

Employment Quality among Young Low-Skilled Migrant Workers in India: A Review of Secondary Literature

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Abstract

Internal migration is an important feature of India's labour market, providing workers with opportunities to access employment and improve their livelihoods. However, the availability of employment does not necessarily ensure decent working conditions, stable earnings, employment security or access to social protection. Young low-skilled migrant workers may face particular difficulties because of limited formal qualifications, dependence on informal employment, weak bargaining power and restricted access to welfare services. This paper reviews existing literature on employment quality among young low-skilled migrant workers in India, focusing on wages, job security, working conditions and social protection. It adopts a secondary-data-based literature review approach using published research articles, government reports and reports from relevant national and international organisations. The literature indicates that informal employment, insecure working arrangements, limited access to employment-related benefits and difficulties in accessing welfare entitlements are important concerns among vulnerable migrant workers. However, the available evidence varies by occupation, region, gender and migration pattern. The review also identifies a need for more focused research on the employment experiences of young, low-skilled internal migrants. From a social work perspective, improving employment quality requires accessible welfare services, rights awareness, skill development, employer accountability and stronger coordination between source and destination areas. The paper concludes that employment quality should be assessed not only through employment availability and income but also through security, dignity, protection and opportunities for long-term livelihood improvement.

Keywords: Employment quality, young workers, low-skilled workers, internal migration, informal employment, social protection, India, social work.

1. Introduction

Internal migration is an important livelihood strategy in India. People move from rural to urban areas, between districts and across state boundaries in search of employment, better wages, improved living conditions and greater economic opportunities. Urban centres attract workers through employment opportunities in construction, manufacturing, transportation, hospitality, domestic work, small businesses and other service activities. For many workers with limited formal education or vocational qualifications, migration provides an opportunity to participate in the labour market and support their families.

Nevertheless, employment opportunities and employment quality are two different aspects of labour market participation. A worker may obtain employment but continue to experience irregular wages,

uncertain working hours, inadequate safety measures, insecure accommodation and limited access to social security. Therefore, employment quality must be examined beyond the simple distinction between employed and unemployed. It includes the regularity and adequacy of income, continuity of work, working conditions, occupational safety, employment-related benefits, social protection and opportunities for professional development.

The Government of India's *Migration in India, 2020–21* report, based on the Periodic Labour Force Survey, provides important information on migration patterns and reasons for migration. It reported an overall migration rate of 28.9 per cent for the survey period. However, the report also indicates that migration has multiple reasons, including marriage, family movement and employment-related considerations. Consequently, the overall migration rate should not be interpreted as the proportion of workers migrating specifically for employment (National Statistical Office [NSO], 2022). The report provides a useful national background, although it does not independently establish the employment quality of young low-skilled migrant workers as a separate population.

The employment experiences of low-skilled migrant workers are closely connected with the structure of India's informal labour market. Workers may obtain employment through contractors, personal networks or informal recruitment arrangements. Such arrangements can provide immediate access to work but may also create difficulties in verifying wages, negotiating working conditions and accessing formal grievance mechanisms. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has emphasised the importance of inclusive policy frameworks, labour standards and social dialogue in improving the situation of internal migrant workers in India (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020).

Young migrant workers are an important group for examination because employment experiences during early adulthood can influence future occupational mobility, savings, family responsibilities and long-term livelihood security. However, it would be inappropriate to assume that all young migrant workers experience the same disadvantages. Their employment outcomes may differ according to education, skills, gender, caste, social networks, occupation, migration duration and the destination labour market.

This paper therefore reviews the existing literature on employment quality among young low-skilled migrant workers in India. It examines four major dimensions: wages and income security, job security, working conditions, and social protection. It also discusses the implications of these issues for social work practice and labour policy. By synthesising existing evidence, the paper seeks to identify the concerns that have received attention in previous research and the areas requiring more focused investigation.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 National evidence on migration in India

The National Statistical Office (2022), in its report *Migration in India, 2020–21*, examined migration patterns using information collected through the Periodic Labour Force Survey. The report provides information on migration rates, previous places of residence, reasons for migration and temporary visitors. It demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between migration in general and employment-related migration. For the present paper, this distinction is important because not all migrants are workers and not all workers migrate for the same reasons. The report offers a national statistical foundation for understanding internal migration, but its aggregate figures do not provide a complete picture of the employment quality of young low-skilled migrants. Further analysis of employment characteristics and relevant subgroups is therefore required.

