

Impact of Migration of Labour Force Due to Covid-19 Pandemic with reference to India

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 15 June 2020

Keywords

Migration, COVID-19, labour force, lowkdown, recession Indian Banking Sector, Agriculture, Health Dept.

ABSTRACT

This article discussed the effect of epidemics like COVID-19 on the migrant population. These impacts are most troubling for low income households, which are less well positioned to cope with earnings losses during this pandemic, have no alternative earnings and have no social security available. Migrant workers constitute quite a large population of such vulnerable population. Millions of migrant workers have lost their jobs due to the lockdown and subsequent fear of recession in India. Many of the migrant workers have returned to their villages, and many more are just waiting for the lockdown to be lifted. The lockdown is likely to first hit contract workers across many of the industries. On the one hand, lockdowns and social distancing measures are drying up jobs and incomes, whereas they are likely to disrupt agricultural production, transportation systems, and supply chains on the other. This poses a challenge of ensuring food security and controlling already rampant malnutrition, particularly among children, which is likely to result in increased infant and child mortality. There is a need to relook at the national migration policies, which should accommodate the assistance and protection of migrants arriving from, or faced with the prospect of returning to, areas affected by health crises. Also, there is a need to establish resilient food systems that could reduce food insecurity and the pressure to return to origin among migrants. There is a need to relook at the national migration policies, which should accommodate the assistance and protection of migrants arriving from, or faced with the prospect of returning to, areas affected by health crises. Also, there is a need to establish effective food systems that could reduce food insecurity and the pressure to return to origin among migrants.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the country into an unprecedented crisis and uncertainty. It called for putting workers rights and the needs, aspirations and rights of all people at the heart of economic, social and environmental policies. In India, the lockdown combined with global headwinds delivered a severe blow to the economy. For 2020, the IMF estimates GDP growth of just 1.9% for the country, the lowest rate since the 1991 balance-of-payment crisis. Women are marginally more likely than men to be in non-regular employment. Thus, COVID-19 has increased vulnerability of women employment and has further added care work responsibilities in this time. The COVID-19 epidemic in the country. A large number of migrants who are from rural areas but work in the cities may be susceptible. The quarantine measures taken by the government are appropriate, but these may lead to inefficient outcomes because many of the migrants would prefer to escape the centres of disease, consequently inflicting negative externalities on other uninfected people. Studies indicate that when a disease has an epicentre, the marginal migrant imposes a net negative externalit.. Research has also confirmed suspicions that travel restrictions do not have much effect on the spread of pandemics. The major problem is that usually enough cases have been 'seeded' by the time awareness of an epidemic crystallises. Many models have been developed and used to study the spread of an epidemic in space. Most of these are based either on contact distributions or on processes describing migration or movements of individuals in space.

COVID-19 has also exposed the vulnerability of urban

casual workers, many of whom are migrants. They were among the first to be jolted by the lockdown

measures as economic activities were halted threatening survival of many small urban units and jobs of these workers. With limited data available on migration, it is difficult to figure the number of migrants who lost jobs and accommodation during the pandemic and returned home.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim and objective of this study is to assess the impact of COVID-19 on migratory labour force who lost their jobs and accommodation during the pandemic COVID-19 and returned home. The largest number of these migrants sets off from the states of Bihar, UP, Bengal and Assam. Overall, these job losses were more in the unorganized sector.

3. Impact of the Pandemic COVID-19 on Workforce

The structure of urban and rural populations in India and the dynamic component of migration are likely to exacerbate the COVID-19 epidemic in the country. The quarantine measures taken by the government are appropriate but these may lead to inefficient outcomes because many of the migrants would prefer to escape the centers of disease, consequently inflicting negative externalities on other uninfected people. After the announcement of the 21-day-country-wide lockdown due to COVID-19 in India, there was a sudden gathering of tens of thousands of migrant workers from across the city of Delhi, walking towards bus terminals to cross into Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Other States.

With most transport links shut down, many were trying to

walk hundreds of kilometers back to their rural homes with their families. The studies suggest that the job loss during a downturn sometimes results in long-term unemployment and wage setbacks, deteriorating the health of unemployed workers and increasing poverty. In case of COVID-19 situation, a large number of migrant workers are at immediate risk of losing their current job, temporarily or permanently. The risk is particularly higher for those who are working in the unorganized sector, and those who do not have written contracts, or those whose contracts are at the verge of completion. The lockdown is likely to first hit contract workers across many of these industries.

4. Research Methods

The study is based on secondary data sources like published government reports, newspapers, blogs, articles, academic papers etc. It is an explanatory paper based on qualitative research analysis. Some extracts have been drawn from the existing literature available on various sites of internet.

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5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The pinpointed drug to prevent COVID-19 coronavirus is yet to see the light of accuracy. Rapid testing procedures in identified hotspots across the country along with state-imposed isolation and quarantine in state sponsored establishments while sealing the hotspot areas from rest of the country might bring a feasible alternative solution. Local administration can play a key role in identifying unemployed and eager youths in the process of door to door screening and provide them PPE as and when required. The states and union territories have been advised to make these vulnerable groups aware of measures taken by the government, including provision of free food grains and other essential items through public distribution system (PDS) COVID-19 knows no geographical boundaries, no caste, creed, colour or religion. It knows no economic or political strata but impacts everyone on this planet. Therefore, we must combat this crisis together and play our individual leadership roles in guiding communities in this crucial public health emergency situation.