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IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WORKING WOMEN AS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) PROFESSIONALS IN BENGALURU: A CASE OF REVERSE MIGRATION

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Abstract

International migration has always been a catalyst for development and advancement in any nation. The COVID-19 virus's global proliferation compelled a large-scale return of the migrant population to its nation of origin. Not only have the organized migrant workers been impacted by the disease, but also the unorganized migrant workers. The study's primary subject is the migrant workforce in India's information and communication technology industry. The IT industry in India is thought to be expanding at the quickest rate in the entire world. Due to the implementation of the lockdown, millions of migrant workers in India are anticipated to lose their jobs. This thorough cross-sectional study examined the difficulties experienced by remote workers in Bangalore's information technology sector to better understand the causes of reverse migration among IT professionals. To comprehend the socioeconomic behaviour of IT professionals, the researcher also made an effort to investigate spending and saving patterns before and after the epidemic.

Keywords*:* Information Technology, International Migration, Domestic Migration, India

INTRODUCTION

The mobility of people in early 2020 which included the movement of migrant workers around the world, working in many fields of economic activity, the coronavirus outbreak was first caused by the movement of individuals from Wuhan, China (Chinazzi, et al., 2020, Ellis-Petersen & Chaurasia, 2020). Due to their potential to spread disease to the local population in

their home country, the movement of migrant workers has increased dread in all countries (Pandey, 2020). India was one of the top countries of origin for international migration globally in 2019, followed by Bangladesh and Pakistan (Desa, 2019). In India, the transmission of the virus between and within districts has been anticipated by international migration. (Ray & Subramanian, 2020). Domestic reverse migration in India involved a shift from urban to rural areas followed by the repatriation of migrant workers from within the country. Since the lockdown tactic was being supported by the government. Only a few migrants successfully returned home; the others had transit issues (Jazeera, 2020 & Ginsburg, et al., 2018). On the other hand, all employment and income were lost as a result of lockdown and social isolation policies implemented by the federal and provincial governments. There was concern that the Covid-19 outbreak may kill unanticipated human trolls who relied on daily income. An early study found that job losses during recessions can occasionally lead to long-term unemployment and changes in the country's wage structure, both of which have a detrimental effect on employees' health (Papademetriou, et al., 2010)

Migration and Employment Conditions in India

The global economic crisis has a detrimental impact on migration; it can result in job loss, a reduction in salary structure, a decrease in remittances, and disruption of the overall migrant system (Curran, Irons, & Garip, 2016). According to economic surveys, more than 9 million people move within the nation each year, primarily for employment- and education-related reasons. Cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai are thought of as the migrants' transit points in India. In India, internal migration has increased by 20% of the labour force (Economic Survey, 2016-2017). These migrants provide more than 10% of the Indian economy's overall production (Jazeera A, 2020). For improved chances, internal migrants from underdeveloped areas like Bihar, UP, and Assam move to major cities. Without taking into account farmers and other agricultural labourers, 65 million migrant workers in India are employed across many different businesses. A sizable portion of labourers works as assemblers, machine operators, and construction workers.

Table 1: Migrant Workers Working in India (Excluding agricultural and cultivators), Census of India, 2011

Occupation Categories	Total	Male	Female
Legislators, senior officials, professionals and managers	9.69	11.42	6.02
Technicians, associate professionals and clerks	11.44	12.13	9.98
Service workers, market sales workers	15.92	19.3	8.8
Shop and fishery	6.91	2.31	16.59
Manufacturing labours	48.34	50.22	44.4

There are an estimated 115.3 million individuals employed throughout a range of sectors, including manufacturing, services, and other non-manufacturing businesses. Around 56.4 million migrant workers are estimated to work in manufacturing and 58.9 million in non-manufacturing. Construction sites employ a significant chunk of the 92 per cent of workers in non-manufacturing units.

