

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology
of Egypt / Egyptology

**REVERSE MIGRATION AMID COVID OUTBREAK, ITS IMPACT AND
CONSEQUENCES ON UNSKILLED AND SEMISKILLED MIGRANTS
ABOUT VILLAGES IN BANSDIH BLOCK, BALLIA, UTTAR PRADESH.**

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BANSDIH BLOCK, BALLIA, UTTAR PRADESH.– Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of
Egypt/Egyptology 18(8), 3116-3124. ISSN 1567-214x**

Keyword- Migration, Reverse Migration, Pandemic, Covid -19, Opportunity, Population

ABSTRACT

Migration is the process which led the distribution of human on this planet with different cause for food and survival. Later agriculture, the economic opportunity becomes a dominant cause. In this pandemic year, millions of workers had to migrate back to their original places. Mainly in their villages in India intensifying the magnitude of reverse migration of semiskilled and unskilled workers and they are the most to suffer in this pandemic of Covid – 19 outbreak. This paper is a case study research paper on a contemporary issue which will try to unfold the cause and impact of this reverse migration to themselves and their family. Their livelihood and employment opportunity in one of the least developed regions of Eastern Uttar Pradesh that is of Bansdih block of Ballia District. Where almost 70% of the working population migrates for employment and better economic opportunity.

OBJECTIVE

1. Identify the unskilled workers who migrate to another state for work.
2. Identify and access the causes of reverse migration apart Covid-19 outbreak.
3. Analyse the impact of Reverse Migration due to covid-19 and prolonged lockdown on their livelihood and other behavioural changes

METHODOLOGY

This is a case study research data is mostly abstracted by field survey primarily. The door interview is done with the migrant workers who flee back to their homes after lockdown from various states and cities. Questionnaires' prepared and the data were collected in tables later analysed and interpreted accordingly. Questions were asked like their educational qualification, marital status, and the place they migrate to work. Duration of migration. Landholding, their jobs, pandemic and problems. Change in the decision of migrating after 2nd wave etc. A targeted approach to working-class who migrate and random sampling is

carried out. Secondary data of village population, area, literacy are taken from the government released data in Census. All the data are tabled and with the help of charts. A special group is targeted and freedom of answering the question was given and later processed with a deductive approach.

STUDY AREA

The area of study is in the villages of Bansdih Block, District Ballia. Azamgarh division, Uttar Pradesh. The surveyed villages are located 19km north of district headquarter Ballia. In total 108 sample size of data is collected from the six villages of Bansdih block where almost 80% of the working population migrates to find a job in different states and cities like Gujrat, Maharastra, Punjab, Delhi, Mumbai etc. The villages are Kewatallia Kala, Kewatallia Chaube, Dev Dih, Rukunpura, Hardattpur and Dui Bhusi. All these villages are near to one other in the periphery of oxbow lake created by Ghaghra River and adjoining in Bansdih Block municipality. Kewatallia Kala and Rukunpura are dominated by fisherman communities and other villages are a mixed population of a community like Ahir, Ballia district is in the doab region between Ganga and its tributary Ghaghra. This makes the land fertile for farming and agriculture is the main economic activity of the majority population here.

INTRODUCTION

Uttar Pradesh is India largest state with 19.98 Crores (census, 2011) population. Which is also the biggest contributor of interstate migrants. Though the proportion of migration is large from the eastern region of this state due to backwardness socially and economically. The character of the migration is from rural to urban mostly in the industrial states where they can get jobs. They get absorbed as an unskilled and semiskilled worker in factories and industries construction in real states and many in mining and brick kilns. The United Nations multilingual dictionary defines "MIGRATION" as a form of spatial mobility that involves a change in the usual place in residence and implies movement across an administrative boundary. Migration can be the result of the social, cultural, economic, political and physical circumstances in which individuals and societies find themselves (Bhende & Kanlikar, 2016). In most countries, migration has been observed that industrialization and economic development are accompanied by large scale movements of people from farm areas and towns to other towns and from one country to the other country (Bogue, 1961). Globally importance of migration has been increasing and migrants are becoming important contributors to the population of big cities of the world (World migration report, 2015) Systemic migration of unskilled labour in India dates back to the colonial era when after abolishing the slave trade. The black slaves were replaced with Indian Labours. They work in plantations and mines in Mauritius, West Indies colonies, Fiji, South Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, Ceylon(Srilanka), Burma(Myanmar)(Naidu 1991; Dewal et al 2004). The emigration was male-dominated and temporary but with the advent of 20th-century women also started migrating and it became more of permanent characters. Now the unskilled labour is forced in interstate migration due to various push factors like lack of economic opportunity, education, infrastructure, landlessness, less growth in agriculture, caste discrimination. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh account for 50% of the total share of migrant percentage to the total. Where Uttar Pradesh contributes 20.64% and Bihar 14.9% (which is a very high share) according to the 2011 census. Near about 30% of migrants migrate to another state for work and business. Most of the migrants migrate to Delhi, Mumbai, as it bears the heat of 1/3rd of the total, migrated population. The regional disparity, inequality in economic

