



INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES KOLKATA

(A Centre of Excellence in Social Sciences funded by the Government of West Bengal)

SALT LAKE CAMPUS • DD 27/D, SECTOR 1, SALT LAKE, KOLKATA 700 064

Seminar Notice

Dr. Subrata Mukherjee

Associate Professor, IDSK

Jointly with

Monalisha Chakraborty & Priyanka Dasgupta

PhD Scholars, IDSK

will present a paper on

Bengali Migrant Workers in South India

An inquiry into their earnings and livings

Abstract

For the last couple of years, the south Indian states are the major destinations for male migrant workers from West Bengal. Though a few studies exist on migrant workers in south India, especially in Kerala, studies comparing the earning and non-earning aspects of migrant workers from West Bengal engaged in different types of work in multiple locations of South Indian states are limited. This study is an attempt to bridge that evidence gap. The study is based on interviews (with a semi-structured questionnaire) of 111 Bengali speaking male migrant workers from West Bengal living in multiple locations of Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur in Kerala and Bengaluru in Karnataka. In addition, 4 in-depth interviews and 3 focus group discussions were conducted. All the sample migrant workers are in their early or mid-thirties, though they first migrated from source locations in their early twenties. Most of the migrant workers landed in south India after working in Kolkata, northern or western Indian cities. Majority of the workers are under labour contractors though they came to know about the job opportunities in south India from their villagers or friends. On an average, they earn 1.7 lakhs [1.52-2.03 lakhs] annually and their earnings depend on experience, education, type of work and place (state). They are able to send almost two-third of their earnings as remittances. Except the rag pickers in Bengaluru, all other migrant workers live without their families at the destination places. The living conditions of the migrant workers, especially the rag pickers, are poor. Their reported consumption of alcohol and tobacco seems to be lower than estimates from National Family Health Survey 4 (2015-16) for rural West Bengal. Lack of regular employment opportunities and low wage rate in rural as well as urban West Bengal is the dominant reasons for their migration. Hostile social environment and increasing earning uncertainties in northern and western Indian cities along with higher wage rate in South India are reasons for the migrant workers shifting to South India. Except the rag pickers, others do not have opportunities to bring their families. Continuous inflow of migrant workers from eastern and north-eastern India is now a challenge for the incumbent Bengali migrant workers in south India. However, almost 80 per cent of them (even those who are staying without families) do not want to go back to West Bengal in future.

Date: February 14 (Friday), 2020

Time: 3.30 pm

Venue: IDSK Seminar Room, 5th Floor

All are Welcome

Subhanil Chowdhury
(Subhanil Chowdhury)

Convenor, Seminar Committee, IDSK
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