SPOT LIGHT
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Department of Economics
Raniganj Girls' College

MIGRATION AND REVERSE MIGRATION OF LABOURERS IN INDIA

It has been customary and an honour for the Department of Economics, Raniganj Girls' College to publish their Wall Magazine "Spot Light" annually on contemporary burning issues. In the event of the prevalent pandemic situation due to COVID 19, it was decided by the Department in its meeting held on 26th December 2020 to publish the "2020-21" issue on the digital platform.

The theme "Migration and Reverse Migration of Labourers in India" is based on the model of rural-urban migration in developing nations as formulated by Sir W Arthur Lewis in 1954, the nature of migration in India and the reverse migration of labourers from urban to rural areas that took place in India recently during lockdown in 2020.

Editor's Desk

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The presence of dual economies is a common feature in most developing countries of the world like India. Theoretically, this features the existence of agriculturally backward rural areas and technologically advanced urban areas side by side. Typically the rural farm sector is characterized by the prevalence of poverty, lack of employment opportunities and low wages. This induces the farm labourers to move to urban non-farm areas in search of better employment opportunities and higher wages. This is known as *rural–urban migration**.*
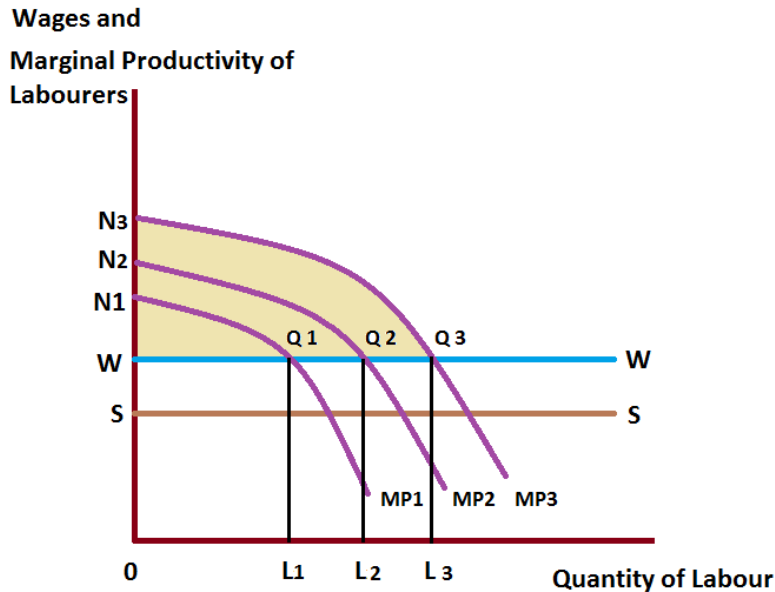
Rural Urban Migration

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This problem of rural-urban migration in underdeveloped countries was published by Saint Lucian economist Sir W Arthur Lewis in 1954 under the title 'Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour'. The economist won "The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences" in Memory of Alfred Nobel in 1979 along with Theodore W. Schultz. This theorization later came to be famously known as the "Lewis Model" and an integral part of the course of study on Development Economics for undergraduate classes.

Sir W Arthur Lewis

Wages and Marginal Productivity of Labourers

There are two sectors in an underdeveloped economy – the subsistence sector and the capitalist sector

The subsistence sector in rural areas is based on agriculture and the capitalist sector in the urban areas based on industries.
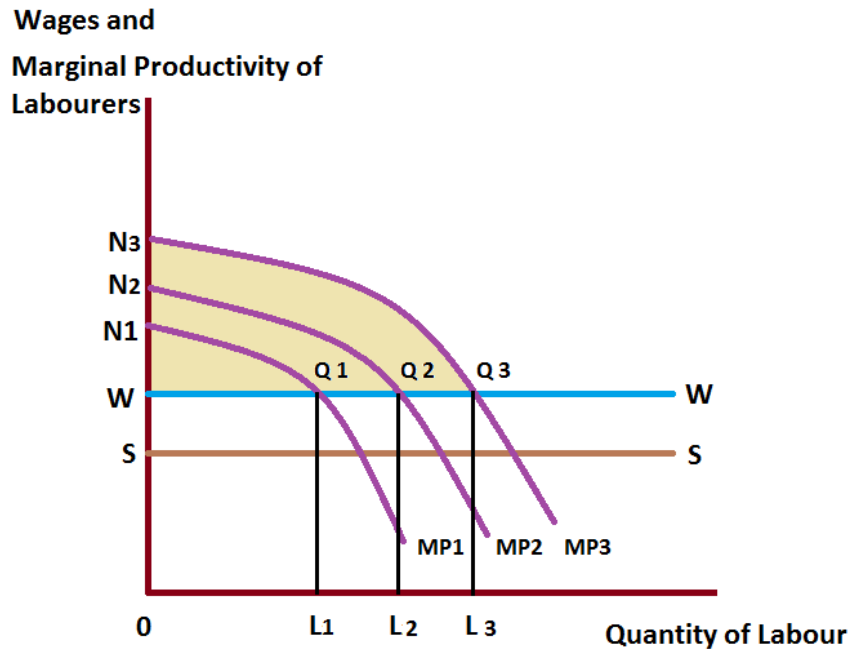
There is abundant supply of labour in the subsistence sector which is termed as unlimited supply of labour

