

## INDIA WALKING: THE LABOUR MIGRATION DUE TO COVID 19

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### Abstract

To contain the spread of Covid 19 pandemic i.e. Corona Virus the Prime Minister of India imposed nationwide lockdown with barely four hours notice on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020. At the same instance the first prime question arises in front of millions of migrant labours is how to survive and when to go back at native. During first two lockdowns the transit was not permitted still thousands of migrant labours left the workplace at their own. At the beginning of third lockdown on may 03, 2020 when conditioned transit permitted, a human flood have been seen on all highways & state roads. There are certain conditions imposed by government like e-pass, Aarogya Setu app for safe & secure transit but a gross violation of conditions took place. The police and security forces become silent observer of this historical migration after partition in 1947. There are more than 140 million migrant labours in India and maximum of them intended to reach their native place due to number of facts & myths in their mind; as a result India walking.

In the present research paper and little attempt is made to focus on ground reality of a labour migration, the status, scenario, facts, conditions of travel, dilly-dally attitude and stepfather behavior of Government compelled migrant labour to exodus is discussed.

### Introduction

The Government of India has declared nationwide lockdown on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to avoid a spread of Covid-19 pandemic i.e. Corona Virus and along with world economy the Indian economy who is in catastrophic collapse. The lock down in India was initially introduced for 21 days i.e. from 25 march to 14 April subsequently it increases till 3<sup>rd</sup> may as lockdown second, it further extended till 17<sup>th</sup> may as lockdown three, even after the fourth lockdown were declared for 18<sup>th</sup> may to 31<sup>st</sup> may 2020. During the lockdown hundreds of decision were delivered by government and it change as per the need of hours.

There are more than 140 millions of migrant labours in India. The fear of Corona Virus and lockdown decision stuck in their minds and as a outcome of fear, millions of migrant labours are on road i.e. exodus starts. Initially it was started in first lockdown itself but at the end of second lockdown on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2020, Government allowed conditional migration subjected to e-pass and the volcano blasts, millions of migrant peoples are on road intended to back to their native. The procedure and arrangements made by Government for migration was seems only on paper and subjected to elite class of society. Millions peoples left metro cities and their workplaces with Bus, trucks, auto, tempo, car, motorbikes, cycles and even walking too. Highways and state roads are flooded with humans traveling with neither facility nor physical distancing and in poignant sense India Walking.

According to World Bank report “The lockdown in India has impacted the livelihood of a large proportion of the country’s nearly 40 million internal migrants. Around 50000-60000 moved from urban centers to rural areas of

origin in the span of a few days.” According to report- ‘COVID-19 crisis through a migration lens’- magnitude of internal migration is about two and half times that of international migration. Lockdowns, loss of employment, and social distancing promoted a chaotic and painful process of mass return for internal migrants in India. (World Bank, 2020)

### **Objective of Study**

- 1) To study the impact of lockdown on labor migration in India.
- 2) To identify the lockdown effect on Psychology of labour and its outcomes
- 3) To access chronologically the steps taken by Government and its consequences on labor migration

### **Research Methodology**

The study on labour migration in India due to Pandemic Covid-19 is conducted. The period of study was from 25<sup>th</sup> march 2020 to 31 May 2020 i.e. during all four lockdowns declared by Government of India. The study is exploratory in nature. The research is purely based on secondary data like information through newspaper, websites, and reports of various relevant organizations like International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Bank.

The lockdown was started on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and continues till 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 in four phases. The labour migration was started during 1<sup>st</sup> phase only but at the end of second phase when official transit is allowed, the migration volumes expands like flood on roads. The chronological ground reality of migration of workforce due to Covid has been explained with the help of authenticate sources.

### **Limitation of Study**

- 1) The study is based on secondary data available through newspaper and website for the period of 25<sup>th</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020.
- 2) The reliability and authenticity of data depends on the honesty maintained by news paper while drafting it.

### **Migrant labour in India**

In India according the census 201, more than 450 million Indians were found to be migrants for various reasons with marriage and employments are the two major reasons. Out of 450 millions migrants it is estimated that almost 140 million people acts as a migrant labours. Migration becomes essential for people in order to survive themselves from poverty, also lack of local option available, better opportunities are also the few reasons for migration. Migration in India is in two steps i.e. interstate migrants and intra state migrants. Also migration from rural area to urban area well as seasonal migration for worth is a pervasive reality in rural India.

Migrants form the largest part of India’s vast unorganized work sector. Their entry into the labour markets is marked with several endemic disadvantages. Devoid of critical skills, information and bargaining power, migrant workers often get caught in exploitative labour arrangements that forces them to work in low-end, low-value, hazardous

work. Lack of identity and legal protection accentuates this problem. The hardships of migrant workers are especially magnified when state boundaries are crossed and the distance between the “source” and “destination” increases. Migrants can also become easy victims of identity politics and parochialism.

