

## Life or Livelihood of Migrated Workers of Odisha (India) Amid Covid-19 Effect

**Sanjaya Kumar Sahoo**

Research Scholar, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar,  
Email: sanjaya86census@gmail.com

**Sukanta Chandra Swain**

(Corresponding Author) Associate Dean,  
KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar,  
Email: sukanta\_swain@yahoo.com

**Aswin Kumar Routa**

Lecturer in Mathematics, SKCG AUTO. College, Paralakhemundi,  
Email: aswinmath2003@gmail.com

DoI: 10.23862/kiit-parikalpana/2023/v19/i1/220843

(This paper was reviewed and presented at: International Conference on Sustainability and Equity, (ICSE), 2022 held at KIIT Bhubaneswar.)

### **Abstract:**

Pandemic COVID-19 has made the lives perilous genuinely across the globe. Especially, the migrant workers faced the hardship as they are jobless in one hand and unable to come back to their native places on the other hand. Being India as the second most populous country of the world, it is most important to study the living status of migrant workers of the country. However, due to diversity in population, varying Covid rate in different states and large number of migrant workers of the country, it is tedious to ascertain the impact of Covid situation in the entire country. Therefore, we have considered one state Odisha to study the situation of migrant workers during the pandemic time. This will be helpful to study the situation of migrant workers of entire country and the world. In this paper we have devised the following approaches. It is primarily a descriptive research based on both primary and secondary data. Data collected for this study is through content analysis and telephonic in-depth interviews. For telephonic in-depth interviews, 20 migrant workers are selected on the basis of convenient sampling method. For telephonic opinions, five experts are selected on convenient sampling method. This research aims to ascertain how the migrant workers of Odisha (India) come across the complicated problem of choice between life and livelihood during socioeconomic emergency that caused due to Covid-19.

**Keywords:** Life, Livelihood, Migrant workers, Covid-19, Pandemic.

**Introduction:**

Pandemic caused due to coronavirus has made the world handicapped. Super powers of the Globe are struggling to stand before the invisible enemy. Due to movement of migrant workers, the positive cases rapidly spread across the country. So, India has sought for lock-down uniformly across the country and imposed shut down in the regions that are identified hot-spots and demarcated as containment areas. The number of Covid-19 affected cases and casualties have both decreased as a result of this proactive policy, which clearly produced the desired results. However, the deadly Covid-19 virus has caused the nation to halt all economic activity. This also applies to the state of Odisha. In fact, it goes one step further in locking down and shutting down than the national level does. The affluent people did not find difficult to maintain their living as they are getting their basic requirements either at the door step or from the nearby essential shops. Similarly poor people are also managing the situation by virtue of governmental intervention in the form of supplying free essential commodities, free LPG cylinder and some monetary help. But the hardest hit out of this precarious situation worsen the down trodden group of the society i.e. migrant workers.

The number of migrant workers of the Odisha in the country is considerably large in comparison to other states. A sizeable population of the state has been working in other states and even in

other countries. Migrants from Odisha those are working in other countries, they will somehow manage the situation even they lose their jobs after pandemic period as they might have saved huge money. However, migrants from Odisha who are employed in other states across the nation are truly in difficulty. Due to the considerable increase in the number of workers per room in the areas where the lock-down and shut-down were applicable, their work establishments ceased operations, and they remained inside their so-called dwelling. Even though they followed the advice to “remain at home; stay safe” in order to combat the virus, the nature of their isolation rendered them more susceptible because they were unable to maintain the necessary social distance and hygienic etiquette. They are not eligible for government assistance in their new jobs because they do not have ration cards in their new locations.

To protect the lives of the migrants, the government declared that the businesses where they were employed would provide for their basic needs, including food. The announcement, however, was not at all what happened. How long can they support the idle workers when the businesses are no longer in operation and have a negative return on investment As a result, migrant employees either went hungry or were only partially fed. Due to the prohibition on using any form of transportation while the area was under lockdown, they were unable to return to their homes. This has been resulted

in unthinkable actions by the migrant workers. Some of the workers were walking thousands of miles to reach at their villages although they knew very well that they won't be allowed to their villages and homes without staying in quarantine for 14 days in their Gram Panchayatas. For the sake of earning something, some of the migrant workers were adjusted with some sort of ad hoc works at their migrated places as they were afraid of walking such a long distance to their homes. They were violating the Covid-19 recommendations in this way. They had to make the difficult decision between life and a means of support in both cases. In the first instance, as they travelled a great distance to perform an earning task in their hometowns, they risked their lives due to the physical strain of the lengthy walk and the vulnerability of Covid-19. In the latter instance, as they sought out further employment in their new location in an effort to make some money, they left themselves vulnerable to the deadly virus' attack. The question of how to prioritize life and livelihood in an unorthodox scenario, particularly in the context of migratory workers, is thus something for researchers and planners to consider.

### **1. Review of Literature:**

Migration is one of the pertinent livelihood strategies, even if there are many different ones available to the majority of individuals who live in poverty. While migration is typically prompted by chronic poverty, there are

rare instances where migration itself triggers chronic poverty as a result of an incorrect strategy [Kothari, 2002]. Given that migration is a significant source of income for many rural residents, encouraging policies for population mobility should be in place, and there should be investigation into ways to strengthen the positive benefits of migration [Haan, 1999]. Migration should be viewed as one of the main techniques used by families, sometimes combined with other methods, and a two-way process that allows migrants to maintain strong ties to their home communities for a lot longer than is typically assumed [McDowell & Haan, 1997]. The movement of people, ideas, and money around the world has had a huge impact on people's lives and means of subsistence. From the forced movement of slaves during colonialism and the uprooting of the peasantry during industrialization to the most recent victims of ethnic cleansing, the recognition and cognitive content of the migrant have drastically changed through time [Papastergiadis, 2000].

