



A STUDY ON EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RETURNED MIGRANTS DURING COVID-19 IN INDIA

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Abstract:

This study has examined the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the employment status of return migrants and rural poor people of six underdeveloped states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, UP, and Jharkhand. This study has encompassed with two research questions (a) How does Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan affect the employment status of returnee migrants during COVID 19 pandemic period? (b) What is the employment status of returnee migrants under MGNREGS during the COVID 19 pandemic period? The data used in the study from the secondary sources like census survey (2011) for out-migration and return migrant (due to covid-19) data from respective state governments' official data, various journal reports, and employment status data from the Ministry of Rural Development, GOI(2020). In this study, descriptive statistics have been used for the analysis of both out-migration and return migration and their employment status. From the analysis, it has been found that 72 percent and 58.31 percent of return migrants have got jobs under GKRA and MGNREGS respectively. After comparative analysis, it has been found that in the states like Bihar, MP, and Rajasthan returnee migrants are more benefited from GKRA than the MGNREGA. However UP, Odisha, and Jharkhand returnee migrants are more benefited from MGNREGA than the GKRA.

Key Words: GKRA, MGNREGS, Returned Migrants, COVID 19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Migration is the demographic process that has been an integral and a salient feature of human history since time immemorial. Interstate Migration happens more due to regional disparity in development in different sector starting from the primary to tertiary level. Usually people move from underdevelopment regions to developed regions to improve their standard of living. However there are several challenges has been facing by the migrant labour in different times due to numerous issues like natural hazards, collapse of the industry, mismanagement of the organisation, payment issues etc. Recently COVID 19 pandemic has disrupted the economic condition of the country, Migrant worker are severely affected due to this pandemic. During this pandemic all industrial sector

or any other working places has been closed. As a results they have no any option to stay in their working places because of non-availability of any income sources. They are facing many challenges such as unemployment, educational problem of their wards, and arrangement of food. During the lockdown, **92** percent of migrants lost their job due to the company or contractor fired them from the workplace after the industry or works sector shut down. And also, **49.5** percent of migrants were faced starvation during the day, **38.9** percent never went completely out of food, and **10.5** percent were out of food for more than seven days during the lockdown (Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi, 2020). Thus, migrant workers were force to return to their home. After returned to home they were faced the problem like unemployment in their localities. The migrant workers were mostly affected in the states like Bihar, Rajastan,Uttar Pradesh,Jharkhand, Madhay Pradesh and Odisha((Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi, 2020). Due concerning the alarming issues of the migrant worker during the pandemic period government of India has launched Garib Kalyan Rojagar Abhiyan scheme on 20 june 2020 to providing employment opportunity in the states Bihar, Rajastan,Uttar Pradesh,Jharkhand, Madhay Pradesh and Odisha in their localities. Therefore, this study has attempted to investigate the employment condition of returned migrants in the six underdeveloped states during covid-19 pandemic after launched the Garib Kalyan Rojagar Abhiyan scheme 2020 and pre-existing employment scheme like MNEREGA.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lewis's model (1952) is the first comprehensive model to locate rural migration or labour transfer from rural to urban areas. De Haas (2009) analyses that migration happens within frameworks where some parts of economic, socio-cultural, and institutional structure changes create both source and destination points of migrants. It has rationalized with the best argument of disproportionateness development between both the places. DP Singh (2016) has used 1971 and 1981 census data and examined the age-sex in and out-migration differences in the states among males due to socio-cultural condition differences in the states.

In India the migration reports during 1971-1981 indicated that 75 percent of males migrated for family reasons and employment, while females relocated due to family-related reasons and marriage. Most of the migrants, both males and females are young, from 15-29 years. An unavailability of jobs, irregular monsoon, repeated droughts, lack of irrigation facilities, etc., (Sansristi ,2007), lack of employment opportunities and less developed states people moved to developed states (Das and Saha ,2013) are the cause of migration. From the previous research it has been found that low-income group people primarily migrate from rural to urban areas to search for employment (Sushma, 2004). There were conventional migration patterns from high-income to low-income states in the 1980s and 1990s but in 2011, interstate migration has declined (Mistri ,2015). An increase in interstate migration due to inequality among the urban lower-income class and the interstates migration was reduced in rural areas because of the successful implementation of MGNREGA (Mahapetro,2012). However the internal migrant workers, who are at the lower end of the labour market, lack social security at the place of destination. In addition, they suffer from a range of deprivations and vulnerabilities. But both types of migration have positive consequences for poverty reduction, employment, and economic growth (Srivastava and Pandey,2017).

