

IMPACT OF THE LOCKDOWN ON MIGRANTS IN INDIA

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Abstract

Migration economies have long been a crucial area of study. There is no doubt that labour migration affects a variety of factors, including employment, the labour market, rural development, social welfare, labour management, migrant networks, etc. Making effective labour market policies and inclusive economic growth policies requires a solid understanding of the labour force. Examining how labour migration policies have changed over time and their impact on a country's labour market and overall economic development. This study, which is focused on secondary data sources, used descriptive research. Books, newspapers, journals, articles, and governmental websites are used to collect secondary data. A careful review of the literature shows that migration has always been a significant factor in population growth and economic development. In search of better lifestyles, people have crossed national and international borders. The effects of labour migration on national development are examined in this essay. The trends, patterns, causes, and effects of labour migration at both the international and national levels are presented.

Keywords: COVID-19, Labour migration, types of migration, causes of migration.

Introduction

People move across a defined border in a geographic direction for a variety of reasons, most notably for social, economic, and political ones. Migration is one of the factors that contribute to population change, along with fertility and mortality. Similar to the terms "immigration" and "emigration" used in international migration, the terms "in migration" and "out migration" are used for migration within a nation. Numerous push and pull factors influence global migration in different ways. The majority of theories have highlighted the significance of pull factors in migration, but in the case of India, the push factor has been found to be more important. In India, people continue to migrate in order to survive, as was evident in the recent years following the pandemic. Moving from one location to another with the intention of settling there permanently or temporarily (geographic region) is known as human migration. Internal migration, or moving within a single country, is another option and is actually the most common type of human mobility worldwide. Movement occurs frequently over very long distances and between different countries. Migration is frequently accompanied by improvements in human capital, both at the individual and household levels, as well as easier access to migratory networks, which may result in a second move. Age affects both migration for work and migration for other reasons. Families, small groups, and large crowds of people can all move around. Labour migration has a significant impact on India's socioeconomic development. It is truly a global phenomenon because movements cross borders domestically and globally. Migrants help the Kerala economy by moving human capital to places where it is needed and facilitating the acquisition of new skills and a higher standard of living. Migration from rural to urban areas has significantly aided the process of urbanisation.

An effort has been made in this review article to look at prior research on domestic and international migration as well as the current trend of a sizable influx of migrant workers from North Indian states to the State of Kerala in search of employment.

Recent occurrences like the COVID-19-induced lockdown have prompted some discussion on the subject of migration, primarily with an eye towards the effects. The overall impact of migration cannot, however, be determined solely by these recent events. Numerous studies have demonstrated the advantages of migration for both the host and the home country, as well as the rise in migrant population income. The history of migration is the history of people's struggle to survive and to prosper, to escape insecurity and poverty, and to move in response to opportunity. The economist J.K. Galbraith outlines migration as "the oldest action against poverty". Migration happens more due to regional disparity in development. People move from backward underdevelopment as a regions to developed and prosperous areas in order to improve in their living conditions. This is found to be true both in international as well as in internal migration. In the developing countries in general and India in particular the migration between states should be viewed in the above context of regional disparity and inequality in development. A study on intra-state migration and service sector contribution (Mitra, 2020) has shown the contribution of service sector in generating employment opportunities for migrant population. The share of service sector in the study significantly influences the intra-state migration unlike industrial sector's coefficient. The majority of the literature has emphasised the beneficial relationship between underdevelopment and immigration. Numerous studies have also demonstrated that even economic prosperity can cause emigration. A community's improved social and economic circumstances may tempt young people to relocate in search of job opportunities. Migration is the term for people moving across national or international borders to live somewhere other than where they usually reside. The 2011 Census provided the most recent government information on migration. According to the Census, there were 45.6 crore migrants in India in 2011 (38 percent of the population), up from 31.5 crore in 2001 (31% of the population). While the population grew by 18% between 2001 and 2011, the number of migrants rose by 45%. In 2011, 99% of total migration was internal and immigrants (international migrants) comprised 1%.

