



# Analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on the informal sector migrant workers in India

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- Abstract

In the background of the COVID-19 pandemic, the most vulnerable and severely affected section of the Indian population have been informal sector migrant workers. Despite a slew of government policies and schemes being announced and subsequently implemented in the short term, effective mitigation of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown will need to deal with several barriers, such as an inconsistent and outdated data base on these workers . The reverse migration phenomenon that has taken place may further the rural-urban income gap and create an unprecedented health crisis in the previously unaffected rural regions. This paper aims to analyse the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on Indian migrant workers and assess the effectiveness of measures announced by the state to mitigate the impact on them.

**JEL Classification: I380; H760; R230; D630; J110**

*Key words: migration, welfare programs, transfer payments, public safety, unemployment*

- Introduction

With a UN study on the impact of the COVID-19 global outbreak suggesting that global poverty could rise again since 1990, an estimate projected that the number of people below the World Bank defined poverty line could increase by over 450 million globally (Sumner et al.,2020). Thus, developing economies like India, who are yet to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), could find a sharp rise in unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and inequality due to this global outbreak.

The COVID-19 pandemic in India and the subsequent measure of implementing a stringent lockdown, has had an impact on all sections of society. However, the worst affected have been migrant workers in the informal sector. With 77% of the total workforce in India falling under the vulnerable category (World Bank,2019), the impact of the pandemic has been severe for a vast section of the population. Figures for seasonal migrants vary between 15.2 to 55 million, with the informal sector employing close to 90% of India's working population and contributing more than 45% to its overall GDP. The lockdown, while necessary to control the transmission of the virus, has led to a mass exodus of millions of migrant workers and their families back to their villages. The latest data from the Consumer Pyramid household level survey of the CMIE shows that the unemployment rate in urban areas increased sharply to 30% in the week ending on March 29, about 3.5 times the rate of 8.7% for the week ending March 22. For rural areas, the corresponding figures were 21% and 8.3%. The overall unemployment rate increased from 8.4% to 23.8%. Thus, due to lack of employment and no income, the exodus of migrant workers from cities back to their native villages was bound to happen. While several migrant workers lost their lives in the journey, approximately 10.5 million migrant workers have been encamped in temporary shelters, as per the reports given to the Supreme Court by the government (Rawat et al., 2020). Even among the migrants, it is the seasonal migrant workers that have been worst affected, since permanent and semi-permanent migrants tend to have higher income or more social security. When migrants flee from the cities they not only lose their livelihood but they may also act as carriers of the infection to their native places (BBC, 2020).

To mitigate the impact of the outbreak on millions of migrants as well as control the spread of the novel coronavirus, both the central and state authorities have formulated several policies and schemes, which are expected to provide short-term relief to the migrant workers. A Rs 1.7 lakh-crore relief package under the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana was launched to help the vulnerable sections of society to overcome the crisis. The scheme has under its ambit, health workers, MGNREGA workers, farmers, economically vulnerable categories, Jan Dhan account holders and Ujjwala beneficiaries. Under the PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojana, 80 crore beneficiaries will be receiving 5 kg of wheat or rice, and one kg of preferred pulses every month for the next three months free of charge, in addition to the 5 kg they already get. The central government also directed states to utilise the Building and Construction Worker's Welfare Fund of Rs 52,000 crore, to provide relief to construction workers through the direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme(DHNS ,2020; Government of India, 20a). While both the centre and states have come up with independent strategies as well to ensure the safe return of migrants and provision of food and income to them, the policies and schemes formulated are mainly effective in the short-term, and may not even reach all those who deserve the benefits. The major issue has been that the amount of services provided to the thousands of migrants in the camps has been inadequate. And this is besides the millions still stranded or on their way to their destinations. Disagreements have also occurred between state authorities over who would provide shelter to the migrants, and who would pay for the transport ferrying them. Another major obstacle to ensure proper reach of the benefits and transfers to migrants has been a lack of sufficient and updated official data on them. Immigrants in the country who have not been registered are also out of the ambit of these policies, making them particularly vulnerable. While catering to the needs of the migrant workers is crucial, the impact of reverse migration on the rural economy cannot be ignored. The rural areas, which are already over-crowded, may find a decline in productivity and average income due to excess of labour, in addition to a potential outbreak occurring in these regions due to unchecked community transmission. To ensure that migrants return back to urban and industrially important areas will not be an easy task, considering the impact that the outbreak has had on the mental and physical health of the migrant workers. Thus,

