

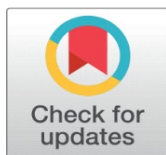
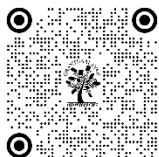
REIMAGINING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN POST PANDEMIC INDIA: ROLE OF STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE BACKDROP OF MIGRATION

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ABSTRACT

State plays a vital role in the development and progress of its citizens all around the world. Within the state people migrate from one state to another, from one region to another in search of better living conditions and livelihood. The aim of the present paper is to examine the degraded life of these peripatetic workers, specifically poor and backward among them in post pandemic India. The main question which prompted this paper is what is the relationship between the rural development and the condition of poor migrant workers in India? There are other equally relevant questions this article tries to underline such as what is the major cause of migrant hardships which triggers migration from the rural to urban areas? How is the migrant workers access to the social benefits in the 'State of Absorption'? What is the city's approach toward the rural migrants from other parts of India? What is the responsibility of the state toward its internally migrant population in a period of crisis and emergency? Finally the paper will try to suggest a possible alternative to present the problem by linking it to Gandhi's idea of rural development?.

Keywords: Migration, Welfare State, Civil Society, Migrant Workers, Rural development, Gandhi

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is struggling with Covid-19 (Coronavirus disease) pandemic and India is not unaffected anyway. But the 'Migration crisis' emerged around this pandemic again resurfaces the old debate over migration and the approach of the Indian state towards its internally migrated population. Migration literally means transposing of a person or the group of people at large from one specific area to the other, on temporary or permanent bases. As per the World Migration Report 2019, for the international expats, India is the largest country of origination with a large number of migrants expatriate overseas (approximately 17.5 million), far more than Mexico (11.8 million) at second place and China (10.7 million) on third.

Along with highest number of international migrants it has also very high number of internally migrant people. According to the Census Report of India, in year 2001, 31.5 crore Indians were migrants which was 31% of the total population. It increased to 45.6 crore in year 2011 around 38% of the total population of India. A comparison of these figures shows that between 2001 and 2011, the number of migrants records an increase of 45% while the population

growth for the same period stood at 18%. While for women marriage remains the dominant reason for migration, for men the most cited reason was work and the employment opportunities (GoI: 2021). Millions of people migrate all over India to better their economic and social positions.

As of 2011 records, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are the largest source of inter-state out migration in India. Maharashtra and Delhi attracts the largest number of people and stood at the top spot in receiving states. The figure shows that almost 83 lakh inhabitant from Uttar Pradesh and 63 lakh from Bihar had shifted to other states to settle on temporary or permanent bases. As per 2011 census rural population still dominated the landscape with 68.84% and urban population covers 31.16% of nation's population (Iyer: 2020). Still a large portion of rural population migrates to the urban areas or the more developed places. As per estimation around 92% of the India's workforce collectively made from 450 million internally migrant workers (Mishra: 2020). Two relevant questions arise here first is why people migrate? And second where they migrate? Due to regional disparity in development, natural calamities like flood and drought, socioeconomic conditions and demographic pressure people tend to migrate to comparatively more developed regions. The degrading condition of rural India and lack of basic amenities such as better education infrastructure and health services and most importantly unemployment coerce village dwellers to migrate toward urban centres.

Urban centers requires both highly skilled and educated work force for their more modernized setups of multinationals and even more unskilled labours for the construction works, heavy industries and household chores. But here they are not entitled to decent working conditions such as limited working hours and the adequate equipments required for the work. Also, with the increase in number of migrant workers state's generosity towards them starts declining. The receiving states and the urban centers which employ the majority of migrant are lacking generous and benevolent attitude towards them. It increases intolerance towards migrant workers and deny them of entitlements like food through Public Distribution System and medical facilities in hospital. So migrant plight was always there but pandemic has made it apparent and visible formalized it into an emergency like situation.

