



INCREASED VULNERABILITIES FACED BY MARGINALIZED MIGRANT FAMILIES INHABITING URBAN SLUMS IN GURGAON DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on Economic dimensions: short-term and long-term implications for employment and livelihoods of migrants in regard to **urbanization**: The respondents belong to migrant and marginalized families that live in 2 urban slums in Gurgaon. The paper captures the vulnerabilities of this population in regard to their income and expenses for housing rentals and other expenses. The data is analysed on the following themes- demographic data, educational and occupational details, income, sustenance plans during the **pandemic** lockdown, provision of government documentation, emotional needs as well as continuity of child education. The conclusion highlights the increased vulnerabilities faced by the marginalized families due to their income, occupation, migration status. Further it captures their views on their ability and mechanisms to support themselves financially during the lockdown period of the **Covid 19 pandemic**.

KEYWORDS :

2. Methodology

2.1.1 Objective

The overall objective of the study explores the vulnerabilities to sustain faced by migrant marginalized families that inhabit 2 urban Slums in Gurgaon during the Covid 19 Pandemic.

2.2. Operational definitions

- **Marginalization**— broadly has been defined as a complex process of relegating specific groups of people to the lower or outer edge of society. It effectively pushes these groups of people to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally and socially as a result of exclusionary practices.

For the purpose of this study marginalized refers to members from the vulnerable communities inhabiting an urban slum. They include people who have been pushed to the edges of society. These members belong to the economically weaker sections in the society. They include members from Dalit, Adivasis, schedule tribe, other backward classes, and may be below the poverty line.

- **Migrants**- refers to people who have moved to a particular location and live there for the purpose of economic gains, in search of employment opportunities. For the purpose of this research the term means people from rural settings who have moved to an urban slum in Gurgaon mainly in search of job opportunities.
- **Urban Slum**- this is a heavily populated informal setting characterized by a large number of houses. For the purpose of this study it is Slum with around 50,000+ inhabitants.
- **Pandemic**- refers to an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people, in this case in reference to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- **Informal sector**- For the sake of this study informal sector workers include domestic workers (sweepers, cooks, drivers, housekeepers), potters, parlour professionals, auto drivers.
- **Vulnerability**- the quality or state to preserve self from either physical, social, economic or emotional harm in order to sustain during the Covid Pandemic.

2.3. METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative exploratory study. This study captures data of marginalized migrant families. The primary data is based on quantitative data gathered from 41 respondents inhabiting 2 urban slum in Gurgaon belonging to marginalized migrant families. Data was collected through convenience sampling in April 2020. The respondents were a part of an Ngo's organization set up in the communities where their children were being educated.

The researcher relied on rapport that was previously built while working in the community at the NGO.

2.4 Field of Study

The geographical location of the study are urban slum communities in

Gurgaon called Indira colony and Harijan Colony slums, where the Ngo learning centres are located.

2.4.1 Indra Colony

Indira Colony is a heavily populated village area situated in one of the busiest parts of the city, with a large number of houses and high population with approximately 80,000 inhabitants.

The sample consists of community members with children inhabiting Indira Colony. They belong to marginalized migrant families whose children study at the NGO. Inhabitants of Indira Colony are migrants from different parts of rural Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal.

2.4.2 Harijan Colony

Harijan colony is a heavily populated slum area situated in one of the busiest parts of the city, with a large number of houses and high population density. Approximately 1,50,000 inhabitants. The sample chosen for the purpose of this study are community members with children inhabiting Harijan Colony, whose children study at the NGO. They belong to marginalized migrant families. Inhabitants of Harijan Colony are migrants from different parts of rural Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal.

2.5 Location of the study

Gurgaon is one of Delhi's four major satellite cities and is part of the National Capital Region. It is the second largest city in Haryana and is the industrial and financial centre of Haryana. It has the 3rd highest per capita income in India after Chandigarh and Mumbai. It has recently been renamed to Gurugram.