authorities will have to take measures to reduce the non-monetary harsh costs of living in urban areas. Among the recommendations of this paper, establishment of a long-term migrant centric policy, along with an augmented official database are crucial to ensure that a potential socio-economic crisis in the future does not impact them as severely as the COVID-19 outbreak has.

- **Review of Literature**

**Bhagat et al(2020)**, in the paper titled “The COVID-19, Migration and Livelihood in India”, by comparing the situation of migrants in the current COVID-19 pandemic with HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s in various parts of the world, shows that the stigmatization of migrants as “carriers of disease” continues to be widespread throughout India. The author points out that while this holds true to an extent, it is the lack of initiative by the concerned authorities to develop migrant-centred outbreak prevention programs. If such programs existed in place before, perhaps the impact of the pandemic on migrant workers would have been mitigated beforehand. The treatment of migrants in India as an ‘at-risk’ population, as well as a dearth in provisions arranged for them to sustain their lives, will greatly contract their contribution to economic growth and economic development. This paper recommends local level authorities to be prepared to face economic stress in areas which were heavily dependent on migrant workers for their functioning, citing the difficulty landowners in Punjab and Haryana are facing in harvesting their crops as an example.

**Imbert and Papp (2020)**, in their paper titled ‘Costs and Benefits of Rural-Urban Migration: Evidence from India’, conduct an analysis to find out the factors determining rural-urban migration movements in India. By using survey data from an out-migration region, surrounded by the states Rajasthan, Gujrat and Madhya Pradesh, this paper conducted the study on seasonal migration in India. Imbert and Papp (2020) analyse the variation in employment provision under India's national rural workforce programme, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). The analysis of this study can be interpreted as suggesting that the availability of work in villages and other rural areas has a strong negative relation with migration to urban areas. The analysis of this paper is relevant to my study, given the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, which has led millions of migrant workers to travel back to their native villages due to lack of employment opportunities as well as income earnings.

**Ganguly, Misra and Goli (2020)**, in their paper titled “India’s COVID-19 Episode: Resilience, Response, Impact and Lessons”, find that due to a lack of existing measures to safeguard workers in the informal sector, the sudden announcement and implementation of the lockdown created panic among millions of migrant workers in the country and led to a massive reverse-migration phenomenon. The authors find that the reverse migration puts the families of migrant workers at high risk, particularly where the members are vulnerable or ‘high risk’, like the elderly, based on evidence documented from countries like Italy and Spain, where the high mortality rate was due to a comparatively high population of the elderly. The authors’ recommend implementation of gendered outbreak mitigation measures, mitigate the impact of the outbreak on women migrants, along with modernising educational facilities to ensure that the access of education to the children of migrant workers is not compromised.

**Morten(2016)**, in her paper titled “Temporary migration and endogenous risk in villages in India”, examines the relationship between informal insurance and risk sharing networks, and rural to urban migration. The author in her study, finds that informal insurance actually reduces the need to migrate for workers. Morten (2016)’s analysis took the national rural employment program, NREGA, as an example. Her study concluded that not only does NREGA act as a potential substitute for informal insurance, the subsequent increase in rural household income from it acts as a substitution to migration, thus having a negative relation with temporary migration. The analysis of this study is relevant even in the current situation, where millions of migrants have gone back to their native villages due to lack of employment and income in urban areas during this pandemic. The return of these migrants to urban areas may be hindered post lockdown, and a lack of bank accounts among several unregistered migrants may increase their dependence on informal insurance networks. Overdependence on NREGA as a source of income may further discourage migration, in spite of an opportunity to earn a higher wage in cities and urban centres.