The present migrant crisis emerged in the wake of global diseases largely influenced this paper. Keeping an eye on the issue of internal migration and rural development it become clear the welfare state has failed in assimilating all the citizens in the progress and development of nation. The principle objective of paper is to understand the sudden rise of migrant crisis emerged amid COVID-19 pandemic. To contain the spread of corona virus government has implemented some restriction resulted in the mass unemployment and denial of daily necessities. Second objective is to find what kind of government intervention were initiated to relieve the migrant workers. To overcome the food shortage the government announced free ration for the next 8 months to extend the support to the 80 crore families. Government also started Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan to employ those who returned to their homes in rural areas. According to the government calculation more than 1.14 crore migrants went back to their home amid lockdown. But the data was much higher than the official data which impact the effective policy measures formulation. An effective data based legal framework has been required to cope with the migrant issue (Paliath: 2021). Third aim is to find whether there can be a long-lasting solution to the migrant problem in India.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Primarily this paper is based on the secondary sources such as monographs, books, research articles, government and non-government reports and internet sources like newspaper articles and web pages. The paper analysis the erstwhile writings related to the topic and presented a base for the future writings around the subject. It employs both theoretical and empirical approach to understand the central problem and find possible solution. Data has been collected through different reports and other sources and compiled here to validate the given arguments in the paper.

3. THEORIZING MIGRATION

Migration is often associated with the rise of globalization as it sparked the movement of people as never before. But surely it cannot deny the fact that migration is as old as the civilization because human always migrated from one place to the other. Historically migration started in the Rift Valley (Africa) between 1.5 million and 5000 BC. Later *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens* expanded to the Europe and further continents. In 18th and 19th century migration takes shape in form of the forced circle slaves, a population of 12 million compelled to migrate from West Africa (Koser: 2007). In later period indentured labour from India, China and Japan were moved in large numbers. In the same period migration was also caused by decolonization drive. The most significant examples are Indian partition and Jews and Palestinians

locomotion after Israel's creation which forced millions to migrate along the borders (ibid). Migration is not simply relocating from one place to another because it is not always voluntary, it can be forceful at the same time. There are multiple factors which influence people to move and migrate. There can be exiguous livelihood requirements, natural forces such as frequent floods and other woeful weather conditions responsible for human migration. Off course disease disaster also steers large scale migration as in the case of COVID-19 migration.

E. G. Ravenstein's "*The Laws of Migration*" (1885) is a classic in the field of migration studies. It put some assumptions regarding the migration pattern based on United Kingdom. Ravenstein argued that most of migration is triggered by the need of places of better work and employment in comparison to the present settlements. He classified Countries in two groups one the 'Countries of Absorption' (these are the major hubs of commerce and industry) and the 'Countries of Dispersion' (from where the countries of absorption are getting its needs fulfilled) they are mostly agricultural economies and fed the countries of absorption. Along with the classification he also presented some laws regarding migration. Among them I found four laws more relevant for the purpose of this study.

First law says that majority of migrants are migrating to small distances and their migration is towards the state of absorption (big centers of commerce) as it provides them with better opportunities. Second the migration takes place in steps means when inhabitants of an area migrated to the more advanced centers of economy they left a void in their previous places; this void being filled by the migrants of the more remote centers and it continues step by step until the void gets completely filled by the other set of migrants from the more remote areas of economy. Third the town residents are less migratory in nature than the rural dwellers in any country. This may be because of the development difference. Forth the females are more migratory in nature than the males. Female migrates not only for better employment and educational purposes but marriage remains an important reason behind their migration. India is also an example here.

Besides the factors responsible for migration, Migration always entails the permanent or semi-permanent change of one's residence. There is no restriction upon the distance of movement whether it is voluntary or involuntary in nature, no distinction was made between internal and external migration (Lee: 1966). The factors involve in the process of migration and responsible for it can be summed up as first the Factors associated with the area of origin (from where the migration originated). Second the Factors connected with the part of destination (where migrants migrated). Third the Intervening obstacles (other relevant factors influence migrant behavior such as climatic conditions) and fourth the Personal factors (ibid). There are push and pull factors influencing the decision of migration. Push factors are those which forced individual or group of individuals to them left their place and flee to the other better place. Pull factors are those which attract the individual or group of individuals to the new places like better socio-economic conditions and new job opportunities. For example, a good climatic condition can be attractive and a bad climate can be repulsive to anyone. Availability of a good school system can be positive to parent with young children but it can be negative to a house owner with no children while an unmarried male has no impact and remains indifferent to it (Lee: 1966). So, push and pull factors which influence the decision making of a migrant can be different to the different individual.

