



AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON UNORGANIZED MIGRANT WORKERS IN INDIA

Mr. Swapnadeep Bagdi

Research Scholar, M.Phil, Department of Geography,
Dr. C. V. Raman University, Kota, Chhattisgarh

Abstract:

This paper discusses various issues of migrant workers in India due to Covid-19 lockdown. This study found that the family income of the villages is dependent on agriculture and migrant workers. The rural areas of the country lack improved agricultural land, education centers, medical facilities, self-sufficient livelihoods and alternative opportunities. The socio-economic status of migrant workers is known through various newspaper, T.V, journals and studies which reveal the real situation of the country. The lockdown has left millions of migrant workers unemployed and reduced the economic status of permanent and temporary, short and long distance, seasonal workers, and the plight of the backward classes in the society through which the various promises made by the government can be realized. Migrant workers in the unorganized sector have faced various problems due to lack of proper information and lack of proper implementation of ration system. In conclusion, the Covid-19 has caused severe damage to the socio-economic conditions across the country. In developing countries like India, the government needs to take appropriate measures to address the plight of migrant workers through appropriate measures. The present research paper analyzes the socio-economic situation problems and the causes of migration. The study is based on secondary data collected from various newspapers, books, journals, government statistics, case studies etc.

Keyword: Lockdown, migrant workers, unorganized sector, socio-economic condition.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:	RESEARCH ARTICLE
Mr. Swapnadeep Bagdi Research Scholar, M.Phil, Department of Geography, Dr. C. V. Raman University, Kota, Chhattisgarh Email: swapnadeepbagdi2014@gmail.com	

Introduction:

India is a riverine and agricultural based country. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the people of India and the country's economic base is being built with this agricultural power. People living in this motherland work in different parts of the country to support their families financially through construction workers, hotel workers, miners, cleaners, agricultural workers, restaurant workers, retail, transport workers, social workers, maid and so on. The government of India launched a nationwide lockdown in March 2020 to protect the country from the deadly harmful virus covid-19. Migrant workers face various problems. Millions of migrant workers lose their jobs as a result of coronavirus lockdown in India. As a result, they have to walk about 400 to 1000 km by road to get back home. Burning examples are still floating in the eyes of India and the world through newspapers, TV and radio (Agarwal, 2020).

The number of migrant workers in India is higher than in other developed and developing countries. , Forest lands and the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of India after the independence of the country, Article 14 and 15 and 21 and 39 (a) provide equal rights to all citizens. The ultimate incompetence of the government in formulating social and economic policies of the unorganized workers has led to a life of crisis in the backward people of the country. "According to the International Labor Organization, India's unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in 2018 and rose to 5.27 percent in 2019, which economists predict will be higher in 2018 and 2019 as a result of the lockdown in March 2020". Lockdown will be the first and main reason for the increase in unemployment in 2020. (Jha, 2018, Ray, 2021) From the information obtained from CENTER FOR MONITORING INDIAN ECONOMY (CMIE) which can be easily inferred.

Year	Month	Percentage
2020	March	8.41
	April	23.38

Source: (CMIE, n.d.)

Objectives and methodology of the study:

i) Methodology: This study followed descriptive research design based on secondary data, information has been gathered from various places like TV, Newspaper, and Official Statistics, other related published and unpublished data or documents, Journal etc.

ii) The main goal of the study: is to study the problem of migration and its various associated factors.

iii) Specific objectives of the study:

1. To understand the problem of migration in India and its associated factors.
2. To understand the concept of lockdown and find out the relationship between lockdown and COVID 19.
3. To study the impact of lockdown, its effect on migrant workers so as to suggest measures to overcome the problems that our country is facing through.

4. To understand the working conditions of unorganized migration workers.

Outline of migration and its associated factors:

Migration concept:

According to The Dictionary of Human Geography, migration is the process of moving from place to place for the purpose of staying permanently in a place for a long time. (Sen, 2008). “According to census data 2001 and 2011, the population grew by 16%, but the number of migrants increased by 45%, which increased the amount of migration. On the other hand most of the migration has been noticed within one's own country.” (Lyer, 2020)

Classification of migration:

There are many types of general travel depending on the subject. Here are some common types of migration.

(A) According to the characteristics of the migrating people-

1. Travel to take part in humanitarian work.
2. Travel to participate in service work.

(B) According to the characteristics of the migrant stability-

1. Long-term migration.
2. Short-term travel.
3. Daily travel.

(C) Travel according to compulsion-

1. Migration in a voluntary manner.
2. Compulsory migration (Sen, 2008).

Reasons for migration: Although migration has taken place for various reasons, various workers working in unorganized fields in India migrate for the following reasons.