**Kasare(2020)** studies the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry of India. Employing over 8.1 % of the total workforce in India, tourism industry is an important source of employment, especially for thousands of migrant workers and labourers. Kasare(2020)'s study shows that the severe impact on the tourism industry has resulted in massive layoffs and pay cuts, thus pushing informal sector workers further into poverty. This paper suggests that the government should adopt a universal basic income scheme to mitigate the impact on these workers, so that they would have some cash flow to sustain themselves and their families. Kasare(2020)'s analysis of states with the highest tourist visits, like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, shows that informal sector workers there would face a more dire situation, since they were mostly migrants from other states living in temporary shelters. Kasare(2020)'s suggestion of a universal basic income can only be effective if all informal sector migrant workers had bank accounts and that the official data on them was accurate.

**Bhattacharjee (2020)**, in the findings of his paper, suggest that the relief measures implemented have been "piecemeal". His study's conclusion comes from the data from various surveys, one of which aimed at collecting data on over three thousand workers in the construction sector, found that 90% of them had no source of income since the lockdown was implemented. The lack of social security measures for migrant workers, which form over 90% of the country's total workforce, would further prevent them from raising their income post COVID-19. Bhattacharjee (2020)'s findings further suggested that the benefit received to migrant workers and other informal sector labour may vary sector wise, due to the sector specific approach of schemes like DBT and EPF, thus potentially increasing income inequality among workers in different sectors.

**Bhagat and Keshri (2018)**, in their paper's analysis show that the underprivileged in India, migrate primarily seasonally and temporarily, compared to the advantaged, who tend to migrate on a semi-permanent or permanent basis. Their analysis explains the 'low level' of mobility in India, since migration intensity calculation is based on permanent or semi-permanent migration and thus excludes seasonal migration. The lack of measurement of seasonal migrants is harmful since seasonal migration occurs 7 times more than semi-permanent or permanent migration in India. The analysis of the authors however find that policies and programmes which should facilitate integration of migrants in urban destinations are widely missing in India, with the policies primarily being either ignorant or hostile. The findings of this study are relevant to the current situation of COVID-19 as well, since due to a lack of migrant centric programmes and policies led to an exodus of migrants to their native villages. The reverse migration and its aftermath may also hinder economic growth of the urbanized regions, while over-crowding rural economies.

**Dev and Sengupta(2020)**, in their paper titled "Covid-19: Impact on the Indian Economy", analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian economy, by first highlighting the already existing downturn in economic growth and rising unemployment. With the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, the authors' suggest that the migrant workers will be disproportionately affected across different sectors. Citing the data collected from a survey by CMIE which showed that the unemployment in urban areas increased sharply to 30% in the last week of March 2020, the authors compare this data with the unemployment rate in rural areas, noting that the rise in unemployment in the urban areas was higher than that in rural areas. The author recommends that to ensure the timely and safe return of migrant workers back to urban regions and industrially important zones, the authorities must utilise the network of "anganwadis, panchayat bhavans, government schools" etc. to set up feeding camps, medical centres and screening facilities.

**Buheji et al. (2020)**, in this paper, analyses the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on poor and vulnerable groups around the world. Using an integrative literature review of secondary data for their analysis, the paper assess the situation of the marginalized and poverty stricken communities in 4 different continents. For Asia,

India has been taken as the primary case study in this paper. Maintaining social distancing norms and taking adequate precautions is difficult for migrant workers in the informal sector, since their living condition are over-crowded and lack proper sanitization (Buheji et al., 2020). The authors' examine the relationship between rising COVID-19 cases in India, as well as increasing incidents of overcrowding in public places like bus and railway stations, due to the process of reverse migration taking place in the nation. Among their recommendations, Buheji et al. (2020) recommend that the concerned authorities take measure at the grass root level to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on migrant workers and also recommends the Brazilian Unified Health System model for developing economies.

