



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Covid 19 – Impact on Employment

Dr. Purvi Shah

Former Assistant Professor

Department of Management Studies

ITM Universe, Vadodara, India

**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the planet into an unprecedented crisis and uncertainty, calling to expedite the implementation of the Centenary Declaration. It called upon constituents to pursue 'with unrelenting vigour its [ILO] constitutional mandate for social justice by further developing its human centred approach to the longer term of work'. It involved putting workers' rights and therefore the needs, aspirations and rights of all people at the guts of economic, social and environmental policies. The international community and ILO's constituents have engaged during a collective endeavour to tackle the devastating human impact of the pandemic, but more is required.

*Index Terms* - Covid 19, Employment, Unemployment, Employee Behaviour, ILO, Economy

### I. Introduction:

#### 1. What is corona virus

Corona viruses are large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections starting from the cold to more severe diseases like Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

#### 2. What is COVID-19

COVID-19 is that the communicable disease caused by the foremost recently discovered corona virus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Globally in a poll by the 'Edelman Trust Barometer', out of the 13,200+ people polled, 67% agreed that "The government's highest priority should be saving as many lives as possible even if it means the economy will recover more slowly"; that is, life should come before livelihood. For India, the poll showed a ratio of 64% to 36%, where 64% of the people agreed that saving as many lives as possible was a priority, and 36% agreed that saving jobs and restarting the economy was the priority. As many people are going homeless and jobless it is accepted for the government to provide job for those people.

Government of India as taken many steps towards this they have make a new economic policy with would help the middle and low class of the country. This has also help many low class people to run their livelihood little proper. But as this pandemic situation is going to be long time government plays an important role because they are the one to can help low and middle class people as they have the power.

In India the life versus livelihood debate also played out, with the govt first announcing that life would be prioritized over livelihood, which later changed to an equal importance being given to life and livelihood. By mid-May the centre was keen to resume economic activities, while the Chief Ministers had mixed reactions.

As many as 41 lakh youth in India lost jobs thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic with most job losses within the construction and farm sector, consistent with a joint report by the International Labour Organization and therefore the Asian Development Bank.

Job loss is that the most severe immediate impact of COVID-19 crisis while lower economic process and rise in inequality would be the long-term effects, consistent with a survey by the Indian Society of Labour Economics (ISLE). The online survey was conducted on 520 ISLE members within the last week of May.

The preliminary results showed that loss of employment was considered because the most severe immediate impact of the crisis while lower economic process and rise in inequality were probable long-term.

The pandemic caused by Covid-19 has created havoc around the world. According to WHO's website, as of May 6, 2020, there are quite 3,588,773 confirmed cases and 247,503 deaths globally thanks to Covid-19, with US, Italy, Spain, and China being the most affected.

India, second most populous country in world, is not any exception for Covid-19. However, the Indian Govt. was prompt in taking some bold preventive measures to contain the deadly virus. Due to such measures, business entities having operations in India are finding it difficult to manage their operations during these testing times.

A year ago, in June 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work with support from its 187 member States. The declaration called upon constituents to pursue 'with unrelenting vigour its [ILO] constitutional mandate for social justice by further developing its human centred approach to the longer term of work'. It involved putting workers' rights and therefore the needs, aspirations and rights of all people at the guts of economic, social and environmental policies.

One year on, the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the world into an unprecedented crisis and uncertainty, calling to expedite the implementation of the Centenary Declaration. The international community and ILO's constituents have engaged during a collective endeavour to tackle the devastating human impact of the pandemic, but more is required.

