

MIGRATION AND PANDEMIC: ROLE OF COMMUNITY RADIO

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Abstract: -

Human migration basically involves the movement of people from one place to another either with the intention of setting, permanent or temporarily at a new place. The Covid- 19 pandemic has changed the life of the people completely due to which migration, changes in the work culture of migrants and a sudden change in the way of life has occurred. This paper through secondary literature and review tries to analyse the changes in society and the role of media during Covid- 19 pandemics. The major objective of the paper is to understand the role of media especially community radios during the tough pandemic situation.

Keywords:

Migration, pandemic, media, community radio.

Migration in simple terms is the movement of people from one city to another, from rural to urban, from urban to urban and from one country to another.

Lee (1966) provides a definition that considers both the temporal and spatial dimensions of migration. He defines migration as, a change in permanent or semi – permanent residence; something that involves an origin, a destination and intervening obstacles (Lee, 1966).

There are no single causes of migration. There are different drivers of human migration such as – (A) Environmental – Land productivity, food / energy / water security, climate change and natural disasters, conservation efforts. (B) Political – Discrimination, persecution governance, freedom conflict, insecurity. (C) Demographic – Population size and density, population structure, disease prevalence. (D) Economic – Employment opportunities, income, wages, well being, production prices, and consumption price (E) Social – seeking education, family obligations or ties.

Neuman, 2015, Foresight, 2011, Black, 2011 have discussed about intervening obstacles

such as cost of moving, social networks, political and legal frameworks. Some personal factors are also there such as age, sex education, marital status, wealth etc. These affects the decision whether to migrate or stay. Rao (1981, 21) offers the following definition and types of migration: Migration is a shift in the place of residence for some length of time. While it excludes short visits and tours, it includes different types of both voluntary and involuntary movements. Examples of involuntary movements are migration under such crises as war, transfer of population, riots, floods, droughts and earth –quakes. It also includes marriage migration – virilocal, uxorilocal, or neolocal and transfer migration. There are other situations of migration where movement is a part of people's earning a livelihood. There are nomads, shifting cultivators, itinerant traders and salesmen artisans and labourers.

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003) identify two major paradigms of migration. The marginalist or dual economy model attributes migration to wage differentials between the two sectors – one, rural/traditional/low wage and the other urban/modern/high wage. Marxists model on the other hand view (temporary) migrants as a surplus labour pool used by dominant groups to drive down wages and weaken the possibility of collective action.

In this perspective, "Cyclical migration may occur because it can allow agents to loosen and occasionally repudiate institutionalized forms of authority and control that are exercised through the rural labour process". This theorization views migration as vectors of ideas and 'political sensibilities' (p204), from the urban to the rural and vice versa.

The most influential study of circular migration in India is by Dutch Anthropologist Jan Breman's work on the Adivasi Halpati's of South Gujarat, who travel from their villages to

the largest nearby city of Surat. In Breman's (1996) study, the vast majority of industrial labour in Surat consisted of migrants- a 'foot loose proletariat'. Furthermore, as Breman notes (1996, 70), "urban employment in the informal sector is marked by the cyclicity that is usually associated with an agrarian- rural economic life- style. Thus there was little concept of "leave" or vacation time- employees who took days off for sickness or travel stood to loose their jobs.

Jodhka's (2012) work, focusing on two Haryana villages on the periphery of the National Capital Region, also reveals the spatial form of the rural- urban continuum. Many of his respondents commuted to nearby urban centres, even while continuing to live in the villages... "Choosing to live in the village did not imply any kind of commitment to or identification with the village and its ethos. The social order of caste hierarchy is a thing of past and the collective identity of villages are nearly completely fragmented".

A pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread over the larger region and has affected larger number of people. While going through History, there have been a number of pandemics such as small pox and tuberculosis. The most fatal pandemic in recorded history was the Black Death (also known as The Plague) which killed an estimated 75 – 200 million people in 14th century. The W H O discusses phases that how in nature, influenza virus circulate continuously among animals, especially birds. Even though such viruses might theoretically develop into pandemic viruses, in Phase 1, no viruses circulating among animals have been reported to cause infections in humans. In Phase 2, an animal influenza virus circulating among domesticated or wild animals is known to have caused infection in humans, and is therefore considered a potential pandemic threat. In Phase 3, an animal or human – animal influenza reassortant virus has caused sporadic cases or small clusters of disease in people, but has not resulted in human – to- human transmission sufficient to sustain community - level outbreaks. Limited human - to – human transmission may occur under some

circumstances; for example, when there is close contact between an infected person and an unprotected caregiver. However, limited transmission under such restricted circumstances does not indicate that the virus has gained the level of transmissibility among humans necessary to cause a pandemic. Phase 4 is characterized by verified human to human transmission of an animal or human – animal influenza reassortant virus able to cause community - level outbreaks. Phase 4 indicates a significant increase in risk of a pandemic but does not necessarily mean that a pandemic is a foregone conclusion. Phase 5 is characterized by human – to – human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one W H O region. Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, implementation of the planned mitigation measures in short. Phase 6, the pandemic phase, is characterized by community level outbreaks in at least one other country in a different W H O region in addition to the criteria defined in Phase 5. Designation of this phase will indicate that a global pandemic is underway. The post – peak period signifies that pandemic activity appears to be decreasing; however it is uncertain if additional waves will occur and countries will need to be prepared for a second wave. In the post – pandemic period, influenza disease activity will have returned to levels normally seen for seasonal influenza. At this stage, it is important to maintain surveillance and update pandemic preparedness and response plans accordingly. An intensive phase of recovery and evaluation may be required (World Health Organization; 2009).

