CHAPTER – 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
Chapter 7

7.1 Introduction

Consequent to the globalization and development processes, and the concomitant increase in communication and transport facilities, movement of people across state-country boundaries has become a common phenomenon in developing countries. However, much attention has been paid on international migration despite the notable fact that the bulk of people migrate within their own country. Evidently, most internal migrants are labour migrants and a larger proportion of them migrate on temporary basis (International Organisation for Migration, 2005). Moreover, recent research suggests that internal temporary labour migration plays an important role in household survival in several agrarian economies (Deshingkar, 2006; Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005).

Available literature shows that there is a complete dearth of studies that cover a large population and present a generalized picture of intensity, pattern, seasonal variation, and socioeconomic determinants of temporary labour migration in India. The recently available National Sample Survey (NSS) data of the reference year 2007-2008 (64th round), which has a separate schedule for “Employment & unemployment and migration particulars”, provided a great opportunity to understand the phenomenon of temporary labour migration in India. Therefore, the present work aims to (a) study the regional pattern and intensity of temporary labour migration at state and NSS region levels along with inter- and intra-state flow of migration; (b) study age-sex characteristics of temporary migration and basic differentials between temporary and
permanent labour migration; (c) explore the seasonal pattern of temporary labour migration; (d) assess the socioeconomic determinants of temporary labour migration in India and major states. To a limited extent, study also utilizes the 55th round of the NSS data of the reference year 1999-2000 for initial comparisons.

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the study. There are two sections in this chapter. First section includes summary of the findings and second section is related to conclusion, policy recommendations, and limitations of the study.

7.2 Summary of the Findings

7.2.1 Regional Pattern of Temporary Labour Migration in India

The regional pattern of temporary labour migration at inter- and intra-state level (NSS region) is explored. The number of temporary labour migrants has increased by 2.8 million from 1999-2000 to 2007-2008 and 13.62 million temporary labour migrants are observed according to 64th round of the NSS. A part of this increase can be attributed to the better capturing of the temporary labour migrants in 2007-2008 with a modified definition with duration of 30 days reduced from 60 days in earlier definition. Interestingly, there has been huge difference between the estimates of migrants in all ages and working age-group (15-64 years) during 1999-2000, which are 10.87 million and 8.29 million respectively. A substantial proportion (around 20%) of temporary migrants belonged to the 0-14 age-group. Similar results are also highlighted by Keshri & Bhagat (2010). However, such discrepancy is not present in the estimates of the NSS round pertaining to the reference year 2007-2008.
A regional pattern in temporary labour migration is evident in the low-income central and north Indian states. However, regional pattern also shows that it occurs in a vast geographical stretch with different socioeconomic milieu. During 2007-2008, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Nagaland showed a very high intensity of temporary labour migration. Most of these states have high level of intra-regional inequality and temporary labour migration is one of the most important livelihood strategies during the lean season of agriculture when people move to big cities in the same state or to other states (Breman, 1994; Deshingkar & Farrington, 2009; Jayaraman, 1979; Rogaly et al., 2001). All states but Gujarat, are characterized by low per capita income and agrarian economies.

