

# Impact of Daily Labour Migration on Rural Household Economy: A Field-Based Study of Bolpur Sriniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal

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**Abstract:** *In present-day India, daily labour migration play important role in supporting the rural economy. Due to limited employment opportunities in rural areas, seasonal unemployment and a insufficient work in agriculture, many labourers travel to nearby towns in search of jobs. This study examines the impact of daily labour migration on the economic well-being of rural households in the Bolpur Sriniketan region. At present, large numbers of labourers in this region commute daily to urban areas for work, and this has become a significant part of their livelihood strategy. This study based on primary data collected through a field survey of 100 daily migrant labourers, along with information from 80 of their household, data were collected using Interview and questionnaire methods were presented in tables and pie charts. Percentage analysis was used to interpret the finding. The result of the study show that although daily labour migration contribute to an increase in workers' incomes several challenges persist. These include the nature of the work, long working hours, lack of proper transport facilities, irregular employment and the absence of social security. At the household level migration is associated with limited educational opportunities for their children, food insecurity, and mixed health conditions. The study conclude that while daily labour migration helps to improve income levels, it is not sufficient to ensure long-term economic development and stability for rural households.*

**Keywords:** Daily labour migration, rural economy, social security, livelihood strategy

## I. INTRODUCTION

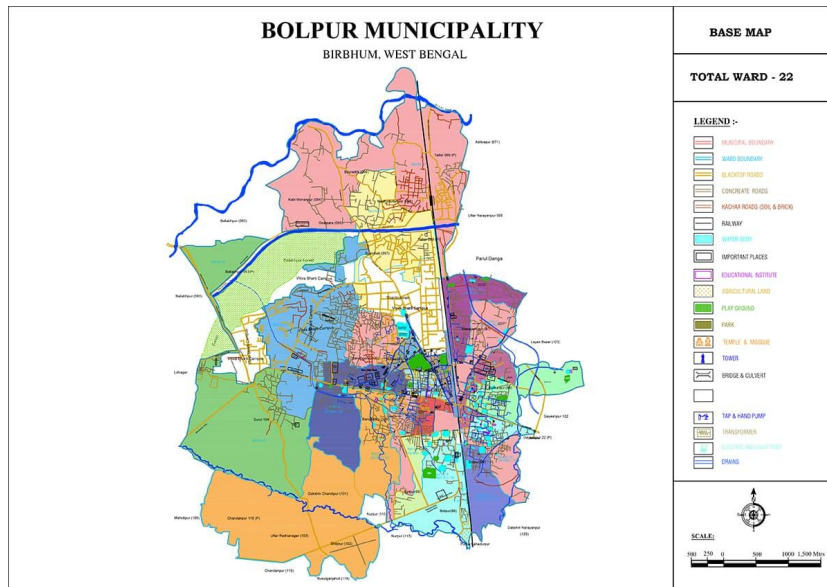
In India, the rural economy is largely driven by the labour force engaged in the informal sector. For many rural households, migration for manual and agricultural labour has become an important means of earning income. Various government statistics and studies have clearly reflect the structure of the rural economy and the extent of income inequality (RBI, 2022). Across different states, income inequality remains a major issue due to limited employment opportunities and inadequate infrastructural development. In rural areas of West Bengal, several factors have contributed to the rise of labour migration. The lack of adequate employment opportunities in rural areas, along with limited development infrastructure, encourage workers to migrate to urban areas (NITI Aayog, 2021; CMIE, 2021). These include long-standing administrative challenges in the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act 2005(MGNREGA) scheme, limited availability of irrigated agricultural land, the impacts of climate change and limited employment opportunities. As a result, workers from the unorganized sector are increasingly moving towards urban areas in search of income, with the migration of manual labourers being a prominent example. Within West Bengal, income disparities are visible across different districts. The town of Bolpur–Santiniketan holds particular important as a cultural and economic center in the Birbhum district. Due to its attraction for both domestic and international tourist, the town has experienced growth in sectors such as accommodation, hostility, and small-scale and cottage industries. These development have created employment opportunities that draw daily migrant labours from nearby rural areas to work in these establishment. Insecurity in the agricultural sector, rising



production costs, and environmental changes are making rural livelihoods increasingly vulnerable, which acts as a significant driver of migration (FAO, 2017). Although Physical migrant workers are seen arriving in the town of Bolpur from neighboring areas to work in these establishments. Although physical migration contributes to an increases in workers' incomes, its border impact is always clearly understood.

