

DETERMINANT AND BEHAVIORAL PATTERN OF UNORGANIZED MIGRANTS OF INDIA DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC SCENARIOS

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ABSTRACT

Internal migrants play an important role in the economic development of the country. The share of migrant workforce constitutes substantially large in number but only COVID 19 exposed the way they all neglected and underwent big crises among these vulnerable groups. At various levels migrants raised their difficulties and got their attention. Provisions enacted earlier are inefficient and not followed. Due to the sudden pandemic issue across the country forced the unorganized sector to stumble. The migrant workers engaged in this sector have suffered financial, psychological and physical stress to the core. This study examines the determinants and associated behavioural patterns of the migrant under unorganized sectors in India.

Keywords: Pandemic, Unemployment, grievance channels, Government subsidies, inter-state migration.

Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed deep cracks in Social Security for internal migrants. Today India's economic process hinges on the mobility of labour. The federal government's 2017 economic survey conveys the share of migrants within the workforce that is estimated to be even 20 percent, the dimensions of the migrant workforce are often estimated to be over 100 million.

From rural areas, they relocate to metropolitan labour markets, businesses, and farms. Despite the enormous value they add, migrant workers receive the least attention when it comes to their security and well-being. The COVID 19 has focused the government's attention on finding ways to restructure migration into a more honourable and fulfilling opportunity. In order to ensure inclusive or sustainable growth within the nation, welfare and security programmes must be changed.

Literature Review

Khanna (2020) in India, millions of migrant labourers are expected to lose their jobs as a result of the lockdown and the ensuing recessionary panic. Many of the migrant workers have already visited their homes in the areas where they came from, and many more are just waiting for the lockdown to end. For people who work in unorganised industries, don't have writing contracts, or have contracts that are about to expire, the risk is especially severe. Contract employees across various industries are expected to be the first to be affected by the lockdown and the accompanying recession. Lockdowns and social isolation tactics are reducing employment and wages on the one hand, while disrupting supply chains, transportation networks, and agricultural productivity on the other.

Bhagat (2022) people's mobility and migration are blamed for the COVID-19 outbreak that was first noticed in Wuhan, China, and spread throughout the world. In this paper, we discuss how a plan for reducing the economic and social effects of COVID-19 in India could be developed using our knowledge of migration and means of subsistence. We come to the conclusion that as a result of the nationwide lockdown, migrants confront a variety of difficulties as COVID-19 spreads. Many internal migrants struggled with issues like a shortage of food, necessities, health care, financial stress, access to transportation to return to their home countries, and psychological support.

Gruer (2021) the movement of individuals "over an international boundary or within a country" is referred to as migration. 3 It is undoubtedly the most significant contributor to humanity's progress and will continue to influence the course of human history. With the mixing of peoples, it hastens change, fostering cultural and genetic vitality, economic innovation, and advancement. Yet, the exodus of refugees from Syria and Burma, as well as the ongoing unrest at the US-Mexico border, are only three recent instances of the human suffering and political unrest that migration may bring about. These events pose significant risks to people's health and well-

being. Millions of migrant workers, asylum seekers, and illegal migrants have been put in danger by the coronavirus pandemic because of COVID-19 or because of unemployment and social marginalisation brought on by lockdowns and border closures.

Girimallika Borah (2022) stated that the outbreak of a novel coronavirus epidemic and the ensuing lockdown have led to an unusual situation of forced back migration among Indian labour. It provided a setting for conducting a retrospective study to examine factors that influence internal migrants' return behaviour. The purpose of the study is to conduct an empirical investigation into the socioeconomic status of migratory workers, information about their final destination, factors that influence return migration, and the expectations for the future of those who migrate back. We discovered that four states from South India, namely Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, are the most alluring destinations for migrants from Sonitpur. This research was based on a telephone semi-structured open-ended questionnaire survey conducted in February and March 2021 among 238 non-returnees and return migrants of Sonitpur District of Assam.