A significant finding that emerges from the analysis is that in most of the states temporary labour migration appears to be basically a rural phenomenon. Also, regional inequalities and uneven economic development in different states of the country impel rural to urban temporary labour migration from agriculturally backward states, as almost two-third of the migrants belong to this stream. The pervasiveness of rural to urban migration among temporary labour migrants reflects the increasing divergence between rural and urban areas in terms of income and employment. Stream-wise results suggest that a majority of temporary migrants from poorer states like, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh move temporarily out of the state for few months in a year to get job, mostly in the lean season of agriculture. On the other hand in the developed states like, Gujarat and Maharashtra most of the temporary migrants circulate within the state for job, suggesting that availability of good employment opportunities drive labour to migrate locally (intra-state).
Results related to temporary labour migration rates across the NSS regions are presented to understand intra-state or within state variation. These regions have more or less similar agro-climatic conditions and socio-economic features (Murthi, Guio, & Dreze, 1995; Murthi, Srinivasan, & Subramanian, 2001). Intra-state variations for temporary migration are noteworthy in almost all the states. An important finding which is worth mentioning that there are five pockets of high prevalence (>35 migrants per 1,000) of temporary labour migration. Similar pockets are also mentioned in existing micro level studies. For example, there are evidences of large-scale seasonal labour migration of the tribal population from south eastern Gujarat to nearby urban areas despite the high growth status of the state (Breman, 1994; Krishna, Kapila, Porwal, & Singh, 2003; Mosse, Gupta, & Shah, 2005). Its adjoining southern region of Rajasthan has been documented in the work of Haberfeld, Menaria, Sahoo, & Vyas (1999); they conducted a field survey in the Dungarpur district of the state and found that seasonal migration is used as compensating mechanism to reduce their disadvantageous status. Also, Vindhyan, Malwa, and southern regions of Madhya Pradesh have been known for regular temporary labour migration of people to the urban and industrialized destinations of Maharashtra and Gujarat (Sharma, Kumar, Deshingkar, Farrington, & Akter, 2009). The largest pocket of temporary labour migration of Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal has also been documented earlier (Dayal & Karan, 2003; Rogaly et al., 2001). There has been a long history of seasonal migration of workers from Bihar, Jharkhand, and eastern plain region of West Bengal to converge on the southern central part of the state for agricultural work (Rogaly, 1998).
7.2.2 Characteristics of Temporary Labour Migration in India

Characteristics of temporary labour migration in India are focussed in this section. More specifically, it presents age and sex characteristics of temporary labour migration. Comparison of temporary and permanent labour migration has been done at national level. Study also attempts to understand a generalised pattern of type of work across the states obtained by temporary labour migrants at the place of destination. Analysis suggest some good and interesting results, which may really be helpful in understanding the phenomenon of temporary labour migration at macro-level.

It is found that the rate of temporary labour migration is seven times higher than the permanent labour migration busting a myth that permanent labour migration is more prominent form of labour migration in the country. One can also find notable socioeconomic differentials between the two forms of labour mobility. Apparently, persons belonging to poor and disadvantaged caste groups (STs/SCs) with low educational attainment have a high propensity of engaging in temporary labour migration, which is in contrast to permanent labour migration. This hypothesis is supported by the earlier migration research in India (Bhagat, 2010; de Haan, 2011; Keshri & Bhagat, 2010), which indicates that temporary labour migration is mainly a survival strategy in the country, that is different from the phenomenon of permanent labour migration.

Being an employment related migration a higher prevalence of temporary labour migrants is observed in the working age-group (15-64 years), nevertheless, one can observe a clear pattern of very high migration rate in younger age groups (15-29 years and 30-44 years) which declines swiftly among older working population (45-64 years). Variations across states are noteworthy. In most of the high migration intensity
states, younger age-group (15-29 years and 30-44 years) has shown higher prevalence of temporary labour migration. Further, large gender gaps are observed in the temporary labour migration rates. As mentioned in a study of rural Bihar that very few women migrate for economic reasons from the state (Rodgers & Rodgers, 2011).

It is important to note here that there is a higher flow of temporary labour migrants from rural areas as most of the people, in order to diversify their livelihood, move from rural areas to any nearby or distant urban centre for a few months in a year to find jobs in construction or in the unorganized informal sector. It is suggested by the results that a majority of people work in the construction sector at the place of destination among rural to urban migrants, whereas, among rural to rural migrants, their most important job provider is the agriculture sector. This fact is supported by micro-level studies which document frequent seasonal movement of labour from Jharkhand to work in agricultural related activities in western India (Dayal & Karan, 2003; Rao & Mitra, 2013). Some micro-level studies have mentioned that temporary labour migrants, mostly being unskilled can easily get absorbed in the construction sector, as mentioned in recent studies, that in western India seasonal migration is linked to monsoon cycle which shapes both farming and urban construction work (Mosse et al., 2005; Mosse et al., 2002). Further, manufacturing has emerged as vital sector in both the rural to rural and rural to urban streams of temporary labour migration, suggesting that this sector is providing an important option for employment in unorganised sector.
7.2.3 Seasonal Pattern of Temporary Labour Migration in India

