

**Working Paper 526**

**Job-Seeking Behaviour,  
Employment, Labour  
Employability Skills,  
Dissatisfaction and Job  
Mobility: A Study of North-East  
Migrant Workers in Bengaluru**

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# **Job-Seeking Behaviour, Employment, Labour Employability Skills, Dissatisfaction and Job Mobility: A Study of North-East Migrant Workers in Bengaluru**

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**JOB-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR, EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR EMPLOYABILITY  
SKILLS, DISSATISFACTION AND JOB MOBILITY:  
A STUDY OF NORTH-EAST MIGRANT WORKERS IN BENGALURU**

**Reimeingam Marchang\***

**Abstract**

*The size of North East (NE) migrant workers in Bengaluru has been rapidly growing primarily due to unemployment issues at the origin of migration. This paper examines the job-seeking behaviour, nature of employment, employability skills and traits, and the job mobility for the migrant workers from NE to Bengaluru using primary data. Migrant workers extensively use social networks for migration in a job search. They are largely flexible in searching and choosing their aspired job. The majority of the migrants work in the private sector predominantly in retail, corporate and hospitality sectors. Employability skills, specifically communication and flexibility, enable them to get a job within a short period. Many workers do not enter into job agreements with employers causing job insecurity and instability for the workers. Workers derived labour competency that is a mental ability to execute work from confidence, skills, ability, experience and education. Migrant workers have a higher employability trait in the occupations of retail, teacher, corporate, banking, and hospitality among others. Communication has been the foremost employability skill. Labour employability is attributed to intrinsic skills as well as exogenous factors. Job training enhances labour employability and job stability. Migrant workers tend to switch their job basically for wage growth. Hence, it is imperative to promote and develop employability skills through training and apprenticeship to enhance labour employability.*

**Keywords:** Job search, migration reason, employment, employability skills, training, job mobility, North-East migrants.

**Introduction**

Social network helps in migration as well as in job search. North East (NE) migrant workers were expected to use social networks while searching for a job in the cities as established by Davern (1999) and Livingston (2006). Labour employability traits revolve around the skills, experience, expectation, attitude, flexibility, willingness and competency among other factors of the employees and its interaction in the labour market particularly with the employers (Arrow, 1971; Tseng, 1972; Hodge, 1973; Becker, 1975; Bricout and Bentley, 2000; Grip, Loo and Sanders, 2004; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Wittekind, Raeder and Grote, 2010; Misra and Mishra, 2011; Cai, 2013; Aring, 2015; Likhitkar, 2016). Similar traits of labour employability are expected for NE migrant workers. Employers consider the level of educational attainment to measure labour quality or ability (Cai, 2013) that determines labour employability. Moreover, many NE migrant workers were expected to keep on changing their job mainly to obtain their expected remuneration. Labour switches from one job to another in an attempt for wage growth (Even and Macpherson, 2003) will remain true for NE migrant workers. The ability to switch jobs primarily depends on labour employability skills such as flexibility.

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Rapid migration to urban centres is expected owing to slow and uneven economic growth (International Organisation for Migration or IOM, 2015). Labour migration increases rapidly as employment opportunities flourish and wages are relatively higher in metropolitan cities. Kundu's (2007) findings of new employment opportunities mushrooming and available in selective sectors, few regions and few urban centres in India appeared to be still valid. NE labour migration is caused by unemployment issues at the origin of migration i.e. North Eastern Region (Usha and Shimray, 2010; Chandra, 2011; Remesh, 2012; Marchang, 2011, 2017, 2018a and 2018b). NE migrants have some educational qualification and skills (Usha and Shimray, 2010; Chandra, 2011; Remesh, 2012; Marchang, 2011, 2017, 2018a and 2018b) that motivates them to migrate for employment opportunities. NE migrant workers were working in various cities of India to meet their expenses of stay, to pay for their education, to support their siblings' education and to support their family back home (McDuie-Ra, 2012; Marchang, 2018b and 2020). The propensity to migrate increases with an increase of acquired educational qualifications (Cote, 1997) appears to apply for NE migrants too.

This paper initially reviews the literature on NE migration, job-seeking behaviour and labour employability. Later, using primary data, it is juxtaposed with the job-seeking behaviour through the extensive use of social networks of the NE migrant workers in Bengaluru. The nature, extent, and job terms and condition of employment, and wage expectation and its actual receipt of the migrant workers are also examined. Additionally, the paper examines the various traits of labour employability of migrant workers. It further captures the nature of job mobility mainly to attain their economic aspiration. A conclusion is drawn based on the above analyses.

## **Data and Methodology**

The study is descriptive, however, qualifying quantitative and qualitative aspects are largely based on primary data. The basis of the study has been formulated using the available literature on job search, labour employability and job mobility or switch; and data from the Census of India on North East labour migration.

An in-depth study is conducted using primary field data. Primary field data was collected through a field survey during August and September 2018 with a reference period of one year preceding the date of the survey. The sample population or the respondents were on-the-job workers. Using a semi-structured questionnaire, questions were canvassed through a personal interview method.

A mixed-method of sampling technique was adopted due to difficulty in locating, reaching and identifying NE migrant workers in Bengaluru. Simple random sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used to draw a sample of 255 workers. The local areas of Koramangala, Ejipura, Shanthinagar, Mahadevapura, Madivala, MG Road, Brigade Road, Whitefield, Indiranagar, Anapalya, Silkboard, Electronic City, Kothanoor and JP Nagar in Bengaluru were randomly selected for the study. As many as 150 samples of the 255 workers were randomly drawn from various workplaces such as salons, malls, restaurants, music institutions, educational institutions; from residence; and also from NE community functions, meetings and Churches located within the randomly selected local areas in Bengaluru. And the rest were selected following Goodman's (1961) snowball sampling technique. The initial referees were drawn through individuals from various NE social organisations such as Rongmei

Welfare Organisation, Naga Student Union, North East Solidarity, etc, covering the whole of Bengaluru. The survey was constraint by participation reluctance, non-cooperation and hesitation despite thorough explanation and convincement about the exercise.

The result of the survey data is analysed comprehensively in the following sections emphasising the reasons for migration, job-seeking behaviour, job mobility, nature of employment, job competency, and skills and training for labour employability.

## **Job Search, Employability and Job Mobility**

An increase in job competitiveness in the labour market coupled with an increase in the supply of various skills or otherwise labour, the labour market information imperfection and job information asymmetry has rendered many job seekers dependent on social networks. Davern (1999) and Livingston (2006) established that social networks, which are a rich resource, are widely used to collect employment information on available avenues, remuneration and others by job seekers to find a job. Both migrants and non-migrants have the potential to use social networks for obtaining a job. However, obtaining a job is constraint by an intrinsic skill of labour to qualify the labour as employable.

