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Non-Medical Challenges of Covid-19: Crisis of Indian Migrant Workers

[Abstract]

The phenomenon of migration is an important factor for keeping the economic wheels turning but also it posits some potential challenges to population framework, employment structure and welfare vulnerability of the Government. Rural urban migration has long been recognized as a mechanism that majority of poor workers take for uplifting poverty line or to access job that promises decent livelihoods. Now one of the biggest non-medical threats posed in India by Covid-19 is the issue of these migrant labourers. Their informality over labour, unsteady land and housing tenure have been uprooted and shaken them multiplying to their already existent nutrition vulnerability. Nationwide lockdown system has put a stop in the transport system and hence they are seen walking hundreds of kilometres in bare feet to reach their native places along with a crunch in money, food or health security. 'Social distancing' is also not possible here as they travel in larger groups. They are occasionally getting harassed at the hands of police while crossing inter-state boundaries. India Government seemed to have taken a lot of pro-active measures. Scheme like '*One Nation, One Ration Card*' has been launched allowing workers to collect food grains for free anywhere across the country although many could not avail. Indian Railway has ferried around 3276 '*Labourers' Special Trains*' those are apparently not sufficient as per already increased numbers. Hence with a brief survey of these migrant workers (both male and female) of different age groups, the present paper intends to focus on the systematic negation of both social and economic rights to them and carefully examines the



current disputes over crossing state boundaries opening with historical debates on workers' citizenship rights.

[Key Word]

Informality over labour, Nutrition vulnerability, Citizenship rights