

Status of Migrant Workers during Covid-19 in Bihar and Impact of their Training under Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan (GKRA)

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Abstract

A survey was conducted and 525 reverse migrant workers were sampled from 114 villages in nine blocks to train them as per their need for skill development or upgrade their skill to generate income after lockdown during first wave of corona(COVID-19) in the month of June, 2020. Impact assessment was done in the month of January, 2021. Out of 38 districts in Bihar state, Kaimur district had 8495 reverse migrant workers from 879 villages in 11 blocks (district office, Kaimur). They had migrated in different states of India in pre- COVID -19 period. In Kaimur district, loss of Rs.138.6 crores annually and Rs.11.55 crores monthly was estimated on the basis of average salary/wages per migrant worker and per month at the rate of Rs.13600. Adoption percentage of training was quite low which was 10.48 per cent in vegetable production followed by goatary 8.57 per cent. No one adopted nutri-garden, vermicompost, processing and value addition and mushroom production enterprises. Main reasons for non-adoption were lack of capital for infrastructure and working cost. Labour was the main capital with them. It is suggested that the MNREGA will provide employment for them and Government should provide grant or loan facilities to trained migrant workers for their self employment so that they would be able to establish enterprises and generate money as well as to take opportunity "VOCAL for LOCAL".

Keywords: Reverse migrant workers, Need based training, Impact assessment

JEL Classification: J01, M53, D04

Introduction

Corona (COVID-19) is a new virus and pandemic which has been spread all over the countries of the world and damaged human life and economy a lot of. The International Labour Organization in its report describes the coronavirus pandemic as 'the worst global crisis since World War II'. About 400 million people (76.2% of the total workforce) working in the informal economy in India are at a risk of falling deeper into poverty due to catastrophic consequences of the virus. As half of the world is in lock down, it is going to be a loss of 195 million full - time jobs or 6.7 per cent of working hour globally.

Many were in low paid, low – skilled jobs where sudden loss of income is catastrophic (International Labour Organization, 2020). Its effect was recorded from February to march in India and therefore lockdown was

declared to control COVID -19. Almost all companies and industries were closed due to declared lock down and panic situation was created among workers of industries and businesses. During COVID - 19 and lockdown period national, state, private institutions and personal level economic loss were assessed to a great extent.

Out of 38 districts in Bihar state, Kaimur district had 8495 registered reverse migrant workers at 879 villages in total 11 blocks. They had migrated in different states of India. In Kaimur district, due to lockdown during COVID-19 period, a loss of Rs.138.6 crores annually and Rs.11.55 crores monthly was estimated on the basis of average salary/wages per migrant worker and per month at the average rate of Rs.13600. Pandemic (COVID-19) had adversely impacted the plantation sector due to labour supply challenges, supply chain disruptions, skewed consumption and cash flow and

logistic issues (Devi, 2020). Srivastava *et.al* 2020 told that farmers in Bihar did not witness any benefit on account of increased labour supply due to large scale reverse migration. To mitigate the effect of lockdown on the vulnerable groups, Government of India on 26 March 2020, announced a Rs. 1.70-lakh-crore package under the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana. It has within its ambit health workers, farmers, MGNREGA workers, economically vulnerable categories, especially women, elderly and unorganized-sector workers, Jan Dhan account holders and Ujjwala beneficiaries. The scheme entails an additional 5 kg of wheat or rice and one kg of preferred pulses every month to 80 crore beneficiaries for the next three months. Many programmes had been launched by Central and State Government for COVID-19 reliefs. In this context “Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan”(GKRA) also was implemented by Govt. of India through Ministry of Rural Development and one of the main objective of GKRA was “Training for Reverse Migrant workers” to develop/upgrade skill for their income generation during Corona so that they can minimize their loss and maintain their livelihoods in village level. Mostly reverse migrant workers belonged to small and marginal farm families and they were engaged in agricultural and allied activities before their migration. KVK received budget from Indian Council of Agricultural Research, ATARI, Patna (Bihar). Out of 8495 reverse migrant workers in the study area, 525 migrant workers (6.18%) were targeted by Government with a budget of Rs.2.70 lakh to train/refresh them by Krishi Vigyan Kendra Kaimur, Bihar. Our objectives were to survey selected 525 migrant workers with different parameters so that training needs would be identified, to conduct need based training for their rozgar as well as income and impact assessment of trained reverse migrant workers with different indicators so that feedback would be utilized by policy makers for further launch and improvement of programmes (Cariappa *et al*, 2021; Neetha and Prema, 2020; Sanyal and Maity, 2018). Impact assessment was done in the month of January, 2021.