Education is crucial for the development of skills for employability (Aring, 2015). Education helps a person to get a job and also enable them to perform the same with a fair degree of competence. Development of employability skills is required for the reduction of a job search or unemployment (Sermsuk, Triwichitkhun and Wongwanich, 2014). Job seekers or the unemployed cannot afford to remain searching for a job for a long period if they are living in poverty and human capital endowment is poor which would eventually force them to take up lower-profile jobs (Mitra and Verick, 2013). The educated seek either public or private organised sector employment (Parthasarathy and Nirmala, 2000). Unemployed, educated in particular, aspire and search for specific or white-collar jobs such as office jobs (Callaway and Bettenhausen, 1973; Puttaswamaiah, 1977; Visaria, 1998; Gumber, 2000), certain income, location of the proposed employment, nature and status of the job, prospects, etc. (Callaway and Bettenhausen, 1973; Marga, 1974; Roberts, 1985; Visaria, 1998; Gumber, 2000). Yet, the educated seek a specific job and remain unemployed till they get their aspired job (Callaway and Bettenhausen, 1973; Gumber, 2000).

Long-term job seekers, who have been seeking work for a relatively long period, find it harder to get and keep jobs (Sinfield, 1967). Budd, Levine and Smith (1988) found that the probability of finding a job is lower for the long-term unemployed when compared with the short-term unemployed. Similarly, Krueger, Cramer and Cho (2014) posit that the long-term unemployed are on the margins of the labour market as they are either self-discouraged accompanied by skill erosion or discriminated against by employers against them. The long-term unemployed, after experiencing greater difficulty in finding work, often compromise their job aspiration and trade down to accept the lower graded job (Roberts, 1985; Todaro, 1991; Mitra and Verick, 2013) implying they had a false job aspiration that otherwise was employable at the lower graded job.

The unemployed, especially the educated, pass through a long waiting period or job search for employment before the first job is found (Visaria, 1998). The waiting period becomes wider with the increase in the supply of labour and the scarcity of job opportunities in the labour market. The higher

the educational qualification of an individual the lesser is the duration of unemployment or waiting for a job (Prasad, 1979). However, the waiting period varies between individuals depending on their type, nature and level of educational qualifications, and nature of job search (Marchang, 2020).

There is a widespread up-gradation of minimum hiring educational qualification standard for a job (Blaug, Layard and Woodhall, 1969; Todaro, 1991) because of the deterioration in the quality of education (Puttaswamaiah, 1977; Desai, 1989; Parasuraman, 1989; Visaria, 1998). The prospects of educated people in finding productive employment have deteriorated (Roberts, 1985; Visaria, 1998) because the education system has failed to produce employable labour (Watson, 1983; Visaria, 1998). Labour employability is determined by the educational system, the content of the curricula and the practical applied training (Visaria, 1998). Earlier, Gupta (1955) also noted that liberal subjects like arts and commerce do not equip an individual for a job that requires special training for specialised fields of industry and occupations.

Understanding labour employability manifests recognition of Becker's (1975) Human Capital Theory. The issue of employability is well related to labour discrimination as postulated by Arrow (1971) based on tastes and perception of the employer that reflected wage differences between races, genders or school diplomas. The perception of employability depends upon employment-related traits such as morale, motivation, performance, reliability, effectiveness, aspirations, biases and attitudes towards the employment of a person (Bricout and Bentley, 2000). Employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment with a set of skills, knowledge and experience. It is a construct of attributes that enhance the opportunity of getting employment such as individual qualities, occupation-related and specific skills, labour market conditions, government policies, wage policies, employer training policies, etc (Grip, Loo and Sanders, 2004; Misra and Mishra, 2011).

Employability is job knowledge and skills that are associated with the labour market (Tseng, 1972; Misra and Mishra, 2011). It is the basic set of skills and abilities necessary to find a job, remain in a job or obtain a new job (Robinson, 2000; Crossman and Clarke, 2010; Misra and Mishra, 2011; Chen and Lim, 2012). It is determined by the job-related qualifications, willingness to develop new competencies, willingness to change jobs and knowledge of the labour market (Wittekind, Raeder and Grote, 2010). Thus, employability is a psycho-social construct. However, the term employability is dichotomous in meaning namely unemployable and employable which essentially denotes people ineligible and eligible for work respectively (Grip, Loo and Sanders, 2004; Misra and Mishra, 2011; McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). Employability includes both individual quality and market conditions that limit the accessibility of some people to some jobs (Hodge, 1973). Personal attributes on employability include loyalty, commitment, honesty and integrity, enthusiasm, reliability, personal presentation, common sense, positive self-esteem, sense of humour, balanced attitude towards work life and home life, ability to deal with pressure, motivation and adaptability (Likhitar, 2016).

The problem of employability originated from the mismatch of labour supply and demand in the labour market. According to Likhitar (2016), the mismatch arises from the appropriateness of the choice of qualification, adequacy of subject knowledge, sufficient skills for a particular job and adequacy of practical and technical knowledge. In India, the main problem of employability is the lack of skill and

shortage of skill. The problem of labour employability includes lack of attention towards education, the problem of over expectation of job and salary, unawareness of technological advancement and lack of facility to explore, mismatch of demand for and supply of labour of various skills, mismatch of practical skill and possessed skill. Further, factors that influence labour employability include training and mentoring to the employee, work experience, flexibilities and abilities, willingness to learn new things and working functions, skill development programmes that possibly enhance the chances of gaining reemployment after having been laid off, improve labour market elasticity, and educational qualification. Employers expectations from the employees are many ranging from the ability to work, dedication, motivation, commitment, and communication, flexibility and creativity.

In India, there is an excess supply of labour over demand thus, labour is available at a lower wage rate (Papola, 1968). This means labour employability at the given wage rate with the possessed skill or qualification of many workers is not matching. In India, employers face the problem of a skill gap that is essentially the difference between the skills needed for the job and its possession by the person (Likhitkar, 2016).

Employability issues can be addressed by changing the entire educational system and content of the curricula orienting towards skill development and practicals considering the changing structure of the economy (Visaria, 1998). As such, the National Education Policy 2020 aims to provide opportunities for job and research internships to students to improve the labour employability potential of higher education programmes (MHRD, 2020). Development of skills for enhancing employability is envisaged. Thus, the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, which supersedes the National Skill Development Policy 2009, attempts to link skills development to improved employability and productivity in India (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015). Measures for ensuring employability among the unemployed include provision of adequate training for productive work, imparting marketable skills, instilling flexibility to learn new things and to innovate, and inculcate proper work ethics. According to ILO (2013:41) "development of targeted skills training or apprenticeship programmes" would enhance labour employability.

Employers invest in employees and compensate them for their lost opportunity cost by providing further skill investment and employment stability; while employees voluntarily agree to remain with that employer to allow the employer to earn returns from such skill investment in employees (Burea, 2003). However, workers often switch their job to achieve their aspired job or salary and enhance their employability. Job switching or job mobility early in a worker's career is particularly imperative to wage growth as per the job-matching theories of wage growth (Even and Macpherson, 2003). In India, employment instability is evident although the extent is exaggerated; and such instability is partly owing to the employers' policies of constantly changing the workforce to maintain low wage bills (Papola, 1968). Thus, job mobility occurs due to a higher wage expectation of workers and worker's low wage bill maintenance by employers.