development is a key driving force for the movement of migrants from underdeveloped states to more developed states (Panchamukhi, 2013). The migrants who don't find any jobs and cannot discover employment migrate to other states to gain more income. The covid 19 outbreak from Wuhan city was reported in December 2019. And reported in India on January 30, 2020. The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced COVID-19 disease as a Pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). The government of India took strict action by imposing a lockdown and restriction of lockdown for 21 days in the whole country. The movement of people, transport were paused. This episode created panic in millions of migrants across nations. Due to no availability of work and earning. Fear of uncertainties to the families' health. Prolonging lockdown and increasing expenditure away from home, shortage of food compelled the migrant worker to return to their home in any possible way. The Reverse migration took place in a short span and huge magnitude. After the improvement and ease of lockdown people again migrated but were compelled to come back home in March- April 2021. With the outbreak of the 2nd wave of Covid -19. And reverse migrants of labours and workers again left them to think of new options. This impact changed the behaviour of their migration pattern. Migration is considered to be a contagious phenomenon in the sense that once the stream of migration takes a definite direction it continues to follow unless any serious obstacles come in the way (Zachariah,1968; Kayastha and Prakash, 1971)

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The district of East Uttar Pradesh also called Purvanchal and consist primarily of the western Bhojpuri Region. It comprises 5 divisions named Gorakhpur division, Varanasi division, Mirzapur division, Basti Division, Azamgarh division. This case study is carried in few villages in the Azamgarh division of Ballia district and Bansdih block. This region is fertile agricultural doab

Educational Qualification	Distribution of the sample population
Illiterate	12
High school (Class10)	53
Intermediate (Class 12)	36
Graduation	7

between Ghaghra flowing in the north and Ganga flowing in the south.

VILLAGE	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL NO. OF HOUSES	FEMALE POPULATION (%)	TOTAL LITERACY RATE (%)	WORKING POPULATION
Kewatallia Kala	988	180	51.9%	57.0%	26.1%
Dev D	2879	493	49.6%	56.2%	30.9%
Duhi Bhusi	1638	249	48.2%	57.6%	32.7%
Hardattpur	1178	147	46.9%	45.8%	48.6%
Kewatallia Choube	2267	340	49.1%	44.3%	31.1%
Rukunpura	2569	395	49.5%	58.1%	26.0%

Table 1: Important facts regarding the

surveyed village.

Source: Census of India, 2011

Table: 2 Educational qualifications of the sample size
Source: Primary Survey

The data collected by primary survey with fieldwork are from the villages named Kewatallia Kala, Dev Dish, Duhi Bhusi, Hrdattpur, Kewatallia Chhoube and Rukunpura. Almost all the working population migrate to other states and towns for jobs. They mostly are seasonal migrants as they migrate after sowing their seeds and returns during harvest season but many of them were landless. Kewatallia Kala and Rukunpura are mainly dominated by the fisherman community. And all other surveyed villages have mixed communities. Dev Dih accounts for the most populous village with 2879 population size and most number of houses with 493 households but does not contribute to maximum working population which is 30.9%. Rukunpura with 2569 population stand 2nd most populated followed by Kewatallia Chaube(2267), Duhi Bhusi(1638), Hrdattpur (1178), Kewatallia Kala(988). Simultaneously the number of households distributed proportionally according to a population of village Rukunpura with 395 households is 2nd position rest Villages, Kewatallia Chaube (340), Duhi Bhusi(249), Kewatallia Kala (180) and Hardattapur (147). exception in Kewatallia Kala with a population of 988 contributes to houses while Hardattpur with 1178 population size had only 147 houses. The female population also highest in Kewatallia Kala with a 51.9% share and lowest in Hardattpur that 46.9%. The literacy rate is highest in Rukunpura that is 58.1% and the rest four villages literacy lies between Duhi Bhusi with 2nd most literate 57.6 % following Kewatallia Kala 57.0%, Dev Dih 56.2%, Hardattpur (45.8%), Kewatallia Chaube (44.3%). The literacy rates of these villages on average 49.2% are 24.84% less than the national literacy rate which is 74.04% and 20.52% less than the state literacy rate which is 69.72%. As the literacy rate of the Ballia district is 70.94% which is more than the state average and less than the national average. This displays the backwardness level of this area within the district and nationally it has to cover a long distance to meet development criteria. The working population is highest that is 48.6% in Hardattpur followed by Duhi Bhusi (32.7%), Kewatallia Choube (31.1%), Dev Dih (30.9%), Kewatallia Kala (26.1%), Rukunpura (26.0%).