Data Sources and Methodology

Purposive and random method of sampling technique to collect data was used. In the first step, list of migrant workers who were registered by Govt. and returned back to their homes from different states up to May, 2020 was collected from Welfare Department

of Kaimur district and official web site of Bihar Government. In the second step, out of eleven blocks, nine blocks were selected purposively on the basis of large migrant workers. In the third step, villages were selected randomly from the selected blocks. In the fourth step, list of workers' name was arranged alphabetically and sequentially alternate workers were selected from top to bottom for trainings in selected villages. Meeting with finally selected workers was conducted and they were supplied sanitizer and masks with social distancing norms according to Corona guidelines. A brief socio-economic information was taken from selected reverse migrant workers by pre tested schedules during meeting held in June 2020. In the fifth stage, selected trainees were clubbed in a batch of training according to their need as well as their interest for various enterprises. Block Agriculture Officers, Agriculture Coordinators, Kisan Salahkars, Assistant Technology Manager and Block Technology Manager helped us for selection of trainees (reverse migrant workers) from selected villages. In the last step, fifteen batches for different disciplines\sector or enterprises. Each training batch had thirty five trainees (reverse migrant workers) and thus five hundred twenty five reverse migrant workers were selected for respective trainings and they were informed about dates as well as venue for attending training programmes.

Results and Discussion

Out of 525 sampled migrant workers in 9 blocks from 114 villages for training, maximum 140 (26.67%) were from Adhaura block due to rainfed area and economically as well as literally poor condition of these workers. Table 1 reveals that 70 (13.34%) workers were belonged to ST(Scheduled Tribe) whereas 154(29.34%) migrant workers were under SC(Scheduled Caste) and rest were Other than SC and ST. 97.53 per cent sampled workers were literate and only 2.47 per cent were illiterate. Out of total migrant workers 20.76 per cent (109 migrant) had passed matric (10th) in which mostly were from Chainpur block but rate is higher in Mohania block as 1 Matric per3 workers. Table1 also indicated that as a whole, post graduate were only 0.39 per cent (2), 8.95 per cent possessed Graduation, 11.62 per cent were Intermediate whereas 55.81 per cent (293 migrants) were non-matric.

Table 2 represented that out of total 525 migrant workers, 144(27.43%) were landless where there were no scopes for own cultivation except rented in land or

Table 1. Status of sampled reverse migrant workers in Kaimur district of Bihar (N= 525)

Block name	Villages Covered	No. of reverse migrant workers for training	Caste			Education					
			SC	ST	Others	Postgraduate	Graduate	Intermediate	Matric/10th	Non-matric	Illite-rate
Adhaura	11	140	37 (26.43)	46 (32.86)	57 (40.71)	01 (0.71)	10 (7.15)	18 (12.86)	20 (14.29)	88 (62.87)	03 (2.12)
Bhabua	03	35	08 (22.86)	-	27 (77.14)	-	1 (2.86)	02 (5.71)	06 (17.14)	26 (74.29)	-
Mohania	14	35	12 (34.28)	1 (2.86)	22 (62.86)	-	6 (17.14)	7 (20.00)	12 (34.29)	10 (28.57)	-
Chainpur	20	70	16 (22.86)	1 (1.43)	53 (75.71)	-	2 (2.86)	4 (5.71)	22 (31.44)	32 (45.71)	10 (14.28)
Ramgarh	15	35	21 (60.00)	01 (2.86)	13 (37.14)	01 (2.86)	03 (8.57)	06 (17.14)	07 (20.00)	18 (51.43)	-
Kudra	10	35	03 (8.57)	-	32 (91.43)	-	09 (25.71)	06 (17.14)	05 (14.29)	15 (42.86)	-
Chand	07	35	24 (68.57)	03 (8.57)	08 (22.86)	-	01 (2.86)	02 (5.71)	06 (17.14)	26 (74.29)	-
Bhagwanpur	06	35	02 (5.71)	15 (42.86)	18 (51.43)	-	02 (5.71)	03 (8.57)	06 (17.14)	24 (68.58)	-
Rampur	28	105	31 (29.52)	03 (2.86)	71 (67.62)	-	13 (12.38)	13 (12.38)	25 (23.81)	54 (51.43)	-
Total	114	525	154 (29.34)	70 (13.34)	301 (67.32)	02 (0.39)	47 (8.95)	61 (11.62)	109 (20.76)	293 (55.81)	13 (2.47)