People migrate for different reasons but in India with the government restrictions followed by the immediate rise in COVID-19 cases, Loss of livelihood has sparked the mass exodus of millions of migrant labourers from cities to their homes. A temporary change in migration behaviour has been seen during pandemic period. Migrants were forced to leave the cities to manage their livelihood activities, largely covered by the media houses. They left and they came back, according to "*Over a Year after the First Covid-19 Lockdown, Migrants Remain Vulnerable*" (2021), more than half of the migrants returned to the cities. They slightly improved their economic condition than those who opt to stay remain in rural areas. They have recovered more than 80% of income but the village settlers have only meagre income and more likely to be unemployed, low level of food consumption and lend money for daily needs. But economically vulnerable workers of informal sector workers need a sustained support in both rural and urban areas. Because in absence of alternate livelihoods opportunities and scant skill development plans majority of population migrated towards urban areas from rural space.

4. THE IDEA OF WELFARE STATE

Welfare states are common in today's world but they have been extended only in post-World War period. This expansion was a result of three factors. First of all it is important to understand that some kind of economic surplus is required for a welfare state to expand and flourish. First factor responsible for the expansion of welfare state was the increase in economic development between 1945-1973 periods which has supplied the extensive economic means to

flourish it. Second centralization of federal government in national wartime has stretched the capacity of national bureaucracy to expand its arms in other activities. Third the Keynesian economics has arranged the rationale behind the welfare state (Quadagno: 1987). It has provided a theoretical support to the idea of welfare state. It requires a special mention that welfare programs are not unique to the forward capitalist states. All Western societies have discovered a mechanism for the betterment of their most backward population since the sixteenth century. Welfare has not changed but the method of dispensing the welfare to the most vulnerable sections (from a micro financing of welfare programmes to macro financing at national level) has been changed overtime (ibid). Now welfare states are very regular to facilitate its citizens.

If we try to uncover the history of origin of welfare state, the roots of welfare state can be traced back to the mid-19th century public health measures. With the provisions of state pensions, maternity, unemployment and the disability benefits around the First World War the modern welfare state came into existence. The process was completed by 1940s with the enactment of health Service, free secondary education, and the universal safety-net. Employment remains critical to welfare and given supreme priority by the later governments also (Fulcher: 2004). Though states impart its services to all its citizens without any discrimination but there are certain sections of society which always requires special kind of treatment to fulfil their goals.

Here Harold Wilensky and Charles Le beaux's (1965) distinction between a residual and a universal welfare state is interesting. While a residual welfare state is characterized by the provision of safety nets mainly for the poor population. USA is a frequent example of the residual welfare state. The universal welfare state targets all socio-economic groups and provision of services includes all these groups. Germany is put under this category (Barr: 1992). India is also an example of residual welfare state as it did not provide safety nets to the whole population rather its welfare policies are mainly for the targeted groups such as backward and poor sections of society.

Welfare states are often seen as a propellant and guarantor of poor's right, in "*The Myth of Welfare State*" Jack D. Douglas (2017) came up with an entirely different theoretical interpretation of welfare state. He argued that the term welfare state is a weapon of political agitation and propaganda which he called agitprop. Modernist society is termed superior to all other earlier civilization as it is largely made up of welfare states. Unlike old states modernist states do not run by power exercising rulers rather they governed by reasoned and conscious leaders. That's why modernist states have not subjected but citizens. Besides this the truth is that modernist welfare state is barely concerned with the equality, poor's needs, communal care, and the political freedom. It is also less concerned about the pauperism instead poor have been used as tool in quest of power (Douglas: 2017). Similar kind of argument has been presented by A. R. Desai in his essay "*State and Society in India: Essays in Dissent*" here he examined the form and function of a capitalist society. He attacked the idea of welfare state and argued that the welfare state does not stand by its claims. The western idea of welfare state is restricted to what he called "Executive Committee of Monopoly of capitalism" (Munshi: 1976).