The migration of workers mostly as unskilled labour to other states and failing to develop other options of income on their land and place proves the lack of individual capacity and it and limited skills. As per census 2011 if a person is aged seven and above who both can read and write with understanding in any

language is called literate. As per primary data surveyed in fieldwork, out of 108 sample size 12 are illiterate, 53 completed high school (10th), 36 completed intermediate (12th), 7 people drop out of graduation. After enquiring about finding jobs in government services and doing their own business they admitted to not attending the classes and getting enrolled in coaching and passed their 10th and 12th by unfair means and lack of support and motivation with the financial problem of family and other issues they could not complete the graduation and they drop out from it. Out of 7 samples who got enrolled themselves into college 5 of them drops out in the first year and 2 of them drops out in the second year To find a job and sustain the family. Early marriage also forces them to earn for their family. While enrolled in the school they had to help their parents in field cultivation of the crop, sowing and harvesting which makes them unable to attend the class. Skill less education make them migrate to other states following their elder's footprint. They discover new jobs at destination places many of the workers migrate in groups allotted the job in factories by contractors.

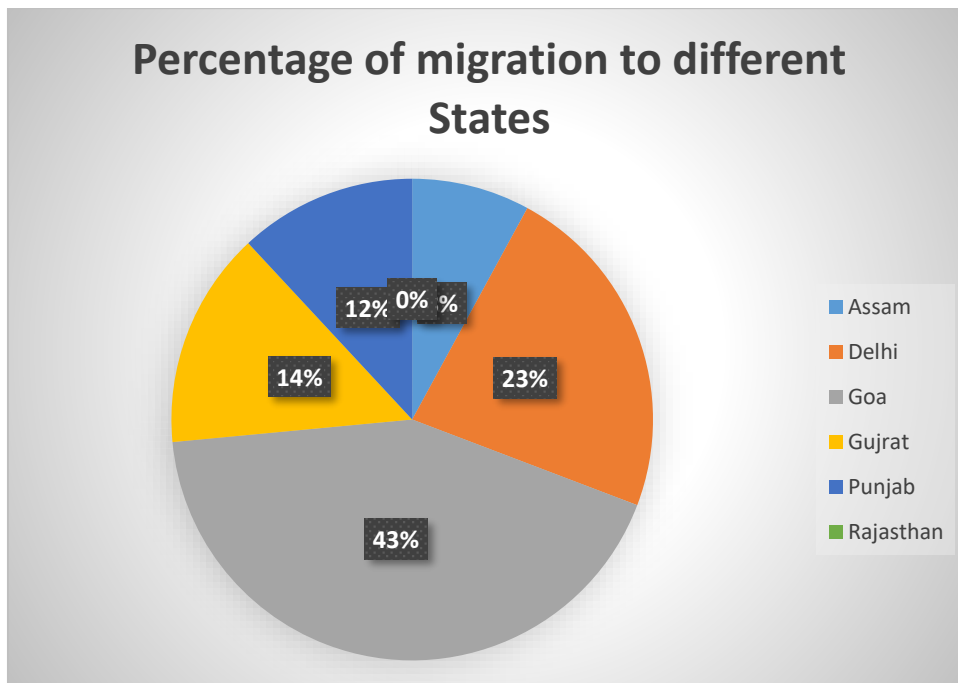
Table 3: Unskilled labour migrating to different states in different fields of work.