Despite the vast numbers of migrant workers, the policies of the Indian state have largely failed in providing any form of legal or social protection to this vulnerable group. In a continuous state of drift, migrants are left out of the scope of state provisions at both ends- the “source” and the “destination”. The urban labour markets treat them with opportunistic indifference extracting hard labour but denying basic entitlements such as decent shelter, fair priced food, subsidized healthcare facilities or training and education. They are also usually out of bound of government and civil society initiatives, both because of being “invisible” and for their inability to carry entitlements along as they move. **(Labour and Migration in India, 2020)**

The maximum migration across India took place from ‘Bimaru states’ i.e. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. As widely believed Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are responsible for most migrants. According to census 2011, 20.9 millions people migrated outside the state from these two states. This is 37% of the number of people who were interstate migrants according to that enumeration. Also, by taking the example of National Capital and financial capital of India i.e. Delhi and Mumbai, it is seen that they both are widely considered as a migrant magnets and the 2011 census bears that out. According to census 2011, migrants from other states in Delhi and Mumbai numbered 9.9 million or almost third of combined population of 29.2 million in these two metropolitan cities.

### **Ground Reality / Rapporteur of labour Migration**

On the night of 24th March 2020, hours after Indian prime minister Narendra Modi declared a nationwide lockdown, millions of migrant labours becomes fidgety and few thousand foot looser are started moving towards their native places at their own. As the numbers of lockdown increase patience level of migrant labours reduces. It happened due to unavailability of work, money, scattered resources, fear about corona, Stress of future, psychological insecurity factor and what not. It was the beginning of India’s second migration after historical migration in 1947 due to partition. Government machineries, bureaucracy, social organizations, no one can expect such huge human flood on roads. In shame words ‘India Walking’ the most pathetic labour migration in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Why it happens? Is it not unavoidable? Is there is no another way? Is lockdown against a minimal period of 04 hours is really required when we know about Covid-19 since January 2020? Where this migrant labour in ghantanaad as well as in lamp lightening? Before taking such historical decision why labour migration possibilities were ignored? Thousands of such questions will arise in future when considerable quantum of migrant labour denied returning back. It is fact that the real unsung heroes of Indian economy i.e. migrant labours are sophisticatedly overlooked.

Fortunately the media has taken due cognizance of the pathetic scenario of migrant labour. Here we discussed the various news & article published or uploaded by several well-known media houses of India about facts & realities of labour migration. For better perception & orientation the lockdown stage wise changing scenario are expressed below.

### **Lockdown I (March 25 to April 14, 2020)**

As the nationwide lockdown declared migrant workers walks along a highway with their families as they return to their villages, during 21 days nationwide lockdown to limit the spreading of corona virus disease. Instantly the issue of providing food & shelter along with cloths & medical aid has been raised. According to news18 website sources on 28<sup>th</sup> march Government changes rule to help migrant worker amid Covid-19 lockdown. State disaster funds to be used for providing food. The center on Saturday asked the State Government and Union Territory administrations to utilize the state disaster response fund (SDRF) to which 29000 crore has been allocated for the next fiscal, for providing food and shelter to migrant workers hit by the 21 day lockdown. Joint secretary in the ministry of home affairs said that the central government has also asked the states and UTs to set up camps for migrant workers fleeing cities and carry out their health checkups. Home minister has asked the State Government and UT administrations to utilize the SDRF money for providing foods and temporary shelters to the unorganized sector affected by the lockdown. (**“Govt Changes Rules to Help Migrant Workers Amid Covid-19”,2020**)

The states & UTS were also told to communicate about availability of free food and accommodation to migrant workers through the public address system. Instructions were given to employers by state about to insist the migrant worker to stay wherever they are. Against the possibility of migrant workers carrying disease, directions were given to states about providing accommodation to migrant workers along with the health checking. Sufficient provisions were seen on paper from Central Government to State Government.

The Indian training center ITC has stated on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 protecting the vulnerable means protecting all. Article further states that migrant workers are mostly employed in informal, low-skilled, precarious employment in areas such as agriculture, construction and domestic work and are often subject to many forms of discrimination and engaging, against this background, it is expected that international migrants, regardless of their migratory status, will be more exposed to the immediate and long-term harms of the COVID-19 pandemic. The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) published a statement on protecting domestic workers rights and fighting the corona virus pandemic and calls upon Governments to take immediate steps to protect the rights of domestic workers: Domestic workers, same as other workers in the care economy, are on the frontlines of keeping families and communities healthy. However they are also most vulnerable as their own health and safety are ignored and even violated.

