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Understanding Migration and Psychological Health of Migrant Workers

Zeba Rahyee¹

Abstract

Migration has been a dynamic phenomenon from the evolution of the human species. It affects various aspects of life and gets affected by different determinants around us. Various studies have been done in this field to comprehend the phenomenon and still, there are distinct aspects of it that need more attention. One such aspect is the psychological health of migrants. Migration is an inevitable process of human life that's why understanding the phenomenon becomes very imperative. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, it has become crucial to study this aspect of migration. Various changes took place very rapidly as the covid-19 hit the world. People were left in uncertainty in comprehending the situation. Among those people, one of the most vulnerable groups was the migrant workers. This paper attempts to understand migration by discussing why people migrate and what are the major factors behind the movement. Further, the types of migration are also discussed to gain a more holistic perspective on the topic. After that, a case study of the plight of Indian migrant workers has been taken to understand the psychological effects of Covid-19 among migrant workers. A very strong social protection policy is required. Some measures of immediate response could be providing community shelters and community kitchens. Apart from these initiatives is also very significant to recognise that it is individuals who need to be more aware and responsible for their health securities.

Keywords: *Migration, Psychological Health, Migrant workers, COVID 19 pandemic, Uncertainty*

Introduction

The movement of people from one place to another has been a constant process from the beginning of human civilization. As per United Nations, just 2 per cent of the total population is migrants. However, the complications and significance of this process are much more than what the percentage shows. It is a process which is having a political colour, which is getting diversified and is growing (Castles & Miller, 2003), which makes this phenomenon more significant to explore in the present context. It is a natural human behaviour to improve their lives. The process of migration affects the life and surrounding environment of humans. Apart from mortality and fertility, migration is another important phenomenon that plays a vital role in population growth or population alteration of any specific geographical region. When people migrate from one place to another, they become more adaptable to the new environment.

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They make various new decisions, go through the whole process, shift physically from one place to another, adjust to new local culture, and become part of that local culture and system.

One important question which comes here is why people migrate. Migration is defined in simple terms could be understood as the movement from one place or region to another and this process is a series of actions to achieve something so the process of migration is a series of movements of people from one region to another to achieve a goal, for example, good life, employment opportunities, better education, etc. When people move in very distinct contexts and circumstances like an invasion, conquest, forced displacement, fleeing because of natural disaster, mercantile outreach, colonial settlement, slavery, etc. it could be termed as migration.

In the post-war globalization era, the movement of individuals or families generally for socio-economic purposes is the modern understanding of migration. Many historians of migration believe that migratory flows have been, and will continue to be, a significant catalyst of social, economic, and cultural change in any society. However, determining the number of people who were migrants in history is not possible. The Second World War is often considered an important turning point in the history of migration.

It is imperative to comprehend and analyze the factors responsible for migration to decode the cause-effect relationship as well as the consequences of migration on society as a whole. A factor can be understood as a force that influences or affects something and lead to the consequence, that force can be favourable, unfavourable or neutral. As far as migration is concerned the factors are related to the Origin (place of the last resident) and Destination (the place of new residence). There have always been a various push and pull factors behind why people move from one place to another. Few such factors include economic factors, social factors, and cultural factors. There are some theories about factors of migration. One such example is the law of migration Revenstein (1885), where he states certain norms about migration such as when people move from one place to another it causes counter-migration, people generally migrates to a short distance, as compared to urban people rural people migrates more, migrating people tend to choose big cities as a destination, majority of migrants are adults, migration causes the growth of the large town, adults move more frequently as compared to families, etc.

The “Push-Pull Theory” was provided by Lee (1996), in which he explains that there are different push and pull factors that make people leave their country of origin and often they get attracted to various opportunities at the destination country. A few examples of push factors are lack of employment and opportunities, underdevelopment, natural calamities, fear of being persecuted, death threats, negligible medical facilities, discrimination, war or war-like situations etc. Examples of pull factors are better living conditions and quality, more opportunities, education, employment, safe environment, no fear of death and persecution, sound medical facilities, industrialization, favouring climatic conditions etc.

Another is “Situational theory” given by Wolport (1965), in this theory he talks about the importance of “place utility”. He argues that people migrate to locations where they find the value of “place utility” higher than the

location where they are already residing. People migrate because they believe that in locations with higher place utility they could get better socio-economic opportunities and benefits. These are a few theories that explain the reasons for migration and why people migrate from one place to another.

The objective of this paper is to understand the concept of migration comprehensively, specifically at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic because both have affected each other immensely. In this context, another major aspect will also be discussed which is the mental health problems of migrant workers. What are the factors for this problem, who are responsible for ensuring health security, how the current pandemic affected the migrant workers are a few questions which will be addressed in the paper?

International Migration

International migration means there will be a change in the place of residence across national boundaries. An international migrant crosses the border of a country and move to another one. International migrants can be understood between different categories like legal and illegal migrants, refugees. As suggested by their names legal migrants are those people who move from one country to another with legal ways by following required rules and norms. However illegal migrants are those people who enter the destination country without following laws through illegal means. Refugees are those who move from source country to destination country for survival and due to fear of persecution. As explained by Jay Weinstein and Vijayan Pillai, there is another kind of international migration which is forced migration. Forced migration takes place when a person didn't have a choice to move. He/She is not willing to move but the circumstances have forced them to move such as calamities, wars etc. Making a clear distinction between internal and international migration is very imperative as the reason to move in both circumstances are different from each other. Motivating factors among international migrants are higher than internal migrants because international migrants face more barriers while moving as compared to internal migrants (weeks 1999).

MIGRATION AND COVID-19

Understanding migration and its types provide an insight to comprehend the issues and understand various aspects related to it. Now we can understand that various types of migrants sometimes move at their will and sometimes forcefully due to various situations. Consequently, they face various issues and

challenges. In this article, we will discuss one such challenge which is; Psychological aspect and due to the ongoing pandemic, this article will attempt to discuss the aspect in light of Covid-19.

At present world is experiencing the largest migration and people getting displaced since World War II ended. It has resulted in such situations where people and communities are leaving their home countries because of conflict, various forms of violations, due to negligible stability in the socio-political scenario, because of environmental threats etc. As per International Organisation for Migration, at present, there are 281 million international migrants around the world. Among these people around 26 million people falls in the category of refugees. In 2020 around 80 million people had to leave their home country because of conflict persecution various forms of violence. Various reports of the United Nations had predicted that this pattern of migration will keep increasing in the future because of factors such as increasing inequality, globalisation, sound connectivity, climatic changes etc. Such patterns make the international organisations act proactively towards the need of migrants and refugees and try to address their problems rather than just giving reactions to the crisis. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic provides enough scope to analyze this phenomenon from various perspectives, especially psychological perspectives.

It has been estimated that around 272 million international migrants are way more vulnerable as compared to other migrants due to personal reasons or social or circumstantial reasons. Covid-19 has increased their vulnerability and has made them prone to various problems and challenges. They are at risk of health and financial challenges. The majority of migrants from the estimated numbers are in developing countries and pandemic has been affecting them adversely. Governments have taken various steps to contain and manage the pandemic which has curtailed the movement of migrants. Restrictions have been put on travel, any kind of movement from other states or countries was prohibited. Migration of labours got suspended as precautionary measures. The assistance which was being provided to asylum seekers got slowed down. Because of the restrictions, international organisations like IOM and UN High Commissioner for Refugees have to suspend the travel related to the resettlement of refugees.

Restrictions put on the borders of countries due to pandemics have affected and restricted the role of various international organisations. As per International Organisation for Migration (2021); after recognizing Covid-19 as a pandemic by World Health Organisation around 105,000 restrictions were put all around the world. However, different areas and territories of around 189 countries also introduced some 795 exceptions against the restrictions, which resulted in the movement of people (IOM, 2021). Even after introducing the exceptions, it was quite evident that migration flow has decreased. As per UN DESA (2020) in 2020 around 2 million international migrations decreased. In the initial months of 2020 migration flow in OECD countries decreased by 46 % which was considered a historical decrease in the flow of migration in OECD countries (OECD, 2020). This decrease in migration adversely affected the demography of those countries which were dependent on the migration for the growth of their population.

For example, as per the data from German Federal Statistics (2011), the population in Germany did not register any growth for the first time in a decade and the reason behind this was the decreased immigration. Since 1945, for the first time, net immigration in Australia was expected to decline at such speed. This would result in the lowest growth of population in 100 years (Australian Centre for Population).

Migrants and mental health

Over time flow of migrants and numbers of refugees have increased, especially in the European region. As discussed earlier different types of migrants and refugees move from one place to another. In many instances the

category of people moving from one place to another change also. For example, a person who has moved into some country irregularly can apply for and get asylum or sometimes when asylum seeking application of a person gets rejected they become irregular migrants. Sometimes irregular migrants manage to find some job and get status of migrant. However, one thing which is common in all these people is that they have to go through a very stressful and complicated process. Migrants leave their country of origin and move to a new country where they need to adopt a different environment, culture, lifestyle etc (Bhugra, 2004). As a consequence of this process migrants face various psychological problems which need to be addressed. They face fear and trauma during the process from the origin country to transit to the destination country. The extent of challenges and problems could be different from category to category i.e. from refugees to asylum seekers to irregular migrants. The intensity also depends upon the settlement policies of the host country (Giacco D et al, 2018).

Irrespective of the fact that what is the legal status of few refugees or migrants they have had very long, complicated and troublesome travel experiences before arriving in the destination country. They have also faced severe poverty and adverse economic circumstances. Apart from these challenges refugees have to very frequently go through stressful situations like wars and various conflicts, fear of persecution, various kind of discrimination and many more difficulties even before starting their journey from the origin countries. Once migrants and refugees reach the destination country they have to face difficulties there as well. They have to accommodate to a different environment, they face language-related difficulties. Apart from all these issues many times asylum seekers and irregular migrants have to go through stressful circumstances due to administrative work which needs to be done for their stay in the destination country. Many times their movement is associated with the fate of their family, especially with the economic migrants. This responsibility of family put more pressure on migrants.

Those seeking asylum and irregular migrants stay in constant fear about the insecurity of not getting asylum or not knowing the stay period in the destination country. They face the fear of being deported or uncertainty about their stay till the time their status in the destination country gets decided. The majority of the time the movement from one country to another is not so smooth. Migrants and refugees have to move through various transit countries to reach the destination country. This makes the whole process of migration more complicated and stressful (Marković et al, 2018). When refugees and migrants reside in the transit country for a longer time it affects their economic condition thus, resulting in stressful situations. Staying in the constant fearful and stressful situation makes refugees and migrants more prone to mental disorders and they suffer a lot of complications due to it. In such a scenario providing them, treatment becomes very imperative. However, accessing medical facilities and services become more challenging for them. This is a common difficulty for almost all refugees and migrants (Lindert et al, 2008).

Major reasons for difficulty in accessing healthcare services are language barriers, lack of awareness about the available facilities in the destination country, not having proper entitlements to receive free services, different ways to understand the mental disorders, distinct attitude to psychological treatment, stigma related to mental health etc. in such circumstances those migrants whose educational qualification is good they could better interact with health professionals thus, ability to express the problems varies from individual to individual (Giacco & Priebe, 2018). Among all the categories irregular migrants are more vulnerable in terms of getting access to healthcare facilities as they usually are not able to afford the mental health treatment and free access becomes difficult due to their entitlement. Also, they avoid getting healthcare access because of fear of getting reported to the authority which results in various adverse circumstances for them especially the fear of being deported because of their irregular migrant status (Priebe et al, 2018). Various agencies and associations have recognized the need of providing physical and mental health treatment to refugees and migrants. However, the abovementioned factors limit their scope of access thus, making their condition worse.

Various debates have taken place regarding the responsibility to ensure mental health and it is being realized that this responsibility could be ensured at three levels; individual, state and institutions. People must recognise the mental health problems at the individual level then comes the responsibility of the state to make adequate policies to ensure mental health and then the role of institutions such as NGOs, civil societies, community groups, media etc to create awareness among people related to mental health problems. It should be a collective action from all the stakeholders so that smooth functioning and effective implementation could be ensured.

Indian migrant workers during covid-19: a case study

Migrants and refugees are often not very familiar with the new environment they move to. They become more prone to different socio-psychological and emotional traumas. The fear of not getting acceptance from the locals and neighbours and the security of families back at the origin country make the situation even worse. Workers move to another country or city for better economic opportunities so that they can earn more and provide a better life to their family back at home. Many times families depend on the earning of the migrant worker. Migrant workers are one of the most impoverished sections of society as they rely on the daily wages which they receive after their work. In this article, we are taking the case study of internal Indian migrant workers during a pandemic.

Around 100 million internal migrant workers work in the Indian industries (Deshingkar & Akter, 2009) which are a huge number to impact the economy of any country. Migrants who have moved from rural to urban areas for work are engaged in temporary and unskilled work. They get very low wages with negligible or no work security. Indian migrant workers comprise a huge unorganized working sector and workforce with the feature of the informal work environment (Zeitlyn et al, 2014.).

Covid-19 affected people around the world not only physically but psychologically as well. One of the most vulnerable groups who got affected by the pandemic is internal migrant workers. Factors that make them more vulnerable are they could be potential carriers of the virus, pre-existing physical health issues due to work, psychological issues like lack of or no family support during a pandemic, staying away with family, overcrowded living space, struggling to get necessities etc. Financial burden, because of loss of work and no safety in the pandemic, among this group made them more vulnerable to the Covid -19. During the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, immediate lockdown and various restrictions were imposed on day-to-day work activities to implement social distancing so that virus could be contained. The travel ban was also introduced as a precautionary measure. Due to restrictions on a day to day activities daily wages workers could not get work and money. Such a situation made it more difficult for migrant workers to manage the necessities of their day to day life like food and shelter. It triggered anxiety among them. Because of anxiety, they could not think about anything as they wanted to go back to their native place or place of residence where their families were residing. Migrant workers started gathering at the railway stations and bus stands to go back to their native places. They tried all possible ways to reach their home. Many migrants got stuck at borders. Their anxiety level went so high due to restrictions and difficulties that they started moving from the place of their work to the place of their resident by walking. In the majority of cases, this distance was hundreds and thousands of kilometres. This incident of huge gathering made migrant workers more vulnerable as they were at the risk of twofold setback. One, to getting affected by the virus two, becomes potential carriers of the virus. In the latter case, they had to face harassment and negative reactions from the locals and neighbours. The most crucial psychological effects of Covid-19 among workers were anxiety and fear. Various reports of nervous

breakdown, depression and anxiety and panic attacks have been reported among migrant workers (Shastri, 2020).

Migrant workers have to go through various psychological consequences due to multiple stresses and various negative factors like poverty, no social protection, malnourished, difficulties of adapting new environment and culture, poor healthcare facilities etc. In India following are the most crucial factors their mental health issues:

- 1.) Potential carrier of Covid-19; due to huge gatherings, living in an unhygienic and overcrowded place and lack of sanitation migrant workers become more potential carriers of the virus.
- 2.) Pre-existing health conditions as a risk factor; the majority of daily wages workers and migrant workers have some kind of pre-existing disease like TB, silicosis, hypertension which makes them more prone and vulnerable for covid-19. The major reason for these pre-existing diseases is the poor working condition.
- 3.) Staying away from the family in a pandemic; increases the distress among workers triggering the feeling of loneliness and fear of losing a family member due to the virus. It also creates anxiety among workers by making them feel incapable of providing the necessary medical services.
- 4.) Barriers in following the norms; due to lack of awareness and lack of resources majority of migrant workers could not follow the rules of social distancing and other norms to contain the virus.
- 5.) Limitations in getting psychiatric help; migrant workers are not aware of the psychiatric facility. The financial limitation is another barrier in this case. Also, there is a stigma attached to the psychological treatment among those strata of society where educational level is low. Awareness is very low.
- 6.) Not having effective laws for the unorganized sector; due to the nature of this sector, there is no security and insurance Scheme for migrant workers. They are the most neglected workforce and have to suffer a lot due to this limitation.

WAY FORWARD

In the pandemic, migrant workers have faced various challenges, from making efforts to reach their native places to staying temporarily at the quarantine centres. All these experiences have filled anxiety and fear among them. In such a scenario it becomes very imperative to assess and address the psychological health issues of these workers and provide them psychosocial support. To implement and deliver the solutions to the challenges following measures could be taken; First, treating migrant workers with empathy and dignity and trying to understand their difficulties. Second, Pay attention to the needs and requirements of migrant workers. Third, Not treating everyone from the same lens as every individual face or experience different kind of difficulties. An approach is needed where everyone's specific needs get

recognized. Fourth, Reassure the migrant workers that this pandemic situation will be over soon and life will get back to normal again. Fifth, Make migrant workers aware of all the help and facilities provided to them by governments and various organisations. Sixth, Making migrant workers aware of the risk which is related to the mass movement and how such incidents could adversely affect the efforts which are being taken to contain the virus. Seventh, Appreciate their contribution to the economy and society to boost their morale. Eighth, make them realize their importance in the workforce and among their family as well. Ninth, Giving reassurance to them that even if migrant worker's employers are not able to pay them charitable organisations and administrations would extend their help. Tenth, Providing reassurance amid the fear of getting affected. Eleventh, Tell them that their families would be safe if they stay away from them and would not rush together to reach their native places.

To achieve all these, a very strong social protection policy is required. Some measures of immediate response could be providing community shelters and community kitchens, providing resources of necessities, making workers aware of the importance of social distancing, tracking cases of infection and taking appropriate measures to manage such situations like setting up mechanisms to get the infected workers in contact with family members through virtual platforms. It will help the workers in dealing better with the infection and pandemic. Such interventions could help in promoting the mental health of migrant workers. There could be an approach to identify those migrant workers who need special attention and then their mental health should be handled accordingly. For example, irregular migrant workers need special attention as they have to face much more challenges as compared to regular migrant workers. A guideline could also be created to assess and provide mental health treatment to one of the most vulnerable groups of people, especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Apart from these initiatives is also very significant to recognize that it is individuals who need to be more aware and responsible for their health securities.

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Tracing the Impact of Migration in Bangladesh: From Partition to the Pandemic

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Abstract

The challenge of migration has been multidimensional, with ramifications that range from economic, social, cultural, and even psychological. People have suffered deep trauma, which is reflected through their experiences of homelessness, the act of leaving their homeland or known habitat behind and being forced to travel due to societal pressure. This paper attempts to study migration-based literature and films with a special focus on two films from Bangladesh, *Chitra Nodir Pare* (Quite flows the River Chitra) and *Maati* (Back to its Roots). The first part of the paper examines how partition affected the subcontinent and caused trauma to multiple people in different ways by creating divisions and further turning friends into strangers. It also attempts to analyse the economic as well as identity crisis brought about by the large inflow of migrants. Migration caused by either war or disease causes multiple problems in our society such as panic, chaos, homelessness or violence. The second part of the paper studies the societal impact of migration on the gender scale with a focus on inter-communal relationships. Through Sudipto Roy's *Tasher Ghawr*, made during the pandemic, the paper examines the problems of women's abuse at home during the lockdown. Furthermore, the third and concluding part of the paper attempts to analyse migration from the prism of the Partition to the Pandemic.