States migrants migrate for work	No. of migrants	Work they prefer to do
Assam	08	Brick kiln
Delhi	23	Factories, daily wage
Goa	43	Sand mining
Gujarat	15	Fabrication, factories
Punjab	12	Fabrication, factories
Rajasthan	05	Stone mining
Karnataka	02	Sand mining

Source: Primary Survey

Out of 108 samples, 8 people migrate to Assam as labourers working in Brick Kilns. 23 people work in factories and some as daily wage workers in NCR and Delhi. 43 out of 108 surveyed sample migrate to Goa and 2 to Karnataka here they migrate in groups work in Sand mining. As they had to dive to the shallow continental shelf offshore for mining sand and get paid 1000 per day. Many of the fisherman community who used to living in water opt for this work. And almost all the people migrating from Kewatallia Kala and Rukunpura go to this place. Persons who migrated to Punjab and Gujarat work in the Fabrication industries in cloth and plywood industries.

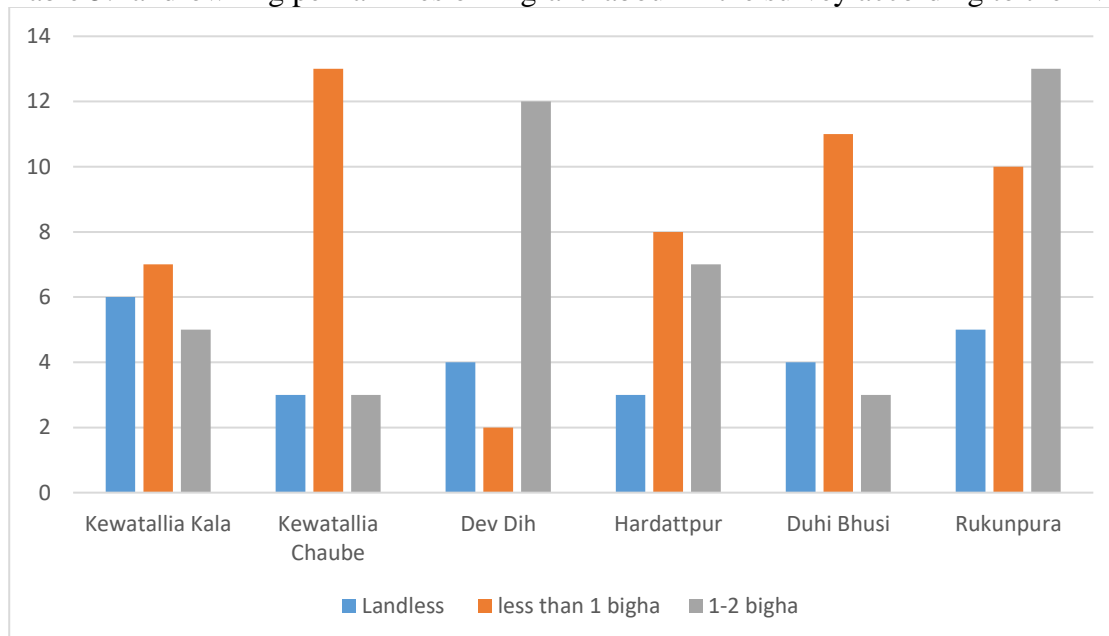
Table 4: Percentage of unskilled workers migrating to different states.



Source: Primary Data

This data reveals that the maximum population 43% migrate to Goa, 23% migrate to Delhi and NCR, 15% to Gujarat, 14% to Gujarat, 12% to Punjab, 8% to Assam. 42.59% of workers are semiskilled who worked for years in fabrication industries and some daily wage earners but they switch to work as labourers if they could not find a job of their skill.

