

A Study On Crime Victimization Against Migrants In Chennai City

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Abstract

Crime victimization against migrants' states acts of harm to, exploitation, or abuse targeted at individuals who have moved from one region or country to another. These felonies tend to stem from migrants' fragile legal, financial, or status in society, which leaves them open to abuse, including labor exploitation, hate crimes, and human trafficking. This study aims to explore the prevalence, patterns, and underlying causes of crime victimization against migrants, emphasizing the social, cultural, and systemic factors that contribute to their marginalization. It is a quantitative research with 130 individuals. It is conducted within the Chennai city migrants who work at construction site, the research is being conducted to address a critical gap in understanding the unique challenges faced by migrant communities. By identifying risk factors and vulnerabilities, this study seeks to inform policy-making and intervention strategies aimed at preventing crimes against migrants. The findings will benefit society by promoting inclusivity, ensuring justice, and safeguarding human rights, while fostering an evidence-based approach to supporting migrants and reducing crime at local, national, and global levels.

Keywords – Migrants, vulnerable, crime, victimization

Date of Submission: 12-04-2025

Date of Acceptance: 22-04-2025

I. Introduction

A migrant is a person who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work or better living conditions. Migrants can be classified into categories such as:

- **Economic migrants:** Moving for better job opportunities.
- **Refugees and asylum seekers:** Escaping war, persecution, or natural disasters.
- **Internal migrants:** Relocating within a country for work, education, or safety. (International Organization for Migrants and United Nations).

Urban job opportunities depend heavily on migration, which promotes economic growth. However, migrants frequently experience socioeconomic difficulties, such as being victims of crime. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the frequency and correlation of crime against migrants in Chennai, the elements that make them vulnerable, and the reactions of social support networks and law enforcement.

Most Challenges Have Worsened In The Last Decade Due To:

- Rising global inequality.
- Worsening climate crises.
- Increased political polarization and anti-immigration policies.

While some countries have taken steps to address these issues (e.g., resettlement programs), the scale of the problems has outpaced solutions.

Migration has generally increased due to ongoing conflicts, climate change, and economic inequality. However, stricter immigration policies in several countries have limited legal migration routes.

Current Trends:

- **Understanding migration trends:** To address the root causes of migration.
- **Policy improvement:** Evidence-based research helps design inclusive and humane policies.
- **Promoting social integration:** Helps societies understand and reduce prejudice against migrants.
- **Global cooperation:** Research can guide international collaboration on managing migration.

II. Review Of Literature

The various literatures regarding:

1. Prevalence and Patterns of migration.
2. Social and Economic Impact of migrants in the society.
3. Policy and Response Mechanisms in the society.

In Migration, Culture Conflict, and Crime (2013), Graeme R. Newman explores the complex interplay between migration, cultural differences, and crime through the lens of culture conflict theory. The book examines how the clash between the norms of migrant communities and host societies can lead to misunderstandings, tensions, and, at times, criminal behavior. Newman challenges stereotypes that equate migration with increased crime, emphasizing that migrants are often victims of systemic discrimination and economic marginalization, which can contribute to social unrest. Drawing from historical and contemporary case studies, Newman highlights the need for culturally sensitive policies, social integration strategies, and education to promote mutual understanding and reduce cultural friction. He ultimately advocates for addressing structural inequalities and fostering inclusive environments to ensure harmonious coexistence between migrants and host communities.

In The Migration-Crime Nexus: New Directions in Theory and Research (2015), edited by Charles B. Fields and Richter H. Moore Jr., the complex relationships between migration, crime, and social policy are examined through a multidisciplinary lens. The book integrates theoretical perspectives, empirical research, and case studies to analyze how migration intersects with crime in various contexts. Key themes include the criminalization of migrants, the socio-economic factors that may contribute to migrant involvement in criminal activities, and the impact of transnational crime networks. The editors challenge simplistic narratives that associate migration with increased crime, focusing instead on structural inequalities, systemic discrimination, and the influence of host societies on migrant experiences. The book also explores policy responses, emphasizing the need for law enforcement, legal systems, and social programs to address migration-related issues without perpetuating stigmatization. This volume is a valuable resource for advancing research and informing policies related to the nuanced dynamics of the migration-crime nexus.