Source: Analysed surveyed primary data

other enterprises where as 381 migrants were marginal farmers because they possessed average 0.92ha cultivable land. Mostly 152 sampled migrant were under 21-25 years age-group followed by 19.05 per cent in 25-30 years and 17.90 per cent in 17-20 years age. It was clear that more than 60 per cent youth were migrated to earn money for their dependent family members having average size 5.7. Maximum years of experience of migrant workers was 22.5 years, whereas minimum experience was 0.5 years. They had been migrated in 18 states in which Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana and Delhi covered 399 migrant (76%) of total 525 migrant due to larger industrial areas. Chaudhary *et al*, 2020 also supported that major migration corridors in India are from UP and Bihar, to Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Newer corridors from Odisha, West Bengal and North East to Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, from Rajasthan to Gujarat, from Madhya Pradesh to Gujarat and Maharashtra and from Tamil Nadu to Kerala are being created. More than 80 per cent reverse migrants were getting their wages/salary more than Rs. 15000/month and a average of Rs.13600. Minimum wages was Rs.8000/month whereas maximum of Rs.22700/month. 55 per cent of migrant workers got a daily wage between Rs.200 and Rs.400, and 39 per cent of the workers got it between Rs.400 and Rs.600, which was below minimum wage rate. Only 4 per cent of the workers got Rs.600 and above, which was close to minimum wage rate (Chaudhary *et al*, 2020). Mostly workers were employed in Maharashtra 29.15 per cent followed by 28.76 per cent by Gujarat as per then data in Table 2. 84 migrant workers (16%) were employed as Machine operator, followed by 72 (13.71%) engaged in construction work and 11.81 per cent as helper. Other than trade work like automobile industry, carpenter, mason's helper, blacksmith, computer repair, cook, gardener, gate grill and welding, auto mechanic, sports sector workers, AC water cooler/purifier, child caretaker, call centre, car repair, tiles mechanic, hotel workers, cobbler, laptop service, watchman, e-commerce, rickshaw/thela puller, electronic sector workers, vegetable seller(Thela), engaged in road and bridge, textile sector staff, washing machine mechanic, daily wages service, centering, beautician, plumber and Maid/housekeepers etc. engaged 19.23 per cent as indicated in table 2. Chaudhary *et al* (2020) also quoted in their research paper that Migrant workers were employed in the construction sector (40 million), domestic work (20 million), textile (11 million), brick

kiln work (10 million), transportation, mining and agriculture (IIPS, 2001).

