



Plight of Indian Migrants and One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)

Dr. Rishu Tomar

Assistant Professor

Department of Geography, Shah Satnam Ji Girls' College, Chaudhary Devi Lal University, Sirsa - 125055

Abstract: There's no doubt the government acted swiftly and under the first economic program announced by the ruling dispensation in 2020, government offered PM Garib Kalyan Yojana where they decided to provide free foodgrains to the needy for appropriate time. It was also revised accordingly to include even 5 kilograms of pulses for each family in order to secure the quality of food grains along with quantity of food grains. Also, it was decided to form this One Nation One Ration Card system (ONORC) where a beneficiary in the territory of India can access cheap food grains over 1 valid national card than different state cards.

Keywords: Food Security, One Nation One Ration Card system (ONORC), Migrants, Security, Sustainability, Nutrition, Food Grains, Covid 19, Resilience, Marginalized Population

Origins: Covid 19 has brought to the forefront several challenges of the past. There has been more than ever desire and inevitability for the new models of the new businesses. The world had not set its targets for a visible change but the pandemic has not made it urgent, however, indispensable. The change, as we all see and talk about it, may bring some hardliner approach into the kitty or leave the roof appalling in search of some fixation. How do the policy makers and representatives of the world interpret the new situation would drive the pace of the change towards a new post-pandemic world order, as they say it?

This, one segment in the Indian affairs deserve the mention *i.e.* India's gravest humanitarian crisis after 1947 partition crisis, The Migrant Crisis in the wake of unplanned, rapid, sudden and impromptu measures of stringent lockdown.

Was the government buying some time to prepare for the future waves of the pandemic or was it an institutional disaster like the old times of demonetization or Goods and Services Tax (GST); these questions don't deserve in this article, a sufficient space and attention. However, the migrant crisis after the call of nationwide lockdown that has shocked the soul of the country with its horrifying true images strictly demand closer scrutiny of its reasons and probable solutions for the future.

Aspect 1: In the wake of the nationwide lockdown call which was neither planned nor sought after in such sudden measure, it is understandable that the most marginalized could not find their way and lost track of their senses to start migrating on their way back to hometown on barefoot in the pandemic days, ignoring the dire health warnings of experts to keep social distancing. Those recurring images in the papers on regular basis kept the clarion call of social welfare and justice alive. Not only those migrants on their way back to home gave us befitting lessons with regard to humanity, they also exposed the glaring gaps in state's health and education capacities.

As some experts go by the usual tranche that government wanted to buy some time to prepare for the future waves of the pandemic, second wave in late March, April and May revealed the hollow trajectories of promises and vision.

Aspect 2: It was a no brainer that migrants on their way back to home would suffer severe food security concerns and employment issues as they were far away from their work places. What usually have to work in such conditions was also left in the dark *i.e.* *Ration Card* to easily access and afford the cheap food grains from Public Distribution Depots (PDDs). This irregularity in such an important and urgent system made Indian judiciary pass an order and direct the central government to resolve the mess of food insecurity and employment for migrants who have returned to their hometowns.

There's no doubt the government acted swiftly and under the first economic program announced by the ruling dispensation in 2020, government offered PM Garib Kalyan Yojana where they decided to provide free food-grains to the needy for appropriate time. It was also revised accordingly to include even 5 kilograms of pulses for each family in order to secure the quality of food grains along with quantity of food grains. Also, it was decided to form this One Nation One Ration Card system (ONORC) where a beneficiary in the territory of India can access cheap food grains over 1 valid national card than different state cards.

This measure was being put in citizen centric reforms with others such as ease of doing business and power sector reforms. States in India have been given a clear cut time frame to comply with the measure of ONORC and post Covid, there have been amendments and changes in several laws related to labor.

References:

1. Government of India, Kurukshetra Magazine
2. Government of India, Yojana Magazine
3. Ahuja, Ram, Social Problems in India
4. Verma, Sanjeev, Indian Economy
5. Singh, Ramesh, Indian Economy
6. Editorials, Indian Express
7. Editorials, The Hindu
8. Editorials, Financial Express