With all its bright and dull sides, the idea of welfare state is not typically Western but ancient India too have many welfare provisions like citizens, doctors and others were charged to report the cases in case of epidemics outbreak. We have examples of State-run hospitals and dispensaries found in the Emperor Asoka's reign. Steps were taken for the adequate supply of the essential drugs and medicines. Evidences of large hospitals in Patna around 5th century A.D. are also found where poor were provided with free food and medical services (Altekar: 1955). In contemporary times constitution of India tries to guarantee the welfare activities should remain for the betterment of poor and backward.

5. THE WELFARE IN INDIA IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

"*The Constitution of India*" (1950) clearly says that as per the fundamental right to freedom all the citizens have the right of free movement throughout the Indian territory, to inhabit in any part of country and to adopt any profession, occupation, trade or business. It means all individuals have an intact right to migrate from one part of territory to the other but this freedom is curtailed due to lose labour laws and workers' rights. Along with free movement Indian state has also promised under Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) to promote welfare of its people, minimize the inequalities of income and status. It has promised to work for adequate livelihood and distribution to serve common good. It endeavours to an economic system which restricts the concentration of wealth and a system with equal pay for equal work for both sexes. But India is not fulfilling many definitional criteria of the welfare states associated with the western notion of the concept. Instead of a welfare state Indian state should be attributed as an interventionist and a developmentalist state with a parochial welfare orientation. Thus, first the Indian state can be seen as an interventionist

state which has adopted some welfare role but not a welfare state per se. Second its insular welfare function is need responsive denote that welfare state here is less a right and more an obligation to the state (Jayal: 1994). Probably that is the reason the welfare part of the state is laid down Directive Principle of State Policy which is non-justifiable in nature and work as a guiding principle in policy making.

The ground reality shows that the constitutional provisions are not just enough and most of migrated workers in India are working in informal sector without adequate facilities. Some sectors in cities like construction work are heavily dependent on the migrated workers. The migration in India was initially low and increased only in post 1990s period but that too was not drastically. Migration for economic reasons has increased over time. Though the migration for better employment opportunities remains a topmost consideration but employment status of migrants in post migration did not suggest the betterment (Mishra: 2016). Migration process not only uproots children and families from their homes but also disenfranchised them from their entitlements. Year after the year migrated families lose the benefits of welfare schemes like Public Distribution System and the health benefits such as immunization. The large percentage of migrated labour lacks relevant documents required for entitlement like voter identity (ID) cards, caste certificates, Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards, old age pension cards and others. The entire process has impacted negatively upon children who evicted again and again from one place to other devoid of education and other such necessary requirements for their development (UNESCO & UNICEF: 2012).

Once again India's migrant crisis has indicated towards the Government's incapability to protect the livelihood migrant workers. Here government has also failed in keeping the employers (large and small, state or private) responsible for the wellbeing of its employees. State was even failed in providing an inadequate infrastructure to give a way to given the workers returning their homes (IHRB: 2020).

"The Economic Survey of India" (2016-2017) has estimated that annually more than 9 million people migrate internally in India. The major reason of such migration is job or the education. Capital Delhi, followed by economic capital Mumbai, is the top preference of migrants in India. In Delhi, migrants from the largest populated state Uttar Pradesh alone constitutes around 39 per cent of total migrants. While Bihar spots at second place with 12 per cent share in the total migration. Migration in India has historically low. It was obstructed by the factors such as the joint family culture, caste system, traditional values and the agrarian relations. But in recent times the pace of migration has influenced by many factors including the advancement in Indian economy, the improved level of education, improvement in information and communication technology, the transformation in transport and a wide shift from agriculture to industry and other sectors (Bhagat: 2010). Unlike the common understanding that the speedy growth of cities and industrial regions, the poor and landless peasants are forced to make a shift to urban centres and adopt non-agricultural occupations, the migration is more voluntary accounts shaped largely by the perceptivity that it will lead to horizons of new opportunities and desires (Chatterjeen: 2008).