There are many policies and programs have implemented to deal with the in-migration and out-migration, but these are weak and have no impact on migration; the integrated policy framework failed to place either at a state or central level (Srivastava, 2020). Recently due to the unprecedented COVID -19 pandemic has disrupted the entire economic condition of the nation. Due to this pandemic the migrant workers were severely affected. They were lost their livelihood and migrated towards their native place. During the first lockdown 75 percent of migrant workers lost their job, out of them 40 percent of migrants in informal sectors and not having any paid leave, job contract, benefits, or social security (Dasgupta, 2020). Ravi Srivastav (2020) found 93 percent of workers lost their employment and income in the first phase of lockdown. After the 3rd phase of lockdown, many migrants did not receive the past wages, at worksites lost their accommodation, and were unable to access necessary food and non-foods. After many problems facing, they return home by bus, trains and a walk returns some with their paying and those who do not have any money some people helped them, but the government failed to solve migrants' problems. During COVID-19, the government set the strategy for improving the public distribution system, integrating migrants with development, strengthening the public health system, and providing employment to return migrants to reintegrate them (R Bhagat et al., 2020). Due to the coronavirus pandemic, GOI increased the wage rate of MGNREGS worker from INR 182/- to INR 202/-; as a result, 50 million families benefited, and government-provided extra pay of INR 2000/- per worker (KPMG 2020). The GOI has dispatched additional Rs 40000 crores under MGNREGS to increase employment opportunities due to returnee migrants looking for employment in their native regions during COVID-19. Also, GOI has assigned Rs 50000 crore for set in motion Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan to provide employment and livelihood opportunities for returnee migrant workers (Surya Sarthi Ray, Monetary express, 8th July 2020).

Due to the pandemic migrant agricultural workers mostly affected in rural areas in India and government has also implemented several welfare scheme like free ration, financial augmentation for migrant worker, Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan for employment during the pandemic for migrant worker (Krishna and Mahalinga K, 2020). From the previous study it has been found that Kerala is the most inclusive state in india for the integration of migrants worker and implemented the state-level policies in an integrated manner for improved the condition of interstate migrant worker (Agarwala, 2020). However Maharashtra is highly effective state to fulfil the demands and needs of the migrant worker, while Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are at the bottom due to failure in providing the welfare scheme to the migrants during the pandemic period (N Rao.et.al, 2020).

After retrospectively investigated the previous research study it has been found that due to the COVID-19 pandemic migrant workers were mostly affected. They were lost their livelihood as well as they were struggling for getting employment in their localities. For providing employment in their localities central government has implemented several new schemes like GKRA in the states Bihar, Madya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, UP, and Jharkhand for the employment of the migrant workers and returned migrants also enrolled under MNERGA scheme. Therefore the study has attempted to explore how both GKRA and MNERGA has effect on the employment status of return migrants during the pandemic period in the above mentioned six underdeveloped states.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan affect the employment status of returnee migrants during COVID 19 pandemic period?
2. What are the employment status of returnee migrants under MGNREGS during COVID 19 pandemic period?

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Method: In this study Descriptive method has used for proper investigating of the data in accordance with the above mentioned research questions.

Population: The study has investigated the status of return migrant workers in six underdeveloped states like Bihar, Madya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, UP, and Jharkhand by using secondary sources of data.

Source of data:

The secondary data has used for the analysis. The out-migration data based on the place of last residence (0-9 years). The data has obtained from Census of India 2011 for migrants' data and State Government Official reports, various national journals reports and research papers for returnee migrant's data, Employment data of GKRA and MGNREGA from the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Data Analysis Techniques:

Percent Analysis has been utilized for estimating the level of returnee migrants in respective states and their employment position under GKRA and MGNREGA during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, bivariate choropleth maps have been used to visualize the returnee migrants engaged in GKRA and MGNREGA.

In this analysis, out-migration may be defined as the number of persons who have migrated out of the state to other countries per hundred enumerated population of the origin state.

Rate of Out-migration = Total of out-migration/ Total enumerated mid-year population of the year multiply into 100.

