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EFFECT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON KERALA'S JOB MARKET

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 outbreak is an exact reminder that pandemic like other rarely occurring disasters have happened in the past and will continue to happen in the future. Around the globe, countries are in lockdown, and citizens are asked to maintain social distancing and stay at home. This is not first instances that Kerala is fighting against a deadly virus like Coronavirus. Earlier in 2018, Nipah virus had been identified in Kerala and they had mortality rate of 40 to 80 per cent. From previous experience, among all the states in India, Kerala was well and the best prepared to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and has managed to flatten the curve. But COVID-19 hit Kerala very hard, because the major source of revenue comes from tourism and Non-Resident Keralites (NRK's) remittance drastically fell down. This paper provides vital insight into the effect on COVID-19 on Kerala's job market. The aim of this study is to find out how Kerala's job markets are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since Malayalees are working in different countries across the world, survey method is used to collect data. The study helps us to understand the demographic characteristics of workforce in Kerala. It clearly discusses effect of COVID-19 on different sectors where of Malayalees work across the world. The study also helps to analyze the effect of COVID-19 on employability of graduates and non-graduates. Finally, this study identifies the rate of job loss due to COVID-19 lockdown during the month of June 2020.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Lockdown, NRK's, Unemployment

1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in over 2.59 million confirmed cases and over 49,980 deaths in India. Kerala having 44,415 confirmed cases and 156 death cases so far which is less in number when compare to other states in India. COVID-19 the first reported in India from a student who back from

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Wuhan to Kerala. From that period Coronavirus case started to increase in Kerala, Kerala's health department joined with Police department started to implement complete lockdown in Kerala. After few days of complete lockdown announced across the country by central government people are forced to stay at home and the number of job loss started to increase across the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all the sectors of economy, but worst hit the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise) sector in India [1]. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) reported unemployment rate in India in the month of April and May was 23.5% and 24.5% respectively. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated more than 25 million jobs would be threatened globally due to the spread of Coronavirus. Jones et al (2020) [2] reported that in the United States, the number of people filing for unemployment hit a record high, indicating an end to a decade of expansion for one of the world's largest economies. Approximately, one million people in the United Kingdom applied for benefits in just two weeks of the pandemic there; at the end of March. It is estimated that four out of five people in the global workforce are currently affected by full or partial workplace closure. The US, UK, Canada, Russia and most of the European and Asian countries have begun to register huge job losses which leading to significant rise in unemployment rate. The ILO, in its report 'ILO Monitor 2nd edition: COVID-19 as the 'worst global crisis since World War II'. The head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kristalina Georgieva, said that world faced the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

1.1 COVID-19 Lockdown in Kerala

Kerala is one of the small states in India with 3.48 crores of people living. The first case of COVID-19 in Kerala was confirmed in Thrissur district on 30th January 2020 (which was the first case in India) [3]. Following the detection of positive cases, the government of Kerala declared Coronavirus as "state calamity warning". After 4 days the "state calamity warning" has withdrawn when there is no further case reported. The government of Kerala again declared high alert from second week of February to first week of March 2020 due to Coronavirus were reported from the state. On 10th March government of Kerala announced to shut down all schools and colleges, the government also restricted people not to undertake pilgrimages, attend large gatherings such as wedding, meeting and cinema shows. The government of Kerala launched a mobile application called "GoK Direct" for people to get important updates and information regarding the Coronavirus disease. On 15th March, a new initiative was launched "Break the Chain" campaign; the aim of this campaign was to educate people about the importance of personal hygiene. Under this campaign, the government has installed water tap at public spot such as bus stands, railway station and other public places. It has created massive public attention and people responded positively. On 23rd March, CM of Kerala announced a state wide lock-down till 31st March to prevent massive spread of Coronavirus. This was one day before central government announced national wide lockdown.

1.2 Kerala's Job Market

Kerala is a small state in India with high density population. The total population in Kerala was 3.48 crores (Census report 2011). From which the total working population constitute around 35%, which is very lower when compare with other states in India. Similarly, gender wise classification of workers in Kerala is that 52.72% of male workforces are involved in work while 18.22% of female are working, female worker participation in Kerala is very low when compared with other states. The major source of income comes from the tourism, IT sector and NRI remittance.

1.3 Tourism Industry in Kerala

Kerala is one of the popular tourist destinations in India. The National Geographic Traveller named as one of the ten paradise of the world. Kerala is famous for its ecotourism and backwater. Its unique culture and tradition, coupled with its varied demography, have made Kerala one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Kerala is a popular destination for both domestic as well as foreign tourists. In 2010, Kerala attracted 660,000 foreign tourist arrivals. The state's tourism agenda promotes ecologically sustained tourism, which focuses on the local culture, wilderness adventures, volunteering and personal growth of the local population [4].