According to Nomura India Business Resumption Index economic activity fell from 82.9 on 22 March to 44.7 on 26 April. By 13 September 2020 economic activity was nearly back to pre-lockdown. Unemployment rose from 6.7% on 15 March to 26% on 19 April then backtrack to pre-lockdown levels by mid-June. During the lockdown, an estimated 14 crores (140 million) people lost employment while salaries were cut for many others. More than 45% of households across the nation have reported an income drop as compared to the previous year. The Indian economy was expected to lose over ₹32,000 crores (US\$4.5 billion) every day during the first 21-days of complete lockdown, which was declared following the coronavirus outbreak. Under complete lockdown, less than a quarter of India's \$2.8 trillion economic movement was functional. Up to 53% of businesses in the country were projected to be significantly affected. Supply chains are anesthetizing stress with the lockdown restrictions in place; initially, there was a scarcity of clarity in streamlining what an "essential" is and what's not. Those within the informal sectors and daily wage groups are at the foremost risk. An outsized number of farmers around the country who grow perishables also faced uncertainty.

## II. Picture of Lockdown:

Indian Scenario India 's occupational structure and poverty is not well equipped with the luxury of complete self-isolation or social distancing or lockdown at the moment. It is not a choice of lives on one hand and economic production on another; it's an issue of lives versus lives. As nation 's economy is sinking and employments in both organized and unorganized sectors are going haywire with International Labour Organization (ILO) predicting the loss of quite 40 crore of jobs in India alone and quite 200 crore job loss globally. During the good Depression which began in 1929, GDP plunged 50% from \$105 billion in 1929 to \$57 billion in 1932. One reason for GDP drop was deflation between 1929 and 1932 and average level of prices fell 30%. Nobody can predict the economic contraction to be caused by COVID-19 and its 'rippling effects on global employment sectors. Goldman Sachs predicted COVID-19 would cut US GDP by 34% within the second quarter of 2020 and by 6.2% for all of 2020, consistent with CNBC. Morningstar constructed several scenarios and its base case envisioned a 5% decline in 2020 US GDP- roughly in the middle of its optimistic and pessimistic scenarios. Morningstar expects global GDP to say no 1.4% in 2020 like what happened in 2008 recession and an enormous change from the worldwide growth it had predicted for 2020.

As per Mark Zandi, Moody 's Chief economist, Wall Street Journal, April 5, 2020, This is a natural disaster. There's nothing within the Great Depression that's analogous to what we 're experiencing now. 'The Great Depression caused exceptionally high levels of joblessness. Between 1928 and 1932, the percentage soared from 3.2% to 24.9%- the very best rate within the history of USA. By April 2, 2020, US jobless claims in the previous two weeks have totalled nearly 10 million. According to (Ray, et al., 2020), the Indian experience highlights, in a visceral way, both the Scylla of widespread viral infection and the Charybdis of socio-economic lockdown. India 's occupational structure is so diverse, and the base of the pyramid is so broad that it crumbles under the overwhelming population of fellow citizens below the poverty line. A comprehensive strategy of nationwide lockdown therefore must be accompanied with comprehensive State support for compensating welfare measures aimed at protecting the health, nutrition and psychological well-being of all households across the length and breadth of the country. This is undoubtedly a humongous job and impossible for any government across the globe taking into account the whopping population of 1.34 billion spanning over different geographies and socio-economic-political strata of the vast nation.

Viral outbreak has already exposed countless poor households (majorly within the urban peripheries and rural setups) to vulnerabilities of mortality and morbidity under the mercy of primary healthcare systems which neither have neither the manpower nor the expertise to combat a pandemic to the monstrosity of COVID-19. Adding to it is the lack of income and fear of employment loss giving ways to terrible food insecurity.

The latest report published by Periodic Labour Force Survey paints a gloomy picture. Over 2017-18 FY, about 52% of rural households earned their bread through self-employment opportunities. Casual labour accounts for 25% of rural households while regular wage earners accounted for 12.7%. The urban picture demonstrates 32.4%, 11.8% and 41.4% figures for the above three parameters. We are reminded in our rural development lectures that urban poverty is more dangerous than rural poverty and India 's current lockdown phase combined with COVID-19 threats reclaims this fact. One thing that has to be admitted is that Government of India did institute a nationwide lockdown fairly early in the cycle, when the reported cases and casualty numbers were relatively low and we were standing in the midway of Stage 2 of community infection. However, the disastrous picture of millions of migrant workers panicking and rushing to their hometowns defying lockdown claimed lives too as shelter-less people walked down hundreds of kms with no food and water. These out-of-job workers along with or preceding the lockdown announcement lacking any relief package would constitute a huge population in the nation 's unemployment graphs. It is a Catch 22 situation for the govt. If it lifts the lockdown on April 14, we are certain to face a pandemic explosion with figures touching thousands and lakhs leading to complete collapse of healthcare systems as happened in USA and European countries, if not worse.