Introduction

As a result of large-scale migration, people have suffered deep trauma, which is reflected through their experiences of homelessness, leaving their homeland or known region, and being forced to travel due to societal pressure. This paper attempts to study migration-based literature and films with a special focus on two films based in Bangladesh, *Chitra Nodir Pare* (1998) (Quiet flows the River Chitra) and *Maati* (2018) (Back to its Roots). It also examines how partition affected the subcontinent and caused trauma to multiple people in different ways. There are multiple cinemas based on partition and migration, however, Tanvir Mokammel's film *Chitra Nodir Pare* is perhaps one of the only films made by a Bangladeshi director based on partition and migration. Another interesting film is *Maati* (2018), a recent film based on a partition by Saibal Banerjee and Leena Gangopadhyay. In *Maati*, the trauma of partition is portrayed through three

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generations. Meghla Chowdhury, the lead character in the film *Maati*, travels to Bangladesh to visit her ancestral home and revisit history which caused her to take up history as a subject she studied and taught and researched. The brunt of partition history and personal trauma never left her family. In both films, migration-related trauma is focused upon and how it caused divisions between people once known as friends turned to strangers. Furthermore, a film made during the pandemic shows the problems of women's abuse at home during lockdown through Sudipto Roy's *Tasher Ghawr* (2020). Migration caused by either war or disease causes multiple problems in our society. It causes panic, chaos, homelessness or violence. Hence, this paper sheds light on the problems created by migration, especially since the Partition to the Pandemic.

Trauma

Migration due to the Partition or the Pandemic caused immense trauma in people's lives. The narratives are shared in various ways through different tales either through history or literature. As Urvashi Butalia recorded in her Partition based historical text, "Never before or since have so many people exchanged their homes and countries so quickly. In the space of a few months, about twelve million people moved between the new, truncated India and the two wings, East and West, of the newly created Pakistan." The film *Chitra Nodir Pare* unfolds the dilemma of the Migration for many Hindu families in East Pakistan after Partition in 1947. The story revolves around Lawyer Shashikanto (Momtajuddin Ahmed) and his family who faces the constant question of migration and hears of their neighbours moving slowly to West Bengal. Widower Shashikanto lives with his two children Minoti and Bidyut in their house in Narail on the banks of river Chitra. Anuprava Devi (Rowshan Jamil) is an affectionate aunt who looks after the motherless children. Many neighbours eye the house but Shashikanto has an unbending will to not leave his ancestral land. Minoti and Bidyut are friends with the neighbouring Muslim children, Badal, Salma and Nazma. Minoti (Afsana Mimi) and Badal (Tauquir Ahmed) develop a deep emotional bond as they grow up. The children grow up. Minoti, Salma and Nazma are students of Narail Victoria College while Badal is a student of the University of Dhaka. Badal gets politically involved in the anti-military student movement against the Pakistani Government in the 1960s and is shot dead by police during a protestation rally. Nidhukanto is the elder brother of Shashikanto who lives on the other side of the River Chitra. He is an idealist doctor who treats the villagers with great passion. During the Hindu-Muslim riot of 1964, his widowed daughter is raped. Later Basanti, his daughter drowns herself in the river Chitra. After the death of Basanti, Nidhkanto's family shifts to Kolkata. The stress of all these unpleasant incidents and the pressure of migration affects Shashikanto's failing health causing sudden stroke and death. In the end, Minoti and Anuprava Devi leave tearfully in a heart-wrenching state to Kolkata to an unknown future.

In the movie *Chitra Nodir Pare*, the opening scene is symbolic of the trauma of the refugees, as little Minoti says metaphorically about the wild ducks that come to Bengal from a faraway land in reply to her friend's comment that it's an interesting life the wild ducks have, as they roam around from one place to another. Minoti replies "My father said those are the most miserable ones who don't have a home of their own." Throughout the movie, a regional song plays in the background,

"In the land of others we make a home and stay/; however the home doesn't belong to me". It shows the transitory status of the home for the refugees. In this movie, the minority Hindus in Narail show their constant fear of being driven out of their homeland. In a scene Lawyer Shashikanto tells his colleague Salauddin, that he is afraid as his neighbours are eyeing his property. It is a matter of grave concern when your known circle becomes your enemy for the sake of property. Throughout the movie, we hear about the problems of refugees in Kolkata and how they live in dire situations. When Bidyut is sent to Kolkata to Biren Kaka's house, Sashikanto complains of his shabby two rooms flat in Barasat (A place outskirts of Kolkata) in cold and dark surroundings.

Anita Desai's novel *Clear Light of Day* is a story of the Das family set in old Delhi, before the Partition. The house is symbolic of the undivided India where the four siblings had an unusual childhood in a family where the parents were partying at Delhi's Roshanara Club while the children were looked after by Mira Masi, their widowed aunt. Bim and Raja were very close but slowly drifted away as Raja went to live with the Hyder Ali family, their Muslim Landlord's house in Hyderabad. Raja's abandonment wasn't accepted by Bimala, Tara too left the house after her marriage to Bakul and never came back to help Bim with Baba or the death of Mira Masi. The novel shows that despite all the differences the family comes together in the end. Bim forgives Raja and invites him back to the house.

In *Clear Light of Day*, the only mention of refugee camps portrays the trauma felt by Bim:

"Here there was no light except for the dull glow of small cooking fires, blotted out by smoke and dust and twilight. They swarmed and crawled with a kind of crippled, subterranean life that made Bim feel that the city would never recover from this horror, that it would be changed irremediably, that it was already changed, no longer the city she had been born in"(Desai 1980: 131).

Throughout the film *Chitra Nodir Pare*, the topic of migration repeats over and over again foreshadowing the inevitable migration of the protagonist in the end. When asked about whether they will migrate or not by a neighbour in Jessore, Minoti replies "Father says we will never leave Narail. There is no peace even in heaven leaving the Chitra River"

The last scene of the film *Chitra Nodir Pare* evokes a cathartic effect amongst the audience as Anuprava Devi cries and tells Minoti, "how this unfortunate situation befell them" to which Minoti replies, "Don't Cry, aunt! Time will heal all scars."

In *Maati*, it is observed that time doesn't heal the scar of migration; it shows that the trauma is passed on through generations. Meghla Chowdhury (Paoli Dam) the protagonist of *Maati*, goes back to her ancestral land of Bangladesh in search of her roots. After various struggles starting from her home when her visa is not extended beyond three days. The irony is visible through the struggle to travel to one's ancestral land. As Meghla Chowdhury travels to Bangladesh by Biman Bangladesh Airlines, a song plays in the background (I would be born again in this land) which sends the message to the audience about Meghla's attachment with her ancestral land, her patriotism and her love for Bangladesh. She feels an unknown attachment even though visiting Bangladesh for the first time. She internalizes the pain undergone by her grandmother during the Partition and how she (Aparajita Adhya) has been killed later by her servant trying to save her ancestral property. Meghla (Paoli) is deeply troubled when she is aware of the fact that Jamil (Adil Hussain) is the descendant of her grandmother's murderer.

In the film *Maati*, the trauma unfolds through the revelation of the present owners of the Chowdhury mansion to Meghla. As she comes across the news from Jamil that he lives in Meghla's ancestral home with his mother, the news brings shock and unhappiness to Meghla, causing a rift in the friendship of Jinia (Monami Ghosh) and Meghla. She keeps reliving the trauma of the past through her first experience of visiting her ancestral place Kutubdia. She cannot accept the fact that her grandmother was killed by Jamil's grandfather. However, after spending some time with Jamil and getting to know his family better, she overcomes her trauma and realises that one cannot be blamed for the faults of one's forefathers.

Economic and Identity Crisis

After the Partition, many people became homeless and stayed as refugees both in India and in Pakistan. In the movie *Chitra Nadir Pare* (1998), in a conversation with Comrade Jatin (Ramendu Majumdar), a very important topic comes up regarding the rise of the Muslim middle class in Bangladesh and the fall of the Hindu middle class. Lawyer Shashikanto states that most of the cases at court are about properties and disputes over land problems of most Partition based property cases. How the minorities are suffering in both the countries and none of the political parties are bothered about their basic human rights. The topic of usurping Hindu properties comes up in the movie several times, in a conversation with Salauddin, as he states how corrupt lawmen areas they know the loopholes in the rules of law; they are buying up Hindu properties at very cheap rates. Shashikanto suggests to Salauddin that he should buy too, to which he says "I want to make property in an honest way". In another conversation with Nipen (a friend of Shashikanto), the audience becomes aware of the dire situation of the refugees in Kolkata and West Bengal. How thousands of refugees are suffering for basic human rights in West Bengal.

The idea of home is deeply related to migration, through literature and films the representation of trauma is portrayed through different characters from pages to screen. The cultural representation of the people reminds the migrant of the homeland. In *Maati*, when Meghla's grandfather comes to know Zinia's identity, her being the granddaughter of Munir, his childhood friend, she brings her country and region along with her as he tells her "I have seen people of Kutubdia after decades! As I touch you, I feel I am touching Kutubdia". Later when Jamil's mother tells her tale of migration from Kolkata to Kutubdia, she too finds that Meghla represents her homeland and she expresses her longing for homeland and nostalgia through her past experiences. The journey from Kolkata to Kutubdia, Meghla Chowdhury's first visit to Bangladesh shows her search of her roots and her visualization of her ancestral home and finding out the similarities with her grandmother's narrative of Bangladesh. She feels an unknown bond with the place she never visited but only heard tales of. Her experience of trauma is shared, passed on from her grandfather, her father and through descriptions of her grandmother's diary. She finds out the ancestral history of the Chowdhury family through her grandmother's diary and finds out more once she visits Kutubdia and from Jamil who now lives in her ancestral home.

Gender

Due to the communal violence, people had to migrate during or after the Partition. The victims were mostly women and children. In *Chitra Nadir Pare*, Bidyut, the little brother of Minu suffers from child abuse from a Muslim villager of Narail when he is accidentally caught while urinating at the graveside. He is called a "Malaun" a slang that means an infidel and probably thrashed or abused physically which leaves him traumatized for days until he is forced to send off to Kolkata to his uncle's home. Later during the time of Hindu-Muslim riots which was a repercussion of a riot in India, Minu's cousin was gang-raped by a Muslim mob and forced to drown herself in the river Chitra. At the beginning of the film Advocate, Shashikanto is asked by a villager named Ramanandokathi if he is going to leave, to which Shashikanto answers that one walks firmly on ancestral land. Later Ramanandokathi shares his concern about three grown-up daughters and also how difficult it is to marry them off due to exorbitant dowry asked by the bridegroom's family. Shashikanto accuses him of looking for excuses to migrate. At this point a key character, a mad man comes to the scene saying "Are you coming? Or going? It's the same thing to go or come". This is quite symbolic as it represents the pain that the migrant feels. Though the Partition caused two countries to divide because of communal differences, the ancestral homeland has a deep impact on a person's life. It is a part of their identity and self.

From the interview of Daimanti Sehgal, stories of abduction and recoveries are known through Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence*, Voices from the Partition of India. Sehgal recounts her story of going to Pakistani villages, in the name of selling eggs, asking for Lassi, and inquiring after abducted women right after the Partition. Once they recovered a Pakistani woman after searching for months however the

child was lost as she says “Not all tales ended so happy and there were thousands of women who were unsuccessfully spirited away, never to be found.” (Butalia 1998:147). Butalia further states in her book, about the impactful relationship of women’s bodies with honour. In Basant Kaur’s interview the horrific stories of mass murder of girls by family members are told in a spine chilling narrative, as she says “one girl from our village, she had gone off with Musalmaans. She was quite beautiful, and everyone got worried that if one has gone they will take all our girls away...so it was then that they decided to kill the girls.”(Butalia 1998:199)

In the film *Maati*, the Hindu villagers of Kutubdia complain about girls being abducted at night and returned in the morning, during the time of partition causing several families to migrate.

Inter Communal Relationships

In the film, *Chitra Nodir Pare*, the two lead characters Minoti and Badol has a deep bond of friendship since childhood which develops into a romantic relationship as they grow older. The children play with each other and also different dialects are used in different communities. Often children from each community enjoy the festival of the other. The cultural amalgamation of the two communities is visible in this film. When Minoti is asked about their relationship by a friend she says casually that she hasn’t told her father yet. Later Badol dies during a demonstration by the students at Dhaka University for the Liberation of Bangladesh and Minoti is heartbroken at the news.

In the film *Maati*, we see that there is an interreligious marriage that takes place under the guidance of social activist Jamil and though it causes riots in the village, however, the two families agree to the marriage. This shows that over time, in recent times though it’s still a taboo, however people are becoming more open to the idea of interreligious marriage. The friendship of Shottobroto Chowdhury and Munir shows that inter-communal relationships can be strong too, later the friendship between Jinia and Meghla and finally a friendship between Meghla and Jamil portray a communal harmony which indicates a better future for the two countries and communities.

In *Clear Light of Day*, Raja’s deep interest in Islamic culture and literature portrays the intertwined lives of Hindus and Muslims in the pre-partition era. The Das family, especially Bimala, fell out with her brother due to this very reason, as Raja abandoned his family to be united with the Hydar Ali family. Raja and Bim had been the two closest siblings in the Das family, however as soon as Raja started going to their landlord Hydar Ali’s family he adopted their culture of reciting Urdu poetry and have been awestruck by the Zamindar culture which seemed too glamorous to him in comparison to his home surroundings. As Desai describes Raja’s obsession with the Hydar Ali family,

“Raja naturally inclined towards society, company, applause; towards colour, song, charm. It amazed and enchanted him that in the Hyder Ali household such elements were a part of their lives, of their background. In his own home, they were alien.”(Desai1980:75)

Pandemic

The Pandemic in 2020 created mass havoc in the lives of people all over the world. Just like war or the Partition created panic and migration, so did the Pandemic create multiple problems. People faced unprecedented situations that they never faced before. In both India and Bangladesh apart from other countries, due to the large population, people had to face severe problems during public gatherings and due to the ignorance of people about health safety, many died without taking the vaccinations despite being available quite early on. Apart from health hazards, people had to face deep trauma due to loss of near ones and also people lost their jobs, a large no of people had to shift from cities to villages due to lack of jobs. The low-income groups had to suffer due to lockdown and many people were trapped in either their own homes or in some other places where they were not comfortable. Near ones were separated during the Pandemic due to sickness or due to lockdown.

“Those who are working in the unstructured and non-mainstream employment sectors, such as taxi drivers, restaurant workers, day labourers, small vendors, construction workers, industrial labourers and so forth, are facing a serious crisis to maintain their earnings (Abdullah and Hossain, 2014, Ali, 2014) and their jobs will remain uncertain for an indefinite period. Many have been rendered jobless (Sumon, 2020), have lost their jobs or received low wages or no pay (BB (Bangladesh Bank), 2020a, BMET (Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training), 2020). The economic impacts of COVID-19 on migrant workers will hugely influence the remittance flow and the economy (Sutradhar, 2020), with serious impacts on the GDP growth rate of Bangladesh.”

Many women faced violence during the pandemic at home since people were stuck at home for a long time, the violence was inescapable. In the film *Tasher Ghawr* (2020) directed by Sudipto Roy, Sujata Sengupta (Swastika Mukherjee) tells her narrative differently, directly talking to the audience and describing a smell attached to everything around her. She describes her husband's extramarital affair to be something that smells rotten. She narrates the story of a neglected housewife working endlessly for her home. Despite that, she is often criticised for her cooking. Soon the audience finds out that her husband likes to abuse her emotionally and has an extra-marital relationship. She even feels that her physical relationship is forced and a detachment has grown between the couple after several miscarriages. In the end, she describes how she poisons the rat who doesn't like her cake, referring to her husband. She feels suffocated in her own home during the lockdown, due to the constant presence of her husband which

bothers her immensely. She can even hear him talk to his lover while she overhears them talking in an inappropriate manner. The mental trauma of an abusive relationship makes her more claustrophobic in her private place; due to the Pandemic, it becomes unbearable to tolerate her husband's constant presence. The end shows her end of trauma in her way.

Apart from the rise of domestic violence, there were serious issues of lower caste and lowerclass financial struggle due to the Pandemic. According to a survey,

“For example, the lockdown has pushed Dalits with disabilities even further to the margins, with reports of low-caste people with a disability unable to access relief due to lack of documents or exclusion.” (Minority Rights International.21/07/2020)

“In the context of the pandemic, social stigma against returning migrants is high, with returnee migrants facing discrimination in their home settlements, being perceived as bringing the virus even if they have not tested positive for COVID-19” (The Himalayan Times 01/04/2020; Mobarak et al. 2020).

Due to the pandemic migrant workers from the subcontinent faced multiple problems including the financial crisis. According to a survey, a subsequent amount of remittance was reduced for both Bangladesh and India.

“BRAC data indicates that 87% of returnees from overseas have no alternative sources of livelihood and that more than one-third of them are likely to run out of savings in less than three months (Dhaka Tribune 22/05/2020).”

Apart from the financial problems due to the pandemic for low-income groups and migrant workers a new problem had arisen due to the citizen amendment bill which caused Bangladeshi migrants to return during the Pandemic in a chaotic situation. As stated in a report, “In late 2019, India passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill, which has been widely criticized as anti-Muslim and accused of stoking fears of detention, deportation and statelessness for Muslims, including Bangladeshi migrants (BBC 11/12/2019).

Fearing increased discrimination amid the pandemic, migrants in India have been returning to Bangladesh (Mixed Migration Centre 04/2020).

In both India and Bangladesh, internal as well as external migrant workers suffered due to the lockdown. There was a dilemma as the daily labourers couldn't afford lockdown. It was either death due to the pandemic or due to poverty. A report supports this claim:

However, the coronavirus outbreak has threatened 13 million migrant workers and their livelihoods. Thus, Bangladesh has become one of the most severely affected countries by the COVID-19 pandemic. Travelers as well as returning migrant workers and their relatives coming from China, Italy and the

Middle East are believed to be the original bearers of the coronavirus to Bangladesh, and it has since spread throughout the country. With the increase of incidents of COVID-19 around the world as well as in Bangladesh, commercial flights have been limited in and outside the country. As a result, an immense number of migrant workers are trapped, affected and in dire circumstances (Palma, 2020).

Conclusion

To sum up, the impact of migration and its effects on both citizens of Bangladesh and India had been traumatic. Migration due to Partition, war or, Pandemics caused people to be disoriented and face multifaceted issues with daily lives. Whether the problem is financial, or emotional the impact of migration had a deep scar on the lives of people who had been affected. Some gained out of this as seen in the movie *Chitra Nadir Pare* and *Maati*, a class has risen and another fell to poverty, to oblivion, death and homelessness. Due to the Pandemic, people lost near and dear ones and many lost an entire family and had to leave the homeland due to dire circumstances. Some migrated voluntarily like Raja in Desai's *Clear Light of Day*, and some were forced to migrate like Jamil's mother in *Maati*. The longing for the ancestral land is seen through Meghla's eyes as she falters to leave Bangladesh at the end of the film. Most of the migrants feel an identity crisis in the migrated land, never feeling at home as seen through the character of Shottobroto Chowdhury in *Maati*. According to a survey during Covid 19, unfortunately, migrant workers were forced to return to their home country and due to the Citizenship policy, many migrants came to Bangladesh from India to a land where they have no jobs, no savings and no homes for some to return to. This gives rise to many new problems; feeling alienated in one's own country is one amongst many other dire situations creating a condition of poverty leading to depression and even suicide.