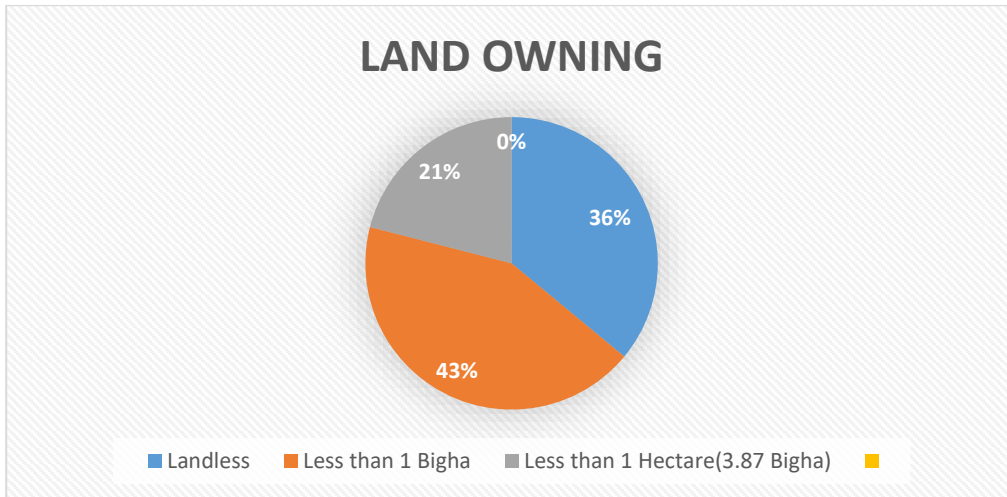
Table 5: land-owning per families of migrant labour in the survey according to their villages.



Source: Primary Survey

In the sample survey, they admitted to own land in their family. Here in East Uttar Pradesh it is demarcated as Bigha. 1 Bigha is 1/3.87 hectare. Most of the land individually is owned by the former Landlords and families and other high caste communities like Brahmins. Though in Land Sealing and distribution by government landless farmer gets a small share of the land but largely it was unsuccessful in this region. Not more than 1 hectare of agricultural land is accounted for by the surveyed people.

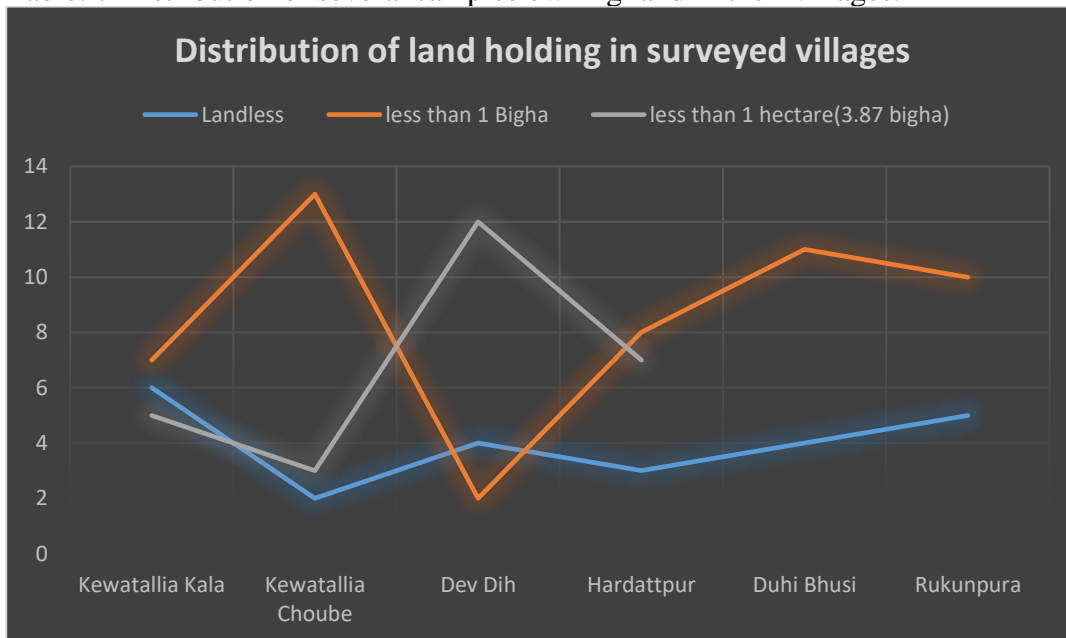
Table: 6 distribution of land-owning to the percentage of the population



Source: Primary survey

36% of the surveyed household do not possess any land while 43% own less than 1 Bigha which is divided among their family member, 21% has less than 1 hectare and undivided.

Table: 7 Distribution of several samples owning land in their villages.