On the other hand, extending the lockdown would call for a great economic depression and massive unemployment scenario with job losses and job cuts both in organized as well as unorganized sectors. In absence of comprehensive testing procedures for whooping population, countrywide lockdown or absence of it won 't be faithful in stopping the pandemic with silent increase in the number of asymptomatic carriers in population. This would make the battle longer and draining; socially, emotionally and of course economically.

### III. India's Jobless Growth Hurdle:

Five months into the lockdown, India has witnessed a sharp decline in the number of jobs in the formal sector — the largest source of salaried employment in the country. Even after unlocking the economy, there has been no improvement within the salaried jobs space. The government has cited the unprecedented depression behind the work situation within the country. However, the coronavirus pandemic might not be the sole reason why salaried jobs — one among the foremost secure sorts of employment — are losing prominence in India.

Unemployment within the country had been a drag since 2017-18. A government job survey, whose publication was delayed just before 2019 Lok Sabha election, showed how the country's unemployment reached a four-decade high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18.

Job loss is that the most severe immediate impact of COVID-19 crisis while lower economic process and rise in inequality would be the long-term effects, consistent with a survey by the Indian Society of Labour Economics. The online survey was conducted on 520 ISLE members within the last week of May. The preliminary results showed that loss of employment was considered because the most severe immediate impact of the crisis while lower economic process and rise in inequality were probable long-term impact.

As per the survey, the immediate policy priorities suggested were protection of workers and families, short-term employment creation and income transfers to affected workers. Short-term policy requirements were support to MSMEs, expansion of MGNREGA, job creation, cash transfers and social security while the long-term measures included need for building a stronger public health system, universalisation of social security and policies for welfare and rights of migrants.

The survey was discussed at a two-day virtual international conference on "Implications of the COVID-19 Crisis for Labour and Employment in India: Impact, Strategies, and Perspectives" on June 8-9. The conference was organised by the Institute for Human Development (IHD), International Labour Organization (ILO).

"The lessons from other countries suggest that active labour market policies including cash transfers and wage subsidy to small enterprises are often effective in mitigating the adverse impact of COVID 19 on livelihoods and employment of these worse affected in India," Alakh N Sharma, Director, IHD said during the conference. Dagmar Walter, Director, ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and India, said there's a requirement to prioritise work for all and fault-lines got to be addressed for better outcomes. The takeaway from the conference was that overall, there has been about 25 per cent decline in total GDP with the economic sector (especially MSMEs) highly disrupted and down by 54 per cent.

Without any stimulus the economy may need declined by 12.4 per cent, the participants noted. Estimates of job loss showed that 80 per cent jobs were affected in urban economy, most of which were self-employed, 54 per cent jobs were affected in rural economy, most of which were casual employment, they said. A 2,500-respondents survey by SBI Life NSE 1.77 % said job or income loss is among the top three financial worries, and a bulk of 78 per cent respondents feel that stress or anxiety affects mental and physical immunity, as per a politician statement.

A survey of 1,089 people by Bharti Axa General Insurance said anxiety over not being able to meet family or friends (44 per cent), concern over returning to work place (38 per cent) and lack of focus on work (36 per cent) are the top three situations being faced since the beginning of the lockdowns, as per an official statement.

The insurers released their surveys once in a while of the planet Heart Day, observed on Michaelmas. "We are living in unprecedented times. The need to be conscious and wary of our physical health and well-being has never been more crucial than it's now. "Evident through this study, stress can be an invisible but major contributor to heart disorders as it is a leading cause of cardiovascular ailments," Bharti Axa Managing Director and Chief Executive Sanjeev Srinivasan said.