## Migration from North East

There is a rapid increase in out-migration from NE India to various cities of India. In Bengaluru, the number of migrants from NER has substantially increased from merely 3,780 in 1991 to 6,429 in 2001 to a whopping number of 24,214 in 2011 (Table 1). It has increased six-fold in 2011 from 1991. NE migrants to metropolitan cities were mostly educated youth having matriculation and above educational qualification (Marchang, 2011, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Remesh, 2012). NE migration for employment has considerably increased from a mere 16% in 1991 to 20% in 2001 to 46% in 2011 (Table 1) indicating the existence of serious unemployment issues in NER. As per NSSO (1997), the unemployment rate (usual principal status) of all the NE states, excepting Assam, Nagaland and Tripura, were much lower than the national average particularly in urban areas during 1993-94. However, later, unemployment rate has increased considerably for most of the NE states, excepting Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim during 2011-12 (NSSO, 2014). Its trend shows that the unemployment problem has aggravated in most of the NE states. Hence, unemployment problems in the NE and employment opportunities in the cities are the primary reason for out-migration for a job (Marchang, 2011, 2017, 2018a and 2018b; Usha and Shimray, 2010; Chandra, 2011; Remesh, 2012). Many of the NE labour migrants in the cities work in formal and informal sectors such as government offices, banking, retail sectors, hospitality, BPO, teaching, etc have been established by them. Specifically in Bengaluru city, a large number of NE people are employed in organised and unorganised sectors such as hospitality, retail, BPO jobs, etc (Gooptu and Sengupta, 2012; Marchang, 2020). The issue of employability of NE migrants in the city is a complex phenomenon and is associated with a household economic condition where workers usually adjust with job and income aspirations (Marchang, 2017).

**Table 1: Distribution (%) of reasons for migration for migrants (all duration) from NER to Bengaluru (UA) by gender**

Reason for migration	1991			2001			2011		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Work/employment	16.1	28.4	3.7	19.9	29.9	5.2	45.9	59.0	22.1
Business	2.4	3.2	1.6	2.1	3.1	0.7	1.7	2.0	1.2
Education	15.1	22.6	7.4	28.5	32.8	22.2	17.7	17.5	18.1
Marriage	11.1	1.6	20.7	4.3	0.2	10.3	5.8	0.2	15.8
Moved after birth	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	1.5	2.1	1.1	0.8	1.5
Moved with household	45.8	35.3	56.4	28.9	17.0	46.3	16.4	9.3	29.4
Others	9.5	8.9	10.1	14.6	15.5	13.2	11.4	11.1	11.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	[3780]	[1900]	[1880]	[6429]	[3816]	[2613]	[24214]	[15636]	[8578]
	(0.8)	(0.7)	(0.8)	(0.8)	(0.9)	(0.7)	(1.5)	(1.9)	(1.2)

*Notes:* Figures in ( ) are NE migrant % total in-migrants to Bengaluru (UA) from outside Karnataka. Figures in [ ] are numbers.

*Sources:* Author's calculation based on Census of India (1991, 2001 and 2011).



Migration can address labour shortages and skills shortages by making migrants in the labour pool more employable (IOM, 2015). NE migration in the cities has been largely in the form of chain migration through a social network (Marchang, 2018a and 2018b). Social network helps in migration as well as a job search. According to Livingston (2006) social networks, which supplements publicly available information, provide employment information faster than non-network job-seeking methods. Indeed, social network members do provide information that facilitates the performance in the job search and finding a job. Davern (1999) states that social networks are used extensively by job seekers or the unemployed to find a job and by employers to acquire information concerning potential employees.

## **Field Data Result**

### **Socio-economic Characteristics of the Migrant Worker**

The sample of NE migrant workers, who are employed, in Bengaluru, consist of 255 numbers originated from all the eight NE states. It comprises largely of people from Manipur with a share of 31.8% followed by Nagaland (20.0%), Assam (12.5%), Mizoram (11.0%), Meghalaya (8.2%), Tripura (6.7%), Arunachal Pradesh (5.5%) and Sikkim (4.3%). It consists of 50.6% of males and the remaining 49.4% of females indicating that males and females have an equal chance of migration without any gender discrimination by their family and are equally engaged in economic activities for their livelihood. Their age ranges from 18 to 46 years with a mean age of 28 years that is a prime and most productive age of a person. About 71% of them are in the age group of 18-29 years. It shows youth who are energetic with high expectations form the majority of the migrants. Out of these migrants, about 77% are never married, 21% are married and about one per cent are either divorced or separated. It portrays that migrants are largely bachelors who are energetic and flexible and have high aspirations.

Concerning educational level, about 94% of the workers are educated people who have completed matriculation and above and the rest six per cent of them are qualified below matriculation. The workers have mostly studied arts and humanities subjects that are the root cause of un-employability in the employment sector that depends on modern technology. Among the workers, the majority (55%) were from arts and humanities educational background, 11.0% from science, 6.3% from commerce, 2.4% from theology, 7.5% from engineering and allied subjects, 6.3% from the management; and the rest 12% have studied up to matriculation without any specialisation. Most (59.7%) of the workers have migrated to Bengaluru after completing their studies in their home NE states and the rest of them studied in other cities of India. It is evident that many NE people initially migrated to cities for education and after completion of their education in the cities, they moved to other cities to find employment. It also implies that those who have studied in the cities either do not want to return to their native place or migrate to other cities. Inter-city (other than NE states) migration for employment is prominent. The mobility of NE migrants relates to their degree of flexibility in choosing and adjusting the work or living environment at migration destinations.

Most of the migrants have had their education in English medium (95% in school education and 89% in higher education) that enable their capability of communication and possibility to migrate to any city and find any job in the modern labour market matching their educational qualification and

skills. Knowledge of English as a whole and perhaps English communication skill, in particular, enhances the chance of finding and keeping a job that essentially relates to labour employability characteristics. Moreover, the workers have mostly (81.2%) studied the subject of their self-interest and choice. It indicates that there is no systematic and proper guidance for education and subject selection. However, individuals who choose their subject on their own are likely to have a greater chance of success for entry into the labour market primarily guided by self-interest on the subject where skills and knowledge are manageable and have scope for further development.

## **Migration Reason**

Out-migration from NER to cities for employment due to unemployment problems in the region was earlier established by Usha and Shimray (2010), Chandra (2011), Remesh (2012) and Marchang (2011, 2017, 2018a and 2018b). Again, it is established that most of the NE migrant workers have migrated to Bengaluru for job-related reasons, some of them for education and a few for other reasons such as marriage among different age groups as shown in Table 2. Around 61% of them migrated to the city primarily in search of employment due to lack of employment opportunities at their place of origin and in search of better employment due to some dissatisfaction with their previous job. That indicates either the intensity of unemployment issues, inability to find a job or the shortage of their expected job particularly at the origin of migration. The availability of various job opportunities in Bengaluru attracts them to migrate to it. Moreover, more than a quarter of the workers migrate to take up a better job in the city and that highlights the dissatisfaction of their previous job at other places that is associated with less remuneration or less job satisfaction as discussed in the later section. This further indicates that their aspired jobs are not obtainable at their places of origin. A similar situation prevails for various age groups and for various categories of the place of their last residence as presented in Table 2.