1.4 Non-Resident Keralites

The destination of emigrants from Kerala spread across the world. Wherever we go, we can see a Malayalee. Non-Resident Keralites play a significant role towards the progress of the state. Their contribution to the overall development can be seen at different levels. The standard of living in the Malabar region has been improved because of emigrants from Malabar to Arab countries. There have been improvements in healthcare, food, consumption, household earnings, education and housing. The Kerala migration survey 2014 (draft), conducted by the Centre for Development Studies, estimated that there were more than 24 lakh Keralites living in various countries and their remittances to the state net domestic product was nearly 36.5 per cent. Out of the total NRK's, 87.77 per cent are engaged in economic activities. Among those employed, 93.04 per cent are men and 6.96 per cent are women. Among all districts, Malappuram has the highest proportion of NRK's employed at 19.51 per cent. The major destination of migrants from Kerala are UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, USA, Canada, U.K, Africa, Singapore etc. Due to the nationalisation policy in the Middle East countries and economic destabilisation all over the world, the number of return emigrants is increasing in Kerala.

1.5 Objectives

- To understand the demographic characteristics of workforce in Kerala.
- To find out effect of COVID-19 on different job sectors of Malayalees across the world
- To analyze the effect of COVID-19 on employability of graduates and non-graduates.
- To find out the rate of job loss due to COVID-19 lockdown.

2 Research Methodology

This descriptive study adopts quantitative technique approach to find the effect of COVID-19 lockdown on Kerala's job market. Primary data were collected through questionnaire using Google forms, Questionnaire sent to respondents across the world randomly through Facebook, G-mail, and Whatsapp. The questionnaires are sent to 1500 respondents out of which 425 responded. However, some of them are responded twice and finally 400 samples taken for this study. 16% of them are female and 84% are males. Secondary data were collected from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). CMIE is a private limited company which measures each month unemployment rate in India. Other sources of secondary data's are Journals, newspaper and internet.

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Demographic characteristics of workforce

A total of 400 respondents completed the questionnaire and were subjected to analysis, of which 84 per cent are men and 16 per cent are women (see chart 1). Women worker participation is very low when compared with other states in the country. With regard to region (see chart 2), 67 per cent of the total

workforce comes from rural areas while 33 per cent are from urban area. 33 per cent of the total respondents belong to the age group of 21 to 25, followed by 27.75 per cent are in the age group of 26 to 30 and a total of 9.75 per cent respondents are in the age of above 40 years (see chart 3). In terms of workplace responds (see chart 4) received from different parts of the world, larger number of respondents were work in Kerala itself (64%), followed by Gulf Countries (25.5%), Other state in India (8%), Canada(0.75%), U.S(0.25), Europe (.50%) and other countries (1%).