**Singh(2020)**, in his paper, assesses the impact of the pandemic on the rural economies in India. The findings of this paper suggest that over 400 million informal sector workers in India will fall deeper into poverty as the entire economy heads towards a recession. **Singh (2020)**, in his study, also notes that the limited scale of testing in the initial stages of the lockdown contributed to a rise in community spread, particularly among migrant workers returning home or staying in crowded zones in urban areas. The rising cases of community spread among this vulnerable population puts them at high risk, due to their limited access to proper medical care. The increasing reverse migration of millions of migrant workers to their native rural villages is projected to create a huge burden on rural economies, which already face the problem of over population and an excess of labour (Singh, 2020). This paper's analysis of the government economic package for mitigating the impact of the pandemic on migrants, finds that the short-term measures such as cash transfers and subsidies in wages will be ineffective, due to a lack of official and updated data on migrant workers, in particular, seasonal migrant workers.

- **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

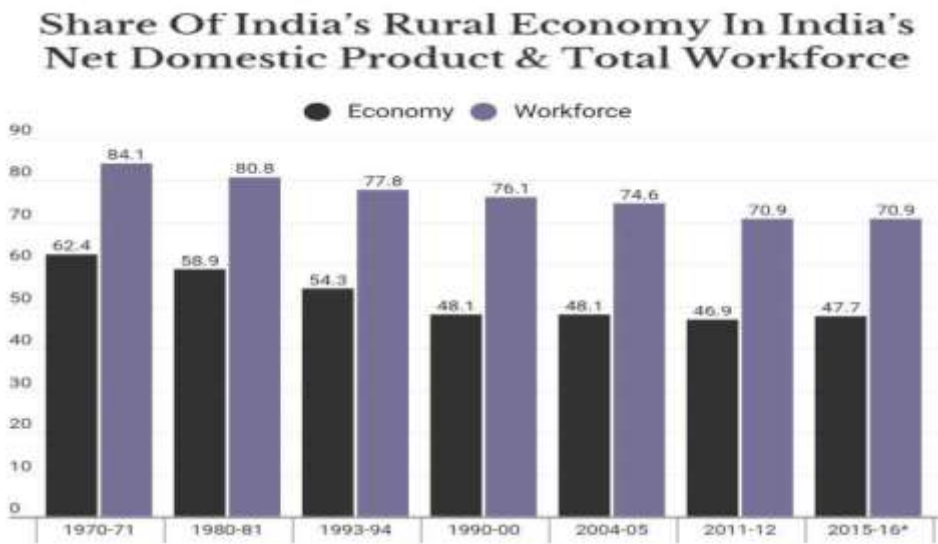
1. This paper uses the data on rate of growth of Net Domestic Product (NDP) and employment share in rural areas, as collected by the NITI Aayog (2017), to establish a correlation between NDP and employment share. The data collected, is for the years 1971-1994, 1994-2005 and 2005-2012.

Table 1: Growth rates in rural NDP and rural employment share(2004-05 prices)

| Year    | Net Domestic Product(%) | Employment share(%) |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1971-94 | 3.72                    | 2.16                |
| 1994-05 | 5.06                    | 1.45                |
| 2005-12 | 7.45                    | -0.28               |