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Acculturation: Strategies to Overcome Stress by Migrant Families

Samhita Chaudhuri³ and Susmita Bhattacharyya⁴

Abstract

Migration contributes to cultural change which involves acculturation, enculturation and resilience. Locational choice, cultural differences, coping mechanisms and learning specific skills help to sustain socio-economic life patterns. Seven domains are linked at the primary level (language, religion, cultural events, entertainment, food, and shopping habits); three at the secondary level (cognitive styles, behavioural patterns, and attitudes). On a temporal scale - acculturation reflects in cultural change of migrants' psychological character and cultural-economic safety. Acculturation strategies involve processes like integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization based on individual and group identities. The paper will attempt to identify the underlying factors that shape the psychology of a person who decides to migrate. Migrants, when leaving their native place, create two layers of psychological problems and thus different coping strategies adopted by everyone related to migration. The psychological stress of immigrants shall also be explored in this paper and will also focus on the types and impact of migration due to COVID -19 on family, the relationship between work and migration and coping mechanisms. Responsibility should be attached with multiple dimensions centering on personal, familial as well as community levels. In the COVID era, the issue of responsibility becomes the most coveted notion for existence especially in the context of migration.

KEYWORDS: *Migration, acculturation, culture-change, assimilation and coping strategy*

Introduction

In the era of globalization, migration should be taken as the mark of the rhythmic existence and dynamicity of contemporary modernity. People are habituated with ongoing movements and mobility as daily events and existing norms cutting across micro, meso and macro-level locational choice. Migration contributes to cultural change in both the origin and destination involving several mechanisms through

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the intergroup exchange of values and norms. In the post-migration phase when an individual encounters a new culture at a new place, acculturation begins and takes a new form accordingly. It conceptualizes locational choice (Epstein & Gang, 2010), cultural changes, coping mechanisms to a stressful situation (Yu & Wang, 2011), learning specific cultural skills to thrive and survive in a given cultural context (Berry et al., 1987). Seven domains are linked with acculturation at the primary level, including language, religion, cultural events, entertainment, food, and shopping habits, and at the secondary level, cognitive styles, behavioural patterns, and attitudes. On a temporal scale - before acculturation and during acculturation reflect the cultural change in migrants' psychological character (Berry, 2001), anxiety level, degree of life satisfaction, and cultural-economic safety (Gurieva et al, 2020). Differentiation between structural identification and behavioural assimilation, individual and group identities may well respond in different ways at different levels in terms of rejection and deculturation.

This paper will attempt to identify the factors behind the mindset of migrants. People leave their family members at their place of origin and it creates two layers of psychological problems for them. The coping strategies adopted by them and by the rest of the family members who stayed back at the native place become pertinent and ought to be studied. Similarly, the psychological stress and strain a migrant confront while migrating and after reaching a place of migration shall also be explored in this paper. In addition, the present article will also focus on the types and impact of migration due to COVID -19 on family, the relationship between work and migration, and coping mechanisms.

The research is based on the Case Study method involving thirty participants. Primary data are collected by the in-depth interview of the respondents.

Purposive sampling

The method is applied here for the selection of the required respondents. The respondents are educated urbanites with the age group 25- 50. The information regarding the mental state as well as necessary coping strategies adopted by the family members of the migrants is collected from those in-depth interviews. The secondary data are used for substantiating the analytical content. The research question revolves around the issue – how can the migrants adjust to the emergent situations after migrating to a new place? There are two-fold objectives of the present study. Firstly, to identify the underlying factors that shape the psychology of a person who decides to migrate. Secondly, to determine the necessary coping strategies adopted by the migrant along with the rest of the family members.

Review of literature

Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998) studied psychological and sociological challenges that an

individual face when confronted with a new environment and new culture. Adjustment problems are greater in the beginning and decrease over time. Societies of high cultural diversity reflect high importance in acculturation strategies and accept a multi-cultural trend emphasizing an individual's developmental trajectories. Developmental research on acculturation has been of particular interest in explaining how well immigrants adjust to the new context, and in identifying the factors that shape positive and negative developmental pathways particularly in young people (Weichold, 2010), when carrying their knowledge and expressions of distress with them in the course of migration. In a new place, their cultural identity is likely to change and that encourages a degree of belonging; they also attempt to settle down by either assimilation or biculturalism (Bhugra, 2004). People opt for collective identity, emotional inter-dependence, group solidarity, sharing, duties and obligations, the need for stable and predetermined friendships, group decisions and particularism in post-migration phase at a collective level; while at the interpersonal level, the individuals are seen as discreet, autonomous, self-sufficient and respectful to the rights of others (Bhugra, 2004). The two most common research findings at the individual level are that how people acculturate and in how well they adapt to this process. Variations in acculturation strategies are integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. (Sam & Berry, 2013). Psychological well-being and Sociocultural competence are two variations faced during individual's acculturation.

Those engaged in both their heritage culture and in the larger society are better adapted than those who acculturate by orienting themselves to one or the other culture mainly by way of assimilation or separation or to neither culture, i.e., marginalization (Sam & Berry, 2013).

To Collier (2013, p. 67), "Migrants bring not only the human capital generated in their own societies; they also bring the moral codes of their own societies. Stress can generate through disagreement with several migration-related issues (Valtonen, 2012; Wroe et al., 2019). Several are certain issues of concern like lack of acknowledgement of their prior erudition or educational qualifications, the subsequent problem of unemployment (Schweitzer et al., 2006) or taking up jobs that are lower than the positions in the native soil (Hack- Polay, 2019). As a consequence of meeting with a dominant different culture, acculturative stress can appear with psychosocial anxiety and incapability of migrants to perform normal social roles (Berry, 1970). Due to cultural clash sometimes, migrants confine themselves to the ethnic enclave to stay within their own culture and identity (Consoli et al., 2018; Hack-Polay, 2019; Mazumdar et al., 2000).

Baker and Baker (2016) highlighted some coping strategies of using a variety of communication channels like language support (Individual), local community support and social and emotional support (family), knowledge exchange and learning from other countries' experience and working with migrants to improve the national brand image (national). On the basis of the study, Thomas (2010) pointed out that

discrimination, unfulfilled expectations, daily stressors, lack of control and mental health are recognized sources of vulnerability of the migrants. Love and self-confidence, solidarity and self-esteem and rights and self-respect are the prescribed coping strategies for him.

Acculturation: theoretical background

Young Kim (1982) defined acculturation as “an interactive and continuous process that evolves in and through the communication of an immigrant with the new socio-cultural environment. The degree of immigrants’ acculturation is governed by their acquired communication competence (Kim, 1982). Thus, the communication skill of migrants plays a vital role in acculturation. In the cultural adaptation model, Young Kim (1998, 2001) emphasized a stress- adaptation-growth dynamic model that features cyclic tension of constantly moving forward and drawing back in the adaptation process. The concept of deculturation, acculturation and assimilation- are explained in the model (Lakey, 2003). Complete assimilation is rare due to low changes in core values. Assimilation is the “state of the highest degree of acculturation into host milieu and deculturation of original cultural habits” (Kim, 1988, 2001).

Migration offers a transformative experience for the migrants, involving levels of macro, meso and micro. Macro factors like political turmoil, conflict and environmental changes cause forced migration that adds large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers to the population. Meso factors include the influence of communication technology or social media that attract people and also the diasporic links. On the other hand, micro-factors (i.e., education, marital status, religion and personal willingness) are the key drivers for migrants who leave their origin in search of better opportunities (Choy et.al., 2021). Migrants return some of their experiences to their native place in terms of social and economic remittances.

Migrants often face a host of challenges like acculturation stress, discrimination and socio-economic-cultural disadvantages. Berry (1997) proposed four types of acculturation strategies- integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. Integration is the strategy, where someone from different culture adopts the cultural norm of the new country, while retaining their own culture. Integration is the most preferred (Berry et al, 2006) during acculturation for immigrants, while marginalization is the worst result in migrant’s acculturation and adaptation. Thus, the differences in the use of strategies, while considered at individual or group level of migrant’s life patterns are mainly based on locational choices as a condition prior to acculturation, cultural similarity and dissimilarity, previous perception about new culture, cultural identity of migrants including age, gender, language, education level etc. However, the acculturation process is a dynamic one. Assimilation refers to the strategy, where an individual adopts new cultural attributes while rejecting own cultural norm. Separation is when someone retains their own cultural norms and rejecting the new one while marginalization refers to the rejection of both the new and their own cultural norms (Choy et al, 2021). Assimilation is the strategy when there is little interest

in cultural maintenance in accordance with the mentality of interaction with larger society. Social indicators of psychological health sometimes indicate good adaptation character of immigrants and thus there is a need for integration and less marginalization. The changes in the degree of adaptation strategies contribute to different types of acculturation architecture and cultural landscape at individual and collective scale. For example, when both cultures value individualism, it is very difficult to start quick acculturation. If two introvert and passive cultures like Chinese (do not praise openness & self-expressing) and German (ethnocentric in nature) meet, both are in a difficult situation to initiate communication as they can hardly achieve a close relationship. Thus, the more differences between two cultures, the more acculturation problems arise (Yu & Wang, 2011).

Acculturation: problems and strategies

The psychology of intercultural adaptation was first discussed by Plato and argued that, acculturation could cause social disorder thus acculturation policies are needed to implement (Yu & Wang, 2011). This study revolves around acculturation strategies investigated in terms of assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization and conglomeration.

Seven domains linked at the primary level are language, religion, cultural events, entertainment, food and shopping habits; while three at the secondary level- cognitive styles, behavioural patterns and attitudes. These culture-specific behavioural skills (Bochner, 1972) are necessary to learn by an individual who has migrated to a new place. Generation wise differentiation in accepting new cultural elements is also common as in most of cases, first-generation migrants face difficulties in coping with new cultures. Second and further generations are more capable to accept new cultural attributes and various verbal and non-verbal components of culture help in accelerating the acculturation process. Another type of acculturation is noticed among various migrants based on cultural traits. Some migrants accept some particular traits easily keeping aside other traits while some migrants imbibe some other set of culture traits unaccepting the traits accepted by the first group of migrants.

In today's mobile world, individuals have internalized more than one culture (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005) and often described as bicultural or multicultural. People live in some place other than their place of origin develop a sense of community around national, cultural, ethnic, linguistic membership produce a meaningful concept of cultural integration through cultural mixing, cultural clash and cultural integration. Migrants generally deal with two types of issues relating to acculturation- a) How they are motivated to retain their own cultural attributes and

(b) the extent to which they are motivated to accept and adopt new dominant culture. The negotiations of these two cultural issues often result in four types of acculturation positions- Assimilation, Integration, Separation and Marginalization (Berry, 1990; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Cultural identity of an

individual, where the person is exposed to two or more cultures, the acculturation and adoption process take a new dimension. Such a situation develops as there is the blending of more cultural attributes- some dominate and some remain passive. Lower blundeness is linked to personality and performance-related challenges as blended or fused identity representation is common in bicultural personalities (Huynh et. al., 2011).

Psychological stress due to varieties of factors sometimes at an individual's workplace or in relation to family-related worries creates internal discrepancies which result in cultural conflict and make the migrant uncomfortable to adapt to new cultural circumstances. On the other hand, identity construct and cultural characteristics separate migrants' own culture and the new culture that also creating psychological stress and resulting in a delay in the acculturation process of the individual. Linguistic stress is one important factor, which develops cultural distance in society.

Analysis Based on Primary Sources

Census of India reveals some information regarding the reasons for migration. If we consider, data of two districts of West Bengal, Darjeeling in the north and Kolkata in the south of the state, shows some interesting facts. According to the level of urbanization as well as the availability of resources (natural and economic), these two districts are characterized by different types of factors for the migration of people. If we exclude the other factors, in Kolkata, most of the in-migration occurs for employment-related reasons. Same for the male migration. On the other hand, in the Darjeeling district, marriage is one of the important reasons behind the migration of womenfolk and it also projects in the total migration scenario of the district (Table 1).

Major troubles identified in the context of migrants includes issues like residential problems, cultural clashes, language problem at new place, lack of family proximity and support system and discriminatory behavioural traits. In this study, researchers have identified four important stressors (Socio-cultural, Psychological, Economic and External), which are formulated on the basis of responses from primary survey. Socio-cultural stressors include four types of responses- 1) Language, 2) Acceptance (Cultural Clash/ Unsystematic Lifestyle/ Social disparity/ Different behavior/ Interaction), 3) Food related stress and 4) Culture Shock (Time related issues, Dress & Ritual etc.). Psychological stressors are those problems faced by migrants which are affecting on psychological and mind set-up of respondents like Feeling lonely/ lack of connection with family/ Psychological stress in work place and at new residences/ Physical Fitness/ Gender issues and so on. Economic factors include transport, communication, availability of water and infrastructure, education of children, finding new residences, cost-differences between native place and new place.

Table 2 reveals that, majority of stresses are of socio-cultural category. It is true for all the respondents (Migrated due to job, study and as accompany persons). People who have migrated due to job factors, face more stress from socio-cultural issues in work place as well as in residential place. Other factors range between 12 to 17 percent of their responses. On the contrary, students' response reveals that, they face more economic problems than psychological and external; while accompanying persons feel more stress due to external than economic. These are self-explanatory. Due to huge cultural differentiations in work place and in new residential locations, migrants are marginalized because of higher level of threats in relation to adjustment which ultimately leads towards vulnerability. It also enlarges the cultural gaps between the natives and migrants as a result they become isolated and searching a new as well as comfortable platform.

Table. 3: Types of Coping Strategies adopted by respondents

Different Coping Strategies	Type of Respondants with responses in percentage		
	JOB	Students	Accompany
Cultural acceptability	52.94	52.63	59.09
Support system	38.24	42.11	27.27
Enhancing self adaptabilty	8.82	5.26	13.64

Source: Based on Primary Survey (Survey done during Sep- Nov 2021)

Unlike stresses, in the case of all types of respondents, coping strategies are more or less similar types. All of them have taken steps relating to cultural acceptability to overcome stress. Cultural acceptability includes learning the language of a new place, learning cultural traits & enhancing positive factors, and new food ventures. This category is followed by the social support system that includes Supportive social networks/ Family & Friends, Peer's help and Engagement in different activities like Cultural activities, listening to music, reading, Watching TV, Cooking etc.

From the migrant's responsibility point of view, there are two main aspects- reasons of migration and post migration phase. As a general rule of migration, an individual takes the decision of migration sometimes voluntarily and sometimes by force. Thus, all reasons behind migration may be categorized into two- Push and Pull. All the factors fall under these two factors. Here the present researchers can add the theme of the responsibility of migrants to move from one place to another. Any individual should have the responsibility as a person with own character, as a family member having some responsibilities to make the other members happy and as a citizen of the country with some responsibilities to make the country proud. When the individual found a lack of resources to fulfil the familial needs, the person decides to move

from the native place to a new place. In this study, responsibilities are of three types- employment to fulfil the familial needs, education as a means to upgrade the individual so as to help in fulfilling future needs of the family and as an accompanying person (here housewives to accompany husband in a new place) to help psychologically and physically in family activities. Thus, responsibility matters a lot in the migration behavior of people. In the post-migration phase, this responsibility helps the migrant to stay at the new place and to overcome all stresses faced there. That is why different migrants take different strategies to acculturate in a new place. These are- Adjustment with the new socio-cultural surroundings, incorporating some of the cultural traits of new place and above all live a life with Conglomeration of cultural traits mixed with their native and new cultural traits. Diagram 1 explains the responsibility factor in migrants' movement and acculturation behavior in a new place.

Sometimes the issue of migration can be perceived with the consideration of integrative power, the strength of unification and the determination to have the recognition with honor . All kinds of interactivity should be discussed in connection to the matter of responsibility from the part of migrants. For Successful integration, migrants and the host community have to participate in a two-way process involving mutual adaptation as well as parity and reciprocity of rights and obligations. It entails a sense of responsibility and respect for a core set of values – like the presence of rule of law. The very concept of responsibility is the bridge by which the link is established between migrants and their host communities for a common goal.

Conclusion

Assimilation as a process cannot be possible in reality because in most cases, respondents are maintaining their own cultural traits with simultaneous occurrence of accepting and incorporating the new arena of culture. Integration takes place in some cases as a consequence of convenience cohabitation. Unique cross-cultural traits of a globalized universe invariably invite cultural mixing and contact aiming towards the complexity of coexistence. Thus, harmonization happens to be persisted as parallel to a multicultural representation of cultural trends for the migrants.

Resilience can be interpreted as a positive cross-cultural adaptation as a consequence of continuous as well as persistent efforts of coping done by the migrants in facing the stressors within the periphery of the new environment. Resilience trajectory is another mode of the stipulation of adaptability through which migrants are passing through in their host society. Thus, coping strategies are perceived as the most focused vocabulary of psycho-social adaptability. Acculturation and psychological adaptation among migrants can be discussed in accordance with specific coping strategies for having a synergic view of theoretical and empirical considerations becomes necessary for the focused conceptualizations of

acculturative adjustments. In the context of migration, responsibility should be attached with multiple dimensions centering on personal, familial as well as community levels. In the COVID era, the issue of responsibility becomes the most coveted notion for existence especially in the context of migration. Migrants live with the responsibility of immediate family and the family in the native place simultaneously; the source of economic anxiety is coupled with psychological crises that emerge in the COVID era as a pertinent problem of contemporary society. The only solution can be achieved under the broad umbrella of cultural conglomeration with an emphasis on acculturative association.