The restrictions brought on by COVID-19 have led to a generalised humanitarian crisis and increased vulnerability among migrant workers in terms of access to food and cash. The migrant worker situation has not been adequately addressed by the government or the legal system, according to this report, which was based on the Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN). Both quantitative and qualitative data

analysis were used to conduct the analysis. According to the study, India's relief initiatives NREGA and PDS need to be improved more than they were [Adhikari et al., 2020].

India's poverty and inequality over various time periods. According to the report, regional differences rose while poverty decreased in the 1990s, with the south and west performing far better than the north and east. Within cities and between cities and rural areas, economic disparity continued to rise. While social indicators showed varied trends, some health and education-related indicators showed sustained improvement [Deaton and Drèze, 2002].

According to the forces of supply and demand, agricultural products do not sell for a profit. Additionally, the product's supply chain is very shoddy and unreliable, which results in consumers paying outrageous costs and farmers receiving lower prices. According to the study, adding some productive labour will help to some extent resolve the issue. An influx of migrants is currently occurring in the original country due to pandemic COVID-19. In order to address the issues of price and supply and demand for food, these repatriated migrants can now be incorporated into the supply chain of agricultural products [Sahoo and Swain 2022].

It has been discovered via the use of the All-India Debt and Investment Surveys (1991 and 2002) that wealth levels have increased while interpersonal wealth inequality has slightly but noticeably

increased. The analysis demonstrates that there is inequality between middle- and upper-income states and low-income states. According to the study's findings [Jayadev, Motiram, and Vakulabharanam, 2007], income disparity has increased more sharply in states with higher economic growth.

It is apparent from the literature reviewed above that the migration is inevitable as it has been proved as one of the important means of livelihoods. So, it has been treated as a tool to fight out chronic poverty. However, there is paucity of literature on choosing one between life and livelihood for migrant workers. Moreover, the said problem of choice during a pandemic situation, which the world is confronting at present has not been taken up by any researchers. Therefore, we have considered this problem to address the importance of Life or Livelihood and discussed details on the basis of interpretation of data obtained from different sources. Hence, this research is new and its novelty of study will give new dimension in the research of socio science.

## 2. Objectives and Methodology:

On the backdrop of a complex problem of choice between life and livelihood, the objectives of this paper are to;

- Describe the effect of Covid-19 on lives and livelihood of the humanity across the Globe.
- Analyze the preparedness of the State of Odisha (India) to fight the invisible enemy - Covid-19.

- Ascertain how the migrant workers of Odisha (India) come across the complicated problem of choice between life and livelihood during socioeconomic emergency caused due to Covid-19.
- Devise the way out to address the issue of life or livelihood.
- For telephonic opinions, ten experts are selected on convenient sampling method.

### 3. Effect of Covid-19 on lives and livelihood of the humanity across the Globe:

According to the International Labour Organization, the two billion employees in the world's informal economy would become more vulnerable and live in greater poverty as a result of Lockdown policies. Covid-19 has been affecting the world economy very badly. Different sectors like hospitality, manufacturing, travel and tourism which provide about 50 million jobs and about 10% of the global GDP are severely affected. Projection done by various research organizations as presented in Table-1 reveals the intensity of the Covid-19 effect.

To accomplish the objectives, the following methodology is adopted.

- It is primarily a descriptive study using both primary and secondary data..
- Data collection for this study is done through content analysis and telephonic in-depth interviews
- For telephonic in-depth interviews, hundred migrant workers are selected on the basis of convenient sampling method

**Table-1.** Economic growth projection for the financial 2021.

Agencies	After Covid-19(in Percentage)	Before covid-19(in Percentage)
Moody's	5.3	6.6
OECD	5.1	6.2
UBS	5.1	5.6
Barclays	5.6	6.5
Fitch	5.4	5.9

Source: MOSPI, Ministry of Commerce

As revealed in Table-1 and Figure-1, growth prediction by different agencies is undoubtedly a point of concern for the policy makers of the country. Figures reflected in the Table insist the planners to choose some effective alternative path to rebound the economic growth into 'V' shape. Before the outbreak of the

pandemic situation, Moody projected that the economy would grow by 6.6%, but considering the present situation, it predicts that the growth might decline to 5.3%, with a reduction in projected growth rate by 1.3%. Other growth rate projecting agencies such as OECD, UBS, Barclays and Fitch have also