The wages in the subsistence sector (OS) is lower than the wages in the capitalist sector (OW). [OS< OW]

The difference in wages, known as wage-gap leads to migration of labourers from rural areas to urban areas.

Lewis Model

Wages and Marginal Productivity of Labourers

The labourers are employed in the capitalist sector to the point where the marginal product (MP_1) is equal to the wage line (WW) at point Q_1. Thus OL_1 units of labour are employed.

The capitalist uses the surplus N_1WQ_1 for the expansion of industries in the urban sector.

The unlimited supply of unskilled labour from the subsistence sector ensures that capitalists can go on hiring more labourers (OL_2 & OL_3) at the same wage rate OW.

As the surplus of the capitalist increases from N_1WQ_1 to N_2WQ_2 & N_3WQ_3, the capitalist sector goes on expanding. This could possibly continue till the marginal productivity in the two sectors become equal theoretically.

Lewis Model

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The rural urban migration in India is mostly circular in nature. Circular migration indicates the frequent mobility of migrant workers between their homes based in villages and places of employment based in towns and cities. This mobility may take place within a district or between the districts of the same state of India or between different states of the country.

This type of migration involves the relocation of one or more male members of an impoverished rural household to urban areas with the motive to earn a living and sustain their family who remain behind in the villages. Typically the migratory working population residing in the urban areas, maintain close associations with their rural base, sending money back home at regular intervals and returning to the villages during the harvest season.
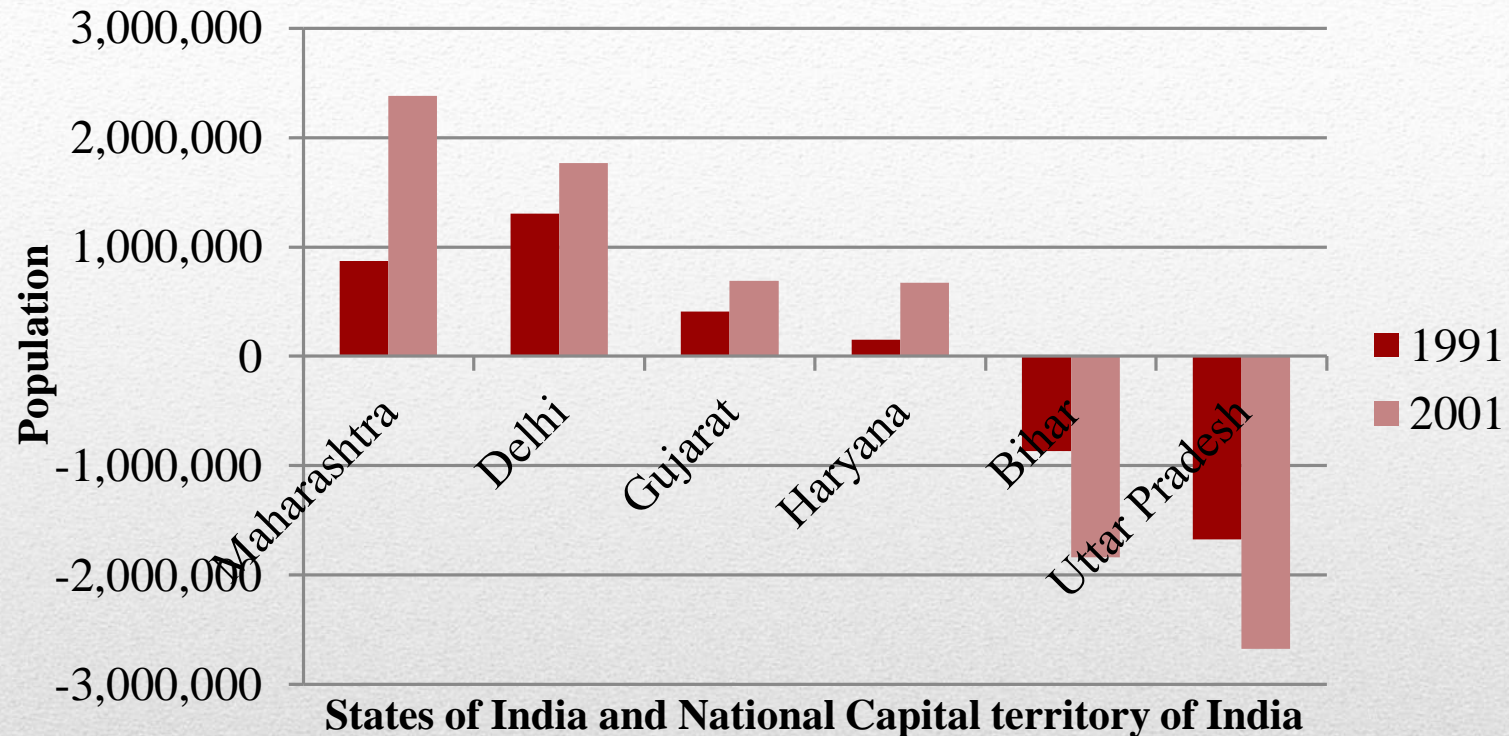
Migration in India