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Appendix

Table 1: Reasons for Migration: Based on Secondary Sources (Census, 2011)

Reasons for migration	TOTAL MIGRANTS (% of migrants in different categories to total migrants)		MALE MIGRANTS (% of male migrants in different categories to male migrants)		FEMALE MIGRANTS (% of female migrants in different categories to female migrants)	
	in Darjiling	in Kolkata	in Darjiling	in Kolkata	in Darjiling	in Kolkata
Work/employment	9.71	20.97	20.15	35.77	2.27	4.57
Business	2.31	3.38	4.93	5.79	0.43	0.70
Education	1.45	1.92	1.90	2.76	1.13	1.00
Marriage	30.81	17.83	2.16	0.91	51.21	36.60
Moved after birth	3.84	2.72	5.27	3.21	2.81	2.18
Moved with household	22.06	22.28	26.10	20.31	19.19	24.47
Others	29.83	30.89	39.49	31.25	22.94	30.48
Total Migrants	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

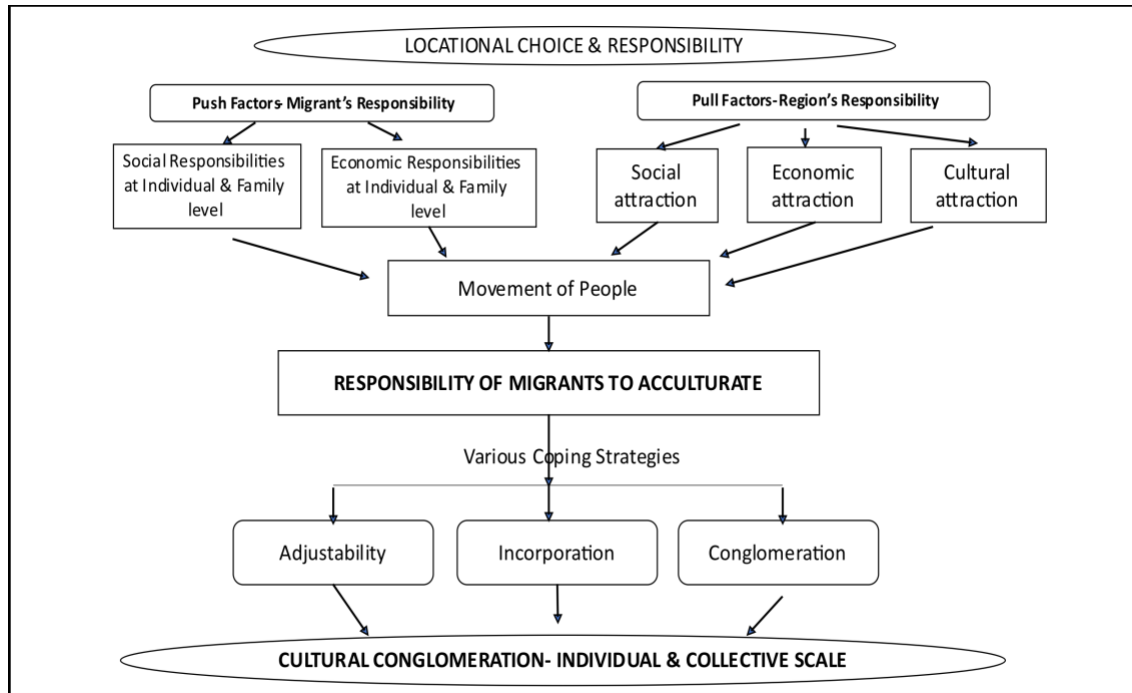
Source: Census of India, 2011

Table. 2: Types of Stresses faced by respondents

Type of Stressors	Type of Respondants with responses in percentage		
	Job	Student	Accompany
Socio-cultural	57.14	69.23	63.33
Psychological	16.33	7.69	13.33
Economic	14.29	15.38	6.67
External	12.24	7.69	16.67

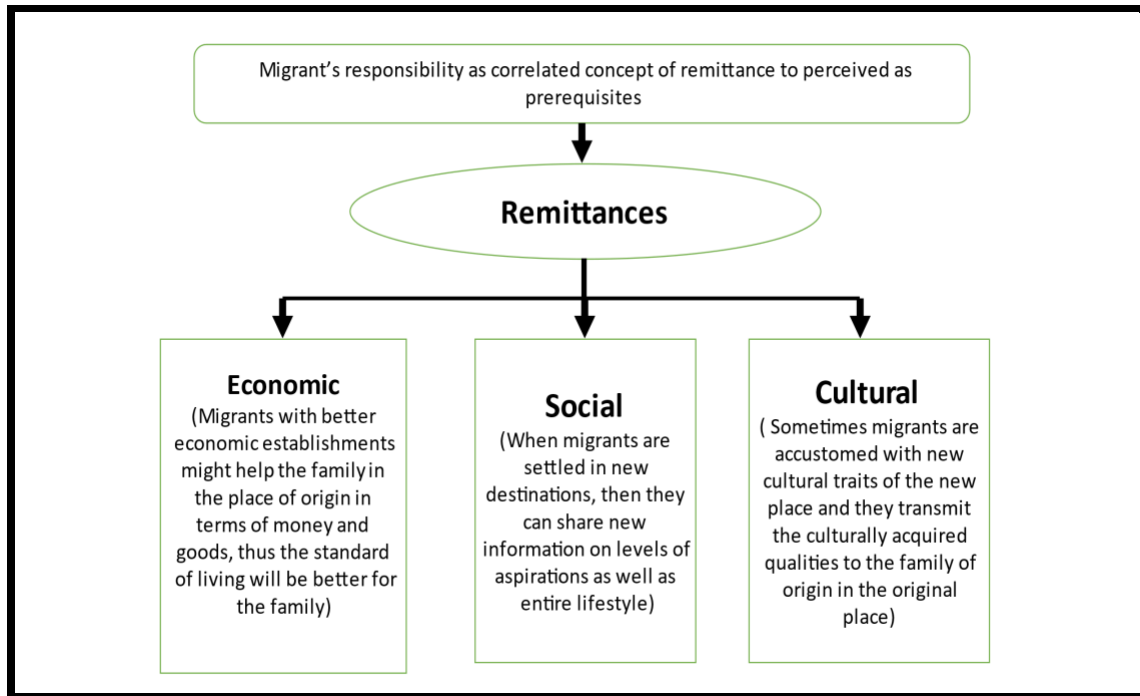
Source: Based on Primary Survey (Survey done during Sep- Nov 2021)

Diagram 1: Flow Chart showing responsibility of migrants to acculturate



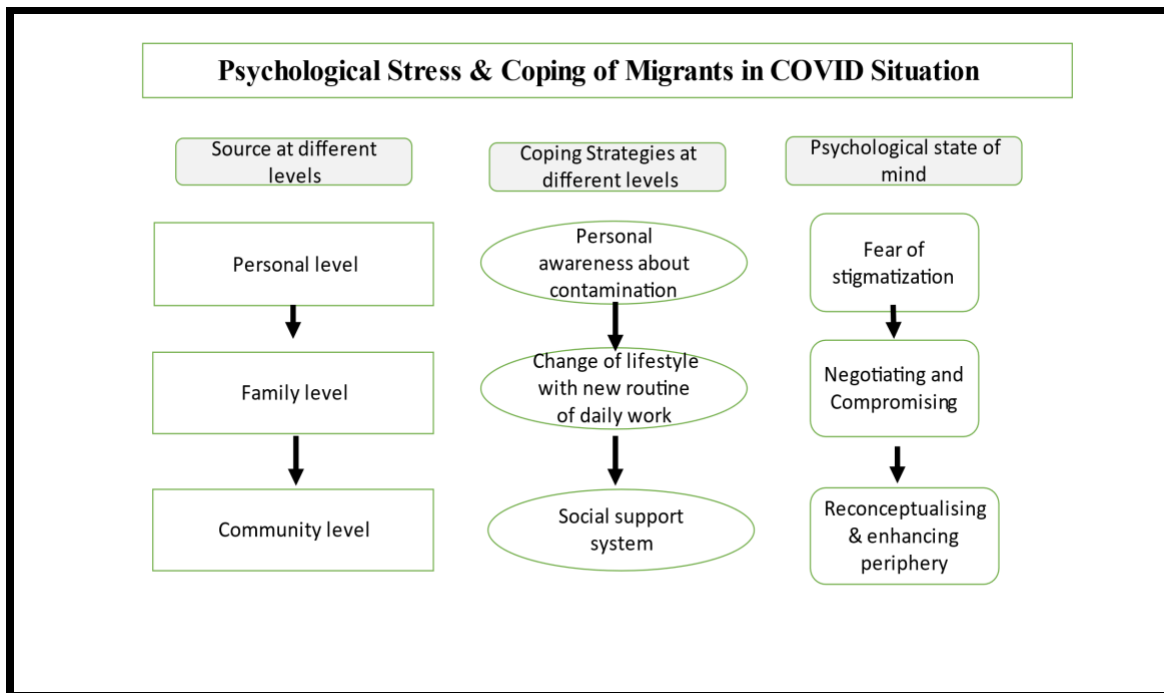
Source: Compiled by authors based on primary survey done Sep- Nov 2021

Diagram 2: Flow Chart showing Components of Remittance as Consequence of Responsibility



Source: Compiled by authors based on primary survey done Sep- Nov 2021

Diagram 3: Flow Chart showing Stress & Coping of Migrants in COVID era



Source: Compiled by authors based on primary survey done Sep- Nov 2021

Journey, Movement, Affect and Rhythm: Migration Through North Indian Folk Songs

Sangeeta Gupta⁵ and Shambhavi Gupta

Abstract

This paper captures the lived experiences and affect associated with migration, through the folk songs of North India. While migration is usually studied as a larger demographic movement involving temporary or permanent displacement and departure, our project captures the pain and apprehension it entails. We have tried to retrieve the vital connection between gender and migration through an analysis of folk songs about the experiences of women. These songs passed down as a part of the oral tradition, articulate how a woman engages and interacts with migration – both due to her marriage and also when her husband leaves home in search of work. Thus, *bidaai* and *birah* are the two prisms within which this paper addresses the theme of migration and highlights the sociological factors immersed within the songs.

Keywords: Women, folk songs, North India, emotion, gender, migration.

This paper is an exploration and uncovering of women's migration narratives encapsulated within the tradition of North Indian folk songs. A conscious effort to leverage the aural-emotional over data-driven statistical arguments, this paper is an endeavour to highlight movement and displacement through a sociological and phenomenological lens. Folk songs are archives of effect and experientiality; from the seeds of these emotions germinate the larger structures they represent. Therefore, we shall be analysing the content of the songs– the nuances and symbolism in the lyrics, following which, we will focus on the larger social reality they embody.

The selection of songs we have chosen spans across the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh which linguistically belong to the “Northern Zone” (Karve 1994, 51). These regions share a common cultural stock of oral literature. A linguistic area includes various languages and dialects belonging to the same language family (ibid). Owing to this, being well versed in Hindi⁶, we share a familiarity with the lyrics even though we do not speak all the affiliated languages.

It is believed that the kinship practises and structures within a linguistic area are largely similar. Family systems in this region are predominantly patriarchal, patrilocal and patrilineal. Marriage partners are chosen from within one's caste, but outside one's clan and village. A clear line of demarcation is drawn between consanguineal and affinal kin (Gould 1961, Berremen 1962, Karve 1994). There is also the

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⁶ Hindi is a major language in north India.

prevalence of joint families, which means that women will be living with their in-laws post-marriage (Karve 1994).

These sociological factors are reflected in the migration-related experiences immersed within the songs. The pain, apprehension, fear and longing, felt by the women who are affected by the experience of the migration, are expressed through the lyrical realm. The collection of songs we have chosen have been accessed through our family archive, some have reached us through popular culture accessed for the paper, through online folk song performances and secondary literature.

Faced with the daunting task of choosing from a seemingly infinite repertoire of songs, dealing with a variety of issues related to migration, we have focused on the lived experiences of women as highlighted through two perspectives. Marriage and the inevitability of the woman leaving behind her natal home, and the pathos of separation from her husband as he leaves his home in search of work, are the two prisms within which this paper addresses the theme of migration.

Bidaai: From Natal to Affinal Home

Folk songs usually follow the rhythm of festivals, seasons, and rites of passage like birth, puberty, the transition to adulthood, and marriage. *Bidaai* or *Vidaai* is one such event. It is a ceremony that takes place after the wedding rituals about the bride's side have culminated and the daughter of the house has to accompany her husband, leaving her parents' home forever. From then on, her affinal home will be considered her permanent abode. It is an intensely emotional moment, with the bride and her loved ones embracing each other and crying as they bid her farewell. In earlier times, the moment was especially traumatic for the young bride as transportation systems were not developed and she could not think of coming back soon.

Though marriages are always much talked about in all families and are enacted playfully as little girls marry off their dolls, the girls presume weddings to be the time they get to wear good clothes, enjoy the music and dance; only at the time of their own *Vidaai* do they realise the finality of the separation.

During our childhood onwards, we have attended several wedding Sangeet ceremonies that involved the customary singing and dancing accompanying wedding rituals, but *Vidaai* songs were left out of the repertoire to be sung only at the time of the actual ceremony, post the wedding rituals. The reason being, that these songs touched a very sensitive chord articulating all the pain and sorrow and never ceased to make the members cry, especially the bride-to-be and her close family and friends. Such is the emotional charge of the ceremony, and the songs were sung, that even when women hear such songs later in life, or parents of young daughters hear them at weddings, they cannot hold back their tears.

The song we wish to analyse in this context is an Awadhi folk song which has been written between the 13th and 14th century by the Sufi singer Amir Khusrau, and was subsequently adopted by the popular folk traditions. We encountered this song through folk singer Malini Awasthi's⁷ performance at a literary festival, which we accessed on YouTube.⁸ Awasthi has training in classical and folk music, which she combines in her performances thereby foregrounding the symbiotic relationship between the two traditions. Often one is led to question whether expressions of women's emotions in songs and literature authored by men, affect the authenticity of the experiences they speak about, but drawing from Nitin Sinha, "...the male authorship of these songs does not foreclose the option of reading women's social reality into them. Their oral articulations in the light of limited or no access to the written word, when collected, authored, and published by male literati, still invoke women's silenced perspectives." (Jassal 2012 quoted in Sinha 2018).

This song *Kahe ko Biyahe Bides* is a conversation between a bride and her father as she is about to cross the threshold from her natal to her affinal home. Unable to bid her final goodbye, she first poses a powerful question to her father asking him why he has chosen to send her to a foreign land.

Kahe ko biyahi bides— Why are you getting me married off to a foreign land?

Kahe ko biyahe bides

Kahe ko biyahi bides

Arre lakhiyaan baabul more

Kahe ko biyahi bides

"Why are you getting me married off to a foreign land?" [A pained daughter questions her father.]

Hum toh babul tori pinjare ki muniya

Arre jis angana kaho udi jaaye

Arre lakhiya.....

"I'm your caged bird" [she says,] "Now being asked to fly away to someplace else."

⁷ She is a renowned folk singer from Uttar Pradesh.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxOwoO40xJw> Accessed on 12 August, 2021.

Bhaiya ko dinho baabul mahala do mahale

Bhaiya ko dinho mahala do mahale

Arre hum ko dinho pardes

Arre lakhiya.....

“You gave my brother your mansion, and gave me away to a foreign land. Why?”

Kaahe ko biyahi bides

“Why are you getting me married off to a foreign land?”

Nimiya taley, nimiya taley, nimiya talesi mora dola jo utha

More biran ne khay bauchhar

Arre lakhiya.....

“My brother wept profusely as my palanquin was lifted from beneath the Neem tree. Why did you get me married off to a foreign land?”

This song is written from a woman’s perspective, and what is noticeable is the particular reference to one’s affinal house as *bides* or a foreign land. This is a common trope found in several folk songs sung in Northern India. The practice of village exogamy is common in this region, and this ensures that there is a wide geographical distance that separates the woman’s consanguineal home from her affinal home (Gould 1961, Karve 1994). Along with this physical distancing, social norms and expectations are also attached. A strict difference is maintained in terms of one’s blood kin and kin formed through marriage. As Harold A. Gould explains,

Patrilineal kinship systems by their very nature purposefully exclude such overlapping obligational ties inherent in consanguineal and affinal forms of relations...The rule enjoining village exogamy achieves this end. Affines and agnates are kept spatially separate with great consistency in this fashion. The latter are free to conduct their lives in comparative freedom from interference by the former... (1961, 298).

It is within this physical, the social and obligatory distance between one’s natal and affinal family, that the notion of *bides* arises in these folk songs. The new home and the in-laws appear to be a ‘strange’ and ‘foreign’ set of people, with whom the woman is supposed to maintain formal ties. It is also not common

for the woman's parents to come and visit her in her affinal house, and it is only the brother who is given this liberty (Gould 1961). Due to the separation observed between blood and marriage based kinship ties, a strict division is also maintained between daughter and daughter-in-law (Karve 1994). Most northern languages also linguistically divide the two (ibid), in Hindi we use the terms *beti* to refer to daughter and *bahu* referring to daughter-in-law.

It is also commonly believed in this region that a daughter is someone else's property and that her time with her parents and siblings is a transitory phase before she makes it to her permanent abode after marriage. This assumption also guides the practice of village exogamy, because this abrupt, drastic shift, though heartbreaking for the parents and the daughter, is considered necessary to ensure that she can adjust to her affinal home without much interference from her natal family (Chanana 1993). The geographical distance coupled with the lack of advanced communication technology during the times when these songs were composed, makes interaction with one's parents and siblings less frequent and more inconvenient.

These are some reasons for the close association between one's affinal home being and foreign land or *bides*. In a context where the migration of a woman is supposed to maintain formal and obligatory relationships with her new family, she is initially a stranger and an outsider. There is also a sense of permanence in this movement. She cannot visit her natal home whenever she wishes.

This tussle is also envisaged in the song when a daughter is pleading with her father not to send her away after marriage. This song has been revived from our family archive, women from the family used to sing these songs together.⁹

Mera Seeko ka Bangla Ri : My House made of Straws¹⁰

⁹ There is a Punjabi song to this effect : *Sada chirian da chamba ve, /babal assan ud jana.*

Sadi lammi udari ve, babal kehre des jana...

Ours is a flock of sparrows, dear father,

We'll fly away

On a long, long flight,

We know not to which land we shall go. Accessed from <http://ilovepunjabifolk.blogspot.com/2013/12/punjabi-folk-song-sada-chirian-da.html> on 23 September, 2021.

¹⁰ This song is from a diary which has scribbles and lyrics of various folk songs written by women in our family. Flipping through the pages and trying to remember the tunes to the familiar yet forgotten lyrics always stirs up conversations steeped in nostalgia. "Remember mummy used to dance to this song?" Or, "Remember when we performed this at so-and-so's wedding?" For us, these diaries are an archive of emotions, a memory of the women who sang, danced, laughed and wept at these songs.

This song is a conversation between a daughter and her father

Mera seeko ka bangla ri

Babul chidiya tod chali

“Father, the bird has broken her house made of straws”

Tera khana bana doongi

Babul mujhe ghar rakh le

“I will cook for you father, please retain me in this house”

Meri bahuje bana lengi

Laado ghar jaa apne

[The father replies,] “ My daughters-in-law will cook for me, dear daughter, you go to your own home”

Tere kapde dho doongi

Babul mujhe ghar rakh le

The daughter adds, “I’ll wash your clothes, please don't send me away”

Main dhoban laga loonga laado

Laado ghar jaa apne

“I’ll hire a washerwoman, dear daughter, you go to your own home” [he replies]

Main tere bartan mal doongi

Baadul mujhe ghar rakh le

[She tries again, this time saying,] “I’ll wash your utensils father, please keep me in this house”

Main mehri laga loonga

Laado ghar jaa apne

“I’ll hire someone to wash the utensils, my sweetheart you go to your own home”

Maine gudiya chhodi re

Babul tere aaley mein

[As a last resort she pleads] “I’ve left my dolls in this house father, in a tiny niche in the wall.”

Meri poti¹¹ khelengi

Laado ghar jaa apne

[It’s not a problem,] “My granddaughters will play with them, now sweetheart, you go to your home.”

¹¹ In Hindi and most languages within the Northern zone, there also exist separate terms for grandchildren of one’s daughter and of one’s son. In Hindi we use the terms *dhevti* for a daughter’s daughter, while her son would be *dhevti*. A son’s daughter is known as *poti* and his son is *pota*.

This song captures the angst and anguish of a daughter at having to migrate to her patrilocal residence, or what the father in this song refers to as her “own home” (*apne ghar*). Songs such as these allow an outlet for these emotions. A daughter is imploring her father to not send her away, trying to prove that she can be useful and help with household chores. Her father negates each of her requests and this song captures the desperation and helplessness that the daughter feels.