Dr. Sanghamitra Choudhury's (2015) research focuses on gender discrimination and the marginalization of vulnerable groups, particularly in the Northeast region of India. Her work delves into the intersection of gender and migration, highlighting how entrenched social inequalities amplify the challenges faced by women migrants. Choudhury examines issues such as cultural exclusion, violence, and inadequate institutional support, shedding light on the precarious conditions many migrant women endure. The Northeast region of India, characterized by socio-political unrest and economic instability, often serves as both a source and destination for migrants. Choudhury's research is critical for understanding the intersectional vulnerabilities rooted in gender, ethnicity, and regional disparities, offering valuable insights into the experiences of women migrants in marginalized communities.

Dr. K.C. Suri (2016), a political scientist, has extensively examined internal migration in India, focusing on the socio-political and economic challenges migrants face. His research identifies structural drivers of migration, such as rural poverty, regional disparities, and a lack of economic opportunities in rural areas. Suri explores the implications of migration on both sending and receiving regions, highlighting issues like the strain on urban infrastructure, shifts in local labor markets, and cultural dynamics in host communities. His findings demonstrate that migration not only influences economic growth but also reshapes the social and political fabric of regions. By addressing the broader implications of migration, Suri's work underscores the importance of inclusive development and advocates for holistic policies aimed at tackling the root causes of migration.

Srivastava and Pandey (2017) critically examine the effectiveness of legal frameworks like the Interstate Migrant Workmen Act of 1979, which was designed to protect the rights and welfare of migrant workers in India. Despite its intent, they argue that the Act's implementation remains weak due to systemic issues, including insufficient enforcement mechanisms, inadequate monitoring, and the inability to curb exploitation. As a result, many migrant workers face poor working conditions, wage theft, and limited access to social protections. The authors emphasize the urgent need for stronger enforcement of existing laws, awareness campaigns for migrant workers, and institutional reforms to bridge the gap between policy and practice and ensure that the rights of migrant workers are upheld.

Galos (2017) emphasizes that 2016 represented a devastating peak in migrant fatalities, with record numbers of individuals perishing or going missing while attempting to cross international borders.

The literature on migration and displacement reveals the growing scale and complexity of global human mobility, driven by factors such as conflict, political instability, and climate change. The global number of displaced persons has reached its highest level since World War II. Migrants face significant vulnerabilities, including dangerous transit routes, exploitation, and limited access to protection mechanisms (IOM, 2017). Additionally, scholars have analyzed the socio-political responses of receiving states, highlighting tensions between humanitarian obligations and national security concerns. This body of research underscores the critical need for comprehensive global strategies to address the root causes of migration and mitigate the risks faced by migrants.

Dr. R.B. Bhagat (2018), a prominent demographer, has extensively researched internal migration patterns and the socio-economic conditions of migrant populations in India. His work focuses on the demographic drivers of migration, including population growth, urbanization, and regional labor demands. Bhagat highlights the challenges faced by migrants, such as poor living conditions, lack of social security, and limited access to healthcare and education. He also addresses the gendered dimensions of migration, shedding light on the distinct experiences of male and female migrants. Through his demographic analysis, Bhagat's research advocates for evidence-based policymaking to address the socio-economic vulnerabilities of migrants and to promote their integration into both urban and rural economies.

Sailendra Kumar's (2021) work explores the intersection of human rights and migration policy, particularly focusing on the impact of India's COVID-19 lockdown on migrant workers. The pandemic led to widespread unemployment, displacement, and a lack of access to basic amenities for millions of internal migrants, resulting in significant hardships and a mass exodus to their home states. Kumar highlights the systemic failures in addressing these crises, specifically pointing to gaps in social security systems and labor protections for migrants. His analysis critiques the policy responses to the situation and emphasizes the need for proactive measures to safeguard the rights of migrant workers during emergencies. By advocating for stronger frameworks that prioritize the welfare of vulnerable populations, Kumar's research underscores the importance of integrating human rights into migration policy to ensure equitable and just outcomes.

