

# Impact of Covid 19 lockdown on Migrant labour: A comprehensive study

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**Abstract:** Covid-19 or corona virus, virus of pandemic family originated from Wuhan, China. Spread over the world and turned all the developments and growth into a nightmare. India, The Diamond of Asia is also facing the problems of the spreading from the past three and half months all the activities are almost stopped. Due to this it created a deadly problem for the daily wage earners or workers or contractual labourers who are completely dependent on such activities, for their livelihood. The lockdown caused due to the pandemic have created or resulted in a huge migration of labourers may be at national or international level. Nowadays as the problem of migrant workers has been on rise in the afterwards of lockdown, as per an estimate there are 44crore workers who are labouring in unorganised sections like ,construction sites, brick making, nest owners, house maids etc. Small and marginal farmers whose lives have become difficult as the crisis situation prevailed in the agriculture one also included in this. Being homeless, jobless try to come back to their native land by foot. Later by the urge of Supreme Court Government have taken several steps still it is not adequate. In this paper tried to find out the problems faced by migrant labour and how government try to solve it. Supreme Court have directed central and state Govt for the relief of Migrant labourer and Government have also took different steps to control the situation. Hopefully some good solution will come in near future for this issue.

**Keywords:** Contractual labour, developments, migration, wages etc.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Covid-19 or corona virus, virus of pandemic family originated from Wuhan, China. Spread over the world and turned all the developments and growth into a nightmare. Following Italy, USA, France it almost spread over Western African countries. It has not left a single piece of land. India, The Diamond of Asia is also facing the problems of the spreading from the past three and half months all the activities are almost stopped. Due to this it created a deadly problem for the daily wage earners or workers or contractual labourers who are completely dependent on such activities, for their livelihood. The lockdown caused due to the pandemic have created or resulted in a huge migration of labourers may be at national or international level. The major characteristics of the pandemic are it highly spreads but the mortality rate is low to compare the other virus outbreak. In 1994, a major pandemic of plague broke out in western India with epicentre in Surat. There was a huge migration of labour population from the industrial City of Surat. Due to the flee they not only lost their livelihood but also carried their infections in different places. The same scenario is up fitted in India nowadays a huge portion of migrant labourers shifted from their work place to their native place causes a huge down gradation in the economical sphere of India. Migrants suffer from the double burden of being poor and migrants. Many programmes created for the migrants by the government haven't reached properly to them due to lack of residential permanence and various unavoidable problems. In the meantime, sudden eruption of migration crisis resulting due to the Covid 19 lockdown reminds us the urgency of matter. India has been in lockdown since March 25, 2020.

During this time, activities not contributing to the production and supply of essential goods and services were completely or partially suspended. Passenger trains and flights were halted. The lockdown has severely impacted migrants, several of whom lost their jobs due to shutting of industries and were stranded outside their native places wanting to get back. Since then, the government has announced relief measures for migrants, and made arrangements for migrants to return to their native place. The Supreme Court of India, recognising the problems faced by migrants stranded in different parts of the country, reviewed transportation and relief arrangements made by the government. On June 9, the Court directed central and state governments to complete transportation of remaining stranded migrants and expand focus of relief measures to facilitate employment for returning migrants.

### 1.1 Objective of the study:

The primary objectives of the study are -

- To understand the problems of Migrant workers.
- To find out the steps to be taken to solve the problem of migrant workers.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The paper performs an extensive research on the basis of the data and information obtained from secondary sources. It involves the use of journal, research paper, and various reports of WHO and authentic finance website and online resources etc. for the collection of secondary data needed in the analysis.

## 3. Directions by the Supreme Court:

The Supreme Court reviewed the situation of migrant labourers stranded in different parts of the country, noting inadequacies and lapses in government response to the situation.

- Ordered all the state and central Government to submit a response detailing the measures taken for migrant labour.
- Direct to the state and central Government to ensure relief transport service.
- Direct to the state and central Government to ensure food and safety to the migrant workers and simplified the process of registration of migrant workers.
- Ordered the state receiving migrants should provide last-mile transport, health screening and other facilities free of cost.
- Further directed the Central and state/UT governments to ensure the identification of migrant workers is immediately completed and the process of migrant registration be decentralised to police stations and local authorities and records of returning migrant labourers are kept including details about place of earlier employment and nature of their skills.

