The particulars of migrants indicate, that all the migrants belong to Hindu religion and a majority of them i.e., 83.2% belong to middle caste group. Among the middle caste, the caste group ‘Poojari’ dominates (47.3%) the migratory stream. The migratory stream consisted mainly of youths (56%) in the age group of 15-30 years. Most of them (76.8%) were illiterates and majority (67.2%) of the migrants were married at the time of migration.

A majority of the migrants (93.2%) had no land at native place at the time of migration, and most of them (38.4%) have been casual labourers. Unemployment/underemployment i.e., economic constraint have been the major (49.2%) cause of migration irrespective of caste and phases of migration.

9.3 As regards the present demographic characteristics of the migrant respondents is concerned, a majority (34.64%) of them, irrespective of caste, are in the age group of 15-35 years. The sex ratio is 1000/968 (M/F), while the females are slightly below the average in the case of lower caste group and earlier migrants. Majority (60.91%) of immigrant population is unmarried and more married persons are found in lower caste group and recent migrants.

The ‘Poojari’ caste group dominates (47.01%) the entire migrant population. The average literacy is 57.35% and maximum (71.43%) literates are found in Yellapur Mandal. Higher rate of literacy is noticed in middle caste group especially among the earliest migrants. Majority (43.6%) of the migrants belonging to middle caste have medium size families and irrespective of caste, duration of stay, most of the migrant families are of nuclear type. Almost all (94%) have adopted patrilineal (Makkala Santana) family system. Only a few of the earliest migrants seem to be following the matrilineal (Aliyasantana) family system. Most (72.7%) of the immigrants are agricultural labourers. Only 3.2% of them have changed their occupation and are engaged in non-agricultural works and 3.6% of them have taken to independent cultivation in their own land. Most of the independent cultivators, are earliest migrants. The local farmers directly employ the labourers for their
farm work either on casual or contract basis. There is no unemployment problem among the agricultural labourers. The contractors or middleman (commission agents) have totally disappeared.

The migrants generally get a wage of Rs. 36/- per day. The method of wage payment present in Yellapur taluk is in the form of cash and kind. Invariably, irrespective of caste and duration of the stay, all the migrants have acquired certain moveable assets like transistors etc. The early migrants and middle caste respondents possess live stock, wrist watches and bicycles. Majority (32%) of respondents families have two earning members. Migrants have benefited by Government assistance and 53.6% of respondents have been assisted by Government for self employment schemes like, dairying and petty business and maximum number (67.2%) of the beneficiaries are supported by dairying. Most of the migrants settled in Kundargi Mandal and also more number of early migrants have benefited by Government aid. 62% of migrants are in debt, the major cause being the maintenance of family. On the whole the economic status of the migrants has improved.

9.4 Most of the migrants have stayed for more than 15 years in the present locality and have settled permanently. Majority (56%) of the migrants who have kachcha houses are the earlier migrants belonging to lower caste. Out of the total Pukka houses, 57.22% were built with the financial assistance from the Government of Karnataka. Most (43.6%) of the migrants do not have good source of drinking water and depend on ponds and seasonal streams. 24.8% of migrants have acquired land and majority of them are found in Kundargi mandal. On an average, 2.5 acre of land has been acquired. The average land holding by the middle castes and earlier migrants is however more in Kundargi mandal. About 8.1% of the total land owners have legally occupied the land which is found mostly in Kundargi mandal. About 12.9% of respondents who own land, are self reliant. Majority (50.8%) of the migrants rarely visit their native place and have settled in this locality permanently.
9.5 The migrants have a high level of social participation in most of the local activities. Most of the earlier migrants in Ummachgi mandal have mixed so well with the local fabric that some of the migrants even have successfully contested in recent elections to Local Bodies and have got themselves elected.

About 49.6% of migrants have a cordial relation with the local people. In Kundargi and Kampli mandals, there exists a high degree of mutual cooperation among the migrants and the hosts. About 43.6% of the migrants prefer the local people as their immediate neighbours and they do not seem to have the feeling of homesickness.

The level of adjustment of migrants with the local population, adaptation to the local tradition and rituals is very high and the immigrants observe/celebrate almost all the festivals of the locality. Irrespective of caste, duration of stay, all the migrants frequently visit the temples situated in the area. Most of the respondents offer animals/fowls to gods and goddesses. Some of the migrants arrange Pooja (worship) of ‘Sri Satyanarayana’ once a year and some of them arrange a feast of sacrificed birds and invite their friends, relatives and local people. Some of the migrants have a custom of sending money to Lord Manjunatha Swamy of Dharmasthala, at least once a year.

The migrants have started consuming raw rice instead of parboiled rice and they have also mastered the local dialect. The migrants have also adapted themselves to the living style prevalent in the destination and follow the new dressing style along with the locals. The younger generation have taken to trousers and shirts and choodidara. Interestingly, the locals have also started wearing a typical headgear made up of arecanut sheet which is considered as the influence of the migrants on the locals. Most of the immigrants have given up matrilineal family system and are following the patrilineal system prevalent in the place of destination. Over the years of stay in the locality, the migrants have acquired new agricultural skills. 70% of migrants have acquired the skills of paddy threshing and 60% of them know the art of land ploughing and leveling. 86% of migrants have mastered land development for arecanut garden. 76% of them have acquired the skill of arecanut
curing work. The migrants are deemed as ‘experts’ in arecanut garden work in the locality. 66% of respondents have acquired the new skill of cardamom cultivation, 60% of them have learnt pepper cultivation and 24% of them have acquired the skill of sericulture work. Thus, it clearly indicates that, gradually the migrants have found themselves comfortable with new locality and mixed well with local fabric.

9.6 Because of the responsibility shown in the work entrusted, honesty in approach, a majority (61%) of local farmers prefer the migrants despite the general feeling among the locals that ‘migrants are costly labourers’. The land reformation act seems to have a great influence on the locals. Most of them prefer the migrants to be relocated outside their land but still treat them as localities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the absence of any detailed study on the migrant agricultural labourers, that too in a peculiar agro-climatic set-up where small scale farming is the predominant practice and cultivable land accounts for only 20%, the present work was undertaken with a view to provide some useful information about the immigrants. Though it has made all attempts to bring together information about the background of migrants, their adjustment with new set-up and socio-economic aspects, there remains much to be studied and analysed. Gradual decrease in migration of labourers needs to be viewed in a new perspective: the sudden/rapid economic development, better opportunities in the native place, a change in thinking among the younger generation mainly because of literacy campaign, a more materialistic attitude and probably attraction towards entrepreneurship are some of the issues in the place of origin which can be considered as important reason for the decreasing migration in recent times.