

MIGRATION, MOBILITY and CORONA PANDEMIC
SPATIAL STUDY APPROACHES IN POPULATION GEOGRAPHY

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Abstract: In Human terms, migration refers to movement of people, applied more widely incorporating permanent, seasonal and daily change of location. To get rid from war, political instability, natural calamities like droughts, hunger, economic causes like poverty, search for better employment, man has either in group or individual had been moved. In 2020, the Corona Virus spread has to be viewed from Continental migration or human movement. But counter reaction is, to break the chain of virus spread, lock down and quarantine method was applied, that is, no movement. During lock down, people stayed where they were, consequently, economic, social and psychological imprints yet to be recognized fully. In India, another imprint was witnessed, and that is, during no movement order, huge mass movement of reverse migration was witnessed. From urban, migrated rural citizens moved back to rural home at their own, without help of government. This reverse migration has opened new dimension to the study of movement of people during pandemic flashing light on vision and pandemic management of government, changing population structure of urban as well rural India, Economic crisis of rural and urban unorganized sector, rural poverty and rural sustainable development. As, these events are registered over horizontal space, the geographic analysis of pandemic need to study under Migration and Pandemic head. The domain of study could be- International migration and pandemic, Interstate migration and pandemic, Urban –Rural Reverse migration and National policy of internal migration. Comparative analysis between migrants and non migrants through economic, health and social point of view. The outbreak and spread of Corona and Migration has developed two approaches. One is, due to International migration spread of Corona Virus, and second is, migration due to forced locked down during pandemic. Its relevant to mention the developing country like India has shown not only spread of virus due to International migration but also very prominently the pattern of migration due to forced lock down, that is, reversed migration.

Key Words – Corona pandemic, Migration, approaches to study migration.

Introduction - Migration in spatial studies incorporates movement of people within country or out of country borders, with push or pull factors, with respect to time like, permanent or seasonal or daily, and with spatial scale. In 1885, E.G. Ravenstein put forth SEVEN LAWS OF MIGRATION, indicating spatial scale, gender- age perspective, volume of people, process of dispersion and absorption. Recently more dimensions were added in this study. Like, people leaving rural areas are more to urban area; opportunity to earn more money is dominant reason, increasing number of migrants forced to live as refugee.

Developed country like USA, has witnessed mass rural – urban migration after Civil War and abolition of slavery during 1870s. The drought and soil erosion in Dust Bowl along with economic depression forced farmers to migrate urban cities. Further, reduction of farm workers due to mechanization during 1950s and 1960s resulted in reduction of rural people. During 1970s ‘suitcase farmers’ added more push factors to rural farmers. These, natural calamities, induced technology and economic depression witnessed internal or rural- urban migration in which closing of boundaries is not associated. But if the Health hazards are considered, in 1892, port of New York witnessed 20 days imposed quarantine on all immigrants. In 1883 Rayners- Harris National Quarantine Act set up procedures of Medical Inspection of immigrants and suspension of immigration on temporary basis. Bubonic plague of 1900, spread in San Francisco applied quarantine method. Pneumonia outbreak in 1924 quarantined Mexican American Immigrants. Recently, H1N1 influenza epidemic in 2009, Ebola fever in 2014 and Zika virus outbreak 2015, registered tighter restrictions on immigrants in United States.

In European countries, many countries signed bilateral labor migration agreement in 1950s and 1960s. Steady economic growth till oil crisis in 1973-1974, labor deployment and development schemes were formulated, due to which, refugees returned from former colonies to motherland, the direction of flow of migration was from East to West. Next period of migration started with oil crisis and ended with the fall of cold war. In late 1980s, after fall of Iron Curtain, North Western countries restricted migration. Many migrants returned under the title of Family reunification. Further, from fall of cold war, till today, European Union is encouraging intra European migration and restricting migration from third countries. ‘More and Better jobs’ principle facilitated the free movement of people towards Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, in

last few years, Europe has witnessed large surge of asylums from war witnessed countries. This movement of people is held under the title of Mobility of people in Europe. As far as history of epidemics in Europe is concerned, first quarantine was implemented in Ragusa, Sicily, in 1377. First true global pandemic was Spanish Flu in 1918-1920 lasting immense influence over human civilization. During Smallpox pandemic outbreak, in former Yugoslavia, in 1972, it declared marital law and introduced mandatory revaccination. During this, Cordon measure was taken. Cordon is putting entire geographic region in quarantine. Near about 10,000 individuals were quarantined by suspecting contact with infected people. Within two months life returned to normal. Swine flu in 2009, Ebola of 2014-16 and Zhika I 2015-16 management reflected the social aspect in form of emotional epidemiology, as, spreading of fake news in society created panic. It was registered that, Fake News on epidemics requires attention to manage health emergency in future.

