. Therefore in this context, an attempt has been made to examine the socio-

economic aspect of migration in Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh state was a part of Madhya Pradesh, so the JFM activities begun with the JFM resolution passed in the year 1991 with the formation of village level institutions or organizations. Forest Department, Government of Chhattisgarh has passed resolution in October 2001 and revised it in October 2002 to make Joint Forest Management as a basis of forest management. In Chhattisgarh Out of total 19720 villages in the State, there are 11,185 villages located within 5 kms periphery of forests. Thus, there was a paradigm shift from centralized, controlled and custodial forest management to democratic, devolving, participatory community-based natural resource management, resulting in orientation from revenue generation to resource development, single benefit to multiple benefits, mono-culture to multiple cropping and above all unilateral decision making to participatory process. Public participation is the combine efforts of the members of the community, resulting from an imbued sense of the dignity, to utilize the resources available in such a way that it results in an increased well being of the community and reduces its dependence on outside resources. [Ahmad S., 1994]. In a small village of Janjgeer –Champa forest division of Chhattisgarh experience of participatory management clearly shows that if JFM is gaining ground it is mainly because of the economic incentives that motivate villagers for forest conservation.

2. Study Site

Janjgeer was one of the areas of central Chhattisgarh that were severely drought-affected for several years. Only 4.2% of the land area of the division is under forest cover. In the division 66 forest committees have been formed under participatory management practices. Villages forest committee namely Amlipali of Sakti range of forest division, Chhattisgarh have been selected for study, extension, and

demonstration of participatory management practices. Forest Committee Amlipali covers three villages Amlipali, Amaldiha, Purainateli from where primary records had been collected.

3. Methodology

The research paper is based on secondary source of data produced by the State Government, academic literature, magazines, and population census. Interaction with people is also reflected in the paper. To formulate a systematic approach for studying about problem of migration and impact of JFM an elaborate exercise was taken for primary data collection. For the purpose socio economic survey of the villagers was conducted. A pre designed question ire was used for collecting ground truth information in relation to size of the family, occupation, means of subsistence and way of living of the inhabitants before and after the implementation of JFM. Collected data was rearranged and summed up in a comprehensive table to serve as reliable data table.

4. Observation and Discussion

After the analysis of collected data following records have come to recognize that in all villages -Amlipali, Purainateli and Amaldiha other back word class community 'patel's, yadav, etc are formed about 90% of the total population while schedule tribes formed about 10 % of population, others are schedule caste(Table: 1).

Table 1: Population description of forest committee Amlipali

Villages	Total Houses	ST	SC	OBC	Gen.	Total Population
Amlipali	145	44	15	84	Nil	580
Amaaldiha	120	12	12	96	Nil	600
Purainateli	110	12	1	94	3	550
Total	375	68	28	274	03	1730

Results of socio economic survey have revealed that main occupation of the villagers is farming. No industrial establishment is present in the study site. On the basis of land holding village families have classified into small, marginal and landless category (Table: 2, Figure:1). In these village 'patel's (OBC) have good land holdings and for all the families' agriculture is the chief occupation. Schedule tribe communities are either landless or marginal farmers having land holding less than 1 acre or landless and all the families work as agriculture labor during the monsoon season. In these villages during the monsoon season village houses who have land holding of different sizes (Small and marginal) their chief occupation is agriculture, on the other hand agricultural work provides employment to about 22% houses of landless families.

Table 2: Land holding records of the villages of Amlipali

Villages	Total houses		Small farmers		Marginal Farmers		Landless	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Amlipali	145	100	54	37	56	39	35	24
Amaaldiha	120	100	73	61	22	18	25	21
Purainateli	110	100	68	62	18	16	24	22
Total	375	100	195	52	96	26	84	22

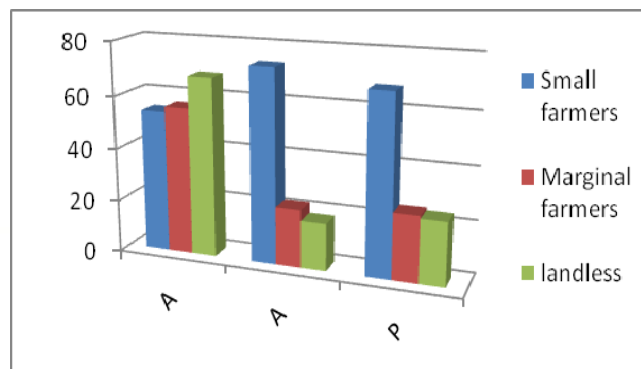


Figure 1: Village wise land holding records

During the survey separate records had been collected regarding the villagers migration pattern (Table 3 &4). It had been observed that the rate of migration was higher in landless and marginal farmer's category. On an average 70% families of these category migrated during the monsoon lean period due to lack of alternative source of income. Record of migration was very high before the start of joint forest management programme (Table -3). Most of the landless and marginal families went to metro cities for their bread earning. Intensity of migration was high because after the monsoon season villagers didn't had any alternative source of earning. Due to meager forest cover(Only 4.5 %) villagers were not had any option for collection of non wood forest produces like Mahua leaves, fruit, flower, Tendu patta etc. as like many other parts of Chhattisgarh and irrigation facilities were also totally absent so they didn't have option for raising crop for second season.