2.6 Tools

2.6.1 Questionnaire

The tool used was a questionnaire that captured information about the population of interest, in this case the families in Harijan and Indra Colonies. The questions were open and closed end questions, clear and easy to understand. They were brief and used simple language. Because of this, people were more likely to respond to the questionnaire allowing for a larger sample size which could increase the reliability. The open ended questions required short answers and closed ended questions were framed to get yes or no answers, or one option out of multiple to avoid biases. Closed ended questions are also ideal for calculating statistical data and percentages, as the answers set is known, to better support our conclusions.

The questionnaire was conducted in Hindi, which is a language understood by all the participants and therefore they were able to answer it to the best of their abilities and understanding. This has been highlighted by various studies across sectors (Setia,2016)

This was conducted with parents whose children attended the NGO learning centre, which ensured that the results were valid and applicable to the larger population of marginalized migrant families inhabiting urban slums. This selection of the sample of respondents

may be seen to balance the demographic profile of the sample, which also means that the data can be used to draw general inferences of the population (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003)

3. Data Analysis

The data was divided into 6 headings to understand the vulnerabilities faced by migrant marginalised families in 2 urban slums.

1. Demographic Data of Respondents
2. Educational and Occupational Details of Respondents
3. Wage earned by Males and Females
4. Sustenance in the pandemic lockdown increases vulnerability
 - Salaries during the lockdown and resistance to approach employers in order to sustain during the lockdown
 - Burden of Rentals and Other Expenses during lockdown of Covid 19 pandemic
 - Sustenance Needs (Such as Rations)
5. Provision of Government Documentation
6. Emotional needs as well as continuity of child education.

Further the data was analysed and collated for the respondents across both the communities.

3.1. Demographic Data of Respondents

Telephonic conversations were conducted with parents whose children were getting educated at the NGO centre. There were a total of 41 respondents from Harijan Colony and Indra Colony out of which 24 live in Harijan colony and 17 live in Indira colony. However, there is data for 82 parents because each respondent provided data for their spouse as well. Exactly 31.7% of the family members have 4 children living with them, 26.8% of the family members have 5 children living with them and the rest of the families have similar concentrations but with 2-3 children living with them.

The children range from ages 5-13 years. The most common age for the children is six years (11 responses) and with the same number of children for ages 7 and 5 (8 responses). The children most commonly attend KG (37 responses) with 3 children in grade 1.

The respondents are mostly Hindus (35 responses) with all the others being Muslims (6 responses), 5 Muslims reside in Harijan colony with the other residing in Indira Colony. Hindus are more evenly distributed with 19 in Harijan Colony and 16 in Indira Colony.

While there was no majority caste, the respondents included SC (64%), ST (11%) and OBC (10%). General (8%). The remaining 8% respondents did not specify their caste as some did not wish to share their caste details due to lack of documentation proof.

The respondents were mostly migrants from northern states, 79% the migrants were from other states. 21% respondents have migrated within the state or city. These respondents migrated to their present community in the past 1 to 10 years with most of them (25 responses) migrating in the past 5-10 years.

Mothers were younger than fathers in general, with no fathers aged between 18-25 whereas 5 mothers fell into that criteria. 70.7% of the mothers and 63.4% fathers belonged to the age group 25-34.

3.2 Educational and Occupational Details of Respondents

Most of the mothers have some form of education, where 46% remain illiterate. One mother has a bachelor's degree. Fathers were marginally better off with only 39% being illiterate and the rest having some level of education.

51.2% of the mothers work as domestic workers, as compared to 36.6% of fathers working as domestic workers. 31.7% of the mothers were unemployed while only 3 (7.3%) of the fathers were unemployed. Fathers mostly worked in the informal sector with the most common jobs in the data being 9.7% as bus or auto drivers, 39% as labour and services, and 36.6% as domestic workers, either personal drivers or housekeepers. 1 (2.4%) father worked in the formal sector as a DLF maintenance worker.