The pandemic has brought a complete U- turn in the trend of migration. It has shown that now there is back – pedal or reverse migration from the 'destination' to the 'source' in large parts of the country. Most people who are working as agriculture labour, brick kilns, construction sites, industrial non – skilled workers, small businesses such as working in hotels, dhabas, etc. are returning back to their villages. (Ajay Dandekar, Rahul Ghai, 2020).

In order to protect the citizens from covid – 19 pandemics, lockdown was announced but this

has affected the lakhs of labourers, daily wage earners etc. In India around 94 % of women are employed in the unorganized sector, but it was noticed that there was under estimation of women's work was seen as migrant women workers are generally at the bottom of pyramid and their work remain unrecognized (Ajay Dandekar, Rahul Ghai, 2020).

The pandemic affects the life of the people differently. Not all the sections of the society get affected equally. It is the poor and the weakest section which faces the consequences more.

The Covid – 19 pandemics has brought a sudden change in the life of the people. It has also shown that how would be the future of the work place. For example, have announced 'working from home' in the near future. During this pandemic, schools and colleges were closed. As education is also necessary along with other welfare measures, classes in schools and colleges were conducted online. Webinars were conducted; open- book texts are available for students. During this tough pandemic situation, media has played a very vital role in creating awareness among people. Mobile media has played a very vital role. The facilities which are available in smart phones helped not only the migrant labour but also many people. The facilities such as the audio – video content, global positioning system (G P S) helped migrant workers when they were returning home. The facilities of mobile banking also helped lot of people to do their banking transactions from home. Various e- payment applications such as Google – Pay, Paytm also benefitted lot of people for doing instant cash transfer. (Amoolya Rajappa, 2021).

Another way in which media helped people is through 'community – radio'. Community radio is a model of radio broad- casting which serve geographic communities and communities of interest. They are generally operated and owned by the community they serve. They allow individuals, groups and communities to share their own experiences, express their views etc. It guarantees community involvement and participation, acts as the community's eyes and ears during a crisis, and can be the main means of

information exchange, community preparation, and risk reduction. In some of the most isolated parts of the nation, community radio stations are a reliable source of information distribution and can provide last-mile connectivity. Community radio has been developed in many countries such as in United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States. Community radios have been built for the access and for the participation of the local people. Generally they are run by local people to serve local audience. The Association of Radio Operators for India (AROI) commissioned a recent survey that revealed that the radio sector had 51 million listeners, almost twice as many as social media (57 million) and television (56 million). Radio's listenership has increased by 23% during the lockdown. During the time of Covid – 19 pandemics, these community radios have played a major role in providing relevant information to communities to how to protect themselves against the virus. Community radio are serving as a channel or mechanism through which information such as safety precautions, symptoms of infections, testing, quarantine rules and giving alerts and various other information. For example, in Gurugram (erst while Gurgaon), started 'Gurgaon ki Awaaz' which inform the migrant workers in Gurugram about safety and dealing with health issues such as anxiety, loss of jobs, availability of essential goods etc (Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar, 2020). Another example is in order to provide information to all the people, tribal population of Sargur, Mysore, there in community radio they invites doctors and health officials to provide information in the local language. (R Krishna Kumar, 2020.) Another example is in Uttarakhand area, seven radio stations have come together and created the network and reached the remotest villages to tackle misinformation about Covid – 19. These are Mandakini ki Awaaz, Kumaon Vaani, Pantnagar Janvani, Radio Zindagee, Himgiri ki Awaaz, HevalVaani and Radio Khushi are coordinating with the People's Power Collective, a community radio capacity - building, training and skilling organization (AvantikaBhuyan). Another example is Uttar Pradesh, several community radios are playing

important role in helping local public in the fight against Covid-19.

One such radio is 'Kisan Community Radio' based in Basti district. They update their audience regularly with Covid – 19 news and to download Aarogya Setu App. Another radio station is 'Radio Badayun' which also runs programmes related to Covid – 19. They through radio clear the doubts of general public and invite doctors and health experts (All India Radio News, 2020). Community radio has played a vital role in tackling the pandemic and minimizing its impact on the lives of the people.

Conclusion

Through this paper, efforts are being made to understand how pandemic has affected the migration. Furthermore the pandemic era has led to changes in the present world system. The role of community radio especially in far away areas has played a vital role in the pandemic era. So, the issue that needs to be answered is: Have they been acting unethically? Have they been putting out news releases? Should they suffer consequences for this? That would be ridiculous if it came to that. They've done what they do best, which is create and distribute content that helps people through these trying times. Not only have they stopped the sickness from spreading, but they have also stopped dread and panic. Therefore, the Government should try to include community radio in their policy and support them financially. The paper also tries to analyse how a pandemic affects the life of informal sector people which in result has caused reverse migration. Thus, author has tried to discuss the impediments of the pandemic era and the role of media based on the secondary literature.

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