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Working Paper

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Department of Humanities and Social Sciences / Policy Brief, No. 1/2020

Suggested Citation: Pazhanisamy, R. (2020) : Pandemic Impact on Migrants, Immigrants and Reverse Migrants in India. Implications for Immediate Policy Interventions, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences / Policy Brief, No. 1/2020, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, FET, Jain University Global campus, Bengaluru, India

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/227762>

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Pandemic Impact on Migrants, Immigrants and Reverse Migrants in India Implications for Immediate Policy Interventions

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Abstract

The present Covid -19 pandemic has taken away many millions of lives across the countries and negatively affect the lifestyles of crores of households and the migrant populations are the immediate victims of such disaster. This policy brief trace and reveals the extent of migrants population in India and discover the lock down caused socio economic impact of covid-19 and highlight the gap where the state intervention is immediately warranted.

Key words: Migration, Immigration, Impact of Pandemic, Covid-19 and Migration.

JEL classification: J21, J46, J58, J68, J61, J82,O15,Z22.

1. Introduction and Rationale

The impact of covid-19 is numerous across various walks of physiological and psychologoigaical aspect mankind even in developed countries of the world. It creates cascading effect on the society and backward multipliers effect on the economy. Lock down is found as one of the immediate preventive measure adopted by various countries even if it is not desirable socially, due to its instant announcement which has not given enough preparedness to the public to meet the challenges. It is justified that the prior information about the prolonged lockdown going to be adopted will lead to spread the virus quickly and faster which caused to the limitation of movement of people, products and services from one place into another and thus creates an illusion market failure even with enough supply and the demand persist in the market.

Government of India has announced its lockdown on March 24th 2020 for a nationwide lockdown for 21 days which extended up to May 30th 2020. During this lockdown the total of 1.3 billion population in the country were restricted to mobilise from one place into other places and it is accounted that the number of affected cases are crossed one cores by December 20th 2020. Various studies reveals that the migrant's populations documented as one of the immediate victims of this lockdown due to their vulnerability to unemployment, hunger and the exclusion. The data on the amount of the job loosed by the migrant informal employees and their death are not available in the hands of the state as it is not maintained by the government (Indian express 2020) as a result the causes, consequences of the immigration and the reverse migrations in India is not available in the literature. It is in this context this paper to explore the data of migrant population and its extent across various states of the country and analyse the relevant policies for the intervention.

2. Objectives:

- a) To explore the extent of migrant population in India
- b) To identify the impact of covid 19 on migrants population
- c) To suggest areas of policy intervention for the recovery of economy.

3. Methodology

Various methodology are available in the literature to identify the impact of the pandemic such as simulation model (Martin Karlsson 2014), and the models which adjusting the demand and supply to reach a new equilibrium of the economy after the economic shock witnessed (Bloom et al., 2005), the empirical estimation models used by (Lee and McKibbin 2004) and so on. Due to lack of availability of the gross root level primary data on the migrant workers in the country it is decided to drop the simulation models and used the rhetorical approach using the emerging variables to identify the areas of immediate policy interventions.

4. Extent of Migrant Population in India

The enumeration of migrant population in India is not new. The first data on the migrant population was collected in the year 1981 while the census data were collected as about 24.66 percentage of populations were migrant with the contribution of 22.74 percent of rural population and 30.65 percent of urban populations (National Sample Survey Organisation 1993 and Economic Survey 2001) out of which 77 percent of male and 23 percent of female population.

This statistic increased to 31 percent of the population to rise the immigrants as 301 Million in 2001 and 46 percent of the population accounted as 450 million in 2011(Census Statistics of Government of India 2011).The following table can be used to highlight the extent of migration in India.