History of Indian Migration

People have been relocating from rural to urban areas in India for a very long time. According to a 1931 Royal Commission on Labour report, workers from rural India were pushed into the industries rather than being drawn to them because the city offered few opportunities for them. Economic considerations have been the primary force behind migration ever since humankind first began to develop. For instance, early on in the history of humanity, people moved around or migrated in order to gather resources from the environment and go hunting. As a result, during the pastoral stage they moved to greener pastures, and during the agricultural stage they looked for new, productive land. India's population statistics show relatively low mobility, according to Kingsley Davis, who raised concerns about region-specific mobility because of economic, social, and cultural factors more than 50 years ago. The survey found that Indians tended to live close to their villages and were not very mobile. Zachariah strongly advises against moving from one state to another because of language barriers because there is evidence from a lot of research that Indian residents are less mobile. During the British colonial era, people migrated to India in order to meet the needs of capitalist development at home and abroad. Since independence or during the first decades of freedom, when many industries operated across the country, there has been an increase in emigration. Researchers should have given historical Indian migration trends and patterns more attention, but they haven't. Many academics may not have been able to understand these issues due to the

lack of comprehensive data. Numerous studies concluded that interstate movement in India was minimal, but they insisted that the fact that about one-third of Indians were counted outside of their birthplaces demonstrated the significance of migration as a social phenomenon. Migration has received more attention in research as a result of the decline in fertility and mortality. The Indian Census has been a source of information on migration since 1872. However, it has been discovered that the Indian population has limited mobility, depending on the birthplace criterion. Since 1981, about 3% of the population has been counted in a state other than their state of birth. However, the Census of India does not provide data on lifetime migration or return migration. It has, however, been supplying the rate of migration from rural to urban areas. When examining both interstate and intrastate migration, the findings indicate that there is a greater disparity in rural than in urban areas. We all know that the population of the Indian subcontinent is less mobile. However, it was anticipated that population mobility would increase if economic advancement was accompanied by advancements in communications and infrastructure. The majority of them are actually concentrated in unorganised industries, primarily in the textile, construction, and agricultural sectors. Contrarily, there are many different types of workers in the unorganised sector, including temporary workers and migrant workers without legal status. Mobility, the qualitative effects of outmigration, increased staying power, and rising reservation wages have all contributed to an increase in the variety of subsistence practises used by labour households. Only a negligible proportion of labour immigrants are healthy enough to increase fertility in rural areas. We also understand that migration is a dynamic process involving a variety of spatial and temporal movement. Migration can take many different shapes and forms. It might manifest as seasonal to year-round migration, permanent or transitory migration, or a combination of the two. Recent studies carried out at the village level in several regions of India have shown a significant rise in population mobility, including both long- and short-term migration as well as commuting movement, particularly from areas that are prone to drought. Several studies on migration, including those that looked specifically at rural-to-urban migration in India. Once a stabilising factor for poor regions, labour outmigration now appears to hasten changes in the way that production connections are structured. The primary characteristics of migrant labour are elastic supply, long and flexible work hours, and low wage costs. Due to the ease with which migrant workers could be disciplined, their presence reduced local wages and disciplined local workers. The majority of labour emigration to urban areas is absorbed by the informal sector. Interstate migration is more common in India than migration internationally. They also point out that some states are given the designation of sending states, whereas others are given the designation of receiving states. As an illustration, Punjab has long demanded labour from its neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh (options for gainful employment) due to pull factors. On the one hand, it promotes mobility and raises wages as a result, particularly in regions with little demand for labour. Additionally, it is stealing labour from other workers in a way that helps capitalists. It is the migration movement, which is as old as Indian civilization. It is essential for social and political stability as well as economic growth. India's current development trajectory has resulted in regional disparities, with a demand for labour in the developed regions and a supply of labour coming from the less developed regions. For instance, the increased demand for labour caused by agricultural and "industrialised states" like Punjab has been satisfied by migrant labour from underdeveloped regions like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, and Odisha. More developed states like Punjab and Haryana have a higher rate of interstate migration when compared to the other less developed states. Studies show that the movement of Indians is precisely tracked at different times. In order to become accustomed to city life, rural residents first relocate to nearby small

