DOES PANDEMIC CAUSE REVERSE MIGRATION- AN ENQUIRY AMONG GARMENT MIGRANT WORKERS OF TIRUPUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

The rapid spread of the COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in a number of unfavorable cognitive responses and feelings among the population that is at danger. Migrants are experiencing an unusual humanitarian catastrophe as a result of lockdown in India. The current study aimed to identify the migration details and reverse migration intention among migrant workers of garment industry in Tirupur district with sample size of 500. In the study almost 81 percent of the population had intention to migrate back to origin in spite of the intention they did not take up the reverse migration plan as many stated that they stayed back as they did not have anyone at their place or origin whereas due to improper transport facility they were not able to move back in case of the intention of reverse migration most of them wanted to return because of family that is left behind and they had a fear that the world may end and they had fear of losing their job which would result in loss of wages and it affects their livelihood. Government has to take initiative to provide safe guard to internal and unorganized migrant workers for future.

Introduction

The world is familiarized in common knowledge around us that a pandemic will have repercussions in many different areas of the world, and that these repercussions will be felt for an extended period of time. A number of pandemics, including the Asian flu (1957-58), the Spanish flu (1918-1920), the Hong Kong flu (1968-1969), the Swine flu (January 2009, August 2010), the Ebola virus (1976 Sudan, 1995-2014 Congo, 2013-2016 West Africa, 2017 Congo, 2018 Equateur Province, 2018-2020 Kivu, and 2020 Equateur Province), and the Zika virus (2015-2016), have been responsible for the deaths of a significant number of people in addition to Both the ongoing trade war between the United States and China and the BREXIT are having a negative impact on the economy of the entire world Hossain and Alam 2022, Kumar 2020 and Kuttappan 2020and Ho. et.al.2020. Due to these factors, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasted that the expansion of the world economy will be 3.4%. However, the COVID-

19 outbreak abruptly altered all forms of predictions and caused significant harm to the economy of the entire world, including the loss of human life, Acharya 2020 and Bhagath et.al, 2020. The gross domestic product (GDP) of virtually every nation on Earth has decreased as a direct result of COVID-19.

The rapid spread of the COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in a number of unfavourable cognitive responses and feelings among the population that is at danger. As a consequence of this, the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to produce chronic psychological manifestations such as depression, anxiety, panic disorder, and other psychosomatic manifestations. This is in addition to the negative consequences it has on a person's physical health and life(Qiu et al., 2020; Tandon, 2020, Nelson 2020,Asian development bank 2020 and WHO 2020).

The exponential growth of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in overcrowded residences of internal migrants in slum areas of urban cities like Dharavi in Mumbai and underprivileged localities of metro cities like Delhi is a problem that many Asian countries, such as India, are currently facing. This problem affects countries in Asia such as India. Also the most recent live example is Singapore, which recently reported a sudden resurgence of cases of COVID 19, which was caused by the rapid growth of transmission of infections in its migrant worker dormitories GOI 2020. This occurred after initial success in the epidemic containment, and it occurred after the initial success in containing the epidemic. Under the event that the problem is not addressed in the COVID 19 containment policy, active viral clusters of illnesses have the potential to rapidly spread among low-wage migrant workers Sultan et.al.2020 and Manoj 2020.

Scenario of covid-19 information and migrants' action in India

The early implementation of the lockdown that was declared by the Government of India helped to slow down the spread of the sickness throughout the country. On the other hand, it has brought to light issues about the worsening inequities and increased vulnerability of underprivileged people across the nation. Because to this lockdown and its successive expansions, life has been made difficult for everyone as a result. As a result of the lockdown, millions of citizens were forced to remain inside their houses. Businesses were closed across the country, and practically all economic activity came to a halt as a result. This had a detrimental impact on the workforce that was employed in both the formal and informal sectors. After the word that there would be a lockdown, construction sites were deserted. During the same time period, the majority of the residential societies and colonies locked their gates, preventing access to anybody other than their residents. The construction and building industry, manufacturing units, trade set-ups, transportation, and hospitality are some of the most significant industries that employ migrant workers who are primarily part of the informal economy. Other prominent sectors include: Additionally, some of these migrant workers may find employment as domestic helpers (such as maids, drivers, or watchmen), street vendors,

workers at teeny-tiny and roadside enterprises (such as tea shops, dhabas, etc.), or as assistance in salons and gyms. According to an estimate provided by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), there were close to 122 million people in India who did not have jobs in April of 2020 already.

