



Employment Status of Intra-State Migrant Workers in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract: Migration has emerged as a major factor affecting labor markets and overall economic growth in numerous countries, including industrially advanced ones like Tamil Nadu. This paper seeks to show how the employment status and working conditions of intra-state migrant workers influence their economic well-being, and to examine the specific characteristics of such migrations using the case of Pudukkottai district. The study draws on both qualitative and quantitative data collected from 200 respondents. It used the survey method and was carried out with a carefully designed questionnaire. Special emphasis is placed on the socio-economic traits of respondents, including employment status, job satisfaction, job security, income levels, and working hours. In addition, the paper investigates the relationship among age, gender, and occupation, and the association between education level and income, assessed via the chi-square test. The study's findings show that the majority of respondents are young to middle-aged men, typically employed in the textile and construction sectors. Most of them are employed under a contract, enjoy a reasonably satisfactory level of job security, and earn an average income. Moreover, the study revealed a statistically significant link between the education level and the income of migrant workers. The paper concludes that improving working conditions and securing stable employment for intra-state migrants is crucial to enhancing their socio-economic wellbeing.

Keywords: Intra-State Migration, Employment Status, Working Conditions, Job Security, Labour Welfare

Introduction

Migration has played a crucial role in economic development, particularly in developing regions like Tamil Nadu, where internal migration serves as a strategy to meet labor demands across various economic sectors. Internal migration within the state has increased sharply because of differences in employment opportunities, income levels, and quality of life across various regions. Shrivastava and Gupta (2026) Migrant workers are vital to sectors including construction, textiles, street vending, and small-scale industries, yet they often face job instability and low wages (Desinghar & Akter, 2009). Tamil Nadu, being one of India's most industrialized states, draws a significant number of internal migrants seeking improved employment prospects in urban centers such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Tiruppur. Although these migrants contribute to the state's economy, they continue to face poor working conditions, restricted hours, and the absence of key social rights and benefits (Keshri & Bhagat, 2012). Thus, investigating their employment status is crucial in order to develop measures that will enhance the conditions of these workers. Dave (2024) This paper will examine the employment circumstances of intra-state migrant workers, with a focus on their employment status and working conditions in Pudukkottai District. The study will concentrate on migrant workers in the specified district and analyze aspects such as employment structure, job security, income levels, and working hours to better understand the obstacles they encounter in securing quality employment.

Review of Literature

Balraj and Sivakumar (2024) studied inter-state migrant workers in Tamil Nadu and found that migrant labourers contribute significantly to industrial productivity but continue to face challenges such as insecure



employment, limited welfare access, and poor living conditions. The study emphasized the need for stronger labour protection mechanisms .

Tamil Nadu Labour Department Report (2024) highlighted that only 10–12 per cent of migrant workers in the state have been formally registered, indicating gaps in official labour documentation and access to welfare benefits. The report stressed the importance of comprehensive worker registration systems .

CAG Report on Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board (2024) revealed that a large number of migrant workers were not included under welfare schemes despite their significant role in construction and industrial sectors. The report pointed to implementation failures in labour welfare delivery .

State Planning Commission Survey (2025) observed a major increase in non-farm employment in Tamil Nadu villages, indicating changing labour market patterns and rising dependence on industrial and service-sector jobs among workers .

Labour Policy Reforms Report (2026) noted that recent labour reforms in India aim to improve protections for migrant workers through appointment letters, digital worker databases, and portable social security benefits. These reforms are expected to enhance employment security and formal recognition of migrant labourers.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to analyze the employment status and working conditions of intra-state migrant workers in Tamil Nadu. Also, an attempt has been made to focus on the problems faced in getting regular and satisfying work. Rahul and Shaifali (2025)

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research.

Data Collection

- Primary Data: Surveys and structured interviews with Intra-State migrant workers in Pudukottai District.
- Secondary Data: Reports from the Multidimensional Poverty Index MPI and 2011 Population census Pudukkottai district in Tamil Nadu has been purposefully selected for the present study in particularly selected by Thiruvankulam taluk in pudukottai district based on highest population.