towns. As a result of this transformation in the nearby communities, they faced various social and economic difficulties. The biggest and most effective driver of people from rural areas to relocate to cities in search of employment opportunities is unemployment. However, it is now more challenging to transfer surplus labour from rural to urban areas. However, migration is viewed as the only option for poor and landless labourer families to survive. India is a lower-middle-income nation in South Asia with a population of 1.21 billion people, according to the 2011 census. It has a varied cultural heritage. Data from the 2011 Census show that there is only a small amount of permanent internal movement among Indians, which is thought to be replaced by transient circular mobility, particularly among males, in countries with an ACMI below 8%. Male and female Indian early migration patterns peak at ages 20 and 25, respectively, with the former being primarily driven by marriage and the latter by employment. With 30% of its population living in urban areas, India appears to be in the early stages of the urban transition, and rural-to-urban migration contributes very little to urban growth. Limited population redistribution is supported by migratory efficacy at moderate levels and low intensities. Spatial patterns reflect significant and enduring state-level socioeconomic status disparities, with industrialised and urbanised states recording net gains while less developed states recording net losses. Despite the low level of permanent internal migration by Asian and global standards, the Indian government is still worried about rural-to-urban migration due to worries about congestion and infrastructure provision.

Causes of Migration

Numerous positive, negative, and neutral reasons could affect migration. Many good, bad, and neutral reasons could influence migration. The reason for a person's migration is influenced by their place of origin, also known as their current residence, and their destination, which is where they move to a new location or where their migration ends permanently or temporarily. At both the source and the destination, there are factors that either encourage (permit), discourage (deter), or are neutral (neither support nor oppose migration). People are attracted to a location by pull factors, or its alluring features. Push factors are negative aspects of a place that either compel or encourage someone to leave. Both the origin and the destination have push and pull factors.

Economic factors: These relate to the local economy's overall health, the labour market, and the employment landscape. Migrants may be lured to their destination by the favourable economic conditions there, such as the promise of higher salaries, better employment opportunities, and prospects for wealth development, in an effort to escape the domestic social and political climate of their home region. Similar to this, if the economy is bad enough, those who are unemployed or in need of assistance must leave their own country in order to survive. Kerala attracts immigrants for a variety of push and pull factors. According to Dr. Manav Paul, Kerala is being attracted by both push and pull factors. Push factors like poverty, unemployment, population density, low agricultural yields, low labour demand, and other factors like family life, a lack of community activities, disasters, wars, and internal conflicts based on caste, creed, or race all affect the flow of migrants to Kerala. Additionally, Kerala has pull factors that attract migrants, such as more job opportunities, a higher standard of living than other states, higher salaries, fewer intercommunal conflicts, highly rated health, and access to education for kids.

Wage Rates: It has been noted that one of the main factors driving migration was the comparably higher daily wage rate at destinations. People do move from lower-paying to

