CHAPTER II

2.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

'Migrant' is a doubtful and ambiguous concept in public debates and they are often combined with ethnic minorities and with asylum seekers (Saggar and Drean 2001; Crawley 2005; Baker et al. 2008). Taking the international definition of migrant, the United Nations (1998) defines migrant as— any person who changes his or her place of usual residence. A person who changes his residence for a period of at least a year is regarded as a long-term migrant. On the other hand, a person moving to a new place for at least three months but less than a year are regarded as short-term migrant excluding the cases where movement is for purposes of recreation, holiday, casual visits, etc. The one year duration notion is based on practical observations rather than any theoretical considerations. The Indian definition of migrant given by the NSSO (2007-08) is read as, "a household member, whose last usual place of residence (UPR)[8] was different from the present place of enumeration was considered as a migrant member in a household". The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) also defines that the "household members who spend 180 days or more away from the village for work as long-term migrants, while the household members who spend between 30 and 180 days for work outside his/her place of origin is termed as short-term migrants. However, a study by Coffey et al (2014) documented that although short-term migrants are short-term in nature but it is a "permanent part of households' long-term economic progress". It is a long-lasting livelihood strategy for the households. Most of the migrants who come to work in urban space are mostly absorbed in the informal work and are employed casually (Piore 1979). The 62nd

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[8] Usual place of residence (UPR): Usual place of residence of a person was defined as a place (village/town) where the person had stayed continuously for a period of six months or more.

round of NSSO (2007-08) documented that around 56 percent labourers are self-employed, followed by casual labourers with around 30 percent among the total employed in the labour market in India. The NSSO and the Manual Labour Statistics of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) define a casual wage labourer as a person who is employed by others in farm or non-farm enterprises, both by household and non-household. In return, these workers receive wages according to the terms of the daily or periodic work contract (NSSO 2006). In India, casual labourers have three major characteristics— 1) they do not have a regular job contract, 2) their wages are comparatively lower than that of the people with regular and self-employment, and 3) they do not receive any benefits of social security and other benefits from the government. Interestingly, migrants are very significant part of the casual labour market in India and they migrate in search of livelihood opportunities (Deshingkar and Farrington 2006).

In the true sense of the term, migration is a very diverse and multifaceted topic. It cannot be explained a single definition or in one theory. The models on migration are useful in understanding the basic concepts of it, and they simplify the complicated aspects of the subject. As the study aspires to investigate the labour migrants, it becomes a necessity to go through various models discussed in the past. For fitting the present study in an established model, a few established and renowned theories on the theme are discussed below.

2.2 NEOCLASSICAL THEORIES OF MIGRATION

Adam Smith in his book, the Wealth of Nation, published in 1776 mentioned that migration happened because of the economic benefits. In short, a person decides to migrate from one place to other for economic interests. He mentioned that wage rates

of labourers vary from place to place but the prices of the commodities remains the same which induce people to migrate. Similar kind of notion was given by Hicks (1932) who explained the role of economic advantages in people's decision to migrate. Nevertheless, Smith's observation was formalised by Shields and Shields (1989) in a model that postulates the dependence of movement and volume of labour migration from one location to another on wage differences and barriers to migration. The model is given below-

$$M_{ij=} \alpha_{ij} (W_j - W_i)$$

Here, M is volume of migration, 'α' is obstructing factors in migration 'i' is origin, 'j' is destination, W_j is wage at origin and W_i wage at destination. Ravenstein (1985) believed that migration is a crucial part of development and tried to explain it with few laws based on the Census Surveys of 1871 and 1881 in United Kingdom, which could be applicable to both internal and international migration. He outlined seven "Laws of Migration" that explicate the migration pattern in UK. According to the first law, most of the migration only proceeds a short distance in the direction of the great centres of commerce and industry; the second law explained, the gap that was left in the rural population are filled up by the migrants from more remote districts; the third law explained the process of dispersion which is the inverse of absorption both exhibit a similar feature. Dispersion being the rural areas, mainly the agricultural countries and absorption being centres of industry and commerce. Second and third laws are mainly about rural to urban migration and urbanisation. The law mainly dealt about net migration; return migration, two-way migration and migration flows. Migrants proceeding long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centres of commerce or industry. The natives of towns are less migratory than those of the rural