Source: NITI Aayog

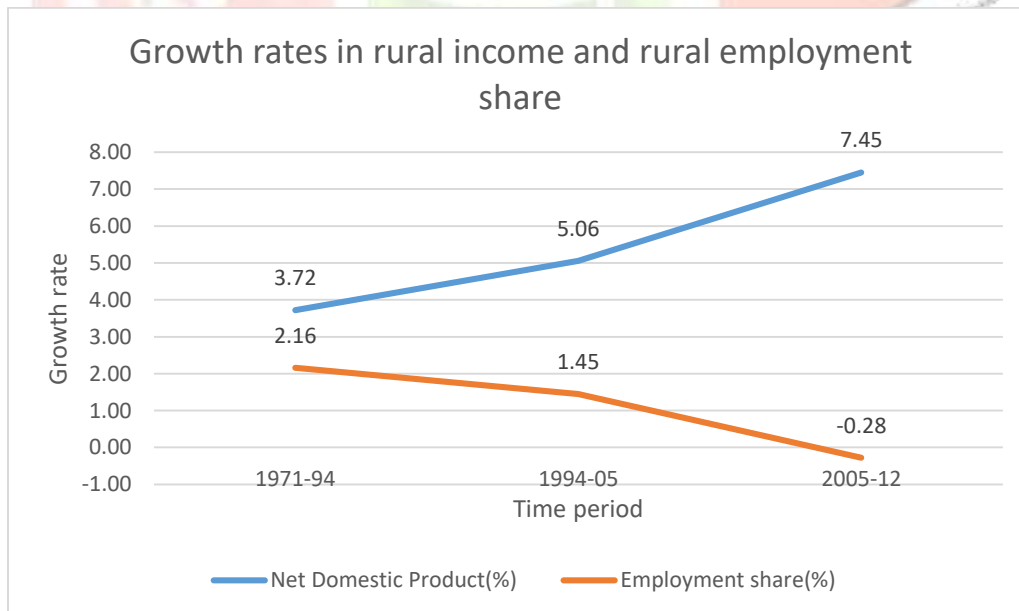
Figure 1



Source: Central Statistics Office, National Sample Surveys, National Account Statistics and Periodic Labour Force Survey via IndiaSpend

The above figure indicates how the share of India's rural economy, which is primarily agriculture based, has declined as share in India's NDP, in comparison to a near constant share of the rural population to India's total workforce.

Figure 2: Growth rates in rural NDP and rural employment share(2004-05 prices)



Source: Author

Table 2: Correlation

| Net Domestic Product(%) |                     | Employment share(%) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Net Domestic Product(%) | 1                   |                     |
| Employment share(%)     | <b>-0.997135655</b> | 1                   |

Source: Author

**Correlation:** Correlation coefficient (  $r$  ) is used to display how strongly two variables are related to each other. Correlation gives a linear relation between two variables.

i. Formula of Correlation: **Covariance(A,B) / (Std. Dev A\*Std. Dev B)**  
(where A and B are two variables and Std. Dev is standard deviation)

From table 2, we see the correlation coefficient between NDP(%) and Employment share(%) growth rate. A strong negative correlation of  $r = -0.9971$  is calculated, which shows that the growth rate in rural NDP and growth rate of employment share of rural areas are inversely related. Thus, it is observed that growth in share of NDP is more when rate of increase in employment in rural areas is less, implying that a decline in the rate of employment of labour in rural areas actually increases the productivity of the rural, since most of the employment in rural areas happens in the agriculture sector, which is already overburdened.

- Regression Analysis

Regression analysis helps one to understand the shift/changes that take place in a dependent variable, based on when one or both of the independent variables varies. This analysis is based on the sum of squares, which is method to determine dispersion of data points.

In this study, I have used linear regression to establish relationship between one dependent variable and one independent variable.

