

Rural to Urban Migration Trends among Telangana Labourers Post-State Formation (2014–2025)

Haritha Kommera

Assistant Professor, GDC Nakrekal, Nalgonda.

Email: harithajl005@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper examines the patterns, drivers, and implications of rural-to-urban migration by labourers in Telangana since the formation of the state in June 2014. Drawing on secondary data, state-level surveys and migration studies, the paper explores key push and pull factors, major source and destination districts, labour sectors, policy responses, and socio-economic outcomes of migration. While Telangana has experienced rapid urbanization and infrastructural transformation, rural-urban migration continues to play a significant role in shaping labour markets and demographic shifts. The analysis shows that the state's migration trends are influenced by agricultural distress, infrastructure and construction growth, urban employment opportunities – especially in the capital region – and evolving labour policies. The paper concludes with policy implications for sustainable urban growth, equitable development and labour welfare.

Keywords: Rural-urban migration; labour migration; Telangana; urbanisation; state formation; internal migration; informal labour.

1. INTRODUCTION

The state of Telangana was officially formed on 2 June 2014, carved out of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. The new state inherited both rural and urban challenges, including the large metropolitan region of Hyderabad along with its hinterland. Since state formation, Telangana has embarked on infrastructure projects, urban growth and agro-rural development programmes. At the same time, internal migration – especially from rural to urban areas – remains a key dynamic in the labour market and demographic structure of the state. Understanding how migration trends have evolved post-2014 is crucial for policy-making, urban planning and labour welfare.

This paper focuses specifically on labour migration from rural to urban areas within Telangana in the period 2014–2025. It asks: (i) What are the major trends in rural-to-urban labour migration in Telangana since 2014? (ii) What are the major drivers (push and pull) of this migration? (iii) What are the key consequences – economic, social, spatial – of labour migration for both origin and destination areas? (iv) How have state policies responded, and what are the implications for sustainable development?

2. Context and literature review

2.1 State formation and urbanisation

Telangana's creation in 2014 brought renewed attention to its urban and rural development trajectory. Urban population growth in Telangana outpaced rural growth in the preceding decades, with one note indicating that between 2001 and 2011 the urban population grew ~38.1 % while the rural population grew only ~2.1 %. Telangana PCS Exam Notes+2The Times of India+2 The capital region around Hyderabad has been a magnet for economic activity and therefore for migration from rural districts.

2.2 Migration and labour: broader perspectives

Internal migration in India – especially rural-to-urban migration of labourers – has been widely studied. Kumar (2025) notes that migration supports urban informal sector growth and is a reflection of surplus rural labour and urban labour demand. RR Journals A study focusing on rural→urban labour migration (with special reference to Scheduled Castes/STs) found that poverty, illiteracy and rural socioeconomic disadvantage can drive migration. Jimres These frameworks help situate Telangana's experience.

2.3 Migration in Telangana: empirical notes

Some state-specific observations for Telangana:

- In 2014, the government noted approximately 61.88 lakh migrants living in Telangana, according to a 2014 news article referencing 2011 census numbers. The New Indian Express+1
- Drought and agrarian distress in districts like Mahbubnagar, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad have been cited as triggering large-scale migration into Hyderabad and surrounding districts (pre-2015). Deccan Chronicle
- Post-COVID, enumeration of unorganised workers (including migrants) via the e-Shram portal in Telangana: some 4,040,397 registrations, of which a large share were in agriculture and construction. Telangana Today
- A note that more than 5 lakh workers migrated to Telangana for livelihoods since 2014, according to state officials (though out-migration also occurs). The Hans India These indicate layers of both in-migration from rural areas and labour mobility outwards.

Hence the literature underscores the relevance of migration in shaping Telangana's rural-urban dynamics, though disaggregated, long-term data specific to labour migration (rural→urban) post-2014 remains limited in public domain. This paper builds on available data and insights to map what can be discerned for the period 2014–2025.