SBI Life President Ravi Krishnamurthy said, "While personal and family safety is the biggest concern in the current situation, the pandemic has re-emphasized the importance of immunity for each one of us." While consumers' current state of monetary preparedness towards any health emergency is insufficient, there's awareness on the necessity to create a 'financial immunity' to safeguard one's future, he added.

### IV. How years of jobless growth have come back to haunt India during Covid-19 pandemic:

When India's growth was blooming in 2016-17, it earned the tag of the fastest-growing major economy within the world. Even as the country kept clocking impressive growth numbers for successive quarters, economists were worried about one anomaly — jobless growth.

India's rate of jobless growth had emerged as a top concern among economists who had repeatedly questioned how jobs were not growing as fast as the country's GDP. They warned that the speed of jobless growth could severely impact India's economy which depends heavily on the center class population, engaged primarily in salaried jobs and entrepreneurship.

While GDP growth in India had been falling since the start of last year, the coronavirus shock in 2020 had an awesome impact on India's economy and jobs. The pandemic and consequent lockdown laid bare the fragility of India's formal job market, which has collapsed.

### V. Failed Entrepreneurship Wave:

An entrepreneurship wave that started in India a few years ago could be another reason why there has been no growth in salaried jobs in the country, noted the Centre for Monitoring India Economy (CMIE), a Mumbai-based economic think factory.

"Salaried jobs don't seem to grow in tandem with economic process, or maybe with a rise in entrepreneurship. But, they're suffering the foremost during the present economic meltdown," consistent with a recent article written by CMIE MD and CEO Mahesh Vyas.

"This structure of the working population does not behove a country that has often boasted of being the fastest-growing major economy in the world," he added.



Data show that despite India's rapid climb before 2019, salaried jobs grew at a snail's pace. Salaried jobs grew from 21.2 per cent in 2016-17 to only 21.6 per cent in 2017-18. It inched to 21.9 per cent in 2018-19. India was clocking a true Gross Value Added (GVA) rate of 6-8 per cent once a year all this while. But the amount of jobless growth hit a roadblock in 2019-20 when salaried employment fell to 21.3 per cent. The CMIE explained that the stagnation within the salaried job market in spite of India's economic process in recent years isn't the sole anomaly. The CMIE found it "equally odd" that India has been witnessing a rapid increase in entrepreneurship with none increase in salaried jobs.

It is no secret that entrepreneurship has been rising in India over the past years. By FY20, India had over 7.8 crore entrepreneurs. But surprisingly, the rise in entrepreneurship didn't add more salaried jobs which remained steady at 8.6 crore. This indicates that much of the entrepreneurship growth in India was self-employed and consisted only of very small-scale businesses.

The government after coming to power in India had introduced several schemes to market entrepreneurship within the country including the flagship 'Make in India'. PM Modi had on many occasions encouraged India's growing youth population to become entrepreneurs.

While entrepreneurship did see an increase in India, it's not the type that helps sustain economic process, evident by the low job creation. Besides, most start-ups and entrepreneurs in India struggle to strengthen their base thanks to a number of challenges, consistent with a 2019 Observer Research Foundation study.

## VI. The Urban Job Meltdown:

The fact that all salaried jobs put together account for just 21-22 per cent of total employment in India is worrying as it directly impacts a large share of private consumption.

"There are many more farmers than salaried jobs. And, there are even more daily wage labourers. Farmers and daily wage earners together account for nearly two-thirds of the Indian working population," said CMIE.

It indicates that a large part of India's workforce is employed by the informal sector, where it is easy comparatively easier to get jobs. However, such form of employment heavily depends on demand originating from the urban economy, comprising mostly of salaried jobs.

With the sudden meltdown of salaried jobs in India, the informal economy is also feeling the heat with thousands of small-scale traders and hawkers shutting shop. Only the agricultural economy has seen a gentle rise during the lockdown period as farming became the pillar for those that lost their urban jobs. Most daily wage labourers who were forced to return to their native places were the main reason behind a 14 million rise in farm employment.

