

REVERSE MIGRATION IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS OF MAHARASHTRA IN THE PANDEMIC SITUATION OF COVID -19.

Dr. Pramila Maruti Gaikwad¹, Dr. Amit Eknath Sonawane²

¹Assistant professor in Department of Economic Nowrosjee Wadia College Pune.

²Associate professor Department of Geography, Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce (Autonomous) Shivajinagar Pune-411005.

Abstract:

The nationwide lockdown in India starts from 22nd March 2019 due to the covid -19 pandemic all over the world. In India the interstate migration and inter district migration is due to many reasons such as unemployment, labour supply, good standard of living, education, religion conflicts and market related policy, droughts, floods etc. The women migration mainly in India due to marriage and the distance of the migration is very small or native. The inter district migration in Maharashtra is mainly some of the districts are always facing water scarcity droughts and employment facility, better education facility etc. Some of the area of Maharashtra like Vidarbha, Marathwada is not providing the economic assets to the population so people are migrating from their origin place to where the employment facilities or economic opportunities are available. In this paper an attempt to find out the inter district migration of peoples due to covid-19 pandemic in Maharashtra.

Keywords: Internal migrants, international migrants, Low-skilled, post-COVID economy, Reverse migration, Migrant mobility.

Introduction: All over the world due to covid-19 the workers from unorganized sector are the most affected by the lockdown. In India around 93 percent of the total workers in the country are found to be working in the unorganized sector. There is always and continuous migration of labour or workers from rural and semi-urban areas to large cities in search of work and this will continue in the developing countries like India due to the regional imbalance. As the economies of the backward and underdeveloped regions were unable to provide employment, the labourers started working in various unorganized sectors in the city. According to the Sixth Economic Census, about 56 percent of the total employment in the state is concentrated in the urban areas of the two divisions of mainly Mumbai and Pune, (2013, pp. no. 29 and 30). India has a predominant share of internal migration and is also the top origin country of international migrants (De, 2019; UNDESA, 2020). The Indian Census (2011) data calculated the total number of internal migrants accounting for inter and intra-state movement to be 450 million, an increase of 45% since the Census 2001 (De, 2019). The Economic Survey of India 2017 estimated the inter-state migrant population as 60 million and the average annual flow of migrants between states was calculated at 9million between 2011 and 2016 (Sharma, 2017). Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Rajasthan are among the major origin states, while Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu are among the important destination states for these migrant workers (Kamal, 2018). According to the Economic Survey Report of 2019-20, about 94.07 lakh persons migrated from one place within the district to another place within the district during the ten years (census period) from 2001 to 2011. While about 72.67 lakh persons migrated

from one district to another district (inter district) of the state in India. The total number of migrants from other states to Maharashtra state is 38.13 lakh. The number of people who migrated from Maharashtra to other states is about 12.52 lakh. (Pg.No. 19-20) The proportion of women among immigrants is higher. But marriage is the main reason behind migration of women. Most of the migration of men is seen to be for the purpose of employment.

In recent years, the low-skilled labour outflows to Gulf countries from relatively poorer states such as UP, Bihar and West Bengal has increased substantially while those from more prosperous states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka have reduced (Sasikumar & Timothy, 2015). Poor wage rates in less prosperous states, persistent wage inequalities between regular and casual workers and lack of formal employment opportunities leads to low-skilled and semi-skilled workers migrate overseas to enhance their economic well-being (Karan & Selvaraj, 2008; Sasikumar & Timothy, 2015). Due to lockdown, workers started returning to their hometowns from Mumbai, Pune, Thane, Navi Mumbai, Raigad, Nagpur, Nashik, Aurangabad and other cities. We have seen through the media that lakhs of migrants have started their return journey on foot, on bicycles, paying extra money to private vehicles, hiding in cargo- shramik trains, asking for thieves, and hiding in freight trains. We saw the plight of children and women, starvation and even accidents during this journey (Aurangabad train accident workers are walking on the train track). Government lately started Shramik trains and buses for the workers to return to their hometowns. But even then the laborers had to face difficulties regarding online application, documents. According to the state home ministry, 1.2 lakh migrant workers have left the state till June 2020. It is claimed that half of the workers have returned from Mumbai and Mumbai suburbs. According to the state labour ministry, around 3 million migrants may migrate from the state. (Dainik Sakal, 11 May 2020) Most of the migrants who were returning to their respective states by Shramik Special Train were going to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, Karnataka respectively. Migration thus gives an optimistic livelihood strategy for migrant workers and their families, contributes to the economic growth of the destination state/country, while the origin state/country benefits from the remittances and the skills acquired during their migration. Migrants from Kerala, a southern state in India, earn high wages as high skilled workers in the Gulf, allowing them to remit more (Rajan & Zachariah, 2020).