Marriage is considered an integral and inevitable fact of life in this part of India, and while parents of daughters may always be aware that they will ultimately belong to their husband's family, the transition is never easy. These songs draw upon this contradiction between cognition and affect, between facts of life, and sentiment. Leela Dube mentions that it is through lullabies and nursery rhymes that the inevitability of marriage and migration to one's husband's house is first communicated to a daughter (2001). The Bengali¹² rhyme she mentions is,

“Rock a-bye-baby, combs in your pretty hair,
The bridegroom will come soon and take you away”
[Then the daughter says to her friends]
“... Let us play, for I shall never play again
When I go off to a stranger's house” (Dube 2001, 94)

As marriages were (and still are) traditionally arranged by the elders of families, often the bride and groom were not familiar with each other— and may not even have seen or spoken to each other prior to their marriage¹³. Thus there are various layers to the ‘strangeness’ a woman feels in her house after marriage.

The symbolism of a bird cuts across both the *bidai* songs mentioned in this section. While in the former, the bird is caged in her father's home and is getting ready to take flight, in the latter, the bird is living in a house of straws. This can be taken as a metaphor for the fragility of the daughter's status at her home, and the transitory nature and impermanence of the time she is meant to spend at her natal home.

***Birah*: Angst and Loneliness**

While the previous section has dealt with the woman's pain of separating from her natal home, this section continues her ordeal of experiencing the pain of separation, albeit of a different kind. In the Indian Classical tradition, the representation of women or *Nayikas* includes the special aesthetics of the suffering

¹² West Bengal, though a state geographically located in Eastern India, linguistically and culturally falls within the Northern Zone (Karve 1994).

¹³ While arranged marriages still take place, interactions between the couple prior to marriage are more common now.

woman or *Virahotkanthita Nayika*¹⁴. *Virah* or *Birah* is a very layered term imbricating the emotional charge of love, longing, hope, devotion, desire and indefinite waiting.

In the folk traditions also, this word finds a repeated occurrence, for it encapsulates the figuration of the suffering, desiring, lonely woman. This word can be used for an unmarried girl concerning her lover, as well as for a wife, whose husband has migrated to a far-off land, mostly to earn money. While a woman's role is to silently and obediently endure her destiny without complaining, *birhan* songs articulate her emotions of not just yearning, but also anger, thereby giving it a voice. We can imagine women sitting in a group, singing this song, cursing the employer, as well as the train which has taken the woman's husband away to a strange land— in some ways mitigating the pain through the verbalising and the playfulness involved. The *birhan* song we are analysing has also been sung by Malini Awasthi.¹⁵

What was particularly noticeable during the performance we are referring to, is the community of listeners that the singer established by the serious as well as playful interaction with the audience, punctuating the beautiful song. This interaction also served an important function – of explaining the subtle nuances of the lyrics to those not familiar with them and also of elucidating the context of the song, thereby evoking a participative community experience –more mutual and informal.

Reliya Beran, Piya ko Liye Jaayire– The Cursed Train is Taking my Lover Away

Reliya bairan piya ko liye jayire

Reliya bairan piya ko liye jayire haaye

Reliya bairan

The cursed train is taking my lover away

Jaun tikasva se, saiyyaan more jaiyhe

Saiyyan more jaiyhe

Balma more jaiyhe

Jaun tikasva se, saiyyaan more jaiyhe

Paani barse tikas gal jayire

Paani barse tikas gal jayire

¹⁴ <https://indianculture.gov.in/nayikas-indian-classics-their-genesis-and-rise-glory> Accessed on 30 September, 2021.

¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bHKHyjZRs4> Accessed on 16 August, 2021.

*Reliya bairan piya ko liye jayire*¹⁶

I hope that the ticket that will take my lover away, disintegrates in the rain.

Jaun sehariya ko saiyyan more jaiyhe ooh

The city my lover is going to....

[Awasthi addresses the audience which we have translated here for reference]

("How many people living here are from Delhi? Raise your hands with honesty. On behalf of how many of your wives am I singing this song? Raise your hands. Who all have left their brides and lovers and come here?... Very honest people have raised their hands. I'll also raise my hands as my husband is also far away.")

Jaun seharva ko saiyyan more jaiyhe ooh

Aagi lagai saher jali jaaire

Reliya bairan piya ko liye jayire

May the city that my husband is going to... burn down

Jaun sahabwa ke

(Kya baat hai)

Arre jaun sahabwa ke saiyan more naukhar

I hope his future employer...

([Awasthi says], "In this world, has anyone ever been born who is not in the service of someone else? Even self-employed people are at service of their customers, and those without jobs are at least in service of their wives!")

¹⁶ The style of singing has a lot of repetitions which add to the dramatic quality of the singing. We have tried to retain the repetitions mainly pertaining to the lyrics,

Arre jaun, jaun jaun sahabwa ke saiyan more naukar

Saiyan more naukar

Balma more naukar

Goli daage (sound of shooting) goli daage sahab mar jaaire

Goli daage ghayal kar jaiyve

I hope his future employer, gets shot and dies... that he is injured

Reliya bairan...

("The story doesn't end here. The husband went to work and the bride was left alone. The line "I hope his future employer gets shot and dies" is referring to the British Colonizers. Her husband is going to the city to work for them. If the ticket that will take my lover away, disintegrates in the rain, and he still doesn't return, then may the city has an outbreak of riots, forcing my husband to return out of fear. If he still doesn't return, then the suspicion point towards her husband loving another woman (*sautan*). If such is the case, may the other woman consume something that makes her insane.")

Arre jaune sautaniya ke saiyaan more aasiq

Saiyan more aasiq

Balma more aasiq

[The singer is referring to the replacement of the word meaning 'lover' (ashik) to its indigenous form of (asik), wherein the "sh" sound is replaced by "s". According to her, this makes the word softer and more delicate.]

Arre jaune sautaniya ki saiyan mori aashiq

Khaye dhatura saut baurayre

Khaye dhatura saut baurayre

Reliya bairan.....

The performance ends with the singer repeating the last line of each stanza as a climax; the beat and tempo increase and the audience claps along enthusiastically, immersed in the experiential quality of the song.

This particular performance communicates the liveness and charged atmosphere of the space where Awasthi is singing. The lyrics of the song are of course the focus, but equally relevant are the segments where she engages with the audience, which is largely composed of migrants, as revealed through the show of hands. Thus, this piece, composed during colonial times, is resonating with an audience sitting in 2018.

While searching for songs of migration, we came across the “Bidesia Project”, which is a project archiving songs of migration¹⁷. The term *bidesia* again is a term used to refer to a ‘foreign land’ which could have referred to a literal foreign land, as indentured labourers were taken to work on plantations overseas as well. However, in the space of popular imagination, any place or city within the country, where the migrant goes, is also referred to as *bides*. A possible reason for using this word may be explained due to lack of advanced communication channels. The following song has been sourced from the Bidesia project archives available on YouTube.

Kahave Gaile Na- Where Have you Gone¹⁸

Birha ko aag mein

Din raat jala karte hain

Khali banamali

Bin haath mala karte hain

This rift has caused a fire in my heart¹⁹

And I burn in it night and day

The gardener’s labours don’t bear any fruit

In a desert, he looks for a garden to tend

One trial after another

¹⁷<https://scroll.in/article/969113/in-these-bhojpuri-folk-songs-forgotten-tales-of-indian-slaves-in-british-colonies> Accessed on 8 September, 2021.

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tjx8pJVam6w> Accessed on 8 September, 2021.

¹⁹ Translation accessed from the video subtitles.

Shehte sehte har sadma

Mere dil mein arman kho gaya

Malte malte ab kaleje

Dard paida ho gaya

Rote rote aasuon se

Aankh jale jaate hain

Pritam mera milta nahi

Haddi bhi gale jaate hain

Yet my heart has only yearned

I have tried tending to the sore

But it has only deepened the wound

Like sparks from a fire within

My tears have set my eyes ablaze

Meeting my lover is a distant dream

My bones will rot before I see him again

Mujhe birah birahini aake

Chhaari mora balma

Bedardi kahan gayi laina

Humro pran ke adharvay

You left me deprived

And went away without a second thought

How heartless can you be

Leaving my soul wanting and starved

My dear, where in the world will you be found

Balmai kahanwa gayi le naa

Jaise mandir peeche diyara jarela

Balmai waise jaale na

Humro alahara karejava balmai

Waise jalae naa

Humro pranke adharva

Balmai kahanwa gayi lainay

If you have seen a light
Burning inside a temple
So my mind is ablaze
Flaming with thoughts of you
These flames have burned a hole in my heart
You left my soul wanting and starved
My dear where in the world can you be found?

This song is another intense manifestation of the wife's pain at separation from her husband who is geographically removed from her. As Gloria Goodwin Raheja mentions, "[T]he theme of male absence, a common one in Kangra²⁰ oral traditions... refers quite literally to enforced separation from one's husband brought about by the economic necessity of migrant labour (2003,14). The lyrics once again articulate the woman's unquenchable desires and unmitigated pain. The dominant imagery is of burning (The rift has caused a *fire* in my heart; Like *sparks* from a *fire* within/ My tears have set my eyes *ablaze*; These *flames* have *burned* a hole in my heart etc). The song has been sung soulfully by the male singer and the high pitch and quivering voice does justice to the emotional content.

The experience of migration finds a continuum in the comments on the video of this song. The comments are mostly from the Indian diasporic community which responds to this song with a degree of familiarity and nostalgia. There are people from Trinidad and Guyana talking about their Indian roots, recounting

²⁰ A hilly region in Himachal Pradesh which is also a north Indian state.

While migration is mostly dealt with in the context of pain and separation, there is always an element of surprise and serendipity when themes are encountered within the constantly shifting and rich tapestry of our folk tradition.

In the next song that we analyse, from Kangra– a hilly region in Himachal Pradesh we come across a contrasting sentimentality of playfulness.

Kala kot tangaya kiliya – The Black Coat is hanging from the Nail

“Kala kot tangaya kiliya

tangaya kilya

apu chhoru rahenda Dilliya....

... chitti likhna jo pen dei ja

pen dei ja

nahi ta chhoru nal lei ja

A black coat is hanging from a nail

hanging from a nail

My fellow lives in Delhi

...leave me a pen to write a letter

Leave me a pen

Else fellow take me along” (Narayan 2003, 48-49)

This song from Kangra, in Himachal Pradesh, is a dance song (*nach git*) which deals with the theme of migration in a lighthearted manner. The destination where the migrant husband is located is clearly mentioned. As Kirin Narayan explicates, the song uses “English words like ‘coat’, and ‘pen’, refers to the metropolis Delhi, playfully invokes women’s education, and speaks to the emerging possibility that women may accompany their migrant men” (ibid).

Conclusion

While migration is a complex of economic, political, historical and social currents, the analysis in this paper does not start from these macro perspectives. Instead, it privileges the voice of the suffering woman as excavated from some folk songs of Northern India. These songs, some of which are available on the internet, help to form a virtual community of listeners and viewers who have been impacted by migration in some way or the other.

The songs transport us into an experiential domain of intense emotions, as marriage gets implicated within a form of migration.

These songs from indigenous folk traditions, transferred largely through oral traditions have interesting stories to tell which need to be heard, retold and documented. In the words of

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Revisiting Development Discourse amidst Informal Sector Crises COVID-19 Pandemic

Anjan Chakrabarti²¹ and Pooja Sharma²²

Abstract

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, India has experienced a severe catastrophe of the informal sector, related to both health and livelihood. The informal sector and migrant workers are closely linked and they became easy prey during the nationwide lockdown at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The informal sector, primarily a fallout of the prevailing dual economy, makes it highly imperative to revisit not only India's growth and development process but also the distribution. The paper attempts to evaluate the development process adopted by developing countries and their relevance in terms of growth and inequality. The study finds the missing link of the theory of distribution of welfare economics. Lack of emphasis on equitable distribution resulted in a wide gap between the rich and poor. The informal sector crises of COVID-19 has ignited the predominance of regional inequalities in the development process on account of the dual economy and has widened the regional disparities at inter and intra-state level. By settling the migrants in their native place with the holistic economic package, comprising of technology, skills and advancement that will contribute to the rural economy in the long term. The need to institutionalize the regional or localized financial sector, health and social infrastructure has been emphasized in the paper as a long-term solution. the responsibility of informal crises in most developing countries is mainly of development discourse. There is a need to revisit the development process adopted by developing countries. The state must address the acute inequality aggravated due to the existing informal sector and implement the policies of health security during Pandemic crises

Keywords: Informal sector, COVID-19 Pandemic, Dual Economy, Inequality, Inclusivity.

Introduction

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, India is fighting an odd battle to strike a balance between lives and livelihoods. Due to prolonged lockdown, the economy has come to a standstill. On this account, the structural impediments of development discourse embedded in the economic reforms got highlighted and

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exposed. In India, the size of informal labour is debatable, around 90 per cent of people working in the informal economy, about 400 million workers in the informal economy are at the highest risk of falling deeper into poverty during the crisis (International Labour Organisation). The contribution of the informal sector is estimated to be above 50% of the national product (National Statistical Commission report, 2012). India has opted for nationwide lockdown as a result of which both the supply-side and demand side of the economy became claustrophobic. , The pathetic plight of daily wage-earners, migrant labourers that have been unfolded during the lockdown period raised a few fundamental questions on the efficacy and outcome of economic reforms in India and on the theoretical underpinning of the philosophy of neo-liberal economy.

According to the CMIE report, in 2020, around 12 crores of people have lost their jobs in the informal sector, and the unemployment rate has reached 23.60 per cent. While in the case of the urban areas, the rate stands at 25.30 per cent, and for rural India, the rate is 22.80 per cent on 28th April 2020. How to strike a balance between lives and livelihoods is possibly the primary concern before the country at this crucial juncture of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is well-said “You can’t get rid of poverty by giving people money”, - P.J. O’Rourke

Direct money transfer could be one of the ways to tackle the immediate need of the disadvantaged section of the informal sector owing to the limitations of the lack of bank account of each member of this class. The community kitchen, Local NGOs, Self Help Groups and Panchayat or municipality can be a safe option where cooked food can be sent to the respective poor household.

Export has already reduced by 35 per cent, owing to a severe recession. Therefore, the revival of the domestic economy and domestic demand is the only option. Having an ADHAR card-linked bank account through Jondhan Yojana, cash can easily be transferred without any pilferage. The budgetary allocation under MGNREGA, Rural and Urban Livelihood Mission, Mid-Day Meal, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Pradhan Manti Kishan Pension Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana can be clubbed to ensure the cash and kind transfer till the normal economic activities are taking off. India’s debt-GDP ratio stands at 69.04 per cent (Trading Economics, 2020). Given the fact that revenue collection will be much lower than anticipated, India must relax its fiscal deficit to remain contained within 3.5-4.5 per cent, and at least 5-6 per cent of GDP should be spent to support the families associated with the informal sector.

Further, there is strong evidence of reverse migration back to rural areas, therefore settling the informal labour in their native place suggests that the remedies are embedded in rural areas themselves. COVID-19 gives us a chance to correct the system and balance it by settling the migrants in their native place

with the holistic economic package, comprising of technology, skills and advancement that will contribute to the rural economy in the long term. The need to institutionalize the regional or localized financial sector, health and social infrastructure has been highlighted through the crisis. Earmarking huge collection under CSR must be diverted to the revival of the self-sufficient village economy.

The informal sector is that section of society that is deprived of not only the benefits and rights such as primary healthy working conditions, right to education and good health, however, plays a critical role in economic growth. Scheider and Enste (2000) argued that this section of society is devoid of any social protection or employee benefits, and the principle of inclusiveness in the labour market. The informal sector is prevalent in almost all developing countries. Among the SAARC countries, informal economy and casualisation of labour are highest in India and Nepal (90.7%) with Bangladesh (48.9%), Srilanka (60.6%) and Pakistan (77.6%), (ILO 2018; The Wire, 04 May 2018).

The biggest fallout of a dual economy is the adverse socio-economic conditions of the informal sector and the emergence of a wide magnitude of inequality between the rich and the poor. Consequently, eliminating such inequalities become the predominant problem of all developing countries. The sordid situation of the informal sector of the economy has become a subject of scrutiny. The sordid picture of reverse migration might have shaken the country but this is also an offshoot of widening regional disparities and the presence of informal economy during the post-reform period. This paper is an attempt to review these guiding principles of the three-decades-long reform process and to find out a plausible escape route from the conundrum created due to the pandemic.

Dual Economy: The Genesis of the Informal Sector and Migration

The presence of the informal sector fortifies the existence of a dual economy. The informal sector is primarily a fallout of a dual economy. Among a large set of definitions of “dualism”, the definition advocated by Lewis (1954) defines the fundamental characteristics of “Dualism”. Dualism is primarily characterized by the distinction between the “traditional sector” characterized by limited resources and subsistence production on one side, while a “modern sector” is reflected by modern technology and means of production that is for profits and commercial purposes.

The informal sector comprises not only the internal migrants from different states but also becomes an instrument for the absorption of all refugees and illegal migrants from abroad. Among the several collections of literature in development economics, Todaro (1969) and Harris and Todaro (1970) are recognized for their model of migration, Fields (1975) and Majumdar (1976) also incorporated migration.

Stiglitz (1974) worked on efficiency theory; however, it failed to explore that duality might change over time.

The announcement of lockdown during the pandemic has exposed the scenario of internal migrants in India. The Census 2011 estimated the number of internal migrants accounted for inter and intra-state movement to be 450 million, an increase of 45% compared to the estimates of Census 2001 (De 2019). As per the Economic Survey of India 2017, the number of inter-state migrants population stand at 60 million and between 2011 and 2016, the average annual flow of migrants among the states was calculated at 9 million (Sharma 2017). The actual figure of migrants is likely to be much higher than what Census data is showcasing. This is more of a definitional problem associated with the Census enumeration of migrants. In Census, migrants are identified based on the place of birth or last place of residence and deviation from it. Census, as well as NSSO estimates, do not capture Short-term seasonal movements of migrants. The increasing presence of the informal economy and short-term movements of the labour force has become increasingly prominent.

Who are migrating and from where do they migrate? In other words, the types of migrant workers and source and destination become important to understand the fragility of the rural economy, increasing regional disparities and informal sector. Most of the migrant workers are joining in the agricultural labour force, in brick kilns, construction sites, services (maid, watchmen, laundry services, drivers etc.), industrial un-skilled tiny roadside businesses (tea shops, dhabas, small eateries, hotels, restaurants etc.). This entire workforce predominates the informal sector which constitutes 93 per cent of India's total workforce (Dandekar & Ghai2020). These migrants are not moving out for better opportunities, rather a failure to secure their livelihoods in rural areas, they are moving out and joining the informal sector which is embedded with inhuman work conditions and extreme socio-economic insecurity of urban and peri-urban areas of India.

It is the wages that connect the two extreme sectors comprising of agriculture sector with (low profitability, low-income elasticity of demand) and manufacturing sector characterized by profit incentive, higher productivity, rising wages, trade). One would easily resort to a subsidy to equalize or bring balance between the two sectors. By increasing the wage subsidy in the urban sector, or lowering the shadow wage, the level of unemployment could be decreased. While at the same time, induce further migration, leading to an increase in net employment (Harris and Todaro, 1970).