parts of the country and females are more migratory than males. Similarly, Skeledon (1977) also advocated that migration is influenced by the factors like distance and population densities. But these studies are not free from criticism. One of them is Castles and Miller (1993), who stated that the laws are individualistic and not historical. But, it is also true that the perspective of Ravenstein in which people are expected to move from low income to high income area and the general notion about the migration and people's movements have been presented in many of the recent works by many demographers, geographers and economists ever since then and it also became the basis of push-pull theories (Castles and Miller 2003). Inspired from Ravenstein, George Kingsley Zipf, an American sociologist hypothesised that migration between two regions is directly proportional to the populations of the two regions and inversely proportional to the distance between the two (Zipf 1947). Further, according to him, the higher the population of origin and destination, higher will be the volume of migration, and secondly, the distance acts as a proxy for the cost involved in migration. It is known as the "Gravity law of Migration". However, Stouffer (1940) had different opinion that there is no important relationship between mobility and distance. According to him the number of people migrating to a destination is directly proportional to the number of opportunities available at the destination and inversely proportional to the number of intervening opportunities.

Sjaastad (1962) and Becker (1975) consider migration as an investment decision meaning that a migrant tries to maximize his utility by choosing the location which can offer him the highest net income. According to Sjaastad (1962), a person who decides to migrate, calculates the value of opportunities available at each of the destination options and compares with the value of opportunities available at home. Also, he calculates the cost that will be involved in the migration (cost of moving) and

subtracts from the former and then chooses the best option that will maximize his present earnings. He also said that the migration decision also depends upon information like job vacancies at the destination which he obtains by formal sources like advertisement in newspapers, etc. and informal sources like friends and relatives, who act as networks of opportunity. But, he did not count non-monetary benefits or returns like better climate and recreational opportunities, a desirable social, political, or religious environment, or more desirable quantities of public goods available at the destination. As the study dealt with a single time period, he failed to explain the fact that few people migrate several times during their life time.

2.3 RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

Lewis (1954) explained rural-urban migration as a main part of the development process. According to him development is the genesis of rural-urban migration, and the urban sector drives rural-urban migration by attracting the surplus rural labour. Further, as the urban sector expands it would attract the underemployed or disguised employed workers from the rural areas in an expectation of higher earnings. But, in reality, these workers from the rural areas are underpaid though they are given higher monetary income than their rural earnings. Similar kind of notion was also confirmed by a number of scholars (Rostow 1960; Todaro 1969 and others). According to Todaro (1969), as long as rural-urban income differences remain high enough to outweigh the risk of becoming unemployed the enticement or the attraction of comparatively higher permanent incomes will continue to attract continuous flow of rural migrants. Later, Harris-Todaro model was developed in 1970 that a two-sector economic model in order to develop the concept for rural-urban migration, which was found to be more realistic and refined (Fields 1972). The main assumption of the

model is that the decision to migrate depends upon the income differential rather than wage differentials that is why despite of high urban employment the rural-urban migration is rational because the expected urban income exceeds the expected rural income (Todaro and Maruszko1987). Wage is the money that is paid either monthly, weekly, tri-weekly, daily or as per the hour. The wage is fixed for each work and it may increase in time. On the other hand, income is the money calculated from all the known sources that could include the wages, gifts, interest, bonuses and dividends. Unlike wages, income cannot be fixed as it depends on the varying sources. The income one gets for a particular year could be different from another year. In a slightly different manner, a few scholars (Schwartz et al. 1994; Zachariah et al. 2001) believe that demographic pressure or environmental degradation is another factor which urged migration beside wage differential.

