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**Covid-19: Brought by the Sedentary lifestyle and suffered  
by the Working Class**

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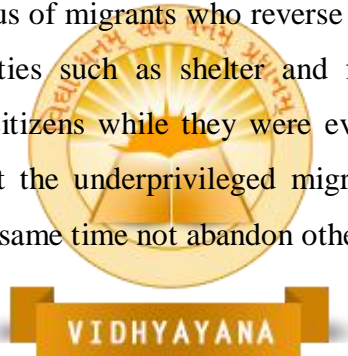


**Abstract**



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Why is the Indian Government and administration so much alert to stop the spread of Covid-19? Is it because the Elite Group is under threat? If we look at Covid-19 outbreak in different parts of our country more than fifteen hundred people have lost their lives. Now let us look at another figure, in India 8.8 lakh children under five years have died due to starvation or hunger in a single year, and at the same time we have vaccine for this, and that is food. Those in power do all that is needed just to prove that the one who died did so of natural causes, including resorting post-mortems to find remnants of food in the victim's stomach. It shows the class and social division of the Indian society. P.Sainath, in his book, 'Everybody Loves a Good Drought', remarks how the 1994 plague in India got unprecedented media attention because unlike several other diseases, it couldn't be restricted to rural areas and urban slums. Thus this shed light on how India responds differently to health requirements based on the social and class locations of those affected. As the largest humanitarian crisis that India show was an emerging of a mass exodus of migrants who reverse migrated hundreds of kilometres for the access of basic necessities such as shelter and food. As providing preferential treatment to prosperous Indian citizens while they were evacuated from foreign countries, shows the discrimination against the underprivileged migrant workers. If we are fighting against Covid-19, we must at the same time not abandon other deadly diseases.



**Keyword:** Elite Group, Class Division, Starvation, Underprivileged Migrant Workers, Food

### Introduction

Covid-19 disease was spread by the rich and the affluent sections of our society who travelled around the globe and now they are threatening to kill the millions of the poor throughout the country. And this affluent sections do not follow the norm of quarantine and skips their regular check-up as per instructed. In this scenario the one who suffers the most is the poor section of the society as they won't be having enough capital to save themselves from this pandemic. As on the other side, it can be seen as Covid-19 is being given more privilege to



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other diseases such as starvation. As millions of people die due to hunger and for which we have vaccine too and that is food. The starvation and sufferings can be seen on the migrant workers who walk thousands of kilometres back to their home for shelter and food. Yet the government of India failed to provide them food and shelter, due to the norms of public distribution system. Thus the class division not only can be witnessed in India, but in the powerful nation also whose duty is to provide security to other nations.

### Elite vs Lower Class

Social distancing is a privilege because for that you need to live in a big house. Running water is another privilege as for hand-washing, hand sanitizers, section 144, curfew it is also a privilege where you can afford to be at home all these times and at the same time ensured that you're not going to be economically affected and salary would be credited into your bank account but all these ways are available and accessible only to the rich and the affluent sections of our society.

This is where the irony is, as this disease was spread by the rich and the affluent sections of our society who travelled around the globe and now they are threatening to kill the millions of the poor throughout the country.

During economic crisis or a pandemic or an epidemic the major sufferers are the poor people as they are daily wage workers and get their living on a daily basis are not able to eat protein food makes their immunity weak, which loosens the ability to fight against such viruses. As they also don't have inadequate access to the safe water, sanitation quality, health care which led to death and illness.

### Starvation and Malnourished

It is an absurd, that living in such a country which is the fastest-growing economy in the world. But a country where surplus grain is eaten by rats, and where the people die due to hunger. India is home to the largest number of malnourished people in the world. About a third of our children are stunted, as their bodies and brains are less developed during their



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infant growth, an entire generation lacks in their intellectual development which traps them in the same poverty. These children have to go in bed, day after day, month after month, without having enough food.

The reason of death of an infant is not always hunger or starvation but also due to diarrhoea or pneumonia. Though the reason behind this disease is that there are too weak from hunger, which has exhausted their body for the necessary biological tonics that would have staved off these diseases. There are many recorded premature death and in many cases the reason behind is that they starved as children.