Mathematically, linear regression can be determined by the equation:

ii. Formula of liner regression:  $y = bx + a + \epsilon$

where  $x$  is an independent variable

$y$  is a dependent variable

$a$  is the expected mean value of  $y$  when all  $x$  variable are equal to 0

$\epsilon$  is the random error term

$b$  is the rate of change of  $y$  as  $x$  changes

Table 3: Regression

| <i>Regression Statistics</i> |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Multiple R                   | 0.997135655 |
| R Square                     | 0.994279514 |
| Adjusted R Square            | 0.988559027 |
| Standard Error               | 0.202102489 |
| Observations                 | 3           |

| ANOVA      |           |           |           |          |                       |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|
|            | <i>df</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Significance F</i> |
| Regression | 1         | 7.099355  | 7.099355  | 173.8103 | 0.048196              |
| Residual   | 1         | 0.040845  | 0.040845  |          |                       |
| Total      | 2         | 7.1402    |           |          |                       |

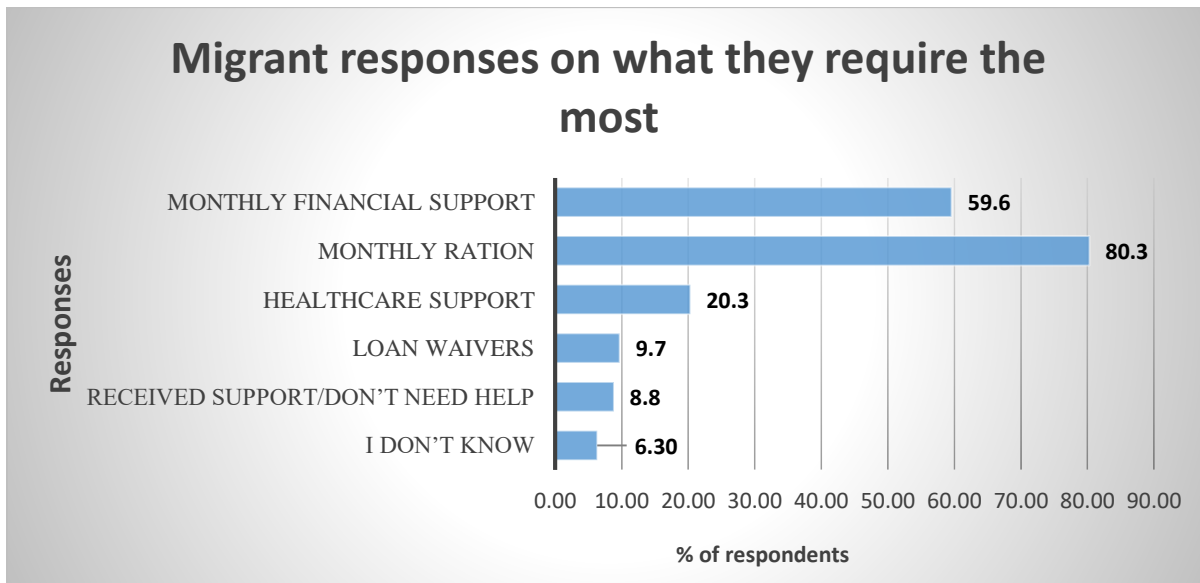
|                     | <i>Coefficients</i> | <i>Standard Error</i> | <i>t Stat</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Lower 95%</i> | <i>Upper 95%</i> | <i>Lower 95.0%</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Intercept           | 7.076338963         | 0.172019              | 41.13697      | 0.015473       | 4.890631         | 9.262047         | 4.890631           |
| Employment share(%) | -1.501206273        | 0.113868              | -13.1837      | 0.048196       | -2.94804         | -0.05437         | -2.94804           |

The value of the Multiple R, which is **0.997135655**, indicates a strong relationship between the growth rate of share of employment in the rural sector( primarily agriculture based) and the rate of growth in rural sector's NDP. The result of correlation shows that these two variables have negative relation with each other, implying that lower the growth of rural sector in terms of employment, higher its contribution or growth rate of NDP. The value of regression of these 2 variables further indicates that they are very strongly related to each other, an correlation signifies that they have a negative relationship with each other.

- Using the data set collected by one of the rapid assessment surveys of Jan Shas (Jan Sahas, 2020), where a sample size of 3,196 migrant workers was interviewed telephonically, this paper analyses the needs of the migrant workers with the aim of suggesting recommendations that meet needs of maximum priority.



