COVID-19: INTER-STATE MIGRATION- PROBLEMS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Human history is observing a very strange time, fighting an invisible enemy, the novel COVID-19. It is now a global crisis of great magnitude and may be compared to the great depression of 1929. The similarity is obvious since the main problem seems to be the loss of jobs and income, causing a huge drop in aggregate demand for all the major economies. Lockdowns, travel bans, and social distancing measures in response to the crisis have affected internal migrant workers, who found themselves stranded, unable to return to their native places. Generally it has affected the most marginalized sections of the society, who depend on daily wages for their living. This pandemic situation has led to a reverse migration as industries were shut and paying house rent or taking care of basic needs become a challenge, apart from health concerns. Many people tried to walk thousands of miles back to home because of the strict lockdown in India. Governments of different states have arranged for safe return of these migrant workers through the appropriate mode of transport services. After reaching their native places, they faced with the situation of spending a few days in temporary shelters/relief camps, which may be quarantine centers. According to CMIE estimates, unemployment has reached 24.2% with urban unemployment being 26%. There is some problem associated with this inter-state migration on the economy. Government has taken some policy measures to overcome the problem arises due

to this inter -state migration. The present study makes an attempt to assess some of the economic problems that occurs due to this inter- state migration and also try to analyze the policy taken by government.

Key Words: COVID-19, Inter-state Migration, Economic Problems, Policy Implications.

Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), a highly infectious disease, was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. In India, the disease was first detected on 30 January 2020 in Kerala in a student who returned from Wuhan. The Indian economy has been hit hard by the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19)-driven global crisis. As on 1 May 2020, about 25,000 people in India have been affected by COVID-19. Social distancing and stay home, stay safe became the only mantras to fight against the spread of COVID-19. It is now a global crisis of great magnitude and may be compared to the great depression of 1929. The similarity is obvious since the main problem seems to be loss of jobs and income, causing a huge drop in aggregate demand for all the major economies. So far, India has been able to keep the spread of the virus relatively low compared to the US and many European countries. COVID-19 is an economic disaster and ispredictedto pose serious challenges to an economythat was already enduring a major economicslowdown. As we all know inter- state migration is an extremely emerging phenomenon especially in developing countries. People's migration is considered an important livelihood strategy in India. The lockdown in India has impacted the livelihoods of the country's nearly 40 million internal migrants. The COVID-19 outbreak has created pathetic conditions for many migrant workers, losing their (mostly informal) jobs.Lockdowns, loss of employment, and social distancing prompted a chaotic and painful process of mass return for internal migrants in India. Governments need to address the challenges facing internal migrants by including them in health services and cash transfer and other social programs, and protecting them from discrimination.

Objectives of the study-

The main objectives of the study are-

1. To study problems of internal migrants arise due to COVID -19 pandemic.
2. To see policies that has been taken by the government for the internal migrant workers.

Data Source & Methodology:

The present study is based on secondary data source. It is drawn mainly from the publications of books, monthly journals, articles, magazines, and official reports published by the central and state governments.

Here descriptive study is used to elaborate the specified objectives with graphs.