Long term and short term as well as long distance and short distance migration contribute in the spread of communicable diseases. R.B. Bhagat and others Article titled *"The COVID - 19, Migration and Livelihood in India"* (2020) Points out that migrated population in any country are most vulnerable to the communicable diseases because when the pandemic coerce migrants to return to their native places not it increases the probability of carrying the diseases with them to their homes. Besides this fact there is rarely any specific Policy and programme designed in accordance with the needs of migrating population in the outbreak of any such diseases. Their livelihood and lives both get threatened by the diseases. The failure of any such policy is the failure to policymakers to recognize migrants as a part of urban community and the stake holder in urban development.

Government effort came in the form of two important laws. *"The 1897 Act"* related to pandemic and the *"Inter State Migrant Workmen (Regulation and Conditions of Service) Act"* (1979) which asks for regulation of internally migrated workers, two deeply important but badly implemented laws. *"The 1897 Act"* is completely silent over the assurance of livelihood of the migrating workers and those who work on daily wages. In the wake of present crisis the act has been amended to curb the proliferation of deadly and fatal epidemic diseases. It also empowers and widens the power of central government to work for the prevention of these diseases (PRS: 2020). No matter how seriously government amended these laws, still it proved flawed and broken.

As per the data collected by the Azim Premji University and Stranded Workers Action Network from 11,000 workers throughout India, during 3rd week of lockdown, found 50% of the workers had left with one day meal. More worryingly, 96% have claimed that they did not received food grains from the government. 70% of them informed that no cooked food available to them (Iqubbal: 2020). Aajeevika Bureau (2014) shows that the policies are more or less failed in

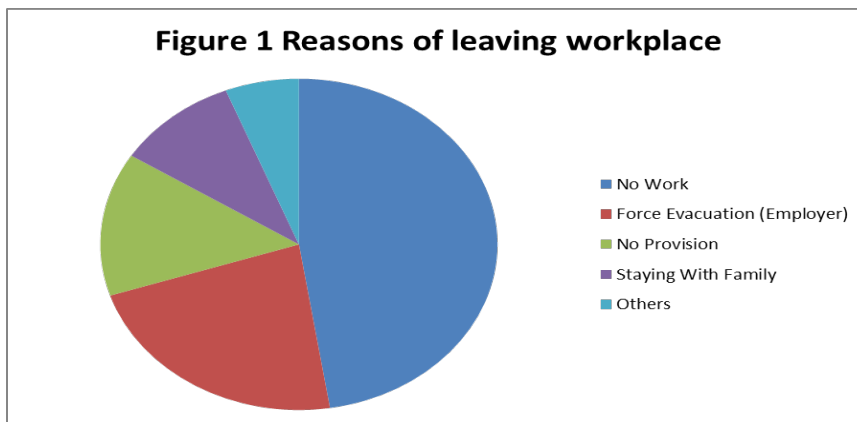
providing any social or legal protection to the vulnerable migrant. They are badly treated in the cities where they are considered as opportunistic. They are entrapped between the cities and their origin places and denied with their entitlements at both places as they cannot carry their entitlements along with them.

Besides the charities and assistance from the variety of sources like government, private organizations, individuals and other Non-Governmental Organizations workers did not want to stay in cities. Cities keep complaining that despite their (cities) support, workers carried on their journey and became the largest carrier of diseases. This duality of cities revealed that furthermore its reliability upon the labour from the countryside; cities do not have a welcome behaviour towards them. This attitude became a source of rural distress and underdevelopment. A recent report *"Migrant Voices: Stories of India's Internal Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic"* (2020) tries to found the possible reasons behind leaving the Workplace during Lockdown and after. Eight major reasons are outlined here.