1. Economic reasons –

- A. The amount of land is less or not.
- B. There are no job opportunities in your own place.
- C. Not getting opportunity in government projects.

2. Social factors -

- A. Reluctance to work on the basis of race.
- B. Gender-based work.
- C. Caste based work.
- D. Social boycott.

3. Political reasons –

- A. Political instability.
- B. False suit for political reasons.

Unorganized field:

Generally, unorganized sector means those workplaces which do not have government-made labor regulations, i.e. leave, provident fund, maternity leave, health benefits, retirement allowance etc. under Indian labour law. (Verma, 2020)

Workers in unorganized sector:

Construction workers, hotel workers, mine workers, cleaners, agricultural workers, restaurant workers, retailers, transport workers, social workers etc.

Regions of migration inter district, state and other state in India:

List of migrants according to the 2001 census

Table-1

No.	Category	Percentage
1	District to District	72.2
2	District to state	17.8
3	District to others state	13.1

Source: (*Census of India: Migration, 2001*)

According to the 2001 census, the proportion of migrant workers from district to district was 72.2 per cent and the proportion of migrant workers from district to state was 16.7 per cent and the number of migrant workers from district to other states was 13.1 per cent. In other words, according to the census, the tendency of migrant workers to work in the district is high because there is a lack of proper information and proper training to go to work in other states. As a result of skilled and appropriate training and higher wages, migrant workers tend to move from districts to their home states and other states. “According to the 2011 census, 37 per cent of migrant workers came from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar. According to the 2011 census, Delhi, Mumbai has the highest number of migrant workers at 29.2 million”. (Jha, et al 2019)

Regions of migration of India 2001

Table-2

Regions of migration	Percentage of migrants		
	Persons	Male	Female
Work/Employment	14.7	37.6	3.2
Business	1.2	2.9	0.3
Moved with households	21.0	25.1	18.9
other	9.7	15.7	6.7

Source: Table D3, Census of India 2001

According to the 2001 census, the work / employment of migrant workers was 14.7 per cent, Business 1.2 per cent, Moved with households 21.9 per cent, and in other cases 9.8 per cent. In the case of more migrant workers and more males than females, it is assumed that there is a tendency in India to leave the area and work elsewhere which is not the case in the local area. In addition, there

is less tendency to migrate in business and less migration of women than men which is mainly due to social reasons.

The number is high and there is a gap between the number of male and female migrants, which is less than in other areas. According to the 2011 census, the number of male migrant workers has increased to 14 crore and the number of migrant workers has increased.

“According to the National Sample Survey (NSS) data of 2007-2008, the number of inter-state migrants has increased slightly compared to other years, which is 11.5 percent and the number of people in the age group of 20-29 years is higher. In addition, various statistics have shown that the number of migrant workers in India is not accurately measured. The number of migrant workers from rural and urban areas can be estimated by looking at the number of unreserved passengers traveling to different states by rail”. (Kundu, et al 2017)

The main reasons for the problem of unorganized migrant workers in India:

In developing countries like India, the number of migrant workers working in the unorganized sector is much higher than other countries in the world which strengthens the economy of the country. As a result of the coronavirus lockdown in India, millions of migrant workers have lost their jobs and have to walk about 200 to 600 km to reach home. According to the information published in the newspaper, migrant workers were working in Delhi, Maharashtra, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal construction workers, hotel workers, miners, cleaners, agricultural workers, restaurant workers, retail traders, transport workers, social workers, maid, managers etc. Since the announcement of the lock down, the contractors and the landlords have been pressuring us to leave the place of work as they have asked us to leave the house as we have not received any rent from them. I started my journey with my family in the dark at night, walking 500-650 km and after 10-15 days I reached my district at night (Agarwal, 2020). According to the information provided by the migrant workers, they could not find out about the workers 'special train, workers' special bus and other facilities announced by the central and state governments as they did not have any smart phone and any other means.

1. Lack of accurate information: - Migrant workers in India lack appropriate information such as - type of work, wages, housing, food opportunities, security, government policy, etc. without knowing the issues of working in cities and towns.

2. Financial Problems: - Although India's economy is dependent on agriculture, it has not been able to develop its agricultural land in the world market economy, which has resulted in financial problems. Most of the migrant workers working in the unorganized sector are from the backward classes of the society who work in various cities and towns of India in search of work due to poverty.