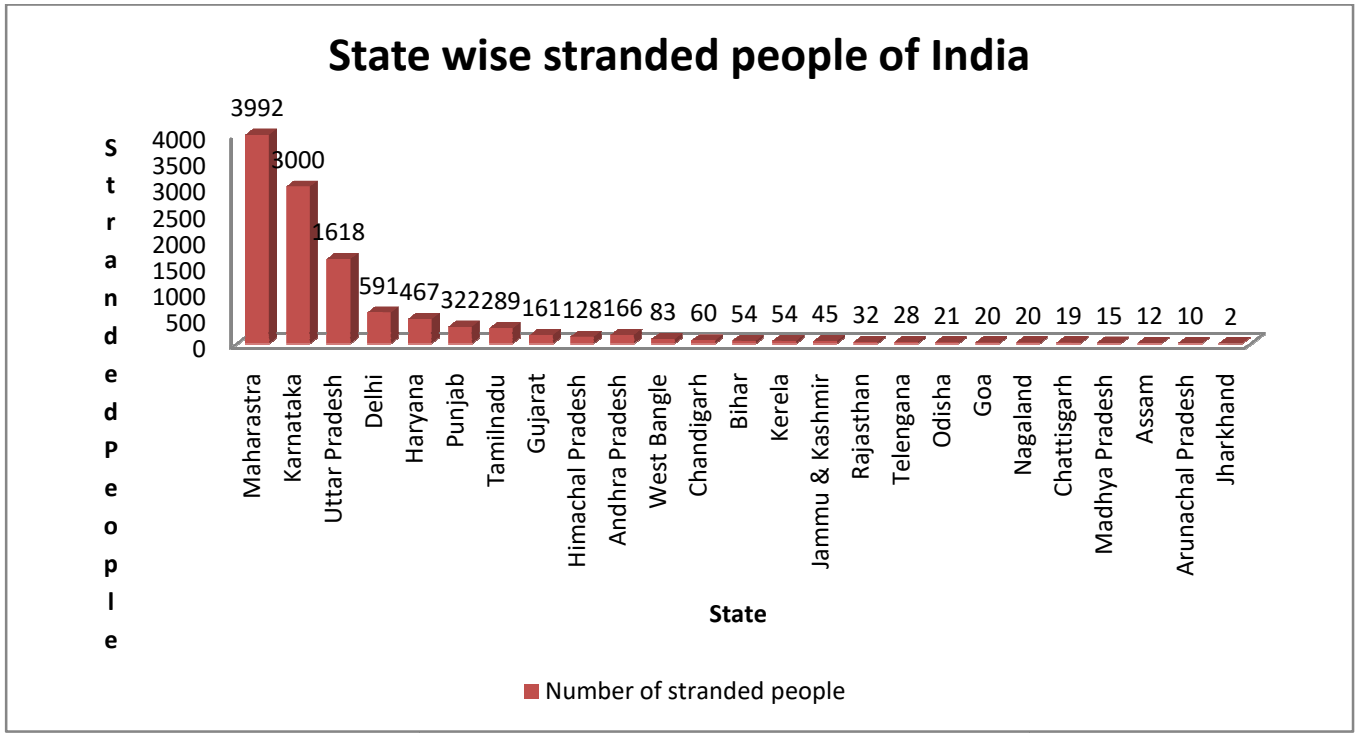
Inter- state migration-

Lockdowns, travel bans, and social distancing measures in response to the crisis have affected internal migrant workers, who found themselves stranded,unable to return to their native places. It has much more impact on those workers who either work on short term contracts or those who are without any job contracts. These are generally the most marginalized sections of the society, depending on daily wages for their living. People are facing challenges in getting food,shelter,income due to contraction in output, loss of job, fear of getting infected and anxiety. Sudden loss of their jobs causes a major drop of demand in the economy. Moreover as the Dhabas, Restaurants are closed during lockdown; private income of the citizen also continues to decline. As a result they stop purchasing durable and non durable goods making the producers of these goods loss in their business and income. Savings are also dried out leaving many people no way out except began to go back to their home states. Because of strict lockdown measures in India, many people tried to walk thousands of miles back to home place.

When migrant workers flee from the city they not only lose their livelihood but they may carry the infections to their native places (BBC, 2020). After reaching their native places, they faced with the situation of spending a few days in temporary shelters/relief camps, which may be quarantine centers. Several state govtshave taken steps of providing food and other amenities of these migrants' workers. Various studies report that most of them need psychological support to boost up their mental stability. To provide security of these workers many states have trained

ASHA workers to spread awareness about the virus which may safe illegal and unsafe movement of these workers. NGOs can be encouraged to participate in ensuring a safe return of migrants by collaboration with medical personnel. Governments of different states have arranged safe return of these migrants workers through the appropriate mode of transport services.

Fig1: State wise stranded people in India during lock down period



Source: SWAN report

Figure 1 gives the distribution where the workers are stranded due to lockdown. Here the majority of workers are stranded in Maharashtra (3992), followed by Karnataka (3000) and then Uttar Pradesh (1618). Assam has recordeda very few stranded people (12) compared to other major cities. Arunachal Pradesh and Jharkhand have 10 and 12 stranded people during this lockdown respectively.

Issues identified with between state movement:

1. ***Hidden joblessness***

If there should be an occurrence of COVID 19, much the same as extraordinary misery 1929, all the creation units have not endured a lot of harm yet they are secured. Accordingly positions were lost and individuals have an abrupt loss of their salary. As indicated by CMIE gauges joblessness to have arrived at 24.2% with urban joblessness being 26%. This circumstance powers laborers to return to their local terrains.

2. Wastage of food grains:

The farming area increased an individual spot as a specialist of monetary advancement simply after the achievement of green upheaval in creating nations. India's agribusiness division relies upon transient workers for a few tasks. Because of this lockdown, numerous vagrant workers have come back to their local spots from different urban areas. These laborers are fundamentally from eastern states, are working in farming fields in the nation's west and north. They are likewise altogether utilized in marine angling, post-gather exercises, overseeing animals, in promoting, and in the making of farming framework. Apparently the transients' arrival is negatively affecting horticulturally evolved districts like Punjab, with the quick reason being the collect of significant robi crops like wheat and mustard, bringing about a higher creation cost. On the off chance that the lockdown proceeds without satisfactory moderation endeavors, even the kharif yield could be influenced. Except if remuneration for the loss of work power, numerous marine angling and fish preparing exercises will likewise be affected. By chance this year is considered as acceptable reap year. Anyway with farming gracefully chain broken and absence of storerooms, food items may get squandered and it results an inflationary circumstance in an econmy.