5. Table: 4.1. Extent of Migrants by place of Birth in India -2001

Sl.no	Particulars	Migrants (by Birth Place)	%
1.	Total Migrations	307,149,736	29.9
2.	Migrants within the state of enumeration	258,641,103	84.2
3.	Migrants from within the districts	181,799,637	70.3
4.	Migrants from other districts of the state	76,841,466	29.7
5.	Migrants from other states in India	42,341,703	13.8
6.	Migrants from other countries	6,166,930	2.0
7.	Total Population	1,028,610,328	100

Source: Census of India (2011)

The above table 4.1. Expresses the extent of migrants in India. It is worth to note from the table that among the various types of migration classified by the government of India the people who are migrating without the state enumeration contributed 84 percent of the migration while the migrants within the district accounts about the 70 percent of the migrant in their birthplace itself. The lowest types of migrants are from other countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal etc. is enumerated as 2 percent only.

5.2. Extent of Migrants by Place of Residents in India -2001

Sl.no	Particulars	Migrants (by Birth Place)	%
1.	Total Migrations	314,541,350	30.6
2.	Migrants within the state of enumeration	268,219,260	85.3
3.	Migrants from within the districts	193,592,938	72.2
4.	Migrants from other districts of the state	74,626,322	17.8
5.	Migrants from other states in India	41,166,265	13.1
6.	Migrants from other countries	5,155,423	1.6
7.	Total Population	1,028,610,328	100

Source: Census of India (2011).

In the above the extent of migration from the place of their resident is highlighted as about 85 percent and 70 percent of the migration is taking place within the state enumeration and within the district enumeration respectively. In case of the internal migrants in the country with nine years of duration of migration about 73,949,607 rural population were internally migrating from the rural to rural areas where as 20,655,277 people where migrating from rural urban areas.

5.3. Internal Migrants in the Country With 9 Years Of Duration

Sl.no	Particulars (Rural/Urban Residents)	Migrants (by Birth Place enumeration)		
		Rural	Urban	Total
1.	Rural	53,354,376	20,595,231	73,949,607
2.	Urban	6,266,503	14,388,774	20,655,277
3.	Not classified	1,807,495	1,147,941	2,955,436
4.	Total	61,428,374	36,131,946	97,560,320

Source: Census of India (2011).

During this lock down when the works opportunities were closed by all the industrial activities millions of migrant workers had witnessed the loss of income, food shortages and uncertainty about their life which caused their families went hungry even in the presence of government public distribution system through which the

food chain has ensured the availability of additional rations to the poor. But it has not achieved expected tolerance to the lockdown due to its less effective implementation.

5. Causes of Migration and Immigration

The census of India has identified and classified the prime causes of migration migrations in India which can be found in the following table.

Sl.No	Reasons	Persons			%		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1.	Reason for migration : Work / Employment	12,373,333	2,072,891	14,446,224	37.6	3.2	14.7
2.	Business	950,245	186,127	1,136,372	2.9	0.3	1.2
3.	Education	2,038,675	876,514	2,915,189	6.2	1.3	3.0
4.	Marriage	679,852	42,421,059	43,100,911	2.1	64.9	43.8
5.	Moved after birth	3,428,673	3,148,707	6,577,380	10.4	4.8	6.7
6.	Moved with households	8,262,143	12,345,962	20,608,105	25.1	18.9	21.0
7.	Other	5,164,065	4,353,096	9,517,161	15.7	6.7	9.7
8.	Total	32,896,986	65,404,356	98,301,342	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Census of India (2011).

It is observed from the table that among the various caused documented, 37 percent and 25 percent of the male populations were migrating across India in search of work and employment and for the movement along with their families respectively. Among the female about 64 percent of the population migrating due to the marriage which leads to the credits of India as the largest country of origin of international migrants (17.5 million) and has become a key determinant of population change. It is to be noted for the policy implication that the male population movement is relatively higher in all the categories of migration than that of the female movement. Only in terms of the movement along with the households female migration is higher than the male population. These Migration will continue as long as the better alternative livelihood option available than home (ILO, 2020).