3. Lack of jobs at the local level: - After the reorganization of the states of India, the job opportunities that were possible for the backward classes of the society living in the states could not be done at the local level which resulted in workers looking for jobs elsewhere.

4. Social Problems: - The type of housing in rural and urban India is based on race and religion, which is creating problems for migrant workers as people of different backgrounds do not have access to all jobs.

5. Education and Training Problems: - The first and foremost reason for the growth of economic development in a developing country like India is to increase production through the use of cheap labor and technology. In a country like India, most of the migrant workers are lagging behind in primary to higher education, as a result of which the use of technology is not going to accelerate the economic development of the country.

6. Lack of accurate information on unorganized workers: - Lack of accurate information on unorganized sector workers from the Government of India and each State Government has forced many skilled workers to leave the local area to work in other cities and towns. The information that the government lacks is name, address, type of work, name of the contractor, labor protection rules.

7. Struggle between Center and State government: - India is a democratic country. According to the constitution of the country, the federal state structure has the power to enact laws on various issues, such as agricultural laws, labour laws, education laws, etc. Migrant workers are facing various problems as a result of conflict between the Center and the state over who should have the power to legislate for the betterment of unorganized workers.

8. Government's indifference: Even though the government has introduced some schemes for unorganized workers at the Center and in the states of India, most of its benefits are not available to the working class. M.G.N.R.G.A scheme, Social Security scheme, Ration card, Soft Loan, Skill training etc.

Effect of lockdown on unorganized migrant workers in India:

As the development of human civilization has increased rapidly in the world, various problems have arisen and if we keep an eye on the pages of history, we can see that the development of civilization has resulted in various epidemics such as cholera, plague, food and crisis. In the modern era, the advent of information technology, the corona virus has caused a terrible epidemic which has created a deep crisis in the medical system of the developed world. Coronavirus outbreak was first reported in China's Wuhan province and countries around the world have taken various steps to protect themselves from the virus, the main one being the lockdown that has been able to protect the human race from the epidemic. (Bi India bureau, 2020)

1. Lockdown:

Lockdown is defined as an emergency protocol declared by the government so that people of a country cannot leave their homes or certain areas and people are restricted from traveling to different places. Lockdowns are usually carried out in natural disasters, war-torn areas, terrorist attacks, etc. Currently no people will be able to enter the workplace, malls or cinemas and other places during the corona virus lockdown. The purpose of this lockdown is to prevent people from interacting with each other, but for some urgent needs, necessary services such as groceries, vegetables, medicines, banks have been kept open. Currently, lockdowns are

also partial and nocturnal, which experts believe is possible to protect people from the virus. In addition, special needs can be traveled with the permission of a government official. (Bhatia, 2020)

2. Relationship between Lockdown and Covid-19:

India's first Covid-19 case was reported in January in Thrissur district of Kerala. Currently there is a special relationship between Lockdown and Covid-19 which has been highlighted through various official data. The main reason for the announcement of lockdown in the case of Covid-19 is that the virus is most likely to be transmitted from one person to another, which has led to lockdown measures in various countries. Experts have taken lockdown measures to protect people from a harmful virus like Covid-19, which can prevent this harmful virus. China took the first lockdown to protect itself from the Covid-19 virus, which made it possible to prevent the virus, and later countries around the world, such as the Russia, Australia, and New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland Brazil United States, India, Bangladesh, announced a lockdown. The impact of the complete lockdown and various restrictions can be seen in the huge impact on people's livelihood and economy. Outbreaks of corona virus in India were highest in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. As a result of severe lockdown in India, the number of Covid-19 cases started to be comparatively less. "The Covid-19 case has become a hot spot and in 2020, 20 per cent of the Covid-19 cases were found in Maharashtra and 49 per cent in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka". (Rawat, 2020)

Socio-economic impact of lockdown on unorganized migrant workers:

Migrant workers have suffered the most from the Covid-19 epidemic. In March, states in India announced curfews and lockdowns to control the spread of the deadly virus, forcing thousands of migrant workers to leave their jobs and move to their cities and villages, affecting India's livelihood economy, social industry and other sectors. Various state governments have taken steps to provide free lunches, accommodation, face masks and sanitizers to keep migrant workers at work.