3. Trends in Rural-to-Urban Labour Migration in Telangana (2014-2025)

3.1 Scale and direction

Precise annual statistics of rural-to-urban labour migration by district in Telangana are not comprehensively available in public sources. However, indicative trends and proxy data reveal the following:

- Urbanisation: As noted, the share of urban population growth is relatively high in Telangana, and this growth is “mainly on account of migration from rural areas”. Telangana PCS Exam Notes
- Internal migration rate: The state was reported to have a migration rate of 25.2% among south Indian states (for 2022 data) and among migrants, around 56.2% migrated for employment among men. deccanrepublic.com+1
- Out-migration for overseas jobs: While not strictly rural→urban intra-state migration, between 2020–2025, about 45,213 workers from Telangana were given Emigration Clearance for blue-collar jobs overseas. The News Minute
- Evidence of rural distress migration: For instance, drought in early 2015 triggered migration from rural districts into Hyderabad and surrounding areas. Deccan Chronicle
- Infrastructure needs: A 2025 survey indicated the rural-urban household gap in Telangana (66 lakh rural households vs 45 lakh urban households) was narrowing due to migration and urban growth. The Times of India

From this we infer that rural labour migration to urban centres (within Telangana and particularly into the Hyderabad region) has been significant and increasing in the post-2014 period, albeit with episodic variations (e.g., COVID-19 disruptions) and limited fine-grained data.

3.2 Source and destination profiles

Source areas: Predominantly rural districts with agricultural distress (e.g., Mahbubnagar, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad) have been cited in earlier migration episodes. Deccan Chronicle These districts continue to generate labourers who move to urban localities.

Destinations: Urban centres – especially Hyderabad and its metropolitan region – and associated construction, manufacturing, and services industries form the primary pull. Migration to overseas destinations also competes for labour supply. Remittances from Gulf workers are significant. [Telangana Today](#)

3.3 Labour sectors and employment

Migrants from rural Telangana often find employment in the informal sector: construction, daily-wage labour, watchmen, apartments, granite industry in Hyderabad's outskirts. [Deccan Chronicle+1](#) A study on construction workers in Hyderabad reported migrants from rural Telangana and Andhra Pradesh with income gains tripling compared to rural livelihoods. [ijrhs.net](#)

3.4 Push and pull factors

Push factors:

- Agrarian distress (drought, crop failure) in rural Telangana. [Deccan Chronicle](#)
- Limited rural labour-absorbing opportunities and mechanisation of agriculture.
- Poverty, illiteracy and low rural per capita incomes (consistent with the broader migration literature). [Jimres](#)

Pull factors:

- Urban employment opportunities and higher daily wages: e.g., migrants shifting from earning ~₹100/day in drought-hit villages to ~₹500/day in Hyderabad. [Deccan Chronicle](#)
- Infrastructure projects, urban expansion, real estate, construction boom around Hyderabad.
- Remittances and upward mobility aspirations: for example, Telangana's Gulf-based remittances exceed ₹25,200 crore. [Telangana Today](#)
- State policies and enumeration schemes, such as e-Shram registration of unorganised workers (which may both capture and encourage migration). [Telangana Today](#)

3.5 Temporal dynamics

- The period immediately post-state formation (2014-2017) saw migration related to statehood transitions, urban infrastructure push and rural distress.
- During the COVID period (2020-2021), migration flows were disrupted, though enumeration of unorganised workers picked up.
- Post-2021, rural labour migration to urban centres has resumed, with intensified urban growth and infrastructure demands; the 2025 data show narrowing rural-urban household gap in Telangana. [The Times of India](#)
- The decline in migration at national level (from ~37.6% in 2011 to ~28.9% by 2023) suggests broader patterns shifting, though Telangana's state-specific dynamics may differ. [adda247](#)

4. Socio-economic and Spatial Implications

4.1 For origin (rural) areas

- Labour out-migration reduces the number of working-age individuals in rural areas, which can affect agricultural productivity and local labour markets.
- Remittances provide rural households with incomes, investments in housing, education and health (especially for those who migrate overseas or to urban centres). [Telangana Today](#)
- Social costs: family separation, loss of social capital, and cultural dislocation in migrant-sending villages.
- Some rural areas may be left with older populations and fewer youth, which raises concerns of "left-behind" communities.