A 26-years-old female worker migrated to Bengaluru as job opportunity is better in the city when compared to her home state. Another male worker (44 years) who got better gainful employment in the city, shared the reason for his family's migration to Bengaluru as follows:

"In Manipur, the condition of the social environment and educational system is very bad especially to mould our children. I don't want my children to let them stay alone in a metropolitan city while pursuing their education. Therefore, I am staying together with my children in Bengaluru as a guardian and provide financial support by working for my family".

However, a female worker (24 years) working in the retail sector said:

"There are not many employment issues in my state because the government of Arunachal Pradesh is functioning well in employing graduates and educated youth. Therefore, people from Arunachal Pradesh do not extensively migrate to other places for work. They migrate mostly to pursue higher education and return to their home state after the completion of their education".

Migrants tend to keep on migrating to maximise their job aspirations or for other reasons that ultimately affect their wellbeing. It is evident from the proportion of the last place of residence of

migrants given in Table 2 in the parentheses. For example, among those who have migrated in search of better employment in Bengaluru, as much as 30% of the migrants were from places other than NE states and the rest 70% constituted the first time migrants to outside NE states. Similar situations are evident for migrants for various other reasons.

Migration for education is the second prominent reason for various age groups and various places of their last residence. About 36% of NE migrants initially migrated primarily for education in Bengaluru. Data shows that after completion of their studies they continue to stay back in the city and enter the labour market as workers. This indicates that NE migrant labours are fairly employable in the city owing to their educational training and acquired skills and knowledge. It also shows the availability of various job opportunities in the city.

**Table 2: Distributions (%) of the Reason for the Migration of Workers by Age Group and Place of Last Residence**

Reason	Age group			Place of last residence	
	18-29	30+	All	NE states	Other states/ country
In search of employment	31.7	34.7	32.5	34.7 (81.9)	25.4 (18.1)
In search of better employment	21.1	16.0	19.6	17.9 (70.0)	25.4 (30.0)
To take up better employment	7.8	8.0	7.8	6.6 (65.0)	11.9 (35.0)
Proximity/closeness to work	0.6	1.3	0.8	1.0 (100.0)	-- (--)
Transfer of service /contract	0.6	1.3	0.8	-- (--)	3.4 (100.0)
Education/studies	36.1	36.0	36.1	37.2 (79.3)	32.2 (20.7)
Acquisition of own house/flat	1.1	2.7	1.6	1.5 (75.0)	1.7 (25.0)
Marriage	1.1	0.0	0.8	1.0 (100.0)	-- (--)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0 (76.9)</b>	<b>100.0 (23.1)</b>
	<b>[180]</b>	<b>[75]</b>	<b>[255]</b>	<b>[196]</b>	<b>[59]</b>

*Notes:* Figures in ( ) are proportions (%) of migrants by place of last residence. Figures in [ ] are numbers. -- Not available (hereafter).

*Source:* Field Study (Bengaluru), 2018.

## **Job-Seeking Behaviour, Qualification and Waiting Period**

Migrant workers mostly get job vacancy information or advertisement through social networking (70%) from friends, colleagues, social media, seniors, teachers and relatives making social networking a prominent medium for disseminating job vacancy information. This reaffirms the findings of Davern (1999) and Livingston (2006) that social networks are widely used to collect employment information by job seekers to find a job. The job vacancy information sources are largely informal. Only 13% of them get a job after receiving a proper advertisement. And the rest around 17% of worker's job is facilitated by brokers, agents, placement consultancies and direct enquiry about the job. Irrespective of the sources of job vacancies majority (80%) of them have not come across any mention about the salary or wages. It means that employers did not divulge the salary, either in the advertisement or verbally, to the majority of the workers to strengthen the employer's bargaining power. Only 20% of them have mentioned the salary in the job vacancy information from various sources like advertisement, agents and others.

Despite the majority not mentioning the salary in the job vacancy information around 57% of the workers have not negotiated their salary. They have accepted the wage offered by the employers owing to multiple reasons such as decent salary, offered salary is at par with their expectations and financial pressure. Interestingly, many workers (110 or 43.1%) negotiated their salary before joining a job. Among them, the majority (56%) negotiated for salary but did not get it indicating that the workers were under economic pressure or un-employability for other jobs. And a significant share (44%) of the workers negotiated and received it indicating workers have the required skill and also have the prospect to grow and develop professionally. It would eventually raise the productivity of the establishment and benefit the employers.

Workers mostly do not wait for long to get their present jobs largely because of the nature of job search processes through social networking that somehow has job assurance. The waiting period of a worker seeking a job ranges from one month to 18 months. The existence of long-term unemployment has been negligible. Long-term unemployed persons are on the margins of the labour market as they are either self-discouraged accompanied by skill erosion or discriminated against by employers (Krueger, Cramer and Cho, 2014). Long-term unemployment is being without a job for a relatively long period of more than 12 months (Budd, Levine and Smith, 1988) or seven months or longer (Krueger, Cramer and Cho, 2014). On average, they sought their present job for around two months. Most (91%) of the workers got their job within a short period of three months perhaps due to flexibility in seeking or choosing their occupation. Even among the new workers (i.e. first job), who are mostly educated (93%), about 86% got their job within three months. It contradicts the finding of Visaria (1998) that the unemployed, especially the educated, pass through a long waiting period for employment before the first job is found. It is because the opportunity cost for the unemployed migrants is higher than the unemployed non-migrants. Thus, the migrant workers mostly do not remain unemployed for a long time indicating that NE migrants mostly possess the characteristics of labour employability. This is similar to the findings of Prasad (1979) that the duration of unemployment of an individual is lesser as the educational qualification become higher. The migrant workers are flexible and adjustable depending on the prevailing labour market condition that is likely to be caused by their economic condition. Their opportunity cost of remaining unemployed is very high owing to being a migrant belonging to a modest income class.

Concerning the flexibility in choosing an occupation, the majority (63.5%) of the workers do not seek a specific job or wait for a particular job implying that they are ready to take up any job irrespective of occupation. It shows that they are looking for multiple jobs and have likely chosen the job they felt is best suited with their interest, outlook and skill. The rest 36.5% of them have sought a specific job such as in the finance sector, IT sector, HR, retail manager and food industry/restaurant, lecturer/teaching and BPO, retail executive, banking, lab assistant, graphic designer, government job and technical service, salon, security, cosmetic line, nursing, corporate job and air hostess.