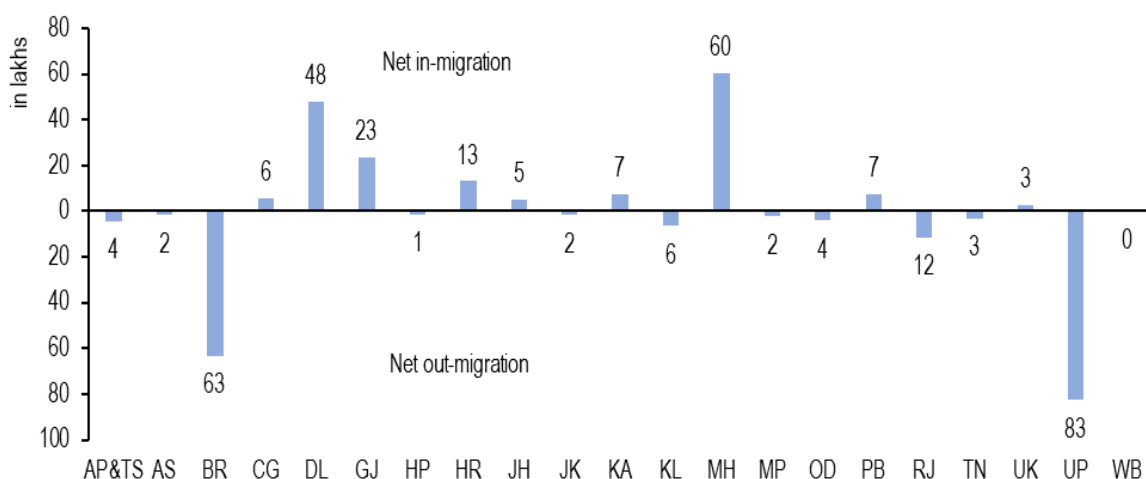
higher-paying states and regions both within individual states, according to extensive comparisons of the minimum wages in the two most labor-intensive industries, construction and agriculture. In order to prepare the comparative analysis, the minimum wage rates of the source and destination states have been gathered and examined. Kerala is a unique State where salaries paid for non-public work are more than twice what is allowed for migrant workers in agriculture. This is probably due to the labour shortage in Kerala, a State. The State is compelled to offer migrant workers higher wages in an effort to attract them and establish itself as one of their preferred destinations as a result of the significant number of Keralites who migrate abroad in search of better prospects. Kerala, the nation's most southern state, draws labour from all over the country due to its extraordinarily high wages, whereas states like Delhi, which also serves as the nation's capital, pay higher wages to their unorganised sector employees. Unskilled labourers in Kerala make about Rs. 600 per day, whereas skilled labourers can demand more. In Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, carpenters earn about three times as much as in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Socio-political factors: These include conflicts within and among families, the need for independence, racial, ethnic, and religious norms, as well as war or the threat of war, among other things. Motivating factors include political unrest, worries for one's own safety and security (caused by persecution based on one's ethnicity, religion, or culture), conflicts or the possibility of a conflict, slavery or the use of bonded labour, and a lack of or inadequacy of urban infrastructure and services. Family harmony, individual liberty and independence, social inclusion and cohesion, food security, and affordable access to urban services (such as healthcare, education, utilities, and transportation) are pull factors. People are driven to relocate in search of better ecological conditions by two environmental factors: climate change and the availability of natural resources. These are regarded as ecological variables. Extreme weather events and climate change are push factors that result in failed crops and a food shortage. Resources and minerals in abundance (such as water, oil, and uranium) and a favourable environment are both pull factors.

Patterns of migration

Based on their place of origin and final destination, internal migration flows can be categorised. There are four categories of classification: rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural, and urban-urban. According to the 2011 Census, there were 21 crore rural-rural migrants, accounting for 54% of classifiable internal migration (5.3 crore people were not classified as being from either rural or urban areas by the Census). Each of the two migration types—rural-urban and urban-urban—accounted for about 8 crore people. Approximately 3 crore urban-rural migrants (7% of measurable internal migration) were recorded. Migration can also be categorised as (i) intra-state and (ii) inter-state. Nearly 88% of all internal migration in 2011 (39.6 crore people) was within states. When it comes to interstate migration flows, there are differences between states. There were 5.4 crore interstate migrants, per the 2011 Census. As of 2011, the largest sending states were Maharashtra and Delhi, while the biggest receiving states were Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. A total of 63 lakh people from Bihar and 83 lakh people from Uttar Pradesh had either moved temporarily or permanently to other states. By 2011, approximately 60 lakh individuals from all over India had moved to Maharashtra.

Figure 1
Inter-state Migration (in lakh)



Sources: Census 2011; PRS.

Note: A net out-migrant state is one where more people migrate out of the state than those that migrate into the state. Net in-migration is the excess of incoming migrants over outgoing migrants.

Reasons for internal migration and size of migrant labour force

In-state migration was primarily motivated by marriage and starting a family as of 2011, with differences between male and female migrants. Males moved for marriage and starting a family made up 39% of the total, compared to 83% of females. Overall, 21% of male migrants and 2% of female migrants who moved within a state did so for employment. Interstate migrants were more likely to move in search of employment (50% of male and 5% of female interstate migrants). In 2011, there were 4.5 crore migrant workers, according to the Census. The Working Group Report on Migration claims that the Census undercounts the number of migrant workers, though. Since family is the main motivator for female migration, it is recorded as such. The number of women moving for employment-related reasons does not reflect the fact that many women start working after moving. The Economic Survey for 2016–17 claims that the Census data also understates the temporary migrant labour movement. The NSSO estimated that seven crore people—29% of the labour force—were migrants in India in 2007–08. There were six crore interstate labour migrants, according to the Economic Survey for 2016–17. According to the Economic Survey, an average of 90 lakh people travelled for work each year between 2011 and 2016 on average.