The article further raise three vital questions like how the economic outcomes of health crisis restructure, how will it affects future labour migration policies, impact of increasing unemployment on human mobility and lack of seasonal migrant labours. Also it is expected from policy makers to have addressed a number of questions related to even yet unknown impact of corona virus on the mobility of human being. (**“Labour Migration at the time of COVID-19”, 2020**)

### **Lockdown II (15 April to 03 May 2020)**

The World Bank has published a report on Wednesday 22 may 2020 who states that during a month of lockdown nearly 40 million internal migrations has badly affected. The report further says lockdown, loss of employment and

social distancing promoted a chaotic and painful process of mass return for internal migrants in India. It is also expected in report that Government need to address the challenges facing internal migrants by including them in health services and cash transfer and other social programmers and protecting them for discrimination. Sadaf Modak has stated in his article on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 that the migration in lockdown is not just because of hunger but job security as well as psychological factors behind migrant exodus. There is psychological urge to be with kith and kin during time of crisis. The example of one of the construction worker is very poignant. With every increase in the number of Covid-19 cases in dharavi, Triveny yadav receives a call from his family back home in Jharkhand, worried, pleading him to return home safely as soon as possible. They read that the cases here are rising and knowing the conditions that we live in, no matter how many times I assure them of my well being, they feel sooner than later, the virus will let me. It was said by yadav, a construction worker who currently living with seven others in Dharavi in a small cramped room. Their concern are not exaggerated as they have to continue to access public toilets used by all others in that area **(Sadaf Modak, 2020, April 23)**

The Rahul Sakpal, Assistant Professor, school of management Tata Institute of social sciences has said when the lockdown was imposed, social distancing and quarantine were advised keeping in mind the middle and upper middle class population, who can afford to do this. The exodus of migrant workers, which began before the lockdown, which reveals the caste and class divide. We are still not factoring their emotional quotient. In the policy the authorities need to understand that the workers who are trying to reclaim their share in the city are an important segment of democracy, our society. Their needs can not be ignored. **(Sadaf Modak, 2020, April 23)**

The Indian Express on April 19, 2020 covers a Sunday story in 'The Out break' of Sandip Yadav and Family. Four days and nights sandip pedaled with his cart, happing that if he tried hard enough, he could get from old Delhi to madhubani in Bihar. He made it as far as Gonda, half way to home he has caught by police and kept him shelter at Govda 550 km apart from his home. In shelter home yadav got basic facilities, But he afraid even his body wouldn't make it to his village if he gets covid 19 as his family urging him to return thus. The psychological bursting of migrant labor is a staunch issue in front of Indian economy. **(Shrivastav Vishal, 2020, April 19)**

The labors of Uttar Pradesh are much eager to go back to their home. The UP Government has initiated for framing the policy for it. The State Nodal office has started to prepare a list of passengers in the regard. **(Pandey Navin, 2020, April 25)**

The Government of Maharashtra has worried about the management of migration of three lac traveling passengers, till date all the decision regarding migration of peoples are not proper linked means permissions allotted to states are not uniform by Central Government. Thousands of peoples who have their own vehicles are also waiting for Governments decision about migration policy. **(Shitole Abhimanyu, 2020, April 28)** The scenario of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in Mumbai was very confusing. The Editorial of Locksatta on 29<sup>th</sup> April has states that there is no discussion during the Prime Minister – Chief Minister Meet about migration of migrant workers to their natives. The Prime Minister has pondering about economy, but how economy can run without migrant labour? It was not answered. The queries raised by Supreme Court on migration labor is very practical, Apex court asked that the migrant works who has not virus affected, what is the difficulty to send them back at their natives?. It was asked to Central Government by Apex Court to mention a say within a week. It was shocking that during the meet not a

single leader neither Hon. Prime minister nor any central leader raised maiden point about migration of workers. The article ‘bolachich kadhi’ has clearly done post mortem of Prime Minister Chief Minister meet. **(Editorial, 2020, April 29)**

According to the news published in Loksatta (**Special Reporter, 2020, April 30**) there are 5.40 lac labor workers in Maharashtra state who have been admitted in 4336 Shelter center. The Maharashtra Government requested to Central Government to start railway facility for migrant labour. Due to travel distance and social distancing factor the option of Bus is not practically feasible. The Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab in an interview with vishwas waghmode (**Waghmode 2020**) speaks about the reasons behind states keenness to send migrant workers back to their native states and the logistic worked out by the state to facilitate this mass movement. State minister further told that Govt keep 1000 buses ready and can be used on time and by maintaining physical distancing around 150000 people can be transported by these buses. The political bureau of the Economic Times has published news on May 01, 2020 and wrote that state prepare for migrants return, the health checkup, quarantine center and shelter homes being readied. A day after the MHA notification allowed movement of people stranded outside their states and several State Governments have stepped in to action to bring them back. Jharkhand Chief Minister has stated to Economic times that as they don't have transport corporation, they are incapable of bringing back all their peoples from different parts of India and expects help from other states to send back more than 07 Lac people back in Jharkhand. **(Political Bureaus, 2020, May 01)** Another Headline of Navbharat Times on May 01, 2020 says migration of labour is not easy. According to the instructions and directions given by central home ministry, the considerable documentation is required for migration. It includes list of transferee is prepared by collector office followed by contact to respective states and if these states agree then only the process initiated. For individual level every person should take e-pass for their vehicles, medical certificate and must have to be quarantine for 14 days after reaching to destination. i.e. native place. **(Shitole Abhimanyu, 2020, May 01)**