Using the sub-round information of the NSS, the seasonal pattern of temporary labour migration in the country at two levels namely, major geographical regions and NSS regions are explored. Results related to major geographical regions suggest that in northern region, highest seasonal migrants are found during July-September which is the rice sowing season in most of the areas due to monsoon induced rainy season. In western region highest proportion of migrants is observed in April-June, which is the lean season of agriculture, thus people might prefer to move to urban areas for off-farm income. In Eastern region, which consists of most of the high seasonal migration intensity states, seasonal variations are not so prominent. However, highest proportion of migrants is observed during April-June. Moreover, in southern region, highest seasonal migration is seen during January-March, which is mainly the lean season.

The NSS region-wise results suggest that seasonal labour migrants migrate in all the sub-rounds, yet ample variations are found across regions. Most of the sub-rounds correspond to the agricultural seasons of the regions. Results suggest that in central Brahmaputra plains and western plains regions of Assam; Ranchi and Hazaribagh plateau of Jharkhand; central and eastern regions of Uttar Pradesh; and western plains of West Bengal, per cent share of temporary labour migrants is comparatively higher during sub-round July-September. It can be inferred that during the sub-round of July-September, a large labour movement occurs in eastern India. It is mainly due to sowing season of paddy crops, which requires a large number of labourers. Available literature supports these findings, for instance, extensive field work by Rogaly et al. (2002) suggest that a large number of seasonal and temporary migrants migrate for paddy cultivation during monsoon season in the eastern part of India. Further, Rao &
Mitra (2013) also found a huge flow of tribal population from Jharkhand to northwestern part of India. Their work generally stretches over a period of nine months.

Other important sub-round, which involves a comparatively higher proportion of temporary migrants, is April-June. For example, in northern region of Bihar; Mahanadi basin of Chhattisgarh; south eastern region of Gujarat; Vindhya and Malwa regions of Madhya Pradesh; inland central and eastern regions of Maharashtra; southern region of Odisha; southern, western, and northern regions of Rajasthan, and central region of Uttar Pradesh, a major flow of temporary labour migrants is observed during this season. This is generally a lean season of agriculture, particularly, in north India and due to unavailability of local employment in either of farm or non-farm sector, people move to urban areas in search of seasonal jobs. As found in the field studies of Mosse et al. (2002) that temporary migration is unambiguously seasonal, linked to the monsoon cycle, which shapes both farming and urban construction work, particularly in western India. Rodgers & Rodgers (2011) on the other hand, found that migration has become a way of life in some parts of Bihar, this migration is almost exclusively male dominated, seasonal, and between one and six months. Besides these regions, in some NSS regions higher flow of temporary labour migrants is observed during January-March and October-December sub-rounds but these are less in number.

### 7.2.4 Socioeconomic Determinants of Temporary Labour Migration in India

Socioeconomic determinants of temporary labour migration in India and states are examined in this section. Also, in the backdrop of the observed variations in its prevalence across the states, study attempted to assess the role of the macroeconomic
indicators of the major states in propelling temporary labour migration. Results suggest that in most of the economically backward states like, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal people have the higher chances of migration. However, Gujarat, a high growth state, is an exception to this. The correlation results, related to state level temporary labour migration rates and macro-level economic indicators of the states, suggest that there is a negative correlation between average per capita consumer expenditure (PCCE) and temporary labour migration rate. Furthermore, there is a high degree of negative correlation between per capita net state domestic product (PCNSDP) and temporary labour migration rate in major states, suggesting a negative relationship between the temporary migration rate and overall economic development of the states.

Both bivariate and multivariate results suggest that poorest of the poor i.e., people who belong to low monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) quintiles, who are from the household having major activity of agriculture labour or casual labour, with low educational attainment, and having low social status are more prone to temporary labour migration in most of the major states. It is noteworthy that chances of migrating temporarily increase in these groups if they belong to states of high intensity of temporary migration namely, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand. There is an economic stratification of population by endogamous caste groups, in which STs and SCs groups are the most disadvantaged followed by OBCs (Zacharias & Vakulabharanam, 2011). Expectedly, caste emerges as an important determining factor of temporary migration and results suggest that STs and SCs are significantly more likely to migrate temporarily than OBCs and others. Bihar may be
an exception, as against the general pattern OBCs are most prone to temporary migration in this state.