Migrant workers who do not seek a specific job and are flexible got a job relatively easier and faster when compared to those who seek a specific job. Among those who do not seek a specific job, 92.6% of them got their job within 1-3 months, 6.8% within 4-6 months and 0.6% within 13-18 months. However, in the case of migrants seeking a specific job, as much as 88.2% of them were

unemployed for 1-3 months, 9.7% for 4-6 months, and 1.1% each for 7-12 and 13-18 months. To some extent, it shows that aspiring and seeking a specific job takes a longer waiting period. Labour unemployability challenges appear to be very insignificant for migrant workers.

It takes a relatively long time to find a job for some of the BPO (2.5%), IT (5.9%) and airline (12.5%) workers, owing to their nature of professionalism, as they remain unemployed for more than seven months before getting a job. The remaining majority of the BPO, IT and airline workers got their present job in less than six months. For the rest of the jobs as retail executive or manager, teacher, security personnel, corporate employee, banker, hospital staff and others the period of waiting has been less than six months. It shows NE migrant workers are attracted and have higher employability traits in these occupations.

Migrant workers are largely employed in the private organised sector (97%) and the rest (3%) in the semi-government sector. This is because they are largely educated. It is aligned with the findings of Parthasarathy and Nirmala (2000) that educated people seek employment primarily in the public or private organised sector. The labour employability of migrant workers in the public sector is a major concern because many of them cannot afford to wait for a job for long due to economic pressure. Immediate employment is prioritised due to their modest household economic condition and financial pressure. Poverty and a poor human capital endowment force the unemployed to take up jobs as they cannot afford to remain unemployed for long period (Mitra and Verick, 2013). However, migrant workers seek jobs that take a long time through competitive job examinations mainly for the organised public sector job.

The deterioration in the quality of education (Desai, 1989) is attributed to the problem of labour employability in public jobs which is competitive. As many as 53 persons, constituting 21% of the total workers, have appeared in various competitive public job examinations. They were mostly (96.3%) having graduation degrees and above qualification. Out of the total 53 migrant workers who have given competitive job examination, the majority were from the arts stream (50.9%) that is followed by science (13.2%), commerce (13.2%), business administration (11.3%), engineering (7.5%), and fashion technology (3.8%). The concentration, predominance and preference for art subjects may have created the problem in getting public sector employment. Thus, the acquirement of conventional educational degrees has hindered their level of labour employability in the public sector. These workers are mostly working in the private sector mainly in retail, corporate and hospitality sectors. It means that after failing to get a job through competitive examination in the public sector the migrant has opted for a job in the private sector particularly in retail, corporate and hospitality sectors for a livelihood that requires a specific skill that the worker possessed.

Moreover, lack of preparedness for a competitive public job may be the problem of unemployability in the public sector. Only 34% of those who have appeared for competitive job examination have made certain preparation through coaching centres for public sector job. It highlights that certain people can afford job examination coaching fees but many could not finance such coaching depending on their families economic condition. Irrespective of whether one can afford such coaching or not or aspire for a public sector job, the evidence of NE migrant workers engaging in such a job is

very minimal. It immensely relates to the trait of labour employability problem that is a major concern that requires the immediate attention of policymakers.

The widespread up-gradation of minimum hiring educational qualification for a job (Blaug, Layard and Woodhall, 1969; Todaro, 1991) remains applicable even for the migrants. Thus, overqualification of education is prevalent for migrant workers. As much as 14.5% (37 workers) of the total 255 workers in Bengaluru claimed to have possessed qualifications higher than the prescribed qualification for their job. As many as 13.5% of them have studied up to PUC, 59.5% were graduates, 24.3% were postgraduates and 2.7% were having an MPhil qualification. This has to do with the deterioration of employment prospects as found by Roberts (1985) and the difficulty in the absorption of educated people in productive employment as highlighted by Visaria (1998). Among them, about 73% did not seek a specific job which means they were ready to take up any job of their interest; and the rest 27% sought a specific job of finance-related, IT, HR, teaching, security, cosmetic, government job and air hostess. It indicates that they have traded down their job aspiration below their acquired qualification. Usually, after a spell of unemployment, the unemployed, after experiencing greater difficulty in finding their aspired work, are often obliged to trade down and accept the second or third-best job (Roberts, 1985). Additionally, it means they were not employable in a job that commensurates with their level of education. It implies that the system and quality of education have to be improved or employable skill has to be imparted to produce employable labour. It is imperative to generate more employment avenues that correspond to the growth of education.

### **Employment of Migrant Workers**

NE migrant workers predominantly work in the private sector (97%) and some of them (3%) work in the semi-government sector. It highlights two aspects of labour employability issues in the public sector, namely, labour unemployability due to lack of skill and knowledge, and inability to afford long-term unemployment owing to economic pressure. Similar to the statement of Gooptu and Sengupta (2012), the NE migrant workers were engaged in various occupations in retail, BPO, spa, airline to educational institutions in Bengaluru. The single largest occupation was a retail executive (19.6%) followed by BPO employees (15.7%), corporate workers (14.9%), makeup artist and IT employees (6.7% each), security and restaurant workers (6.3% each), teacher, including music and secular, (4.3%), nurse and air hostess (3.1% each), bank employees (2.0%), self-employed and retail manager (1.6% each), outreach officer (college) (1.2%), spa, graphic designer and employer (0.8% each) and visualise merchandising, vendor manager in office campus, room service waiter, research assistant, nursing tutor, laboratory assistant, interior designer, human resource, housekeeping, fitness instructor, English editor and bartender (0.4% each). Male workers predominantly work in retail, BPO, corporate, IT, restaurant and security services; while females largely work in retail, BPO, corporate, makeup studio, IT, educational institutions, hospitals and airlines.

The majority (90.6%) of these workers have been employed for less than five years, and the rest (9.4%) for more than ten years in their current job. The majority of them were working for a period less than five years across a different period of migration (Table 3). Many employed migrants have lived in the city for many years but working in their current job for a shorter period. For example,

there were about 34% of those who were working for less than a year or 36% of those who were working for a period of 1 to <5 years among those who have lived in Bengaluru for a period of 5 to <10 years. It indicates that NE migrants either tend to change their job frequently. Difficulty in getting a job or frequently laid-off from a job are issues and challenges faced by them.

**Table 3: Distribution (%) of the Duration of Migration and Job of Migrant Workers**

Migration duration (years)	Present job period				Total
	< 1 Year	1 to <5 Years	5 to <10 Years	>10 years	
<1 year	13.9	--	--	--	4.3
	(100.0)	(--)	(--)	(--)	(100.0)
1 to <5 years	41.8	48.0	--	--	41.6
	(31.1)	(68.9)	(--)	(--)	(100.0)
5 to <10 years	34.2	36.2	47.6	--	36.1
	(29.3)	(59.8)	(10.9)	(--)	(100.0)
>10 years	10.1	15.8	52.4	100.0	18.0
	(17.4)	(52.2)	(23.9)	(6.5)	(100.0)
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	[79]	[152]	[21]	[3]	[255]
	(31.0)	(59.6)	(8.2)	(1.2)	(100.0)

*Notes:* \*Figures in ( ) are proportions (%) of migrants classified by present job period. Figures in [ ] are numbers.

*Source:* Field Study (Bengaluru), 2018.