3.3 Wage earned by Males and Females

Out of the mothers, 80% earned between 5-10 thousand, and 3 (9.7%) mothers each earning between 10-15 thousand and not earning at all. Fathers were much better placed as far as income is concerned, 47.5% of the fathers earn between 10-15 thousand rupees per month while

28.9% earn between 5,000-10,000 rupees per month, and 21.1% earn between 15-20 thousand rupees per month. A mere 2.5% earn between 25-30 thousand rupees per month. The category of parents who earned the most was fathers who were drivers, earning between 10,000 to 20,000 rupees per month on average. More than half the respondents cumulatively (the sum of mothers' and fathers' income) earned between 15,000-20,000 rupees per month.

3.4. Sustenance in the pandemic lockdown increases vulnerability

3.4.1 Salaries during the lockdown and resistance to approach employers in order to sustain during the lockdown

Out of the families that were interviewed, 75% of the mothers who work got their salary in full, while fathers were much worse off with 29.7% of the fathers not getting their salaries for the month of April and 18.9% got a portion of their salaries. 57% of mothers were unsure of their salary in the next month and 35.7% say their employees will not pay them next month. Much like the mothers, out of the fathers, 51.6% of them were unsure about whether they will be paid next month. The employers of 36.7% of the fathers had said that they will not be paid next month. 60% suggest their earnings were affected due to at least 1 member losing their job, an additional 60% are unsure about their wages from their employers due next month.

Further, as a big sign of concern, 96% of mothers have not spoken to their employers for support during the ongoing crisis while 93.9% of the fathers have not spoken to their respective employees. One mother said that she felt embarrassed to ask for her salary since she hadn't been working for the last 2 months, even though she needed it to purchase basic amenities. Only 26 respondents answered whether employers would provide them extra support and all said that they would not receive any extra help from them.

3.4.2 Burden of Rentals and Other Expenses during lockdown of Covid 19 pandemic

The monthly rent for most of the families lies within the range of 4,000-8,000 rupees, and the landlords for 51.5% of the families refused to defer rent. 18.2% of the families were unsure about the status of the same. 16.7% of the families had pending loans.

All respondents are currently finding it difficult to sustain themselves financially, using their previous salaries, savings and loans, and in the future. Only 7.3% of respondents are considering a loan to sustain themselves if the lockdown continues. 82.9% of respondents explicitly stated they are unsure about sustaining themselves in the coming months.

When asked about the probability of migrating back to their village, 35 respondents said they will not go to the village and 3 said it is because they don't have money to do so. 6 respondents said they would but out of them, 66% were unsure about ways to sustain themselves back in their village if they went back.

3.4.3 Sustenance Needs (Such as Rations)

When asked about what kind of support they are looking for, from NGO, the government or other organisations, 97.5% of respondents simply wanted basic amenities like rations to be able to succour themselves in this period. While 3 respondents said they would not need any help, an additional 4 added that any other help apart from rations would also be helpful but did not mention in specific what this help would entail.

3.5 Provision of Government Documentation

Aadhar Card was the most common form of documentation. 28 mothers had Aadhar card with the address of their village, 12 respondents had Gurgaon as their residence and the 1 had their Aadhar Card registered in a location that was neither Gurgaon nor their village. Within the fathers, 25 respondents had Aadhar of their village with 16 having Aadhar with Gurgaon as the address. 27 children had their Aadhar card registered in their own village and 14 had their Aadhar card registered in their current location in Gurgaon.

17 mothers had Ration cards of their village while 10 had of Gurgaon. 15 fathers had ration cards of the village and 10 had of Gurgaon. 17 children didn't have a ration card and 14 children had their ration card registered in their village. 10 children had their ration card registered in Gurgaon.

In the case of BPL Cards, 12 mothers had a BPL card of their village and 10 had a BPL card from Gurgaon. 14 fathers had a BPL card from

their village and 11 had a BPL card from Gurgaon. 7 children had their BPL card registered in their village and 10 children had their BPL card registered in Gurgaon. The other 24 children didn't have a BPL card.

3.6. Emotional needs as well as continuity of child education.

When asked if anything was troubling them emotionally only 2 respondents said yes with one saying they were a little concerned, but did not specifically say about what. One mentioned she was worried about her survive in the coming months due to lack of wages and uncertainty of jobs in the lockdown.