Developing country like India has witnessed the most horrifying, politically induced mass migration during India Partition in 1947. According to International Migrant Stock 2019 report released by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, India has emerged as the top source of International migrants, with 17.5 million, constituting 6.4 % of world's total migrant population. Similarly, within the nation, it witness large rural- urban migration. Urban cities are receiving large volume of rural people induced by droughts, education, marriage, better employment. As per 2011 census, there were 90 Lakh immigrants in Mumbai, the Business capital of India. Delhi with 63% and Uttar Pradesh stood at third rank. Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh account for 46% of total number of migrants. North East states are with lowest immigrants. Most common path is Uttar Pradesh- Delhi, Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra, and Karnataka to Maharashtra. As far as epidemics and migration in Indian history is concerned, Cholera pandemic of 1961- 1975, Smallpox epidemic of 1974, had affected, but migration data and measures are not available. In 1994, September, Plague hit Surat. Rumors led people migrate in mass, carrying and spreading in rest of the country. 2002-2004 outbreak of SARS, Swine Flu of 2014-15, and Nipah of 2018 in Kerala, are registered in Indian History.

In 2020, outbreak of Corona Virus has brought the whole world at halt. On 31 December, Wuhan, China, reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia, by identifying novel Corona virus. WHO published first outbreak of disease on 5th January. On 13th January first recorded case

outside of China was reported in Thailand. Corona was declared as virus spreading human to human on 22nd January. WHO declared pandemic on March 11th. To break the chain of spreading transmission of Corona, Governments across the globe started applying Migration Tools. To restrict the mobility of people, nations started to take steps as, closing of borders, travel restrictions, and withholding asylums.

Along with closure of boundaries of country, lock down was implemented with closing state and accordingly districts/ counties and small areas of city as Hot Spots. Home quarantine, mass quarantine was micro level policies implemented. Thus, movement of people from global to local level has been forcefully brought to halt. Consequently, economic, social, psychological impacts slowly started to affect human life. The Corona pandemic not only changed the nature of migration, pattern of migration, but also policies of migration. Present paper desires to study, how the nature, pattern of migration and consequential effects of Corona Virus spread can be studied in spatial reference.

Objective: To reveal the approaches to study the nature, pattern of migration and mobility during Corona Pandemic in spatial context.

Analysis: Corona virus spread has considered as global health determinant. Being transmitted human to human, along with migration, Human mobility must be taken as a dominant concept to study pandemic spatially. Migration is international or internal mass movement, rather, mobility indicates the free movement of labor. Both migration and mobility determine the spread and causality of the pandemic. Migration policy may help in curbing the spread of virus. But, mobility may create obstacles in implementing health policy in health hazard management. Moreover the mobility of people may reflect variations in economic, social, cultural, political, and psychological in host country. Declaration of the epidemic as pandemic helps the countries to implement its migration policies. The International migration for trade, commerce, education, employment was restricted by all global countries by March 2020, after the declaration of the pandemic by WHO. Air ports, Ship movements, Railway movements and Bus transportation were brought to halt. It will be relevant to study spatial pattern of international migration before declaration of pandemic and outbreak of Corona in the country. Free movement of labor in Europe, free movement of rural people in developing countries like India, need to assess differently. Country might be tackling International or internal migration as well mobility of labor or rural – urban migration pattern at a time.

International Migration and Corona Pandemic: After declaration of Corona pandemic by WHO on March 11th almost all countries restricted international air routes, sea routes and railways, roadways, by closing its boundaries. European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen said, 'The less travel, the more we can contain the virus'. March 26, 2020 was 25th anniversary of Schengen Agreement, instead, across border; boundaries were closed. United States of America, suspended all immigration temporarily through an executive order in response to the corona virus outbreak and to protect American Jobs. In India, as a precautionary and preventive measure, Airports were shut from 22nd March. The movement records of air ports, railways, helped in formulating viral spread management plan by identification of visitors, and tracing, quarantine and surveillances. Many remained halted in desperate situation. Both the situations needed human and capital investment in the country.

It will be relevant to study the pattern of global movement of people across continent and countries before pandemic. It may help in correlating the outbreak of pandemic in countries with directions in spatial context. Another aspect may cover the spatial variation in temporal aspect of decision taken by government to close borders, and clarifying it with causes, even though spread of corona was major reason. Third aspect emerges, as, which country uplifted its stranded citizens from other host country, and when. Spatial pattern of uplifting of migrants at international level will help in assessing the plan and expenditure incurred, which may help in future. After closing borders, management plan for migrants stranded at borders, their health and medical expenses need to be studied spatially. To access protection, and eliminate inequality, discrimination, exploitation for migrants and asylums, migration policy is witnessing shift in ideology. World will witness inventory measures taken at global level regarding migration policies to maintain socio economic harmony among migrants and asylums.