The effects of migration can be observed in various aspects of workers lives, including household incomes, expenditures patterns, savings, livelihood conditions, and access to adequate food, health care, and children's education. Furthermore, the employment insecurity, low wages, and lack of social protection for workers in the informal sector further weaken their livelihood, pushing them to move towards cities in search of alternative income sources (ILO, 2018). In this study, migration is not viewed merely as a source of earning income but a border life process. It involves daily movements of workers', there working conditions and hours, and the resulting effect of family life. Therefore, this research is significant for understanding the actual economic and social changes experienced by rural household.

**Study Area Profile:** The Birbhum district is an important part of Rarh region of West Bengal. The economic base of this district is primarily agricultural. The major rivers of the district, such as Ajay River, Mayurakshi River, and Kopai River, serve of important sources for irrigation and provide water for agricultural activities and as well as domestic use. This district is also cultural significant, being closely associated with Rabindranath Tagore. It home to Visva-Bharati located in Santiniketan. In 2023 Santiniketan received UNESCO world heritage recognition, which has further enhanced its important as a global tourist destination. According to the census 2011, a large portion of households in the Bolpur–Santiniketan block are engaged in the informal sector. In recent year, the growth of tourism and related economic activities Bolpur and Santiniketan, has created new employment opportunist. However, due to low income level in rural areas, many people commute daily to these town in search of work, leading to an increases in daily labour migration.



**Figure 1: Map of the study Area: Bolpur Town, Birbhum, West Bengal, India**  
Source: (Bolpur Municipality, n.d.)

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

(NCEUS, 2007) According to the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, more than 85 percent of India's total workforce is employed in the informal sector. These workers are generally paid on a daily wage. The report states that poor and marginalized rural populations often migrant to urban areas as daily labourers in search of employment.



(Kahanec & Zimmermann, 2014) Most of the daily migrant labourers working in the urban areas are either illiterate or have low level of education. They largely belong to economically weaker section. This study shows that migration often acts as a short term coping mechanism rather than a pathway to sustainable development.

(Srivastava, 2020) This study discusses that daily migrant workers frequently lack of safe and supportive working environment and have limited access to labor rights and social protection.

(de Haas, 2021) This study discusses that the main causes for daily migrant workers coming to the town are unemployment, low income and livelihood opportunities.

(Baggio & Iglesias, 2024) This study shows that although economic development occurs due to daily labour migration, it also entails social and humanitarian risks.

(PLFS, 2023) According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), it is an important source for analysing India's labour market, providing information on employment, unemployment a labour participation.

### **Objective of the Study:**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify the major causes of daily labour migration in the study area.
- To analyse the socio-economic impacts of daily migration on rural households
- To examine workforce conditions, challenges, and safety issues faced by migrant workers.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

This study is a field-based descriptive study, aimed at analyse the impact of daily labour migration on the economic and social conditions of rural households in the Bolpur-Santiniketan region. It's based on empirical data collection and uses simple analytical techniques to ensure clear and accurate presentation of findings.

**Nature of the Study:** - This study follows both descriptive and analytical approaches. It incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data. Rather than making future predictions the study focuses on analysing present conditions such as worker's income, expenditure, transport, food security, and family circumstances.

**Sampling Design:** The Multi-Stage Sampling method was adopted for study.

**First Stage:** In the first stage, the Bolpur-Santiniketan region was selected as the study area. This area was chosen because many daily wage labourers live and work here, and regular commuting is common in this region.

**Second Stage:** In the second stage, the main commuting routes and workplaces of the workers were identified. This was done through field visit, observation and talking to local people.

**Third Stage:** In the third stage, 100 daily-wage labourers were selected using purposive and convenience sampling methods based on their availability. Among theme, 80 households were surveyed. This approach is referred to as the "worker household link approach", which helps in analysing the relationship between the worker's migration and household conditions.

