



Peer Reviewed Referred  
and UGC Listed Journal  
(Journal No. 40776)

ISSN - 2277 - 5730  
An International Multidisciplinary  
Quarterly Research Journal

# AJANTA

Volume IX, Issue - IV, October - December - 2020  
English Part - I/II

Impact Factor / Indexing  
2019 - 6.399 ([www.sjifactor.com](http://www.sjifactor.com))

**AJANTA PRAKASHAN**

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## 9. COVID - 19 and Migration in India

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### Abstract

Due to COVID-19 pandemic everything has changed around us. We all have to go through a lot where poor people are still suffering.

Through which migration has become very common and major factor.

Many people migrate from their hometown to cities/towns in search of job, money etc. In which we can mainly find poor people emerging to town in need of money. But this COVID-19 has made a huge impact on that. During the Global crisis of COVID-19 pandemic, migrant workers in India faced multiple hardships and struggle. To save the country from the growing infection of corona virus, the Government of India imposed nation-wide lockdown in the country. As a result, million of a migrant workers had to face with the loss of income, shortage of food, and uncertainty about their future.

Key words - Migration, COVID-19, Labour

### Introduction

Meaning of Migration- The migration happens, when a person doesn't wish to work in his own village, town or when village town is backward, sometimes he leaves his own town for his jobs and willingly as he wishes to live in his native place. The laborers who entirely leave their native place are called Last Resident Concept.

It is considered a very common thing when the labour migrate from villages to cities. But when the same people migrate in opposite, it draws attention of people. But this tendency is found ready among the people.

The people coming from one particular area into another and the persons leaving one area for another have the same importance. Such kind of migration has social economical and population phases for instance the youth and bachelor people have this tendency of migration. The people from rural area have tendency of migration towards cities. Such people take all chance that they are conformed with.

The people with less education or illiterate or the poor have constant fascination towards cities. They believe that they can generate employment in city. The labour working in the fields are considered as a reserved labour therefore, They can migrate to cities at any time in search of employment.

### Types of Migration

As the facilities are provided in cities the feeling of flocking towards cities is around among the people at rural areas. Until basic facilities which are easily available in cities, are made available in villages to meet the needs of villages, there will always remain the attraction of cities among the villages dwellers. The labour Commission in relation to labour migration observes some labour are closely association with their villages, some have more social relations with their town, some other have inspirational relations. Therefore these follows six kinds of migration.

1. Regular Migration
2. Seasonable Migration
3. Permanent Migration
4. Migration tendency.
5. Internal Migration:
6. Accidental Migration.

In the following research, our main objective is accidental migration. In a country like India accidental migration is very common factors but since the effect of COVID-19 pandemic, it has severely increased among the migrant workers.

During the Global crisis of COVID-19 pandemic, migrant workers in India faced multiple hardships and struggle. To save the country from the growing infection of corona virus, the Government of India imposed nation-wide lockdown in the country. As a result , million of a migrant workers had to face with the loss of income, shortage of food, and uncertainty about their future. Many of them and their families went hungry to their villages. Due to the Lockdown thousands of workers began walking back home, with no means of transport. In this regard, the central and state Government took various steps to help the workers. Many migrant workers died while walking to their homes. Many workers had to face starvation, exhaustion, road and rail accidents, police brutality and denial of timely medical care. According to the world Economics forum , there are an estimated 139 million migrants in India. The international labour

organization predicted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the nation-wide lockdown, about 400 million workers would be poverty-stricken. Most migrants in the country came from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh. In India big cities like Mumbai, and Delhi attract the highest number of migrant workers.

Migrant workers are mostly daily- wage labour, working in the manufacturing and construction industries. Many of them work in private sector. They are often denied of their essential needs like health care, nutrition housing and sanitation. They are mostly from rural areas but they have to come to the city in search of jobs. They have no saving of their own and lived in factory dormitories, which were shut due to the lockdown imposed by the government.