The Sunday Express has published a spontaneous reaction of migrants leave Mumbai for Bhopal i.e. ‘Jab wapas aa sakte hai aayenge.’ Finally after 38 days of lockdown the trains for labour migration have started from 1<sup>st</sup> may 2020. **(Siddiqui Iram, 2020, May 03)**

### **Lockdown III (4<sup>th</sup> May – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020)**

Migration subjected to fulfillment of conditions like medical certificate, Physical distancing, e-pass from collector office and several other formalities is allowed in lockdown state III. But Scenario of migrants become worst in lockdown III, every administrative system fails due to exodus of migrants on roads. According to Navbharat Times report that long lines of migrants were seen to obtain medical certificates. The certificates are issued with less than 01 minute of checkup, only temperature was checked by private clinics **(NBT Report 2020, May 05)** The Indian Express Report by Sanjana Bhalerao on may 05, 2020 states that migrants scramble for fitness certificate, say private clinic charging Rs.250-500 in Mumbai region like Dharavi, Sakinaka, Andheri East, Bandra East & Malwani Area. In spite of detail checking, only temperature measurement & face reading method were used by maximum private clinics & medical practioners. **(Bhalerao Sanjana, 2020, May 05)** The news cover by Abhjit Patil & Mohd Akhef in Times of India on may 07, 2020 states that migrants stands hours in line for medical certificate in Kolhapur,

Nasik & Aurangabad. In kasba wada Kolhapur, more than 200 people were found in queue without maintaining physical distancing. Medicos in Aurangabad charge Rs. 200 to 400 to issue a Medical Certificate. There were no guidelines to fix the fees to be charged by doctors. **(Patil Abhijit, 2020, May 07)**

Meanwhile one positive news arrived for Nasik from Aniket Sathe in loksatta on may 08, 2020 where employees of Municipal Corporation, Tahsil office of Nasik & Igatpuri collected money for railway ticket of 1200 migrant labours and send them Bhopal (M.P.) and Lucknow (U.P.) by special train. All those worker are already quarantined in Nasik since a month. **(Sathe Aniket, 2020, May 04)** During the same period a black Friday arrived at 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 when a group of 20 peoples left Jalna for Jalgaon hoping to catch a train. They all walking on railway line to avoid the police. The victim had stopped for rest and were sleeping on the tracks when accident happened, while 15 of them died on the spot and one person later succumbed to his injuries.**(Express News Service, 2020, May 09)** The news Coved by Mohammad in Times of India May 09, 2020 one of the survivor sajian singh Dhurve from Madhya Pradesh asked that what was our fault? we just wanted to go home. Another survivor Indralal of Madhya Pradesh told that they decided to walk their way through railway track to reach bhusawal to avoid getting caught by police deployed on roads & highways. They did this because they came to know that some trains carrying stranded migrant workers were being released from bhusawal to Madhya Pradesh. **(Akhef Mohd, 2020, May 09)**

The report of devina sengupta has stated that lockdown fears grip children, children mental health has been the biggest casualty during lockdown, said child therapists and psychologist. **(Sengupta Devina, 2020, May 09)** According to the news portal webside the wire the news entitled ‘understanding the impact of the covid-19 lockdown on migrant workers children’ that the mass exodus of migrants from cities has raised concern over impending economic crisis but the other implications of it like children of migrant labours, their psychological status are not issue of key concern of any body. The covid-19 pandemic is an extraordinary emergency which requires extraordinary means to safeguard the interest of children. **(www.thewire.in, 2020 May 05)**