A huge majority of these unemployed individuals are small traders and wage labourers. Therefore, as a consequence of this precarious circumstance, migrant workers are currently facing acute crisis and displacement.When it was noticed that after the announcement of the 21-day country-wide lockdown due to COVID-19 in India, there was a sudden gathering of tens of thousands of migrant workers from across the city of Delhi, walking towards bus terminals to cross into Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and other states, this issue caught the attention of the administrators and the researchers. They gathered in the numbers, yearning to get to their hometowns in the states that were next to theirs. Because the majority of transportation ties were cut off, many people were attempting to walk their family the hundreds or even thousands of kilometres back to their homes in rural areas. The government, which at first had stopped all public transportation and emphasised "remaining at home," had to make the decision to allow people to reach bus terminals and city borders, and they arranged for hundreds of buses to be put into service. Initially, the government had stopped all public transportation and placed an emphasis on "remaining at home." In addition, in the wake of the national lockdown, the Central government requested that state governments take action in order to forestall a significant number of migrant workers from abandoning their jobs. Concerns have been voiced that the COVID-19 epidemic could develop into a humanitarian crisis as a result of a major exodus of migrant workers from cities in numerous states back to their communities. It was necessary for state governments across the country to build their own portals and compile the personal information of their citizens (daily labourers and migrant workers) in order to facilitate the workers' relocation back to their respective hometowns. For the purpose of their travel across state lines, a sizable number of buses were organised. Shramik special trains were also developed by the Indian Railways to facilitate themovement of migrant labourers, tourists, pilgrims, students, and other types of passengers.

But many suffered the situation due to their lack of knowledge about the actions taking place in the economy and false messages that were spreading due to which they rushed, quarreled with others leading to many illegal circumstances taking place. As a result, access to city services like ration cards, relief benefits, etc. is problematic due to the local authorities' incorrect identification of these workers. As a result, they frequently lack access to government programmes designed to lessen the harmful effects of poor people being locked up. Movement restrictions and the disruption of economic activity are impeding the management of the supply chain for products and services (Rapone, 2020). Due to the lack of safety nets and appropriate housing, the health issue of migrant workers is also quite concerning (Damani et al., 2020). In the community at risk, the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked a string of negative emotional reactions and emotions. The COVID-19 pandemic may result in persistent mental health issues as sadness, anxiety, panic disorder, and psychosomatic symptoms (Qiu et al., 2020; Rajan et

al., 2020). Internal migrant migrants are experiencing an unusual humanitarian catastrophe as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown in India (Srivastava, 2020). The studies described above raise the following queries for the general public.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a study carried out by Behra et.al. 2021 stated that migration is a bigger option for earning and livelihood in Odisha either for push factors or pull factors, for which people move to other states in search of work and better wages. But COVID-19 emerged as a crippling blow for which huge reverse migration is being noticed in the state. So the study tried to investigatedlabour supply and employment opportunity in rural areas due to COVID-19-led reverse migration and to examine the impact of COVID-19 on employment status, income profile and livelihood of returned migrants in Odisha. The study also discusses the possible measures to create alternative livelihood by rebuilding the rural economy after COVID-19. Both secondary and primary data are used in the study. Descriptive statistics and regression model are used in the study to examine the vulnerability of migrants during the period of COVID-19. The study found a sudden rise in labour supply with a huge scale is catch sight of the rural economy of Odisha. Job loss is the biggest problem faced by migrants followed by income loss. The study found that income of migrants, household income excluding migrants and nature of work have significant impact on the vulnerability of migrants.