Table 2: Industrial Employment Trends in India: A Subsector-Wise Data

Sector	Number (Million)	Percentage
Manufacturing units		
Food, beverages and tobacco industry	9.2	16.3
Textile	18	31.9
Leather, wood and paper industry	5.8	10.3
Petroleum and chemicals industry	1.5	2.7
Rubber, plastics and non- metallic industry	5.1	9.0
Metals	4.6	8.2
Electronic units	4.0	7.1
Transportation and vehicle units	1.5	2.7
Jewellery and Sports industry	6.8	12.1
Total Manufacturing	56.4	100.0
Non- Manufacturing units		
Mining and quarry	2.0	3.4

Electricity, LPG	2.8	4.8
Construction	54.3	92.2
Total Non- Manufacturing units	58.9	100.0

Source: Periodic Labor Force Survey 2017-2018 (Mehrotra & Parida, 2019)

According to reports, migrant labourers from various states are concentrated in large metro areas. No matter the climate or environment, migrant labourers are employed in all sectors of the economy. They just care about finding work in big cities and making a living at minimum wage.

Table 3: Status of Employment in India

Items	Total	Male	Female
No contract	71.1	72.3	**66.8**
No eligibility for paid leave	54.2	55.2	**50.4**
No eligibility for social security benefits	**49.6**	**49.0**	**51.8**

Source: SARVEKSHANA (Government of India, 2019)

The National Statistical Office (NSO) reported in SARVEKSHANA (Government of India, 2019) that roughly 71% of salaried workers in non-agricultural industries do not have employment contracts. And in the non-manufacturing sector, almost 54% of workers are not entitled for paid leave. In the non-manufacturing sector, about half of the total working population does not receive any benefits. The report also notes the gender split of the workforce in non-manufacturing industries (Das, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The reverse migration created a pressure on primary sector. The pandemic had both short and long run effects on the Indian economy. The government focused on the long-term policies and programs to boost the economy, whereas the short term measures like increasing the wage rate and creating job opportunity did not get noticed (Singh & Pratap, 2020).

With large compilation of secondary data, the research studied how migration dependent on household especially among vulnerable community. The data was collected on pre and post Covid -19 in Bangladesh and Nepal. A study was conducted to analyze the impact of the pandemic on the migrant's workers in China (Che, Hu, & Chan, 2020).

The impact of pandemic outbreak was studied on technology and innovation management. Identifying the key assumptions and areas that made an emergency shift to new normal reality. The pandemic has tested the ability of organization which shifted their work life in new normal world (George, Lakhani, & Puranam, 2020).

The emergence of covid-19 affected the movements of the population internally as well as internationally. As these people move across borders in search of work, education, tourism and for a better standard of living (Skeldon, 2018). The movements of people are fundamentally on the basis of demographic, social, cultural and economic contexts. The outburst of the pandemic has affected all dimensions across the globe. On the basis of the selected country, the study analyzed factories that largely affected migrant communities during the initially phase of the pandemic (Siddique, 2020). (Guadagno, 2020 & (Shen, Fu, Pan, Yu, & Chen, 2020).

The impact of COVID-19 also seen in educational institutions around the world and thus migration of learning, teaching and assessment was shifted to online domain. The impacts of this largely Seen in academic community. (Watermeyer, Crick, Knight, & Goodall, COVID-19 and Digital Disruption in UK Universities: Afflictions and Affordances of Emergency Online Migration, 2020), (Adams-Prassl, 2020) & (Fernandez, 2020).

The policies also framed to support the remittance recipient who fell in poverty cycle, health loss and labor policies also supported the growth of jobs and encouraged business environment in later phase of pandemic (Takenaka, Villafuerte, Gaspar, Narayanan, 2020, & Barrak Alahmad, et al., 2020)

The main challenge was to control the shortage of food supply, malnutrition and other medical emergence. Initially due to lockdown many Public Distribution System across the country was closed down with regards to the fear of spread of virus. Any economic crisis will reduce the migrants, remittances and disturb the entire migrant population (Meijer, 2016, (Khanna, 2020 & Lee, Mahmud, Morduch, Ravindran, & Shonchoy, 2020)