2.4 PUSH-PULL THEORY

Lee (1966) believes that the push and pull factor make people to migrate from one place to another destinations. The push and pull factors (push-pull factor hereafter) have been further categorised in different groups based on the area of origin, area of destination, the intervening obstacles and personal factors. The first two categories include several factors to hold people within the area or attract people to it, and which can be said as the 'positive' or '+' factor. There are factors which cause people to repel and that can be said as 'negative' or '−' factor. Few other factors which make people indifferent, are known as 'zero' or '0' factor. Further, there are intervening obstacles with which the migrant is encumbered like physical distance, cultural barriers such as language, cost of making the journey to destination, etc. The personal factors which motivate people whether to migrate or not play an important role. For

instance, it is easier for a single and unmarried people to migrate to other destination with better economic opportunities. Having analysed these, Lee's model was named as 'push-pull' model for migration although he did not apparently coined it so (Passaris 1989). A large number of studies have applied this push-pull framework. Nevertheless, it is believed that various factors like demographic, economic and environment are responsible for determining migration decisions. Few researchers like Skeldon (1997) and Schwartz and Notini (1994) distinguished two forces that create "push and pull". First is the rural population growth that causes pressure on natural and agricultural resources which tends to force people to move out of the rural areas. Second, the economic reason, which was well explained by the Harris-Todaro model and in which, higher wage, was the major attracting factor (Fields 1972). The push-pull attributes are also considered as an important factor for migration by many other studies like Haq and Rehman (1975), George (1970). On the contrary, a few studies (Greenwood 1985; Ritchey 1976; Shaw 1975; Fields 1979) in the past suggest that economic condition of origin, which is a major factor to create push force from the origin, has no role in deciding the labourer's out-migration. The studies believe that the economic and demographic conditions outside the area influence the extent and direction of the labour flow which is not supported by studies that indicate factors like unemployment affect the decision of the labour migration to move or stay back (Schlottmann and Herzog 1982; Herberle 1938).

2.5 NETWORK THEORY

Besides the theories discussed above, some of the factors which motivate a person to migrate from one place to another can be classified into different categories like economic factors, demographic factors, socio-cultural factors, political factors and

miscellaneous factors (Kumar and Sindhu 2005). Despite varied reasons that explained the causes of migration, the economic factor cannot be overlooked in this regard and stands to be the most important one. Economic forces play an important role for inducing people to migrate (Kumar 1992; Sidhu et al. 1997; Gill 1998; Kundu 1998; Singh and Aggarwal 1998; Srivastava 1998). However, Schoorl (1998) argued that the economic factor alone cannot explain the migration patterns. Probably, the role of nation-states, geographical proximity, institutions, social networks, and cultural and historical factors could be responsible for creating new migration patterns. In the recent decades, network is plausible to describe the migration patterns more. Literatures on migration have highlighted the fact that migration often leads to further migration. Once a certain number of migrants get settled at destination, the process becomes self-perpetuating. Social ties are created in between origin and destination, and the process thereby continues (Massey 1990; Massey et al. 1989). Further, Massey, et al(1993, p. 448) have defined, "networks can be defined as sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin". Similarly, Portes (1995, p. 22) phrased it as, "migration is defined as a network-creating process because it develops an increasingly dense web of contacts between places of origin and destination". Once established such networks, it allows the migration process to become self-sustaining and impervious to short-term changes in economic incentive. There are several models which explain the working and operation of social networks. One of them is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) developed 'Social Capital Model' which assumes people tend to migrate in order to maximize the returns that they have developed 'human capital' in themselves earlier, and in order to do so, they rely on

the social capital nested in their interpersonal networks. Social capital is defined by the OECD as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups". Hanifan (1916, p.130) is the said to be the first to describe social capital, as "those tangible assets [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit". Social capital plays a very important in reducing the costs and risks involved in migration that is, access to housing, safe transportation, employment, and probability of decision to migrate are increased.