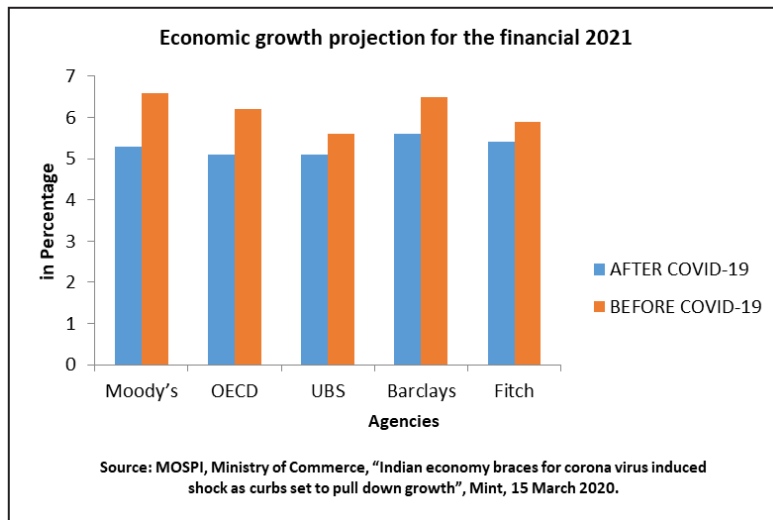


Figure-1

reduced their projected rates by 1.1%, 1.5%, 0.9%, and 0.5% respectively from their original projection owing to the outbreak of Covid-19. Thus, the situation warrants that the Government needs to put some extra effort for bringing the growth track back to the original.

Growth of different industries since the outbreak of the Coronavirus attack, as presented in Table-2, supplements the fact that Covid-19 has been doing the damage that may not be repaired in the near future.

Table-2. Growth of different industry from February 1 to March 15, 2020:-

Industry	Growth in Percentage from February 1 to March 15, 2020
Automotive	-23.1
Power	-18.3
IT	-16.2
FMCG	-16
Healthcare	-9.2
Telecom	-3

Source: MOSPI, Ministry of Commerce, "Indian economy braces for coronavirus-induced shock as curbs set to pull down growth", Mint, 15 March 2020.

Table-2 clearly highlights how different industries are badly affected due to the pandemic covid-19 situation. Among the industries mentioned in the Table, most affected industry is Automotive which has experienced an exemplary fall in

growth rate by 23.1% from February 1 to March 15, 2020. Other industries such as; Power, IT, FMCG, Health Care, and Telecom have also experienced fall in their growth rate respectively by 18.3%, 16.2%, 16%, 9.2% and 3%. Negative

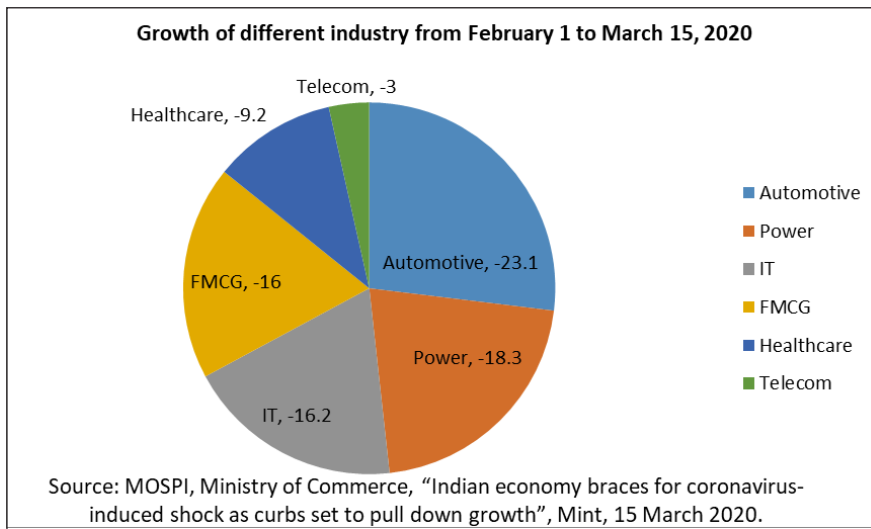


Figure-2

growth rate in almost all the industries of the country may push the economy to drastic instability causing irreparable loss due to negative multiplier effect in a multidimensional way. Thus, proactive steps by the government are needed to break this chain and revive the economy into mainstream. The pie diagram as shown in Figure-2 indicates the decay in the growth rate of different industrial sectors.

All the sectors of the economy have been affected badly due to Covid-19. Important sectors that have become the victims of the pandemic are;

- Agriculture sector - Crisis in agriculture is mainly due to unavailability of labour and disruptions in marketing due to the ongoing covid-19 situation. This is having negative effect on local, national and international levels.

- Travel and Tourism sectors - Because of the pandemic covid-19 situation, tourism sector is badly affected. This deadly virus has made the domestic carriers to cancel and suspend flights in all routes for a considerable time period. This sector contributes around 11.5% of global GDP. It is expected that EU's tourism industry may lose around €1 billion per month due to this deadly virus. International Air Transport Association (IATA) predicts that passenger revenue may reduce by US\$252 billion, i.e., 44 per cent lesser than what it was in 2019.
- Auto sector - Basically the development of this sector in India depends on the business of this sector in China, as India supplies raw-materials to china. Different studies show that the manufacturing of this sector will be contracted by 8-10%.