**Data Collection:** Both primary and secondary data were in this study.

**Primary Data:** Collected through field survey using interviews, questionnaires and observation methods. Information regarding commuting patterns, working hours and income was gathered from location such bus stand, railway station, auto stand and construction sites in Bolpur town. Household level data on income, expenditure, savings, food security and social condition was collected from the selected workers homes. Secondary data were collected from government reports, statistics and journals.

**Secondary Data:** collected from government reports, statistical records, and academic journals.

**Data Analysis Technique:** The percentage method was used to analyse the collected data. Each variable was expressed in percentage from to examine aspects such as income, expenditure, type of work, working hours, transport facilities, and food security. The results were presented using tables and a pie chart clarity.

**Data Collection Time Period:** The study collected data from October 12 to October 26, 2025, from selected respondents in the study area.

**Variables and Measurement:** - The variables used in this study are discussed below:



**Independent variables:** - Migration Status, Travel Time, Transport cost, Type of work.

**Dependent variables:** - Household Income, Expenditure, Saving, Food Security, Health condition.

**Control variables:** Age, Sex, Family member, Education level.

**Measurement of variables:** The variables were measured using nominal, ordinal and ratio scales to ensure proper classification and analysis.

**Ethical Considerations:** The study followed important ethical principal:

1. Informed Consent was obtained from all respondents.
2. The privacy and confidentiality of respondents was strictly maintained.
3. The collected data were used only for research purposes.

**Hypothesis:** The hypotheses used in this study are as follows:

H<sub>0</sub>- Daily migrant workers do not have specific types and characteristics.

H<sub>1</sub> - Daily migrant workers have specific types and characteristics.

H<sub>0</sub> - Daily migration does not affect family income.

H<sub>1</sub> - Daily migration increases family income.

H<sub>0</sub>- Migration does not affect household expenditure and savings.

H<sub>1</sub> - Migration increases expenditure and limits savings.

H<sub>0</sub>- migration has no significant effect on food supply, education, and health.

H<sub>1</sub> - migration has significant effects on food supply, education, and health.

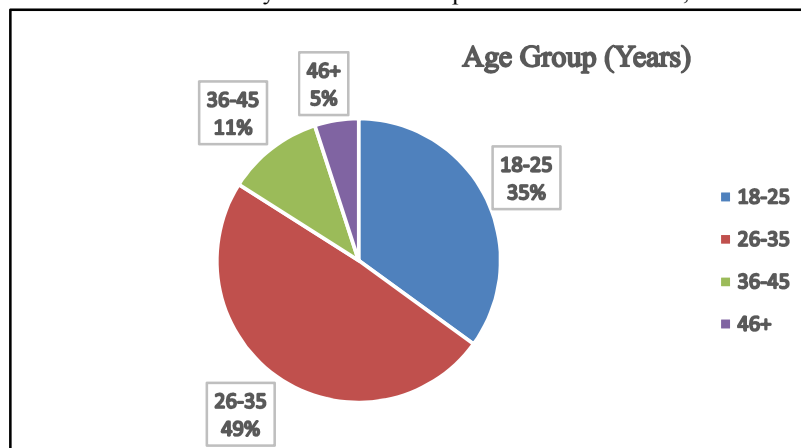
#### IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data were analyzed and interpreted to understand the research finding:

**Table I: Age-wise Distribution of Workers**

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	35	35
26-35	49	49
36-45	11	11
46+	05	05
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum

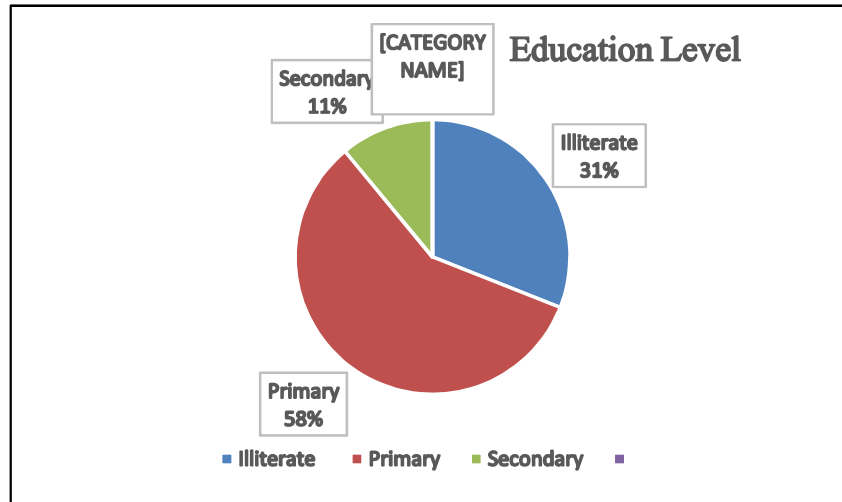


**Analysis:** The data indicate that, 49 per cent of the workers belong to the 26–35 age group, suggesting that daily labour migration is largely supported by young and middle aged individuals. Another 35 per cent fall within the 18–25 age group, which shows that a section of youth is also actively engaged in daily migration for work. In contrast 11 per cent of workers aged 36-45 and 5 percent of worker aged 46 and above are involved in migration, however, they face greater physical and occupational challenges in sustaining such work.

**Table II: Educational Status of Workers**

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	31	31
Primary	58	58
Secondary	11	11
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum



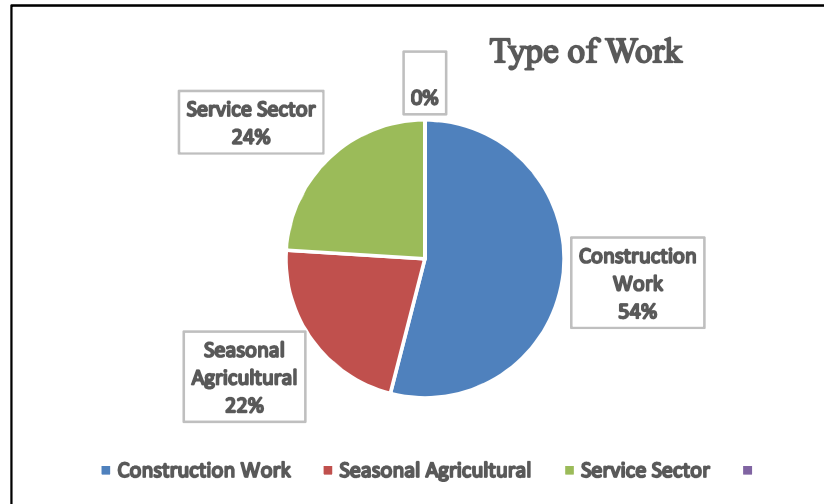
**Analysis:** The table shows that 31 per cent of workers are illiterate, while 58 per cent have only primary education. This reflects the dominance of low-skilled labour in daily migration. Only 11 per cent have completed secondary education, indicating that limited educational attainment restricts access to stable and better paying employment opportunities.

**Table III: Occupational Structure**

Type of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Construction Work	54	54
Seasonal Agricultural	22	22
Service Sector	24	24
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum



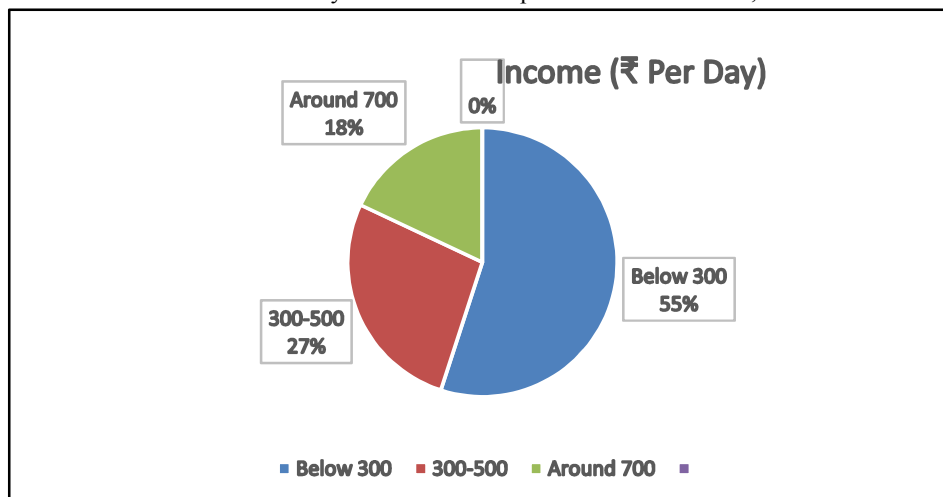


**Analysis:** According to the table, 54 per cent of workers are engaged in the urban construction sector, which is the major sources of employment for migrant labourers. About 22 per cent are involved in seasonal migration, mainly during the off-season. The remaining 24 per cent work in service related activities such as hotels staff, garment shop and other small private sector jobs in urban areas.