Figure
Reasons for intra-state migration

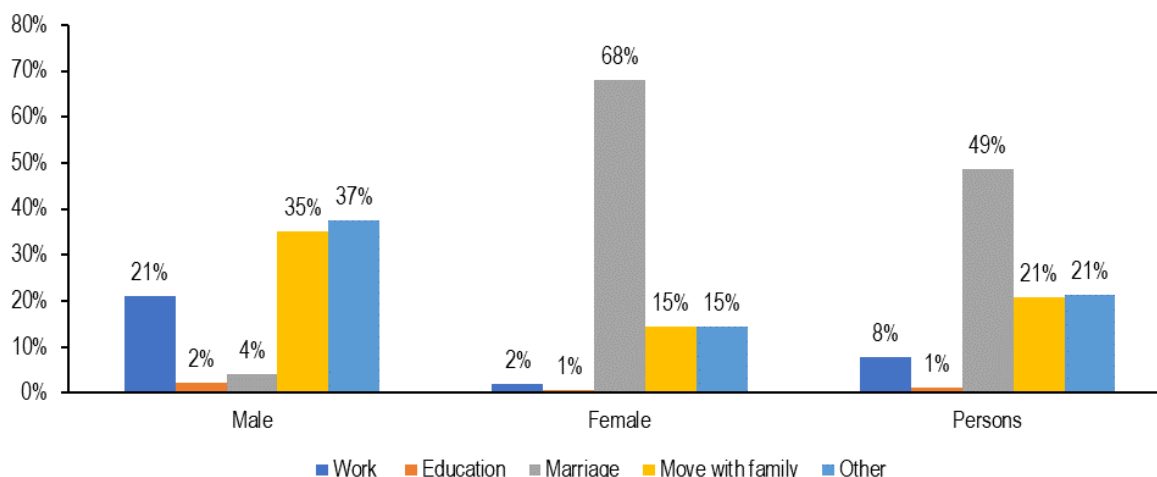
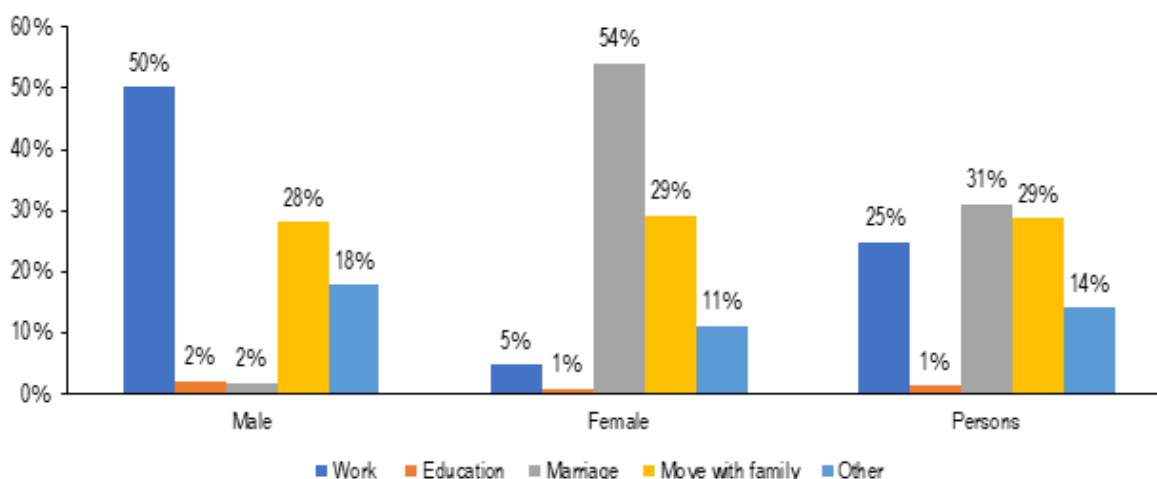