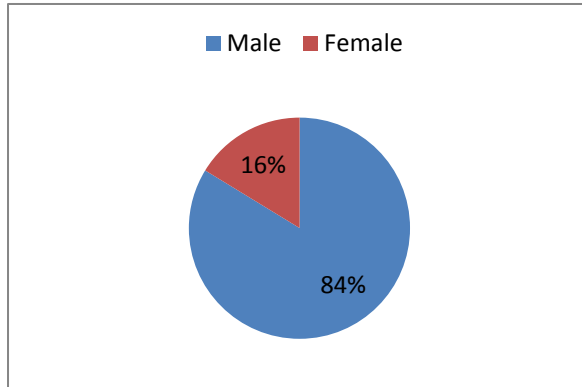


Chart 1. Gender wise classification

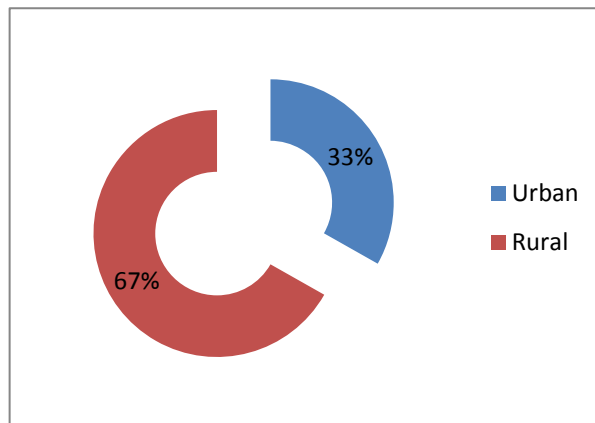


Chart 2. Region wise classification

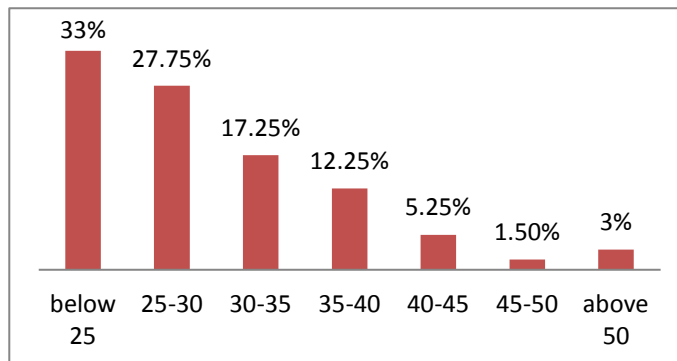


Chart 3. Classification on the basis of Age group

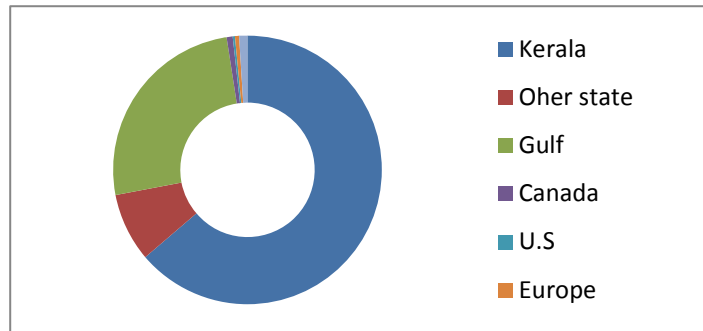


Chart.4 Classification on the basis of workplace

4.2 Effect of COVID-19 on different job sectors of Keralites

Table.1 shows the percentage of Keralites working in different sectors across the world. Out of which a large number of respondents are working in Private Sector (51.75%) and less number of respondents in Agricultural sector (0.50%). Other sectors are Coolie (11.25%), Own Business (10.50%), Public sector (8.00%), and other sector (13.50%). In Private sector a greater number of respondents are working in Kerala (26.25%) followed by Gulf countries (18.5%) and other states in India (5.25%). Table.2 Illustrates whether workers received salary or wage during the lockdown period, for that each sector has been taken separately. From the table it is clear that 51.5 per cent of the respondents received salary/wage during the lockdown period while 48.5 per cent of respondents have not received salary/wage. This means that half of the respondents received remuneration while another half do not receive but they are still working. Table 3. indicates that whether the employees can continue their job after COVID-19 lockdown. For that each sector has been taken separately and it is found that 56.50 per cent of the employees can continue their job after COVID-19 while 6.50 per cent cannot continue their job or they may be layoff. But 37 per cent of respondents do not know whether they can continue their job or not. So that 37 per cent of employees are having the confusion whether they can continue job or search for a new job.

Table 1: Cross Tabulation between Respondents Region and their Job Sector

Region	Job Sector							Total
	Private Sector	Public Sector	Own Business	Coolie	Agriculture	Government	Other Sectors	
Kerala	26.25	6.25	7.5	11	0.50	3.25	9.25	64.00
Other States in India	5.25	0	1.50	0.25	0	0.25	0.75	8.00
Gulf Countries	18.5	1.5	1.25	0	0	0.75	3.5	25.5
Canada	0.50	0.25	0	0	0	0	0	00.75
United States	0.25	0	0	0	0	0	0	00.25
Europe	0.25	0	0	0	0	0.25	0	00.50
Other Countries	0.75	0	0.25	0	0	0	0	1.00
Total	51.75	8.00	10.50	11.25	0.50	4.50	13.50	100

Table 2: Cross Tabulation between Respondents Receive Salary/Wage and their Job Sector

Received salary/wage	Job Sector							Total
	Private Sector	Public Sector	Own Business	Coolie	Agriculture	Government	Other Sectors	
No	23.25	3.00	7.25	9.25	.25	.25	8.25	51.5
Yes	28.50	5.00	3.25	2.00	.25	4.25	5.25	48.5
Total	51.75	8.00	10.50	11.25	.50	4.50	13.50	100

Table 3: Cross Tabulation between Respondents Continue Job and their Job Sector

Continue Job	Job Sector							Total
	Private Sector	Public Sector	Own Business	Coolie	Agriculture	Government	Other Sectors	
No	4.25	.25	.50	.50	0	0	1.00	6.50
Yes	25.50	6.00	7.50	5.25	.50	3.75	8.00	56.50
Don't Know	22.00	1.75	2.50	5.50	0	.75	4.50	37.00
Total	51.75	8.00	10.50	11.25	.50	4.50	13.50	100