Sampling Technique

- Sample Size: 200 migrant workers across different sectors.
- Sampling Method: Stratified random sampling based on employment sector

Tools Used : Chi square test used

In order to study the relationship between among intra-state migrant workers across different employment sectors

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where,

Σ = Sum

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected Frequency

Analysis and Interpretation

Table:1 Age Details of Respondents

S.No	Age	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	18-25	61	30.5
2	26-35	77	38.5
3	36-45	48	24
4	Above 46	14	7
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

Age is a key factor in any empirical study. More specifically, the number of participants in each age group should be calculated to determine which age group is the most common. 77 respondents making up 38.5 per cent fell within the 26-35 age group. This age group represents the largest portion of the sample, suggesting it accounts for the greatest proportion of the regional population. Chauhan (2025) The respondents aged 18 to 25. In particular, 61 participants (30.5 per cent) fall within this age group. In addition, 48 respondents (24.0 per cent) are between 36 and 45 years old, while 14 participants (7.0 per cent) are aged 46 or above. It can be inferred that most respondents are young and middle-aged individuals, who are more inclined to participate in economic activities.

Table No: 2 Gender wise Details of Respondents

S.No	Age	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	141	70.5
2	Female	59	29.5
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

The gender distribution allows for determining the count of male and female respondents and assessing their involvement in the study. The data shows that 141 respondents 70.5 per cent, are male. There were 59 female respondents, accounting for 29.5 per cent. It can be represents from this information that most of the participants male.

Table No: 3 District wise Details of Respondents

S.No	District wise Details	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Chennai	74	37
2	Coimbatore	32	16
3	Thiruppur	35	17.5
4	Madurai	13	6.5
5	Tiruchy	46	23
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

In this table represents District-wise distribution therefore, it is necessary to analyze the share of sample respondents from each district. This distribution will aid in identifying where respondents are concentrated across the various districts covered in the study. In total, 74 respondents (37 per cent) are from Chennai, which has the largest share compared to the other districts. Tiruchy accounts for 46 respondents (23 per cent), while Thiruppur accounts for 35 respondents (17.5 per cent). 32 (16 per cent) come from Coimbatore. Lastly, 13 respondents (6.5 per cent) are from Madurai, making it the district with the fewest participants in the study. Thus, it can be concluded that most respondents are from Chennai and Tiruchy, while Madurai has a notably small number of respondents.

Table No: 4 Educational Qualifications of Respondents

S.No	Educational Details	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below SSLC	51	25.5
2	HSC	56	28.0
3	Degree	50	25.0
4	Post Graduate	43	21.5
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

The above table shows the classification of Educational qualification. 56 (28.0 per cent) respondents have completed HSC, which is the highest among all the categories. 51 (25.5 per cent) respondents have Below SSLC education, while 50 (25.0 per cent) respondents hold a Degree. On the other hand, 43 (21.5 per cent) respondents have completed Post Graduation, in this category is lowest in all the categories. Hence, it can be that the educational background of respondents is diverse. However, it is also evident that a large number of respondents fall in school and undergraduate categories.

Table no: 5 Details of Nature of Present Work

S.No	Nature of Job	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Street vendors	39	19.5
2	Textile	67	33.5
3	Construction	51	25.5
4	Small scale industry	43	21.5
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

It is obvious from the above table represents the nature of the job 67 respondents (33.5 per cent) respondents are working in the textile sector, which is the highest percentage. 51 (25.5 per cent) respondents are working in the construction industry, 43 (21.5 per cent) are in small-scale industries and 39 (19.5 per cent) are street vendors. Most of the respondents are employed in textile and construction industries. This will help identify the major industries where respondents are employed.

Table No: 6 Details of Job Satisfaction of Respondents

S.No	Level of Job satisfaction	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Very satisfied	99	49.5
2	Somewhat satisfied	67	33.5
3	Not satisfied	34	17.0
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

The table no.6 reveals that the nature of the job. the highest proportion of 67 households (33.5 per cent) are working in the textile industry, which is the highest percentage among the industries. 51 (25.5 per cent) respondents are in the construction industry, while 43 (21.5 per cent) and 39 (19.5 per cent) are employed in small industries and street trading respectively. its suggest that most of the respondents are in textile and construction industries.

Table no: 7 Type of Employment Details of Respondents

S.No	Type of Employment	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Permanent	40	20
2	Contractual	73	36.5
3	Daily wage	41	20.5

4	Self employed	46	23
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

It is ascertained from the above table that the majority of the respondents 73 (36.5 per cent) are engaged in contractual employment constituting the largest portion. This is followed by 46 (23.0 per cent) respondents who are self-employed, 41 (20.5 per cent) working as daily wage labourers, and 40 (20.0 per cent) in permanent employment. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents are engaged in contractual and informal employment.