As per the 2011 census of India Maharashtra has the largest number of migrant workers. To face the corona Virus disaster the state Government imposed the lockdown on 20 March in Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad , the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Nagpur ,Leaving the migrant workers with no work . Thousands then gathered at the train platforms and Bus stations, Seeking transport to their hometowns. All transport facilities were closed due to the lockdown and the workers suffered a lot.

We have seen number of migrant workers standing in a queue for food during lockdown. The Government has taken immediate steps by providing food and shelter to the workers. But the food distribution failed to be effective as the ration cards are area specific and fair price shops were largely inaccessible. Additionally, the one Nation one Ration card system has been implemented in very few states. The scheme allowed migrant workers to retrieve food grains for free anywhere across the country, but very few were aware of the scheme. In additions to this ,the scheme also required biometric authentication, which was discontinued due to the fears of spreading the virus. In Telangana, many could not avail of the ration due to lack of Aadhar cards. As such many were left without food and money . with no work and no money, and lockdown restrictions thousands of migrant workers were seen walking or bicycling hundreds of kilometers to go back to go their native villages. Social distancing was not possible for these migrant since they travelled together in large groups. According to some of them they would rather die from the virus at their own village than starve because of no work in the city.

Many workers were arrested for violating the lockdown rules, some were caught at inter-state borders, forests between state and even on boats to cross rivers. Some of the migrant died of exhaustion and accidents on the roads after walking or hiding in vehicles. Many migrant

workers were allegedly beaten up by the police in Gujarat and forcefully rounded up in a single lorry and dropped in Maharashtra, despite being wounded. 16 migrant workers were killed in a train accident while they were sleeping on the track, exhausted from walking.

Accordingly, the government of India ordered to states to ensure that migrants would not move during the Lockdown permitting the states to use the National Disaster Response Fund for providing food and shelter to the migrants. The government also issued orders that the landlords should not demand rent during the period of the lockdown and that employers should pay wages without deduction. It also announced that those who violated the lockdown were to be sent to government run quarantine centers for 14 days, and that it had asked state government to setup immediate relief camps for the migrant workers returning to their native states.

The state Government set up thousands of relief camp house to lakh of migrants and stop the mass departure. Delhi government provided free food to 4 lakh people every day. Over 500 hunger relief centers were set up by the Delhi government. 75 lakh of migrant workers were being provide food a cross the country in food camps run by the government and NGOs 91 lakh of migrants had travelled back home in government-arranged transport facilities. But the migrants were confused about the exact procedures to register themselves for travel. Additionally, many states registration portal were either in English or the local language of the states they lived in which very few migrants could understand. Further general lack of information from the government to the migrants results in them paying large sums of money to register themselves. The U.P. government decided to arrange buses to take the migrants back to their villages for free. Large crowds then gathered at the bus station. However with the extension of the lockdown, many remained stranded till the last week of April, when the state governments were permitted by the central government to operate buses but not trains. Conditions in buses are generally poor, with social distancing being impossible due to overcrowding and higher fares being charged than promised.

Later on the central government permitted the Indian Railways to launch shramik special trains for the migrant workers and others. After the shramik special trains were introduced, the Karnataka government cancelled the trains and the Bihar government did the same to trains coming from Kerala further migrants faced many hardship while travelling by these trains. As a result number of positive cases of Covid-19 among the migrants returning home as a lockdown restrictions eased. State governments opened thousands of quarantine centre to house them with

some states imposing mandatory institutional quarantine. States also imposed strict measures for migrants to follow, either while leaving or after entering state borders. Upon their return to their hometowns and villages, they faced assault and harassment from the people of their hometown. Migrants travelling by shramik special trains reported that food and water provisions were either not provided or simply dumped at the entrance of the trains, leaving workers fighting with each other to get their share. Many migrants workers expressed a fear of returning to their old jobs in the cities, after facing unemployment during the lockdown. Due to the lockdown more than 300 deaths of migrant workers were reported . 80 died while travelling back home by the shramik special trains. Thousands of migrants have since protested across the country, for demanding transport facilities quality of food served, and against government directives.

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