

## Conceptualizing Dadan Migration: A Perennial Problem of Western Odisha

Dr. Manoj Kumar Nag<sup>1</sup>, Sri Devi Prasad Sahu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor Department of Political Science Rajendra University Prajna Vihar, Balangir.

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar Department of Political Science Rajendra University Prajna Vihar, Balangir.

**ABSTRACT:** The paper conceptualizes 'Dadan' migration of Western Odisha. The issue of Dadan migration is particular to this region of Odisha only. Dadan migration has conceptual differences with other forms of inter-state migration. This issue is affecting the life of many socio-economically backward people of the region. Conceptualization of the issue will offer a novel understanding of the issue and help in policy making and implementation in this regard. This paper uncovers several new facets and attempted to develop a more rigorously grounded and informed view of some emerging dimensions and aspects of Dadan migrants' life conditions. The paper is descriptive, analytical and exploratory in nature. The paper uses both primary and secondary sources of data along with a proper analysis by using inductive method.

**KEYWORDS:** Odisha State, Western Odisha, Dadan migration, Semi-Arid, Push Pull, Social Network.

### INTRODUCTION

Dadan migration is a perennial problem of Western Odisha. Every year numbers of people of this region become part of this process to search for livelihood. This problem is related to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour forces, recruited to work out side of the state. During this process the migrants are exposed to problems such as human rights violation and economic exploitation along with exposure to an unhealthy work environment. The migrants are also reportedly subjugated to physical and emotional abuses by the recruiters or owners.

The problem of Dadan migration is different from any other types of migration existing in Odisha. As the issue is primarily visible in Western Odisha, it is related to the socio-economic activities of this region. It has been found that the Dadan laborers are not completely submerged into agricultural activities. Their engagement in agricultural sector is seasonal and they struggle to find out suitable economic activities to pursue as their livelihood in the vicinity. The Dadan migrants generally recruited in the months of November-December and returned to their native place in May-June. This is because the nature of their work as Dadan laborers. As most of the Dadan Migrants are engaged in bricks making activities, they become unwanted and redundant during the monsoon season. Further, as most of them were hired by receiving money in advance they are forced to meet the target before the arrival of monsoon. During this process of tireless labour activities, the Dadan Migrants ruined their health with no adequate medical facilities. The above-mentioned issues make Dadan migration of Odisha a very challenging and specific variants of labour migration. Thus, conceptualization of Dadan migration is necessary for proper policy making and policy implementation to address this problem.

### Etymological Interpretation of "Dadan"

The contemporary meaning and uses of the word "Dadan" can be traced to the Persian word "dadni", which means "to give" or 'an advance payment' (Cheung, 2007). This became a prevailing system of trade and commerce, particularly in textile sector, under the East India Company in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century. During this period of time the Indian and European merchants were known as the *dadandar* and the artisans and local merchants who received advance payment (*dadan*) were called *dadani* (Bandyopadhyay, 2004). According to *Orissa Dadan Labour (Control and Regulation) Act, 1975* "dadan labourer" means a person recruited on the basis of a contract (either express or implied) from the State of Orissa for doing any skilled, semi-skilled or un-skilled manual work outside the State" (Government of Odisha, 1975). This depicts the typical nature of Dadan migration where the laborers receive advance money much before the actual months of migration.

### Distinctiveness of Dadan migration

Most commonly, migration depicts a situation of movement of people from their native place to outside, in search of better opportunities. It's a world-wide phenomenon, speeding from intra-state domain to international sphere. However, the Dadan migration issue of Odisha does not share many of the features of general theory of migration. Thus, the distinctiveness of Dadan migration needs to be highlighted here.

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Firstly, unlike the general trends in Dadan migration people receive the payment in advance. As the migration season often begins in November-December the laborer often received their advance payment in August-September.

Secondly, Dadan migration is not a problem of the whole state of Odisha. It is mostly confined to some of the western districts of Odisha. The host states are Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Goa. Whereas, Dadan migration mainly occurs from Balangir, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Sonepur, Nawarangpur, and Koraput districts of Odisha. The districts which host maximum numbers of migrations are semi-arid zones, monsoon fed and underdeveloped parts of the state. In these areas people are primarily victims of disguised unemployment and seasonal unemployment. People remain unemployed after the agriculture season, and in the absence of an appropriate institutional arrangement, seasonal migration plays a vital role to provide gainful employment opportunities. Thus, Dadan migration emerged as a lucrative livelihood option for them.