Sometimes the media display over one death due to starvation indicate that such incidents are rare. It shows as India has conquered hunger, in fact, which is totally mistaken.

### Reverse migration

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 it defines inter-State migrant workman as any person who is recruited by or through a contractor. This definition keeps away any migrant workman out of the realm, if he is not brought in through a licensed contractor. The fact is, most of the migrant workmen are not routed through licensed contractors. This small catch, in the definition, has been sufficient to exclude bulk of the migrant workmen from getting any benefit out of the Act.

Heart-breaking images and stories have been emerging of a mass exodus of migrants which have been reported from Delhi, Gujarat and as well as from other industrialized urban centres of India. It has brought out the class and social division of the Indian society. As millions of migrant workers from across the country have been forced to abandon cities because the loss of their daily income from which it made it impossible for them to access basic necessities such as shelter and food.

This exodus is a short of a human tragedy and it has been caused by the too difficult choices. First, follow the lockdown restrictions and stay safe from the pandemic. Secondly, die out of hunger. The biggest tragedy of this ongoing reverse migration is that the children of migrant



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workers and even pregnant and lactating women have been denied the benefits of midday meals this is going to affect the nutritional status of children and women and this is going to lead to their starvation and malnutrition.

As these migrant workers are from relatively backward states such as UP, Bihar, Odisha etc. and as these vast majority of these migrant workers are employed in the unorganized informal sector but the imposition of a total lockdown has brought a complete halt in formal and informal sector as a result millions of migrant workers have lost their livelihoods so this loss of income has made it impossible for these poor migrant workers to sustain the high cost of living in these cities and as a result they are not able to afford even basic necessities such as food and plus the imposition of a total lockdown has made it all the more difficult to access essential items and it has also left them stranded due to the complete suspension of transportation services this dire situation has forced thousands and thousands of migrants to walk hundreds of kilometres it has to be one of the largest humanitarian crisis that India has dealt with in recent times and it also carries the threat of transporting the pandemic which has largely been restricted to its urban areas to its rural areas.

As providing preferential treatment to prosperous Indian citizens while they were evacuated from foreign countries, shows the discrimination against the underprivileged migrant workers.

If the government had provided adequate notice by creating a safety net for the vulnerable sections before the lockdown was imposed by the government, the migrant exodus could have prevented. If there was prior notice to the migrant workers before lockdown and relief package were announced prior to lockdown and by providing sufficient food supplies it might have not created the mass migrant exodus.

As these migrant workers were given a mass disinfectant bath in Borelli but what sprayed on them was sodium hypochlorite solution, it is basically a bleaching agent which is used to sanitize the swimming pools. This chemical releases chlorine whose one percentage of solution can cause damage to the skin if it gets inside the body it can cause serious harm to lungs as well. This solution should only be used to clean the hard surfaces for example floors



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as it is not recommended to be used on human beings. World Health Organization and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have recommended only two to ten percent of this concentrated solution to clean the floors, that also in a well-ventilated area.

### Economic Relief Package

The Government of India under Pradhan MantriGareebKalyanYojanahas announced a massive economic relief package of 1.7 lakh crore rupees to support the poorest and the vulnerable citizens, such as migrant workers, daily wage earners, poor women, old age people, the disabled widows and small business owners which would help them overcome the economic impact and there enormous suffering.

It has to be praised to the government of India for coming out with such a massive relief package, though there are number of drawbacks of the economic relief package for example in the provision of free food grains it is being provided through the public distribution system means that only those who possess a ration card would be eligible for the benefits.

This scheme includes main component that is free food in order to meet the nutritional requirements of the vulnerable sections millions of poor people are being provided with 5 kg and 1 kg of pulses would be provided over the next three months. But other nutrition elements are being missing from these schemes such as oil, salt, sugar etc. there should be 'Universal Food Rationing' which would fulfil all the requirements for nutrition.

The relief package does not talk about mid-day Meal Scheme which could have provided basic food and nutrition to young children and pregnant women. This also exclude a number of migrant workers who may not possess the required documents.

