CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

This research on “Socio-Economic Implications of Labour Migration: A Case Study of Industries in Ludhiana City” has been organised in ten chapters wherein the first chapter presented the introduction to the concepts and definitions of migration. Various models of migration along with the migration status of India and Punjab state were presented. The factors influencing migration, consequences and need for the present study were discussed. The objectives of the study and the brief chapter scheme were also presented in this chapter. The various objectives of the present study were:

1. To analyse the socio-economic background of migrants.
2. To analyse the determinants which lead to migration of the labourers to a new place of work.
3. To analyse the nature and extent of employment and income.
4. To analyse the consumption pattern of the migrants.
5. To analyse the pattern and nature of remittances by the migrants.
6. To analyse the differences in the socio-economic and cultural way of life amongst the migrants and the local labourers.
7. To analyse the behavioural patterns of employers with regards to employment of labour.

The second chapter presented the review of literature. The researches published by various authors form time to time were studied in order to get a detailed understanding of various concepts related to migration like reasons, factors and consequences which were studied in the light of the given objectives of the present study. In the following chapter the research methodology for the study was presented which exhibited the details of selection of sample, data collection and statistical techniques used for the analysis. For the present study a sample of 500 industrial migrant labourers were surveyed from various Hosiery & Knitwear and Cycle & Cycle Parts industrial units of Ludhiana city. The number of labourers employed in the large/medium industrial units of Ludhiana district were 78,951 and those in the small scale industrial units were 2,77,702 (Government of Punjab, 2005). Labourers from the
industrial units of Ludhiana city for the study were covered proportionately in the ratio of 1:3.5 as per the number of labourers employed in the large/medium and small scale industrial units of the Ludhiana district (Government of Punjab 2005). The quantitative and qualitative data were collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through a survey which was facilitated by a structured questionnaire and group discussions. The secondary data was solicited from different reports and institutions. Statistical tools like percentages, averages, indexes, t-test and chi-square test, Z test were used.

The fourth chapter highlighted the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the industrial migrant labourers which further included the factors like sex, age, marital and educational status, status of wife and children, place of origin, etc. The various economic characteristics were regarding house and durables owned, source and regularity of medical treatment, debt position, etc. of the industrial migrant labourers. The cultural characteristics like participation in the festivals of Punjab, liking of Punjabi language and music, changes in the eating and dressing habits and changes in religious practices were also studied.

The fifth chapter presented the various determinants which influenced the industrial migrant labourers to migrate to Ludhiana city. The other aspects related to migration like source of selecting the present place, mode of travel, the hardships faced and expenditure incurred during travel to Ludhiana city were also studied. The following chapter presented the pattern of employment, income and remittance which included aspects like working hours, health and safety measures, working conditions, distance of residence from work place and expenditure on commuting between the same, income, savings, etc. The pattern and nature of remittances were also analysed. The change in expenditure on various items of consumption and the percentage share of these items of the total monthly budget of the industrial migrant labourers after migration was presented in the seventh chapter.

The eighth chapter presented the employers behavior with migrant labourers in which aspects like discrimination faced by the industrial migrant labourers, the type of labourers employed, payment of wages, provision of various allowances, source of employment, preference of migrant labourers from particular state, etc. were analysed. The ninth chapter brought out the comparison between the industrial migrant and local labourers with respect to their social, economic and cultural characteristics.
(i) Socio-Economic Background of Industrial Migrant Labourers