Thirdly, most of the migrants are engaged in only one dominant nature of work, that is, bricks making. The nature of work makes the unskilled people attracted toward Dadan migration. Fourthly, as the nature of work is seasonal Dadan migration is a yearly phenomenon. The Dadan Migrants leave their native place in November-December and come back to their villages in May-June. As monsoon seasons starts from the mid-June the nature of work make the migrants irrelevant for bricks making. Thus, unlike any other type of migration, the Dadan Migrants migrate in every year to out side of Odisha and come back to their native places after six months of work. Fifthly, as these migrants are placed in interior and deserted locations they are forced to live in temporary shelter and forced to work in a very poor working condition. This leads to unrestrained and underreported violation of human rights and severe cases of inhuman torture are often highlighted by the media. Finally, Dadan migration offers a lucrative earning option for the laborers which is essential for them to address their consumption patterns and value addition to life. The advance payment that they receive helps them to accomplish any qualitative aspect of their lives

### THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

There are various theoretical models to explain labor migration. As Dadan is a types of labor migration specifically found in Odisha, two prominent theories can be applied to examine its occurrence and impact for the society.

#### Push-Pull Conceptualization

This widely accepted theory argues that migration is influenced by "push" factors like poverty, lack of jobs, or conflict that drive people away from their place of origin. Further, this theory assumes that "pull" factors such as better job opportunities, safety, and better living conditions that attract them to a new location. It's influenced by intervening obstacles like distance, cost, policies and personal factors such as age, family, socio-economic status (Lira and Aleksandr, 2015).

The application of Push-Pull theory to understand Dadan migration issue offers a more inclination towards the "Push" factor than the "Pull" factor. As the Dadan migration belt of Odisha are poverty stricken and offers seasonal employment, people are pushed for alternative livelihood option such as Dadan migration. However, the "Pull" factor can't be strike out here for good. The potentiality of Dadan migration to offer an attractive sum of wage amount is lucrative for the people to consider it as a viable livelihood option. The sum of money which they received as advance is useful to them for value addition to their live. Is a steady Dadan migration are developed originally to explain Dadan labor migration in the process of permanent or semi-permanent change of residence and changing nature of policy making that not favor of migrations labour or Dadan migration. So that they relocation diffusion the spread of people, ideas, innovations, behaviors, from one place to another and moves to new locations. This reason people migrate are determined by push and pull factors, which are forces that either induces people to move to a new location, or oblige them to leave old residences. These could be economic, political, cultural, and environmental.

The number of Dadan migrants is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at a given place and inversely proportional to the number of intervening obstacles in various state. Like, one may also think of intervening obstacles as intervening opportunities; that is, the presence of other places between an origin and destination point to which one could migrate. Therefore, the volume of Dadan migration from one place to another is associated not only with the distance between places or number of people in the two places, but also with the number of opportunities or obstacles between each place. So that Dadan migrates Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa.

Further, if we examine Dadan migration from the perspective of push factor then the problem of seasonal unemployment can be considered as a stringent factor of migration in Dadam effected areas. As no significant livelihood options available to people of these areas after the Kharif season they are forced to live native places in search of work for rest of the moths of the year. In pull factor, people migrate to places where the jobs seem to be available and where the wages are higher that their native places. The wage variation that exists between native places and migration zone often attracts people choose Dadan as a viable option.

#### Social Network Theory

The Social Network theory argues that the decision to migrate depends on the extent to which the migrants are connected to communities and home destination. The destination community can facilitate migration by providing access to information about jobs and material support for recent arrivals (Munshi, 2014). This theory highlights the role of social network in shaping the social value of individuals. This "social value" is broadly construed to capture access to information and opportunities for risk sharing and

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favor exchange. Like, when two agents (communities) meet, they each contribute effort to a joint project and effort to determine endogenously by the network structure. So, this theory allows to describe equilibrium network structure that affects to social value of agents and getting from the network, which in turn affects the decision to migrate.

The Social Network theory can be applied to explore the social and economic background of the Dadan laborers. The Dadan laborers share a certain degree of similarities among themselves in terms of social and economic perspective. These people are underprivileged and mostly from STs, SCs and OBCs Communities. Most of them are seasonally unemployed with a least area of land under their possession. Further, these people are mostly from rural area where socio-cultural communications among villagers are stronger than the urban belt. The theory can be used to explore such networking among the Dadan laborers. The nature of Dadan labor is to get involved in Bricks making activities, primarily during winter and summer season. Such activities require a team work rather than individual labor. Thus, the social and cultural bonding of the laborers helps them to formulate a team of bricks maker and migrate as Dadan laborers. Even the money they receive in advance are arranged in such a way that a team will be formulated to perform the labor.

### CONCLUSION:

Dadan migration is having a conceptual difference from other forms of migration existing in Odisha. People of Western Odisha are forced to migrate as Dadan to different states of India. People receive the advance payment as they do not have any significant source of income. Further, as the advance amount is lucrative and given in totality, people easily get attracted to Dadan migration. As most of these people are poor, they effortlessly spent the entire advance amount and forced to oblige the terms and conditions of the recruiters. So, the migrants lose their rights and independence in this process and get exposed to exploitation and inhuman treatments. Dadan migration is a routine and inseparable livelihood problem in the semi-arid zones of Western Odisha. Conceptualization of Dadan migration will certainly help in understanding the roots of the problem and in this process ascertain better policy making and implementation to solve this problem.

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