Central and the State Government should provide free and the subsidized food for all the low-wage households, yet these public distribution system has not been working effectively as the poor people may not have access to the addhar card, thus this authentication should be completely removed and universally all the poor people seeking for the ration should be provided. The government should lengthen their short-term programs which are of 2 or 3 months, but rather it should be for a longer duration.



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Food storages are now being accessed in largescale but why not before this pandemic. Though it has been more than 70 years after Independence that our food granaries are stuffed, but cannot quench the thirst of hunger, it is nothing but short of a national shame.

There are different schemes from government of India such as Antyodyaya Anna Yojna (AAY), Above Poverty Line (APL), Below Poverty Line(BPL), Midday Meal Scheme, Annapurna Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, Emergency Feeding Programme. But depict the government sponsored food schemes, one of the major problem is execution of the plans. On paper, it might seem a lot is being done to lessen the problems of hunger, but in reality, there have been too many reports of the benefits not reaching the people who need it the most.

### World in COVID-19

After two World Wars political boundaries were drawn economic institutions were established and ultimately control was restricted to few rich countries.

United Nations Security Council was created ensuring international peace and security but they were not serving the humanity while they were serving the agenda of the rich countries. As these countries should have called for a meeting immediately and should have addressed all these key concerns surfacing from this virus but what United Nations Security Council done is they took too many days to call for a meeting and there was no humanity in the picture.

There are regional institutions like The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation(SAARC) as well as the European Union(EU). The SAARC as an institution was long dead until government of India put their initiative, but this initiative was short-lived.European Union mandate was the cooperation between the countries of the Europe but ultimately European Union was clueless too.

The UN Security Council, currently chaired by China, did not seem so active during summit, giving indication as if there is no significant in discussing covid-19. The country who is dominating and making inroads is China who were silent for about two months but its production has increased in the last couple of weeks.Now they are exporting medical aids and



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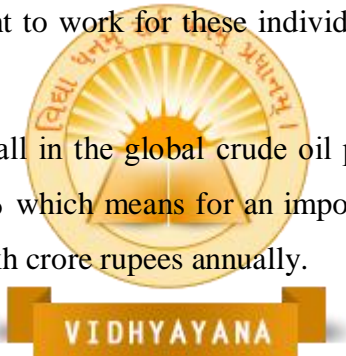
kits all over the world making billions out of it, it seems as those country could have medical kits only who can afford it.

### Helping Hand to Deprived Sector

Govinda Rau says that Covid-19 will lead to global recession crisis may be similar to the Great Depression of 1929, and there will be loss of around 20 lakh jobs but when an individual loses his job his family also suffers.

As MGNREGA, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act can be expanded with Public Works such as roads, hospitals, clinics and we can link mgnrega with pradhanmantri gram sadakyojana for the construction of roads we have another program called roads and bridges. On one hand it will provide them economic benefit in terms of cash at the same time providing a right to work for these individuals and would be excessive for the uplifting of our country.

Though oil bonanzas' dramatic fall in the global crude oil prices now close to \$20 a barrel having annual change of -67.65% which means for an importing country such as India it's a consecration which can save 2 lakh crore rupees annually.



### Conclusion

53 deaths were caused by exhaustion, hunger, denial of medical care, or suicides due to lack of food or livelihood in this Covid-19 pandemic. Where poorest fear hunger before Coronavirus. Despite the good economic performance of our country, it has the largest number of hungry people all over the world, with over 200 million people who are uncertain about their next meal. Problems faced by migrant workers and the poorer sections are entirely different from the problems and challenges faced by the working middle class. The middle





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class and the upper classes are worried about how they would commute during the lockdown how they would access the internet by working from home and migrant workers and lower class are worried that how they would get the supply of their basic essential items of life such as food shelter and clothing. The pandemic has made us realized that what has been considered as the norm until now is actually unnecessary, it has made us realise that a big chubby wedding is actually a waste of resources and instead a small intimate event with close family members offers a more memorable experience. And future after this pandemic we must assure that there should not be any class division based on regional or capital. This pandemic comes with a message that the nation should be build up in such a manner that when any such calamities hits the country, any arrangement for relief should not create discrimination and every class should be able to get the same advantage as any other class.



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