Despite the children being quarantined at home their studies have not been affected to a great extent, 92.7% of the students are able to manage with the material shared with them online by the school. Thus keeping the children engaged they are able to manage their studies during the lockdown.

3.7. Scope and Limitation of study

The design of the questionnaire and multiple-choice questions with categories represents simplification of responses, while the individual responses require interpretation which in cases may be subjective. This questionnaire asked answers for intimate and discreet nuances of everyday life, so results may include respondents lying about their financial stability, either to receive more donations or to make it seem like they are more stable than in reality to avoid embarrassment (Bleek,1987)(Salamone,1977).Additionally, the questionnaire was conducted keeping a small sample size in mind reducing generalizability, however an increase in the sample size would lead to an escalation in systematic bias, since the respondents know the teachers who conducted the questionnaire. Finally, even when asked specifically, none of the parents actually said anything about their emotions, so the report has not been able to capture that aspect of their lives in lockdown holistically.

4. Conclusion and Inferences of the study

The study aims to explore vulnerabilities faced by the migrant marginalized families inhabiting urban settings during the Covid Pandemic as a theme, which has not been explored adequately in the current context. Even though national figures and reports highlight the need to address the economic and social needs of this population during the Pandemic.

The major conclusions from the study are summarized below.

4.1 Income and employment status in relation to duration of stay in Gurgaon

It was found that the longer the respondents had stayed in their particular community, the more they earned on average. On average, for the respondents who migrated more than 5 years ago, their income was 17,700 whereas for people who migrated less than 5 years ago earned only 13,100 on an average. This outlines the fact that having stayed in the city longer gives them more income and subsequently more financial stability. The parents earn more in the city than they do in their villages due to the lack of sufficient work opportunities in the countryside where most families practice within subsistence farming (Kallevik,2014).

The migrants are primarily employed in the informal sector. 87.8% of the fathers and 68.2% of mothers are domestic workers and workers in small businesses. Studies over the years state that many domestic workers and workers in small businesses originate from outside the city in general and their outsider status is in fact an important reason why employers prefer migrants (Breman, 1999).

4.2 Occupational vulnerabilities faced by the respondents

Since most of these respondents work in the informal sector, such as domestic workers and labourers, they are subject to extreme vulnerability which prevents them from defending themselves in this pandemic (Breman, 1999). The data collected highlights that the Domestic workers, which form 51.2% of mothers and 36.6% of fathers, are the most vulnerable because they are not officially classified as workers at all and are therefore not covered by laws that apply to workers (Mohapatra, 2012).

Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers, especially female domestic workers in India, especially since the mothers mostly worked as domestic workers. The mothers who

were domestic workers earned between 5,000-10,000 rupees per month, while fathers working the same job earned between 5,000-15,000 rupees per month, more than the mothers did. Female domestic workers often face very low wages, excessively long hours, have no guaranteed weekly day of rest and at times are vulnerable to physical, mental and sexual abuse or restrictions on freedom of movement in their workplace (Augustin & Singh, 2016).

4.3 Low wages and Gender disparity increases vulnerability of women

Female labour force participation in India's formal sector is lower than many other emerging market economies, and has been declining since the mid-2000s. Moreover, there is a large gap in the labour force participation rates of men and women in India. In the sample studied, only 13 women do not work while the rest were engaged in some form of employment in the informal sector, and the only formal sector employee was a father. In South-Eastern Asia, the share of informal employment in the formal sector and in households between fathers and mothers is relatively high at 9.7 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively, and in this region specifically men are more likely to be part of the formal sector as seen in the data (International Labour Office Geneva, 2018). Women's participation as evident in the sample is still limited to roles of domestic workers and pay is significantly less, as they are a part of the informal sector (Unni, 2005). Out of the respondents the men earned 10,000 more on an average. (Mother's Average: 914 Father Average: 11,585). Despite better participation of mothers in the informal sector than the formal sector, the income generated by them clearly shows the huge disparity that exists. Women workers earn much lower wages than their men counterparts and inequality among the former is much higher than among the latter. Surprisingly enough, wage inequality among women is the highest in public sector jobs in the country. A significant part of wage inequality as observed in India is accounted for by inequality "between" groups rather than inequality "within" groups for working people. In fact, wage inequality persists in India mainly because of significant wage differences between the various sectors(Das, 2012).