- **Electronics Sector** - As far as electronics is concerned, India depends on China for both the raw materials and final products. So, now this type of industry may face reduction in production, fear in the supply of the final product and volatility of price.
  - **Pharmaceutical sector** - In the 2019 fiscal year, India purchased drugs from China worth over Rs 24,900 crore. About 40% of total domestic consumption is represented by this. Importers now run the risk of supply shortages and unforeseen price changes due to the Covid-19 scenario.
  - **Chemical sector** -China is the primary supplier of chemicals and intermediates to India. Nearly 20% of the goods is anticipated to be impacted by the import disruption.
  - **Solar Power Sector** - Chinese industries supply near about 80% of solar cells and modules used in India.
- Due to this Covid-19 situation, India is now facing short-fall of these materials.
- **Information Technology Sector** -This sector depends on the software development by the intellectuals. But due to lockdown, people are unable to move and complete their jobs. Also, the business sectors are closed due to lockdown and shutdown. So, this sector is badly disrupted.
  - **Textiles Sectors** - It is expected that cotton yarn export may decline by 50%. Because of lockdown, consumers' demand have been reduced. In Bangladesh, this industry may lead to loss of around US\$3 billion, affecting some 2.17 million workers.
- The Covid-19 pandemic eruption has altered the global price structure of certain goods. Table 3 shows how much the price index of three important sectors fell between January 2018 and March 2020.

Table-3. Fall in Price Index of three major sectors (Index US \$)

Month & Year	Energy	Agriculture	Metals
January -2018	100	100	100
February-18	94.71	101.88	100.04
March-18	95.13	103.45	95.37
April-18	101.03	105.31	97.6
May-18	107.89	105.52	97.99
June-18	106.79	102.18	98.2
July-18	107.82	99.21	90.7
August-18	106.28	97.47	88.2
September-18	112.45	94.95	87.44
October-18	113.91	95.8	89.6
November-18	96.32	94.48	87.5



December-18	85.42	94.94	85.89
January-19	86.79	95.94	85.55
February-19	91.01	96.23	90.46
March-19	94.01	95.37	91.56
April-19	99.0	95.46	92.13
May-19	96.17	94.48	88.8
June-19	85.91	97.08	88.66
July-19	88.02	95.71	91.49
August-19	82.76	93.12	85.86
September-19	86.56	92.79	87.3
October-19	83.38	94.53	86.32
November-19	87.75	97.97	86.05
December-19	90.47	100.3	87.47
January-2020	87.55	101.76	87.73
February-2020	76.41	98.87	82.44
March-2020	49.42	95.81	77.57

Source: World Bank

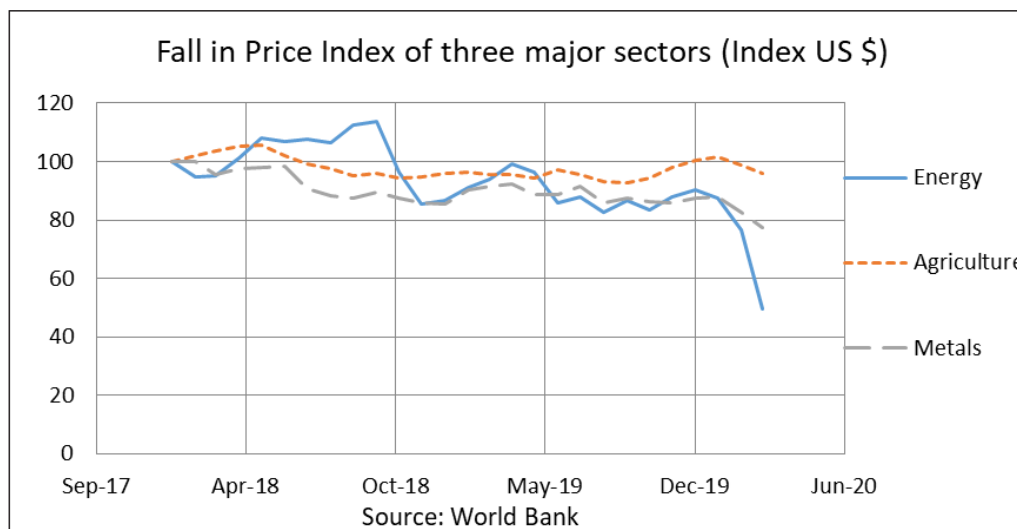


Figure-3

The Figure-3 explains the fall in Price Index of three major sectors in which the energy sector is more declined than the other two sectors. Price index presented in Table-3 is taken for three sectors of the world- energy, agriculture and metal. The indices show that in the year 2018,

the prices of these three sectors had marginally declined. In the year 2019, the prices remained almost stable. But in the year 2020, from January 2020 to March 2020, the prices of energy have drastically reduced. The prices of metal have marginally declined and

the prices of agricultural product though marginally reduced but have remained stable. Thus, energy sector has been proved to be the hardest hit owing to Covid-19.

Odisha is not an exception to the trend presented in Table-3. Since agricultural products are put in the basket of essential commodities having the exemption from the restrictions of lock-down, the marketing of these products are taking place although the demand has drastically fallen owing to consumers' fear of getting affected if they go out. Still, decline in the prices of agricultural products is not that considerable because the supply has also been declined owing to non-availability of workers to harvest appropriately.

Data on decline in Oil demand since 1974, as presented in Table-4, clearly makes the impact of Covid-19 transparent.