## 4. Situation of the Migrant labourers:

Nowadays as the problem of migrant workers has been on rise in the afterwards of lockdown, as per an estimate there are 44 crore workers who are labouring in unorganised sections like construction sites, brick making, nest owners, house maids etc. Small and marginal farmers whose lives have become difficult as the crisis situation prevailed in the agriculture one also included in this. It is these 44 crore citizens responsible for 50 percent of wealth generation in nation. Heartbreaking scenes unveiled in all the metros in the entire country weather it is, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata or Hyderabad. Everywhere it is the same situation. All this has happened for several days as they were deprived of even a single meal a day. In the immediate past that the announcements of lockdown thousands of workers have returned to their native cities. Some of the workers are not paid their salary of March, in this situation it is getting very much obsessive to handle such exploitation of human capital.

## 5. Challenges of Migrant Worker in India:

- 1) The migrant workers working in unorganised sectors who used to work in polluted environment are the primary victim's health problems and sickness. Labourers who are employed in construction sites, metro projects, mines and highway projects leave in hazardous environment are vulnerable to air and water pollution leading to kidney and lung disorders.
- 2) Each state has a unique epidemiological profile of diseases. For e.g Orissa is high per endemic to malaria, when labourers of Orissa migrate towards the other states the risk of malaria spread increases. In short spread of communicable diseases increases.
- 3) In recent years there has been an increase in the number of women who migrate independently in search of work. 92 percent of the 20 million domestic workers in the country are women and females under 14 years of age. Female migrant labourers face several avoidable gender problems including gender discrimination and violence. Lack of supportive environment and social system can have a significant impact on physical and mental health of the women.
- 4) Under aged children who migrate along with their families are not getting their proper educational and social rights. Thus the children are exposed to health problems and occupational hazards similarly faced by the adults.
- 5) In a position of continuous drift, migrant workers are deprived of various opportunities to practice their political rights. Because migrants were not entitled to vote outside of their place of origin, some of them are simply unable to cast their vote. A poll study on Political exclusion of seasonal workers showed 22 percent of them doesn't have their voter ID cards.
- 6) Being forced by the economic imperatives that drive the migration, migration workers essentially remain on uncalculated portion of Population. Since they don't have any permissible proof of Identity of KYC norms as stipulated by Indian banking regulations, resulting in unable to open bank accounts.

## 6. Problem faced by Migrant worker in lockdown period:

- 1) Labourers are exploited for this time period.
- 2) They will not get proper food, shelter, health treatment during lockdown period.
- 3) They become jobless, homeless and without getting proper transport walked for a long distance with their family to return their native land.
- 4) Many were arrested for violating the lockdown, after being caught at inter-state borders, forests between states and even on boats to cross rivers.
- 5) Some of the migrants died of exhaustion where some others died in accidents on the roads after walking or hiding in vehicles.

## 7. Future strategies to cope up with the situation:

- 1) Food grain and pulses need to be supplied on weekly basis to support nutritional needs of the migrant workers and their families. Government should implement the public distribution system (PDS) and distribute the food grain lying as danger stock to the tune of 60million metric tonne with FCI.
- 2) Integration of migrant workers with growth is the need of the time. Government should strictly follow the recommendation of UNESCO- UNICEF at the earliest.
- 3) Health system at the ground level to be strengthened, investment should be increased along with proper supply of medicines.
- 4) Commencement of health immune schemes for the migrants may be helpful. In reference to it, in Kerala a Health insurance scheme which is actually aimed help to support the migrants.
- 5) There is also an urgent need to strengthen the database on migration and migrant households through census.
- 6) PM launched an rural job scheme, Garib Kalyan Rojgar Yojana , aims to provide employment about 6.7 million of 10 million migrants who had returned to villages after lockdown
- 7) The Indian Railways had operated 932 sromik special trains, ferrying home 11 lakh migrant workers on board.

## 8. CONCLUSION:

Migrant worker are also very important part of our society. They help a lot for the development of economy of India. Basically the industry based region is full of migrant worker. Due to this situation they face adverse mental health consequences through various multidimensional factors, many acting concurrently to cause physical, mental, and socio-economical adversities. Besides, the restrictive measures adopted during lockdown and containment COVID 19-policy migrant worker have suffered a lot. Being homeless, jobless they try to go back to their native land. Supreme Court have directed central and state Govt for the relief of Migrant labourer and Government have also took different steps to control the situation. Hopefully some good solution will come in near future for this issue.

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