Most of the migrant labourers working in the industries of Ludhiana city were males and were married. They had large number of children which was governed by the fact of number of sons than daughters. Majority of the industrial migrant labourers belonged to the productive age group of 18-28 years. Also, majority of the migrants had been working in the respective industrial units for a long time and were not newly recruited. Also, most of the people from this aged group are more adventurous and had less social obligations and thus, could migrate easily from one place to the other. Majority of these labourers came from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as these states suffer from lack of employment opportunities and poverty. On the other hand, large number of migrants coming to Ludhiana city indicates better employment opportunities, good industrial development and better welfare facilities in Ludhiana city which thus, attract the industrial migrant labourers. About one-fourth of these labourers whose wives and children that were staying in Ludhiana city were working which indicate the need to earn more money. Majority faced low level of respect from the locals as they were addressed by convenient names like bhaiya. Majority of the industrial migrant labourers were conversed with in Hindi language by locals does not reflect the concern by the locals as to the level of understanding of these industrial migrant labourers but selfish interest of the locals to get their day to day done easily from these migrants. The relationship with industrial local labourers was satisfactory as they mutually invited each other for social functions. This also indicate social acceptance of the migrants by locals and growing healthy relationships between them. However, most of the migrants were not treated well by various government officials who made their living in the city, uncomfortable. Majority of the industrial migrant labourers reported of facing inconvenience from local administration, speaks poor about these local bodies and indicates the lack of sense of social security among the industrial migrant labourers. To live and work happily in a society, social security is important of which the local administration is depriving the industrial migrant labourers. Many of the migrants were politically in-active as they did not possess any voter card.

The economic status of these labourers were not good as less than one-fifth of these labourers owned houses in the city of which majority had kutcha houses. The living conditions of industrial migrant labourers were satisfactory as majority had access to electricity, bathroom/toilet, water supply however, majority of them did not lead a comfortable life as they did not own any durables. The debt position of these labourers indicates poor economic status as majority of them were indebted. The migrants had poor
knowledge and unavailability of better and cheaper source of loan as majority took loans from money-lenders. The reasons for the same were identified as easy availability and trust. Some of the indebtedness was due to ancestral loans. Migration proved to be helpful to the migrants as it helped in improvement of personal and family economic status.

Majority of the industrial migrant labourers reported of liking of Punjabi language and also their effort to learn the same which indicates their desire to settle in Ludhiana city and also, to relate to the local population and make routine work easy. Majority of these labourers were undergoing religious changes which again indicate the desire to relate to the local population. Also, it depicts open-mindedness of these labourers towards godly affairs and interaction with religious and cultural practices which made them adopt new religion openly. After migration, in-order to look like the locals and make themselves comfortable in the local society, the migrants changed their dressing habits. These changes were a result of not only social and cultural exposure but economic betterment as well.

(ii) Factors Associated with Migration

Economic reasons were identified the main factors for migration of the industrial migrant labourers in Ludhiana city as factors like poverty, attraction of getting higher wages as compared to the place of origin and indebtedness were ranked as first, second and third respectively. The least important factor was marital purpose. Relatives were the most common source for selecting Ludhiana city as the destination place for migration and majority travelled through train. This coincides with the fact that majority migrated from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and the distance from these states can be conveniently and cheaply covered through train with a maximum expenditure being up-to Rs. 300. Majority of the migrants complained of being troubled by railway police as they were harassed by them for financial purposes.

(iii) Pattern of Employment, Income and Remittances

The study revealed that the industrial migrant labourers were being exploited to the extent that they were made to work for more hours without being paid for. In spite of the exploitation, not good but satisfactory working conditions, not enjoying the benefits of a permanent labourer as most of them were working as temporary labourers and health being affected by the working conditions, the workers still continued working in the present place of work shows the helplessness and desperation to earn money. The meager amount of monthly saving highlights the plight of these labourers and their families back home that
depended upon such small amounts. Majority of these labourers preferred to work with migrant labourer which explains the need to be respected and liked by the labourers they worked with. Also, since majority of them lived together in rented places, it gave them the benefit of putting up at the same place with the industrial migrant labourers they work with.

Majority of the industrial migrant labourers resided at a distance of less than 5 kms from industrial units. Majority of them stayed in rented accommodations and did not own any means of transportation like cycle, scooter, etc., they had to walk or travel by public transport to the place of work. In order to save money on transportation, majority stayed at a lesser distance and spent up-to Rs. 500 as monthly expenditure on commuting to-and-fro work place. Majority of the migrant labourers wanted to return to the same place of work during the next visit to Ludhiana city indicates that they were trying to adjust themselves in a new society and coming to terms with the given conditions. Most of the savings being remitted back home indicates that the money earned and saved was being used to improve various economic aspects of the migrant and his family which they believed would not have improved otherwise due to low level of income or poverty in their native place.