Migration variable: 1. Total migration, 2. Rate of out-migration, 3. Returned migrants.

ANALYSIS

Details of Out Migration and Return Migration

Table 1:

States	Total out migrants (in last residence, 0-9 years) in lakh	Rate of Out-migration	Returning Migrants Covid-19 (in lakh)	% of Returning Migrants
Bihar	31.88	3.07	23..6	74.02
MP	12.20	1.67	12.10	99.18
Odisha	6.26	1.49	6	95.84
Rajasthan	14.10	2.1	13.43	95.24
UP	50.46	2.52	35	69.36
Jharkhand	6.92	2.09	3.15	45.15

Sources: Census 2011 for total out-migration and Times of India, The Hindu, Indian Express for return migration.

This table shows that the total out-migration based on the last residence, 0-9 years, according to India 2011 census and returned migrants of six underdeveloped states. Due to the lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic MP, Od, Rajasthan is highest returned migrants state, i.e., 99.18 percent, 95.84 percent, and 95.24 percent, respectively. While

Jharkhand, and Bihar's lowest migrants returned states, i.e., 69.36 percent, 45.15 percent, and 74.02 percent. On the other hand, the out-migration is highest in UP, Bihar than the Odisha and Jharkhand.

Returned Migrants and Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan

Table-2. State-wise employment generated in person-days of returnee migrants and expenditure of amount under GKRA.

States	Returning Migrants in Covid-19 (in lakh)	Returning migrants of benefited under GKRA (in lakh)	Man-days Employment Generated under GKRA (in lakh)	Average employment generated in person days	% of Beneficiary	Expenditure (in lakh)	Average rate of exp. (in %)
Bihar	23.6	23.6	424.62	18	100	671224	28.5
MP	12.10	10.72	477.87	44.58	88.6	423349	18
Odisha	6	2.19	74.42	13.09	36.5	100084	4.25
Rajasthan	13.43	12.09	1113.43	92.09	90.02	604425	24.65
UP	35	17.48	590.72	25.05	49.94	490556	20.82
Jharkhand	3.15	1.1	40.10	16.04	34.92	66224	2.81
Total	93.28	67.18	2721.16	40.5	72.01	235520	100

Sources: Ministry of Rural Development, GOI 2020

Table-2, present the State-wise employment generated in person days of returnee migrants and expenditure of amount under GKRA. Returned migrants have got benefited 100 per cent in Bihar, 90 per cent in Rajasthan and 88.6 per cent in MP under GKRA. While Jharkhand, Odisha and UP have lower level benefited i.e., 34.92 per cent, 36.5 per cent and 49.99 per cent respectively. In the case of average expenditure is highest is Bihar i.e., 28.5 per cent followed by Rajasthan 24.65 per cent, UP 20.82 per cent, MP 18 per cent and lowest in Jharkhand 2.81 per cent and Odisha 4.25 per cent and also a smaller number of districts covered in Jharkhand (3 district) and Odisha (4 district). On the other hand, highest district covered state in Bihar and UP i.e., 32 and 31 districts respectively.

Table-3. State-wise employment generated in person days of returnee migrants and wage expenditure under MGNREGA (from 1st April to 12th September, 2020).

States	Job cards issue to migrant's worker (in lakh)	% of Beneficiary	Employment generated in person days (in lakh)	Average employment generated in person days	Wage expenditure (in lakh)	Sample average rate of wage expenditure (in %)	National average rate of wage expenditure (in %)
Bihar	11.76	49.83	1119.80	95.22	213347.56	12.62	5.30
MP	5.87	48.51	1625.51	276.91	291209.07	17.23	7.24
Odisha	4.50	75	925.54	205.67	203730.77	12.1	5.07
Rajasthan	6.76	50.33	2707.38	400.5	445104.7	26.34	11.07
UP	21.45	61.28	2303.42	107.38	456499.61	27	11.36
Jharkhand	4.06	97.14	419.74	103.38	79587.43	4.71	1.98

