Human face of migrant crisis: victims of climate change and collateral damage of COVID-19

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Unprecedented Times

• We have never seen such disruption

• We have never seen such loss of livelihoods; such suffering of the poor; such loss of life (>5 million cases; 330,000 deaths globally)

• We have never imagined such a collapse of our economies – like a pack of cards it would seem that the world around us has been wiped out

• The worst hit are the poor; disadvantaged – black; brown or poor
Double-jeopardy

• The poor are:

  • Most vulnerable to the virus because of their living conditions; congested homes and dirty surrounding with no water or sewage management

  • Most vulnerable because of the collapse of the economy – they are suffering and this is not right. Not acceptable
COVID-19: has made invisible visible

- Massive movement of labour
- Brought to light, what we have always said – **people are leaving rural areas to come to cities; to move to new countries**
- They are leaving **because option for livelihood security are reducing** – ‘push’ is more than ‘pull’ factor – agrarian distress combined with ‘not-so-natural’ weather events are driving people out of homes
- **Massive gaps in data** – census is ten years out of date; global data does not capture internal migrants (COVID-19 has brought out this fact)

- But migrants were international ‘hot-potato’: the face of international politics – often divisive and polarised
**Migration for employment**

Women accounted for over 80 per cent of the marginal migrant workforce in 2011, who are unemployed for at least half of the year.

Overall migrant population up by 44.9%:
- 2001: 214.34 million
- 2011: 453.79 million

Rural migrate more than urban: 2001
- Rural: 226.07 million
- Urban: 195.35 million

Rural areas see more immigration:
- 2001: 269.12 million
- 2011: 516.95 million

This is because a major portion of the migration happens within the state from one rural area to another.

While men account for bulk of main workers, women have a higher share in marginal workers:
- Main workers: 33,020,013
- Marginal workers: 5,145,465

**NEW MIGRANTS**

Most of the population that have migrated for work less than 10 years ago have not studied beyond schooling.

There has been a 23% increase in the population that has migrated for work in the decade before the two censuses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Migrant Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>18.99 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17.22 million</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Most new migrants are from rural areas:
- 2001: 10.3 million
- 2011: 6.59 million

Most new rural migrants go to urban areas within state:
- 2001: 3.3 million
- 2011: 1.7 million

Urban migrants also prefer other urban areas within state:
- 2001: 2.92 million
- 2011: 1.7 million

Population who have studied till schooling migrate the most:
- 2001: 9.22 million
- 2011: 2.6 million

21% rural migrants in 2011 studied beyond schooling:
- 2001: 2.96 million
- 2011: 2.54 million

44% urban migrants in 2011 studied beyond schooling:
- 2001: 3.07 million
- 2011: 3.54 million

Source: Table D-7: Migrants by place of last residence with duration 0-9 years reporting 'lived/employment as reason for migration by age, sex and educational level' in censuses 2001 and 2011.
Migration: where they come from?
More than 21.5 lakh migrants have been transported to their home states through 1600 “Shramik Special” trains till May 19.

PIB data
Join-dots
Climate change and extreme weather/cyclones

• More than enough evidence to show that extreme and variable rain events are linked to climate change – increase of floods and then droughts

• More than enough evidence to show that intensity of tropical cyclones is increasing; becoming more unpredictable and causing more long-term ecological and livelihood damage
Join-the-dots

Internal displacement
Drought-flood-crop loss-cyclones
not single day events

• Cripple people
• Destroy livelihoods
• Take away development dividend
• As events become more frequent, survival becomes more difficult
• No option but to move – migrate – **to cities to new countries**
INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT
by disasters and conflicts

Of the 26.4 million new displacements* that occurred due to disasters in the world last year, 23.4 million were weather-related.

**33.4m**
Total new displacements in 2019

**8.5m**
Total new displacements (conflict and violence)

**24.9m**
Total new displacements (disasters)

**10m**
Total new displacements (other)

**5.2m**
Armed conflict

**2.7m**
Weather

*Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

New displacements refer to a number of movements, and not people, as individuals can be displaced several times, and the data does not always reflect this.

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2016

50 WORST HIT COUNTRIES

India alone accounted for over 20 per cent of all new displacements in 2019.

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2016
Disastrous for India

An average of around 1.6 million people a year were displaced between 2010 and 2020. The majority by flooding during the monsoon. India is also prone to other sudden and slow-onset hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, storm surges and drought.

12 disasters that led to internal displacements in India in 2019

- **April 1**: Thunderstorm
  - Dhubal, Urad; Tripura districts
  - 5,864

- **April 2**: Cyclone Fani
  - Bangladesh
  - 1,821,042

- **May 16**: Floods
  - North Tripura, Udaipur, Dhalai districts; Tripura
  - 739

- **June 8**: Southwest monsoon
  - India
  - 2,421,649

- **June 12**: Tropical Cyclone Vayu
  - Gujarat, Rupn
  - 295,000

- **October 6**: Cyclone Maha
  - Kerala, Lakshadweep island
  - 75,846

- **October 9**: Northeast monsoon
  - India
  - 23,228

- **November 1**: Severe cyclonic storm Baalub
  - Bangladesh
  - 186,218

Sourced from upcoming State of India’s Environment 2020. Figures to be released on June 5.
Pincer attack
Desperate to leave; desperate to return

• **Future of work**

• COVID-19 has made the invisible, visible

• We have seen massive migrant movement; in our world and in the rich world

• Earlier people were desperate to leave their home; because of poverty; lack of livelihood; climate risks because of variable weather and agrarian distress – **now they are desperate to return**

• **What then is the future of work?** Is this the opportunity to invest – big time – to build resilience in local-rural economies.

• **Come up with a new compact between rural-urban; invest in ecological and livelihood security through MNREGA**
Future of production: What migrants did for work?

**Uncertain times**
Daily wage earners account for 37% of the people who are trying to return home

31,423
Total migrants surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,041</td>
<td>2,627</td>
<td>6,638</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Wage Earners</td>
<td>9,165</td>
<td>2,671</td>
<td>6,494</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm labourers*</td>
<td>6,449</td>
<td>2,971</td>
<td>3,478</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2,627</td>
<td>3,074</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial labourers**</td>
<td>7,376</td>
<td>2,671</td>
<td>4,705</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,971</td>
<td>4,404</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services***</td>
<td>1,691</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>1,129</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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*Includes labourers, fishing and poultry; **Includes construction workers, highway workers, industrial labourers and others
***Includes domestic workers, labourers in hotels, carpenters, electricians, masons and others

Source: Ekta Parishad; Data for period April 11-May 20, 2020
Possible future?

• Future of production
  • Till now we have built economies by discounting labour and environment; migrants work in the worst conditions in our cities; high risk of pollution; occupational hazard; no housing; no water..
  • But not surprising because trade as moved where countries/regions can out-compete because of low costs;

• Can this be reversed?
  • Will we pay higher costs of goods; will our economies become less dependent on consumption-led growth; more on well-being led growth

No signs yet of this green-human development led recovery. But this is the time of revenge of nature..so hopefully we will learn; will change