Fear of diseases has been cited by only 1% as a reason for leaving the city. Around 10% of people left as they wanted to stay with their families in this period of crisis. The majority of workers said that no work (47.5%) was the major reason behind leaving the city. While (3%) were forcefully evicted by their landlords, other (22.5%) were faced Forced evacuation from employer. (0.5%) simply followed others to get back to their homes. No provisions means absence of adequate facilities mentioned as a reason by (14%) and (1.5) were simply left to avoid increasing amount of rent. See Figure 1

It has clearly shown the dual character of the privileged groups who are totally dumb about the rights of workers. Affluent groups are reluctant to speak for the poor, primarily due to two reasons. First the socio-economic reason and second the political reason.

The very first reason is the self-created difference in the understanding of fundamental rights for us (ourselves) and others (the state outsiders). Unlike less affluent whose rights entails the mere survival, for privileged it is often associated with the well-equipped living standard. Second, most often migrants are subject to state denial. This indifference towards them is caused by their non-participatory nature in the political process or voting in the state of absorption. Their voting rights rest with their origin state where they tend to surrender their rights and identities (Yadav and Priya: 2021).



Source - Data converted in Pie Chart by author herself. Adopted from IHRB, "Migrant Voices: Stories of India's Internal Migrant Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic" (November 2020), at: <https://www.ihrb.org/focus-areas/migrant-workers/india-internal-migrant-workerscovid-19> Access 06 July 2021 P.13

The number of internally migrated population is four times larger than the internationally migrated population. Migrants contributing positively in nation's progress but beside this contribution they are seen as a public nuisance. Their poor dwellings are regarded as illegal setups around the elites settlements, always tried to evict by local municipal authorities. A kind of negative sentiments for them is growing in cities resulted in their exclusion in the urban spaces. Their exclusion and denial of entitlements are also due to the emergence of some political movements like 'sons of the soil'. People or the local inhabitants of a particular region start believing that the region originally belongs to them, those who settled later and did not share the same linguistic roots are termed as outsiders. Maharashtra, Assam, Meghalaya and Goa are some well-known examples in India. Urban centres have become less hospitable and less accommodating for the poor, restricting them thereby increasing rural economic inequality (Kundu and Saraswati: 2012).

What can be done to deal the migrant workers plight not only during pandemic but also post pandemic period? One facilitating Social safety nets to extend direct support in the form of cash or kind can prevent hunger and poverty in the emergency situation. In long run it will be helpful in eliminating their problems in entirety. Two employment assistance

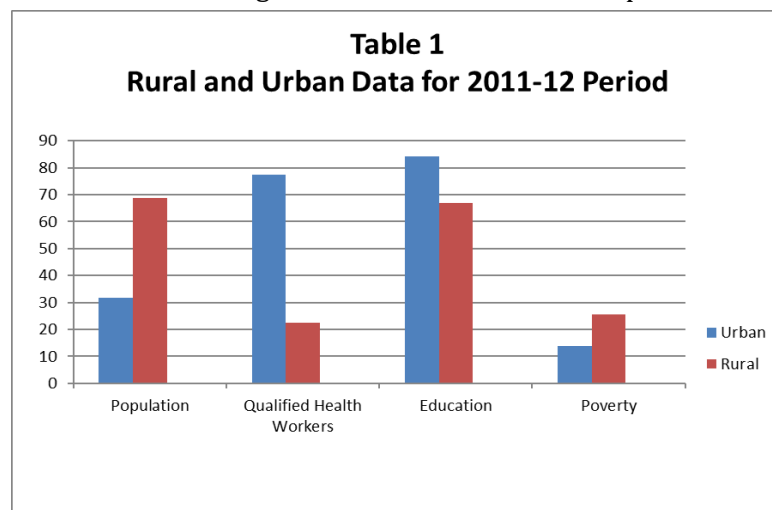
policies should be introduced to promote employment opportunities to both jobseekers and employers (Mauro: 2020). Free food and free services are important to ensure a minimum level of consumption for survival. But providing adequate job facilities can only do well in the long run. Three implementation of relevant policy requires a strong and authentic data base of migrant workers. There is an immediate need to reinforce the migration related database via government agencies such as National Sample Survey (NSS) and National Family Health Survey (NFHS), Migration Surveys and the largest source of data base the census of India because the data at hand are now obsolete. Four public health infrastructures in India have been always under question as being inefficient and inadequate but the current situation reveals its exclusionary nature towards the poor. It demands a huge investment, a revolutionary change in order to fight any such situation in upcoming future (Bhagat et al: 2020).