The societal impact of Covid-19 is almost untold. It has affected and still affecting the social distress and deep economic hardship. Covid-19 indiscriminate in terms of those who were infected, it punished weaker sessions of the society (Lancet, 2020, Marshal, 2018, Watermeyer, Crick, Knight, & Goodall, 2020)

Serbia's geopolitical position faced a heavy burden in economic activity and the health care system as people community trigged back to native places in Serbia (Milica, 2020, Danica Santic, 2020, & Jaffrelot, 2020). The Corona virus which spread from Wuhan China have an effect on global distress. Mainly it affected migration and motion of people across the globe. The medical professionals across the globe were working on the control of spread of disease while the governance focused on imposing lockdown in order to stop the motion of people across the world (Bhagat, R.S, Sahoo, Roy, & Govil, 2020. The government focused on prevention of virus and control strategies (Zhang, Jiang, Yuan, Tao, 2020, & (Ishmeet Singh, 2017). Latin America shifted towards more restrictive policies, which liberalized the immigration policy. The migration movements in Latin America were in a flux, because of the recent developments (Czaika & Haas, 2013). The study showed victimization of irregular migrants in Latin America (Ferrari, 2016, & Bobel, 2014). The growth of Information Technology has made Indian government to focus on public expenditure, thus by creating more opportunity for foreign MNC's to invest in India. The IT industry thus saw an emergence of new vertical in the process of development of public sector, as India's connectivity was increased over boarders. However, the growth of IT industry become authoritative in raising productivity in labor services (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2014, Shoba, 2013, & Motkuri, 2009). Cites like Bangalore and Hyderabad becoming a places where IT Industries boomed in early 20's, Now the Indian professionals in US have not only become primary drivers of knowledge and capital flows to India, facilitating financial and skill transfer (Chacko, 2007, & Singh, 2002).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study focuses on the reasons why Women IT professionals left Bengaluru during the COVID-19 outbreak and returned to their home countries and the difficulties that remote-working women IT professionals encounter.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research objectives are three folded:

1. To assess the factors that led to reverse migration of Women IT professionals.

2. To analyze the expenditure pattern of IT professionals before and during the pandemic.

The study also seeks to determine the reasons for the rise in stress levels among female IT professionals as a result of the nationwide lockdown. It examines the state-level initiative to support Bengaluru's IT clusters. The study will shed light on a number of issues identified during the course of the research. In an effort to better address the needs of professional migrants, it will provide some recommendations for governmental legislation.

SAMPLING DESIGN

In order to gather the data for analysis, the researcher employed the Snowball Sampling approach. The researcher frequently employs snowball sampling, a non-probability form of sample selection, when the population for a qualitative study is unknown. The approach depends on recommendations from the first respondents to other populations with a similar makeup and shared interests. 100 respondents from the study population participated in the data collection. Five IT professionals were also interviewed by the researcher to further grasp the scope of the study. The information was gathered during the 2020 COVID-19 outburst period.

METHODOLOGY

The study's major goal was to carry out a thorough cross-sectional analysis during the pandemic period. The key data for the study were obtained through a mail-in questionnaire with 13 major questions and 7 sub-questions, as well as personal interviews with IT experts. Secondary data was gathered from the Indian Ministry of Labor and Employment. Inferences have been made from the data that has been gathered and are being presented graphically and in tabular form using descriptive statistics and percentage analysis. The study's qualitative variables are analyzed. The difference in IT professionals' spending and saving patterns was determined using a paired t-test.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

It is noticed that because of Westernization people’s mindsets are closely changing, thus contributing to late marriages in urban cities. It is noticed that 47% of total work force are graduates who are working in the dominant middle level hierarchy as services provider in

various fields like consultancy, business processing outsourcing and customer support and 45% of working population completed post-graduation and working in upper level hierarchy as analyst and only 4% are professionals in AI and Information Technology. Depending upon the qualification the IT professional's monthly income is structured as above. 66% of total work force earns a monthly income of less than 30,000 and only 9% of IT professionals earns monthly income above 50,000. These professionals are set up in the top hierarchy who controls the operations of all other performances.