However, rural growth isn't enough for an economy which needs a minimum of 10 lakh formal jobs to be created per annum to support the country's rising youth population.

Salaried job holders working in urban areas are among the worst-hit workers during the coronavirus pandemic in India. This is a key to understand why private consumption numbers are so poor. Indiatoday.in earlier reported how the sharp dip in demand is directly related to the falling income among middle class households in India. India lost 2.1 crore salaried jobs by the top of August, down from 8.6 crore in 2019-20 to six .5 crores last month. "Approximately 21 million salaried job losses can't be confined to only of the support staff among salaried employees. The damage is probably going to be deeper, among industrial workers and also white collar workers," the CMIE said.

## VII. The Reeling Impact:

The ILO was quick to recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic is not just a health crisis, but equally an economic and labour market crisis. The lockdown measures adopted in most countries to stop the spread of the pandemic restricted economic activities. Evidently, developing countries have faced disruptions in trade and supply chains, triggering negative growth.

As early as on 18 March 2020, ILO's first monitor on COVID-19 had estimated an increase in unemployment and underemployment between 5.3 million ('low' scenario) and 24.7 million ('high' scenario) from a base level of 188 million in 2019. Soon, the figures have proved as highly underestimated. ILO 5th Monitor on COVID-19 impact released on 30 June 2020 suggests that the labour market recovery during the second half of 2020 will be uncertain and incomplete. The working-hour losses could range between 140 million full-time jobs and 340 million full-time jobs within the half-moon of the year, depending upon the spread of the pandemic.

The 5th edition of ILO monitor highlights, despite the easing of lockdowns and workplace closure measures in some places, 93% of the world's workers are still living in countries with some restrictions in place, and one in five are in countries where closures affect all but essential workers.

In India, the lockdown combined with global headwinds delivered a severe blow to the economy. For 2020, the IMF estimates GDP growth of just 1.9% for the country, rock bottom rate since the 1991 balance-of-payments crisis.

This assumes significance in an economy dominated by micro and small businesses, primarily in the informal sector. ILO Rapid assessment predicts casual workers, and the self-employed workers are most likely to lose their work and incomes.

India doesn't have labour force data covering the amount quarter 4, 2019, to quarter 2, 2020. However, the PLFS 2017-2018 estimates that 77.1% of employment in India is non-regular—either self-employed or casual workers. There is a further 13.7% in regular but unprotected jobs. When applying 2020 UN population estimate to the above proportion, it suggests that between 364 and 473 million workers are at risk of being adversely affected by the lockdown.

Women are marginally more likely than men to be in non-regular employment. Thus, COVID-19 has increased vulnerability of girls employment and has further added care work responsibilities during this time. Women's labour participation numbers were declining even before the pandemic with the increased engagement of women in education and with domestic duties not being classified as 'work'. The rapid assessment estimates that together, 181 million people in households, mostly women, engaged in domestic duties or unpaid family businesses, are bearing the brunt of the increased care and work burden.

COVID-19 has also exposed the vulnerability of urban casual workers, many of whom are migrants. They were among the primary to be jolted by the lockdown measures as economic activities were halted threatening survival of the many small urban units and jobs of those workers. In most urban units, the jobs are linked with accommodation at workplace and the unemployment may have forced these workers to vacate their shelters as well. With little choice, they're forced to return to their village in desperation. With limited data available on inter-state migration and employment in informal sectors, it is difficult to figure the numbers of migrants who lost jobs and accommodation during the pandemic and returned home. However, using different available data sets, they're a minimum of five million or possibly much higher, as per ILO's rapid assessment.

For enterprises, the impact of COVID-19 has been uneven for various regions, different sectors and different populations. Majority of employers operate businesses within the hardest-hit sectors of producing, accommodation and food services, wholesale, retail trade, land and business activities. Restrictions on movement have had an immediate impact on trade, and particularly on retail trade, and it's going to stick with lowered demand. Manufacturing had already experienced a slowdown thanks to a decline in both domestic demand and exports. The impact of lockdown on construction was direct and immediate as construction largely ceased.