(iv) Changes in Consumption Pattern of Industrial Migrant Labourers

The industrial migrant labourers from all the industrial units of Ludhiana city reported that they underwent a change in the consumption expenditure on various items which included non-durable, durable and socio-religious ceremonies. Also, these labourers reported a change in the percentage share of the consumption expenditure of the total monthly budget after migration. The percentage of monthly budget of consumption expenditure on foodgrains, pickels/jams/juices, intoxicants, other social ceremonies and religious ceremonies had undergone a decrease while the percentage of monthly budget of consumption expenditure on rest of the items increased. The industrial migrant labourers reported of an improvement in their economic status after migration to the city and thus, had more money and spent more on consumption. Also, since majority of these labourers were staying with their families in the city; therefore, the consumption expenditure had increased. There was a significant difference between the percentage of budget expenditure on consumption before and after migration for the durables, services and socio-religious ceremonies.

(v) Employers’ Behaviour with Industrial Migrant Labourers

The industrial migrant labourers face exploitation in terms of refusal of wages as about one-tenth of them reported the same and about one-fifth of them were abused and
manhandled at the place of work. This indicates biasness of the employer and labour in charges against the migrants which made their struggle to earn and survive, difficult. However, the migrants felt comfortable with local labourers at the place of work which is explainable by the fact that all of them faced almost similar situations. The employers were not very interactive with the migrants, thus, only about one-third of them reported that the behavior of the employer was good, while majority reported it to be satisfactory. Majority of the migrant labourers did not face any discrimination at the time of recruitment and routine work at the current place of work while majority of them faced it at the time of payment of wages which indicates indiscipline, poor condition of industrial migrant labourers at work. The migrants felt that the local labourers were supported, encouraged and appreciated more by the employers and also that the locals were given more of the supervisory jobs as compared to them.

The employers seemed to be indifferent and impartial while employing migrant or local labourers and expressed that they tried to create amicable conditions at the work place for all the labourers by paying them equal salary according to work, providing them various allowances and benefits as were available to the locals. However, they expressed that they preferred migrant over local labourers and that too from Uttar Pradesh as they are easily available, were more sincere, had the zeal to work and thus, were dependable and did not demand high wages. The only barrier was the language problem. The interaction between employers and migrants on a social level was minimal as majority never attended the social functions and gatherings of industrial migrant labourers. However, these employers stated that they sent representatives on their behalf to attend the same which explains their desire to relate with the migrant labourers and win their loyalty.

(vi) Comparison of Socio-Cultural and Economic Status of Industrial Migrant and Local Labourers

Among the local labourers working in Ludhiana city, all were males while among the migrants that were working in the industries of Ludhiana city, some were females. A larger number of migrant labourers were married as compared to the locals, and also they had larger number of children than the local labourers which explains their need to earn money to sustain their families. However, the need to earn more money and uplift of the economic status was observed more in the locals as compared to the migrants as more of the industrial local labourers had their wives working in Ludhiana city other than the industries. The need of the locals to have more than one earning individual is explainable by the fact that they
have more social obligations in Ludhiana city and are aware of good living and educational standards and thus required more money for the same. The educational levels of local labourers were better off than the migrant labourers. Also, they were more aware about their fundamental rights as more of them possessed voter cards and voted according to their own will as compared to the migrants.

The locals have been staying with their families in Ludhiana forever and thus, owned houses which had all facilities like electricity, bathroom/toilet, water supply and durables that made life comfortable, as compared to of the migrants who did not have these because they kept on migrating from one place to another and they needed to save money to remit back home. Thus, they took up rented accommodations or stayed in jhugis or kutchha houses. A larger proportion of industrial local labourers owned cattle/livestock as compared to the migrants as the industrial migrant labourers did not have adequate finance and place to keep them. The local labourers lived with their families, had social obligations and were under a pressure to achieve better levels of living, thus, they were forced to spend more and save nothing or less amounts as compared to the migrants who migrate with the sole purpose of earning more and improving the economic status of their families back home. The industrial local labourers have been staying in the city forever so they needed to construct or maintain their houses and hence, needed finance for which majority of them had taken up loans as compared to a lesser proportion of the industrial migrant labourers.