**Table-4.** Percentage Decline in Oil Demand

Year	% decline
1974	-1.42
1975	-0.83
1980	-4.12
1981	-3.08
1982	-2.69
1983	-0.24
1993	-0.22
2008	-0.66
2009	-0.97
2020	-9.3

Source: World Bank

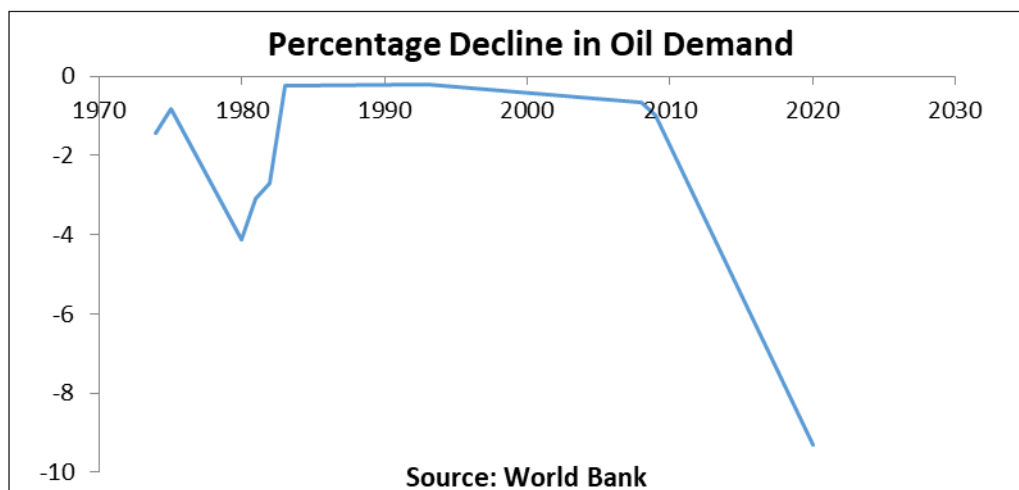


Figure-4

Table-4 and Figure-4 shows the reduction in the demand of oil in different years. Although there have been decline in oil demand in different years, the rates of decline were marginal until 2020. However, in the year 2020, the decline in demand for oil is exceptional. It is reduced by 9.3%, which is the highest ever since the year 1974.

#### 4. The preparedness of the State of Odisha to fight the invisible enemy - Covid-19

Different schemes like Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, Free Blood Services, Nirmal Khushi, Sunetra, Nidan and

Swastha are implemented by the Government of Odisha (India) to tackle the challenges in health sector to promote the health status of the people in general and migrant worker in particular.

Table-5. Odisha vis-a-vis India in Health Indicators

Key Health Indicators	Odisha (NFHS-2015-16)	India (NFHS-2015-16)
IMR	40	41
U5 Mortality	48	50
Use of Family Planning Method(Any method(%))	57.3	53.5
Mother who had full antenatal care(%)	23	21
Institutional birth(%)	85.4	78.9
Children age(12-23 months) fully immunized	78.6	62.0
Children under 5 who are stunted(%)	34.1	38.4
Children under 5 who are wasted (%)	20.4	21.0
Children under 5 who are underweight (%)	34.4	35.8

Source: Odisha Economic Survey 2019-20

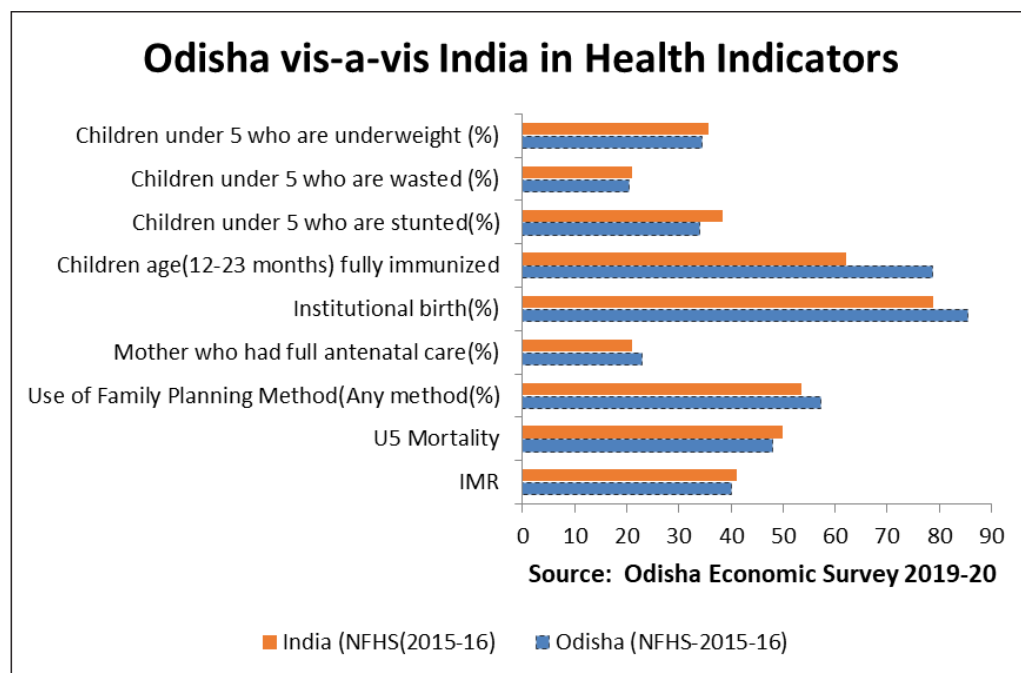


Figure-5

Odisha has made major improvement in health outcomes in comparison to national achievements as presented in the Table-5 and Figure-5 through particular emphasis on health sector reforms.