Although not affected directly by the containment measures, the reverse migration can potentially turn the agriculture sector as refuge employer during the economic slowdown. Transport sector is partially surviving with some urban businesses still operating due to increased use of home delivery systems. Domestic workers may become victim of the second-round effects when households facing losses cannot employ them.

ILO's Policy Framework and Support from the India Country office

While enabling nations with updates and expertise on impact of COVID-19 on world of work, ILO is helping countries to develop a response framework. Leading the knowledge assessment process, the organization was quick to spot the priorities specific to nations and sectors. The ILO response policy framework is keeping International Labour Standards at its base. It guides member countries to prioritize health protection measures for all and economic support for both the demand and supply sides. It reiterates the need for building confidence through trust and dialogue to make policy measures effective.

ILO's equitable and inclusive response addresses four main areas:

1. Protecting workers in the workplace;
2. Stimulating economic and labour demand;
3. Supporting employment and incomes;
4. Using social dialogue between government, workers and employers to find solutions.

Aligned to the present policy framework, ILO's India Country office extends its expertise and support to constituents and partners during this era despite the hurdles of the lockdown.

In India, under the leadership and guidance from the UN Resident Coordinator's office a 'One UN socio-economic response to COVID-19' is being implemented. ILO is that the lead agency within the United Nations Country Team for the result area 'Skilling, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation'.

The office facilitates exchanges between UN agencies and social partners, employers' and workers' organizations, enabling organizations to re-purpose their programmes accommodating the impact of COVID-19. In April, ILO-UNIDO bipartite dialogue on MSME recovery and revitalization helped in shaping UN policy advice in designing relief measures for the sector.

ILO guided select states, notably Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, to develop responses for supporting the enterprises and workers, especially in the informal economy workers. A brief note on Short-term Policy Response to COVID 19 was shared with state governments.

Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme of the ILO is guiding the livelihood recovery efforts of the states like Kerala. Youth and women, especially in rural areas, are being coached to start business using the programme tools. Alongside, Business Continuity Planning (BCP) support to mitigate the risk of market disruptions has been offered to more than 30 MSMEs engaged in the supply chain of e-retailers and corporate houses.

With the Ministry of External Affairs, the office is facilitating conversations about safe repatriation of overseas Indian migrants and exploring avenues for his or her economic reintegration within the country.

The ILO provided Guidance to National Commission for Women (NCW) in the process of drafting and issuing guidelines in responding to the crisis in a gender responsive manner. The guidelines have been shared with concerned ministries and state governments for implementation.

COVID-19 disrupted the statistical system wherein all face-to-face data collection was suspended including the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has initiated a process of modernizing the statistical system including transitioning data collection to a Computer-Assisted Telephonic Interview (CATI). ILO and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development are providing technical support to MoSPI during this regard.

As a priority, the ILO is facilitating safe return to work for employers and employees. An 'Enterprise-level COVID-19 task force guideline' has been developed and shared with the workers' and employers' organizations to promote and reiterate the need for bipartite dialogue for gradually resuming operations at workplaces. A series of virtual practical coaching sessions on 'Improving OSH at workplace for prevention of COVID-19' are being held for constituents through existing programmes.

Prioritizing safe return to figure, an 'Action Checklist for Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 at work' was adapted into Hindi, Bangla and Tamil and a video on 'COVID-19: Three tips to protect SME Workers' was developed in English and Hindi. It has been disseminated among workers and employer's organizations.

### **VIII. Way Forward:**

Since May 2020, the Indian Government has gradually relaxed the lockdown and at the time of writing, July 2020, most economic activities are slowly resuming.

As an instantaneous support measure during lockdown, the Indian Government had provisioned a package of US\$25 billion, around 0.8% of the GDP. The Federal Reserve Bank of India has taken measures to release liquidity of about US\$18 billion into the banking industry. In addition, an economic stimulus package as part of the Atmanirbhar Abhiyan (Self-Reliance Mission), amounting to INR 20 trillion (around 10% of the GDP), was announced. It aimed to profit migrant workers, rural workers, small businesses and street vendors suffering from the economic slowdown.