Bhagwati-Srinivasan (1978) aptly demonstrated that there does exist a subsidy given to all sectors that leads to optimality but fails to measure the marginal productivity of labour due to information problems. Thus, subsidies are generally avoided as they are the second-best solutions and lead to economic

inefficiency and reduce economic growth. However, subsidies in the areas such as education, health and the environment lead to long-term benefits both in present and future.

Growth Theories and Inequality

The sole aim of the development process must be to converge and reduce the inequality levels prevailing in the economies. However, the extensive literature on growth theories explicitly reveals that the rich are becoming more affluent, and the poor are becoming poorer, which is increasing inequalities (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh 2007; Sengupta et al. 2008). In all the development debates "regional inequality" has been ignored. The existence of high-income inequality challenges the basic argument of Solow's growth theory, which advocates that competitive forces and inter-regional migration will allow regional inequality to disappear through gradual factor prices equalisation (Solow 2000). Solow's argument has further been challenged by new growth theorists like Romer, Lucas, Krugman, Venables and Fujita. According to Lucas, uneven distribution of human capital and according to Romer, it is the differences in research and development that causes regional inequality (Barro and Sala-i-Martin 1995). Sala-i-Martin (2002) pointed out that regional inequality has been ignored in the development debates. Kharas and Kohli (2011) referred to it as the "Middle-Income trap", suggesting movement away from centralized to decentralized management or governance.

The famous Kuznets curve (1955) advocated an inverted U – curve postulating that inequality first increases and then decreases over time. Baumol (1986) and Barro (1991) determined convergence in developed countries while divergence in less developed nations. Romer (1986) observed a lack of convergence across nations and argued for an alternative framework for modern growth. Later, endogenous growth theories modified the neoclassical production function to incorporate factors such as human capital, innovation, increasing returns and spatial spillover in the production function to determine long-term growth rate.

There are mixed results, one set of literature are of the view that lagging regions will catch up with the fast-growing regions by adopting balanced regional development strategies such as Borts and Stein (1962) and Needleman (1968) for developed countries such as the US. While Perroux (1950), Myrdal (1957) and Kaldor (1970) argued regional incomes would not converge in the long run. Later, Martin and Sunley (1998) argued that policymakers will attempt to intervene with balanced development but will not be able to overcome regional divergence. In China, Aroco (2008) pointed out that income distribution has shifted away from convergence to "polarization".

The Growth-inequality trade-off is a mixed bag again. Per capita, GDP growth rate is highest in China and lowest for Brazil. Albeit inequality remains highest in Brazil in all four years but continues to be the lowest in Finland. The human development index (HDI) is highest in Switzerland, followed by Finland. HDI is lowest in Nepal and Bangladesh, as shown in table 1. The Indian economy has grown over the last two decades. However, the growth has been unequal substantially when compared to other nations. China has shown a substantial increase in the development of the top 1 per cent of the population, followed by India. This gap has been reduced in the Russian Federation and Brazil (World-inequality Database). There has been an inverse relationship between growth and inequality in the case of India.

Table 1: Country-wise inequality, Expenditure on health and education as a percentage of GDP

Country	1991			2001			2010			2016		
	HD I	Gini	Per capita GDP growt h	HD I	Gi ni	Per capita GDP growt h	HD I	Gini	Per capita GDP growt h	HD I	Gini	Per capita GDP growt h
Switzerla nd	0.83 2	33.9 0	- 2.146	0.88 9	33. 4	0.67	0.93 2	32.6	1.935	0.94 3	33.0	0.617
Finland	0.78 4	22.9 0	- 6.424	0.85 8	27. 2	2.37	0.90 3	27.70 0	2.714	0.91 8	27.10 0	2.333
Brazil	0.61 1	60.5 0	- 0.258	0.68 4	58. 4	0.013	0.72 7	52.90 0	6.524	0.75 8	53.30 0	-4.09
Russian Federatio n	0.73 4	48.4 0	- 5.259	0.72 0	36. 9	5.54	0.78 0	39.50 0	4.453	0.81 5	36.80 0	0.145
India	0.42 7	32.7 0	- 0.983	0.49 3	36. 8	3.02	0.58 1	37.50 0	7.042	0.63 6	37.80 0	6.997 0
China	0.50 2	32.2 0	7.812	0.59 4	38. 7	7.555	0.70 6	43.70 0	10.10	0.74 8	38.50 0	6.160
Bhutan	NA	NA	- 1.120	NA	40. 9	6.083	0.56 6	38.80 0	10.77	0.60 9	37.40 0	6.83
Banglade sh	0.38 7	27.6 0	1.106	0.46 8	33. 4	3.113	0.54 5	32.10 0	4.39	0.59 7	32.40 0	5.950
Nepal	0.38 7	35.2 0	3.627	0.44 6	43. 8	3.052	0.52 9	32.80 0	4.31	0.56 9		- 0.319

Srilanka	0.62	32.4	3.347	0.68	41.	-	0.74	36.40	7.27	0.76	39.80	3.338
	5	0		5	0	2.243	5	0		8	0	

Source :Worldbankdatasource

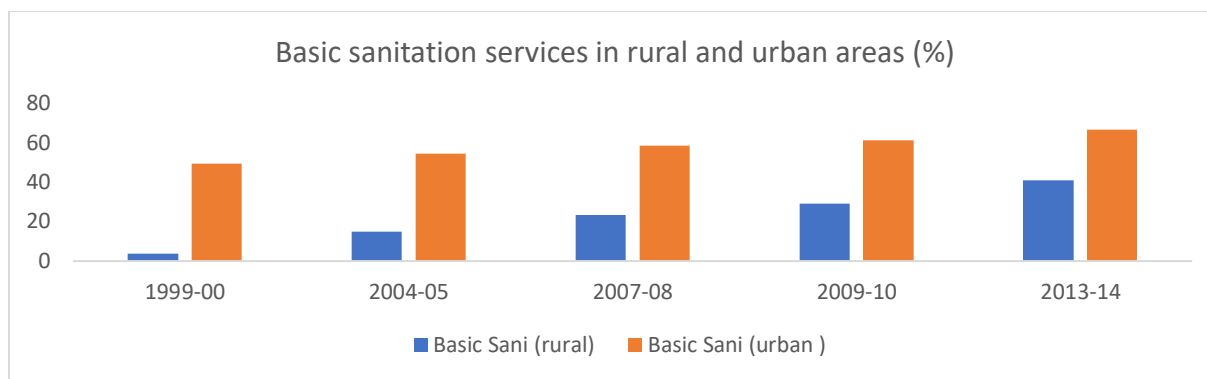
Growth and Inequality in the Indian context

With the onset of economic reforms of the 1990s, India has been heading towards unprecedented per capita growth rates. However, inequality continued to broaden across the nation. The income inequality in India declined sharply between the 1950s and 1980s but increased after that (Chancel and Piketty 2017). The All India Debt and Investment Surveys (AIDIS) reported Gini coefficient for wealth was 0.75 for 2012, rising from 0.67 in 2002.

There was a conditional convergence in terms of level in income inequality and poverty across the states, Jha (2000). However, he added that the variation in rural headcount ratio seems to be rising over time. Marjit and Mitra(1996), Chakravorty's (2003), Roy (2012), Dholakia (2003)and Bhattacharya et al. (2004) argued that though the income of all the states has increased during the last four decades, the sign of convergence was not visible. Roy (2012) identified the gap in human development indices such as literacy rate, general enrolment ratio and life expectancy at birth has declined across the states as well as between rural and urban segments within states.

As pointed out by Nayak (2020:42) 'the present crises of capitalism and its reforms and concluded that its prospects and long-run viability are delimited by ecological imbalance and growing inequalities associated with it '. The paper contended that it is improbable that India is unlikely to move away from the capitalist market system; however, the challenges of education and health need to be addressed on an urgent basis (Nayak, 2020:45).

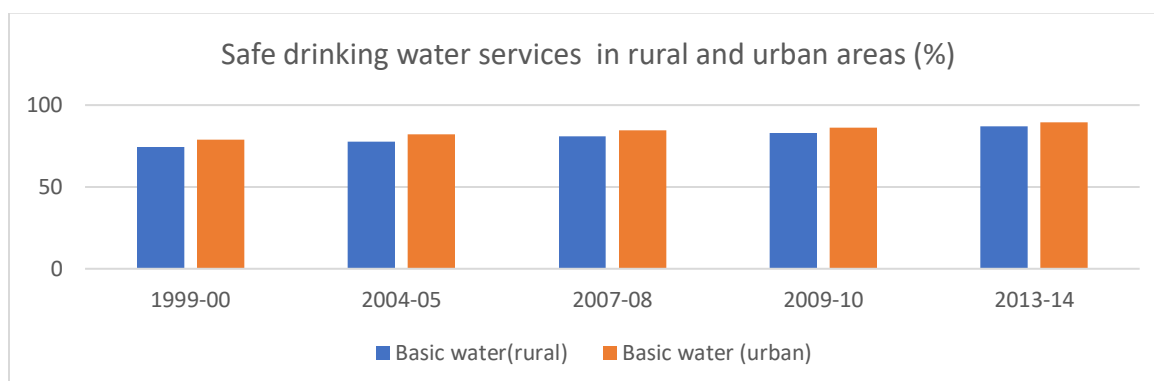
The entire discourse of the development process adopted by India and most of the developing countries mainly points out that the improvement in human capital is not equitable in terms of rural and urban areas. There is strong evidence of enormous disparity between rural and urban areas in the context of social infrastructures, such as basic sanitation and safe drinking water services. In India, there prevails a massive gap between the essential sanitation services in rural and urban areas, evident in figure 1.



Source: Author's calculations based on data collected from <https://databank.worldbank.org/>

Figure 1: Basic sanitation services in Rural and Urban areas (Percentage of households)

However, the situation related to safe drinking water services is better in the context of disparities between rural and urban areas. Around 79 per cent of people using safe drinking water services belong to urban areas while almost 74 per cent to rural areas in 1999-00, as reflected in figure 2.



Source: Author's calculations based on data collected from <https://databank.worldbank.org/>

For data see Annexure I

Figure 2: Safe Drinking water services in Rural and Urban areas (percentage of households)

This reinforces the fact that the kind of development process that we should be looking at in the post – COVID scenario must be based on justice, social contract theory and equity in distribution.

A correlation between the selected variables can summarize the key indicators that reflect the tradeoffs and relationship between the informal sectors in rural and urban areas. Economic growth is gross value added (GVA), the quality of human development indicated by the human development index (HDI), informal employment in rural and urban areas. Per capita consumption in rural areas and unemployment.

Table 2: Results of Correlation

	HDI	GVA	Rural informal N	Urban informal N	Un N	Per capita consn (rural)
HDI	1					
GVA	0.767	1				
Rural informal N	-0.465	-0.186	1			
Urban informal N	-0.239	0.006	0.970	1		
Un N	-0.276	-0.245	0.463	0.437	1	
Per capita consn (rural)	0.974	0.756	-0.612	-0.409	-0.434	1

Source: Author's calculations

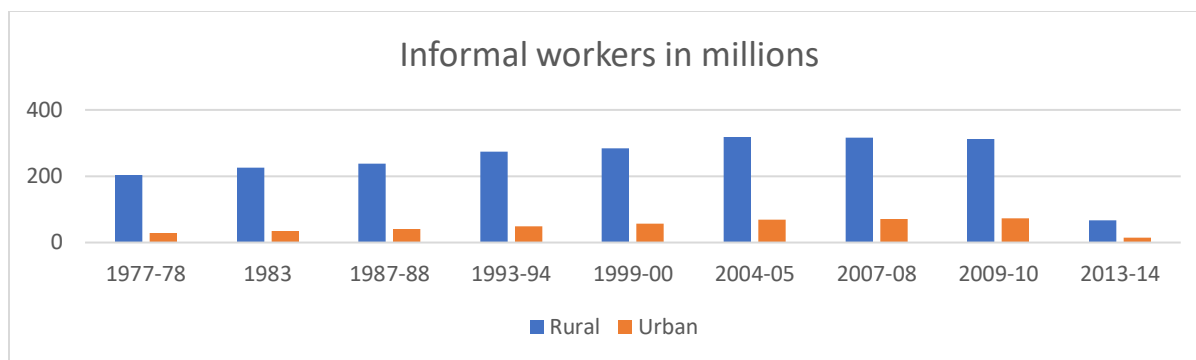
For Description of variables, data source and data see Annexure, II, III & IV

Both rural and urban informal employment significantly increases when there is a rise in unemployment rates. Another crucial observation is the per capita consumption expenditure in rural areas is significantly inversely related to rural and urban informal employment. As rural and urban informal employment increases the rural per capita consumption expenditure reduces significantly. With an overall increase in the unemployment rate, the per capita consumption expenditure also reduces significantly. Further, unemployment substantially reduces the per capita rural consumption. It is also observed that rural and urban employment themselves are highly positively correlated. The human development index is significantly positively related to gross value added and rural per capita consumption.

Governments of all eras and across the world have rejected the notion of harnessing informal workers to promote growth and development. Such a development process has resulted in huge issues and challenges in the informal sector, as discussed below.

Issues and challenges of the informal sector:

As a fallout of the development process, a large section of the labour force has fallen into the grip of informal employment. Apart from uncertainty of job and sub-optimal wages, the informal workers encounter several challenges such as poor-living conditions, child labour, exploitation, access to safe drinking water and sanitation etc. The informal workers are prevalent both in the rural and urban areas, as evident in figure3.



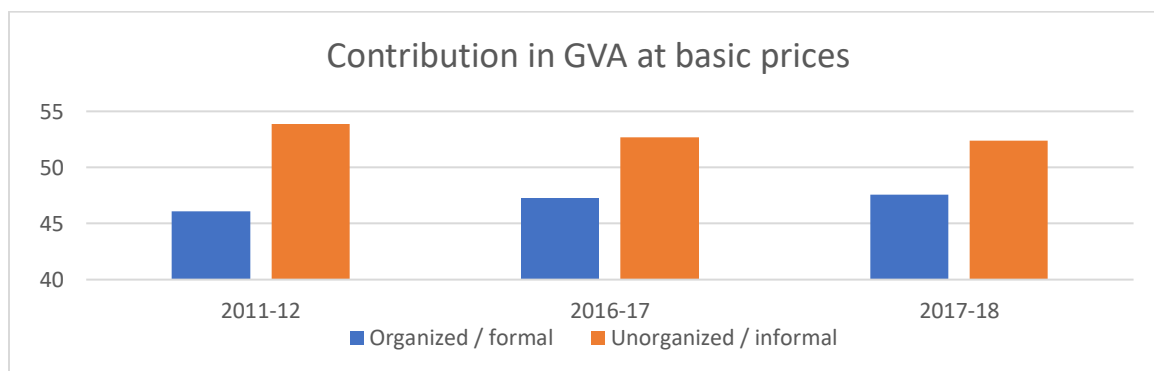
Source: Author's Calculation

For data source and data see Annexure IV

Figure 3: Informal workers in millions (rural/urban)

There is a huge gap between rural and urban employment, and this gap has been continued before and after the economic reforms of 1991. In 1977-78, around 202.9 million workers were engaged in the informal sector in rural areas while only 28.1 million workers were involved in informal employment in urban areas. The trend continued even after the 1991 economic reforms and reached the highest level in 2004-05 in the case of rural employment in the informal sector.

The share of the informal or unorganized sector has been substantially greater than the organized sector. The contribution to Gross value-added was 46.1 per cent in the case of the organized / formal sector, while the unorganized or informal sector has made about 53.9 per cent contribution. This gap continued and in 2017-18, also around 47.6 per cent of contribution is by the formal sector and 52.4 per cent by the informal sector as shown in figure 4.



Source: Calculated from Data on National Accounts, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, <http://www.mospi.gov.in/>

For Data See Annexure V

Figure 4: Contribution of organized/formal and unorganized/informal sector in Gross value-added at basic prices.

Thus, the persistent bottlenecks of duality are evident for many years. As a result, there are specific critical questions that are raised within the gambit of the development process. Firstly, where is the magical multiplier when the concern is to translate the growth when it comes to the informal sector of society? Secondly, if the sole purpose of the economy and sustainable growth is inclusive growth and equitable distribution of income then the prevailing economic systems are a failure. Thirdly, if the mere existence of this informal sector was to serve only the political vested interest and political economy, then the economic benefits which are the main thrust for this migration are also elusive on account of low levels of casual wages and low productivity. Finally, Should the incapability of the agricultural sector be blamed for not retaining its surplus labour, or it is the manufacturing sector that becomes a deterrent in offering essential skills to equip them to reap economic benefits.

Having discussed the trade-off between the growth and welfare theories and the strong evidence that developing countries are failing to converge, instead of demonstrating increasing regional inequalities, let us talk about the current COVID health crises and their impact on the informal sector.

Conclusion

COVID-19 seems to have taught several lessons to the growth processes of developing economies, “Does the informal sector need urban settlements or it is the urban areas that cease to function without the support of the informal sector will be the fundamental investigation in the Post-COVID economy?” “Do we retain the unorganized, informal sector for our vested interest of economic research and political votes or they are a structural impediment of the economy?” COVID-19 pandemic puts the informal workers in the emergency of not only their survival (life threat) but also their livelihood. Finally, we look for numbers and growth rates but at what cost, at the expense of the environment, cost of poorest of poor. Therefore, there is an acute need to revisit our development process, especially at times when we are almost at the zero-growth rate. The growth is inevitable, we will grow, but the question remains how and what pathways we need to follow to accomplish sustainability and inclusivity. The paper concludes the responsibility of informal crises in most developing countries is mainly of development discourse. There is a need to revisit the development process adopted by developing countries. The state must address the acute inequality aggravated due to the existing informal sector and implement the policies of health security during the Health pandemic.