Refugees and Pandemic studies: The refugees need more attention on humanitarian grounds in pandemics. Brutal Military crackdown in Myanmar in 2017 has compelled 850,000 Rohingya mostly Muslim minorities at Cox's Bazar in South East Bangladesh. Safe drinking water, water for sanitation, cleanliness, hunger, safety for women, pregnant and lactating mothers are the challenges. Spatial pattern of combating corona pandemic will help in reconstructing migration policies on humanitarian grounds. To escape persecution in Myanmar, and poverty in refugee camps in Bangladesh, Rohingyas with hopes of better life are migrating through sea routes to nearby countries like Malaysia, starving to even deaths. Refugee migration, in pandemic need to

be studied globally. Undocumented migrants are facing hindrance in search of better life. Documentation of migrants, therefore, needs global attention. The pattern of free movement of asylums in EU, and restricted Rohingya refugees in East world, are spatial global differentiations.

Spatial pattern of Geographical Isolation and precautionary migration pattern-

Geographical Isolation itself indicates the restricted movement of people on one hand and within it precautionary migration implies mass movement of quarantined people. The guiding measures by WHO to combat corona spread, incorporate lock down, identification of Hot spots, Quarantine of Hot spots and making it isolated, and to restrict spread in urban slums or densely populated settlement, mass movement of quarantined people from hot spots to different place. The spatial pattern of hot spots evolved in urban areas or any other form of settlement need to study at national level. Emerging of hot spots reveals the greatest mobility of the people. In future, this pattern will help in taking safer steps at early stages. Similarly, geographically isolated areas people are quarantined and displaced for stipulated duration at other place by keeping vigilance. This forced short duration or medical migration has increased economic and administrative burden. Moreover, during quarantine and mass displacement during quarantine, gender sensibility need to observe and study. In India, many hotspots were demarcated, quarantined and mass displaced. At national level what pattern has evolved will definitely help in future.

Spatial pattern of Reversed Migration: Unpredicted and unimagined mass movement of people during locked down is witnessed in India, where, rural- urban migration is common. This movement was given title of ‘labor migrants’, which is not justified. Natural calamities like droughts, failure of crops, opportunities for industry labor, better living and educational facilities force rural Indians to migrate at urban centers. This movement is free of laws and documentation. The movement of Indian Rural citizens is different from EU labor migrants, in respect of native nationality. Therefore, Indian rural people movement during lock down should not be termed as- Labor migrants.

Rather, this is reverse migration. Rural Indians, in desperate situations during locked down, found their own way to go back at native place. Burden of room rent in urban slums, and food insecurity surfaced as they were not provided any financial security either by their employer or

government. Moreover, small spaced room with more members cannot maintain physical distancing. Transportation was halted, so, desperately, highways of India got occupied by rural pedestrians. After 1947 Partition mass migration, this Corona pandemic mass reverse migration in India was witnessed by world. Death of people and birth of child, both extreme happenings were witnessed along with starvation while back migration of rural India. The spatial pattern of reverse migration need special attention in Indian native migration studies, which may help in altering the native migration policy. Documentation and record keeping of rural migrants has become essential in India.

Post effects of reverse migration in terms of economy, rural demography and labor availability in urban industries will be remarkable. Rural poverty, age and sex structure of rural population is going to transform. Shortage of cheap labor in industries may affect economic sector. Perception of citizens engaged in unorganized sector in India need to be checked.

Concluding Notes: Traditionally, migration studies are concentrated around International, National and local scale. Temporal dimension as permanent, seasonal and daily migration occupied the interest in spatial context. International migration with historical background of slavery to brain drain has sought attention. Recently, refugees and asylums studies along with migration policies specifically EU policies created domain in migration studies. Rural- urban migration in post Industrial period has studied with deep interest.

As, Corona pandemic compelled economically dynamic world to come at halt, migration need to view with mobility dimension. Movement of people is more among refugees, asylums and rural people. Undocumented free movement of these human beings in search of employment has brought them at most haphazard moment. Government policies, organizational efforts need to revise in favor of them. Spatial pattern of standard refugees and asylums at borders, rural people walking hundreds of kilometers back to their homes, need attention in migration pattern studies. Moreover, spatial and temporal pattern of evolution of hot spots, restriction of local movement, its impact on economy and other sectors also frame the domain of research. A new pattern of movement of mass quarantined people from hot spots and associated consequences will also develop research direction. All these movements with gender sensibility studies will bring more humanitarian dignity to migration studies. Shifting of 'Migration' concept to 'Movement' concept in Pandemic studies, will contribute in making individual safe life.

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