Figure 3: Responses of migrants on what they urgently require



Source: Jan Sahas, 2020

Based on the above figure, the most urgent requirement of most of the migrant workers is monthly rations (80.3%), followed by requesting for monthly financial support (59.6%). The above survey responses signify that the authorities should aim to focus on provision of monthly financial support as well as monthly rations. While policies by the central and state governments have focused on cash transfers and provision of free ration, policies addressing the concerns of those with debts (9.7% requested for loan waivers) should be implemented as well. An obstacle to the existing policies and schemes decided by the central and state authorities is lack of an official and updated database, as well as poor knowledge of migrant workers on how to access the benefits entitled to them.

- Findings of the study

The study finds that the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown measures taken by the government to prevent further spread and transmission of the outbreak, have had a severely adverse impact on the migrant workers. Due to harsh non-monetary living conditions, lack of income and fear of catching the virus, millions of migrants' movement to their native areas, primarily rural, poses both an economic and health crisis. The study finds that due to reverse migration, an already overburdened agriculture sector will not be able to absorb the excess labour available in the form of migrants, thus further reducing the productivity and average income of rural areas, as well as risking community transmission of the outbreaks in villages which had not been affected earlier. The rural-urban wage and income gap is also expected to increase further. The daily arrival rate of migrant workers in pre-dominantly out-migration states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh would also influence fluctuations in the number of COVID-19 cases reported in these areas. The impact on education of the children of migrant workers is expected to be severe as well, due to closure of schools for such a long period of time as well as a lack of digital facilities for online education available to government schools. This delay and lapse in provision of education to the children of migrant workers may further result in widening the education gap and hampering the learning of these children.

- Discussion

With over 23 million migrants estimated to be returning home during lockdown, the extent of their helplessness can be clearly seen by the large number of distress calls made by them to both the authorities, as well as the helplines of several NGOs and organisations like Jan Sahas. While the implementation of the lockdown in India has been ranked as one of the most stringent in the world, a lack of inclusion of migrant workers in epidemic planning has largely been responsible for the extent of the impact on them (Bhagat et al.,2020). According to the 2011 Census data on migration, the most “migrant magnets” destinations were Delhi and Mumbai, numbering 9.9 million together. Thus, the severity of the impact of the outbreak in these two destinations also propelled millions of migrants in these cities to travel back to their native villages and towns. The loss of financial income and food security are the major concerns of migrant workers (Jan Sahas, 2020). To mitigate the impact of the outbreak on migrant workers and their families, the government has announced several policies and schemes. The Rs 1.7 crore worth Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana, announced by the Finance Minister on March 25<sup>th</sup>, includes financial aid through direct benefit transfers (DBT) and distribution of rations through the Public Distribution System to migrant workers, poor labourers and their families. The government also aims to use MNREGA to provide migrants with employment opportunities. The primary obstacle that this study finds in the effectiveness of these policies and schemes is a lack of data on migrants and their families, particularly seasonal migrants. Only 5.58% of Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Welfare Fund entitled workers actually possess the BOCW cards, thus leaving a large section of the laborers entitled to these funds without cash transfers (Jan Sahas,2020). Lack of bank accounts with a large proportion of migrant workers, inadequate knowledge of the benefits entitled to them are among the many reasons why penetration of these schemes and policies will be exceptionally low, thus pushing several thousands deeper into poverty. In addition to this, the mass exodus of migrant workers to their native villages in their home states, will further add to the already overburdened rural economies, particularly in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. These areas will not be able to absorb the migrant workers and would thus further increase the rural-urban wage gap. However, schemes like the MNREGA, along with the fear in the minds of these workers of returning back to cities, would discourage migrating back to the urban landscape, unless the authorities take efforts to reduce the non-monetary costs of living in urban areas, as well as provide them social security and other essential benefits like free medical insurance. Saving them from entering into a debt trap, especially due to credit taken from informal sources like money lenders, will also be necessary to reduce their dependence on informal risk sharing networks (Morten,2016).

