ASSESSMENT OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS INTO ASSAM NORTH-EAST INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The issue of immigration in Assam has been unique and unprecedented in nature and intensity for the last three decades. This paper makes an attempt to understand its causes and its consequences, the rights of these migrant workers and the steps forward that could help in promoting their well-being. Specifically, this paper focuses on immigrant workers working in Assam economy using secondary data from Indian Census. The study found that the majority of the immigrant workers are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The share of female migrant workers in agriculture and industry in both the rural and urban areas is greater compared to their male counterparts, whereas the percentage share of males engaged in the service sector in both the rural and urban areas are more than females. Due to low agricultural wages in Bangladesh as compared to that for India as a whole, the migrants prefer to migrate to the nearest place, namely Assam that is rich in agriculture and natural resources. The influx of the irregular immigrant workers into Assam is not welcomed by the local citizens due to fear of competition for their jobs. Instead, the local people resist the settler migrant workers. To promote and protect the welfare of the migrant workers and to ensure their right to work, India should establish and study the contribution of immigrant workers so as to formulate a policy that will be benefit both countries. Bilateral and multilateral discussions among sending and receiving countries could help.

KEY WORDS: Immigration, Immigrant Workers, Workers Rights JEL Classification: F22, J83, J61