2.2 Informal employment and labour market inequality

Mehrotra (2020), in *Informal Employment Trends in the Indian Economy: Persistent Informality, but Growing Positive Development*, examined labour market developments and the continuing importance of informal employment in India. The study provides a useful framework for understanding how employment expansion can coexist with structural disadvantages in the labour market. Informal employment can involve limited employment-related benefits and weaker institutional protection, although the conditions differ across occupations and types of work. This perspective is relevant to low-skilled migrants who may enter informal jobs because these jobs are more accessible than formal employment. The study supports examining employment quality through multiple indicators rather than considering employment status alone.

Srivastava (2019), in *Emerging Dynamics of Labour Market Inequality in India: Migration, Informality, Segmentation and Social Discrimination*, discussed the relationship between migration, informalisation, labour market segmentation and social inequality. The paper highlights the significance of structural conditions in shaping workers' labour market outcomes. It suggests that differences in employment opportunities and earnings cannot always be explained by individual characteristics alone. For low-skilled migrant workers, the type of work available, recruitment arrangements and social discrimination may influence employment experiences. This perspective is useful for understanding employment quality as a structural and institutional issue rather than solely an individual problem.

2.3 Employment insecurity and migrant vulnerability

Srivastava (2020a), in *Growing Precarity, Circular Migration, and the Lockdown in India*, examined the vulnerabilities of labour migrants exposed during the COVID-19 lockdown. The study illustrates how disruptions in economic activity and mobility can severely affect workers whose livelihoods depend on continued employment. Migrants in insecure occupations may find it difficult to maintain earnings when work suddenly stops. The experience also highlights the importance of savings, housing security, access to public assistance and the ability to return to the place of origin. Although the lockdown represented an exceptional situation, the study provides insight into the risks associated with precarious employment and the dependence of migrant households on regular earnings.

Hirudayaraj et al. (2024), in *Work Conditions of Interstate Migrant Workers in India: A Critical Realist Exploration*, examined the precarious working conditions experienced by interstate migrant workers. Their analysis indicates that migration may provide short-term livelihood opportunities without necessarily removing poverty, insecurity or powerlessness. The authors also identify the limited availability of formal opportunities to develop workers' potential as an important concern. This study is particularly relevant to the present review because it connects employment conditions with broader questions of worker development, vulnerability and institutional responsibility. However, its findings should not be treated as representative of every migrant worker or occupation in India.

2.4 Wages, employment standards and working conditions

Sreedevi and Gopinath (2024), in their study *Wages, Inequality and Work Standards in Construction Sector: A Case Study of Inter-state Migrant Workers and Native Workers in Kerala*, examined wages, employment patterns and differences between migrant and native construction workers. The research places employment inequality within a sector characterised by substantial dependence on manual labour. It also emphasises the importance of decent work standards in addressing differences in employment conditions. For the present paper, this study is useful in identifying wages and working standards as interconnected dimensions of employment quality. However, the findings are specific to the construction

sector and the Kerala context, and they should not automatically be generalised to other states or occupations.

Dasgupta et al. (2017), in *Working Conditions of Migrant Garment Workers in India: A Literature Review*, reviewed existing evidence concerning migrant garment workers. The report addressed the structure of production, working conditions, unionisation and collective bargaining. It demonstrates the value of examining employment quality within particular industries, because recruitment systems, workplace organisation and opportunities for collective representation may differ substantially across sectors. Its focus on garment workers also indicates the need to consider the role of employers, supply chains and labour institutions. While the report contributes to understanding sector-specific vulnerabilities, its findings cannot independently establish the employment experiences of all young low-skilled migrant workers.

Bhan et al. (2022), in *Deficits in Decent Work: Employer Perspectives and Practices on the Quality of Employment in Domestic Work in Urban India*, examined employment quality in paid domestic work using evidence from 3,067 households in Bengaluru and Chennai. The study considered income security, employment and work security, social security and recruitment arrangements. It is important because it operationalises employment quality through identifiable dimensions, including wages, increments, assistance during illness or injury, paid leave and insurance. Although domestic work differs from construction and industrial employment, the study provides a useful analytical framework for assessing whether work offers security and protection in addition to earnings.

2.5 Social protection and welfare access

Srivastava (2020b), in *Vulnerable Internal Migrants in India and Portability of Social Security and Entitlements*, examined the difficulties faced by vulnerable internal migrants in accessing social protection. The paper focuses particularly on seasonal and circular migrants whose employment and residence patterns may make it difficult to maintain access to welfare programmes. It emphasises the importance of portability and the ability to claim entitlements across locations. This is relevant because migrant workers may contribute to the destination economy while continuing to face administrative or practical barriers to public services. The study suggests that employment quality must be assessed alongside access to welfare and social protection rather than through wages alone.