24th March 2020, in order to spread the virus, a strict nationwide lockdown was imposed by India with immediate sealing of the inter district borders within Maharashtra four hours of its announcement. This shocked the unprepared migrant workers especially labour. The proper governmental planning is not done, so the problem of the migrant workers within state of India as well as districts of Maharashtra creates many issues. This paper includes the study of challenges face by the workers within the districts of Maharashtra during the covid-19. This paper is related the problems and migrant workers mobility in the various district of Maharashtra during the pandemic period.

Objectives:

1. To study the Inter District Migration in Maharashtra.
2. To find out the challenges face by the migrant workers.

Study Area: Maharashtra occupies the western and central part of the country. Maharashtra is one of the leading in the industrial development. Mumbai is the economic capital of the country is located in Maharashtra. Most of the peoples migration flow in the economic capital city of India, it is well

connected by rail, road, seaway and by airways. Some of the cities of Maharashtra have historical as well as religious background from the several centuries, these cities are well developed so migration from other cities to mainly Mumbai and Pune. The construction workers or unorganized sector workers are migrating to Maharashtra.

Methodology: Many workers leave their home town and migrated to the nearby cities mainly Mumbai and Pune for the employment purpose after nationwide lockdown in country, many migrant workers face many problems while returning to their home town, this study is related to the problems faced by these peoples. For this purposive sampling method is selected. Questionnaire is prepared and question is asked to the migrant workers the problems faced during the covid 19. For this Shirur tahsil's MIDC sector is selected Ranjangaon, Sanaswadi and Karegaon MIDC sector in the Shirur tahsil. During the covid to the help of these peoples, through the NGO questionnaire data is collected. More than 428 migrant workers interview is taken in the various districts of Maharashtra who are living in the MIDC sector.

Table No. 1 Reverse Migration District Level

Sr. No.	District Name	Labour Number in Lakhs
1	Aurangabad	2
2	Beed	2.50
3	Nanded	1.50
4	Latur	1.43
5	Usmanabad	1.18
6	Parbhani	1
7	Hingoli	65
8	Jalana	60

Source: Indian express 23 June 2020

This data is for one division Marathwada and it is till June 2020. The reverse migration of workers from big cities continued till the end of July 2020. Workers returned to their villages in the drought-prone areas of Marathwada, Vidarbha, North Maharashtra, Konkan and West Maharashtra. The problems of these peoples who return to their hometown are studied in the present Paper.

Findings of the study

The present study brings out the problems of the workers in the period of lockdown. Although the health issue is prominent, the issue of employment seems to be highlighted by the effect of the lockdown. In the journey of reverse migration from city to village, it is revealed that the government-administrative system has failed to provide facilities other than the rationing system.

According to a report by the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the number of people who went out of work during the Corona epidemic (i.e. between April 2020 and July 2020) has increased to 1.89 crore. This data is for private but salaried employees. Seasonal workers have also

lost their jobs. In the present study, 11 percent of those who lost their jobs during the Corona period, and 12 percent of the workers who were on unpaid wages were found. The effects of job loss or unemployment have reached the local level, from our neighborhood to our homes. In this background, based on the presented study, it is important to bring out three salient elements. One is to decentralize urban-based industries, second is to reduce regional imbalances and third is to empower public health systems.

