Vijaykumar Kuttappan

Thesis Topic

Rural – urban migration in tank irrigation communities in South India: extent, trends, impacts and implications for food security

Summary

Vijay’s PhD research examines rural to urban migration from tank dependent communities. Tanks are ancient water harvesting structures. These tanks were often neglected during British colonial rule and since independence Indian governments have given a higher priority to big dams and reservoirs. The tank dependent communities of South India are one of the poorest groups in India and the very survival of these marginal farmers depends on the rainwater collected and stored each year from the monsoon rains.

The key research questions Vijay’s PhD seeks to answer are: the extent of rural to urban migration in India, particularly in South India and tank irrigation communities. The trends, drivers and impacts of rural to urban migration in tank dependent communities of Tamil Nadu, South India and the implications it may have on food security in India. More specifically the potential for rural development initiatives to ameliorate the extent that rural to urban migration reduces well being in tank irrigation communities.

The research uses both qualitative (semi – structured interviews; field observations) and quantitative methods (analysis of census data). Vijay will spend time (6-8 months) in India undertaking fieldwork in tank dependent communities. His fieldwork will involve observing, interviewing, and collecting documents to gather sufficient data to answer the above mentioned key research questions.

It is expected that the research will help to understand the rural urban migration happening at the village level and the role of tanks in the rural to urban migration.