Agarwal (2022), in *State-Migrant Relations in India: Internal Migration, Welfare Rights and COVID-19*, examined the experiences of internal migrants employed in informal occupations in Delhi. The study explored how migrants navigated welfare systems and interacted with administrative institutions. It highlighted the significance of documentation, bureaucratic procedures and dependence on intermediaries in accessing welfare benefits. These findings demonstrate that the existence of a welfare programme does not necessarily guarantee effective access. For low-skilled migrant workers, the practical accessibility of entitlements can influence household security and the ability to manage periods of unemployment or illness.

Pellissery et al. (2020), in their chapter *Access to Social Protection by Immigrants, Emigrants and Resident Nationals in India*, discussed social protection within India's segmented welfare system. Their analysis provides a broader framework for understanding differences in access to protection across categories of workers and residents. The chapter is relevant to the present study because employment-related security depends not only on workplace arrangements but also on the design and accessibility of welfare institutions. For internal migrants, administrative portability, eligibility criteria and coordination between different locations are important considerations.

Rajan et al. (2020), in *The COVID-19 Pandemic and Internal Labour Migration in India: A “Crisis of Mobility”*, examined the effects of the pandemic on internal labour migration. The study discussed the difficulties experienced by migrants during lockdowns, including mobility restrictions and weaknesses in policy responses. It also drew attention to the relationships between migration, gender, health and social protection. The research reinforces the importance of examining migrant workers as people whose employment, mobility and welfare needs are interconnected. Although the pandemic context was exceptional, the study offers lessons for developing more responsive systems for workers facing sudden livelihood disruptions.

2.6 Synthesis of the reviewed literature

The reviewed studies indicate that employment quality is a multidimensional concept. National statistics provide a broad understanding of migration, while sector-specific and qualitative studies offer insights into wages, insecurity, working conditions and welfare access. The evidence suggests that employment availability alone is insufficient to establish whether migration leads to improved and sustainable livelihoods.

At the same time, the reviewed literature has different populations, geographical settings and methodological approaches. Some studies focus on construction workers, others on garment or domestic workers, and several examine migrant vulnerability and welfare access during the COVID-19 pandemic. These contributions are valuable, but their findings cannot be treated as interchangeable. In particular, the experiences of young low-skilled workers are not always isolated from those of older workers or migrant populations in general. This limitation supports the need for a focused synthesis of employment quality among young low-skilled migrant workers in India.

3. Research Gap and Objectives

3.1 Research Gap

The existing literature provides important insights into internal migration, informal employment, working conditions, labour market inequality and access to social protection in India. However, several gaps remain relevant to the present review.

First, migration studies often examine migrants as a broad population, while employment quality among young low-skilled migrant workers is not always treated as a distinct analytical focus. As a result, the specific challenges faced by younger workers entering the labour market may not be adequately distinguished from those experienced by migrants of other ages.

Second, previous studies frequently focus on particular sectors or locations, such as construction, garment manufacturing, domestic work or selected urban centres. Although such research provides detailed contextual information, differences between occupations and destinations make it difficult to develop a comprehensive picture of employment quality across India.

Third, the literature commonly examines wages, employment insecurity, working conditions and social protection as separate themes. There is a need to bring these dimensions together in a single analytical framework to understand how they collectively shape workers' livelihoods.

Fourth, access to welfare programmes is not the same as effective social protection. Administrative documentation, portability of entitlements, information gaps and dependence on intermediaries may affect whether migrant workers can obtain support when needed. Further synthesis of these institutional issues is important.

Finally, the relationship between employment quality and long-term livelihood improvement requires further attention. The available literature does not always explain how young migrant workers' employment conditions affect their future occupational mobility, financial stability and capacity to improve their socio-economic circumstances. The present paper addresses these gaps through a thematic review of existing literature. It does not claim that these issues have never been studied; rather, it identifies areas where the evidence reviewed here remains fragmented or insufficiently focused on young low-skilled migrants.

3.2 Research Question

Q - What does existing literature reveal about employment quality among young low-skilled migrant workers in India?

3.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To review existing literature on employment quality among young low-skilled migrant workers in India.
2. To examine the major employment-related challenges, including wages, job security, working conditions and social protection, reported in existing studies.
3. To identify research gaps and discuss the implications for social work practice and policy.