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- *In 1991, the total population of India was 891.3 million and total internal migration was estimated at 222.5million*

- *In 2001, the total population of India was 1028.6 million and total internal migration was estimated at 309 million*

- *In 2011, the total population of India was 1250.3 million and total internal migration was estimated at 450 million*

Migration in India

Inter-state Migration in India for 1991 and 2001

Source: Census of India 1991 and 2001
Note: Census data of Bihar in 2001 includes Jharkhand and Census data of Uttar Pradesh in 2001 includes Uttaranchal
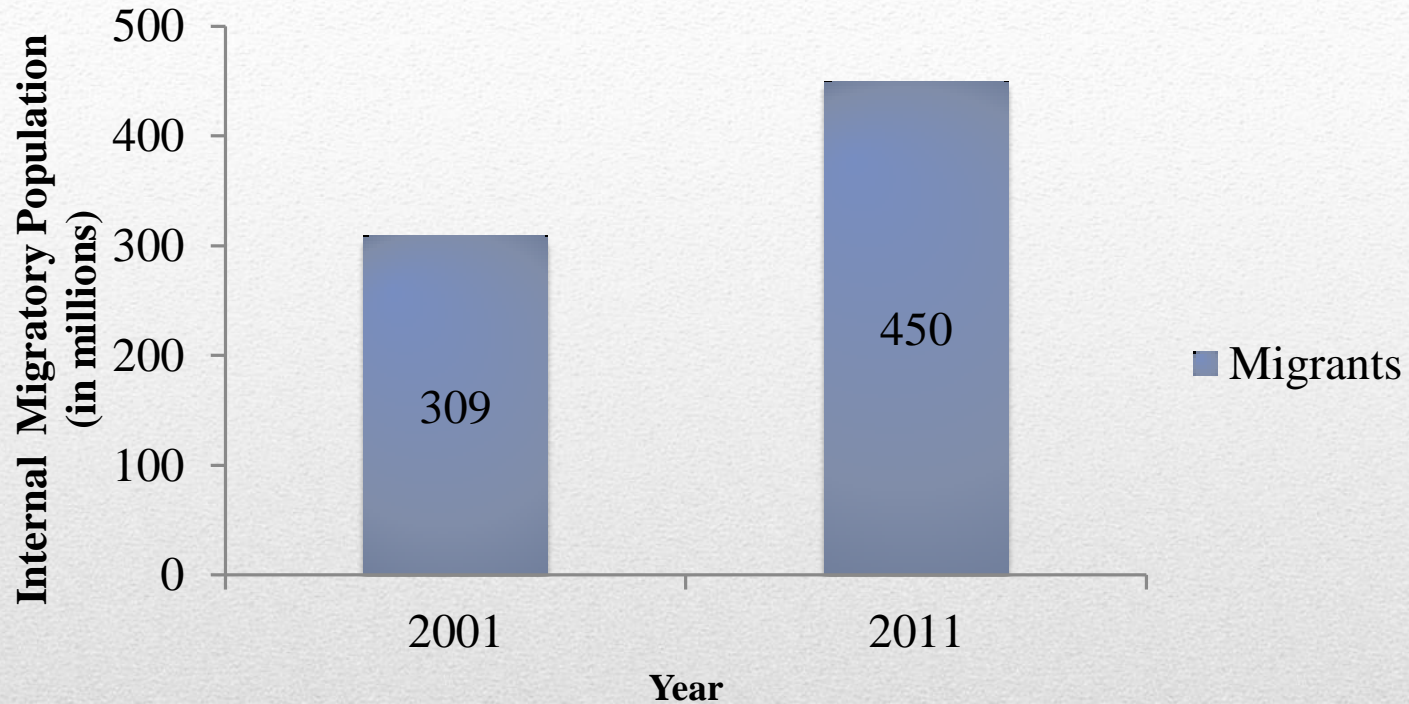
Migration in India