Khan et.al. 2021 focused on the inter-state migrants in India and returnee migrants only from Gulf countries as they account for two-thirds of Indian migrants living abroad. This study conducted a comparative analysis of the Indian government's varied approach towards its internal and international migrants during their reverse migration, repatriation and reintegration after the announcement of the lockdown. Firstly, the paper compares the challenges faced by internal and international migrant workers during these stages with the help of in-depth interview data collected from migrants and social workers. Secondly, the varied governmental responses towards their repatriation are discussed. Thirdly, it analyses the obstacles in their economic reintegration to help frame suitable welfare policies for the Indian migrant community

Verma et.al. 2021 aimed to assess the impact of the later phase of the CoVID-19 pandemic and lockdown on the reverse migrants, and compare this impact with the residents, who have never migrated. Door-to-door survey was conducted in the study population, 5-9 months after the lockdown was announced. The participants were matched and grouped into residents and reverse migrants and were evaluated on PHQ-9, GAD-7, IES, and BRIEF-COPE to assess the impact on the participants. Study found that there is no significant depression or anxiety was found in the reverse migrants group, even though the impact of the pandemic and lockdown was felt more by them as compared to the residents group. In addition, there was no significant difference between the two groups for depression or anxiety. These findings can be

attributed to factors such as social support from the community members, engagement in work and the use of approach based coping mechanisms.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. Has covid-19 affected the life of migrant workers/
2. Did all the migrant workers returned back to their place of origin
3. Are there any problems faced by migrants who stayed back at the place of destination.

OBJECTIVE

The study has been framed with the following objective,

1. To examine the social status of the selected migrant
2. To identify the migration details of the sample group
3. To understand their intention about reverse migration during the pandemic
4. To gather detail on the problems encountered at destination during pandemic

DATA AND METHODS

In order to study the objectives mentioned above, personal interviews with 500 migrants were conducted during May–June 2022 in Tirupur district of Tamil Nadu state of India. All the workers covered under this study belong to the low-skilled and semi-skilled workers category especially working in garment industries of the selected district. The snowball sampling method was adopted at a stage where communication was established with some migrants who connected us to other migrants of their state and their garment company. Interviews were semi-structured and involved key themes covered in the research questions. The interviews were carried out in Tamil and Hindi, which were the preferred languages of the migrants. Data collected through the study was analyzed used IBM 22.0 version.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

In the current study, the details on the sex wise distribution of the migrants indicates that among the 500 migrant respondents, only 19 percent were females and other 81 percent were males, the sex ratio being 234 females per 1000 males. Migration is predominant among males. Migration is thus found to be dependent on sex whereas 51 percent of the sample respondents were from joint family and without a big difference remaining 49 percent are from nuclear family; indicating the independence between migration and type of family. On the basis of age it can be noted that majority of the workforce (44 percent) were from the age group of 20-30 years. It was followed by 38 percent of the sample respondents being in the age group of less than 20years, 13 percent of the respondents from the age group of 30-50years and only 5 percent of the respondents were from the age group exceeding 50years. Hence, migration takes place at a younger age. It is to be noted that 26 percent of the sample respondents were

illiterates. In the sample group 25 percent of them had a chance to undergo secondary education and only 4 percent of them had attained higher secondary education. About 71 percent of the migrant mill workers of the current study were found to be either illiterate or had completed only primary level of education. Migration is thus depending on the educational level. Data relating to marital status of the members in the current study highlights that 46 percent of the population were married and other 45 percent were unmarried. In the selected sample about 9 percent of the migrant were widows. Data pertaining to religion of the respondents unravel the fact that an overwhelming majority (60 percent) of the respondents were Hindus followed by Christians (26 percent) and Muslims (14 percent) and caste wise analysis reveals that the largest single groups (54 percent) were from SC/ST, 31 percent from OBC and 15 percent from other castes prevailing in India.

Migration detail of the respondents

The data on migration is classified into four different types with the help of administrative boundaries of a district and state, as `intra district migration'; `inter district migration'; `inter state migration' and `international migration'. The following figure (1) gives the type of migration of the sample units of the current study.