4.3. Effect of COVID-19 on employability of graduates and non-graduates

The COVID-19 has some effect on both graduates and non-graduates as per the survey. From this analysis we can find out which group are moreover affected due to COVID-19 lockdown. Table.4 illustrates that respondents with different education background are asked to fill whether they can continue their job after COVID-19 lockdown. Out of 31.5 per cent of the graduate respondents 58.7 per cent said they can continue their job, 7.1 per cent said they cannot continue and 34.1 per cent said they don't know whether they can continue or not. The respondents who possess school level education viewed that about 50.0 per cent of them can continue while only 1.8 per cent said they cannot continue job, 47.3 per cent said they don't know whether continue their job or not. Among these the respondents are classified into two categories such as graduates (Graduates, PG and others) and Non-graduates (School, Plus two, Diploma). Employees with graduation background are 54 per cent and the rest are non-graduates. Considering graduates 59.7 per cent said they can continue job, 6.9 per cent said they cannot continue and 18 per cent said they don't know whether they can continue job or not. Similarly, 52.7 per cent of non-graduate said they can continue their job. 5.9 per cent said they cannot and 41.3 said they don't know whether they can continue job or not. So job losses are quite high among graduate respondents.

4.4 Rate of job loss due to COVID-19 lockdown

The COVID-19 pandemic affected all the sectors and all countries across the world. Table 5 illustrates effect of COVID-19 on both male (83.75) and female (16.25) workers. While analysing the table, 55.5 per cent of the male can continue their job while 6.86 per cent said they cannot continue and 37.6 per cent said they don't know. Similarly, among the female respondents, 61.5 per cent said they can continue job, 4.6 per cent are not able to continue and 33.8 per cent said they do not know. So, we can find that male workers are higher affected than female workers. Table 6 indicates how different age groups are being affected by Coronavirus. We could find that highly vulnerable age group employees are above fifty years

which was 3 per cent of total respondents, from that 16.6 per cent of employees cannot continue their job, followed by age between 40 and 45 years (14.25%), Age between 25 and 30 years (9.90%), Age between 30 and 35 years (5.8%), Age group between 35 and 40 years (4%) and less affected age groups are below 25 years (3.03%) and age between 45 and 50 years (0%). Through this study it is clear that about 6.5 per cent of total employees are going to lose their job and 37 per cent are still in confusion whether they can continue job or not.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation between Respondents Continue Job with their Educational Qualification

Continue job	Educational qualification						Total
	School	Plus two	Diploma	Degree	PG	others	
No	.25	2.00	.50	2.25	1.25	.25	6.50
Yes	7.00	11.00	6.25	18.5	12.00	1.75	56.50
Don't Know	6.50	8.25	4.25	10.75	5.75	1.50	37.00
Total	13.75	21.25	11.00	31.50	19.00	3.50	100

Table 5: Cross Tabulation between Gender and Continuation of Job

Gender	Continue Job			Total
	No	Yes	Don't Know	
Male	5.75	46.50	31.50	83.75
Female	0.75	10.00	5.50	16.25
Total	6.50	56.50	37.00	100

Table 6: Cross Tabulation between Age Group and Continuation of job

Age group	Continue Job			Total
	No	Yes	Don't Know	
Below 25	1.00	21.5	10.50	33.00
26 to 30	2.75	13.5	11.50	27.75
31 to 35	1.00	10.5	5.75	17.25
36 to 40	.50	6.5	5.25	12.25
41 to 45	.75	2.5	2.00	5.26
46 to 50	0	.75	.75	1.50
Above 50	.50	1.25	1.25	3.00
Total	6.50	56.50	37	100

5 Conclusions

The effect of Coronavirus on business and jobs are not common across different sectors, age group, gender, and educational level. Some of the sectors are still functioning and others are closed. A large number of people are not able to meet their two ends. From this research study it is identified that job

loss among the employees aged more than fifty years are higher than age group between 20 and 25 years. Similarly, job losses among male workers are higher than female workers. Another important highlight is that job loss among NRK's are higher, especially people working in Gulf countries. COVID-19 pandemic viruses are spreading across all the countries day by day. Moreover, a clear dimension of its impact cannot be identified, because the situation are getting worse every day and people losing their job and others are recruited for job especially in healthcare sector. It is identified through this survey that 6.50 per cent employees already lost job and 37 per cent employees are in the position of layoff. Hence, government should take necessary actions and rehabilitation package to support employees in the state.

Declarations

Study Limitations

The major limitation of this study is that only few responses are received from Non-Resident Keralites. Major responses of NRK's are received from gulf countries and only few received from Europe and U.S. Second limitation is Social Medias such as Whatsapp and Email are used for data collection.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declared that there is no conflict of interest exists in the publication.

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