**Table IV: Daily Income of Workers**

Income (₹ per day)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 300	55	55
300-500	27	27
Around 700	18	18
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum



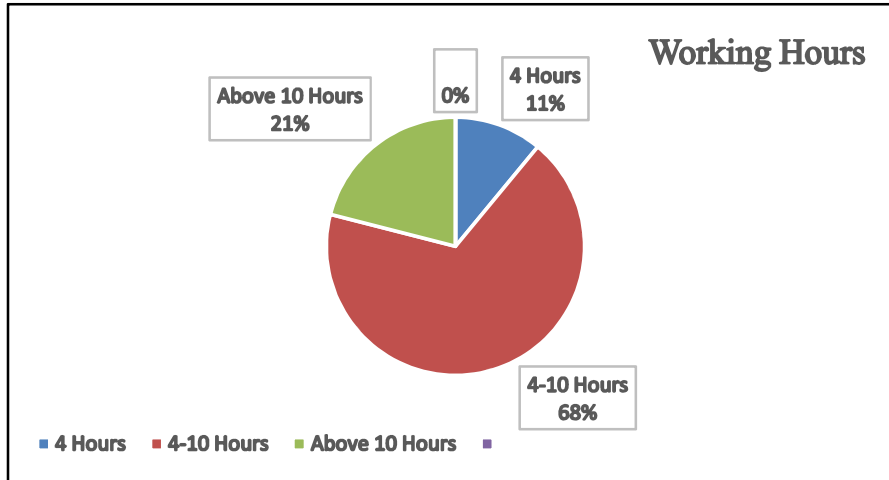
**Analysis:** The data reveal that 27 per cent of workers earn between 300 and 500 rupees per day, which is generally sufficient for meeting basic household expenses but leaves little scope for savings. Around, 55 per cent earn less than 300 rupees per day; these are mostly new or unskilled workers. Only 18 per cent earn 700 rupees per day, indicating the presence of a small group of relatively skilled worker.



**Table V: Working Hours per Day**

Working Hours	Frequency	Percentage
4 Hours	11	11
4-10 Hours	68	68
Above 10 Hours	21	21
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum

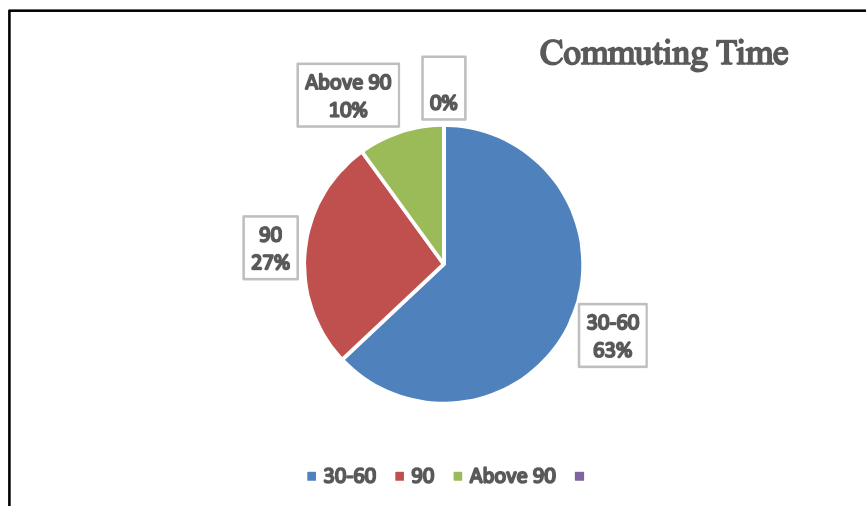


**Analysis:** The table show that 68 per cent of workers spend between 4 and 10 hours at work each day, about 11 per cent work around 4 hours, while 21 per cent work above 10 hours. This suggests that a large proportion of workers engage in long working hours, often extending beyond normal limit, in orders to meet their economic needs.