1. Decentralization of industries;

The intention of the government organization in the initial period behind the establishment of industries was not to concentrate industries in specific places. From the second five-year plan onwards, emphasis has been laid on the development of industries. In some of the early five-year plans, village industries and small-scale industries were emphasized along with big industries. As far as the state of Maharashtra is concerned, industrial development and growth was one of the main motives behind the establishment of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). Along with this, (1) industrialization of all parts of the state equally, (2) decentralization of industry from clusters of industries in the Mumbai-Pune industrial belt was also the intention behind the establishment of MIDC. But the state has not been successful in moving towards this goal. In fact, industries were concentrated in the periphery of some big cities. It also got a favorable political and economic environment. And so the nutritional policies were also designed. Regional through centralization of industry. As suggested by the Committee on Unbalanced Regional Development under the chairmanship of Vijay Kelkar, a 'Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Credit Guarantee Corporation' should be created to improve access to capital for the micro, small and medium enterprise sector. Moreover, as said in the report of the same committee, Aurangabad-Jalna should be developed as an industrial belt along with industrial estates between Shendra and Jalna. In this way, if the small and large scale industries in the backward regions are successful, it will help in the development of those underdeveloped areas and on this occasion, the influx of migrants due to employment will be reduced. Initially, the central government was reluctant to rescue the stranded migrants both within and abroad, despite appeals from different stakeholders such as state governments, civil society and trade unions (Desai, 2020; Haider, 2020). Despite the strict mobility restrictions imposed by the government, the distressed internal migrants kept moving on foot or in unsanitary lorries or trucks towards their origin states due to their inability to sustain in the expensive urban areas (Rather & Yousuf, 2020). They faced numerous problems while attempting to cross state borders such as police brutality, grievous injuries with reports of even death due to exhaustion and dehydration (FPI Bureau, 2020). There was a lack of coordination among the central and state governments resulting in contradictory stances while handling the mass migration (Rather & Yousuf, 2020). At the same time, the employers retrenched the migrant labourers as their businesses were shut due to the lockdown. This resulted in thousands being stranded on various inter-state borders such as Karnataka-Maharashtra and Delhi- Uttar Pradesh (Abi-Habib & Yasir, 2020). There was an increased pressure from all the stakeholders as several petitions were filed in High Courts and the Supreme Court of India to rescue stranded migrants in various states/countries (Desai, 2020; NH Political Bureau, 2020). After one and a half month of the lockdown, the central government started Shramik (workers) special trains and local buses on the request of the state governments. From May 2020 onwards, 4621 Shramik special trains were operated for rescuing both stranded persons and migrants which transported 63.19 lakh (around 6 million) passengers to their origin states (Ministry of Railways, 2020). The Indian Railways allowed only those passengers to travel who were facilitated by the destination state governments. Given the lack of availability of latest data on internal migrants, the Indian government also launched the National Migrant Information System where details of the migrants commuting via the Shramik trains could be maintained for seamless communication between state governments and contact tracing if needed (Karthikeyan, 2020). There was widespread criticism against the central government for making the poor and distressed migrants pay for their ticket despite amassing huge amounts in the PM-CARES Fund established to provide emergency relief during the COVID-19 crisis. Following much confusion and a political tussle between the central and state governments regarding the sharing of travel expenses even when the special trains were running, the state governments later offered to cover their fare (Dhingra, 2020). A number of senior academicians and civil society members had pointed towards the ineffective governmental efforts in spreading awareness about the contact details of the designated officials to help with the free online ticket booking and caution them against the exploitative third parties (Counterview, 2020). The above narration reveals the plight and vulnerability of the stranded Indian workers awaiting repatriation. Further, the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare had prescribed 14 days of mandatory quarantine for all

international arrivals with the first 7 days to be spent in institutional quarantine (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2020). All the respondents of this study reported undergoing the COVID-19 tests and either institutional or home quarantine. It should be noted that for internal migrants, quarantine facilities and COVID-19 testing were state-sponsored. However, for international migrants, the expenses for institutional quarantine and COVID-19 testing had to be incurred by the passengers themselves (Srivastava, 2020).

Regional Imbalance: Disparities in social and economic development, employment, and infrastructure amenities across the regions and within regions have been a major challenge to policymakers and economists. (Jose, 2019) India is a diverse nation with a vast population. Policymaking and its implementation, peace, security and stability, transparent and good governance, political will power, infrastructural development, poverty, education system, industrial development, demographic character, language, central assistance, availability of mineral resources, weather, terrain, etc are very important and decisive factors for regional parity or disparity of a country. Regional disparities give rise to inequalities and due to this, the holistic development of the country is stunted. Regional disparities in India are very huge. Because of this, the pace of development is completely different in all parts of the country. Due to constant drought, water scarcity, education, employment, migration from underdeveloped areas to developed areas is going on. During the severe drought of 1972, there was a large-scale migration from Marathwada to cities like Mumbai, Pune, and Hyderabad. In the seven years period from 2011 to 2018, with the exception of one year of continuous drought, the migration rate has increased. Addition of jobs, expansion of education and industrialization and sugar belt can be said to be the characteristics of western Maharashtra. Moreover, the different political and administrative culture is also responsible for the progress of these two departments. Unbalanced development in Marathwada, Vidarbha and Konkan divisions is a key issue in the state. According to the 2011 census report, the per capita income of Marathwada is less than 40 percent of the per capita income of the rest of Maharashtra. Also the per capita income of Vidarbha is 27 percent less than the per capita income of the rest of Maharashtra. If we look at the development gap (deficit), Vidarbha has 39 percent, Marathwada 37 percent and the rest of Maharashtra has a 24 percent deficit.

The following suggestions suggested by the Vijay Kelkar Committee will be helpful in eliminating regional imbalanced development.

1. As suggested by the committee, resources at regional levels should be further divided at regional, district and group levels. States should have four tiers of schemes namely State Level Scheme, State Level Scheme, District Level Scheme and Group Level Scheme.
2. Empower public health system: The public health system in India is very poor and that analysis done during the pandemic situation in India. The new techniques and the new medical change instruments are not still used in the rural sector of India. The recent advance techniques in medical sector can empower the public health system in India. The public health system in India is used from the independence and their need to change in the system, this will tackle the pandemic situation in India.