4.2 For destination (urban) areas

- Urban expansion: The influx of rural labour supports construction, real-estate, informal services sectors, contributing to Hyderabad's growth.

- Informalisation: Many rural migrants work in precarious informal labour—low wages, no formal contracts, insecure housing, limited social protection. For instance, migrants in Hyderabad’s industries face social alienation and marginalisation. [Down To Earth](#)
- Infrastructure strain: Rapid inflows of migrant labour raise demands on housing, sanitation, transport and urban services. A 2025 survey flagged the need for enhanced infrastructure in both rural and urban Telangana. [The Times of India](#)
- Labour supply dynamics: While migration helps fill labour demand in urban expansion, it also may suppress wages and working conditions for the informal labour force.

4.3 Policy and governance implications

- Need for enumeration and registration: Telangana’s e-Shram portal registrations (over 4 million) reflect efforts to capture unorganised workers and migrants. [Telangana Today](#)
- Welfare of migrant workers: The state has drafted a Migrant Worker Policy (2021) though finalisation is awaited. [Telangana Today+1](#)
- Balanced regional development: To mitigate excessive rural→urban migration and urban congestion, rural employment generation and decentralised industry are important (as some commentators note regarding development concentration in Hyderabad).
- Urban planning: Integrating migrant labour into formal urban systems related to housing, health and transport is essential for social inclusion.

5. Discussion

The migration trends in Telangana post-2014 reflect several intertwined processes: rural distress, urban growth, infrastructural transformation and labour market shifts. While data gaps persist (particularly district-wise flows, longitudinal tracking of labour migration), the available evidence suggests the following key points:

1. **Continued rural-to-urban labour migration:** Rural Telangana continues to supply labour to urban centres (especially Hyderabad region) for construction, informal services and manufacturing.
2. **Changing scale and nature:** The magnitude of migration may be moderated by state-level employment conditions – for example, Telangana’s migration rate among south Indian states was reported relatively low (25.2%). [deccanrepublic.com+1](#)
3. **Broader migration (not just intra-state):** Some labourers move overseas or interstate, which influences supply in the domestic labour market.
4. **Urbanisation and spatial change:** Migration contributes to urban demographic growth, but also places strain on urban infrastructure and may exacerbate spatial inequality (between Hyderabad and other districts).
5. **Need for policy alignment:** Migration should not be treated only as a by-product of urban growth; it requires planning for housing, labour rights, social protection and rural development.

6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

In conclusion, rural-to-urban labour migration in Telangana since 2014 has played a significant role in the state’s socio-economic transformation. However, the migration process also raises challenges for both origin and destination areas. Based on the analysis, the following policy recommendations are offered:

- **Strengthen data systems:** More detailed, disaggregated data on rural→urban labour migration flows (by district, age, gender, sector) is required to inform policy.
- **Enhance rural employment opportunities:** Promote agro-processing, rural small industries and skill development in non-farm sectors to reduce forced distress migration.
- **Promote balanced regional growth:** Encourage industrial development beyond Hyderabad, in tier-2 cities and rural districts, to decentralise urban draw-forces.
- **Improve labour welfare in informal sectors:** Implement labour rights, social protection schemes and access to decent housing for migrant labourers in urban areas.
- **Urban infrastructure planning:** Cities should anticipate and plan for migrant influxes, ensuring affordable housing, transport, health and sanitation services.

- **Facilitate safe migration pathways:** Even when migration is voluntary and positive, pathways should ensure skill-matching, protection from exploitation and upward mobility.

7. Limitations and Future Research

The paper is constrained by limited temporal and spatial disaggregated data specific to rural→urban labour migration in Telangana. The reliance on secondary sources means causal inferences are limited. Future empirical research should conduct household surveys tracing migrant labourers from origin villages in Telangana to their urban destinations, study gender differentials in migration, and evaluate the impact of migration on both sending and receiving communities over time.

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