**Table VI: Commuting Time**

Times Minutes	Frequency	Percentage
30-60	63	63
90	27	27
Above 90	10	10
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum

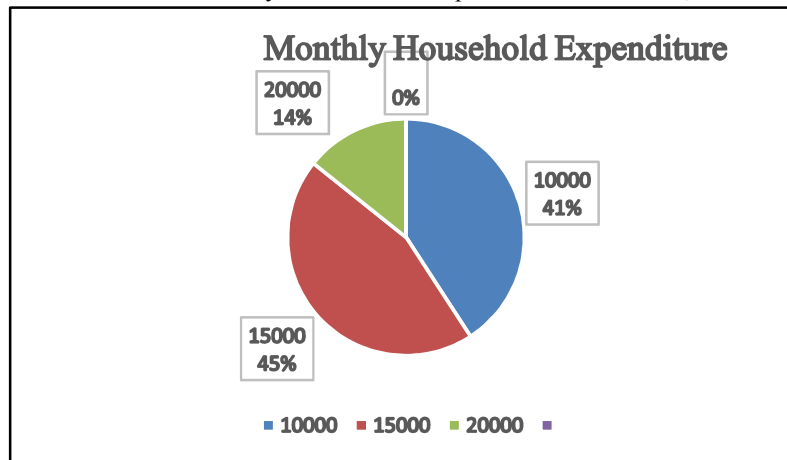


**Analysis:** The data indicate that 63 per cent of workers spend 30–60 minutes commuting daily, while 27 per cent spend around 90 minutes, and 10 per cent spend more than 90 minutes. This reflects the long distances travelled by worker from rural to urban center and highlights the lack of adequate employment opportunities in villages.

**Table VII: Monthly Household Expenditure**

Expenditure (₹)	Frequency	Percentage
10000	40	40
15000	46	46
20000	14	14
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum

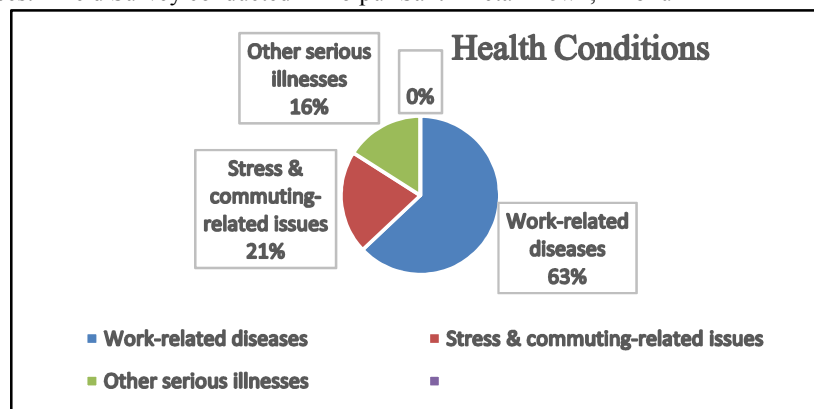


**Analysis:** According to the table 46 per cent of workers spend approximately rupees 15000 per month for their households, while 40 per cent spend around rupees 10,000 and 14 per cent spend about rupees 20,000. Although incomes has increased due to migration, rising costs, such as food, transport , mobile phone expenses result in higher overall expenditure leaving limited scope for saving.

Health Status	Frequency	Percentage
Work-related diseases	63	63
Stress & commuting-related issues	21	21
Other serious illnesses	16	16
Total	100	100%