Moreover, Table 4 shows that the majority of the NE migrants employed across the various period and different migration duration are educated. It also shows that migrants do not continue in the same job. They keep on changing their job irrespective of whether they are educated or otherwise. This is evident from Table 4 that the number and proportion of migrants employed in various period do not correspond to various migration duration. For example, 92 migrants have stayed in Bengaluru for a period of 5 to <10 years but only 10 people (i.e. 10.9%) were working in their present job for the same period. It indicates that many of them faced job insecurity or unsatisfactory terms and conditions of the job, salary, working environment and others.

**Table 4: Distribution (%) of the educational level of migrant workers by a period of present job and migration duration**

Migration duration (years)	Educational level	Present job period				Total
		< 1 Year	1 to <5 Years	5 to <10 Years	>10 years	
<1 year	Below matriculation	18.2	--	--	--	18.2
	Educated	81.8	--	--	--	81.8
	Total (No.)	11	--	--	--	11
1 to <5 years	Below matriculation	3.0	8.2	--	--	6.6
	Educated	97.0	91.8	--	--	93.4
	Total (No.)	33	73	--	--	106
5 to <10 years	Below matriculation	--	5.5	20.0	--	5.4
	Educated	100.0	94.5	80.0	--	94.6
	Total (No.)	27	55	10	--	92
>10 years	Below matriculation	--	4.2	--	--	2.2
	Educated	100.0	95.8	100.0	100.0	97.8
	Total (No.)	8	24	11	3	46
All	Below matriculation	3.8	6.6	9.5	--	5.9
	Educated	96.2	93.4	90.5	100.0	94.1
	Total (No.)	79	152	21	3	255

Source: Field Survey (Bengaluru), 2018.

It is important to have job terms and conditions agreed between the worker and employer for job security. A majority (61%) of the migrant workers claimed to be working as a permanent employees, a considerable share (32%) of them have a temporary job and the rest seven per cent were on a contractual job. Despite a majority of the employed persons having a permanent job, many of them do not have a job agreement, which makes their claim of having a permanent job very doubtful. Among the permanent workers (155 numbers) slightly more than half (52%) have an agreement and the rest do not have it. Among the temporary workers (82 numbers), 54% have it and the remaining 46% do not have it. All the contract workers (18 numbers) have entered a contractual job agreement. Without any job agreement, the terms and conditions of their job are susceptible and vulnerable to the discretion of their employer. Thus, most (56%) of the migrant workers do have a job agreement. However, unfortunately, many (44%) do not enter into any job agreement that may be the major reason for job insecurity and job loss among the workers (under the situation like the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown).

Migrants normally have a higher expectation in terms of well being and job remuneration. As such it is imperative to ascertain their salary expectation. Around 45% of the migrant workers expressed that they got their expected salary; however, 50% of them receive salaries lesser than their expected salary. Interestingly, about five per cent of them got more than their expected salary. Those who have accepted a lower job and received a salary lesser than their expectation are perhaps induced by their hard economic condition or owing to the difficulty in getting their desired job. In other words, they traded down their job aspiration and salary expectation after a spell of unemployment and financial difficulty.

The monthly income of the migrant workers ranges between Rs. 5,001-10,000 and Rs. 50,000 and above. On average, a worker earns Rs. 25,001 to 30,000 per month. The lowest salary of Rs.



5,001-10,000 per month was paid for salespersons in the retail sector and security personnel. Conversely, retail executives, retail managers, teachers, human resource managers and corporate executives including BPO and IT employees earn the highest salary (Rs.>50,000 per month). The majority of those who earn more than Rs. 50,000 per month were corporate employees. Earnings of the educated people were relatively more than the lesser educated people due to the differences in their acquired and possessed skill and knowledge, and occupation.

Nevertheless, in Bengaluru, a majority (86%) of the NE migrant workers are facing various social and work-related issues. And the remaining workers (14%) have not encountered any issues. Communication in the local language is the predominant barrier and challenges faced by the migrants. About 45% of the workers have faced discrimination based on language along with other problems. Moreover, various forms of discrimination and treatment such as harassment from public transport service providers, employers and house owners are common. As much as 44% of migrant workers have faced such treatment. Irrespective of such discrimination and treatment the NE people continue to work for their well-being and also contribute to the growth of the economy of Bengaluru.

### **Competency and Employability Skills**

Labour competency is a mental ability to execute work. Labour employability is partly determined by having a competency and willingness to develop new competencies (Wittekind, Raeder and Grote, 2010). The nature of competency for the current job of migrant workers is multi-faceted. Close to three-fourths of the workers felt and expressed that they can manage the nature of the work of their current job. Their competency is derived from their confidence, skills, ability, experience and education. A large number of workers (27.5%) felt that they can manage their current job. About 12% of them felt they can manage the job, plan for work, organise and guide others, and co-ordinate with other workers. Another 10% of them were confident that they can manage the work and co-ordinate with other workers at their workplace. Those who felt they can manage, and work plan, organise and guide other workers were also considerable at 9.4%. And the remaining share of workers has expressed a different combination of competency factors for their job ranging from planning for work, organise, guide others, co-ordinate, motivate others to work experience.

Skills required for their current job are many and different across workers. It reflects the employer's demand for various skills due to the differences in the nature of the establishment. Only some workers (3.5%) expressed that only skills, such as communication, teamwork, confidence, safety at the workplace, responsibility, positive attitude or pressure management skills were required for their job. The rest 96.5% of workers opined that requirement needed a combination of multiple skills for their current job. The various skills needed for work include two or more combinations of the following: communication, initiative, teamwork, planning, guidance, confidence, appreciating, adaptation, negotiation, organisational, thinking, technological, work safely, responsibility, positive attitude, resilience, willingness to learn, self-management, motivate others, problem-solving, pressure management, valuing diversity and differences, numeracy or maths (a number for evidence), and patience.

Communication was the foremost skill required for their current job as the majority of workers (89%) have opined. The ability to guide and having the skill to take any responsibility were the second-largest needed skills for their current job. Having confidence in executing work, organisational skills and a positive attitude towards work, co-workers, employers and other people were also considered important skills for their work. About a quarter of the workers felt that skills of teamwork, planning, appreciation, adaptation, technology and willingness to learn from colleagues and others were needed for their current job. Skills such as the ability to take initiative for any activity, negotiation, thinking, work safely, resilience, self-management, motivate others, problem-solving, pressure management, valuing diversity, numeracy skills and patience were also needed but not so important for many workers for their current job. It indicates that having good communication skills along with other job-related skills, mainly who can guide or help others, and execute the work with responsibility may enhance labour employability.