Figure
Reasons for inter-state migration



Issues faced by migrant labour

The right to reside and settle in any area of Indian territory is guaranteed by Article 19(1)(e) of the Constitution, subject to reasonable limitations for the general good or the preservation of any scheduled tribe. People moving for work, however, face a number of difficulties, such as: i) a lack of social security and health benefits, as well as inadequate enforcement of the law requiring minimum safety standards; ii) the inability to port state-provided benefits, particularly food provided through the public distribution system (PDS); and iii) a lack of access to reasonably priced housing and essential amenities in urban areas.

Poor implementation of protections under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 (ISMW Act)

Interstate migrant workers are given some protections under the ISMW Act. The following requirements must be met by labour contractors hiring migrants: (i) licensure; (ii) registration of migrant workers with government agencies; and (iii) making arrangements for the worker to receive a passbook proving their identity. The law also specifies the wages and safety precautions (such as lodging, free medical care, and protective clothing) that must be offered by the contractor. According to a report from the Standing Committee on Labour published in December 2011, there were few workers registered under the ISMW Act, and the Act's

protections were not being implemented very well. The report came to the conclusion that the Central government had not taken any effective, concrete steps to ensure that contractors and employers compel workers employed by them to register with them in order to be eligible for benefits under the Act.

Lack of portability of benefits

When moving to a new location, migrants who had registered to access benefits at one location lose access. Access to entitlements under the PDS is a case in point. State governments issue the ration card, which is required to access benefits under the PDS and is not transferable between states. Interstate migrants are not allowed to use the PDS under this system unless they give up their home state's card and obtain a new one from the host state.

Lack of affordable housing and basic amenities in urban areas

47% of the population in urban areas consists of migrants. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs identified migrants as the group most in need of housing in urban areas in 2015. Housing options for low-income owners and renters are insufficiently available. Slums and informal settlements grow as a result of this. The Prime Minister Awaas Yojana (PMAY) is a programme run by the federal government that aims to make housing more accessible to those who are less fortunate economically. The programme offers assistance in the following areas: i) slum rehabilitation; ii) subsidised credit for home loans; iii) subsidies up to Rs 1.5 lakh for individuals to build new homes or improve existing homes on their own; and iv) expanding the supply of affordable housing units in collaboration with the private sector. Since housing is a state responsibility, different states have different policies regarding affordable housing.

Steps taken by the government with regard to migrant labour during the lockdown

Several interstate migrant workers attempted to leave the lockdown and return to their home state. Due to the suspension of public transport, migrants began to travel on foot in the direction of their home state. After that, subject to state coordination, the central government approved the use of buses and Shramik special trains. Over 58 lakh migrants were transported by specially run trains between May 1 and June 3, and 41 lakh were transported by road. The government has taken the following actions to assist migrants:

- **Transportation:** On March 28, the federal government granted states permission to use the State Disaster Response Fund to house migrant travellers. States were urged to establish relief camps near highways with medical services so that people could remain there while the lockdown was in effect. The Ministry of Home Affairs authorised states to coordinate separately to transport migrants using buses in a directive issued on April 29. In order to help migrants who were stranded outside of their home state, the Indian Railways resumed passenger travel on May 1 (for the first time since March 22). Over 58 lakh migrants were transported by 4,197 Shramik trains that Indian Railways ran between May 1 and June 3. Gujarat and Maharashtra are the top states from which Shramik trains started, and Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are the top states where the trains ended. Keep in mind that these trends largely match the migration trends revealed by the census data from 2011.
- **Distribution of food:** On April 1, the Ministry of Health and Family Affairs instructed state governments to run migrant worker relief camps with provisions for food, sanitary conditions, and medical care. The Finance Minister announced on May 14 that under the second phase of the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan, free food grains would be given to migrant workers who have been without a ration card for two months. The eight crore migrant workers and their families are anticipated to benefit from the

measure. The One Nation One Ration card, which will be implemented by March 2021 and offer portable benefits under the PDS, was also announced by the Finance Minister. This will give people in India access to rations from any Fair Price Shop.