3. Neediness:

India is encountering lakhs of transient specialists and their families in the course of the remainder of two months. Abandoned Workers Action Network (SWAN) report shows that 86% of transient laborers had not been paid by their representatives during the lockdown. COVID-19 has incidentally obliterated the additions of diminishing destitution. In view of NSSO information of 2011-12, ICIER has evaluated that only a 25% decrease in yearly salary may make the quantity of poor increment about 21.9% to 46.3% of the populace.

Vagrant specialist misfortunes their work and wages due to COVID - 19 pandemic and it prompts them towards neediness.

4. ***Food Insecurity***

During the COVID-19 emergency, a huge number of vagrants around the globe face food instability. Laborers who leave the places where they grew up likewise need access to financed food made accessible through the open dissemination framework, i.e., apportion shops. This is on the grounds that apportion cards, which award access to financed nourishment for residents, have generally not been compact either inside the state or across state fringes.

Arrangement Measures for vagrant laborers

Because of the expansion of lockdown, vagrant laborers keep on enduring the worst part of its negative impacts. Numerous businesses have stopped creation because of these pandemic limitations, prompting joblessness and food weakness for the nation's most helpless populace.

On May 12, Prime Minister NarendraModi declared the AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self dependent India) help and recuperation conspire just as data about the new emphasis of India's lockdown 4.0. This abhiyan reported by the administration and choices taken by RBI is to tune of Rs. 20 lakh center, which is equal to practically 10% of India's GDP. This bundle will likewise concentrate on engaging poor people, workers, vagrants and so on both from composed and sloppy divisions.

There are a portion of the present moment and long haul measures for supporting poor people, including vagrants, ranchers, small organizations and road merchants.

- *Free food grains flexibly to vagrants for 2 months.*

- *Technology framework to be utilized empowering transients to get to PDS (Ration) from any reasonable value shops in India by March, 2021-One country one proportion card. The plan ought to permit vagrant specialists to get to food in states other than that of their changeless home.*

- *Scheme for Affordable Rental Housing Complexes for Migrant Workers and Urban Poor to be propelled.*

- *2% Interest Subvention for a year for Sishu MUDRA loanees-alleviation of Rs 1500 crore.*

Other measures:

- *The government has given a free flexibly of 5 kg of food grain per individual and 1 kg channa per family every month for two months, for those vagrants who are neither recipients of the National Food Security Act (2013), or NFSA ,nor forces state cards. The administration anticipates that 8 crore vagrants should profit by this plan and the inside will spend Rs 3500 crore on this.*

- *The Finance Minister recognized the centrality of the MGNREGS in giving occupations to returning laborers in provincial territories. The middle has now exhorted States/Union Territories to give work through the plan and to stretch out this to the storm season too in giving employments in manors, cultivation, animals related work. The CMIE's most recent joblessness review report likewise found that while different sections (little dealers, salaried representatives, business visionaries, and so on) have endured huge occupation misfortunes, the quantity of ranchers in the overview had expanded, showing that homestead work has been a wellspring of employment during the lockdown.*

- *The Prime Minister GareebKalyan Scheme worth Rs 1.7 trillion will have two sections i.e money move and food security .COVID - 19 bundles to take of the government assistance worries of poor people and vagrant specialists who have enduring due to an across the nation lockdown.*

- *Migrant laborers who don't have apportion cards and are abandoned in various pieces of the nation because of across the country lockdown will get free food grains for the following two months.*

Conclusion:

From above study we can conclude that the soon-expected finish of coronavirus-drove lockdown may not be the finish of difficulties for some, particularly workers and transient specialists. The finish of lockdown will probably begin another period of issues for them, as work misuse may rise fundamentally in the pockets where there is an oversupply of laborers, even as the business tries to excuse the possibility of such a circumstance emerging. The abuse of the work class may ascend after the lockdown is lifted, as an ever increasing number of individuals attempt to recapture their occupations and budgetary wellbeing, making an oversupply in the market. At this time the issue of the quantum and structure of the revival package is of utmost importance for revive of the economic situation in the country. The revival package has to cover the loss of private investment and private consumption. The return migrants can become a renewed source of economic growth by planting the seeds of their on the job skills learnt in the urban sector into their home states.

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