The special page dedicated to migrant labour by Navbharat times on May 8, 2020 entitled “Sankat me shramik” states that the peoples are not permitted even completion of documentary formalities. Police call them and due to over flooded send them back and call a day after. Navin Pandey in his news on the same page said that ‘Lakho Pravasiyo ko ab bhari lag raha pal pal’. Almost all labours in Mumbai lost their confidence and ration both. Those who even not aware about the word link, how one can expect online from them? Due to government rules & acts on migration in lockdowns, labour lost their patience and started walking on roads towards their natives. **(Pandey Navin, 2020, May 08)** Another news on May 12, 2020 in Navbharat times states that migrant labour started their journey in trucks and trailer lorries in night. The transport agent caught aspirant labours and fill them in trucks like goods and transport them to their natives. There is no control of police on these trucks and trailer lorries. **(Bhiwandi N S,2020, May 12)** Mahesh Jha in his news in Navbharat times on May 13, 2020 wrote that he has interviewed 14 migrant labour who travels 1400 km distance i.e. from Mumbai to Jharkhand on bicycle. They states that they do not have a single rupee in their pockets, transportation is depends on kindness of people who feed them. Ajay Yadav one migrant of them replied, up to what extent we adjust our self respect, we will die here due to hunger so it is better ki marna hi hai to apni hi jamin per ja kar marunga. **(Jha Manish, 2020, May 13)**

Another report of Botekar Abhilash in time of India may 11, 2020 also shows that hundreds leave for state border. Migrants board trucks, buses, trains to exit Maharashtra. If we are stopped at border, we will leave the vehicle there and move ahead by other means, response from one of the migrant. **(Botekar Abhilash, 2020, May 11)** Rajput Sagar has also covers the similar scenario in the Indian Express on May 13, 2020 states that desperate to go home, migrants hits the highway on auto rickshaw, cycles, one of them replied that we will go as far as we can. One migrant bhola raut said, I don't know whether we will infected by covid-19 but if we stay back now, we will definitely die of hunger. It is clear that unlike before now the police and district administration are no longer stopping the worker from leaving. In fact they are even helping them. **(Rajput Sagar, 2020, May 13)** Iyer Kavita has reported in her article in India Express on may 15, 2020 that on Goa highway, steady stream of migrants returning villages in konkan. The transport minister of Maharashtra said only last week that state buses would be made available for intra state migrants but no such buses are seen on Goa highway and thousand of peoples walking towards their destinations. **(Iyer Kavita, 2020, May 15)**

Team TOI news on May 10, 2020 in Times of India states that desperate migrants starts walking; some catches rides, others on foot. What if the Govt. extends the lockdown once again? We have spent all the money we had, how long we live food served by others asked sugandh kumar, a migrant worker from UP who walked towards his destination along with seven friends. **(Team TOI, 2020, May 10)** Kakodkar Priyanka has stated in her news article in the Times of India on may 12, 2020 entitled 'no Govt. rations for 96% of migrant shows survey' As per the report of volunteer group standard acts network (SWAN). It is scathing about the state response to the question on providing for stranded migrants. It says 96 % of the migrants in the state who reached out to the network in the lockdown had no access to Govt. rations in a day as many as 69% would have run out of ration in a day. The report is based on responses obtained from 4823 workers standard in the Maharashtra state till 23<sup>rd</sup> April. It further shows that 81 % of migrants had not received any wages from their employer. **(Kakodkar Priyanka, 2020, May 12)** Another survey carried out 5000 plus rural households surveyed across 12 states by some leading civil society organizations to understand the impact of corona virus- induced lockdown, half of them were found to be eating fewer items and less number of times to overcome the crisis. The survey covered 5162 households of 12 states between April 28 and may 02 **(Pandit Ambika, 2020, May 14)**

On the contrary, according to headline of Times of India Aurangabad edition on may 06, 2020 it states 64 Air India flights to bring around 15000 Indians in 07 days. Evacuation from the UK and UAE starts on Thursday. **(Headline, 2020, May 06)** Another official statement from Railways on may 14 states railway has operated 806 shramik special trains since 1<sup>st</sup> may ferrying one million migrant workers who were stranded in various parts of the country. As compare to the total migrant count of 140 million, only 01 million has been transferred by railways. **(Anonymous, 2020, May 15)** According to the center for monitoring Indian economy (CMIE), the jobless rate hits all time high of 27.1% still may 01, 2020 and the first week of May indicates unemployment could rise in with lockdown now prolonged to may 17, 2020. CMIE further says 71% of daily wage earner lost their jobs, 23% of large entrepreneurs reported job loss. Employment in march is 396 million was felt by 29% and become 282 million in april 2020. **(Bureau own, 2020, May 05)** Another report of CMIE on May 13, 2020 states that 34% household's resources to last a week, 84% of Indian households saw decrease in monthly income. **(Kaushik Krishnan, 2020, May 13)** The

survey carried out by Azim Premji University in collaboration with ten civil society organizations states that 2/3 rd of workers lost jobs in lockdown. Telephonic survey of 4000 workers was conducted, 80% urban workers and 54% rural workers have lost their employment. **(Anonymous, 2020, May 13)**