Reasons that led to Emigration to their Respective Places

The reverse migration was caused by the 21-day lockdown that was implemented in early March to stop the spread of Covid-19. Many migratory labourers returned to their original locations. This movement is present in both the organized and unorganized sectors. Numerous residents of Bengaluru and Mysore relocated to their hometowns since these cities were thought to be the centers of Covid-19 transmission. The researcher made an effort to identify the factors that caused IT professionals to return to their initial homes. The five main factors that convinced IT workers to return home are shown in the following table:

Table 1: Factors affecting women led to Reverse migration

Factors	Frequency	%
Increased cost of living	24	24
Job loss	22	22
Unnecessary travel expenses	23	23
Lack of family support	17	17
Instruction by employer	14	14

Work Structure during Covid-19 Pandemic

During the pandemic time the work structure of all most every IT professional changed, it had a positive impact on the company's productivity. Almost 85% of the IT companies increased the working hours, this increased working hour is noticed in all layers of employment. The companies increased the working hour because almost each and every work participant worked remotely in their comfort zone.

Challenges faced by Remote Workers

During the Covid-19 epidemic, a new revolution in remote working emerged. Despite the fact that studies have shown that working remotely helps people stay motivated, produce more, remain in their jobs for longer periods of time, and value freedom over money. There are drawbacks to working remotely as well. To excel in their particular fields, professional professionals had to overcome numerous obstacles. Working remotely presented many obstacles, particularly for IT professionals. To fully profit from working remotely, it is a blessing that IT businesses made the initiative to set up facilities for this group. The following is a list of the most typical problems:

- Managing Projects
- Remote collaboration
- Keeping track on Productive work
- Work hours' difficulty
- Cultural difference
- Maintaining trust **(**Brooks, 202**0)**

The researcher analysis major four challenges faced by IT professionals from Bangalore in their respective native place. Starting with the biggest challenge with remote working was lack of connectivity, 87% of total IT professionals working remotely faced connectivity problems. Managing tasks across multi locations and in house scenario negatively affected the performances of professionals. In rural India the infrastructure is yet to progress though the population are using smart phones the exposure to use 4th generation network is very less.

Changes in life style of Remote Workers

Remote working has become more popular than ever during the outburst of pandemic. They escape the long commitments and thus avoiding the office distractions. There is growing concerns of people's mental health and wellbeing and thus increasing the stress level among the remote workers. It is brought into notice that 45% of IT workers have experienced reduction in wage rate because of the outburst of pandemic. And also few companies have forced their

employees to take leave, as this lockdown brought many structural changes inside the Information Technology. It is very evident that financial burden was of the major set-back for remote workers as they have incurred many expenses. Since majority of the IT work force are youths they missed travelling and meeting friends in the week ends. This have increased the stress level among work force. At the same time there was fear among the IT workers for being contracting Covid-19 virus.

Analysis of Expenditure and Savings Pattern of IT Professionals

A paired sample t-test is also known as dependent sample t-test is a statistical procedure used to determine the mean difference between two sets of observation is zero.

- Null Hypothesis H_0 assumes the mean difference is equal to zero
- Alternative Hypothesis H_a assumes the mean difference is not equal to zero

The statistical significance is determined by the p-value; p-value gives the observed test results under the null hypothesis. Lower p-value indicates the null hypothesis was true. The significate p-value is 0.05, this indicates at .5% confident level.

Researcher used paired sample t-test to determine whether there is a statistical significant mean difference in the expenditure and savings pattern of IT professionals before the outburst of pandemic and during the pandemic.