The ILO's assessment predicts recovery from the impact of COVID-19 to be sluggish and uncertain. It mentions that damage will persist throughout the whole economy but most notably in the informal sector.

While demanding sufficient protection for the workers from all sectors, in terms of exposure to the virus and their incomes and working conditions, ILO calls for setting a strategy for the medium and longer term to address declining demand and speed up the recovery. It asks for prioritizing incomes and decent work to stimulate demand and productivity and protecting existing rights and dealing conditions.

COVID-19 reminds the world why international institutions like the ILO were created in the first place. The ILO Centenary Declaration on the longer term of labour, agreed in 2019, 100 years after the Organization's foundation, states in its preamble, 'persistent poverty, inequalities and injustices, conflict, disasters and other humanitarian emergencies in many parts of the world constitute a threat to those advances and to securing shared prosperity and decent work for all'.

Recovery efforts from this pandemic got to be derived from the method of social dialogue and will be rooted within internationally accepted Labour standards, developed with the consensus of ILO tripartite constituents. We can only 'build back better' if our efforts are supported the principles of social justice and solidarity that leave nobody behind.

### **IX. Solution in Hand:**

The pinpointed drug to prevent COVID-19 coronavirus is yet to see the light of accuracy. Rapid testing procedures in identified hotspots across the country along with state-imposed isolation and quarantine in state sponsored establishments while sealing the hotspot areas from rest of the country might bring a feasible alternative solution. Also door to door screening needs to be done with the support of unemployed local youths and healthcare professionals. This would not only make testing procedures loyal and free from local troubles but also ensure community cooperation. Local administration can play a key role in identifying the unemployed and eager youths in the process of door to door screening and provide them PPE as and when required.

As per global estimates, the worst affected sectors of worldwide economic distress and COVID-19 impacts would come with food and accommodation (144 million workers), retail and wholesale (482 million); business services and administration (157 million) and manufacturing (463 million) together adding up-to 37.5% of global employment and this is where the sharpened 'of the impact of the pandemic is being felt now. India shows no difference and therefore the scenario would far exceed the financial crisis and unemployment waves of 2008-2009. Workers and businesses alike would face urgent catastrophe in absence of any alternative economic package and oxygen from respective governments, already crumbling under the ongoing stress of COVID-19. However, frontline workers must be kept safe and protected with medical professionals, healthcare workers, supporting staffs and allied sectors combatting head on with COVID-19 crisis. We make and break governments. This is not a time to either socialize or politicize. We need to play our own safe roles while supporting our co-civilians with basic supports like food, drinking water and medical attention. COVID-19 knows no geographical boundaries, no caste, creed, color or religion. It knows no economic or political strata or social boundaries but impacts everyone on this planet. Therefore, we must combat this crisis together and play our individual leadership roles in guiding communities not only during this crucial public health emergency situation but also in coming out of the closet of economic depressions.

**References:**

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic\\_impact\\_of\\_the\\_COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_impact_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_in_India)
2. Lockdown and Beyond: Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on global employment sector with special reference to India, NUJS Journal of Regulatory Studies Special Issue Journal of the Centre for Regulatory Studies, Governance and Public Policy April 2020.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341151432\\_Lockdown\\_and\\_Beyond\\_Impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_pandemic\\_on\\_global\\_employment\\_sector\\_with\\_special\\_reference\\_to\\_India](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341151432_Lockdown_and_Beyond_Impact_of_COVID-19_pandemic_on_global_employment_sector_with_special_reference_to_India)
3. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/job-loss-most-severe-immediate-impact-of-covid-19-survey/articleshow/76323649.cms?from=mdr>
4. Implications of Covid-19 for Labour and Employment in India  
Dagmar Walter  
The Indian Journal of Labour Economics volume 63, pages47–51(2020)  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41027-020-00255-0>
5. India 's lockdown. Policy Insight No. 102. Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)  
Ray, D., Subramanian, S. and Vandewalle, L. (2020).
6. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
7. <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