(vii) Policy Implications

Some of the policy implications have been presented for the betterment of the industrial migrant labourers who play an important role in the economic growth of Ludhiana city. It was found that majority of the industrial migrant labourers did not have working wives. It should be noted that more the earning hands, better is the economic status of the family. Efforts need to be made to create favourable working opportunities for the female migrants so that they can improve their economic status. This will not only improve the economic status of the migrants but will also, benefit the economy of Ludhiana by increasing supply of labour. It was found form that the migrants had large family sizes as majority of them had at least two male and female children each. Larger family sizes mean more expenditure which indirectly leads to low economic status of these labourers. Therefore, the family planning programmes should be promoted amongst the migrants so as to encourage them to have smaller and thus, economically better off families. Approximately one-fifth of the industrial migrant labourers in the city were illiterate. Efforts need to be made to
encourage the migrant labourers to educate their children by emphasising the role of an educated career. There is a need to form special NGOs who take care of the same. This will not only lead to their social uplift but will help in the overall growth of the economy which will have large educated population base.

Migrants are an important part of any economically aware society and thus, need to be behaved with respect and humanity. Majority of the industrial migrant labourers reported that they were called by convenient/derogatory names like bhaiya by the locals. This means that these labourers were not respected and treated as an equal part of the society. Efforts need to be made to give equal opportunities to both local and migrant labourers so that they do not feel discriminated, stand an equal chance for growth and thus, get respected. The employers in the industrial units should not discriminate their labourers and enlighten the local labourers to be friendly and respectful with them. Majority of the industrial migrant labourers expressed their liking for Punjabi language and music and also, they were making efforts to learn the same. Also, many of them had undergone changes in religious, eating and dressing habits. It indicates the desire to relate to the local society. The locals should also make efforts to mingle with them and accept them as a part of their society so that these changes are more by choice than force. One-fifth of the industrial migrant labourers reported of facing a problem from local police and majority of them faced problems from various government organisations. These organisations are there to serve people irrespective of their origin and thus, should not discriminate migrants. Efforts need to be made to frame special separate cells in these organisations which deal with the problems of these labourers efficiently and justice be done with them. Such steps provide a sense of security to these labourers which indirectly help both, these labourers and the economy of Punjab.

Slightly more than one-third of the industrial migrant labourers were indebted of which many were indebted due to ancestral loans which had accumulated over a period of time. The government needs to take some measures to rid these labourers from these loans so that they can work towards saving money for improvement of their future. Though various steps have been taken by the government to forego the loans of various agricultural farmers, efforts need to be made to implement the same efficiently and to introduce the same for poverty ridden non-agricultural farmers as well. It was found that majority of the industrial migrant labourers that were indebted, took loans from the money-lenders who charged exorbitant rate of interests. The reasons given for the same by these labourers were that the loans from these money lenders were easily available, they trusted the money lenders and
also, that taking loans form nationalised banks was a tedious job. Efforts need to be made by the nationalised banks to publically advertise about the loan opportunities and various schemes and make availability of loans easy and speedy so as to prevent economic exploitation of these migrant labourers. Also, various branches of these banks should be opened up in remote areas so as to provide fair coverage of all individuals.

Migrants are important for an economy as they provide supply of labour. Therefore, it is important to retain them and get them settled in the city. Migrants reported various reasons for migration like poverty, crime, corruption, political, cultural and social exploitation. Efforts should be made by the local government to protect the industrial migrant labourers from all such factors which influenced these labourers to migrate in the first place. Some of the other determinants of migration were employment diversification, better recreational and transport facilities, search for better working conditions, employment and availability of social amenities. Efforts should be made by the local government to make all the above said factors available in the local economy. These steps will not only benefit these labourers but widens the economic opportunities available in the local economy, overall development of the society and also, will lead to development of the same which would indirectly make locals more competitive.