On the other hand the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet last week gave NOD to Uttar Pradesh temporary exemption from certain labour laws ordinance 2020 to exempt factories, business, and establishments from the purview of all, except three labour laws and one provision of another law, for three years. The Central Trade Union consider this move as a gross violation of the labour rights and acts and trade union may approaches to ILO on labour laws suspension. The Congress leader Rahul Gandhi states that Covid 19 fight can't be excuse to exploit workers. **(Anonymous, 2020, May 12)**

The Editorial of Loksatta dated may 15, 2020 entitled “ghoshnanchi shramik express” states that the labour, self worker, working class people who played a keen role in becoming Modiji as a Prime Minister, provisions for them were declared on 52<sup>nd</sup> day of lockdown. Government has authenticated 80 million migrant workers and 08 million hawkers and sellers in cities. If it is so then there were no precautionary steps taken by Government for their safe migration. **(Editorial, 2020, May 15)** Lomate Asaram has mentioned that rural business and industries also suffered due to absentia of migrant labour. The out of state migrant labours are not only limited with Metro and other cities but also considerable quantum of them worked with rural industries like cotton mill, ginning-pressing, pulses, oil mill etc. All these business were suffered through the problem of manpower. **(Lomate Asaram, 2020, May 15)**

Suhas Joshi in his article “Shramikancha Pravaho Chalila” in Loksatta may 17, 2020 states that corona theft the bread and butter of labour migrants hence they do not have another option rather back to pavilion. His team interacted with number of migrant labour who were in trucks, on bicycles, walking on roads and very few of them are optimistic to return back. Hunger and fear compel them to left the workplace, when asked them for photo, one replied please take proper photo so as to Government take its due cognizance and avoid dilly-dally attitude about us. **Joshi Suhas (2020, May 17)** Shivdekar Reshma has stated in her article in Loksatta on may 17, 2020 i.e. on last day of lockdown third that more than 125 migrant labour were died on road due to accidents and hectic walking. It can be called as a accident or incident but, in true sense they are the real victims of mismanagement of lockdown **(Shivdekar Reshma, 2020, May 17)**

### **Lockdown IV (18<sup>th</sup> May – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020)**

The exodus of migrants was comparatively shrinks in lock down 04. The Ministry of home affairs allowed interstate movement of passenger vehicles, buses with mutual consent among states. Till May 17, 2020, Over 20 lakh migrants have registered to return from Maharashtra. **(Headline, 2020, May 18)** The ministry of home affair said on May 23, 2020 that around 40 million migrant laboures are engaged in various works in different parts of country and so far 75 lacks of them have returned home in trains and buses since the Nationwide lock down was imposed. **(Anonymous, 2020, May 24)** Meanwhile few encouraging facts of human kindness were seen when Aniruddha Jhare of 28 years aged pushes tricycle helps disabled friend travel 350 km distance to his home in UP. **(Dilshad Mohd, 2020, May 19)** There are countless such merciful stories in lock down.

The founder chairman of Infosys N R Narayan Murty said that India could see more deaths due to hunger than from the pandemic if it continues to remain in lockdown to halt the spread of Covid-19, he further told the country must accept corona virus as the new normal and facilitate the return to work of able bodied while protecting the most vulnerable. **(Krishnan Raghu, 2020, May 02)** The study carried out by researcher of university of Chicago and university of British Columbia, covered 1392 individuals in Delhi, in slum and unauthorized colonies and found 9 out of 10 peoples reporting that their monthly income had fallen to zero. The study also found that the inter city movement, mapped using face book mobility data dropped by 80% immediately after the first lockdown was announced. The study has concluded that even for non migrant workers in Delhi, the lockdown has been devastating economically. **(Chisti Seema, 2020, May 21)** According to the Survey by the domestic workers sector skill council (DWSSC) under the ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship reflects the serious concerns faces by workforce in April 2020. Nearly 85% of domestic workers said that their employers are not paying for lockdown period and 23.5% of domestic workers migrated back to their native place. **(Pandit Ambika, 2020, May 26)** On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaram has announced 65% like in funds for rural job guarantee scheme for migrant workers who back their natives. **(Verma Sunny, 2020, May 18)** Team TOI has stated in article 'Migrants dilemma: out of urban frying pan in to rural field' that for migrant workers criss-crossing the country, homecoming has been bittersweet. One crisis is behind them, but they stare at another: they cant contribute economically and are joining the race for significantly reduced work opportunities, property disputes are turning ugly, and all of this is playing while they struggle with 'virus carrier' stigma. The limited economic opportunities at home that drove people to look for work in cities and towns thousands of kilometers away have shrunk further during the lockdown. In Bihar unemployment increases from 15.4% to 46.6% between March and April; In Jharkhand from 8.2% to 47.1%, according to economic think-tank CMIE, The sharpest spike was in Tamil Nadu where it went from 6.4% to 49.8%. **(Team TOI, 2020, May 26)** In a worrying sign about one in four migrants who return from Delhi and was tested over the past few weeks, has been found Covid positive. Out of 835 samples of migrants who return from Delhi, 218 tested positive. This shows a positivity rate of 26% while the positivity rate in National Capital is about 7%, similarly those who return west Bengal positivity rate is 3% and migrant's positivity rate was 12%. Here the positivity rates in migrant return from various state along with positivity rate of that state is shown in bracked like Haryana 9% (1.16%), Maharashtra 11% (11.6%), Gujrat 7% (7.9%), Uttarpradesh 3% (2.59%), Rajasthan 4% (2.24%), Telngana 2% (6.6%), Karnataka 6% (0.78%), Kerla 2% (1.33%), Tamilnadu 4% (2%). **(Kasnain Sheriff, 2020, May 19)**