Every year the monsoon sows new life in the soil of these villages, when the rain hits the state hundreds of the migrants of poverty stricken families started arriving back in their villages to work in the paddy fields. Monsoon is one time when there is plenty of work in their native land. They were go away again sometime in October and for the rest of the year they slog in big cities and often end up being exploited.

Table 3: Migration record of villages before active JFM implementation

Villages	Small farmers		Migrated		Marginal Farmers		Migrated		Landless		Migrated labours	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Amlipali	54	37	12	22	56	39	30	56	35	24	25	71
Amaaldiha	73	61	18	25	22	18	10	45	25	21	22	88
Purainateli	68	62	10	15	18	16	12	67	24	22	15	63
Total	195	52	40	20.5	96	26	52	54	84	22	62	74

In all the three villages of VFC Amaldiha before the implementation of JFM, degree of villager's migration was high. As in village Amlipali 22 % small farmers 56% marginal farmers and 71% of landless respondent families migrated to different parts for employment whereas in the village Amaldiha 25% small farmers,45% marginal and 88% landless migration had observed. While in village Purainateli 15% small farmer, 67% marginal farmer and 63% landless labour migration had recorded. The survey says the number of households, where migration takes place, has increased day by day before the implementation of joint forest management practices and more people migrated to

cities than before. In the year 2002 after implementation of JFM in state Amaldiha village forest committee had formed. After establishment of village forest committee the first step taken by forest department was to organize frequent awareness generation meetings for taking public participation. Department of forest boost the conviction of the villagers that the nearby forests, the top soil and water conserved are precious natural resources, which if wasted are going to create greater and greater hardship. After conveying this message to the villagers with repeated meetings villagers had agreed to protect the nearby forests as a community resource and go on regular patrolling. By regular patrolling they completely stopped, forest fire, illegal felling, by offenders from the adjoining forest. Villagers of the VFC Amaldiha started raising and protection of the regeneration. All the village houses jointly started the forest resources conservation.

After discussion with villagers forest department had come to know that during the post monsoon period villagers made temporary 'Nallas' every year for irrigating their fields and irrigate some part of the farm area. Forest department helped villagers for better irrigation facility in village. Villagers purchased three tube wells pumps of 5 horse power capacity and started irrigating their fields by using these water they constructed canal towards slopes and started irrigating about 30 eked (near about 10 hector) by this tube well. VFC members had taken loan from Samiti fund and raised vegetables and second season paddy crop in these areas and after harvesting they got good return. Also a woman's self help group had been established in the village and forest department started promoting them for sunflower's cultivation. SHG members had grown sunflower and had taken good benefit. Villagers started cultivating sunflower and vegetables and paddy as second crop by using the irrigation facility and very large number of migrated families benefited. The most important fact came to know during the survey was that now every village house of VFC Amaldiha knows about the importance of people's participation in forest conservation operation and at the same time villager's economic condition is also showing good response.

Table 4: Migration record of villages after active implementation of JFM

Villages	Small farmers		Migrated		Marginal Farmers		Migrated		Landless		Migrated labours	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Amlipali	54	37	5	9	56	39	18	32	35	24	20	57
Amaaldiha	73	61	7	10	22	18	8	36	25	21	14	56
Purainateli	68	62	5	7.3	18	16	4	22	24	22	8	33
Total	195	52	17	9	96	26	30	31	84	22	32	38

It has been observed that degree of migration had been reduced in after the formation of Village forest committee. As in village Amlipali 9 % small farmers 32% marginal farmers and 57% of landless respondent families migrated to different parts for employment whereas in the village Amaldiha reduction in migration observed as 10% small farmers, 36% marginal and 56% landless. In village Purainateli 7.3% small farmer, 22% marginal farmer and 33% landless labour migration had recorded (Table: 4). In connection with migration of the family members of the

respondents of the VFC, migration of the family members had been reduced in all the villages which is due to positive implementation of JFM and good work of forest department.

5. Conclusion

In the above study migration record of different village group are revealed before and after the implementation of Joint Forest Management. The availability of good agricultural land continues to be one of the most powerful economic factors determining the magnitude and direction of population migration. The agricultural unemployment and underemployment, lower agricultural wage and poverty are the major factors pushing laborers' towards job opportunities in urban areas, while the availability of employment opportunities, relatively higher wages, etc. are the major factors in the rural-urban migration [Barro & Sala-i-Martin, 1991; Gupta, 1993; Bhattacharya, 1998; Andrienko and Sergei, 2003].

Migration is mostly influenced by poverty and lack of alternative employment option. The relatively poor and backward community show large population mobility, which is primarily in search of livelihood. The landless poor who mostly belong to lower castes, indigenous communities and economically backward regions constitute the major Internal-Migration of Chhattisgarh.

The study made it clear that the good practice of the participatory management would be improved if focus of the programme associated with the key problem of villagers. Improvement of agricultural practices, village infrastructure development would be given proper importance and associated with forest resource development programmes it could curb the rural migration of Chhattisgarh. Thus boosting of agricultural practices is directly proportional to the forest resource conservation and thus success of participatory management practices but before this peoples participation programme needs people's awareness as first step for success of joint forest management .

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Author Profile



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