



IGNORED HISTORY - FACED MYSTERY

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ABSTRACT

“Man seeks shelter under nature’s lap between birth and death” – Mervin Felix Caleb

Shelter Homes/Stay Homes/Rescue Centres play a remarkable role in times of crisis, especially during large-scale disasters, in responding towards disaster and recovery measures. These shelters are a common umbrella sheltering the victims, deprived of basic necessities, by providing a private and secure places for people to abode, who have abandoned or lost their usual accommodations as a result of some form of disaster.

These shelters provides immediate sigh of relief and scope for recovery to the victims from the disasters and its sabotages along with the plateaued economic effects, caused on the impoverished from the rustic atmosphere rather than, on the elite. The length of rehabilitation span depends on the amount of devastation caused and the financial aid available in the reconstruction of precious lives.

The establishment of shelter homes with boarding would have mitigated the migrant workers woes to a large extent.

KEYWORDS : *Migrant Workers, Homeless, Shelter Homes, CSR Companies, COVID-19*

INTRODUCTION

“Man seeks shelter under nature’s lap between birth and death” – Mervin Felix Caleb

Ubiquitously, Pandemic – COVID19 impact was evident in the past few months, nonetheless, history speaks of numerous epidemic and natural calamities causing migration among masses for several eras.

‘Migration’ was not a term used in the 2020s, but the past facts reveals us to the ages narrating the causes of migration which took place to avoid natural disasters. Communities in large number resorted to migration as the only solution to escape the calamities falling upon them, by abandoning their possessions. History speaks more about this, and lets allow history to do more talking.

The very basic objective of the study of history is to learn lessons from the errors of our predecessors and the precedents, consequently to avoid such recurrence of flaws.

Annually, nature’s wrath unceasingly, without prejudices has affected people around the world, especially citizens of a highly populated and a developing country like India are the worst affected.

Nature’s Anger is not new to mankind, every year natural calamities reports are vociferously broadcasted on every media channels, indicating the monetary loss, property and significantly, precious lives.

Unorganised-sector workers and migrants working on casual and irregular contracts are emerging as the most vulnerable community and are at great risk. Housing the homeless must continue until these displaced group of people can be re-housed in either their rehabilitated original dwellings or new permanent accommodations. Typical examples are large community halls.

These shelters may be required for periods extending to several months or even years, after the disaster, which often require facilities, services, and utilities such as electricity, sanitation, sewerage, roads, etc. Complementary support to shelters should come from all relevant stakeholders (e.g., local communities, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local politicians, and volunteers).

The pandemic caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the gravest health emergency of our times, is poised to disrupt social, economic and political systems and lives worldwide. COVID-19



confirmed cases in India stood at 95,698, with 3,025 deaths, 3.2 per cent case fatality and 0.22/100,000 population on 18 May 2020 [1]

As the announcement of lockdown with a notice of less than 4 hours spread, migrant workers were rendered instantly without work. Panic-stricken workers arrived at bus stops and highways in large crowds hoping to reach their distant rural homes. The point of the lockdown measure was to initiate 'social distancing' to prevent the spread of infection. But there was no way that the migrant workers could fulfil those conditions in their temporary, cramped urban homes without work, income or social protection. Their response to the directive for preventive confinement over the next days and weeks exposed the insecurity, uncertainty and precarity of their life and circumstances. At present, 400 million workers in the informal economy, constituting 90 per cent of India's workforce, are at risk of falling deeper into poverty. Outraged by the condition of the migrant workers, public policy academics have described the COVID-19 lockdown as 'the choice between virus and starvation' [2]

According to a Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) report, India's lockdown order led to a jump in unemployment rate from 21 per cent to 26 per cent in mid-April and a weekly decline in labour market participation (The Economic Times, 2020, April 29).

CMIE data show that the unemployment rate increased from 7.03 per cent in May 2019 to 23.98 per cent on 2 May 2020 [3]

The latest traumatic incident is the death of 16 migrant workers who were crushed to death by a goods train as they fell asleep exhausted on a railway track after walking for kilometres [4]

GOVERNMENT PROVIDES RELIEF TO MIGRANT WORKERS

Migrant workers migrated, due to loss of jobs consequently resulting in being homeless, suffered starvation, hunger, poverty and humiliation. Given below are some of the reliefs announced by the government for poor and daily wagers.