The study of work environment and behaviour of locals at work place with the migrants is important as it determines the level of comfort of these labourers and thus, determines their decision to settle in Ludhiana city. It was found that slightly less than one-fifth of the industrial migrant labourers were made to work for more than eight hours and these extra hours were not accounted and paid for. The industrial migrant labourers should not be forced to work for more than the stipulated eight hours if the extra hours are not considered as overtime work. The government needs to make special efforts to ensure that the labourers are not forced to work overtime. However, if they have to work then provisions need to be made to ensure that they are being paid for extra hours. The grievance cells for migrant labourers need to be established and the proceedings in them need to be speedy and effective so that the labourers are encouraged to come up with their problems without fear. The employers should take proper steps to ensure that these labourers are not forced to work overtime without pay as it is un-ethical. If not so, the workers feel exploited and are thus, demoralised to work. The employers need to make special efforts to provide healthy and safe working environment as one-fourth of the industrial migrant labourers reported that their health was being affected at the work place. Steps need to be taken by the employer to
provide safe working equipments and machineries. Some of the working processes in these units lead to health hazards; therefore, the labourers need to be provided with gloves, glasses, masks and special uniform. Stronger enforcement of laws mandating the compulsory availability of first aid for labourers should be made. Safety instructions should be clearly displayed throughout the industrial unit. The government should ensure that these provisions are implemented. The government should form special teams or departments who are responsible for supervisions and checking in various industries to ensure these provisions are met and if the industries fail to meet the same then they should be penalized.

The industrial migrant labourers reported that the free of cost refreshment acts as an extra attraction during the overtime hours and thus, they worked overtime voluntarily. However, not all the industrial migrant labourers got the same. Therefore, the employers should make provisions for the same in order to increase efficiency. During the summer season the industries are required to provide their labourers with eatables and drinks to avoid dehydration, however, not all the labourers receive these. As these labourers are an important part of the support system of the industries of Ludhiana city, they should not be exploited. In order to get the migrants to work efficiently, the workers should be given work according to their own choice and skills they possess. It was found that some of these labourers were not allocated work according to their choice and skills. In order to retain these labourers in the industry, the industrial units should have human resource departments or special individuals who take care of proper placement of these labourers according to their respective choices and skills possessed. Unless a labourer is employed on a probation period, all the labourers should be employed as permanent labourers so as to ensure no discrimination and provision of all facilities to these labourers. These provisions should not be considered as a compulsion by the employers but should be taken in the right spirits as these are the steps to ensure that the labourers work efficiently and willingly and also, these provisions ensure continuous supply of labourers to these industries.

The employers should take all the necessary actions to avoid discrimination between the locals and migrants so as to make them comfortable and increase their productivity at the work place. The employers need to be understanding and concerned towards the migrants so as to win their loyalty and sincerity. About one-fourth of the industrial migrant labourers were not permanent labourers and thus, did not enjoy the benefits of various allowances, provident fund, ESI fund, employee welfare fund, uniform allowance, H.R.A, D.A etc. The employers need to abide by all the labour laws which include stipulated structure of wages,
allowances, safety and health measures, provident fund, ESI fund, employee welfare fund, uniform allowance, H.R.A, D.A etc. so as to make them feel secure both physically and financially. The hard work of the industrial migrant labourers should be recognised in a way similar to that of the industrial local labourers as little less than one-fifth of these labourers reported of discrimination at the time of recruitment and routine work. Also, about three-fifths of these labourers complained about discrimination during payment of wages. There should be transparency in the payment of wages so as to avoid discrimination or favouritism. Such steps build up the confidence in these labourers and they become more loyal and work more sincerely as they have a feeling of being fairly treated and thus have fair opportunities.

The problems of migrant labourers need to be solved with cooperation and coordination between labour unions and other social and government organisations. The labour unions help in bringing the labourers together and convince the employers to sort out the problems faced by them. The NGOs need to provide a socially correct base for the labour unions. However, the trade unions defend the local labourers and do not speak up for the migrant labourers. It is high time that the migrant labourers be considered equal to the local labourers and thus, the labour unions work to protect their rights. The government of India has made an act in order to protect the rights of the inter-state migrants in 1979 namely “Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act. However, the acts made by the government are not being enforced properly due to corruption, over stretched, inadequately structured, manpower deficient and resource crunched government organisations.