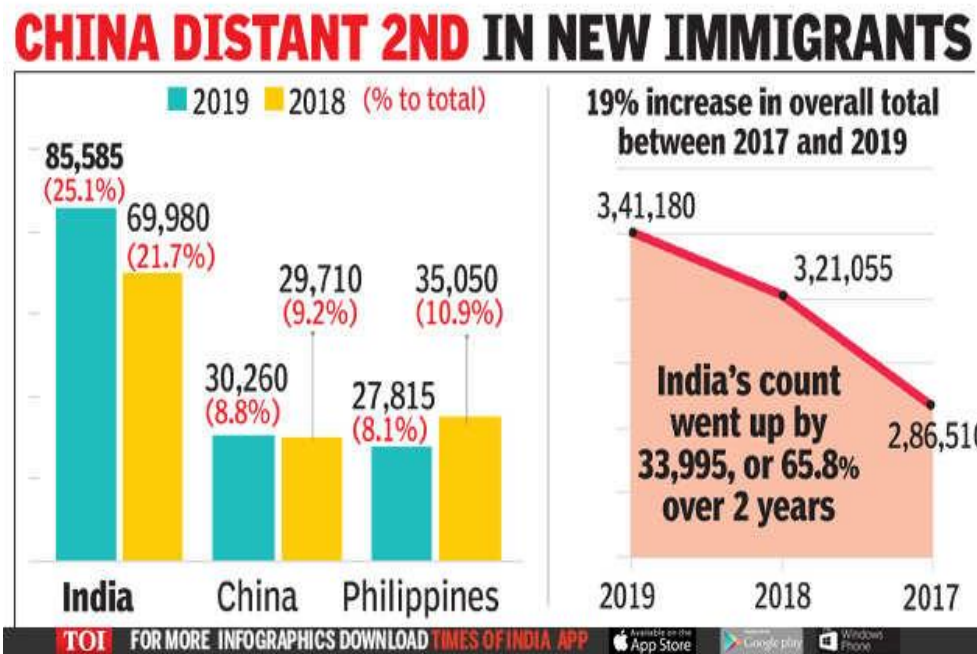
6. Extent of Immigrants in India

Immigration in refers to the situation of movement of people from one country into another in search job, business opportunities without having the citizenship with a nation. International migrant stock can be defined as the number of people born in a country other than that in which they live. This statistic reveals how much a country attract the immigrant workers from the other countries of the globe.

Sl no	Year	Immigrant Population in India	Percentage Decline
1.	2000	6,411,272.00	7.78
2.	2005	5,923,642.00	7.61
3.	2010	5,436,012.00	8.23
4.	2015	5,240,960.00	3.59

Source: World Migration Report (2020).

The world migration report suggest that the immigration in India is keep declining for the past few decades which signals that positive impact of policies adopted by various countries to reduce the world immigration.



Source: The Image Powered by Times of India

7. Socio Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Migrants

India is experiencing a long term economic slowdown as a result of the demonetisation and GST which resulted in the falling growth rate of GDP from 8.2 percent in January 2018 to 3.1 percent in January 2020 and in April-June 2020 it was recorded as was -23.9. Which is very worst in the history. Crucial parameters like manufacturing, construction, share markets, trade, tourism, hotel industry also witnessed a decline and slowed into negative. Manufacturing growth at -39.3 percent mining growth at -23.3 percent, Construction growth at -50 percent, and tree indutricla growth at -1.3 percent, Trade & hotel industry growth at -47 percent which added with the scenario of 80.7 percent immigrant who are not finding job and 80 percent of them

run out of ration while 47.8 percent of them not able to return to their natives(Manavi Kapur 2020).

8. Policy Status towards the Migrant Population in India

Various measures taken by the government of India during the pandemic situation to preserve the population such as the extension of tax returns, tax reduction for the immigrants and migrants, interest payment extension, reduced the bank charges for the online transaction. The relief measures such as Ujjwala schemes using which the poor migrants can get access gas at free of cost during the pandemic, increased cholera free loans for the self-help groups, three month EPF payment but the government, MNRGA workers unemployment relief fund and the insurance coverage of health workers and introduced a special package worth Rs 15000 crores to build health infrastructure fund.