According to responses for several passenger of Shramik special train that they have decided to either not vote at all or choose NOTA from here on. People blame Government that Government was only worried about bringing peoples form foreign countries but they can't handle their own poor people. **(Anonymous, 2020, May 25)** Mahesh Sarlashkar, has stated in his article that disgruntled migrant labours would play a significant role in political environment in coming days. **(Sarlashkar Mahesh, 2020, May 18)** The Covid-19 pandemic has introduced new words and phrases, out of which most prominently is 'stranded migrant workers' Adhir Ranjan Chaudhri has stated in his article that Government does not have comprehensive data of migrant worker of country it appears that Government is emerging from a stupor and grouping in the dark about the status and significant of migrants. He

further noted the need to have a separate ministry for migrants affairs, dealing with domestic migrants only. **(Chowdhury Adhir, 2020, May 22)** Mr. Rathin Roy, Director of National Institute of Public Finance Policy (WIPFP) and former member of Prime Minister Economic Advisory council (PM-EAC) has stated that the Government could have put to much better use the direct benefit transfer (DBT) architecture to transfer money to migrant workers, otherwise the entire system on Jandhan, Aadhar and Mobile (JAM trinity) touted as being highly effective for cash transfer does not appear to be fit for the purpose. **(ENS Economic Bureau, 2020, May 28)**

Another news which perturb a lot is at least ten states moving to amend their labour laws ahead of restarting economic activities post the lock down, it is learnt that most states are expected to move towards extended working hours and are likely to follow the model of suspension of labour laws like Uttar Pradesh & Madhya Pradesh. **(ENS Economic Bureau, 2020, May 24)** Mean while on Thursday May 28, Apex court take cognizance of the migrant labour issue. The Central Government apprised to Supreme Court that U.P. & Bihar are destinations for 80% migrant workers. Apex court has asked the UP Government about the steps taken to rehabilitate workers in the state. **(Anonymous, 2020, May 29)** Questioning the Centre and State on the plight of stranded migrant workers, the Supreme Court directed that no fare to be charged from them to their journey home and the arrangement to be made provided them food. **(Headline, 2020, May 29)** The Apex Court has taken cognizance of migrant labours issue under Suo-Moto, it was already late. Ten days before Supreme Court dismiss the petition and states how they stop migrant form walking. In short Supreme Court has abdicated all responsibility. After a factual letter from renowned lawyer inclusive the P. Chidambaram, Indira Jaysingh, Prashant Bhushan and Kapil Sibbal to Apex court, the cognizance were taken by Apex Court and proceed further. **(Anonymous, 2020, May 28)** But it is ever worst and pathetic reality that administrative and judicial system need 60 days to taken the cognizance of the issue. Is it failure of Government? or is it failure of democracy?. Even the Chief minister of Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray has started in Loksatta web-samved that, the Central Government has not intimated to State Government about lockdown and suddenly imposed it, moreover corona was not spread on 24 march. Therefore even if migrants labors where permitted to go home before lockdown then these people may not face to worst conditions as today they experienced. He further told that timing of imposing lockdown was not proper. **(Special Reporter, 2020, May 29)** The future will definitely ask countless questions to ever one in infinite ways and means.

### **Unveil The Facts**

- 1) Nationwide Lockdown with barely four hours notice stuck in minds of migrant labour.
- 2) First conformed case of corona virus infection was found on Jan 30, 2020 In spite of that sudden lockdown imposed after 53 days which seems unjustified.
- 3) Four major questions arises due to lockdown, why it happens ? It is not unavoidable? Is there is no another way? Is nationwide lockdown with barely four hours notice is ready required?
- 4) Neither Central nor any State Government was anticipated and prepared for migrant workers exodus.
- 5) On first day of lockdown first, there are 627 corona positive patients and 12 deaths, migration was restricted. On 24 May 2020 when conditional migration was permitted, there were more than 40000 Corona positive patients with 1300 death, what and where is the policy?