4.4 Sustenance in the pandemic lockdown increases vulnerability

4.4.1 Salaries during the lockdown and resistance to approach employers in order to sustain

The respondents do not feel comfortable enough to contact their employer in such dire conditions when all work has dried up. One of the possible reasons for this could be the lack of trust due to stigmatization these workers face from their employers. It is evident when the mother expressed her aversion to seeking out help from her employer since she may feel stigmatized if she does talk to her employer since there aren't any formal laws in place for wage payment in the informal sector. Stigmatization against rural-to-urban migrants is common at both the individual and societal levels. Rural-to-urban migrant workers experience stigmatization in their daily life, including employment at the workplace (Albers, Kinra, Krishna, Ben-Shlomo, & Kuper, 2016). It is possible that there exists a disinclination of their employers to provide the respondents with additional support during the lockdown.

4.4.2 Burden of Rentals and Other Expenses during lockdown of Covid 19 pandemic

Due to low income sources and no relief in rent these respondents are negatively impacted by the lockdown. While the elected officials of many states and the central government have asked landlords to defer rent, most of the landlords of the respondents have not done so or either not communicated this to their tenants who remain unsure. For those in the organized sector, rent seeking is more formalized, but for a large portion of semi-skilled or unskilled workers such as the respondents who do not find formal sector jobs, even rental agreements remain informal and therefore are difficult to enforce governmental regulations upon (Kar, Mandal, Marjit, & Mukherjee, 2019).

4.5 Government Documentation and provision for Provision of Local Government Schemes

As shown in the data on government documentation (3.1.5), a limited number of the mothers and fathers had local Aadar card, ration card, and BPL cards. The majority of respondents have ration cards and BPL cards from their own villages, they might not get ration (money transfers for the same made at their village level) and support in Gurgaon which may make their situation worse in the pandemic. Studies have shown inter-state and intra-state migrant workers being the worst hit with hunger amid lockdown. Among those who reported they never ran out of food said they reduced their intake and often had

one meal a day. At least 5 per cent were skipping meals to provide food for their children. The respondents had no access to social security measures and lacked access to institutional support amid the pandemic perhaps due to lack of local documentation (Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi Research Group, Karwan-E-Mohabbat, 2020).

4.6 Emotional needs of respondents and Education status of the children during the lockdown

Despite going through such tough times, there are negligible respondents mentioning emotional strains. It is documented that those on less income and of lower economic and social status show more positive attitudes to society than those who are affluent (PISA, 2017), however this may just be due to the taboo surrounding mental health in society, the respondents do not wish to seek support on the same.

Additionally, the respondents' children are able to cope up with the e-learning material provided at home. Studies have indicated that virtual engagement of students better than normal classrooms and attendance is almost 100 percent (Shenoy, Mahendher, & Vijay, 2020). This is a positive indicator since globally, the Indian Education sector is amongst the largest, with an extensive network of more than 1.4 million schools and 993 Universities, 39931 Colleges, and 10725 Stand Alone Institutions based completely offline and children are able to cope despite this being the first time they would be exposed to an online platform based learning (Raj, 2020).

4.7. Overall Conclusions

To conclude, the data highlights the demographic, educational, occupational details, wages, expenses, sustainability plans during the Lockdown, government documentation, emotional and educational status of the children of these migrant workers.