4. Research Methodology

The present paper adopts a secondary-data-based literature review approach. It draws on published research articles, government reports and publications from relevant national and international organisations dealing with internal migration, informal employment, employment quality, working conditions and social protection in India. Relevant literature was identified through academic search platforms and official publication websites using terms such as *internal migrant workers in India*, *employment quality*, *low-skilled migrant workers*, *informal employment*, *wages and job security*, *working conditions* and *social protection*. Sources were considered for their relevance to the research question, credibility and contribution to one or more of the study's analytical dimensions.

The review uses a thematic approach. The selected literature is organised under four major themes: (1) wages and income security, (2) job security and employment continuity, (3) working conditions and occupational safety, and (4) social protection and welfare access. A further theme considers the implications of these dimensions for social work practice and public policy.

The analysis involves comparing the key arguments and findings reported by the selected sources, identifying common concerns and noting differences arising from sectoral, geographical and methodological contexts. Government statistics are used for contextual understanding, while empirical studies and policy reports provide additional insights into workers' experiences and institutional challenges. As a narrative literature review, this paper does not claim to be a systematic review or meta-analysis. It does not involve primary data collection, interviews or a new statistical analysis of individual-level data. Furthermore, the review does not claim to have exhaustively screened every available publication. The conclusions are therefore limited by the scope and quality of the literature considered. Findings from specific sectors, cities or exceptional circumstances, including the COVID-19 lockdown, are interpreted within their respective contexts.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Wages and Income Security

Wages are a fundamental dimension of employment quality because they determine workers' capacity to meet daily needs, support family members and save for future requirements. However, the value of employment cannot be assessed solely through the amount of income received. Regularity of payment, predictability of earnings, payment for overtime and the ability to maintain income during illness or periods without work are also important.

The literature on informal employment and migrant labour highlights the significance of insecure livelihood arrangements (Mehrotra, 2020; Srivastava, 2020a). Workers whose employment depends on short-term arrangements or fluctuating demand may experience considerable uncertainty. Even when work is available, irregular payment or interruptions in employment can make it difficult to manage rent, food, transportation and remittances to families.

Sector-specific evidence also demonstrates the need to examine wages alongside employment standards. Sreedevi and Gopinath (2024) examined wage inequality and work standards in construction, while Bhan et al. (2022) considered income security in domestic work. These studies illustrate why comparisons must account for occupation and context rather than assuming that all migrant workers face identical conditions. For young low-skilled workers, income security should also be considered in relation to longer-term livelihood improvement. The ability to save, acquire skills or move into more secure employment may be constrained when most earnings are absorbed by essential expenses. Nevertheless, the literature reviewed here does not establish a single national wage pattern specifically for young low-skilled migrants. Further age-specific and occupation-specific evidence is required.

5.2 Job Security and Employment Continuity

Job security refers to the stability and predictability of employment, including the likelihood of continued work and the availability of fair procedures when employment ends. Workers may face insecurity when they depend on contractors, casual arrangements, daily wages or industries with fluctuating demand. These conditions can expose households to sudden income loss.

Hirudayaraj et al. (2024) emphasised the precarious working conditions of interstate migrant workers and the possibility that migration may fail to remove poverty or powerlessness. Srivastava (2020a) similarly demonstrated how the disruption of economic activity during the COVID-19 lockdown exposed the vulnerability of migrant workers whose livelihoods depended on continued employment.

These studies suggest that employment continuity should be considered alongside the availability of work. A migrant worker may find employment quickly after arriving in a city but still lack the security needed to plan household expenditure or respond to emergencies. Employment insecurity can also influence decisions about housing, children's education and the timing of return migration.

However, job insecurity varies across employment arrangements. Some workers may obtain relatively stable employment, while others experience repeated periods of unemployment. The literature therefore supports assessing contractual arrangements, regularity of work, termination practices and access to grievance mechanisms rather than making a general assumption about every migrant worker.

5.3 Working Conditions and Occupational Safety

Employment quality also includes the physical and organisational environment in which work takes place. Relevant indicators include reasonable working hours, rest periods, workplace safety, protective equipment, access to drinking water and sanitation, respectful treatment, and assistance during injury or illness.

The studies of construction workers and migrant garment workers demonstrate the value of examining working conditions in relation to the organisation of particular industries (Dasgupta et al., 2017; Sreedevi & Gopinath, 2024). In different occupations, workers may encounter different risks arising from the nature of the work, the production system and the degree of employer oversight.