Hypotheses Discussion:

H1 there is significant difference in expenses of women IT professionals before and during pandemic

Table. 1 Paired Sample Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	Food expenses – pre	3.29	100	1.506
	Food expenses – post	2.79	100	1.486
Pair 2	Travel expenses – pre	2.58	100	1.415
	Travel expenses – post	1.67	100	.877
Pair 3	Household expenses – pre	1.60	100	.620
	Household expenses – post	1.89	100	.840

Pair 4	Health related expenses -pre	2.12	100	1.166
	Health related expenses - post	2.53	100	1.410

To test the hypothesis of food expenditure during normal days was (M= 3.29, SD = 1.506) and during pandemic was (M=2.79, SD= 1.489). Hypothesis for travel expenses during pre-pandemic was (M= 2.58, SD= 1.415) and test value in post pandemic was (M=1.67, SD=0.887). The household expenses during pre-pandemic was (M=1.60, SD=.620) and during pandemic the values were (M=1.89, SD=.840). And finally the health expenditure was as follows (M=2.12, SD=1.166) and (M=2.53, SD=1.410) respectively.

Table 2: Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Food pre & Food post	100	.519	.000
Pair 2	Travel pre & Travel post	100	.180	.073
Pair 3	Electricity pre & Electricity post	100	.672	.000
Pair 4	Health pre & Health post	100	.723	.000

Pair 1- The correlation between two condition was estimated as r=5.19, p-value <0.01 suggesting the dependent samples t-test is appropriate and thus rejecting the null hypothesis, thus conclude there is statistically change in the food expenditure during pandemic.

Pair 2- Correlation was estimated as r=.180, with p-value of .073 which is greater than 0.05 accept the null hypothesis.

Pair 3 and 4- The correlation value for electricity and medical care was as follows r=.672 and .723 with p-value <0.01 thus we reject the null hypothesis and conclude there is statistical change in the electricity and medical expenditure. The expenditure pattern of IT professionals was statistically significant with a p-value less than 0.05 thus we reject null hypothesis and conclude there was a change in expenditure pattern during outburst of pandemic.

It is noticed that expenditure on electricity and health increased positively as the IT professionals consumed too much of power during working remotely and expenditure on medical care were also increased to avoid the contract of Covid-19. The expenditure on food and travel decline as they were staying in their home and thus avoided unnecessary traveling expenses.

Paired sample t-test was carried out to analysis if there is any change in the savings behavior of IT professionals during the outburst of pandemic.

Findings

The problem of migration is a worldwide one that is influenced by a variety of push and pull drivers, including social, political, cultural, environmental, health, and educational factors. Pushing factors: These are the things that compel someone to relocate. Low wages, poor investments in health, education, and human rights, as well as a lack of environmental policies, can all be considered push factors. Pull factors: Pull factors are what draw migratory workers to their country from other areas, districts, states, and countries. Better wage policies, social and state programmers, a higher standard of life, better environmental policies, and adequate infrastructure and information flow can all be pull factor indications.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the causes of IT workers' backward migration from Bangalore IT firms. The researcher identified five main causes of backward migration, but there are many other causes, based on a quantitative and qualitative investigation. The top five factors investigated in this study were the corporations were forced to do so by the rising cost of living in Bangalore, the need to minimize needless travel expenses, job losses, a lack of family support, and direct pressure. The Covid-19 outbreak significantly affected the working population. Every area of information technology has changed the way they physically work to include remote work. As a result, IT professionals now have to deal with a variety of fresh difficulties in order to efficiently do their duties. The primary difficulties these experts' employees encountered were poor connectivity, a lack of infrastructure, a heavy workload, and juggling work and family commitments. The study highlighted structural shifts in IT professionals' socioeconomic behavior. During the COVID-19 epidemic, changes in working hours, spending patterns, and saving habits were observed. Although it had a favorable effect on professionals' performance, it had a detrimental effect on employees' physical and mental health. IT companies offered a wide range of incentives to their employees in an effort to support their growth and, as a result,

increase business growth even in times of pandemic. The coronavirus outbreak, which affected the national economy, started in Wuhan, China. India put the country under lockdown in the first few days of March to stop the virus's spread. India is a heavily populated nation with a sizable migrant worker population. Since the lockdown was put in place, many migrant workers have moved back to their home state. Heat maps made it evident that states like Karnataka, Mumbai, Delhi, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh were seeing an outbreak of the virus. A tidal rush of messages, worries, attitudes, and new workplace concerns were brought forth by this pandemic. Many businesses are working to adapt, deal with, and plan for these new shifts.

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