3. Education facilities to all.

Education to all can change the social structure of the society. The education facility is not reach to all. The higher education facility available but the extension of this is in the limited cities of Maharashtra. The vidharbha, Marathwada and some of the regions are Maharashtra still behind the global education facility. The student's or parents migrated from their origin place to where better education facilities are available. The students migration is mainly in the cities to pune and Mumbai.

4. Rural economy in trouble:

Labor migrated from cities to rural areas in large numbers. But the rural economy is not capable enough to absorb these workers. Due to persistent drought, lack of adequate irrigation facilities, insufficient employment etc., and limited employment is available from rural areas. E.g. the government has been trying to solve the water problem in rural areas for the past 70 years through various irrigation schemes. Despite this effort, only 12 percent of the area has been irrigated so far. That means 88 percent of the rural areas are still dry. Therefore, there are limitations on the availability of employment from the agricultural sector. Dairying is seen as a secondary occupation complementary to agriculture. But this dairy business also lacks modern technology. Also, this business has failed to develop in backward regions. Farmers cannot afford dairy business only because of not getting good price. Milk which is supplied to consumers at Rs 50 to Rs 60 per liter in

the city, but farmers have to sell it at Rs 17 to Rs 25 per liter. Therefore, farmers in drought-prone areas do not get enough income from dairy business. Other secondary occupations include goat rearing, poultry rearing. Due to lack of training and skills required for this business, farmers do not come forward to do this business. Secondly, livestock has been drastically reduced by persistent drought. Thus, it is a challenge before the rural economy to absorb the laborers returning to their respective villages when the rural economy is already collapsed. The state government will have to provide employment to the workers coming to these rural areas and for this, the establishment of small scale industries or providing necessary financial and technological assistance.

5. MGNREGA for the Rehabilitation of the workers:

The government of India started MGNREGA for the rural employment and this looked upon with much hope. During the lockdown the peoples who migrated from their work place to home town accommodated in MNREGA. In this present paper it was found that around 4 to 5 percent of the migrant workers are covered in this scheme. One of the main reasons for the non-participation of labor in this scheme is that due to good rains in Marathwada this year, it is found that labor in large numbers has given priority to agricultural work instead of MNREGA. Because the wage for agricultural work is higher than the wages under MNREGA scheme. (Umakant Jadhav – Latur, August 18, 2020).

6. Economic issues of migrant workers: Due to the COVID-19-induced lockdown, the working class, especially the low-income migrant workers, have been the worst affected (Pandey, 2020). They were retrenched in large numbers, were rendered unemployed with their wages unpaid in the destination states which forced them to return to their origin states. A few internal migrants reported that they received work under the same employer/ contractor after the lockdown but complained of non-payment of wages during the lockdown period. They were forced to return to their villages due to unpaid wages, no place to live with basic facilities such as electricity and water provided by the contractor/employer and no immediate governmental protection.

7. Social issues of migrant workers:

Social challenges faced by migrant workers before and after the governmental repatriation. Most of the workers are not allowed in their villages. Roads are blocked and no one is allowed from outside, because outsider viewed as the spreaders of the virus in the village. They have to spend 7 to 14 days outside of the village where quarantine facilities is provided by the village people.

Process of economic reintegration of reverse migrants:

The central government announced Rs 1.70 lakh crore (US\$ 22.8 billion) relief package for the vulnerable sections which included categories of people who are migrants (Ministry of Finance, 2020). The central government urged the state governments to mobilize the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) Welfare Fund which would benefit around 35 million construction workers registered under the Act (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2020). However, it should be noted that there are an estimated 56 million workers in the construction sector (Nag and Afonso, 2021) Subsequently, after immense media attention, another relief package was announced of Rs. 20 lakh crores (USD 270 billion approx.) to benefit the migrant workers, self-employed and small traders. (Ministry of Finance, 2020a). The scheme ‘One nation one ration card’ was announced to be implemented across India in 2021 to enable migrants to access ration from any fair price shop in India using a digital card. Between April 1 and May 20, 2020, there was a sudden increase in the registrations (around 3.5 million workers) for MGNREGA, a rural employment scheme promising 100 days of work, pointing to increased need for employment (Chauhan, 2020). SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support), a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the MEA, aimed to create a database of migrant workers based on their skill set and experience to fulfil the demands of Indian and foreign companies (Ministry of Civil Aviation, 2020)

Conclusion:

This study shows that there is sudden and unexpected nationwide lockdown in the country, government is not given time for the preparation to the people or movement of the people. So it creates problem in the various districts of the country. In Maharashtra many people migrated in the

urban areas of Mumbai and Pune, these people. Government should be prepared or ready not only in times of crisis but also in the welfare of the migrants in the nation or international.

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