2.6 NETWORK AND NEW ECONOMICS OF LABOUR MIGRATION

Spittel (1998) explained "network" factor with different model known as 'Risk Diversification Model', in which, house-hold members collectively take decision to migrate or not. This model was well debated by different scholars under the new school of labour migration (Stark and Levhari 1982; Stark 1984; Stark and Bloom 1985; Katz and Stark 1986), and it argued that migration should be studied at the household level rather than at the individual level. It further stated that people decide to migrate in order to maximize their expected income of the household but it also may be in order to diminish the risks associated with the market failure. The theory also posits that households use their network for the diversification of the household income. Sending a member of the household to some other place or another market, where he/she gets a job, and thereafter, he/she acts as a contact for the people who stayed back at the origin. In case of an adverse situation, like market failure or the others, the household can send other members of the house to the same location by taking advantage of the link made by the first mover (Massey and Palloni 1992). Two

conclusions can be drawn from the above debate— first, the decision to migrate may be in order to maximize the household income, and the second is to reduce the risks associated with the market failure. Hence, family acts as migratory unit, may migrate together or individuals can be sent out with the clear expectation that other members will be sent for (Harbison 1981; Mac-Donald and MacDonald 1964).

Using Mexican migration data, a study by Bauer, Epstein and Gang (2000) concluded that migration networks affect a migrants' choice of location by three ways. First, they provide information about the host region labour market. Second, migrants' utility increases with the growth of ethnic goods that is available in the new location. Third, migrants expect previous migrants to help them in the settlement process. In a similar manner, Aguilera (2003) and Bashi (2007) found that network facilitates the process of migration by providing migrants with temporary accommodation, financial help and help in locating jobs. For a fellow migrant, the presence of family, friends and kinship lowers many costs associated with the migrants like information costs, psychological cost and social cost (Lundborg 1991).

2.7 LIVELIHOOD SUSTAINABILITY

Internal migration and its importance in India have been studied by many researchers (Haberfeld et al. 1999; Mosse et al. 2002; Rogaly 1998; Banerjee and Duo 2007; Badiani and Sarkar 2009; Keshri and Bhagat 2012; 2013; Deshingkar and Farrington 2009; Breman 1996). Most of them indicated that the migration is one of strategies to sustain livelihood for poor people (Siddiqui 2003; de Haan 2000). Migration is predominantly a defensive coping strategy for the poor people to deal with shortages (Russell et al. 1990) and irreversibly an essential element in the rural livelihood strategies (Haan 1999; Mc dowell and de Haan1997).

The term 'livelihood' is well-recognized as— humans inherently develop and implement strategies to ensure their survival (UNDP 2002). Researchers say that migration is a strategy to pull out people out of poverty and they have emphasized over the importance of lack of assets as a symptom and cause of poverty (Birdsall and Londono 1997; De Jainvry and Sadoulet 2000), and how different assets play a very important role in sustaining their lives, wellbeing and livelihood (Ellis2000).We understand that the labour migrants live their life on the edges and they can only achieve livelihood sustainability if and only if they 'can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future (Carney1998). In totality, livelihood sustainability is the coping mechanism of migrants at the destination and there is no threshold level of sustainability. Therefore, a relative performance or a migrant's level of satisfaction may be compared with his counterparts in the same destination or in different destination.

2.8 QUALITY OF LIFE

Researchers in India have described two broad streams of migrants— one type includes the poorest strata, disadvantaged and least educated, especially the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and Muslims (Bird and Deshingkar 2009; Breman 1996). Due to lack of assets, knowledge, skills, etc. these types of migrants are primarily absorbed in the informal sector of the urban economy as casual labourers, construction workers, wage pickers etc. (Deshingkar et al. 2008). Working conditions within such sector is hazardous with several other demerits like underpayment of wages, hectic working hours, unclean and unhygienic working environment (Srivastava and Sasikumar 2003; Deshingkar et al. 2008). The other type of migrants