Finance Minister announces package worth Rs 1,70,000 crore for poor, daily wagers

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Ann Yojna (PMGKY) which is a part of the relief package, at least 80 crore poor people will be covered.
- Under the scheme, an additional **five kilos of rice/wheat** will be given to 80 crore individuals -- over the 5 kilo they already get -

- along with a **one-kilo pulse** per household for a period of three months.

- 8.69 crore farmers to be immediately benefited through direct cash transfers under Kisan Samman Nidhi. Instalment of **Rs 2,000 in the first week of April** would be transferred
- Wages under MNREGA will also be **increased by Rs 2000 per worker on an average** as additional income to help daily wage labourers.
- three crore senior citizens, persons with disabilities (Divyangs) and widows will get one-time additional amount of **Rs 1,000 in two instalments, to be given through DBT** over a period of three months.
- 20 crore Jan Dhan women account holders will be covered under the relief package and a compensation of **Rs 500 per month for the next three months**.
- **BPL families will get free cylinders for three months** under the Ujjawala scheme as well.
- collateral-free loans have been doubled to **Rs 20 Lakh for women self-help groups** under the Deen Dayal National Livelihood Mission. It will help seven crore women.
- government will **bear the cost of EPF contribution of both employer and employee (24 per cent)** for the next three months. However, this is only for those establishments which have up to 100 employees and 90 per cent of them earn less than Rs 15,000. This is like to benefit around 4.8 crore employees
- for the welfare of building and construction workers, the central government has passed orders to states to use funds worth **Rs 31,000 crore to provide relief**. This fund is likely to be used to augment medical testing, screening and providing better healthcare facilities[5]

First dedicated COVID-19 hospital in Kerala inaugurated

The first dedicated COVID-19 hospital in Kerala, built by the Tata Group, was inaugurated here on Wednesday by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who said it was an excellent example of how Public Private Partnership can be put to good use. Built by the Tata Group using prefabricated containers in just five months at a cost of Rs 60 crore, the 551 bed hospital has 36 ventilators for the patients.[6]



RECKONER FOR FURTHER RESEARCH BY RESEARCHERS

- Government spent 1,70,000 crores
- In Public Private Partnership, Tata Group (Top CSR Company) at a cost of Rs 60 crore, could build a hospital in Kerala with 551 bed, 36 ventilators for patients, as well.

There are about 5650 talukas or Taluks or Tehesils in India. Talukas are the division of parts of the state and belong to a District. Villages are under a Taluka and Taluka Office is administering them.^[7]

Establishment of shelter homes with hospitals at every taluk, could be undertaken by the government to face future uncertainties and vulnerabilities at every taluk level, at an approximate project cost of 3,39,000 crores , with the help of all CSR categorized companies,

A thorough research could throw more light, on the project feasibility and the monetary burden or benefits, the government would face. Thereby India stands prepared to efficiently confront these eventualities, brought about naturally, by lessening government's administrative and management errors.

SUGGESTIONS

Establishment of Shelter Homes/Stay Homes/Rescue Centers accommodating 500 beds at taluk level must be undertaken to handle the disaster situations, which would have been a great relief to the migrant workers, consisting of whole family, to take on accommodation. Especially women belonging to different age group and their children had to face the brunt of the pandemic outbreak, irrespective of the health problems, that existed in them.

A committee or board has to be constituted under the Ministry of Social Welfare to monitor the effective functioning of these shelter homes during disaster times. These designated shelter homes would be beneficial for the beneficiaries for lodging and boarding purposes, alongwith sufficient space and time for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction from the fallen activity. The perfect ambience in these shelter homes, would dilute the stress level, avoiding panicked movements, buying, communication, travelling, etc among the citizens, diminishing the burden of law and order.

Benefactors would be convenient to meet the necessities of the beneficiaries in an organized manner, through Ministry of Social Welfare, where transparency and accountability of the transactions are evidently and factually reported. This desists unorganized agencies or individuals – felonies from amassing funds and materials, subtly for vested interests, in the name of benevolence.

CONCLUSION

Varieties of news have emerged on the predicament of the migrant workers , especially women, vulnerable to certain health issues, over the past few months and the government had kept their fingers crossed, contemplating on a remedy for this pandemic.

History, suggests lessons to us not to commit the errors of our predecessors in handling such uncertainties, as natural disasters are not new to mankind. Every year in different locations, disasters are occurring challenging the very existence of mankind.

With the collaboration of Government and the CSR categories companies, establishment of shelter homes, consisting of medical facilities must be undertaken and ipso facto, it would certainly reduce the damages and loss of lives drastically, caused by these catastrophic disasters in the next few years.

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