**Table VIII: Health Conditions**

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum

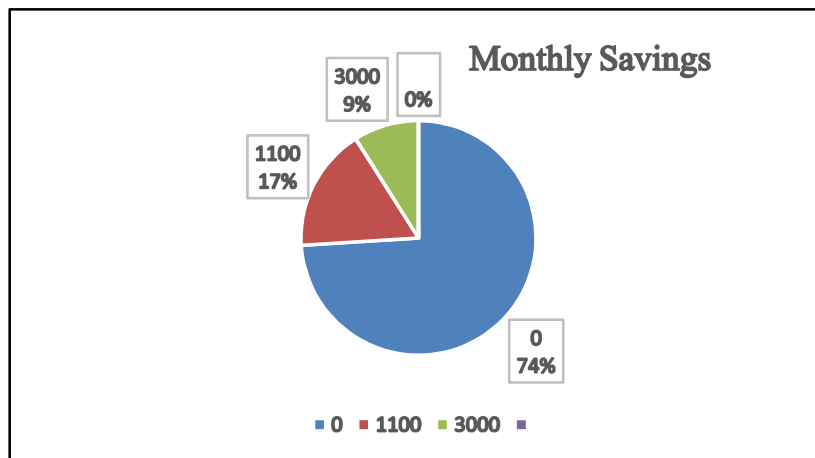


**Analysis:** The data show that 63 per cent of workers suffer from various health problems, including musculoskeletal disorders, injuries and accidents at construction sites, silicosis, skin infections, diarrhea and mental health conditions. Another 21 per cent face health issues due to work pressure and long commuting distances. The remaining 16 per cent suffer from other serious illnesses. This indicate poor working and leaving conditions among migrant labourers.

**Table IX: Monthly Savings**

Monthly Saving	Frequency	Percentage
0	74	74
1100	17	17
3000	09	09
Total	100	100%

Sources: Field Survey conducted in Bolpur Santiniketan Town, Birbhum



**Analysis:** The table indicate that 74 per cent of households have no savings, while another 17 per cent save around 1,100 rupees per month, and 9 per cent save approximately 3,000 rupees per month. Overall despite an increase in daily income, saving remain low due to rising costs of essential goods, medical expenses, education and transport.

**Hypothesis Testing and Results:** In this study, the hypotheses have been tested using the percentage method based on the data collected from the field survey. The results are presented as follows:

**Hypothesis I: Characteristics of workers**

Analysis of table I and II shows that most of the workers are aged 36–45 and have a low level of education or are illiterate. This indicates that a specific socio-economic characteristic is observed among the daily migrant workers.

**Result:**  $H_0$ - is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted.

**Hypothesis II: Impacts of income**

According to table IV, most workers earn between 300 and 500 taka per day, with some earning even more. This indicates that migration has led to an increase in income.

**Result:**  $H_0$ - is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted.

**Hypothesis III: Expenditure and savings**

Table VII and IX show that most families have high expenditure and very little savings. Although income has increased, expenditure has risen in equal measure, resulting in fewer opportunities for saving.

**Result:**  $H_0$ - is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted.

**Hypothesis IV: Social impacts (Education, Health and Food security)**

According to Table VIII, most workers suffer from various health problems. Furthermore, limitations are observed in the family's food security and education.



**Result:**  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted.

**Overall result:** From the above analysis, it is clear that in most cases the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) has been accepted, which indicates that daily wage migration has a significant impact on the economic and social lives of the workers.

**Recommendations:** Practical suggestions are given to improve the current situation.

**Increase in local employment:** To strengthen the rural economy, small-scale and cottage industries should be promoted. This will help create employment opportunities at the local level and reduce the need for daily migration.

**Skill Development Training:** worker should be provide workers with modern and relevant skills development training so that they can become skilled labour and access better income opportunities.

**Educational Support:** Basic educational facilities should be ensured for daily migrant workers. This will help them develop an understanding of income and expenditure, and knowledge of government schemes and policies.

**Legal Awareness:** There is a need to increase awareness among daily migrant workers about laws and government regulation. This will help them understand their rights related to workplace safety, fair wages and social security.

**Improving transport facilities:** An affordable, safe, and reliable transport system should be developed for daily migrant workers, enabling them to travel comfortable between their homes and workplaces.

## V. CONCLUSION REMARKS

The analysis of the research findings shows that, due to the lack of adequate employment opportunities in their native rural areas, daily migrant workers from nearby and other regions move to Bolpur Sriniketan town in search of work. Although this daily migration has contributed to an increase in their income, it has not ensured stable or secure earning. Most of workers are engaged in the informal sector, where job security and employment stability reaming low. In addition, the challenges they face such as long working, transport difficulties, physical and mental stress, and lack of social protection make their lives increasingly difficult. Overall, it can be conclude that while daily labour migration provide short term economic benefits, it has not been effective in ensuring long-term economic development and social security for rural household.

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