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Annexure-I

	Basic Sani (rural)	Basic Sani (urban)	Basic water(rural)	Basic water (urban)
1999-00	3.79	49.25	74.27	79.02
2004-05	14.81	54.45	77.80	82.01
2007-08	23.33	58.44	80.76	84.47
2009-08	29.13	61.13	82.76	86.12
2013-14	40.99	66.54	86.83	89.04

Annexure-1I

Sl. No	Variables	Symbols	Description	Sources
1.	Inequality	GINI Index	GINI Index	
2.	Education infrastructure	Edu exp as % of GDP	Education expenditure as % of GDP	
3.	Health infrastructure	Health exp as % of GDP	Health expenditure % of GDP	
4.	Sanitation services in rural and urban areas	Basic Sani (urban) Basic Sani (rural)	People using at least basic sanitation services, rural (% of rural population)	
5.	People using safely managed drinking water services, rural and urban areas	Basic Water (urban) Basic Water (rural)	People using safely managed drinking water services, rural (% of rural population)	
5.	Human Development Index	HDI		https://databank.worldbank.org/
6.	Gross value added	GVA		
9.	Unemployment rate	Un N		

10.	Per capita consumption in rural areas	Per capita consn (rural)		
11.	Informal workers in Rural areas and Urban areas	Informal workers in million in rural / urban sectors		NSS Rounds (July'77-June'78), (Jan-Dec'83), (July'87-June'88), (July'93-June'94), (July'99-June'00), (July'04-June'05), (July'07-June'08), (July'09-June'10)

Annexure-III

	HDI	GVA (crores)	Rural informal N (millions)	Urban informal N (millions)	Un N (%)	Per capita consn (rural)
1993-94	0.427	1522344	274	49.7	6.06	112.63
1999-00	0.493	2254942	283.6	56.1	7.31	127.32
2004-05	0.526	2971465	318.6	69.5	8.28	128.2
2007-08	0.558	3896636	315.4	70.4	5.5	141.96
2009-08	0.581	9837066	312.8	72.1	6.53	148.07
2013-14	0.618	6286549	66.31	15.26	5.56	163.51

Annexure-IV

Sno.	Year	NSS Round	Informal workers in Rural	Informal workers in Urban
1	1977-78	32 (July'77-June'78)	202.9	28.1
2	1983	38 (Jan-Dec'83)	226.1	35.4
3	1987-88	43 (July'87-June'88)	238	39.9
4	1993-94	50 (July'93-June'94)	274	49.7
5	1999-00	55 (July'99-June'00)	283.6	56.1
6	2004-05	61 (July'04-June'05)	318.6	69.5
7	2007-08	64 (July'07-June'08)	315.4	70.4
8	2009-10	66 (July'09-June'10)	312.8	72.1
9	2013-14	Fourth Employment & Unemployment Survey, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India	66.308	15.25

Annexure-V

		2011-12		2016-17		2017-18	
		Organized / formal	Unorganized / Informal	Organized / formal	Unorganized / Informal	Organized / formal	Unorganized / Informal
	GVA at basic prices	46.1	53.9	47.3	52.7	47.6	52.4

Analysing Pandemic Induced Economic Inequality in Developing Nations

Ravneet Kaur Bhogal²³

Abstract

The dawn of the new decade of the 21st century saw an unprecedented global crisis. This crisis led the world to halt economic and social progress. It led to a galloping increase in the economic inequality and migration of people in search of opportunities to save them from the current situation. The developing nations saw a sea of people migrating back to their roots in search of safe havens. This has led to the loss of jobs which has increased income inequality. Migrants face the risk of contagion and also the possible loss of employment, wages, and health insurance coverage. On the contrary, now when the world opens to a new reality, we see a dire shift in wages and salaries of the employee. There is a huge income disparity that has created an imbalance and pushed people to look for better avenues. The paper discusses the political economy of the developing nations and how the power play has led to the crisis of social, political and economic inequality and the movement of people. On how Lockdowns, loss of employment, and social distancing prompted a chaotic and painful process of mass return for internal migrants in nations like India. Immigrants who are potentially in a more vulnerable position in the labour market due to their generally less stable employment conditions are struggling to balance the economic inequality and the maintaining standard of living. Hence, the national governments need substantial structural reforms and social protection programs to help support struggling families. After all, faster economic growth is the quick way to bring people out of inequality.

Keywords: *Inequality, Migration, Health, Digital Divide, Governments*

Introduction

The General Secretary of the United Nations has said that COVID-19 has been likened to an x-ray, revealing fractures in the fragile skeleton of the societies we have built. It is exposing fallacies and falsehoods everywhere: The lie that free markets can deliver healthcare for all; the fiction that unpaid care work is not work; the delusion that we live in a post-racist world; the myth that we are all in the same boat. While we are all floating on the same sea, it's clear that some are in superyachts, while others are clinging to the drifting debris. This is a palpable representation of the situation of the nation today. With

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the dawn of the new decade of the 21st century, the world saw an unprecedented crisis. The infiltration of the SARS Cov2 into the lives of people turned their world upside down. The socio-political conditions of the nations were deeply affected. The sudden lockdown saw a mass movement of the people. Categorically affecting the daily wage workers, the migrants who had come from the remote areas of the nations to the metropolitan localities in search of better opportunities and livelihoods. It has brought out the paradox that we live in. the falling apart of the health institution struggling to provide basic health facilities to the citizens of the nation. The (International Labour Organization) ILO says that in India alone, more than 400 million people risk sliding into poverty because they are forced to rely on informal work. In developing countries like India, the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the inequality trend and will continue to do so.

Growing Inequality

In the social fabric of the state, Inequality has always prevailed, it is an age-old phenomenon. Though with time through the process of economic development that aimed to bring equality and equity, inequality has grown further. The economist believes that it has ascended and not descended. One of the major factors that have promoted inequality is the neoliberalist economic structures. The neoliberalist economies have promoted the expansion of the market and individualism, this has given rights to individuals, mobility and freedom for the corporation. It has also reduced the involvement of state regulation and government intervention. These economies have both a good and a bad side, as it helps in the growth of the economies, they also promote inequality which is their outcome because of the flawed and exploitative economic system. According to various economists, inequality is one of the core economic issues of our century. And this pandemic has brought this out. It is being popularly called the 'pandemic of inequality'. And no one knows when it will be over. Yet, its end will not define the end of the trouble for the people who have suffered the brunt of the pandemic

In its report, Oxfam has talked about the growing inequality within the nations. According to Oxfam, a non-profit operating across the world has estimated that there are 121 million more people on the brink of starvation today due to mass unemployment, disruption to food production and supplies. "As many as 12,000 people could die every day from COVID-linked hunger," declared Oxfam. The National Human Rights Commission of India has recorded over 2,582 cases of human rights violations early in April 2020. In India, Over 300 informal workers died due to the lockdown with issues ranging from starvation, suicides, accidents and exhaustion. (Esmé Berkhout, 2021)

According to the report from OECD, the COVID 19 pandemic has a much worse impact on developing nations. As they are facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis, with potentially extreme economic, social and sustainable development consequences that may reverse decades of development progress and further jeopardise efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (OECD,

2020). They in the paper has brought out a clear picture of the vulnerabilities of the developing nations such as persistent social and economic inequalities, conflict and forced displacement, declining trust in government, the impacts of climate change, and environmental fragility. The unprecedented crisis has brought out the cracks in the entire system, wherein the people are suffering due to the lack of the resources to scale-up health interventions, the government side has the fiscal space to implement support measures and minimise disruptions, due to the large scale of the crisis. Short-term projections by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund suggest that extreme poverty worldwide and income inequality for low-income and emerging economies are likely to increase in 2020 (NARAYAN, 2021). Within countries, early data indicate that labour market impacts of the pandemic are strikingly unequal, varying with characteristics of jobs, workers. According to the data from the UNDP, Income losses are expected to exceed \$220 billion in developing countries (UNDP, 2021). With an estimated 55 per cent of the global population having no access to social protection, these losses will reverberate across societies, impacting education, human rights and, in the most severe cases, basic food security and nutrition

The population shutdown to control the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had devastating effects on the livelihoods of economically vulnerable populations. In India, just after a national lockdown was announced on March 22nd, thousands of migrant workers in cities found themselves without an income source and unable to sustain themselves started returning to their villages. In general, unemployment has increased substantially, particularly among those in the informal sector. It is now increasingly clear that economically vulnerable individuals are being forced to sacrifice disproportionately more for public health measures that benefit the whole society. Further, the lockdown has also made it difficult for sick individuals to access health services. The African nations have also faced the brunt of the pandemic herein one also needs to understand that Africa faces dual public health and economic crisis that has risked overwhelming healthcare systems, destroying livelihoods, and slowing the region's growth prospects for years to come. Before COVID-19, in 2019, the continent had already experienced a slowdown in growth and poverty reduction overall, although with large differences between countries. The current crisis could erase years of development gains (OECD, OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19), 2020).

Under the COVID-19 pandemic, all that nations have suffered greatly, however, the developing nations have suffered during the pandemic and will continue to suffer as the pandemic isn't going anywhere. Through the reports of the various leading world agencies, we come to realize that COVID-19 has brought out the ineptitude of the nations. The developed and developing worlds have suffered equally. However, the road is tough ahead for the developing nations, as these nations don't have the fiscal stimulus to boost the economy and generate employment that can help bridge the gap of the inequality. From the analytical reports of UNCTAD, we realize that the nations face distinct pressure and constraints on the stimulus, which makes it harder for them to enact effective stimulus without facing binding foreign

exchange constraints (UNCTAD, 2020). Further, the financial turmoil's from this crisis has already triggered sharp currency devaluation in developing countries. As the currency devaluation leads to increasing debts and paying the higher price for the imports it affects the consumers and due to the job losses and low income, the affordability is affected affecting the economic status of the individuals. In the Oxfam report on the effect of the pandemic, "the costs of the pandemic are being borne disproportionately by poorer segments of society (Esmé Berkhout, 2021). Low-income populations are more exposed to health risks and more likely to experience job losses and declines in well-being. These effects are even more concentrated in economically disadvantaged minorities. The pandemic is not only exacerbated by the deprivations and vulnerabilities of those left behind by rising inequality but its fallout is pushing inequality higher". (Georgieva, 2020) It is observed that the rising inequality is one of the major issues of our time. And it has adverse economic, social, and political consequences. Due to the rising inequality, the economic growth has been depressed due to the dampening aggregate demand and slowing productivity growth. It has stoked social discontent, political polarization, and populist nationalism. And as the pandemic has revealed, it has increased societal and economic fragility to shocks. Over the past decade due to the various economic vulnerabilities, the debt of the nations has ballooned, leaving countries already laden with debt on the brink of bankruptcy. The situation is especially dire for Low-Income Countries. For instance, the developing nations from Africa's low-income economies, were already in debt distress before the pandemic struck. (IMF, 2020) The economic crisis resulting from the pandemic has put a major strain on external resources, with a 20% fall in remittances, a 25% fall in foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade in these nations and others too (UNCTAD, Global foreign direct investment falls 49% in the first half of 2020, 2020). The IMF estimates that recent epidemics of diseases such as H1N1 (swine flu) and Zika virus increased the inequality levels in affected countries by 1.3%. It has been predicted that the impact of coronavirus will be far greater.

Both the IMF and the World Bank (Bank, 2020) have expressed strong concerns that the crisis will lead to a spike in inequality in countries around the world. The Vietnamese government has announced financial relief for affected employers and employees, but most workers are without labour contracts and migrant workers in the informal sector have not received any relief. (Vietnam., 2020) India's initial relief package allocated only 0.8% of GDP to social protection for families, resulting in untold economic hardship for the country's 40 million internal migrants. India saw its biggest migration since Independence, as 10.6 million people (Agrawal, 2020) walked thousands of kilometres to return to their informal social support networks in rural areas, with a significant number dying along the way (Gupta., 2020). Though the Indian government did announce the economic rescue package of \$260 billion for the economy. Along with this the government also promised subsidies loans to small enterprises and farmers and 2-month essential commodities to the daily wagers (Rao, 2020). However, this doesn't ease off the daily struggles of the people as health facilities aren't available and other basic amenities. The coronavirus

pandemic has highlighted the critical need for increased public spending on healthcare, free universal access to quality healthcare, and urgent action to reduce reliance on out-of-pocket payments. The pandemic has also demonstrated the need for a greater focus on health prevention and promotion. It cannot only mean huge increases and equitable access to PPE, clean water to wash hands, tests and vaccines. It means to broadly manage COVID-19, for future pandemics and to close the gap in health outcomes. The government should focus on preventive actions to tackle the underlying economic, racial and gender inequalities. And should ensure that the poorest, most marginalized and most oppressed people always suffer poorer health outcomes and die sooner than those with access to better resources shouldn't suffer (Esmé Berkhout, 2021).

The strong recovery in developing country trade that occurred in 2010 seems less likely this time. Even if the damage to global supply chains is not irreparable, as lead firms recover from the crisis they will likely have to rethink their business model, including fewer links in these chains, and with more that are closer to home.

Role of the government

The management of the pandemic has highlighted the role of the governments and their governance structure and how they have failed to help provide the citizen with the basic amenities in their time of need. In a country like India when the nation imposed a lockdown to stop the spread, the businesses were closed overnight. However, this worse impact was on the daily wage earners. The people who don't have any substantial source of income. Along with the loss of jobs these people had to walk miles at end to reach their desired destination as the world or their nation had come to halt. The systemic fallacy was not to see the citizens as equals the government could predict the severity of the pandemic. A Pew Research report from 2021 suggested that India's poor population doubled from 6 crores to 13.4 crores after the first wave of the pandemic. The migration of people from the remote areas to the metropolitans is a clear reflection of the economic divide in the country and the need for employment and better opportunities pushing people to migrate to the cities. Yet, not everyone can migrate. There may be confounding socio-political factors that might hinder the development and also, migration is often expensive, and those most vulnerable to environmental change are usually poor. The informal sector is not as regulated as the formal sector, leading to the exploitation of the workers. They are devoid of the basic employment benefit making them the most vulnerable upon the strike of the crisis. 2020 we saw the number of job losses as reported to be 12.2 crores of which 9.2 crores were lost from the informal sector making 75% of the job losses. The Oxfam report highlights the plight of the Informal workers, such as domestic workers, street vendors, delivery drivers and construction workers who are experiencing significant distress as a result of the pandemic (Esmé Berkhout, 2021). Globally, 61% of workers are in informal sectors. (ILO, 2020) In African

countries, where between 30% and 90% of workers outside the agriculture sector are in informal work, leading to the severe impacts of the crisis. (Africa, 2020) The Informal workers lack the luxury of working from home or being able to socially distance, and so are forced to put themselves and others at greater risk due to the nature of person-to-person work and cash-based exchange. This highlights the divide experienced by such workers, who cannot survive without daily trade and who generally lack bank accounts, bank savings, credit cards and the capacity for online transactions, and who usually have no unemployment assistance to fall back on. The world in the recent decades didn't face a crisis like this one, the nations were not prepared to handle the crisis. Many nations rely on tourism as the source of revenue generation, with the borders closed and travel restrictions, as highlighted by the Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, His country has suffered greatly due to the pandemic. Tourism, in particular, a sector that supports nearly 14 per cent of the population, has been devastated, along with small- and medium-sized businesses in many other sectors (Nations, 2021). Hence at the United Nations, he stressed the need for initiatives on development financing and debt relief to support developing countries so they can emerge from uncertainty. The nations need to do more as highlighted by various academicians and economists that this unprecedented crisis is the Crisis of Inequality and if the stimulus isn't pumped into the economy the consequence would be dire and it would take years to gain the balance. The World Bank estimates that in March 2020, there were 103 active social protection programs in 45 countries while it jumped to 1,414 programs in 215 countries by December 2020 (Dooley, 2021). It is assumed that these measures likely kept many families from falling back into poverty. Despite these measures and emphasis on the need for stimulus, the struggle of the people doesn't seem to subside. Under the Human Development Index, the three main criteria on which we evaluate the people and their capabilities leading to the assessment of the development of a country are all being tested by the pandemic. It has tested the Life expectancy Index, Education Index and Gross National Index. The COVID-19 pandemic affects all three areas, the health sector of the nations has been gravely tested by it as we have observed that there have been severe shortages of the health infrastructure and the health workers, which has affected the successful treatment of the people. There is pressure on government budgets from the public health crisis, due to the fear of the spread of the contagion nations have imposed lockdown which has gravely affected the economic cycles. And with the tighter fiscal space and weaker healthcare and social protection systems expose developing countries to higher human and financial tolls while limiting their ability to respond, triggering a potentially dangerous vicious circle. Because the lockdown is in place the Education sector has suffered as the schools have been shut and online education isn't accessed by all causing a great digital and class divide for the upcoming generation. This divide ultimately reflects upon the national income of the country as unemployment becomes an unbridled indisposition. With the galloping inflation due to the cause of the difference between the demand and supply gap. And the cause of concern is international trade. It means significantly lower demand for exports from other developing economies.

And the losses in export volume of their nations, which will be compounded by the sharp fall in energy and commodity prices, which still make up most of the goods that many developing countries export. This trap of inconvenience and lack of affordability leads to inequality among the people. These issues had always prevailed in the societal structure yet have been overlooked because no such emergency had ever occurred.

Failing Health Sector

Health Sector in nations across the world saw a fall in structure, from the developed to the least developed nation the Health Sector crisis was brought to the notice of the world. For every nation provision of health benefits is the primary upholder in the Human Development Index, yet the uninvited pandemic revealed the frailty of the health sector. As it's said it is not just diseased, but social injustice that kills people. (WHO, 2008) The pandemic has highlighted the worst effects of chronically neglected public healthcare systems, particularly for people living in poverty and marginalized communities. (E. Barrera-Algarín E, 2020) In developing and underdeveloped nations the healthcare system is Underfunded and weak. It cannot test, track, trace and quarantine individuals to control the spread of the virus, or to provide appropriate and timely healthcare for everyone who needs it. According to UNDP data, developed countries have 55 hospital beds, more than 30 doctors and 81 nurses for every 10,000 people (UNDP, 2021). For the same number of people in a less developed country, there are seven beds, 2.5 doctors and six nurses. People with poor access to healthcare who experience COVID-19 related symptoms may delay or even forgo being tested, and may consequently turn to medical care only in advanced stages, resulting in poorer outcomes. This may potentially also put their families and communities at risk.

The Digital Divide

The pandemic has introduced the great digital divide among the various class of people. The UNDP analysis depicts that 86 per cent of primary-school-age children in low human development countries are currently not getting an education, compared to just 20 per cent in countries with very high human development. Oxfam reports depict that in 2020, more than 180 countries temporarily closed their schools, leaving close to 1.7 billion children and youth out of school when closures were at their peak. (UNESCO, 2020) The quitting of school during the height of the pandemic was a clear indication of the inequality in income which was reflected upon the priorities in the lives. Children who need education the most to climb out of poverty are those who are most likely to be left behind. Poorer students in both high- and low-income countries are unable to access distance learning programmes and tend to fall further behind in the absence of additional support (Hares, 2020). With online schooling, it's not just the students

who suffered but the teachers too. The employers are exploiting their staff with extra working hours yet paying them half of the salary.

The digitalization of the work is affecting the employability factor of the daily wagers and the low-income families. With the strict lockdown measure and no mobility of people there has been a demand for the digitalization of the process, the process was initially into the application but not quite rampant however with the inclusion of the measures of social distancing and work from home, digitalization of various activities have become a standard thing. However, 3.7 billion people have no internet access. The majority are in poorer countries, where the need to spread information about how to combat COVID-19 is most urgent. Migrants and the poorest are most vulnerable to the virus, says the World Health Organization (WHO). In a region such as Africa, one gigabit (GB) of data costs nearly 40% of the average monthly wage. According to the World Bank, 85% of Africans live on less than \$5.50 a day (Broom, 2020). Hence we come to realise that most of the world finds itself cut off by the digital divide. And it's not just a problem in developing nations. In Australia, almost a third of less well-off homes have no internet connection.

Conclusion

Though the pandemic hasn't come to an end and nations are still struggling to find their way out of the situation. The current situation has brought to light the cracks in the functioning of the governments and governances. It has brought out the existing inequalities of class and caste. The international organisations have emphasised the issue claiming that economic inequality induced via the pandemic won't go away in the short term. Long term measures are required to deal with the situation. When our nations were still recovering from the Economic Crisis of 2008 and were moving towards a better future. The COVID-19 crisis has led us in a different direction. Nations were moving to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, yet it seems that we are now moving in the opposite direction. Herein, the governments need to take responsibility to take initiatives for the citizens, they need to ensure that the benefits are reaching the people of the country. In this hard-hit society to fight the disease and systematising the basic resources to the people is the priority of the governments. However, the governments are struggling to maintain the balance. They are injecting the stimulus packages for boosting the economy, subsidies are being provided along with other social benefits yet the question remains is that whether the individuals are gaining from it or not. However, at both macro and micro levels, this crisis has come as a learning lesson to gain and organise the society in a way to address diversity. For the governments, they need to address the inequality dilemma as it will hamper future growth and development. The late microbiologist and environmentalist, René Dubois, famously articulated that every civilisation created its diseases and epidemics. And the Covid-19 is the epidemic of

this century. Though migration and inequality have been part n parcel of the social structure for aeons. Yet, the kind of migration the people suffered during the pandemic was away from their land of opportunities to the path of uncertainties. Hence, the nations need substantial structural reforms and social protection programs to help support struggling families. After all, faster economic growth is the quick way to bring people out of inequality.