FIGURE 1
MIGRATION STREAM
International migration 15%
Intra district 20%
Inter district 10%
Inter state 55%
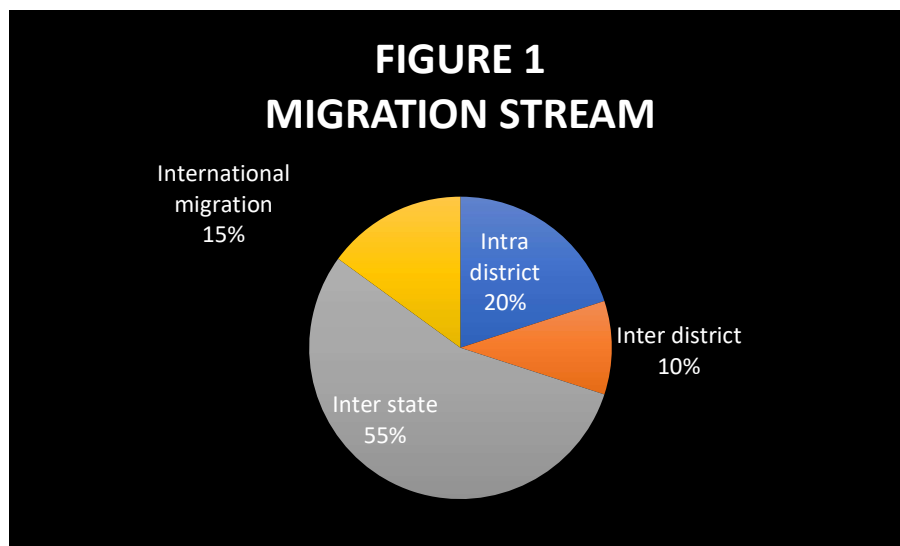
It is clear from the figure that interstate migration dominates with 55 percent of the migrants coming from other states in India. A significant 20 percent had migrated with in Tirupur district and 10 percent constituted inter district migration. In case of international migration about 15 percent of them were found to be working in the study area from countries like Nepal and Nigeria. There are considerable conceptual difficulties in defining a migrant, with the mobility of workers taking very different forms. In the current study migration is classified as temporary, seasonal, circular and permanent migration as shown in figure (2).

FIGURE 2
TYPE OF MIGRATION (IN %)
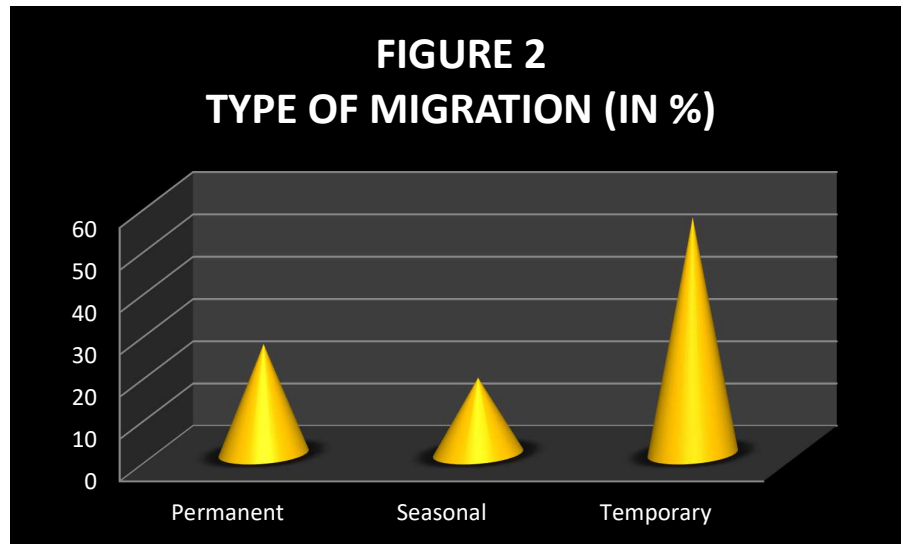
A majority of 56 percent of the migrants stated that they are purely temporary migrants. Next to it, for 26 percent of the migrants, migration is permanent and for 18 percent migration is seasonal. Hence, majority of the migrants of the current study are temporary in their mobility. The current study has made an attempt to analyse the movements of migrants to Tirupur district. The following reveals the data on the period of migration of the sample units into the study area.

TABLE 1 YEAR OF MIGRATION

Year of migration	Number migrated	S.No	Year of migration	Number
2001	8	9	2009	9
2002	11	10	2010	12
2003	7		**2006-2010**	**28**
2004	3	11	2011	6
2005	4	12	2012	17
2001-2005	**33**	13	2013	16
2006	2	14	2014	0
2007	2	15	**2010-2018**	**39**
2008	3		Total	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

The data given in the above table shows that for the period 2001-2005; the percentage of migration was 33 which declined to 25 percent during 2006-2010. Since 2010, there is an increase in the rate of migration. About 39 percent had migrated during 2011-2018. Thus before covid-19 pandemic the study area was receiving high number of migrant workers for employment into garment industry.