Source: Primary Survey

The primary activity is agriculture and practice of subsistence agriculture which somehow meet their daily food requirement to some extent but could not full fill another requirement of medicine, function etc. so for the extra money they migrate make money and come back utilize it and again migrate to earn money. This is the cycle that somehow sustain their family demand

After the Covid-19 outbreak took place initially in 2019. Many of them who initially cooperated with the Government later became patient less due to

running out of food, exhausting savings, no income and increasing expenditure away from family. The migrant from Delhi was most in panic by rumours of running train to their destination and thousand gathered in railway stations in Delhi and Anand Vihar bus depot. The panic grew in other states like Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. And their suffering was just at the initial stage which was in itself unbearable due to summer months and heatwaves in North India. Many people from Delhi and NCR region took the bus and came to Varanasi. And from there they had to take transport vehicle to Ballia though they had to walk to their villages covering 30 km in the least way. People from Goa and Karnataka were transported by Sonu Sood a film actor to Varanasi. Migrants from Punjab and Rajasthan admitted to walking through roads to Uttar Pradesh Border. There they found the state-run buses. People from Assam were transported by their employers by hiring a bus. Seventeen people admitted to having walking to Kanpur from Delhi and Punjab at the initial stage when buses were not available. After somehow reaching their villages the stigma of Covid Carrier haunted them and had to stay away from villages in fields for 14 days in a quarantine centre arranged by village Pradhan. According to the primary survey on average, they had to pay 4000 rupees to transport trucks to cover the miles to the destinations. Whoever could not afford had to walk all the way hungry and dehydrated. Nowhere food was available but only Biscuits. After reaching their home almost everyone exhausted their savings. The three-month lockdown forced them to do their traditional works like fishing, selling milk, cultivating vegetables and selling in markets. This changed a lot in their monthly income. The migrants who went for sand mining who could save 15000 rupees per month now could earn only 5000 rupees on average. The income similarly decreases for factory workers who grow vegetables as well they could also hardly earn 3000 in the lockdown as the prices of vegetables decreased as it could not find a market because of lockdown and income was also hit. The health care facility was under stress and struggling with trained manpower. No person went to the hospital in the entire lockdown and no healthcare facility exists in any of this village and treated themselves by home remedy. With no hope of migrating back and finding work shortly many started selling samosa and Bread Pakoda in the villages to sustain their families. People also worked in MGNREGA but not every day the work was available could earn 2000 per month. Few also took credit from friends to sustain the needs of families on interest. 54 people got the money from the government of 2000 rupees who own land through PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI (PM-KISAN). Which was very less to support the expenditure of the depending family members. And after the lockdown was relaxed and the market started to open almost all the migrants migrated back to their work. Fortunately, no one was tested positive in 1st wave but when the 2nd wave stroked 12 migrants who came back by trains in April 2021 when lockdown in different states announced was tested positive. 6 of them started their shop in the nearby market in Bansdih. 2 opened cloth shop, 2 general store shops, 1 jewellery and cosmetic shop, 1 started selling vegetables he finds it to be more profitable. Rest are still waiting to open the states completely to migrate again. The reverse migration was not sustainable in the peak season of earning as they said. The pressure of families demand pushed 18 people into debt and they need money to repay it and it will be possible if they find work for the next 3 years. 26 person had to find new destination and job as their previous contract is over with the factories. Again finding work to compensate for the economic loss as these families' bears during lockdown with no economic opportunity in their native place will trigger the Distress migration.

CONCLUSION

The reverse migration due to COVID-19 was the 2nd largest migration in the history of India. Where more than 14 million people were displaced. In the primary survey, we have found that many started growing vegetables by themselves in whatever land they possess and sell them in the market. According to the official data from the Ministry of Agriculture and farmers, welfare showed that there is an increase of 21% of the sowing of Kharif crop across India, compared to the same period of last year. This was fuelled by the transfer of Rs 2000 within three months by the government under the PM-KISAN scheme. This monetary aid was only beneficial to those who own any land. The rural health care facility was in the hand of untrained health workers, without any medical training. Lack of awareness and conservatism rumours aired of getting rid of this virus by Pooja and Hawan. The family members of those who were in quarantine in the village separately participated in violating guidelines by mass gatherings. The government tried to push money and employment through government machinery and programmes like Garib Kalyan Rojgar Yojna, MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. These migrating workers are nowhere formally registered. Their migrating nature from one to other states for a job and lack of education and awareness. They are not enrolled and get deprived of government schemes. All the migrant's workers unskilled and semiskilled admitted to migrating once the situation is cured completely and wished to work in their native place if get the opportunity and a decent wage. This Region as a whole need special attention by Central and state government to develop infrastructure with media to highlight dark side and practices and NGOs who could work to uplift the education quality and aware people about health and hygiene and change perception which could facilitate the potential and increase the employability of this place which could stop migration.

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