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Mapping Ecological Footprints of Migrants: A Gandhian Perspective.

Abstract

Amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, migrants have suffered immensely not only across nations but also within the countries. Migration has been an inevitable phenomenon with the onset of globalization. With the commencement of globalization, humans are driven towards more and more consumerism. Thus, increasing levels of consumption have set further pressure on the limited resources in nature. On one hand, it is not ethically viable to cease migration, while on the other hand, while following their dreams or due to unavoidable circumstances, this international and inter-regional mobility results in a high level of consumption. The paper attempts to resolve the dilemma of the ethical responsibility of embracing immigration and the crises it imposes on ecological footprints. The study reveals that by adopting the attributes of the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, tolerance, and adaptability the immigrants themselves can ensure the immigration process as a peaceful journey of life. The other aspects of Gandhian philosophy such as self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and minimum consumption become the guiding force in setting the goals in life. Thus, migrants themselves feel responsible for maintaining the ecological balance and the state must ensure equal opportunities and secure inclusivity, the two fundamental elements of sustainable development endorsed while advocating human migration and settlement.

Keywords: *Migration, globalization, COVID 19 pandemic, ecological footprint, Gandhian perspective.*

Introduction

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The unprecedented outbreak of COVID 19, has left the world in the biggest catastrophe to reflect upon. Migrants across countries and within countries have been threatened not only concerning life but also livelihood, leaving them in the most vulnerable situation. Approximately half of the global workforce is at risk of losing livelihood as reported by the International Labour Organization²⁶. Consequently, it is imperative to comprehend the genesis of migration that has been a part and parcel of our civilization.

There prevails no consensus in a single definition of 'A Migrant '. Migrants may be defined as 'foreign-born'. Alternatively, they may be defined as 'foreign national' (Anderson and Blinder, 2011). UN defines the migration flows in and out of the country as 'A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for at least a year.....' (United Nations Statistical Division). Despite the existing discourses to technically define the term Migration, it remains the custodian of certain fundamentals of the human race. The mere fact that migration refers to the mobility of humans across borders, immediately assimilates focus on a human, a citizen representing a particular history of culture, tradition, religion and lifestyle that is simply non-existent in the new country or recipient country. This diversity inculcates huge potential for conflicts and situations of war on one side, but on the other side when adapted strategically for growth and development, it plays an instrumental role in building people to people connectivity between nations by encouraging people's mobility who are essentially the custodian of one type of cultural identity. It primarily displays the extent of respect, tolerance and adaptability of each other's culture and religion.

Ever since the civilisation of humanity, man has been a wanderer, migrating from one place to another in search of better livelihood. Migration has been part and parcel of civilisation. However, over time, various international policies emerged as a crucial determinant governing this mass movement. Migration is a universal phenomenon and also a social phenomenon that influences human life and the environment around it (Virupaksha et al., 2014). The study revealed that most of the time, lack of preparedness, difficulties in adjusting to the new environment, the complexity of the local system, language difficulties, cultural disparities and adverse experiences would result in distress to migrants. Migrants experience trauma and adversity at each stage of the journey (Lusk et al., 2019). Subsequently, all these experiences would result in a negative impact on the mental well-being of migrants.

There are other instances of environmental crises being the core cause of the continued migration of people of Bangladesh to India (Alam, 2003). Rapid population growth, environmental change and unequal resource distribution have resulted in widespread landlessness, unemployment, declining wages and income, growing income disparities etc. which in turn became reasons for migration. Xu-dong (2012)

²⁶ www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_743036/lang--en/index.htm

highlighted the relationship between environment and adaption and between openness and closure. Several nations open their territories generously, strategically allowing large volumes of permanent and temporary residents in its mainland, rendering the chance to fulfil their dreams and ambitions. Given this fact, the paper creates indispensable connectivity between the policymakers and the immigrants by bringing forth the immigrants at the forefront. Khanian et al. (2019) analyzed the role of place attachment in increasing the tolerance of individuals.

This era of the new world is peculiarly marked by a significantly expanding diaspora, especially in times when the world is attempting to attain environmental sustainability. In this context, Canada has emerged as one of the largest centres, opening horizons for all individuals equally and in every sphere, fulfilling the dreams of a large proportion of people across the world. This country has thus made a peculiar statement in the realm of the Immigration process, reflecting an unusual combination of humanitarian tradition, international obligation and an epitome of a global processing network. Trovato and Halli (1983) suggest that the causal mechanisms involving ethnic, characteristic factors and propensity to move are varied and interconnected. The study concluded that both ethnic and social demographic characteristics are important sources of migration differentials.

The Gandhian doctrine of self-sufficiency, minimum consumption, and self-governance are crucial aspects for introspecting one's desire to set one's wants. The implicit connectivity of inner -self and outer world experience is extremely necessary while setting one's goal for life. When an individual is guided by soul force, the ultimate Truth of nature and the purpose of life guides the migrant to resolve most of the conflicts prevailing in one's mind. A migrant thus leads a life that is aware of one's connection that exists with ecology.

The environment is composed of both natural resources and the social environment. There are fundamental linkages between individuals, community, nation, natural resources and social environment. The paper attempts to reinforce these inter-connections by deploying a comprehensive framework signifying the role of the migrant in connecting with the environment equitably and establishing sustainability in the overall ecological system. A perspective that views the process of migration from the prism of environmental sustainability has been proposed in the study.

However, the natural resources and social environment are not equitably distributed across nations. It is this inequitable distribution of natural and social environments that drives the structural motivation behind the process of migration. The paper attempts to view the process of migration from the perspective of individual human beings, irrespective of the inherent reasons for migration. Guided by psychological, social security or economic security, an individual becomes an integral part of this framework. Based on the Gandhian principles of Truth and non-violence, a migrant acquires the characteristics of adaptability, resilience and cooperation, synthesizing sustainable connectivity not only between the socio-economic

environment prevailing outside but also the inner world. J.C. Kumarappa's "Economy of Permanence" provides the significance of achieving overall environmental sustainability. When a migrant is aware and realizes the inherent interconnection between the inner and outside world, based on Gandhian thoughts, the migrant will consciously enact considering the ecological consequences of actions.

Globalization, Consumerism and Migration

With the surge of industrialization, globalization became an inevitable phenomenon. Humans have adopted migration for growth and betterment ever since civilization. When migration is observed from the point of view of geopolitics, it takes the shape of national security. Thus, the free mobility of people gets jeopardized and challenged. A migrant could be visualized as a political instrument or tool to strike a geopolitical balance or international relation. Political oppression, internal conflicts, civil wars etc. could be among several reasons that trigger the process of migration or are responsible for increased mobility of people across regions (Akopari, 2000). Nizamuddin (1976) argued that low salary and poor prospects of advancement in jobs were two important push factors while improved salary and better promotion prospects were the two crucial pull factors for immigrants from India and Pakistan to Canada in the period 1946-1973.

In general, globalization has fostered free mobility in various parts of the world, giving a chance to the deprived sections of the population to reach out to better life and livelihood. As one of the imperatives of globalisation, people are free to move, looking for better opportunities for better living. To some extent, globalization brought homogeneity of products, lifestyle and even culture. To another extreme, it is responsible for increased levels of consumption. People can dream and also have been successful in accomplishing their dreams and ambitions.

The human race, unfortunately, indulged itself in more and more consumerism. More consumerism has subsequently resulted in mass production. More of everything has become the tradition of today's world. As a consequence, humans have lost the connection with their inner-self as they are focussing on the outer world and outer consumption. The spiritual connection is equally significant for migrants who plan to leave their country with the aspiration to discover a new life in the country of their choice. The spiritual connection or in other words, the connection of the inner and outer world, is critical not only for an individual migrant but also for establishing the ecological balance.

An individual undergoes a whole lot of changes in the inner and outside world. When it comes to the inner world, it mainly refers to the inner self or soul that gets directly or indirectly affected by the world outside. It is observed that the challenges of migration can jeopardize the mental health of migrants (Hosseini et al., 2017). Several policies to prevent depressions in-migrants are suggested such as

improving employment opportunities, reducing discrimination, reducing the stress of the settlement process and interventions that strengthen resilience (Hosseini et al., 2017). Penman and Goel (2017) advocated a multidimensional conceptual model comprising of resilience, goals, settlement planning, healthy lifestyle and adaptation so that the migrants develop resilience.

Inner-self and outer world: A Gandhian perspective

Inner-self constitutes a crucial part of our experiences in this life. A migrant who perceives a journey gets enriching experiences not only in the outer world but also benefits internally, experiencing a better and evolved mindset. It is the responsibility of migrants to enhance and enrich the experience of their inner-self. Adaptability and resilience constitute an integral part of the inner self. Such an inner self enriched by adaptability and resilience not only engenders and leads an inner – self to a higher state of being but also a migrant can think and act rationally. The code of conduct of a migrant is extremely out of wisdom. A migrant is calm, composed and tolerant to every person and every situation in the world outside. In this sense, not only the inner self affects the outer world, but also the outer world influences the inner core equally. There exists a two-way relationship between them, and they both are interlinked with each other.

Adaptability and resilience are essential tools to interact with the world outside more productively and effectively. These aspects uplift the inner-self, making a migrant more sensitive and accommodating in any situation. At the same time, the experiences and changes happening in the outer world tend to affect the inner self of a migrant. Several ups and downs occurring in the outside world during the journey of a migrant are bound to influence the integrity of the inner peace of self. It is the existence of twin aspects of migrant the adaptability and resilience that are crucial in maintaining composure in the migrant. Adaptability makes an individual migrant more resilient, and therefore the inner core imbibes strong willpower that makes the migrant resilient to all hardships, failures and unforeseen circumstances.

The Gandhian ideology prescribed a way of living based on the ideology of Truth and Non-violence. These are the two tools that were instrumental in bringing one of the most significant revolutions of the century 'The freedom struggle of India'. Gandhi introduced the notion of Ahimsa (Non-violence) and Satyagraha (peaceful civil disobedience) to the world. The fundamentals of Truth and Non-violence were powerful enough to bequeath independence to India. These are the two foundations that not only revolutionize the system but also offer the ideology for life. This constitutes the entire purpose of exploring a new place, culture, people and finally, a new life. Gandhian ideology advocates a thought process of adopting the fundamentals of Truth and non-violence that profoundly inculcate the aspects of adaptability and resilience necessary inputs for a successful journey of a migrant.

The essence of 'Truth' and 'Non-violence' originates from 'Ahimsa' meaning 'The greatest love' or 'The charity'. A migrant with an enriched inner-self well-endowed with the characters of adaptability and resilience is successful in placing himself most efficiently in the world outside. Such a migrant is capable of deriving the maximum benefit from the skills and education that he equips himself with. He strategically applies the aspects of his character like tolerance, compassion and adaptability in a much more productive and fruitful way. It is so much fruitful and productive that it not only brings peace and equilibrium in the community around but serves as an essential ingredient in constituting a sustainable community, nation and world. The ultimate connection of an individual with nature or ecology is reinforced and established based on Gandhian thoughts by J.C.Kumarappa.

Migration and Ecological Limits: A Gandhian Perspective

The urge for seeking Truth by adopting, non-violence and resilience propagated by Gandhi is not limited to attaining spiritual upliftment but also to discovering harmony with nature. Based on Gandhian philosophy, the concept of 'Economy of permanence' was advocated by J.C.Kumarappa. Human intellect falls short of comprehending this notion of absolute permanence. (Kumarappa,1958) contends that everything ceases somewhere. Nature, however, is considered permanent in comparison to human life that is transient. Since man consumes nature for his survival and existence, Kumarappa proposes the concept of an economy of permanence.

Such an understanding of life which is transient manifests a deep realization of the true meaning of life. Moreover, the significance in the context of nature gets revealed that nature is permanent and while living a transient life, one needs to harmonize life's connection with nature. Nature comprises both transient and permanent elements. Certain things that get exhausted and possess a certain quantity of stock or reservoir such as iron, copper, gold etc. are found in fixed quantity and referred to as stock. Such stocks are transient as they get reduced and are exhaustible. The other component of elements of nature is 'flows'. Such flows are constantly growing such as overflowing rivers or timber of forest etc. These flows are permanent relative to the stock that are transient. This concept of permanence teaches a great lesson for a life that is based on sustainable consumption by mankind.

The notion of an economy of permanence advocates the process of consumption for an economy that has the potential to remain sustainable. An economy that relies more on the permanent elements of nature as compared to the stocks will ultimately be more sustainable. Apart from the philosophy prescribed for the consumption pathway for an economy, the fundamentals of J.C. Kumarappa also propagate lessons for an individual to base his life philosophy. An individual should attempt to become a flow since the very nature of flow is 'permanent'. Flow in this context reflects the sustainable goal or nature of the individual to

perceive a sustainable life and purpose. An individual who adapts the nature of flow like a river and floats with time progressing towards achieving each step laid down for betterment is the one who lives successfully. He should never become a stock as he tends to confine himself to a place.

The very nature of a stock stops an individual stops his ever-evolving growth and development of both inner self and outer achievements. Adapting this aspect of flow, an individual gradually progresses towards higher and higher levels both in terms of inner enlightenment and in setting sustainable goals. Such a thought process and such a pathway based on flow nature are sustainable. A migrant himself reflects this nature of being a permanent flow. This preaches a lesson of being a lifelong seeker of knowledge and experience who becomes a flow in his endeavour to accomplish his dreams. Such an individual migrant who follows the guidelines of Gandhian thoughts and J.C. Kumarappa's notion of economy of permanence becomes a propagator of an environmentally sustainable community or society.

Such a community that constitutes a nation becomes a remarkable example of an economy of permanence that is based on minimum production and consumption and also depends on natural resources for sustainable growth and development. Lesser exploitation of natural resources results in lower emissions and waste generation. By adopting the Gandhian ideology, individuals can minimize their ecological footprints. Such a community also yields a sustainable social and political environment that is peaceful and just. This model of society or community becomes an epitome of egalitarian, non-violent and non-exploitative world order.

Unfolding Consumerism with Gandhian Trusteeship model

The key driving force behind the Gandhian economic thought is the minimal possible respect for human and socio-ethical values. The Gandhian philosophy of Trusteeship is primarily based on the fact that the bounties of the world are primarily for the entire human race as a whole and not for any particular individual. When an individual processes more than what is rationally needed, he has the ethical responsibility to distribute (Harijan, 23 February 1947). The elementary aspects of the Gandhian notion of self-sufficiency and self-reliance envisage that the individuals are satisfied with minimum consumption. Such a society or community is devoid of any concentration of power, competition, warfare and unrest. Such nations are peaceful and non-violent with equitable distribution of wealth.

The model of trusteeship advocates the responsibility of nature not only at the individual level but also at the state level. Both the individuals and the state must act as custodian of nature and be thoughtful of the future generation. The fact that means are limited and desires are unlimited, provides a substantial rationale for distinguishing between wants and desires. One must never forget

"Earth has enough resources to meet people's needs, but will never have enough to satisfy people's greed".

An individual who is spiritually evolved can clearly distinguish the underlying difference between wants and desire. Such individuals reject greed naturally and are aware of their responsibility towards nature. The aspects of minimum consumption come naturally to them. As a consequence, a migrant who is guided by Gandhian principles is more responsible while setting up the goals and fundamentals in life.

Individuals belonging to communities that get together to make nations affect the natural environment of the country during the process of production and consumption. The method of production and consumption destroys the natural integrity of resources in the form of land, minerals etc. However, individuals who are socially and economically secure and have empathetic behaviour among each other are more contented. Such individuals not only progress in their outer world endeavours but also in their spiritual pursuits of the inner self. With such extraordinary characters, individuals truly realize their journey towards real purpose in life and become more contented. This entails a lesser desire for production and consumption and thus exerting lower pressure on natural resources. This inculcates the habit of minimum consumption and conservation, which reduces emissions and wasteful accumulation in the environment ultimately.

Mahatma Gandhi had once said, "One must care about the world one will not see". Indeed, humanity has progressed when it has collectively risen to its obligation to the world and responsibility to the future. This notion of sustainability is very much embedded in the Gandhian school of thought and Kumarappa's notion of economy of permanence. When an individual basis is life on the fundamentals of Truth and non-violence by deploying satyagraha inculcates the nature of contentment, compatibility and tolerance. Such an individual or a migrant is competent enough to take moral actions and make rational choices. This reduces competition among the community for consuming more and more, realizing the significance of peace within themselves and with others. In such an environment, the wants and desires of people are limited, and the phenomenon of conservation of resources is inculcated. People are at peace not only within themselves and among others but also with nature. They refrain from exploiting natural resources and ecosystems. This is the only pathway how humans can restrain from overconsumption and accumulating excessively the ecological footprints.

When individuals are simply in a peaceful state within themselves, they are more resilient and adaptable to people around them. Principles of Truth guide them, and non-violence would finally conceive the notion of satisfaction and contentment. Such individuals can visualize the needs of the future generation and ultimately the environmental sustainability. A community represented by this epic model is not only the

most environmentally sustainable but also serves as a remarkable model for a peaceful world order strategically. The world that incorporates individuals and migrants who advocate love, Truth and non-violence would define their journey towards progress as most peaceful, devoid of any unrest or war.

Conclusion

The unprecedented outbreak of COVID 19, has left the world in the biggest catastrophe to reflect upon. It becomes extremely useful to comprehend the genesis of migration that has been part and parcel of civilisation and later globalization. However, over time, various international policies emerged as a crucial determinant governing this mass movement. Migration is a universal phenomenon and also a change in social paradigm which influences human life and the environment. This era of the new world is peculiarly marked by a significantly expanding diaspora, especially in times when the world is attempting to attain environmental sustainability.

An immigrant with an ability to adapt and be able to respond to challenges encountered during the process of migration in a most resilient manner. Such attributes are advocated by Gandhian thoughts. Self-reliance, self-sufficiency and non-violence, the underlying Gandhian philosophy provide a guiding source for a migrant to realize the true purpose of life and set their ultimate goals. Kumarappa's notion of economy of permanence based on nature's permanency of maintaining the continuity of life demands non-interference to maintain its permanency. The economy of permanence is embedded in the Gandhian principles of non-violence and cooperation. In this era, when the world is facing the health pandemic crises, the dilemma of the ethical responsibility of embracing immigration and the crises it imposes on ecological footprints. By adopting the Gandhian ideology, individuals can minimize their ecological footprints. Such a community also yields a sustainable social and political environment that is peaceful and just. An immigrant is a traveller proceeding on the journey of evolving his self to be able to connect the outside world and at the same time become instrumental in bridging the gap between the stakeholders in a much productive manner to lead an entirely sustainable and peaceful social order.

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