These skills were not necessarily asked uniformly even for the same type of work during the interview of their current job. Interestingly, 49.8% of the workers expressed that their employer did not ask for any extra skills beyond their possessed skills during the job interview. In other words, workers have all the skills that were desired and demanded by their employers. As much as 46.7% of the workers did not remember whether the employer asked for some skills that workers did not possess in the interview for their current job. It also implies that they have indicated their possessed skills which were desired by the employer in their job interview. However, about 3.5% of the workers recollect that the employer asked a question about some skills that they did not possess during the interview for the current job. It includes communication skills (1.6%), hair stylish skills (0.8%), and process management, attending customer and project management skills (0.4% each). Lack of such specific skills does not deter them to engage in the labour market. Inadequate skills do not mean some labours are unemployable. It also shows employers hardly demand skills which the worker does not have while seeking a job.

### **Skills and Training: Sources of Labour Employability**

The current educational syllabus and system are inadequately imparting the skill and knowledge needed for work and demanded by employers. The educational system, having an excessive theoretical bias and orientation, renders unemployment (Puttaswamaiah, 1977; Watson, 1983; Parasuraman, 1989) is attributing to the labour employability issue. It is empirically evident that only 18.0% (46 numbers) of the workers told that those working skills and knowledge for their present job were taught in school/college. Around six per cent of them were not sure about learning such skills and knowledge from the educational institution where they have studied. However, the majority (76.1%) of them did not express the same and that means their current job working skill and knowledge was not directly from their educational syllabus.

Those who said their working skill and knowledge for their current job were either not taught or unsure about being taught at school/college (206 workers) reported that it was acquired mostly through on-the-job training (66.0%), that was followed by on-the-job training and self-learning by observation (16.3%), self-learning by observation (8.1%), on-the-job training, from colleagues and self-

learning by observation (4.3%), on-the-job training and from colleagues (3.3%), from colleagues (1.4%), and through experience (0.5%). It shows that labour is employable after a worker is tried and tested on the job. Thus, the majority of them (90%) have acquired the required skill and knowledge to perform their current job partially or entirely through on-the-job training. It highlights that job training builds the capacity and ability to perform an activity and stay on the job. Eventually, it may enhance the employability of labour and also increase labour productivity. Thus, on-the-job training is primarily a necessary condition for labour to be employable.

Workers received job training for skill development and employment stability from the employers; while employees voluntarily agree to remain with that employer to allow the employer to earn returns from such skill investment in employees (Burea, 2003). Out of the 255 workers, most of them have received job training at their workplace (79.6%) and elsewhere (6.7%), some did not receive training (12.2%), and a few through self-training or self-employment (1.6%). It implies that training is largely essential for performing the work. Understandably, those who have worked earlier in a similar, if not the same, type of work might least need to undergo job training. Among workers who were working in their second or subsequent job, around 11% did not receive any job training for their current job. Surprisingly, 13.8% of workers (11 out of 80 workers) who were in their first job reportedly did not receive any job training. They were those working as a retail executive, BPO and corporate workers, nurses, restaurant staff, outreach office (college) workers, research assistants and nursing tutors. Training may be required for some of these workers like BPO/corporates. Perhaps such workers are confused with the nomenclature of on-the-job training.

### **Job Dissatisfaction and Job Mobility**

The willingness to change a job is one of the characteristics of labour employability (Wittekind, Raeder and Grote, 2010). Many workers kept on changing their job. Only 31.4% (80 numbers) of the workers were working in their first job, and the rest majority 68.6% (175 numbers) of them already had previously worked elsewhere and switched to their present job. Workers often switch from one job to another to achieve their aspired job or salary (Even and Macpherson, 2003). This indeed prevailed among NE migrant workers. Current workers who have worked experience from elsewhere were previously working mostly as corporate workers (22.3%), BPO employees (13.1%) and retail executives (25.1%); and the rest have previously worked in other occupations. It shows corporate and retail workers predominantly changed their job more frequently. It also shows most of them did not continue to work in the same job. It means they do not have a steady and secure job. However, experienced workers appeared to be relatively more employable.

Intra change of employment (example: from BPO to BPO) are more common than the interchange of jobs (example: from retail to hospitality). A large number of workers continue in the same profession or job description. However, many workers have changed their occupations. For example, some of those who have previously worked as corporate or BPO employees are currently working in the banking sector; also some of those who had previously worked at beauty parlours as a makeup artist, salon as hairstylist and music studio as a songwriter are currently working as an air hostess. It indicates some possess the skill, expertise and knowledge that suits the job which was

unexplored or develop it over some time through experience that enhances their labour employability relevant for multiple occupations. It shows that there is untapped employable knowledge and skills among some people which can be ascertained only after they are tried and tested in some job. However, the skill, expertise and knowledge confines around their previous occupation that hinders them from interchanging their occupation for the majority of the workers. Relating to this, a male worker of 25 years of age said the following:

"Too much work pressure at the restaurant despite salary being higher when compared to my present job as a retail executive. I choose a lower salary in retail because the work pressure in the restaurant was affecting my physical and mental well being as I could not go home and sleep at a proper time".

Migrant workers who have work experience (175 numbers) mostly changed their job a few times before joining their present job. As much as 32.0% of them have changed their job once before joining their present job, 59.4% have changed it a few times and 8.6% of them have changed their job many times. It simply portrays that migrant workers have a very high tendency of changing their job because of various reasons such as job insecurity and working environment, remuneration, work timing and other issues.

There were many new entrants in the labour market i.e. those workers whose present job is first and continuing in the same job. It can be observed that 35% of them have worked in their present job as the first job for < 1-year and mostly are new labour entrants, 55.0% have continued to work in their first job for 1 to <5 years, 6.3% continued in their first job for 5 to <10 years and only 3.8% stick to their first job for >10 years. On the contrary, among workers having previous job experience, 29.1%, 61.7% and 9.1% have worked in their present job for <1 year, 1 to <5 years and 5 to <10 years respectively. This situation highlights that the majority of them, including new labour entrants and experienced labour, worked in the same job for up to five years. It shows that their jobs are insecure and not permanent irrespective of their claim as a permanent job. It also indicates that they tend to leave their job or get laid off after certain years of employment.

Employment instability is partly owing to the employers' policies of constantly changing the workforce to maintain low wage bills (Papola, 1968). Low remuneration employment and job instability are very much evident among migrant workers that causes them to switch jobs. Most of the workers left their previous job largely due to low remuneration and working environment issues. The majority (58.9%) of those workers who have quit their previous job have given a single reason for leaving their previous job, such as work not remunerative enough, health hazard, working environment, odd hours of working, irregular salary, bias attitude of the employer, job unsatisfaction, unpleasant working environment, emergency exit (leave not approved), contract term ended, workplace distance issues, to upgrade skill, to pursue higher education, and wanted to change career. As much as 41.1% of them have given multiple reasons for leaving their previous job.

Some workers have few more reasons for leaving their previous job. For example, a 27 years old female worker left her previous job as she "wanted to change her career". A 24-years-old male worker said he quit the previous job "because the company did not grant him leave as there was an emergency family issue back at home state".

Another male worker of 24 years said that he quit his previous job "because the store he worked in shifted to another place which is far". But a male worker (42 years) left the previous job "to start his own business and make an investment". A 27 years old male worker said that

"There is more growth and benefits to work in a salon compared to my previous restaurant work because working in the salon will improve my professionalism and the skills acquired from it can be useful in future to start my own business".

