

**ISSUES OF MIGRANT LABORS DURING COVID – 19**  
**AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION**

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***Abstract***

*This research is an honest attempt to know the issues of migrant labors during COVID 19 and to bring the best from social work professionals to help the migrant labors for their safe and prosperous life. Psycho social issues are the major concerns of the social workers but immediate issues are associated with the **food, shelter, healthcare, and transport** related, needs to address instantly. Further there is great need of psycho-social support to the migrant labors, through which social workers can boost the confidence level and to address the issues related with unemployment and fear of getting infected. Hence intervention of social work profession plays vital role in mitigating issues of migrant labors. Therefore researcher tried to know how to address issues of individual, group and various communities of the laborers by practicing social work values, principles and techniques of intervention. Researcher Used secondary data and adopted descriptive research design to come into the conclusion.*

**Key Words: Covid 19, Migrant Labor, Social Work, Intervention.**

## **Introduction**

Every individuals of the society desire to stay safe, and wealthy in all manners. To enjoy every benefit of the Govt, one needs to promote awareness of the facilities provided by the various Governments but in the case of migrant laborers, most of them illiterate and semi-skilled, very importantly they are unaware of Govt provisions of employment opportunities available at their local community. Lack of irrigation, poorly managed cottage industries and poor set up of the large-scale industries at their local community also leads them to migrant to other states or countries to hunt for jobs and strive to earn their livelihood. According to Britannica, Migrant labour, casual and unskilled workers, who have moved systematically from one region to another, offering their services on a temporary basis, usually cyclical basis, Migrant labor in various forms is found in South Africa, the Middle East, Western Europe, North America, and in India<sup>1</sup>. Society is well aware of how poorly migrant labors are treated and how they are deprived of to provide with the job security, wages, better working condition, welfare programs & facilities and dignity of labor, therefore they are the first victims of economic recession, disasters and pandemic like Covid 19.

## **Research Methodology,**

### **Objectives**

1. To analyze the immediate issues of migrant labors during Covid 19
2. To understand the psycho-social issues of migrant workers
3. To analyse the social work intervention in mitigating issues of migrant labors

### ***Research Design***

Researcher Adopted Descriptive research design that helps the study to describe the characteristics of the migrant labors and phenomenon of the migration. This design focuses more on reasons and solutions of the issues of migrant labor during covid-19, further it helps to check out with the social work intervention in the process of problem solving.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

Secondary data referred for this purpose, data of migrant laborers collected from the websites of labor Dept. Govt of Karnataka and Maharashtra, media reports of Govt of India, and the print media data analyzed to realize the genuinely issues related migrant labors.

### ***Immediate issues of migrant labors during Covid 19***

Immediate concerns faced by such migrant workers are:

#### **UNEMPLOYMENT**

Due to the corona pandemic Govt of India declared national lockdown. Purpose of it was to prevent community speeding of Covid 19. In this process, all the companies closed down the production and workers of unorganized sector and migrant workers refused to pay by the employer and they lost their employment.

#### **LOSS OF WAGES**

Loss of employment resulted in to economic recession for migrant workers as they denied to pay the wages, hence it was very crucial situation for them to stay back in large cities as they had no money in their hand and life expenses was more.

#### **FOOD**

Due to the loss of jobs and poor economy, migrant workers headed towards their native. Very unfortunately transport facility was suspended to prevent community spreading of pandemic and very naturally their food grains drained off in shorter period. They had faced heavy scarcity of food and support lot,

#### **TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

Public were asked to stay back at their place where they are there presently, but panic for getting affected with the Covid they started walk out from the big cities across India. Transport facility of suspended due to corona hence migrant workers suffered lot with shortage of transport facility.

## **SHELTER**

Migrant labors suffered lot with scarcity of accommodations while reverse migration, it is supposed to address very urgently by district authorities, as many of them suffered emotionally and abuse physically too. These issues forced them to face unsafe situation.

## **HEALTHCARE**

Healthcare was the one of the major and immediate issues of migrant labors during Covid 19 pandemic, need to address as possible as early. Migrant labors don't have access of personal arrangements and due to the sudden disaster created by Covid system failed in anticipating the problems many have suffered with various health issues and nation witnessed with the deceases also.

## **Psycho Social Issues of migrant labors**

### **Major psychosocial issues included:**

Sudden replacement of accommodation due to pandemic thrown the workers into many psychosocial issues, it was quite natural they were attacked suddenly by the disaster. Panic situation resulted in to sudden collapse and blocked their mind for a while. Depressive situation was very common due to the unemployment and they were lost hope regarding future. They were anxious for not reaching home and travelling across with the many positive cases of Covid 19, further worries of aged parents at native and health concerns of their own children put them into the pressure<sup>ii</sup>.

It is reported that, during their journey to native many migrant women workers sexually abused by co traveler and public too, these situations develop the trauma. Violence against the migrant workers was very common by the public as it was wrongly assumed that, migrant workers being carried virus with them and spreading it to others. Family disorganization is the major psycho social for them due to the employment, lack of financial crisis and due to the virus, huge number of family disorganization may happen, surely family disorganization results negatively with the psychological health of the children.