- 1. Impact of Lockdown in General and on Migrant Workers:** - Migrant workers have suffered the most from the Covid-19 epidemic. In March, states in India announced curfews and lockdowns to control the spread of the deadly virus, forcing thousands of migrant workers to leave their jobs and move to their cities and villages, affecting India's livelihood economy, social industry and other sectors. Various state governments have taken steps to provide free lunches, accommodation, face masks and sanitizers to keep migrant workers at work.
- 2. Impact of Industrial Production and labour:** - The role of unorganized labor is highest in all types of industrial production in India. The announcement of curfew and lockdown in India in March has had a major impact on industrial production." According to 2018 estimates, about 16 percent of global GDP comes from the manufacturing sector, which affects the

economies of different countries, and according to data released by the World Bank, India's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to be 3.2% in 2020-2021. 3.1% which can be seen to change from Year 2020-2021 and Year 2019-20” (Kishore et al, 2020). The lack of migrant workers has resulted in industrial production Automobile sector, real estate and construction sector, travel sector tourism sector etc.

3. **Impact of Indian Economy:** - “According to official data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, the Indian economy contracted by 7.3% in April-June of the current financial year. According to the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, the unemployment rate has risen from 7.9% to 12% between April and June 2021” (Mangla, 2021). In India, the closure of transport, businesses, shops, restaurants, mills, services, etc., has had an impact on the economy. In India, the lack of proper information about migrant workers makes it difficult for the government to adopt various schemes.
4. **Impact of Income loss for marginalized communities:** - Marginalized people have suffered the most as a result of the lockdown. This marginalized population works as construction workers, hotel workers, cleaners, miners, restaurant workers, retailers, transport workers, social workers, etc.” As a result of the lockdown, they lose their jobs and lose 2% of the country's GDP, according to scroll data” (Roshan, 2020).
5. **Impact in Rural and Urban Towns:** - Villagers are preventing migrant workers from entering villages and towns as the virus has infected thousands of workers returning to their villages and towns after the announcement of the lockdown for the Covid-19 epidemic, although the government has provided safe houses for migrant workers. People are being asked to maintain social distance to protect themselves from the virus, although a look at social history in India shows that upper caste people maintained social distance with the untouchables so that they would not defile upper caste people. The spread of the Covid-19 epidemic virus from one body to another has created panic among the people, although the administration has allowed them to enter the village. (Soni, 2020)
6. **Impact of job loss:** - The announcement of the lockdown has resulted in huge loss of work for migrant workers as thousands of workers have left their jobs and returned to their villages and towns, increasing the financial burden on migrant workers' families. Migrant workers work mainly industrial production, real estate and construction sector, Automobile sector travel sector tourism sector etc. “According to the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), 21 million workers lost their jobs, which affected the country's economy” (Roshan, 2020).

Suggestions:

Problem faced by the migrant workers as a result of lockdown has been accommodated to overcome their problems. The Government of India and the State Government, NGOs, Clubs have taken a no of assistance to the migrant people including providing ration, health checkup, providing cooked food and a host of other help. Some suggestions may be given to overcome the problems whatever as analyzed on the above:

1. In order to get the information of migrant workers properly, it is necessary to collect good statistics at the Panchayat and block level.
2. The Government of India and the State Governments should make arrangements for self-reliance through various projects such as administration M.G.N.R.G.A 100 days' work, ration card, soft loan, self-reliance scheme, social security scheme, self-reliance employment scheme, backward welfare department loan, etc.
3. The Government of India and the State Governments should provide housing for migrant workers working in the unorganized sector in different states.
4. Provide medical and social security for migrant workers.
5. Guarantee pension for migrant workers.
6. Migrant workers need to be trained to become skilled workers.
7. The Government of India and the State Governments should keep separate money in each budget.
8. The Government of India and the State Government should provide free higher education to the children of migrant workers in their families.

Concluding remarks:

From the information given by the main artisans of the formation of the country, it can be inferred that the proof of how much the working class has benefited from the laws and policies made for the working class has been seen by the Indians through the senses. It is a fact that the weakening of the labor force in the world's largest democracies is a major obstacle to the formation of a humanitarian country. In order to lead the people of the country in the right direction, the government should successfully shape the economy of the country by enacting laws and taking the right steps. In the case of a developing country like India, the Center and the State Governments have to work in collaboration with each other to take every step so that the promises made by the government can be properly implemented. It will be possible to take and solve various problems. Therefore, ordinary, backward, Dalit and tribal people are counting the days waiting for the time when these neglected and downtrodden people will get the statutory rights of the constitution.

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