Household level factors like MPCE, economic activity of the household, and caste play a significant role in the migration decisions of the individuals in most of the northern and central states, particularly in rural areas. It reinforces the findings of previous studies (Deshingkar, 2006; Deshingkar & Grimm, 2005; Keshri & Bhagat, 2012). Importantly, this study shows that the poor households generally migrate either to augment their income or for survival, it supports the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) theory of labour migration. According to this school of thought, the family or household, rather than the individual, is the key decision-making unit on migration-related matters (Stark, 1991; Stark & Bloom, 1985).

7.3 Conclusion, Policy Recommendations, and Limitations of the Study

7.3.1 Conclusion

A significant finding that emerges from results is that temporary labour migration is predominantly a rural phenomenon, dominated by rural to urban migration and more prevalent in north Indian states. Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Nagaland show a very high intensity of temporary labour migration. However, notable regional variation is found at intra-state level and some pockets of poverty do exist in prosperous states, from where socially and economically disadvantaged groups migrate in large numbers. Rate of temporary labour migration is seven times higher than the permanent labour migration rate. Also, notable socioeconomic differentials are found between the two forms of labour mobility.
Apparently, persons belonging to poor and disadvantaged caste groups with low educational attainment have a high propensity of engaging in temporary labour migration, which is in contrast to permanent labour migration. This indicates that temporary labour migration is mainly a survival strategy in the country, which is different from the phenomenon of permanent labour migration.

One important characteristic of temporary labour migration is that it is more prevalent among younger age population, which is a clear manifestation of the higher risk taking ability of young people to take decision to migrate temporarily for feeding their children and elders left at home. A major proportion of temporary labour migrants work in construction sector at the place of destinations, which is more prevalent among rural to urban migrants. Whereas, most important job provider for rural to rural temporary migrants is agricultural sector.

It can be said that seasonality is an important aspect of temporary labour migration in India, which varies according to the seasonal labour requirements of rural agricultural sector as well as urban informal sector. However, one cannot say that there is a particular season at national level, when most of temporary labour migrants migrate rather, different regions have different pattern of seasonality.

As this study shows that the poor households generally migrate either to augment their income or for survival, the results of this study supports the NELM theory of labour migration. This is also evident as several household-level factors are found to be critical in determining the migration decision of a household member.

Overall, temporary labour migration is more prevalent in low-income central and north Indian states. The propensity of temporary labour migration declines with
improvement in economic condition, educational status, and social status. However, social factors are not so important in urban areas as compared to rural areas. The association of temporary labour migration with poor economic status and its high prevalence in backward states indicate that temporary labour migration is mainly a distress driven migration. It is because; both the central and state governments have not paid adequate attention to labour migration in their policies and programmes.

7.3.2 Policy Recommendations

1. The association of temporary labour migration with poor economic status and its high prevalence in backward states indicate that the fruits of development have not reached to some sections, which in turn force them to migrate. This warrants local employment generation and effective social protection programmes to address the issues of inadequate livelihood opportunities, and related issues of access to health care, and provision of education to the children of temporary labour migrants.

7.3.3 Limitations of the Study

1. One important limitation of the study is that, the definition of temporary labour migration in the 55th round and 64th round of the NSS are different, wherein the former defines all those who migrate 2 months or more but less than 6 months, whereas the latter defines all those who migrate 1 month or more but less than 6 months.

2. The place of destination is not mentioned in the survey; therefore, study could not analyse the state of destination of the temporary labour migrants.
3. Number of explanatory variables is limited in the NSS data.

4. It is important to note that as the information on temporary migration was collected with a reference period of last six months, the sub-rounds did actually overlap, but the extent of the periods of overlap gradually diminishes with the progression of survey period. For example, the period of overlap between sub-rounds I (July-September) and II (October-December) may range from six months to three months, between sub-rounds I and III (January-March), the period of overlap may vary from three months to no overlap, and there is no period of overlap between sub-round I and IV (April-June) (National Sample Survey Organization, 2010).