INTENTION OF REVERSE MIGRATION

The study has tried to identify the intention of reverse migration among the selected sample respondents and the following table brings out the details pertaining to it.

TABLE 2 INTENTION OF REVERSE MIGRATION

Intention	Number	Percentage
Did you intend to migrate back to place of origin during pandemic	81	81
Yes	19	19
No	100	100
Total		
Reason for staying back		
Have no one at place of origin	38	38
No money to go back	20	20
No transport facility	30	30
Fear of getting infected	10	10
Regular communication to place of origin	02	02
Total	100	100
Intention for reverse migration decision		
Fear about family left behind	35	35
Afraid that world may end	25	25
False messages that were circulated	18	18
No employment, wages and food	22	22
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data, 2022

Among the selected sample respondents about 81 percent intend to migrate back to their place of origin during the pandemic situation though they intended but they have not taken up the reverse migration decision so the investigator has further tried to examine the reason for staying back at the place of destination and the result showed that about 38 percent of the respondents did not have any one at the place of origin where 30 percent stayed back because of lack of transport facility whereas 20 percent did not have any transport facility to their place of origin nearly 10 percent were getting regular communication to the place of origin. Their intention for taking up reverse migration decision was highly influence by the fear that they have about the family that is left behind in the origin as it was mentioned by 35 percent of the sample whereas 25 percent thought of going back because they feared that the world may end 22 percent suffered by no employment, wages and food issues at destination and 18 percent were afraid about the false information that was getting circulated in the economy during the pandemic.

Problem encountered at place of destination during pandemic

The problem that the migrant workers encountered during the pandemic was identified by the investigator and the result is been given in table

TABLE 3 PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED AT PLACE OF DESTINATION DURING PANDEMIC

Problems encountered	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
No employment	1	5	3.90	1.489
No wages	1	5	3.54	1.434
No food	1	5	2.89	1.241
No access to basic necessity	1	5	3.07	1.443
Psychological problems	1	5	3.28	1.301
Problems faced to reach home	1	5	3.31	1.613
Health vulnerability	1	5	2.54	1.428
Access to government relief benefit	1	5	2.41	1.426
Others	1	5	3.13	1.315
Index of vulnerability	1.22	4.66	3.11	.88

Source: Primary data, 2022

The study found nine important problems faced by migrants and asked them to rate those problems on a rating scale of 1–5. Here the highest problem takes the value 5 and the lowest takes value 1. As can be seen, the most significant challenge that migrants confront is the possibility of losing their jobs; their average score is 3.90, and their standard deviation is 1.48. The loss of money, which has a mean score of 3.54, is the second most prevalent problem that migrants confront, behind only the difficulties they have getting back home (3.31). Migrants faced challenges not just in terms of their finances and their bodies, but also in terms of their minds. With a total score of 3.28 and a standard deviation of 1.30, the psychological difficulty that migrants experience ranks as the fourth most significant challenge they confront. An index of vulnerability is presented in the study as a depiction of the whole of the challenges that migrants must overcome. The mean score of the index of vulnerability corresponds to the average of all of the problems' scores. According to the findings of the study, the average score on the index of vulnerability for migrants is 3.11, and its standard deviation is 0.88.

Discriminate analysis was used to identify the variables that distinguish the respondents from reverse migration decision. The classification of the respondents was done on the basis of their reverse migration intention. The first group consists of migrants who had intention to

reverse migration and the second group consists of non-intention of reverse migration. For variable sex dummy variable was used as follows:

$$Y=b_1X_1+b_2X_2+b_3X_3+b_4X_4+b_5X_5+b_6X_6+b_7X_7+b_8X_8+b_9X_9+b_{10}X_{10}+b_{11}X_{11}+b_{12}X_{12}$$

Where,

Y=Reverse migration intention;
X_1= Size of the family;
X_3= Period of migration;
X_4= Age of respondents;
X_5= Marital status of respondents;
X_6= Education of respondents; and
X_7= Gender of respondents;