is slightly better off than the first one, and is generally equipped with higher levels of education, skills and knowledge. In the urban centres, the security services, plumbing, carpentry, etc. are majorly part of informal sector (Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler 2003; Deshingkar et al. 2008). The migrants coming from countryside live in very hazardous condition in the towns where they migrate to earn livelihood and most of them are unable to get affordable housing and other basic amenities easily (Ghosh 2013). The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines 'quality of life' as an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and the value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept that relates a person's physical and psychological health, level of independence and social relationships to the salient features of their environment (WHO 1995, p. 1405). Traditionally, quality of life was only measured in terms of monetary aspect, but now it includes different aspects of human life. According to Cobb (2000), quality of life is what makes a life good. Quality of life presents overall well-being of a person including happiness and how satisfied a person is with his/her life as a whole in a given environment. But, it is a very broad and subjective concept (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2000, p. 5). Nevertheless, it is both subjective and objective kind of concept. Vinayakam and Sekar (2013) have tried to explain the multidimensional nature of quality of life which includes subjective and objective parts.

Many studies and researches have used expenditure based approaches to understand standard of living. Comparing expenditures in total or on different items represent some minimum living standard of a person (Pradhan and Ravallion 2000; Lanjouw and Lanjouw 2001; Gundersen and Oliveira 2001; Slesnick 1994; 1998). In many developing countries, consumption method has been widely adopted to

understand the well-being of a person. Many studies (Dasgupta and Wea1e 1992; Park1985; Hall 1984; Stover and Leven 1992) have also tried to develop statistical techniques to measure quality of life in the form of indexes. In order to make a composite quality of life index, techniques like simple rankings, principal component analysis (PCA) and scaling methods have also been used and applied widely. Many researchers and past studies (Bigelow et al 1991; Heal and Chadsey-Rusch 1985) have used social and psychological indicators to show the well-being or the state of well-being of a person. Quality of life of a person is also understood from the extent of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that they have in day-to-day life. There are also a plenty of studies (Wang and Fan 2012; Gui, Berry and Zheng 2012) that have discussed about the poor quality of life of migrants but very less studies dealt with the very own perception of the migrants' quality of life at the destination.

2.9 RESEARCH GAP

In general, researchers do explain the well-being of a person belonging to rural or urban area, they hardly talk about the migrants who stay and try to survive at a new destination (Knight, Song and Guntilaka 2009; Wang and Fan 2012). Only in recent times, studies try to understand the perception and evaluation quality of life by the migrants himself (Cheng, Wang and Smyth 2014). Subjective well-being of a person is a very broad concept, it means, how a person feels about his life-quality and it includes satisfaction with life (Diener 1984). In the long run, satisfaction with life represents one's own judgement about the circumstances of life (Diener 1984; Diener et al. 1998). Migrants in general tend to have a lower level of happiness in the pre and post migration, as it is difficult for them to adapt a new environment (Nowol et al. 2013; Hendriks et al. 2016).In contrary, few studies (Mitra 2010; Switek 2016)

concluded that subjective well-being or happiness of a migrant increases when a migrant enters a host place as his earnings rise and they feel they have achieved in life.

Though a plethora of research studies and models have been done on migration and the casual labour issues, limited work is found on the issue of sustainability of the casual labourer migrants at the destination. The present study particularly aims to target the problems and sustenance (sustainability) of the casual labourer migrants at the destination. This study is the modest attempt to understand livelihood sustainability of a labourer at the destination and what makes them stay at the destination. Having seen this environment, the third objective of this study is set as to understand the quality of life of the migrants at the two destination of the country's NER— Assam and Sikkim. Both objective and subjective indicators have been chosen to understand the quality of life of Bihari migrants.

The present study uses two psychological scales in order to understand the subjective well-being of the Bihari labour migrants in Assam and Sikkim. First, it is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener et al. (1985), to measure the subjective well-being of the migrants. The SWLS has proven to be a reliable and valid measure of life satisfaction and because it consists of only five items (discussed in the Chapter III of this study), the time of interview is also saved compared to any other measures. The second scale, General Happiness Scale (GHS), developed by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) is also used to measure the subjective happiness of the migrants. This scale is also widely used and accepted in many studies.