Sources: Ministry of Rural Development, GOI

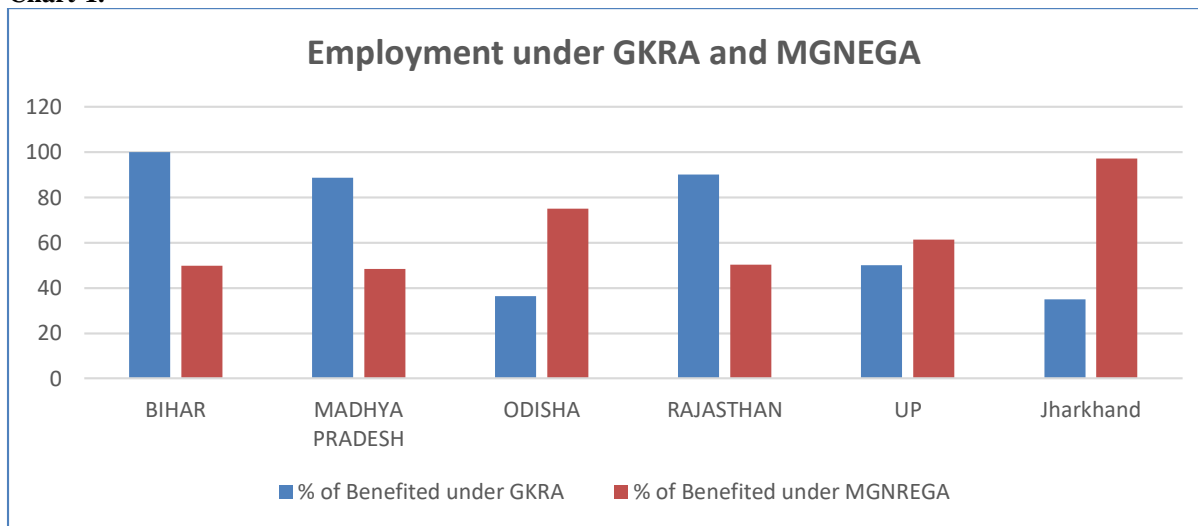
Table-3 shows that the returned migrants of Jharkhand (97.14 %), Odisha (75%) and UP (61.28%) have more benefited than Rajasthan (50.33 %), Bihar (49.83 %) and MP (48.51 %). But average wage rate expenditure is lowest in Jharkhand (4.71 %), Odisha (12.1 %) and Bihar (12.62 %) than the UP (27 %), Rajasthan (26.34 %) and MP (17.23 %). Similarly national average wage expenditure is highest in UP (11.36 %) and Rajasthan (11.07 %) than the Jharkhand (1.98 %), Odisha (5.07 %) and Bihar (5.30 %). In the case of average employment generated in person days is highest in Rajasthan (400.5 days), MP (276.91 days) and Odisha (205.67 days). While Bihar lowest person days employment generated i.e. 95.22 average person days.

Effect of GKRA in different sector:

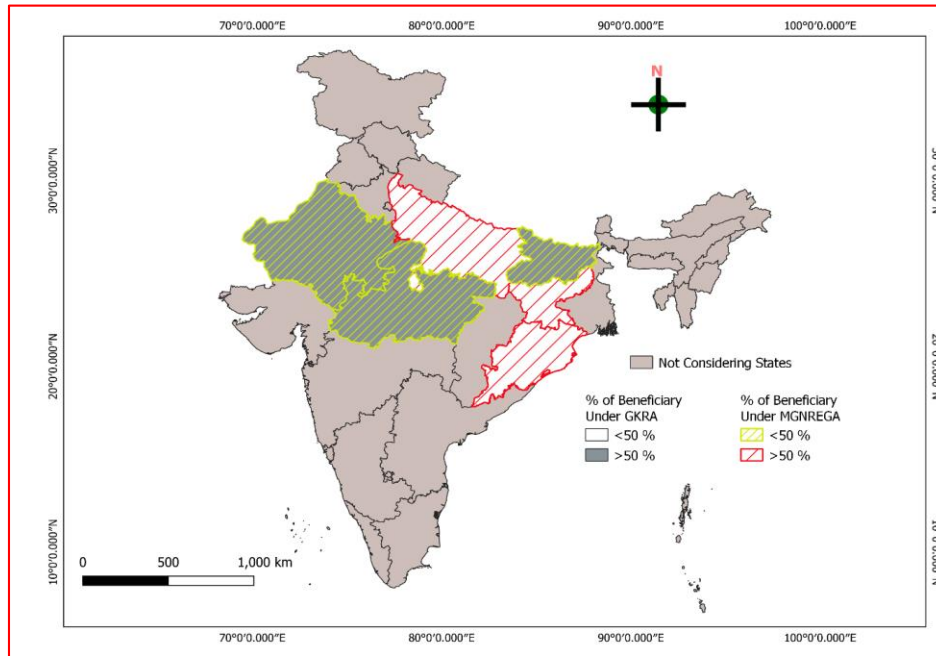
Before the end of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan on 22.10.2020, a total of about 33 crore (initially 27 crore) man-days employment provided and Rs.33114 crore (initially 23559 crore) has been spent and a large number of productive works have been created including 137787 water conservation structures, 431640 rural houses, 38287 cattle shed, 26459 ponds, and 17935 Community Sanitary Complex., 7816 works have been taken up through District Minimum Development Funds, 2123 Gram Panchayat have been provided internet connectivity, a total of 22592 works related to solid and liquid waste management, 65374 candidates have been provided skill training through Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs) during the Abhiyan (PIB Delhi, 15 OCT 2020)