Bhan et al. (2022) also incorporated work security and assistance during illness or injury into their assessment of domestic employment. This broadens the concept of employment quality beyond workplace safety alone. It indicates that workers' ability to obtain help when problems arise is an important component of secure employment.

For young low-skilled migrant workers, limited familiarity with the destination labour market or uncertainty about complaint mechanisms may make it difficult to seek redress. However, this possibility should be investigated rather than assumed for every worker. Research should examine workers' knowledge of their rights, experiences of workplace hazards and access to effective grievance mechanisms.

5.4 Social Protection and Welfare Access

Social protection is essential for reducing the financial and social risks associated with unemployment, illness, injury, old age and other life events. Depending on eligibility and applicable provisions, support may include health insurance, pensions, employment-linked benefits, food entitlements and other welfare programmes.

Srivastava (2020b) highlighted the challenges of extending social protection to vulnerable internal migrants, particularly seasonal and circular migrants. Agarwal (2022) demonstrated that administrative requirements and interactions with public institutions can affect migrants' ability to access welfare entitlements. Together, these studies indicate that the availability of a scheme does not necessarily guarantee effective access.

Rajan et al. (2020) further showed how the pandemic exposed the connections between mobility, employment and welfare. When work and transport were disrupted, many migrants faced difficulties in maintaining their livelihoods. Such experiences illustrate why welfare systems need to account for the mobility of workers rather than assuming that individuals remain permanently within one location.

From an employment-quality perspective, social protection should be understood as both a formal entitlement and a practical capacity to obtain assistance. Information about schemes, accessible registration procedures, portable benefits, effective grievance mechanisms and coordination between source and destination areas may all influence access.

The present review does not independently measure the proportion of young low-skilled migrant workers who receive specific benefits. Instead, it identifies access to social protection as a significant theme in the existing literature and an area requiring more focused empirical assessment.

5.5 Comparative Table: Four Dimensions of Employment Quality

Theme	Evidence from Literature	Major Concern	Research Implication
1. Wages and Income Security	Srivastava (2019) discusses wage inequality between formal and informal workers. Bhan et al. (2022) examine wages, increments and income security among domestic workers.	Irregular income, wage inequality and uncertainty regarding payment may affect workers' ability to meet household expenses and save.	Future studies should examine wage adequacy, payment regularity, overtime compensation and differences by age, gender and occupation.

	 IDEAS/RePEc+1		
2. Job Security	Srivastava (2020a) documents how the COVID-19 lockdown exposed circular migrants to sudden job and income losses. Hirudayaraj et al. (2024) examine precarious working conditions among interstate migrant workers. PMC+1	Casual work, dependence on contractors and uncertain employment continuity can increase livelihood insecurity.	Research should examine employment contracts, continuity of work, termination practices and access to grievance mechanisms.
3. Working Conditions and Occupational Safety	Srivastava and Sutradhar (2016) report poor living and working conditions among migrant construction workers. Dasgupta et al. (2017) review working conditions in the garment sector. Ravi Srivastava, Rajib Sutradhar, 2016+1	Unsafe workplaces, inadequate facilities and limited worker voice may affect dignity, safety and well-being.	Future research should assess working hours, occupational hazards, protective equipment, workplace facilities and complaint mechanisms across sectors.
4. Social Protection and Welfare Access	Srivastava (2020a) highlights difficulties in accessing relief and social protection during the lockdown. Bhan et al. (2022) examine paid leave, medical insurance and other employment-related benefits. PMC+1	Limited access to benefits, registration barriers and difficulties obtaining welfare support can leave workers vulnerable during illness or unemployment.	Studies should assess awareness, eligibility, portability and actual use of social security and welfare schemes among migrant workers.

5.6 Interpretation of the Comparative Table

The comparative analysis indicates that employment quality is multidimensional and cannot be assessed solely through the availability of work. Income security and job continuity are closely connected because interruptions in employment can reduce earnings and make household expenditure difficult to manage. Similarly, unsafe working conditions may affect workers' health and their capacity to continue earning. Social protection is another essential dimension because employment-related benefits and accessible welfare services can help workers manage periods of illness, injury or unemployment. However, the reviewed literature covers different occupations and locations, and therefore does not establish that every young low-skilled migrant worker experience all these difficulties.

The table identifies four areas for further investigation: wage adequacy, employment continuity, workplace safety and access to social protection. Examining these dimensions together may provide a more comprehensive understanding of employment quality and help social workers and policymakers develop interventions that promote decent work, livelihood security and worker dignity.