The book Refugees and Migration: Challenges for Education and International Criminology (2018), edited by Börner and Lahl, delves into the global refugee and migrant crisis, which has been a topic of intensive debate in politics, the media, and academic discourse. Prompted by the United Nations' 2016 framework declarations on sustainable development goals and refugees and migrants, the editors invited 60 contributors from around the world to address the civic education aspects of this crisis. Comprising 35 articles, the book offers an interdisciplinary overview of the issues surrounding irregular migration globally. It is designed for educationists, diplomats, mass media professionals, decision-makers, criminologists, and others engaged with refugee and migrant issues. The volume emphasizes the need for responsible migration policies, advocating for orderly, safe, and regular migration while promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

Approximately 150 million people live outside their home countries, but in many states, the legal application of human rights protections for non-citizens, particularly irregular migrants, remains inadequate or severely deficient. In recent years, there has been an increasing visibility of hostility, abuse, and violence directed toward migrants and other non-nationals worldwide. However, research, documentation, and analysis of the scope and nature of these issues, as well as effective remedies, remain minimal.

In recent years, the relationship between immigration and crime has been the focus of multiple studies at different geographical levels, including neighborhood (Lee, Martinez, & Rosenfeld, 2001), city (Butcher & Piehl, 1998), and metropolitan area levels (Reid et al., 2005). These studies collectively suggest that immigration is not linked to higher crime rates and that increases in immigration do not lead to heightened crime, challenging popular myths and stereotypes. While the research on the individual-level association between immigration and crime is more varied (Ousey & Kubrin, 2009), aggregate studies consistently point to no significant relationship between immigration and crime, emphasizing the need for more nuanced policy discussions on immigration.

Statement Of The Problem

This study explores the crime victimization of migrants in Chennai, highlighting their vulnerabilities due to socioeconomic disparities and weak legal protections. It examines the nature, causes, and impact of crimes like wage theft, harassment, and trafficking, particularly affecting women and children. The research aims to assess existing protective mechanisms and provide insights for better policies and interventions.

III. Research Methodology

Aim Of The Study

To study the crime victimization against migrants in Chennai city.

Objectives

1. To understand Prevalence and Patterns of migration.
2. To analyze the Social and Economic Impact of migrants in the society.
3. To evaluate Policy and Response Mechanisms in the society.

Variables

Dependent Variable

- Crime Victimization Against Migrants

Independent Variables

1. Demographic Factors
2. Economic Factors
3. Migration Status
4. Socio-Cultural Factors
5. Geographical Factors
6. Legal and Institutional Factors
7. Environmental Factors

Research Questions

1. What is the Socio-Demographic Information?
2. What is the Prevalence and Patterns of Migration?
3. What are the Social and Economic Impact?
4. What are the Policy and Response Mechanisms?

Sample Size

The **sample size** for this study is **130 migrant workers** in Chennai. The sample represents migrant workers from various states, different age groups, education levels, and income brackets. It includes both male and female respondents, capturing a balanced perspective on migration experiences.

Sampling Design

The study employs a **non-probability sampling technique**, to select **130 migrant construction workers** in Chennai.

Sampling Technique

Snowball Sampling and **purposive sampling** some respondents may have referred other migrant workers, helping to reach a larger sample.

Methods Of Data Collection

Primary data collection: through a interview questionnaire primary data was collected.

Secondary data collection: With the help of sources from journals, articles, books and social media secondary data was collected.

Methods Of Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and interpreted using frequency distribution using tables and charts. The SPSS software was used to code, generate and output the scientific data.

IV. Result

Average Monthly Income

AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5000-10000	2	1.5	1.5	1.5
	10000-15000	53	40.8	40.8	42.3
	15000-20000	39	30.0	30.0	72.3
	20000 or above	36	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Average Monthly Income

The highest proportion of migrants (40.8%) earn between ₹10,000-₹15,000 per month. Only 27.7% earn above ₹20,000.