Comparative analysis between GKRA and MGNREGA

Chart-1.



From the comparative analysis of both the scheme GKRA and MGNREGA in six underdeveloped states in India it has found that returning migrants of Bihar, MP and Rajasthan have got more employment than the Odisha, UP and Jharkhand under GKRA. Similarly, returning migrants of Odisha, UP and Jharkhand have got more employment than the Bihar, MP and Rajasthan under MGNREGA. So we can say during the pandemic the state government in the Bihar, MP, and Rajasthan has implemented the GKRA scheme in a strategic manner than the rest of the three states.

Map-1. % of Beneficiary of Returnee Migrants

Between GKRA and MGNREGA

Map-1, The sky-blue color represents those states have benefited only less than 50 percent under GKRA. So, Odisha, Jharkhand and UP covered these areas. While Purple color represents the Bihar, MP and Rajasthan which are more than 50 percent returned migrants engaged in GKRA, but these states have only less than 50 percent engaged in MGNREGA which is shows in small plot line. Thus, it can be concluded that those states have engaged in less than 50 per cent under GKRA, but they engaged in more than 50 per cent under MGNREGA and Vice-versa.

Major Findings:

- During the covid-19 pandemic, returning migrant workers engaged both under GKRA and MGNREGA. In the states like Bihar, MP, Rajasthan returnee migrants are more benefited from GKRA than the MGNREGA. While UP, Odisha and Jharkhand returnee migrants are more benefited from MGNREGA than the GKRA.
- Till the end of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abiyan many more construction work has been done such as 137787 water conservation structures, 431640 rural houses, 38287 cattle shed, 26459 farm ponds, and 17935 Community Sanitary Complex., 7816 works have been taken up through District Mineral Funds, 2123 Gram Panchayat have been provided internet connectivity, a total of 22592 works related to solid and liquid waste management, 65374 candidates have been provided skill training through Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs) during the Abhiyan (PIB Delhi, 15 oct 2020)
- Maximum hundred percentage of migrant worker had got benefitted from GKRA and only 11.76 % migrant workers were got benefitted from MGNREGA in Bihar, followed by Rajasthan 90.02 % and 50.33 % , MP 88.6 % and 48.51 % , UP 49.94 % and 61.28 % , Odisha 36.5 % and 75 % and in Jharkhand 34.92 % & 97.14 % in GKRA and MGNREGA respectively.
- It has also found that in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where total out-migration is highest, 50.46 lakh and 31.88 lakh respectively. However in Odisha is the lowest out-migrants states i.e., 6.26 lakh among the under developed states.

CONCLUSION

Though COVID- 19 pandemic has disrupted the entire economic condition of the nation, still government of India has been trying to make sustain the economic condition of the nation by implementing different scheme like GKRA during pandemic for the migrant worker. Most of the migrant worker were benefitted from GKRA in the state like Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhay Pradesh. But this scheme has limited up to 22 September 2020. As a result the return migrant workers again migrated towards other states for maintain their livelihood. Therefore the government should ensure the unemployment issues for the migrant worker in their localities, which could control the outmigration. GKRA is not a long term yojana. So, it is required to relaunch again the programme and increases the wage rate of the workers in the MGNERGA for inclusive adaptation of migrant workers at the unfavorable prevailing economic condition.

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