

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

CURRENT POSITION OF INDIAN MIGRANTS:

THE COVID 19 EFFECT

*By Dr. Malti H. Shukla

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 crisis has forced India to finally acknowledge the migrant. Since decades, the millions of work forces moved from one state to other state and also some shores abroad for looking up to opportunities & livelihoods. This international pandemic ensured that none of the people section stays unaffected. Though, this issue scale may vary from one state to other state or from one city to other city, but its naked fact that no one is unscathed left. Indian migrant work forces during this COVID-19 pandemic have faced multiple hardships. With shut down of factories & workplaces due to imposed lockdown in country, the millions of work forces migrated had deal with income losses, shortage of food as well as with uncertainty of their future.

During one of the strictest 2-month-long Indian lockdown, majority of the activities of industry & commerce were halted resulting; a struggle of the thousands of daily wagers to live at rented shanties in big cities. As all the public transport modes were stopped because of lockdown, the millions poor Indians had to walk hundreds of the kilometres to reach to their native places.

KEY WORDS: Migrants, Covid-19, Lockdown, Economy, Social problems.

Dr. Malti H. Shukla* - PH.D. IN SOCIOLOGY, SARDAR PATEL UNIVERSITY, VALLABH VIDYANAGAR.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 crisis has forced India to finally acknowledge the migrant. Since decades, the millions of work forces moved from one state to other state and also some shores abroad for looking up to opportunities & livelihoods. This international pandemic ensured that none of the people section stays unaffected. Though, this issue scale may vary from one state to other state or from one city to other city, but its naked fact that no one is unscathed left. India always had an internal problem of migrants. The Covid-19 pandemic has only made it look worse. Approx 10 Crore people were estimated migrant work forces of India due to lockdown. The vast majority among them were the people pushed out by poorer states towards the developed ones. Due to situation in the country under lockdown because of the spread of corona virus, these migrants were at desperation for going back home.

CURRENT POSITION OF INDIAN MIGRANTS

Indian migrant work forces during COVID-19 pandemic have faced many hardships. With shut down of factories & workplaces due to imposed lockdown in country, the millions of work forces migrated had deal with income losses, shortage of food as well as with uncertainty of their future. Following it, many of those families went hungry. Thousands of them then began walking back home, with no means of transport due to the lockdown. In response, Central as well as State Governments took many decisive measures to help them, and also later arranged various forms of transport for them. Approx three hundred migrant work forces died because of lockdown with many

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

reasons like starvation, exhaustion, suicides, road & rail accidents, denial of timely medical care and police brutality. The announced nationwide lockdown overnight by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at March 24 2020 forced approx 10 million labourer migrants returning at their home states.

The states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar witnessed highest migrant returns, as report submitted by Santosh Kumar Gangwar, The minister of the state of labour and employment in parliament on Sept. 14, 2020. Majority of such migrants had to reach their homes by walking.

During one of the strictest 2-month-long Indian lockdown, majority of the activities of industry & commerce were halted resulting; a struggle of the thousands of daily wagers to live at rented shanties in big cities. As all the public transport modes were stopped because of lockdown, the millions poor Indians had to walk hundreds of the kilometres to reach to their native places. As these migrants also carry a burden of India's GDP growth at their shoulders is evident from their labour in construction industry, farms of agriculturally developed states, sprawling offices in the services sector, vendors lining up vegetable and fruit markets in big urban clusters, milk and food delivery boys, newspaper hawkers and factories in manufacturing hubs of the country. The last time India witnessed such massive migration was at the time of partition in 1947 when 15 million people were displaced.

CONCLUSION

That the migrant work forces have never been the focus of serious policy making of governments is also evident from the fact that there is no concrete

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

number of migrants in India. States have looked clearly clueless in having an effective SOP for sending back migrant work forces home in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

If the government had accurate data about the number of migrant work forces, their average monthly income, their family size and their cost of living, it would have known how much they had in their pockets when Shramik Special trains were allowed to run for those stranded in camps.

REFERENCES

1. Santosh Kumar Gangwar, minister of the state of labour and employment, Report submitted in parliament on Sept. 14, 2020.
2. <https://www.prsindia.org/theprsblog/migration-india-and-impact-lockdown-migrants>
3. <https://pscnotes.in/problem-of-migration-in-india/>
4. https://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/migrations.aspx
5. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/country-resource/india>