Additionally, workers sought an alternative job while they were working or without quitting their previous job. It is evident from the fact that about 32% of the workers who were in various occupations did not spend time waiting for their current job. There was some time break between their current job and previous employment. It ranged between one month and four years for the majority (68%) of the workers who have work experience. It means most of the currently employed people did not continuously work primarily due to access to inadequate job vacancy information, break taken due to health issues or went home, and had difficulty in getting a new job. But a majority of them got a new job within six months which implies these people have the required skill for their aspired job and are employable. It is just a matter of locating, identifying and applying at the right place for the right opportunity. Some have a longer period of a break between the jobs does not mean that they are no longer unemployable because it is empirically evident that they re-entered the labour market in due course of time. As the break period between jobs increases the proportion of persons who have previously worked decreases almost consistently and that indicates that some people got the job easily i.e. very much employable, some traded down their job expectation as job-seeking period increases i.e. employable at a lower-ranked job. Others remained voluntarily unemployed for a longer period as they were self-supported from savings of the previous job as they could not compete and fulfil their aspired job i.e. employable at a lower-profile job but did not trade down their expectation.

Many workers keep changing their job due to job dissatisfaction. As many as 48 workers (18.8%) want to quit their present job mainly due to low remuneration. They were mostly new entrants (i.e. a first job) to the labour market constituting 52.1% and the rest (47.9%) were in their second or subsequent job. It indicates that their job expectation and salary is unmet. Since they are continuing in their current job even if they want to quit their job with their given educational qualification and limited skills portray the difficulty in moving or getting a new job. It means their employability has certain challenges and is certainly doubtful in an occupation other than their current occupation and for higher remuneration. They do not wish to continue in their current job largely due to low pay and odd working hour and environment. It indicates that the issues and challenges of labour employability are affected not only by the intrinsic skills of labour but also by exogenous factors such as the remuneration that is decided by the employer based on the labour's productivity, and working environment. Labour employability includes both intrinsic individual quality and labour market conditions that limit the accessibility of some people to some jobs (Hodge, 1973). Provision of a good working environment and salary by the employer appears to be imperative to retain labour.

Out of the total 255 workers surveyed, as much as 20.4% (52 persons) of them were seeking another or new job due to job dissatisfaction. Surprisingly, around 31% of the new job seekers were those who want to continue in their current job; and the remaining 69% wanted to quit their current

job. The former type of workers implies that they are ready to quit their current job and join a new job if they get a better job opportunity; otherwise will remain in their current job. The latter workers are those who were extremely dissatisfied with their current job that might eventually lead them to leave their current job soon even if they do not find a new job.

Current workers were also seeking a new job (52 numbers) mainly because of wanting stable, permanent, decent and more remunerative employment. They were also seeking it for their professional and career growth. They also sought a new job to work in a pleasant working environment and better working hours. Besides these, unprofessionalism at the workplace among the employers is another factor that causes them to seek a new job that is a major challenge for the labour to remain employable in their current job. Thus, these factors essentially influence the worker's job aspiration that affects the prospect of their labour employability.

## **Conclusion**

Migrant workers are in their prime and most productive age group, largely educated and largely bachelors who are energetic and flexible but having some job aspirations because of their educational qualification. Workers mostly have studied in the English medium and studied their subject of self-interest that enables their capability of communication skills for the job. Most workers migrated to Bengaluru particularly for employment due to the lack of job opportunities in NER and the availability of various opportunities in Bengaluru. Some workers migrated to fulfil their wage aspiration.

Workers extensively use social networks in their job search; however, the nature of available employment information has been largely informal and incomplete as they did not divulge the salary. Many workers do negotiate their salary during an interview and before taking up a job. Salary negotiation works for some but not for all. Job search through social networking shortens the job waiting period. On average, workers sought their present job for around two months primarily due to flexibility, which is one of the characteristics of labour employability skills, in seeking or choosing their occupation. Workers who are flexible and do not seek a specific job found a job relatively easier and faster than other job seekers. Some workers possess higher qualifications than the job required indicating that the worker has traded down his/her job aspiration or the employer has upgraded the hiring qualification.

Many workers, corporate and retail workers, in particular, kept on switching for their job willingly that is one of the characteristics of labour employability. However, migrant worker faces job instability resulting in many to switch jobs. Work experience enhances labour employability. Intra job mobility or switch is more prominent than inter job change. Flexibility in seeking and choosing a job essentially enables intra job mobility. There are untapped employable skills among intra job switches in particular, which are ascertained only after their skills are tried and tested in some job. Labour was found employable and are at higher chances of getting a job after they have been tried and tested on the job. Job dissatisfaction and low remuneration caused workers to switch jobs. Labour employability is affected by both the intrinsic skills of labour and exogenous factors such as remuneration. Some workers keep on seeking a new job primarily to secure more stable, decent and remunerative jobs.

NE migrant workers predominantly work in the private sector and some worked in the semi-government sector in Bengaluru. They work in various occupations ranging from retail, BPO, spa, airline and educational institutions. The single largest occupation was retail executive followed by BPO employees, corporate workers, and so on. On average, a worker earns between Rs. 25,001 to 30,000 per month. The majority of the workers have worked for less than five years in their current job irrespective of their period of migration. It is partly due to frequent job change that might have partially caused by layoffs from a job by the employer as many workers do not enter into the terms and conditions agreement of a job. In the absence of a job agreement, the terms and conditions of the job are susceptible and vulnerable to the discretion of the employer. It causes job insecurity and job loss among the workers in any situation. The majority of the jobs of NE migrants are insecure and temporary irrespective of their claim of holding a permanent job.

Workers derive labour competency that is a mental ability to execute work from confidence, skills, ability, experience and education. Labour competency includes the ability to manage, plan, organise, guide, coordinate and motivate others among others. Skills required or demanded by employers are multiple ranging from communication, initiative, teamwork, planning, guidance, confidence, appreciating, adaptation, positive attitude, willingness to learn, problem-solving, pressure management to technical knowledge. Migrant workers have a higher employability trait in the occupations of retail, teaching, corporate, banking, and hospitality among others. Communication was the foremost and most common skill required for a job followed by the skill of guidance, responsibility, etc. Labour employability was attributed to intrinsic skills such as communication, professionalism or organisational as well as by exogenous factors such as job satisfaction, remuneration, and working environment among others. The prospect to continue in the same job depends on these exogenous factors.

Most of the working skill and knowledge was not directly from their educational syllabus but acquired mostly through on-the-job training. Thus, job training enhances labour employability and job stability. It is primarily a necessary condition for strengthening labour employability.

Hence, it is necessary to promote English medium education, link and bridge the educational syllabus with the skills demanded by industry, create flexibility in search of a job, avoid long-term unemployment, encourage intra job switch, expect salary based on qualification and experiences, enter job contract agreement on terms and conditions of employment, provide extensive skill development training, provide on-the-job training, and promote compulsory internship and apprenticeship after graduation to enhance the labour employability.

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