The Government of Odisha have taken major initiatives for the safe return to home places of the migrant workers during the lockdown periods. The district wise number of migrant workers are shown in the Table-6.

#### 4.1 Covid-19 specific steps initiated by the Odisha Government

Table-6: District Wise List of Returnee Migrants.

Sl.No.	District Name	Rural data	TMC data	Urban Data	Total
1	Angul	9165	1027	183	10375
2	Baleshwar	56197	15731	464	72392
3	Bolangir	105532	2067	870	108469
4	Bargarh	18389	918	292	19599
5	Bhadrak	36934	6833	1809	45576
6	Boudh	4225	324	52	4601
7	Cuttack	24714	1845	447	27006
8	Deogarh	3220	483	44	3747
9	Dhenkanal	10982	2020	250	13252
10	Gajapati	14029	2231	275	16535
11	Ganjam	210542	10961	4099	225602
12	Jagatsinghpur	16630	3246	122	19998
13	Jajpur	26805	3183	153	30141
14	Jharsuguda	1847	1223	112	3182
15	Kalahandi	39743	1876	283	41902
16	Kandhamal	11207	1618	73	12898
17	Kendrapara	46906	11440	391	58737
18	Kendujhar	16019	2448	336	18803
19	Khordha	16955	3862	853	21670
20	Koraput	11467	887	136	12490
21	Malkanagiri	20387	894	53	21334
22	Mayurbhanj	35687	6016	196	41899
23	Nabarangapur	15715	1326	56	17097
24	Nayagarh	12349	1304	154	13807
25	Nuapada	64240	860	685	65785
26	Puri	19233	2511	145	21889
27	Rayagada	14578	1834	303	16715
28	Sambalpur	5114	757	810	6681
29	Sonepur	8417	405	274	9096
30	Sundergarh	19341	4337	2374	26052
	Total	896569	94467	16294	1007330

Source: <https://ommcomnews.com/odisha-news/over-10-lakh-migrants-returned-to-odisha-during-lockdown>

Due to lockdown and shutdown, the migrant workers did not get their livelihood residing in the outside of the state, so huge numbers of migrants started to return to their home state

Odisha by means of walking, cycling and vehicles provided by the Government or their own arrangements. These numbers of returnee migrants to different districts of state are depicted in table no.6.

Table-7: Migrants returned from different states of India

Sl.No.	Name of the States	Number of Workers returned
1	Andhra Pradesh	111475
2	Bihar	2316
3	Chhattisgarh	9169
4	Delhi	11438
5	Goa	12058
6	Gujarat	193791
7	Haryana	5503
8	Jharkhand	240
9	Karnataka	50473
10	Kerala	31621
11	Madhya Pradesh	2385
12	Maharashtra	71217
13	Rajasthan	3873
14	Tamil Nadu	120353
15	Telangana	147265
16	Uttar Pradesh	22962
17	West Bengal	27046
18	Others(Remaining States and Union Territories)	184145
Grand Total		1007330

Source: <https://ommcomnews.com/odisha-news/over-10-lakh-migrants-returned-to-odisha-during-lockdown>

The migrant workers of Odisha those were returned from different states of the country to the Odisha are shown in table no.7. This will be helpful to interpret and analysis of disease prone area, transportation facility and livelihood status of the workers so that the implementation of Government policies will be fruitful.

Following steps are initiated by the Government of Odisha to tackle pandemic Covid-19 situation.

- The Government of Odisha has increased the nutrition budget from 41.35% to 49.77% in order to improve the nutrition of women and children.

- Medical, public health, and family welfare spending in Odisha climbed from 3.3% to 5.5% of total spending over the previous eight years.
- The state of Odisha has established two COVID-19-specific hospitals with a combined capacity of 650 beds, including 150 beds at Ashwini Hospital in Cuttack and 500 beds at KIMS Hospital in Bhubaneswar.
- Further, many Covid-19 hospitals have been established at each district of the State.
- Odisha Government provides training to 1.72 lakh health personnel - 8023 doctors, 8296 staff nurses, 4105 Paramedical staff and laboratory technicians, 4114 Ayush doctors, 4905 ambulance drivers, 135820 ANM/ASHA/AWW workers, 7236 sanitation workers have been trained to fight against covid-19.
- A procurement committee has been established in Odisha, which aids in the timely and appropriate availability of testing kits, masks, and personal protective equipment.
- Odisha Government has made mandatory registration for all the migrants to control the spread of covid-19. There is a call center for the migrants.
- A call centre (104) has been established for the covid-19 related queries.
- Tablighi Jamaat event in Nizamuddin- To aid in their swift tracing, the government enlisted the police and named the IG, Crime Branch as the state coordinator for contact tracing. Previously, this task was handled by health and municipal officials. The company, which has a Covid-19 budget approved of Rs 630 crore, ordered supplies worth Rs 32 crore just in the past week.
- The Government of Odisha has given the power of collector to Sarapanchas for the effective implementation of Covid-19 act at the grass root level.
- The fact that Odisha now has 299 operational ICU ventilators and has placed orders for 424 additional ones provides an indication of the scope of the situation. Of these, 57 have arrived; however, 7700 nebulizers and 1000 oxygen concentrators are still on the way. Since the end of January, its employees have been alert.
- Government of Odisha has increased the quarantine period from 14 days to 28 days.
- A specimen daily report of Covid hospitals is presented in Table-6 which speaks about the approach of the State towards fighting against Covid-19