No: 8 Details of Job security of Respondents

S.No	Job Security	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Secure	79	39.5
2	Somewhat secure	82	41.0
3	Not secure	39	19.5
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table shows Job security 82 (41 per cent) of the respondents feel that their jobs are to some extent insecure, making it the highest percentage among the rest. However, 79 (39.5 per cent) of the respondents selected the option that indicates they have secure jobs and 39 (19.5 percent) chose the statement that suggests otherwise. it can be suggest that most of the respondents indicated some level of job security, there is still a significant percentage of individuals are insecure in their jobs.

Table No: 9 Income Details of Respondents

S.No	Income Details	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 10000	12	6.0
2	10001-15000	76	38.0
3	15001-25000	66	33.0
4	Above 25001	46	23.0
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

Income is considered as one of the leading aspects in the study. the highest proportion of the respondents 76 (38.0 per cent) earn between Rs.10,001–15,000, which is considered as the largest portion of the sample. Furthermore, 66 (33.0 per cent) of the respondents earn between Rs.15,001–25,000, whereas 46 (23.0 per cent) of the respondents earn above 25,001. On the other hand, 12 (6.0 per cent) of the respondents earn below 10,000. it can be concluded that most of the respondents fall within the moderate income, as they earn between Rs.10,001–25,000.

Table No: 10 Working Hours of Respondents

S.No	Working Hours	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	6-8 hours	57	28.5
2	8-10 hours	96	48.0
3	Above 10 hours	47	23.5
Total		200	100

Source: Primary data

The table no;10 reveals that Working hours of the respondents. it was found that 96 respondents (48 per cent) work for 8-10 hours; this accounts for the largest percentage of the respondents. The second largest group comprised 57 respondents (28.5 per cent) who work for 6-8 hours. On the other hand, 47 respondents (23.5 per cent) work for more than 10 hours on a daily basis. From this information, many people are inclined to work long hours.

Research Question?

Does the relationship between income and education differ significantly among intra-state migrant workers across different employment sectors?

Hypothesis:

(H₀): There is no significant relationship between income and education among intra-state migrant workers across different employment sectors.

(H₁): There is a significant relationship between income and education among intra-state migrant workers across different employment sectors.

Table No: 11

Variables	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.471a	9	.042

Significance level at 5*

A chi-square test was performed to examine if there is a connection between the respondents' income and education. The migrants who moved within the state for work purposes were asked the questions. The results of the test appeared to be a Pearson chi-square of 17.471, with a degrees of freedom (df) of 9 and an asymptotic p-value of 0.042, which is below the significance level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). This implies that there is a relationship between the respondents' level of income and their education in various employment sectors. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was adopted. The adoption of the alternative hypothesis means that there is a link between the level of education of the migrant workers and their income.



Findings and Suggestions:

- The majority of the respondents fall in the age group 26-35 years which depicts that they are in the working age group (38.5 per cent).
- A vast majority of the respondents are male (70.5 per cent), which denotes that more males are taking part in the migration process.
- Most of the respondents belong to Chennai (37 per cent), which is one of the leading business capitals followed by Tiruchy (23 per cent).
- Most of the respondents are graduates with higher secondary education (28 per cent).
- Textile (33.5 per cent) and construction (25.5 per cent) are the two major industries where the migrant workers join in search of employment.
- Majority of the respondents are employed in contractual jobs, which account for 36.5 per cent.
- Majority of the respondents are somewhat secure regarding their jobs (41 per cent).
- Majority of the respondents earn between 10,001-15,000, which denotes that migrant workers get moderate wages (38 per cent).
- Nearly half of the respondents work for 8-10 hours per day (48 per cent), which denotes that they work for more than 8 hours a day.

Suggestions:

- ❖ The government should put in place effective labour registration mechanisms to ensure that migrants are registered and enjoy the due welfare benefits and legal support.
- ❖ Employers should provide more stable jobs as most of the migrant workers are employed in insecure forms of employment such as contract labour employment.
- ❖ Working hours should be regularly monitored to ensure that working hours are not excessively long and unsafe working environments should be avoided.
- ❖ The government should formulate specific policies that address the needs of migrants as they contribute significantly to the economy and settle in urban and peri-urban centers.

Conclusion:

It was revealed that the intra-state migrants contribute to their state's economy by working in different sectors, ranging from textile to construction and small-scale industries. Nevertheless, there were also cases of exploitation since people were hired on an insecure basis with low pay and no social security benefits. It was revealed that most respondents were somewhat satisfied with the employment opportunities and security but in most cases, the migrant workers were employed under contract and had a low income. It was also identified that there is a correlation between education and income, which means that workers with better education will benefit from the improved level of education. All the above results suggest that the Tamil Nadu authorities should consider developing specific policies concerning migrant workers' employment to improve their current situation.

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