5.7 Overall Assessment of Employment Quality

The reviewed evidence suggests that employment quality should be assessed through a combination of indicators rather than a single measure. Wages, job continuity, workplace safety and social protection are interconnected. For example, an increase in earnings may not lead to sustained livelihood improvement if work is highly irregular or illness results in substantial financial loss. Similarly, relatively stable employment may still provide limited security if workers lack access to essential benefits.

The evidence also demonstrates the importance of context. Studies of construction, garment manufacturing and domestic work provide useful insights, but differences in recruitment, workplace organisation and employment arrangements limit direct comparisons. National migration statistics offer broad context, while qualitative and sector-specific studies explain particular experiences in greater detail. A further consideration is the distinction between immediate employment and longer-term opportunity. Employment may help a migrant worker earn income in the short term, but improved employment quality also requires opportunities to develop skills, gain experience, access information and progress towards more secure work. For younger workers, these dimensions may be especially important to future livelihood development, although age-specific evidence remains limited in the sources reviewed.

Overall, the literature indicates that the central issue is not simply whether young low-skilled migrant workers can obtain employment, but whether that employment provides adequate income, continuity, safety, dignity and effective protection. A more integrated approach to these dimensions would support better research, social work interventions and labour policy.

6. Social Work Implications

Social work has an important role in addressing the structural and practical barriers that can affect migrant workers' employment quality. A social work perspective recognises that employment difficulties are connected not only with individual skills or choices but also with labour market conditions, institutional arrangements, discrimination and access to social resources.

First, rights awareness and access to information should be strengthened. Social workers and community organisations can help migrant workers understand applicable labour protections, welfare eligibility, grievance procedures and available support services. Information should be provided in accessible languages and through appropriate community-based channels.

Second, social protection facilitation is essential. Social workers can assist eligible workers with documentation, registration, referrals and applications for relevant welfare schemes. They can also help workers navigate administrative barriers and connect them with appropriate public institutions. Such assistance should respect workers' autonomy and protect personal information.

Third, skill development and career guidance can support longer-term livelihood improvement. Young low-skilled workers may benefit from information about vocational training, recognition of prior learning, employment services and opportunities to develop transferable skills. However, training programmes should be linked to actual labour market opportunities and should not be treated as a substitute for fair wages or safe working conditions.

Fourth, employer accountability and collective support require attention. Social work organisations can collaborate with trade unions, labour departments, employers and civil society groups to promote safe workplaces, transparent payment arrangements and accessible complaint mechanisms. Collective awareness and representation may help workers communicate concerns more effectively.

Fifth, psychosocial and family support may be relevant when employment insecurity affects workers' well-being and family responsibilities. Social workers can provide appropriate counselling, referrals and community support while avoiding the assumption that every migrant worker experiences the same psychological difficulties.

Finally, inter-agency coordination is important because migrants' needs may involve the place of origin as well as the destination. Coordination among local government bodies, labour departments, community organisations and service providers can improve referrals and continuity of assistance. These interventions should be evaluated in terms of actual accessibility, fairness and improvements in workers' conditions.

7. Conclusion

This paper reviewed existing literature on employment quality among young low-skilled migrant workers in India, focusing on wages, job security, working conditions and social protection. The reviewed evidence indicates that employment availability does not automatically ensure secure or decent work. Informal employment arrangements, income uncertainty, insecure working conditions and difficulties in accessing welfare entitlements emerge as important concerns across different strands of the literature. The analysis also demonstrates that employment quality is multidimensional and varies by occupation, location and employment arrangement. National statistics provide essential information on migration patterns, while sector-specific and qualitative studies offer a deeper understanding of particular forms of vulnerability. However, the available evidence does not always isolate young low-skilled migrant workers as a distinct group, limiting the ability to draw age-specific conclusions.

The research gap identified in this review points to the need for more integrated research examining wages, job continuity, workplace conditions and social protection together. Future studies could also investigate differences by age, gender, occupation, migration duration and destination region. More focused research would help establish how employment conditions shape livelihood security and longer-term opportunities for young migrant workers. From a social work perspective, improving employment quality requires more than facilitating access to jobs. It involves promoting workers' rights, strengthening welfare access, supporting skill development, encouraging safe and fair employment practices and improving coordination between relevant institutions. Ultimately, employment quality should be understood in terms of whether work enables individuals to maintain a secure livelihood with dignity, protection and realistic opportunities for future improvement.

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