- 6) It has found during testing of migrants returns from Delhi to Bihar that 26% of them were found positive, while the positively rate in the national capital is 7%. These are the victims of unwanted compelled pathetic migration.
- 7) Along with joblessness, hunger, psychological factor and urge to be with kith and kin during the time of crises are major compelling factor of labour migration due to covid-19.
- 8) The stringent lockdown is like a double edged sword for migrant laborers, their sources of income have dried up and little resources back home are not sufficient to help them withstand the hardship of situation. It simply like that the medicine to counter corona virus has become more deadly than the virus itself.
9. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are the destinations for 80% of the migrant workers stranded across India after lockdown, however the another destinations are Madyapradsh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.
10. Madyhapradsh and Uttar Pradesh has changes the labour lows and made it more bounding for workers like extension of working hours from 08 to 12 hours etc. Also Gujrat, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand and 05 other state moving to amend their labour laws. Ten Central Trade Unions may approach International Labour Organization (ILO) on labour laws suspension.
11. A survey by the Domestic Workers sector skill Council (PWSSC) shows that 86% of domestic workers employer denied paying for lockdown period.
12. In National Capital, the lockdown in resulted in significant economic costs to labour with income falling by 57% and days work falling 73%.
13. According to world bank report, lockdown has impacted on 40 million internal migrants but it's a tip of iceberg where as submerged portion yet have to identified.
14. How many migrant are in country? How many were intended to migrate during pandemic?. Central Government does not have an authentic information, still in the last phase of lockdown 04, Government declared that there are 08 crore migrant workers in India. Still the figure is very less as compared to survey conducted by various Social and Economical Organizations till date. The most persistent question is if one is not aware about the exact quantum to be shifted, how arrangements can be done?
15. Hon Supreme Court has taken cognizance of the migrant labour migration after 60 days of lockdown through Suo-Moto. It seems very late and it was interesting that ten days before the Apex court has already denied the petition about to resist the migrants from walking to reach destination.
16. The e-pass system for travelling as well as medical certificate are the places of organized loot of these migrant labours. Those who have not been aware about internet and does not have a penny in pocket, how such documentation was expected from them?
17. According to CMIE the joblessness rate shot up to an all time high of 27.1% in the week ended May 03 and the situation could get worse in the coming months. It includes 71% of daily wage earners lost their jobs and 23% of large entrepreneurs reported job loss. More over number of salaried employees dropped by 21%. Also 27 million youth lost their job in April. The employment in April 2020 was declined from 396 million to 282 millions.
18. The efforts made by Central Government to bring home stranded Indians in another countries were clearly seen. At the same instance the silent negligence on the exodus of migrant labour within India is also observed. It seems to be very controversial.

19. Survey carried out by SWAN shows that the 96% of the migrants in the Maharashtra State who reached out to network in the lockdown had no access to government rations. As many as 69% would have run out of the ration in a day.
20. CMIE household Survey state that over one third of Indian households have resources to last a week. 65% of urban households report enough provisions for a week; same stood 54% for rural households.
21. The report based on data from 12 states that 67% of workers reported having lost their employment following the covid-19 induced lockdown.
22. Over 5000 plus rural households surveyed across 12 states founds that 50% of rural India eating less due to lockdown.
23. The provisions for migrant labour and labours class were declared on 52<sup>nd</sup> day of lockdown. Hon. Prime Minister shows their sympathy to migrant labour in 'Man ki bat' on 68<sup>th</sup> day of lockdown. It's been very late to take cognizance.
24. The humanistic approach of Government officers, employees and specially police department towards migrant labour is seen everywhere.

### **Conclusion:**

The pandemic due to Covid-19 has changes the definition of life not only migrant labours but also every citizen of India. The Nationwide lockdown was imposed with barely four hours notice and the India's largest migration after partition starts. There are number of questions who arises due to sudden lockdown but the fact is Central and State Government fail to anticipate and be prepared for migrant worker exodus. The scenario becomes very pathetic when migrant labour intended to back their natives even by walking. There are countless factors that compel them to walk towards their natives but the reality is they are the victims of not only pandemic but also mismanagement of Government authorities in imposing lockdown.

Various research and surveys carried out during lockdown shows decline nature of socio economic environment of India. The unemployment, joblessness, hunger, economic crisis, industrial setback, spreading of pandemic through migrants, changing psychology of labours and society are the few outputs of lockdown due to covid-19. Also very few migrants reached their destination through government support and maximum are made it at their own. It has found on Bihar border that 25% migrants are infected i.e. covid positive, it can be avoided if lockdown will impose by providing enough time to this stranded migrants to reach their homes. The statement of founder chairman of Infosys N.R. Narayan Murty is most appropriate on this, he stated India could see more deaths due to hunger than from the pandemic if it continues, he further states the country must accept corona virus as the new normal and facilitate the return to work of able bodied while protecting the most vulnerable.

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