In addition to the government the reserve bank of India joined its hand and extended its supports by permitting all the bank to extend the moratorium of three month and extend the mudra loans for the small and medium enterprises in the country. In March, 22.6 billion dollar relief through cash transfers to the migrants. But it is also not effective.

9. Relevant Policy options and the Demand for Implementation

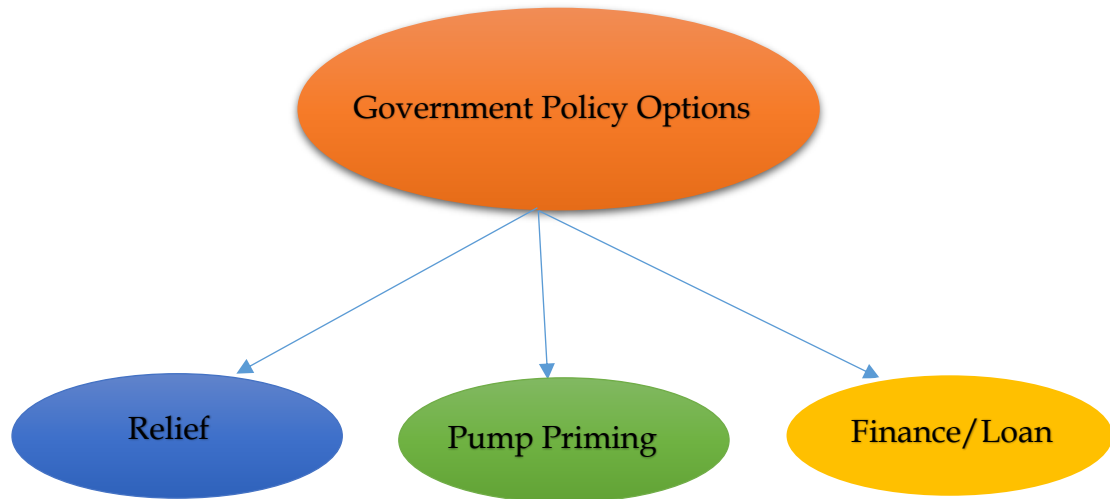
The recent exponential trend of Covid 19 impact across the various parts of the country reveals that the lockdown has not helped India to mitigate the impact and the spread of virus which calls for the analysis of alternative options available to the government. There are three important option that a government can adopt to reduce the effect of covid -19 and can reduce the spread of it.

First it can carry out the relief and rehabilitation activities on war basis and offer the relief fund: but it need huge amount of fund and probably it will make the situation even worst if it borrows any form of financial assistant from international organisations like WHO, UNDP and the world bank t would probably increase the integration debt .

Second option is an opposite of the previous one discussed by which government can offer the loans and finances the income generation activities among the public through extending the low cost loans similar to the one which we provide in the form of Mudra loans to the entrepreneurs. In this case critics argues that givement should not lend on the expectation of returns which can be similar to a pure business lending which is not correct. They also favour to an argument that government should increase the money in the hands of the public so that the demand for goods and services will arise.

So there should be a trade off in between this two which can meet both the criteria of providing the relief at the same time it should not be the debt burden to the country

and also it should be used to push the depressed economy. The following model can be useful to understand the implications of the statement given above.



This can be done only when the government increase its spending in a fine tuned way which can increase the money available in the hands of the poor

Conclusion

Economist argued about the possibility of achieving the v shaped economic recovery of Indian economy (Rahuram Rajan 2020) and (Government of India 2020) through government spending on infrastructure development like road, telecommunication, transport, and other public utilities which require to re look into the elements of public expenditure and the pattern of deployment policies which are absolutely focussed to the recovery of the economy from the lapsed down status. For this the national income should be re injected in to the economic system back through proper policies which can increase the availability of money in the hands of all. All other programmes which has the nature of concentration of national income in the hands of a few should be kept paused up to a reasonable time.

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