Varun Arora and et.al (2023) explored the new data on male reverse migrant labourers in India, this research investigates the causal relationship between the likelihood of re-migration to cities and the perceived threat of getting COVID-19. Regardless of the length of their movement, reverse-migrants who believe there is a large risk of getting COVID-19 exhibit a much lower likelihood of going back to their urban workplaces. On the other hand, compared to shorter-duration migrants, longer-duration migrants exhibit a lower perceived risk of developing COVID-19. By connecting behavioural characteristics to the choice to migrate, we also add to the body of knowledge on migration. We discover that people who are more impatient have a raised belief about getting COVID-19 and a higher projected possibility of going back to work.

Prakash Ujwal (2021) studied informal labour groups, which engage in economic activity without the protection of social security, frequently suffer from economic and legislative changes that cause turbulence on their path to progress. The goal of the current study is to identify its determinant by elaborating on consumption function in the analysis and empirically using multiple regression on macro variables that affect consumption. It examines the limitations of labour consumption as experienced by India's informal labour as a result of the restrictive lockdown implemented to contain the spread of COVID-19. According to the report, in order to support both current and future consumption requirements, the government should help the informal labour force improve their marketable skills so they may land a job and earn the appropriate wages.

Statement of the problem

Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab and Tamil Nadu are the foremost important destination states for migrants in India, consistent with 2011 Census data. But migrants face huge challenges and barriers in these states as their agency is constrained and they're left completely hooked into their networks and employers their livelihoods.

These workers were not given safety equipment like shoes, gloves, or helmets, mask, and sanitizer. Occupational Safety, Health and working Conditions Code completely ignored for migrant workers. They feared that they might become victims to the deadly disease

Due to the lack of public transportation following the lockdown announcement, migrant workers have no way to return to their jobs. Also, migrant workers were allowed to return to their home countries because they couldn't afford to stay because they had insufficient money to cover their basic needs like rent. Both the borders were sealed and there was no transportation. Migrants receive little to no assistance from the authorities to deal with the situation.

Share of migrant labour in India

The total number of internal migrants in India, as per the 2011 census, is 45.36 crore or 37% of the country's population. This includes inter-state migrants also as migrants within each state; consistent with the 2011 Census, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are liable for the foremost number of migrants as 20.9 million people migrated outside the state from the 2 states. This is often 37% of the whole number of people who were inter-state migrants according to that enumeration. Delhi and Mumbai are widely considered migrant magnets and thus the 2011 Census bears that out. Consistent with it, migrants from other states in Delhi and Mumbai numbered 9.9 million, or almost a third of the combined population of 29.2 million. The Hindi belt is the largest source of migrants. In accordance with the census source, 50% of all interstate migrants in India came from four states: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. On the other hand, 50% of the nation's interstate migrants were housed in Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. These percentages are substantially higher than the states' proportion of India's total population. The highest percentage of migrants arrive in Maharashtra, whereas the highest percentage of migrants leave Uttar Pradesh. Between the 1991 and 2001

Censuses, there was a 55% increase in the number of interstate migrants. Merely 33% of this persisted between the 2001 and 2011 Census. The estimate of the number of migrants from various states during the lockdown was a huge issue. As per the survey from various states 26 lakh migrants stranded across the country, of whom 10% are said to be in relief camps, 43% on the worksite and 46% in other clusters. It had been estimated 97 lakh workers had been transported back home. Among the states, UP has noted 21.69 lakh workers had returned, and UP itself had sent back 1.35 lakh.[3] Bihar and Maharashtra accounted for 10 lakh and 11 lakh respectively have left the state. Gujarat had sent 20.5 lakh back home. Karnataka reported three lakh migrant workers, whereas West Bengal 3, 97,389 migrant workers from other states were still stranded. The absence of documentation is evidence that migrant workers are neglected and because of this they faced identification difficulty.

Objectives

More specifically the study makes an earnest attempt by having the subsequent as its objectives

1. To analyse the issues of migrants during the course of COVID 19 outbreak.
2. To examine the Welfare and Social Security Provisions for migrant Workers.
3. To determine the role of state and its welfare schemes to migrants
4. To suggest policy measures to unravel the issues of migrant workers.