One of the major suggestions for long lasting transformation in the lives of migrants is to stiffen rural development so that migrant labours make an informed choice to upgrade their condition. Due to high number of internal migration constitution of a nodal agency empowered with the matters of internal migration within the central ministry is urgently required (ILO: 2020). The present condition of migrants also depicts the huge unemployment and informal character of work. It emphasizes the need of fortify rural employment to control migration towards cities. It is equally important to focus more on rural development and improve the living standard of the migrated workers in urban areas at the same time (Sengupta and Jha: 2020).

6. ADDRESSING MIGRANT DISTRESS THROUGH RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Urban population is rising constantly still rural India is overwhelmed with the majority of population but with fewer facilities. As a result, villages saw a mass exodus towards big economic centres. For now it is clear that agriculture or village economy as a whole required rapid change. There is an instantaneous requisite to understand that self-sufficient villages are the key to several modern economic problems including rural migration.

If we look upon the following table it clearly shows that according to 2011 census of India 68.84% and 31.16% population is residing in rural and urban area respectively. Besides the majority of population resides in rural India, it has low level of literacy rate (66.77) and fewer qualified health workers (only 22.6% of are qualified among all) in contrast to urban areas where the literacy rate is quite high with 84.11% which is even more than the national percentage (72.98) and 77.4% qualified health workers. International Labour Organisation estimates based on NSSO (2011-12) data shows low level of education and low wages for example the average wage in rural areas is 129 rupees in oppose to 214 rupees in urban areas which is again low than the national average 150 rupees made villages prone the poverty. Planning Commission estimates shows Indian villages are nevertheless home to poorer. See table 1



Source- Multiple sources include, for Population Census 2011, Provisional Population Totals, and India.

For Qualified Health Workers Data- Rao KD, Shahrawat R, Bhatnagar A. "Composition and Distribution of the Health Workforce in India: Estimates based on Data from the National Sample Survey" WHO South East Asia J Public Health, 2016 Sep, 5, (2), P. 133-140.

Literacy Related Data- Census of India, Office of Registrar General, India.

For Poverty Data- Planning Commission Estimates, Data book for Planning Commission 22nd, December, 2014, P. 99. According to Tendulkar Methodology

As real India resides in villages, for the development of nation villages must be developed at first place. This is what Gandhi believes. The difference between villages and cities is a difference of two civilizations. City represents its dependence over the big industries and machinery in oppose villages revolves around handicrafts and other small industries. A civilization based on modernization and industrialization was never supported by Gandhi as he saw it an evil to Indian society and its wellbeing.

Modern technology and big industries led to concentration of wealth in few hands, it helps a few to ride on the backs of millions, behind this labour saving technology was not the philanthropy of saving human from physical labour but greed of saving more surplus (Gandhi: 1938). In Gandhi's opinion introduction of this kind of technology will destroy India's economy in general and village life in particular. Gandhi always claimed that India has around seven lakh villages; he wanted all these villages to be self-sufficient which consist of growing and producing for the fulfilment of its needs (Gandhi: 1962).

Attaining self-sufficiency deals with the problem of unemployment among agricultural labourers by providing them alternative nonagricultural occupation through small cottage industries at small scale industries along with spinning *Khadi*. But it is also a fact that no economy shall ever be so develop that it can itself fulfil all its needs. In this sense Mahatma's idea of a self-sufficient village did not means narrowness as it has always a space exchanging goods and services because surplus was meant for those who were not able to produce that item of their own. He chose *Khadi* for that purpose and it was because of its compatibility to Indian conditions where hands were too many unlike developed and industrialized nation with fewer hands.