Table 3 revealed that 525 migrant workers were trained in nine subjects/sectors based on their demand and interest. 105 sampled workers were trained in vegetable production and 150 for Integrated Farming System. Also as per the need of migrant workers, 70 migrant workers were trained in each goatary and mushroom production. Adoption percentage was quite low which was 10.48 per cent in vegetable production followed by goatary (8.57%). No one adopted nutri-garden, vermicompst, processing and value addition and mushroom production enterprises. The main reasons for non-adoption were lack of capital for infrastructure and working cost. Neither loan facilities nor grant was provided to trained and unemployed workers timely after training. Mostly migrant workers told us that they would be migrated again in their jobs or for search of new jobs when they will feel fearless by Corona and also when transport facilities will start specially by train. Landless reverse migrant workers were trained in goatary, mushroom, animal husbandry and poultry. They required village level industries for their employment and utilized their skill.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Almost all the migrant workers were rural youth and returned back due to lock down caused by COVID-19(Corona). Government focus was to train them to generate income for their livelihood who had already returned to their homes. Funds for training were provided but after their training they could not be facilitated by loans at subsidized rate or not received grant to establish their enterprises. Most of the migrants told that they had spent their earned money to fulfill their family's urgent need. They told that their labour and skill were the main capital with them. The major policy implication suggested is that the MNREGA will provide employment for them and Govt. should provide grant or loan facilities to trained migrant workers for their self employment as well as VOCAL for LOCAL. Some workers tried to get credit facilities from bank but bankers did not co-operate them, therefore, the Government should instruct bank to provide loan to migrant workers so that they would be able to run enterprises in trained disciplines. Also the Government of Bihar have not provided job opportunity to skilled and unskilled migrant workers anywhere after lockdown due to first wave of COVID-19.

Table 2. Status of surveyed migrant workers under different parameters (sample no 525)

Parameters	Unit/ No	Percentage
Cultivable land (ha)		
a. Maximum	1.19	
b. Minimum	0.06	
c. Average	0.92	
d. Landless (no)	144	27.43
Age – Groups (years)		
a. 17-20	94	17.90
b. 21-25	152	28.95
c. 25-30	100	19.05
d. 31-35	70	13.34
e. 36-40	35	6.67
f. 41-45	32	6.09
g. More than 45	42	8.00
Dependent family members(no)		
a. Maximum	11	
b. Minimum	2.3	
c. Average	5.7	
Work experience/ Duration of job (years)		
Maximum	22.5	
Minimum	0.5	
Average	5.0	
Migrated places		
a. Delhi	45	8.57
b. Goa	02	0.38
c. Maharashtra	153	29.15
d. Gujarat	151	28.76
e. West Bengal	01	0.19
f. Tamilnadu	16	3.05
g. Haryana	50	9.52
h. Punjab	14	2.67
i. Rajasthan	18	3.43
j. Uttar Pradesh	11	2.10
k. Karnataka	08	1.52
l. Andhra Pradesh	36	6.86
m. Telangana	10	1.90
n. Jharkhand	01	0.19
o. Chhatisgarh	05	0.95
p. Himanchal Pradesh	01	0.19
q. Kerala	01	0.19
r. Bihar	02	0.38
Nature of work/Trade		
a. Fitter/electrician	23	4.38
b. Welder	07	1.34
c. Helper	62	11.81
d. Machine operator	84	16.00
e. Driver	15	2.86
f. Thread mill	27	5.14
g. Dairy	03	0.57
h. Guard	13	2.48
i. Different factories	56	10.67
j. Construction work	72	13.71
k. Business/shop	12	2.28
l. Garments	13	2.48
m. Tailoring	37	7.05
n. Other works	101	19.23
Per month Wages/Salary(Rs.)		
a. Maximum	22700	
b. Minimum	8000	
c. Average		

Source: Field survey

Table 3. Need based training conducted for selected reverse migrant workers by KVK Kaimur

(Each batch 35 participants)

Training sectors	No. of participants	No. of batches	Impact after training			Remarks
			No of adopter	Adoption (%)	Extra income (Rs.)/month per worker	
Vegetable production	105	03	11	10.48	3750	No credit facility, own capital
Poultry	35	01	02	5.71	4000	No credit facility, own capital
Goatary	70	02	06	8.57	3150	No credit facility, own capital
Animal husbandry	35	01	02	5.71	3080	No credit facility, own capital
Nutri-garden	35	01	00	00	00	No capital
Integrated farming System	105	03	02	1.90	4170	No credit facility, own capital
Vermicompost	35	01	00	00	00	No capital
Processing and value addition	35	01	00	00	00	No capital
Mushroom production	70	02	00	00	00	No capital
Total	525	15	23	4.38		

Source: Assessment by KVK

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