When Group I was compared with Group II on the basis of measurement of several variables a discriminant co-efficient function which can discriminate between the two groups significantly was derived. To test whether there exists difference between the two groups, the following F- test was used. The formula used was

$$F = \frac{N1+N2(P-1)}{P} - \frac{N1+N2}{(N1+N2)(N1+N2-1)} \text{ x } D^2$$

Where,

N_1=Number of cases in Group I
N_2=Number of cases in Group II and
D^2=Mahalanobis D square statistics

In order to find the relative importance of variables that discriminate between the two groups, the relative share of each variable was calculated. The relative share of each variable was calculated as follows:

$$DP^2 = \lambda_1 d_1 + \lambda_2 d_2 + \lambda_3 d_3 + \lambda_4 d_4 \ldots\ldots \lambda_i d_i$$

λ_1 is the co-efficient of the first variable in the discriminant function form representing the two groups, d_1 is the difference in the mean value of the two groups for the first variable. In DP^2, $\lambda_i d_i$ gave the contribution of ith variable to the total distance. Total distance between each variable has been calculated to find out the relatively more important variables that discriminate the two groups. The discriminant function was estimated by using IBM 20.00 version.

Identification of factors causing:

By using discriminant analysis the study tried to identify the identification of factors causing reverse migration. Table-4 represents the estimated discriminant function coefficients of reverse migration decision of migrants as related to the selected variables.

Table-4

Estimated discriminant function co-efficients

related to the selected variables

Items	Group-I Mean	Group-II Mean	Mean difference (xi)	Discriminant co-efficient (bi)	bi X xi	Relative Discriminating power (in percent)
Size of the family (X_1)	0.57	0.46	0.11	1.23	0.1353	2.11
Family income (X_2)	0.17	0.14	0.03	0.547	0.01641	0.26
Period of migration household (X_3)	1.59	1.01	0.58	1.879	1.08982	17.01
Age of respondents (X_4)	1.78	1.53	0.25	1.678	0.4195	6.55
Marital status of respondents (X_5)	0.71	0.44	0.27	0.863	0.23301	3.64
Education of respondents (X_6)	0.57	0.45	0.12	1.158	0.13896	2.17
Gender of respondents (X_7)	0.49	0.21	0.28	0.578	0.16184	2.53

Source: Calculated figures based on data compiled.

The estimated discriminate function was statistically valid as indicated by Mahalanobis 'D' square value of 12.146. The canonical correlation which is the measure of the degree of association between the selected variables was 0.892. To test the significance of lambda it was transformed to chi square value 21.621 and its significance level indicates that the two groups had differed. This showed that the reverse migration decision among the selected migrants differs based on their social and demographic behvaiour.

Future security for migrant workers

The most important thing to focus on at this juncture is finding a solution to the situation that arose after COVID-19. The economy is confronting rising levels of unemployment as well as in-migration from other countries. Different challenges pertaining to life and means of subsistence are being faced by migrants. Therefore, the provision of fundamental conveniences, such as food and medical care, to migrant workers need to be a priority for the relevant authorities. And a policy needs to be devised in such a way as to incorporate these returned migrants into the workforce in their home cities. Though while many returned few

migrants stayed back at the place of destination because of the support that they receive from their workplace, neighbors and from people in their village. Government has to take initiative to provide job security, wage security and food security during pandemic to the migrants since their identity is unrecognizable the government has to set up migrants welfare center at every district due to which they migration can be monitored and their identity can be traced.

Conclusion

Migration and migrants are important contributors in the economic development. In case of pandemic especially the case of covid-19 has resulted in many reverse migrations taking place in the economy. In the current study the investigator has tried to identify the migration details and intention for reverse migration among the selected migrant workers employed in garment industry. Result found from the study indicated that almost 81 percent of the population had intention to migrate back to their place of origin in spite of the intention they did not take up the reverse migration plan as many stated that they stayed back at the destination place as they did not have anyone at their place or origin whereas due to improper transport facility they were not able to move back in case of the intention of reverse migration most of them wanted to migrate because of the fear about the family that is left behind in their origin and they had a fear that the world may end. Most important problem that the migrant had because of the covid-19 was fear of losing their job which would result in loss of wages and it affects their livelihood. Government has to take initiative to provide safe guard to internal and unorganized migrant workers in order to prevent them in future pandemic.

Acknowledgement

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