Social stigmatization on the basis of color, caste, religion, gender, and geographical location is oldest social ill to the mankind, every country knows by the practicing of such discriminations in one or the other form. Class and religious discriminations are popular discriminative practices are alive the across the globe. During Covid 19, corona positive community was highly discriminated, ill-treated and stigmatized by the communities everywhere. India is noticed with the social boycott of many people as they were infected with the corona. Therefor such foolish and meaningless discriminations and process of stigmatization results into many psycho social issues and degrade the human dignity.

### **Social Work Intervention**

(Krishna Kant Singh and Ram Shankar Singh) Social work is a profession for those with the strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social Workers assist people by helping them cope with and solve issues in their everyday lives, such as a family problems and dealing with the relations<sup>iii</sup>. Foremost question faced by the professional social workers during the pandemic is, 'how best social workers can help the migrant workers?'The purpose of social work is intervention. Social workers do not stop after studying a phenomenon, but do something about it: prevent ill health, change policy, influence organizations, assist families, or teach individuals coping skills and so on<sup>iv</sup>. There are some interventions techniques would helpful in dealing with the issues of migrant workers;

### **Crisis Intervention**

Crisis intervention model is used when someone is dealing with an acute crisis. Corona and post lockdown situation made migrant workers panic for the both like getting infected with corona and unemployment. But crisis intervention model of social work helps individuals and families come out from the universal crisis happened due to corona. The model includes seven stages: assess safety and lethality, rapport building, problem identification, address feelings, generate alternatives, develop an action plan, and follow up<sup>v</sup>.

### **Counseling**

Counseling is the important technique of intervention. It helps to read and understands the mind of individual and groups, during this pandemic. Counseling supports individuals and families in

sharing their difficulties and complications faced in the period with the professionals and provides the platform for ventilation of feelings of distressed. It also helps in understanding the problems of family, for the benefit of individual and family group treatment can execute with the help of counseling process and group treatment is used by social workers to encourage new awareness and support for better mental health, increased confidence and finding new employment opportunities<sup>vi</sup>.

### **Psychotherapy**

Psychotherapy is an interactive process for the treatment of psychosocial issues of migrant workers, clinical social workers can address the emotional issues like anxiety depression due to lockdown and covid19. Regular counseling meditation and motivational speech helps the individuals and families in overcome of psychosocial issues due to pandemic<sup>vii</sup>.

### **Linkage with the NGO**

Govt of India and state Govt's, too have no registration portal of migrant workers, however all the needy people should get register with the labor department and NGO to be asked for the develop linkage between needy and Govt, there are many NGOs have the data regarding domestic workers and construction labors and so on, sharing the such data with the Govt helps lot in reaching need by the Govt.

### **Helping of the needy to get benefited with the Govt**

Govt of India and all the state Governments are being announced many packages for the welfare of the poor and lower middle-class communities. Professional social workers need to study all the packages and help out the needy one. Especially economic packages for agriculture labors, skilled and semi-skilled and non-skilled laborers, domestic workers construction labors and Auto rickshaw Drivers need to educate to take the optimum use of the facilities announced by the Govt.

### **Health education**

Health and hygiene, sanitation plays very vital role in preventing and combating corona virus. Hence, we need to educate every individual about the importance of the being hygienic.

We need to socialize very intensively of our new generation regarding personal health care, being hygienic and sanitize our surrounding's.

### **Developing the job portals**

Soon after the normal situation, it is very imperative to help the migrant workers in getting the new jobs. Social work professional bodies need to develop job portals and through which help the out every individual in finding their desirable jobs. This would be an excellent effort and true intervention of social work in the welfare of every migrant worker.

### **Suggestions made up for the welfare of migrant Labors**

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, Have been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and have met in the Thirty-eighth Session on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1955, and decided upon the adoption of certain proposals concerning the protection of migrant workers in underdeveloped countries and territories, which is the fifth item on the agenda of the session, and it is determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation, but unfortunately very few countries follow those ideas proposed by the International Labor Organizations (ILO). Along with the recommendations of ILO, following recommendations for Indian migrant worker and it should be considered seriously<sup>viii</sup>.

1. Need to design National Welfare Policy on Labor Welfare Programmes
2. Strict implementation of labor laws and it should be followed actively
3. Migrant workers and their dependents ensure with the life and health policies with security
4. System of national portal should be developed for their registration and it should be linked to Adhara
5. A Govt provision for organizing migrant labors is need of the hour and it should control and monitored at district headquarters.
6. Need to support cottage industries to reduce migrant laboring
7. Need to focus more on SME at large
8. Education facility for the migrant labors and their children should monitor strictly
9. Support for concept of vocal local, through which we can develop indigenous brand and employments too

10. Startups need to support with increased finance.
11. Need to design provisions for stabilization of migrant workers

## **Conclusion**

Developing countries like India and China has issues of migrant workers. During any kind of pandemic issues, labor communities suffer lot and due to the unorganized status, they will be victimized socially and economically. Therefore Governments need to stabilize the migrant workers by developing cottage industries and promoting the local entrepreneurship. Relief packages may help them time being but these packages are not the ultimate solutions. Social work profession also has important role in motivating individuals' groups and communities in generating jobs locally and improve financial status by SHGs and other small saving schemes with the psychosocial support for not getting panic. Immortally, social work professional creates awareness among the varies communities for not stigmatizing the corona effected individuals.

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