For him villages were backbone of Indian economy as most of its labour force was involved directly or indirectly in agricultural sector. He always favours villages as an important unit for development because cities which premised on industrialization and large-scale production brought unhappiness and violence in form of two world wars. It also forced India to back foot, in a condition so unhappy and miserable ever before. Cities are grown into prominence and its beauty and shine is stood upon the blood of villages. This grinding and ghastly condition can only be dealt with the attainment of self-sufficiency and self-reliance (Hindustan Standard: 1944). But the condition of cities cannot assess with few rich who attained wealth and prosperity by improvising villages. Here also except few, the majority of workers working in pathetic condition in mills and big industries and treated like slaves. Cities have to face the problem of migrated labour from country side which led to wide spread unemployment, hunger and beggary. So the root cause of problem of poverty in villages and cities is a vicious circle of exploitation. The cities were exploited by mills and big industries and the modern civilization. But the villages were exploited in the hands of its own countrymen the city dwellers (Harijan: 1946).

Villages are where bulk of population resides needs more attention. Gandhi's solution to rural problems lies in villages as a self-contained unit. He suggested that if all self-sufficient villages apportion its overabundance to those with less produce, the rural destitution and hunger will itself vanish. It further leads to poverty eradication, attenuate mass migration and lead a felicitous and self-sustaining population (Bhuimali: 2004). Agriculture solely cannot fix the rural sufferings and idleness. Therefore, Gandhi stressed upon the development of small scale rural or local level production such as *Khadi*, handlooms, handicrafts and sericulture. In oppose the large-scale manufacturing unit's harms the hard-working tendency of people. But the major drawback of big industries is that it gives advantage to minority in accumulation of wealth. Rural industries on the contrary, needed fewer resources and are largely based on household labour. The reason he emphasizes upon rural development was the belief that the persistence mass migration, overcrowded cities and the vicious circle of poverty and under-development cannot be eliminated until unless villages are self-reliant and prosper.

Thus, Gandhian approach to village development and eradication of rural problems focused upon social, economic and also ecological aspect of village development. He supports and favours sanitation and cleanliness, education for all not in formal sense but through a system of education which can help individual in attaining livelihood and an honourable standard of living. Gandhi's model for village development which asks for the alleviation of all (*Sarvodaya*) not just a single individual can be categorize as a down top model. He proposed not only an economic solution to village development but ethical philosophical and moral solution. He asked cities to go back to villages for that purpose and villages must not imitate cities blindly for the solution of their problems such as unemployment and poverty (Gandhi: 1962).

7. CONCLUSION

Negation and denial of migrant workers during COVID- 19 crisis insinuate toward their conditioning in contemporary state in general. The condition of migrant workers in big cities like Delhi, Surat and Mumbai is bad in general (normal circumstances) and worse in particular (crisis period). The state of internally migrated population primarily the poor daily wage workers, street vendors and those who are involved in some other chores in unorganized sectors was initially deficient but the pandemic has made it pathetic. The argument here is that pandemic has only made their (poor migrant workers) condition apparent which was vague earlier. A kind of anarchy has been created which forced the internally migrated population to go back to their respective places. There are two important findings here one is the State benevolence toward it internally migrated population especially the poor workers is very low mainly in the big cities where they are seen as a burden instead of a human resource. Second migrant worker's access to the social benefits provided by welfare state is not equivalent to the permanent non-migratory population. Welfare state has seen a decline and ethnic competition and threat perception is on rise.

This whole scenario reminds me of Mahatma Gandhi. His view upon rural development is a road map to tackle the migration crisis. Rural/village development is a prerequisite for a nation's development especially in a country like India which is dominantly a rural and agrarian society. Comprehensive village development and a constructive approach to rural betterment deter migration from rural India. Until villages are underdeveloped and incompetent, overcrowded cities, widespread migration, dearth and inadequacy are inevitable (Gandhi: 1962). And even the worse condition in the time of crisis be it medical emergency or any such conundrum.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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