ABSTRACT

The study analysed the socio-economic and cultural status of the industrial migrant labourers working in the industries of Ludhiana city that migrated from their native places to achieve certain objectives. Majority of these labourers came from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and had their families residing in Ludhiana city. These labourers were not treated with respect and dignity as they were addressed by convenient and derogatory names. The local police and government organisations were not very co-operative with these labourers and harassed them. The economic status of these labourers in the city was not very satisfactory as majority did not own any assets and durables and approximately two-fifth of these labourers were indebted. These labourers changed their religious practices, eating and dressing habits after migrating to the city so as to be accepted and recognised as a part of the local society.

The study concentrated on detailed factors responsible for migration. Also, the costs incurred and problems faced by these labourers during migration were studied. Economic factors like poverty, attraction of getting higher wages and indebtedness were identified as the three most common factors responsible for migration. Relatives were the most common source for selecting Ludhiana city as the destination place for migration but often faced problems while travelling to the city. After migration to the city the monthly expenditure as a percentage of the total budget of these labourers had increased for durables, services and on socio-religious ceremonies.

The average annual income of these labourers was Rs. 35,112 while the average annual saving was Rs. 7548 and the average annual remittance was Rs. 5,786. A little less than two-thirds of these labourers remitted money back home and a majority of these labourers remitted their entire savings. Repayment of loans was identified as the most common reason for which money was remitted, followed by consumption purposes. The industrial migrant labourers faced exploitation at the work place as one-third of them were forced to work for more than eight hours without being paid. Also, they were discriminated against local labourers at the time of recruitment, during routine work and at the time of payment of wages and allowances; and were even manhandled at times. The industrial local labourers were better off than the industrial migrant labourers economically, socially and even at the work place. The employers preferred migrant labourers over local labourers for being easily available and dependable. The reason for non preference was identified as language problem.