Table-8. Specimen Daily report of Covid Hospitals of Odisha (Data as on:22.04.2020)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Data		
<b>A. GENERAL INFORMATION</b>				
1	Number of General Beds	4969		
2	Number of ICUs	337		
A1	Man Powers Deployed in three shifts	Total	Trained	Trained for ICU
3	Number of Doctors Deployed (3 shift)	355	236	54
4	Number of Nurses Deployed (3 shift)	843	603	123
5	Number of Paramedics Deployed (3 shift)	372	268	26
6	Number of Group D (3 shift)	572		
<b>B. PATIENT INFORMATION</b>		Male	Female	Total
7	Number of New Patients admitted today in General Beds	26	5	31
7(i)	Suspected Cases	20	3	23
7(ii)	Confirmed Covid Cases	6	2	8
8	Total Number of Patients in General Bed	78	28	106
8(i)	Suspected Cases	41	13	54
8(ii)	Confirmed Covid Cases	37	15	52
9	Number of New Patients admitted today in ICU Beds	1	1	2
10	Total Number of Patients in ICU Beds (Susp+Confirm)	5	4	9
11	Number of Patients relieved/discharged	17	10	27
12	No of Deaths	0	0	0
<b>C. INFORMATION ON PPE AND EQUIPMENTS</b>				
13	Number of N95 masks available	11113		
14	Number of Surgical mask available	325181		
15	Number of PPE available	28808		
16	Amount of Hand Sterilizers available	Available in All Covid Hospitals		
17	Availability of Oxygen	Available in All operational Covid Hospitals		
18	Number of Ventilators Available	164		
19	Number of Medical Ambulance Available	48		

Source: Department of Health and family welfare, Government of Odisha

The state Government tackled the situation effectively by providing better health facilities to the citizens of state. The disease successfully controlled by the Government by implementing the clinical and non-clinical Covid-19 measures like lockdown, shutdown and special Covid hospitals in different parts of the state. Health personnel viz: paramedical staff (nurse, pharmacist, technicians etc.) and trained doctors were engaged with special incentives to treat the symptomatic patients suffering from Covid-19. The health department of the state has implemented the 3T rule i.e. T for trace, T for test and T for treatment. The human resource and medical equipment used for this is shown in table no.8.

#### **5. Choice of the Migrant Workers between life and livelihood during Covid-19 situation:**

As lockdown due to Covid-19 has been announced, the migrant labourers are badly affected. They are affected by the loss of livelihood and thereby living without food, shelter, health and other basic needs. In Odisha near about 10 lakhs people are staying outside the state. As bus and rail services shut down people were faced difficulty in getting essential goods and this leads to artificial increase in price and shortage of essential commodities. Most of the migrants are living lonely. It creates mental distress to them. If such things continue then another problem of psyche disordered may not be avoided. Without any work they do not have income. So

they are unable to purchase the basic needs. If such a situation continues then they will die in starvation. If people go out then there is fear of corona virus and if they will be infected then they will die.

So on this critical situation it is very difficult to choose whether life or livelihood.

Some of the migrants without any help walked miles and miles kilometer to reach at their home. Some other people en routed via water ways by purchasing boats. It became difficult for them. Even when they got close to their neighbourhood, local officials imposed a 14-day quarantine on them to stop the disease from spreading. The government of Odisha has launched an online registration system for migrants who desire to return to the state after realizing the hardship. For their homecoming, the government had intended to set up the bus system. Additionally, the government had established guidelines for them, stating that once they arrived at their home country, they would be kept in quarantine facilities. They can return home once the quarantine period is up.

#### **6. Way out to address the issue of life or livelihood:**

The government should divide planning measures into short-term, medium-term, and long-term measures in order to address this problem.

**Short-Term Measures:** In coordination with the Central Government and other state Governments, the Government



of Odisha should prepare a list of the Odia migrants living outside the state. Then to test the covid-19 report of all the migrants who wants to return. Government should arrange for the smooth arrival of these migrants and isolate them in quarantine center for 21 days. Before doing this government needs to arrange the quarantine center with the availability of food and other basic necessities. Focus must be given in such a way that they should not use the public amenities like ponds, temple available near the quarantine center. As to shelter near about 10 lakh migrants, most of the migrant centers are to be arranged at panchayat level. If the quarantine people use the public amenities then it will collapse the plan of the Government to stop the spread of the deadly virus.

If this is possible then migrants would be mentally satisfied by staying near to their village. As they are supplied with basic needs there is no fear of death due to hunger.

In this situation government needs to counsel the villagers as they need to support for this. If village people will not accept the quarantine center near to their village then it create another problem of hostile attitude of not cooperation. If anybody breaks the quarantine norm then there is high chance of community spread. So, extra cautious needs to be given. Through this the Government can save the life in both ways, i.e by testing and by staying at quarantine center. Further, their life will be saved

from the starvation if the Government will provide basic needs.

**Medium-Term Measures:** Once all the migrants will be in the quarantine center then plan must be made for their engagement to work at the quarantine center to earn something for their livelihood. It needs the area specific approach of micro industry. E.g. Stitching Khali (Indian eating plate made with big leaf), Painting, Plantation, Cleanliness of the environment and other needs of the local products. Government will provide them the raw materials. After the completion of the work the product will kept separately for 3-4 days. Even if any corona virus exists then it will die with in that period. The Government will take necessary steps with the help of villagers to sell the product. After the completion of the quarantine period and with covid-19 testing, people will be freed from the quarantine center and proper plan will be made to engage them in the agricultural and industrial sector at the village level.