- **Housing:** The Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan also launched a scheme for Affordable Rental Housing Complexes for Migrant Workers and Urban Poor to provide affordable rental housing units under PMAY. The scheme proposes to use existing housing stock under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Housing Mission (JnNURM) as well as incentivise public and private agencies to construct new affordable units for rent. Further, additional funds have been allocated for the credit linked subsidy scheme under PMAY for middle income group.
- **Financial aid:** Some state governments (like Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh) announced one-time cash transfers for returning migrant workers. The UP government announced that returning migrants who must be quarantined will receive a maintenance allowance of Rs 1,000.

Directions by the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court reviewed the situation of migrant labourers stranded in different parts of the country, noting inadequacies and lapses in government response to the situation.

- The Court ordered the federal and state governments to respond with a list of all the steps they had taken to support migrant workers.
- The Court issued temporary directives to the federal, state, and local governments to ensure relief for migrant workers. These directives included the following: i) no migrant workers should be charged for train or bus fares; ii) free food should be provided to stranded migrants by the concerned State/UT government; iii) States should streamline and expedite the process of registering migrants for transport; and iv) those registered should be provided with transportation.
- The Supreme Court reiterated its earlier directives on June 5 (the full order was released on June 9), and it further instructed the Central and state/UT governments to make sure that: i) transportation of all stranded workers wanting to return to their native place is completed within 15 days; ii) migrant worker identification is immediately completed; and iii) records of returning migrant labour are kept locally at police stations. The Court further ordered the state and federal governments to take into account dropping any complaints or prosecutions brought under Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act against migrant workers who allegedly disobeyed lockdown orders.

Conclusion

Studies on migration and migrant workers have provided a thorough understanding of the subject, which should be taken into consideration for future research, according to the evaluation of the literature. A thorough examination of migration and migrant labour was attempted in this study. We've already gone over the causes, effects, and history of migration from India. The survey indicates that there has recently been a sizable influx of migrant workers from various regions of the country into the state. States with migrant workers that resemble Kerala include West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Orissa. Despite having a high unemployment rate, migrant workers still made up a sizeable portion of the workforce in the state because of the higher wages for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the abundance of open business opportunities, and the scarcity of local employment. India was already experiencing a slowdown in GDP growth and rising unemployment rates before the start of this

health crisis. Demand had slowed, and the lockdown made the decline in supply and demand in the economy even worse. The already disrupted domestic supply and demand are being made worse by the global recession and problems in global supply chains. The impact of this crisis would need to be spread across both the formal and informal sectors. India has faced particular difficulties as a result of the coronavirus. The main causes of this are the 1.3 billion-person population living in various States with varying levels of health infrastructure as well as social, cultural, and economic disparities. There have been significant differences in how prepared state governments have been to combat the virus. Kerala used extensive testing, contact tracing, etc. after contracting the Nipah virus in 2018 to stop the spread. Similar to this, the State of Odisha has experienced a number of natural disasters, and the State government responded appropriately in each case. Migration can be defined as the temporary movement of people from one location to another. Due to the countries' reliance on China for the supply of intermediate goods, the lockdown caused manufacturing to come to a halt and the supply chain to be disrupted. Even though there were workers and capital in the cities, production ceased as a result. In addition, outside of the demand for necessities, the economy's demand for goods and services declines. There is a Domino Effect. This group of people's lack of access to savings only makes the situation worse by escalating their misery. It is these workers who are moving from the cities to the villages in the anticipation that at the very least food and necessities will be offered there. The majority of the investigations into the effects of the pandemic outbreak are seen to be related to the economy and health sector, according to the research that has been done. More in-depth research is thought to be necessary to fully comprehend the difficulties this pandemic and India's slowing GDP growth rate have posed for migrant workers' conditions, which has had an effect on economic inequality levels. It is also crucial to determine whether the government's public policy initiatives are sufficient to ease the difficult circumstances these workers are facing or whether further economic policy announcements by the Indian government are necessary.

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