Methodology

The present study is analytical and employed both primary and secondary data to ascertain the information about entire number of migrants under unorganized Sector Workers, problems of internal migrants, Social Security Schemes for the migrant Workers in Unorganized Sector and therefore the activities of the central government combine with the state governments to tackle the unconventional obstacles relating to the migrating process for these migrant workers etc. were examined with the help of primary data collected from 152 respondents and various journals, articles, E magazines and the like.

Provisions of welfare systems to migrant workers

The lockdown has made a devastating impact on the economy also as on the livelihoods of lakhs of migrant laborers. The foremost vulnerable group of migrants have protection through Constitution in Article 217 with 'List 1', under the seventh schedule 'item 81', mentioned "inter-state migration and inter-state quarantine" to be an influence of the centre. The central government alone is empowered to affect this generally, and inter-state migrant workers are surely an area of the 'power' and thus the responsibility.

The list of states' powers and responsibilities don't mention 'interstate migrants' but that doesn't absolve them totally, as they're both recipients of such labour and exporters also. The Concurrent List Item 22 mentions "trade unions, industrial and labour disputes" while item 24 cites "welfare of labour" and allied issues. After independence various Act enacted for the protection of migrants. Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1979 enacted to manage the utilization of inter-State migrant workmen and to supply for his or her conditions of service and matters connected therewith.

The Act mandated that labour contractors who export workers to other states have to register at both ends and take licenses. Those who employ more than five migrant labourers are duty-bound to supply proper wages, housing, medical facilities, pass-books, displacement allowance and anything that the government of dreamers could cobble together. Despite 13 old labour laws, including the ineffective Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979 in their favor, the migrants' welfare is ignored for they are not in the local electoral rolls

COVID -19 and its impact

The outbreak of COVID-19 in India led to the crisis of migrants unable to return home and also that of villages struggling to cope with returnees, who have no income to meet their basic demands and no immediate chance of job opportunities.

The Minister of Finance, on 26th March 2020, had announced a ₹1.7 lakh crore Garib Kalyan package to mitigate the loss faced by the poor because of the coronavirus lockdown.

The Government of India through rural public works scheme launched 'Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan' to village Teliha in Khagaria district of Bihar on 20th June 2020. The scheme will empower and supply livelihood opportunities to the returnee migrant workers and rural citizens who have returned to their home states due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown. This campaign added mission mode for 125 days with an outlay of Rs. 50,000 crore. A total of 116 districts across six states, namely Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Odisha, where maximum migrant workers have returned, are chosen for the campaign. The welfare scheme estimated to cover about 2/3 of such migrant workers and chosen districts includes 27

Aspirational Districts. It will involve intensified and focused implementation of 25 differing types of works to supply employment to the migrant workers on one hand and make infrastructure within the rural regions of the country on the other hand. The workers will help build gram panchayat Bhawan and Anganwadi centers, national highway works, railway works and water conservation projects, among others across six states. The scheme includes 12 different Ministries/Departments that coordinate the program namely, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj, Road Transport and Highways, Mines, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Environment, Railways, etc.

The villages will join this program through the Common Service Centres (CSCs) and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) maintaining the norms of social distancing within the wake of the pandemic.

Benefits of the scheme

The scheme ensures the following benefits to the returnees of migrants

- Employment opportunities provided near their homes based on their skills
- To help and empower the migrant labours to face the challenges due to the corona pandemic
- The talented workforce returned from cities develops the rural sector and will strengthen the rural economy
- To deploy assisting cells in various districts to promote cottage and artisan based business opportunities
- To enhance the skill set of the workers to take up new technological initiatives in the manufacturing process
- To scrutinize the welfare parameters on quarterly basis with the use of administrative panels

Data Analysis

	Attributes	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	85	56
	Female	67	44
Age	Less than 20	4	3
	21-30	101	66
	31-40	28	18
	41-50	19	13
	Above 50	0	0
Education	SSLC or HSC	8	5
	Graduate	64	42
	Post-Graduate	38	25
	Diploma	19	13
	Doctorate/Professional	23	15