**Primary Sector -** In Odisha, most of the lands remain unused after the harvesting of paddy crops. So lands remain barren from the month of December to June. So people will be encouraged and supply them the necessary things with proper guidance so that they can cultivate it. Using this food shortage at the village level will be solved and the administration will help to take the surplus product to town level for selling purpose. So this will save the livelihood of the people. By staying near the village

it will also save them from the corona virus.

Dairy firms are now in the loss as people are not able to use it. So, some of them can be engaged in this area. Some other people may be encouraged to produce mushroom. There are many other sources are also available for earning in the primary sector. For this a high level committee needs to be formed at the Government level.

Secondary Sector - Primary sector is not sufficient enough to absorb all the laboures of the village. Government will provide the surplus labour area specific training to engage them in the micro industry like- weaving and food processing industries. This will allocate the primary sector product for converting it into high value product. For non-agricultural industry, machinery and raw-material will be supplied to the trained people. It may employ both skilled and unskilled labourers.

Tertiary Sector - Most of the teachers are available at the village level. As now schools are closed, they may be engaged to counsel the people and monitor the work . Further they may be encouraged to teach the students at the village level by maintaining social distance. Further a teacher will teach a student near to its house irrespective of school. Lawyers and other professionals may be engaged to counsel and provide knowledge related to their profession to the people. So it will create a great opportunity to the villagers for learning.

**Long-Term Measures:** Once Medium term plan become successful it can be transformed into long term plan. After the deadly virus extinct or all the human being vaccinated against the disease most of the people will be engaged at the village level and if any surplus labour exists they again will be migrated.

Different sources for collecting and utilizing the revenues could be; a) Different religious establishments have huge resources, which can be used for this purpose, b) For this time, Government may relax the FRBM act to some extent, c) Government may borrow internally from different institutions like RBI and also from the public by selling the Government securities, bonds etc., d) Government also can borrow externally from different institutions like World Bank, IMF, ADB etc., and e) For the time being, many welfare programmes may be halted to utilize this fund in this manner. Once people find employment, there will be automatic mechanism that may bring the economy back on the track. Consequently, both lives and livelihoods of the people could be saved.

## 7. Conclusion:

In this article, we discussed the problems of the migrant workers during the lockdown and shutdown period due to Covid-19. The data from different sources are interpreted graphically and analytically. Different tables and graphs reveal the true facts of the problem of the migrant workers, i.e., how they faced the difficulty to live. This investigation

shows the importance of life than the livelihood because first an individual have to live then to earn for life. Hence, this study will be helpful for other researchers to extend this research using other parameters. Also it will be helpful for the Government to carry out different plans, execution and implementation of policies. Although life owns the edge over livelihood, without a decent livelihood, life becomes lifeless. Thus, while people are to be cautious for protecting their lives, governmental intervention has a role to play as a facilitator for ensuring livelihood.

Both life and livelihood are equally important for any human being. While former matters more in short-run, the latter matters more in long-run. If we neglect life, we will lose our existence

now, but if we neglect livelihood, we may have our life now but will definitely lose that subsequently. Thus, strong intervention from government is required to save both lives and livelihoods of migrant workers who have been on the crossroad of life and livelihood. A genuine query may arise pertaining to successful implementation of the policies that could strike balance between lives and livelihoods during a crisis like outbreak of Covid-19. For the purpose of saving both lives and livelihoods, huge fund is required under two heads; i) To spend on fighting out Covid-19 and providing essential commodities to all the citizens during the new normal. ii) To provide packages to different establishments to restart operation post Covid-19 normalcy.

### References:

- Kothari, U. (2002), Migration and Chronic Poverty, Working Paper No. 16, Chronic Poverty Research Center, Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester.
- De Haan, A. (1999) 'Livelihoods and Poverty: the role of migration. A Critical Review of the Migration Literature', *Journal of Development Studies*, vol.36, no.2
- McDowell, C. and A. de Haan (1997) 'Migration and Sustainable Livelihoods: a critical review of the literature', IDS Working Paper no. 65
- Papastergiadis, N. (2000) *The Turbulence of Migration*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Adhikari, A., Goregaonkar, N., Narayanan, R. *et al.* Manufactured Maladies: Lives and Livelihoods of Migrant Workers During COVID-19 Lockdown in India. *Ind. J. Labour Econ.* 63, 969–997 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41027-020-00282-x>

- Deaton, A., and J. Drèze. 2002. Poverty and Inequality in India: A Re-Examination. *Economic & Political Weekly* 37 (36): 3729–3748.
- Sahoo, S.K., Swain, S.C. (2022). Repatriated Migrants in Re-engineering Supply Chain of Agricultural Produce of Rural Odisha. In: Mallick, P.K., Bhoi, A.K., González-Briones, A., Pattnaik, P.K. (eds) *Electronic Systems and Intelligent Computing. Lecture Notes in Electrical Engineering*, vol 860. Springer, Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9488-2\\_65](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9488-2_65)
- Jayadev, A., S. Motiram, and V. Vakulabharanam. 2007. Patterns of Wealth Disparities in India during the Liberalisation Era. *Economic & Political Weekly* 42 (38): 3853–3863.