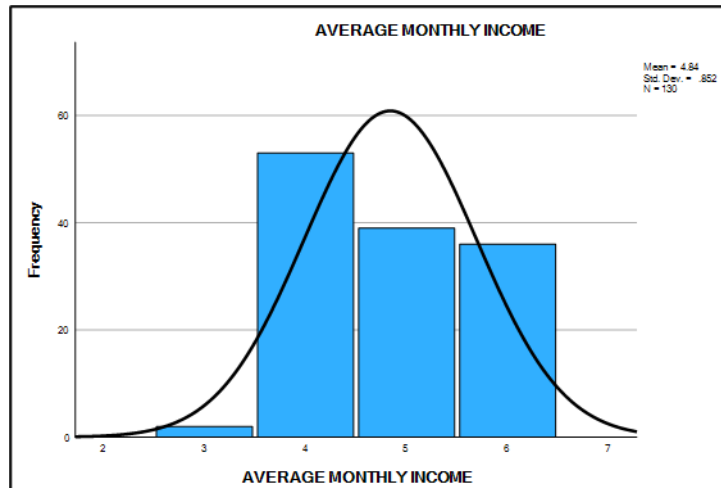


Fig 1: Average Monthly Income

The income chart is concentrated between ₹10,000-₹15,000 (40.8%), followed by ₹15,000-₹20,000 (30%). The bars gradually decrease as income levels rise, indicating that high salaries are less common among migrant workers. This suggests that despite working in urban areas, most migrants remain in low-income brackets.

Migration Reason

MIGRATION REASON					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of job opportunities in home state	36	27.7	27.7	27.7
	Higher wages in Chennai	51	39.2	39.2	66.9
	Better living conditions	43	33.1	33.1	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Migration Reason

The main reason for migration is better wages (39.2%), followed by improved living conditions (33.1%).

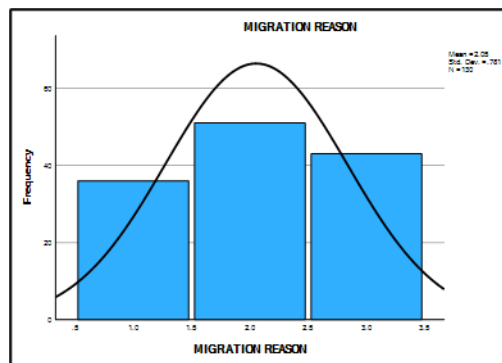


Fig 2: Migration Reason

The migration reasons histogram shows a peak at "Higher wages in Chennai" (39.2%), followed closely by "Better living conditions" (33.1%). The distribution suggests that economic factors are the biggest motivator for migration, with relatively fewer migrants moving due to a lack of jobs at home.

Not Feeling Secured

IF NO, WHY					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	104	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Menacing	12	9.2	9.2	89.2

No safety for women	4	3.1	3.1	92.3
Layoff	10	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: If no why

The table interprets that **79 migrant workers** who do not feel secure in Chennai, the most common concern is **job insecurity (31.6%)**, highlighting the **lack of stable employment, inconsistent wages, and fear of sudden job loss**. **Lack of legal protection (25.3%)** is another major issue, suggesting that many migrants are unaware of labor laws or face difficulties in accessing legal aid.

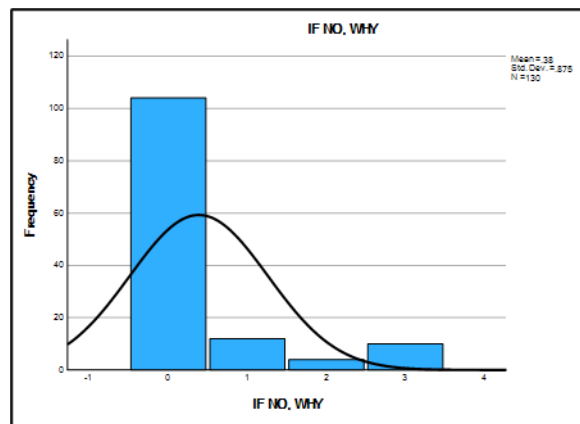


Fig 3: If no why

The chart visually represents the key reasons for insecurity among migrant workers. The **tallest bar is for "Job insecurity" (31.6%)**, showing that unstable employment is the primary concern. The bars for **"Lack of legal protection" (25.3%)** and **"Discrimination & harassment" (22.8%)** are also significant, emphasizing systemic challenges faced by migrants. **"Poor living conditions" (19.0%)** has a slightly smaller but still relevant representation, showing that unsafe housing contributes to insecurity.

Faced Discrimination

FACED DISCRIMINATION					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	11.5	11.5	11.5
	No	115	88.5	88.5	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Faced discrimination

The table shows that significant portion of migrant workers (**32.3%**) reported experiencing discrimination, while **67.7%** stated they had not faced such issues. This suggests that although a majority feel relatively accepted, a substantial number still encounter **prejudice, exclusion, or unfair treatment** in workplaces, neighborhoods, or public spaces.