- Future Scope and Limitations

The COVID-19 outbreak has exposed the lack of preparedness that the world has in dealing with a crisis of such magnitude. In India, it is a reflection that despite internal migration being an intangible asset to any country's economic development, it is the migrant workers who have borne the brunt of the outbreak's impact. To guarantee the effectiveness of the policies and schemes that the central and state governments have launched, ensuring that all migrant workers who are entitled to them are made of aware of these schemes and policies. At the same time, authorities must take necessary steps to provide each and every entitled individual with cards that will allow them to access their benefits, such as the BOCW card, MNREGA job card etc. Strengthening and keeping up-to date the details of all migrants workers, particularly seasonal migrant workers nationwide, in an easily accessible and well defined data base, is perhaps the first step to ensure that those entitled to government provided benefits receive them. Apart from ensuring aid through cash and food, free medical healthcare/insurance is also a must, so that in the future, a health crisis originating in cities does not force the poor to migrate back to their native villages. Ensuring that the children of migrants also have access to education amidst this pandemic is another task which will remain herculean,

until a strong and 'easily accessible to the poor' digital infrastructure is not created. The impact of the outbreak on the education institutions, particularly government schools, also calls for need to ensure that these school have access to computers, the internet and other electronics to facilitate distance learning when necessary. A major limitation of this study has been the lack of assessment of the gendered impact of the outbreak, particularly since women make up the majority of the migrant population, and yet their primary reason for migration is not employment but marriage. Establishing facilities to ensure that the mental health of the migrant workers and their families, whether they are in urban areas, rural areas or sheltered in migration camps, is crucial, especially since the reports of the Indian Psychiatry Society (IPS) suggest that a 20% increase in reported cases of mental illnesses has occurred during this pandemic in India. The policies and programmes launched by the government are expected to provide relief to the migrants in the short-term, however, authorities must formulate a long-term plan to include migrants in the informal sector when it comes to epidemic and crisis planning, so that the impact on them is mitigated in the future.

- **Conclusion and Suggestions**

The COVID-19 outbreak has led to authorities around the world asking citizens to follow social distancing measures. However, in areas where poor people live, such as the Dharavi slums in Mumbai, following social distancing is exceedingly difficult. The short-term priority at this point should be to ensure that all migrant workers and their families have access to adequate cash, rations, shelter and health care facilities. Their debts should also be waived. However, as the situation normalises, steps to ensure that migrants who have returned to their native rural areas gradually migrate back to cities and other industrially important region. This is because the already overburdened agriculture sector does not have the capacity to absorb more labour in India, and the employment opportunities provided by MNREGA are limited at best, effective only in the short run. In addition, without adequate labour, industries, factories, business owners etc will not be able to restart their activities, further slowing down economic growth. Another concern is that the reverse migration may increase the dependence of poor migrants on informal lenders and risk sharing networks, which may threaten to pull them into a debt trap. Without the return of migrants to urban areas, the rural-urban divide in term of income, wages, growth etc will continue to increase, further increasing the disparity. To ensure that migrants return, the authorities both in rural and urban areas must ensure provision of safe transport networks, in addition to lowering the non-monetary costs of living in urban areas for these migrants. Creation of a universal, social security scheme is also a short and long term measure to not only ensure the return of migrants to urban areas, but also mitigate the impact of a possible future socio-economic crisis on them (Bhattacharjee,2020). Pending MNREGA wages, loan waivers and rent problems are also among the financial concerns of migrant workers, which will need to be addressed by the authorities when making migrant specific schemes and policies. Private entities, NGOS, civil societies etc. must also be involved by the government to ensure a more inclusive and penetrating implementation of socio-economic measures to help the migrant workers and their families emerge out of this crisis, and be able to earn a livelihood for their welfare, and the welfare of the entire nation.

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