It is important to note that over 80% of these respondents belong to the marginalized sections of society. The results further postulated that most of these respondents who work in the informal sector are subject to extreme vulnerability due to financial uncertainty which makes their standard of living worse than before (Bremann, 1999). In addition, domestic workers are more vulnerable because they are not covered by laws that apply to workers in the formal sector (Mohapatra, 2012). Most of the respondents work as domestic workers, 51.2% of the mothers and 36.6% of fathers with a total household income of approximately 17,000 rupees per month. There also exists a major uncertainty for these families in terms of what lies ahead for them. 96% are uncertain about support from employers and 82.92% of the family don't know how they will manage if the lockdown continues to be extended, and there exists a fear this will worsen with time. Gurgaon is in the Orange district zone as per April 2020 and it is unlikely that there will be easing of the lockdown in the near future, seeing the rate at which cases grow on a daily basis. Furthermore, these respondents are hesitant to contact their employer in such dire conditions when all work has dried up. This could be because of the lack of trust due to stigmatization these workers face even from their employers or embarrassment to approach them (Albers, Kinra, Krishna, Ben-Shlomo, & Kuper, 2016). Lastly, their documentation is primarily from their village so they may be unable to avail ration services provided to those who reside in Haryana and have Haryana registered documents.

Thus, it is evident that the Covid Pandemic has increased the vulnerability of members who were already marginalized and on the periphery of society due to their social, economic status.

5.8. Areas for Further Research

This research may be conducted with larger groups of respondents to increase sample size and scope of the findings. The research may also be conducted for a longer period of time to draw inferences on changes in the families' financial state as the lockdown progresses. Additionally, the research could possibly be conducted in a new urban slum location in Gurgaon to study whether similar trends present themselves in different migrant population in the same city. To address the emotional component of the study better, parents could be engaged in focussed group discussions to obtain detailed information about personal and group feelings, perceptions and opinions about the current scenario once the lockdown has been eased.

Appendix 1.1- Questions for questionnaire with Parents

There are seven sections of questions, demographic data, mother's details, father's details, expenses, lockdown extension plans, government documentation and any other issues they might be facing.

There were a total of 57 questions for holistic understanding.

Demographic data

- Name of child
- Name of respondent (parent)
- Phone Number
- Age
- Sex
- Class
- Class Teacher
- Community
- Religion
- Caste
- Which state (country) have they migrated from ?
- How long back did they migrate to the city?
- How long back did they migrate to the present community?
- Total family members staying together(including child)
- Total household income (in thousand)

Mother's details

- Mothers Name
- Mother's age
- Mother's Education qualification
- Mother's employment status
- Mother's income (in thousand)
- Have they spoken to their employers for on-going support? (ration , material)
- What kind of support will employers give if any?
- How much have they got paid this month ?
- Will the employers pay next month?
- Employer Name
- Employer Number

Father's details

- Father's Name
- Father's age
- Father's Education qualification
- Father's employment status
- Father's income (in thousand)
- Have they spoken to their employers for on-going support? (ration, material)
- What kind of support will employers give if any?
- How much have they got paid this month ?
- Will the employers pay next month?
- Employer Name
- Employer Number

Expenses

- Monthly Rent
- Will the landlord defer the rent?
- Landlord name
- Landlord number
- Any pending loans
- If yes, for what how much ?
- Due date for loan (Application can be submitted to the bank for loan deferment)
- Other Expenses currently ... such as tuitions
- How are they managing their expenses currently?

Lockdown extension plans

- What are their plans if the lock down continues?
- In case they plan to go back to the village how will they sustain ?
- What kind of support are they looking for ? (From NGO), Government, other organisations

Government Documentation

- Mothers Documents [Aadhaar Card]
- Mothers Documents [Ration Card]
- Mothers Documents [BPL Card]
- Mothers Documents [Driver's License]
- Mothers Documents [Caste Certificate]
- Fathers Documents [Aadhaar Card]
- Fathers Documents [Ration Card]
- Fathers Documents [BPL Card]
- Fathers Documents [Driver's License]

- Fathers Documents [Caste Certificate]
- Child's Documents [Aadhaar Card]
- Child's Documents [Ration Card]
- Child's Documents [BPL Card]
- Child's Documents [Caste Certificate]
- Child's Documents [School Certificate]

Any other issues they might be facing

- Are the physical constraints they are facing at this time?(fan, size of room)
- Any issues related to ensuring child studies?
- Are the children able to cope with the material shared online
- Anything troubling them emotionally
- How are the children coping at home ?
- Any other

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