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents’ Demographic Profile

Source: Primary Data

From the above table, it is clear that Gender is equally distributed in this data collection, Male 56% and Female 44%, 21-30 age group are the major respondents holding 66%, Graduates are more compared to other qualifications 42%.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value
Quality of Life	152	1.32	.732	.059	22.171
Economic Viability	152	1.30	.461	.037	34.844
Standard of Living	152	1.82	1.318	.107	17.050
Social Security	148	1.36	.630	.052	26.367

Table 2: One-Sample t-test of Migrant workers with respect to social security factors

Source: Primary Data

From the above one-sample t-test analysis, mean ranges from 1.30 to 1.82, Economic Viability holding Rank 1, (t-value = 34.844) indicates the migrants having enough economic power after the migration, Social Security in Rank 2, (t-value = 26.367), Quality of Life and Standard of Living each holding Rank 3 and Rank 4 (t-value =

22.171, and t-value = 17.050) respectively. It indicates that the government has to formulate the new policies for the migrated people for the better standard of living and quality of life in their place.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value
Applicability to all the migrant's	152	1.68	.924	.075	22.479
State's policy towards migrant's	152	1.72	1.075	.087	19.774
Implementation of such Schemes	152	1.47	.853	.069	21.208

Table 3: One-Sample t-test of state and its welfare schemes towards migrants

Source: Primary Data

The mean ranges from 1.47 to 1.72 in the above table, t-value shows that Applicability to all the migrant's is the prime factor which shows theoretically policies and schemes are well enough (Rank 1) t-value = 22.479, followed by Implementation of Such Schemes (Rank 2) t-value = 21.208 and State's policy towards migrant's (Rank 3) t-value = 19.774.

Findings

Role of the state

The issues highlighted not only exist during COVID 19 but are thrown into sharp attention during this lockdown. The state did not show any attention to the existing system followed by the migrant workers. The state needs to focus on and address the challenges faced by them. The following critical elements suggested protecting these poor, marginalized and disenfranchised.

Registration of workers

India has no central registry of migrant workers despite passing legislation 40 years ago to determine such a database. The law needs to be enforced to formalize employment contracts and protect migrant laborer's rights. Registration of workers must be carried out after the lockdown is lifted. Migrant workers scattered across factories or living on the outskirts of cities or sleeping rough, counting them would be a challenge.

Development of an effective communication system

Provisions covering their rights and clear understanding of the welfare schemes and procedures need to be educated to the migrants in the unorganized sectors. There should not be any discrimination, fear and communism. Infrastructure for communication should be strengthened between the administrative departments to communicate to the panchayats to take actions on complaints at the local level. Regular status updates and feedback from the field cadre across various departments to be followed.

Decentralized grievance channels

With the COVID-19 crisis established help lines to listen to complaints related to the Public Distribution System have been set up in many blocks across the country. These must continue after the lockdown, functioning in a decentralized manner, as the action required is local. Additionally, the state arranged authorities to register and follow up actions to settle grievances immediately. Also provided relief packages and raised community awareness successfully.

The institutionalization of social audits

Social audits can regulate and insist corporate give due importance to the underprivileged workers within the organization. It ensures the welfare system adopted as per the provisions laid in the Act. These audits remove the gap and give them opportunities to raise the voice for their rights.

Conclusive remarks

From the data analysis, it is very clear and authors conclude that Migrants have better policies theoretically but the state's implementation of such policies are not well enough for the betterment of their livelihood, standard of life must improve for the migrants, Migrants in the unorganized sector play a vital role in the economic development of the country. But the provisions to protect them are ineffective and not considered. Due importance and enforcement of the Act strictly, can assure well-being of the unorganized migrant workers. Also, the government needs to formulate new programs to prevent rural-urban migration by creating economic opportunities close to their place of residence. This enables the country to have better urban planning. It would also provide an empirical basis for better urban planning in the future course. The labour gap is the adverse issue present in the Indian subcontinent due to the prevailing employment opportunities and nature of livelihood

activities present across the country. Government can formulate policy level implications to overcome the migration problems and provide uniform and sustainable development across the nation.

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