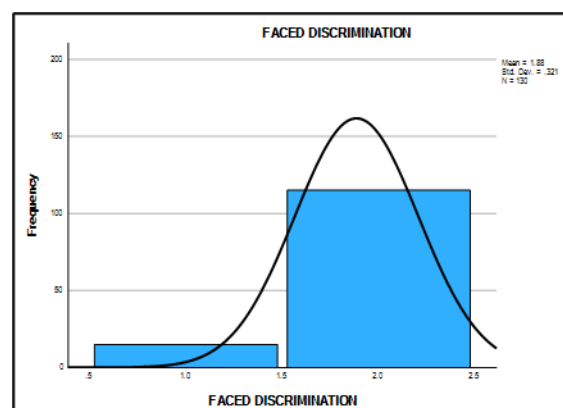


Fig 4: Faced discrimination

The chart clearly shows that the **bar for "No" (67.7%) is much taller** than the bar for "Yes" (32.3%), indicating that the majority of migrant workers do not experience discrimination. However, the presence of **over 30% facing discrimination** is a concern, highlighting ongoing **social and workplace biases**.

If Yes How

IF YES, HOW					
Valid	0	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		115	88.5	88.5	88.5
	Racism	9	6.9	6.9	95.4
	Unwanted comments	6	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: If yes how

The table shows that **42 migrant workers** who reported experiencing discrimination, the most common form is **workplace discrimination (42.9%)**, where migrants face **unequal treatment, lack of promotions, or unfair work assignments**. **Wage disparity (23.8%)** is another major concern, as some migrants receive **lower wages compared to local workers for the same job**.

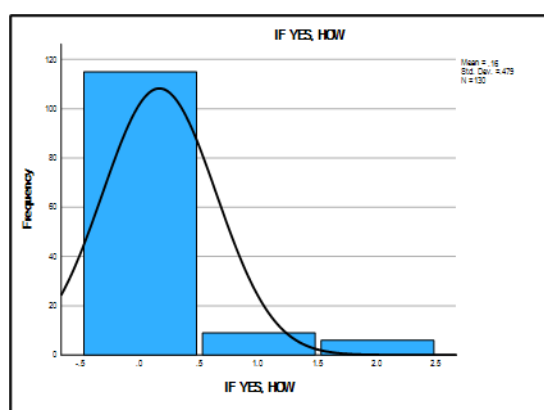


Fig 5: If yes how

The chart displays **workplace discrimination as the most common type**, followed by **wage disparity** and **housing discrimination**. The shorter bars for **social exclusion and harassment** indicate that while less frequent, they still significantly impact some migrant workers.

V. Suggestions

Conduct awareness programs on migrants' rights and government policies. Ensure better enforcement of labor laws and contracts. Provide job security and improved accommodations for workers. Address issues related to unpaid wages and excessive working hours. Implement measures to prevent discrimination at workplaces. Introduce financial literacy programs to help migrants manage earnings better. Expand government welfare schemes to ensure eligibility and accessibility for migrants. Enforce labor laws to ensure fair wages and job contracts. Make written job agreements mandatory to prevent exploitation. Introduce grievance redressal mechanisms for migrant workers. Conduct awareness campaigns on labor rights and welfare schemes. Simplify the process for migrants to register for government benefits. Set up help desks in construction sites to assist with government IDs and entitlements. Encourage community integration programs to reduce discrimination. Conduct awareness campaigns to promote equal treatment of migrant workers. Implement anti-discrimination policies at workplaces and public spaces. Strengthen police patrolling in areas where migrants reside. Establish emergency help lines for migrant workers facing threats. Implement workplace safety measures, especially for female workers.

VI. Conclusion

The findings reveal that migrant workers in Chennai face significant challenges related to job insecurity (43.8%), high living costs (31.3%), and social exclusion (15%), making long-term settlement difficult for many. More than half (53.8%) do not feel secure, and a majority (65.4%) lack formal employment contracts, increasing their vulnerability to workplace exploitation. While 61.5% possess government-issued IDs, a substantial 38.5% remain undocumented, limiting their access to essential services. These insights highlight the urgent need for

better labor protections, affordable housing, financial inclusion, and stronger social support systems to improve the overall well-being and stability of migrant workers in Chennai.

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