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- *In the figure on inter-state migration in India for 1991 and 2001, the upright columns represent the inflow of migrants to a particular state or union territory and the inverted columns represent the outflow of migrants from a state.*
- *According to Census of India data of 1991 and 2001, the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana and the National Capital Territory of Delhi saw the maximum inflow of migrants from other states and the largest outflow of migrants from the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.*
- *Out of the total migrants 14.7 percent migrated for purposes of work or employment between 1991 and 2001*
- *Rural to urban migration was to the amount of 20.5 million between 1991 and 2001*

Migration in India

Internal Migration in India in 2001 and 2011

Internal Migratory Population (in millions)

500

400

300

200 — 450
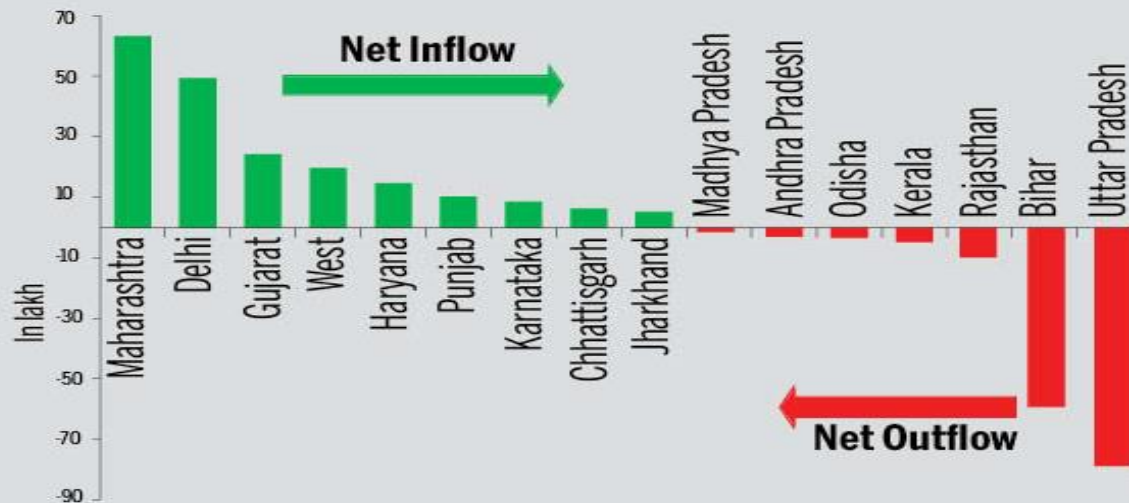
309

100

0

2001   2011

Year

■ Migrants

Source: Census of India as cited in https://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove/internal-migration-india-grows-inter-state-movements-remain-low

Migration in India

Source: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/when-will-reverse-migration-reverse/articleshow

Migration in India

- *According to a post of the worldbankblogs.org dated 18th December 2019, the total internal migrants as a percent of the population increased from 30 to 37 between 2001 and 2011.*

- *According to the above blog, the bulk of the movement of migrants estimated at 62% is with the same district, about 26% is between districts and the rest 12% is inter-state.*

- *According to an article in the online edition of "Hindustan Times" dated 26th July 2019, the census of India data for 2011 reveals that about fifty percent of the total out-migration within the country took place from the four states namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. On the other hand, fifty percent of the inflow of migrants was received by Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The newspaper terms the megacities Delhi and Mumbai as "migrant magnets".*
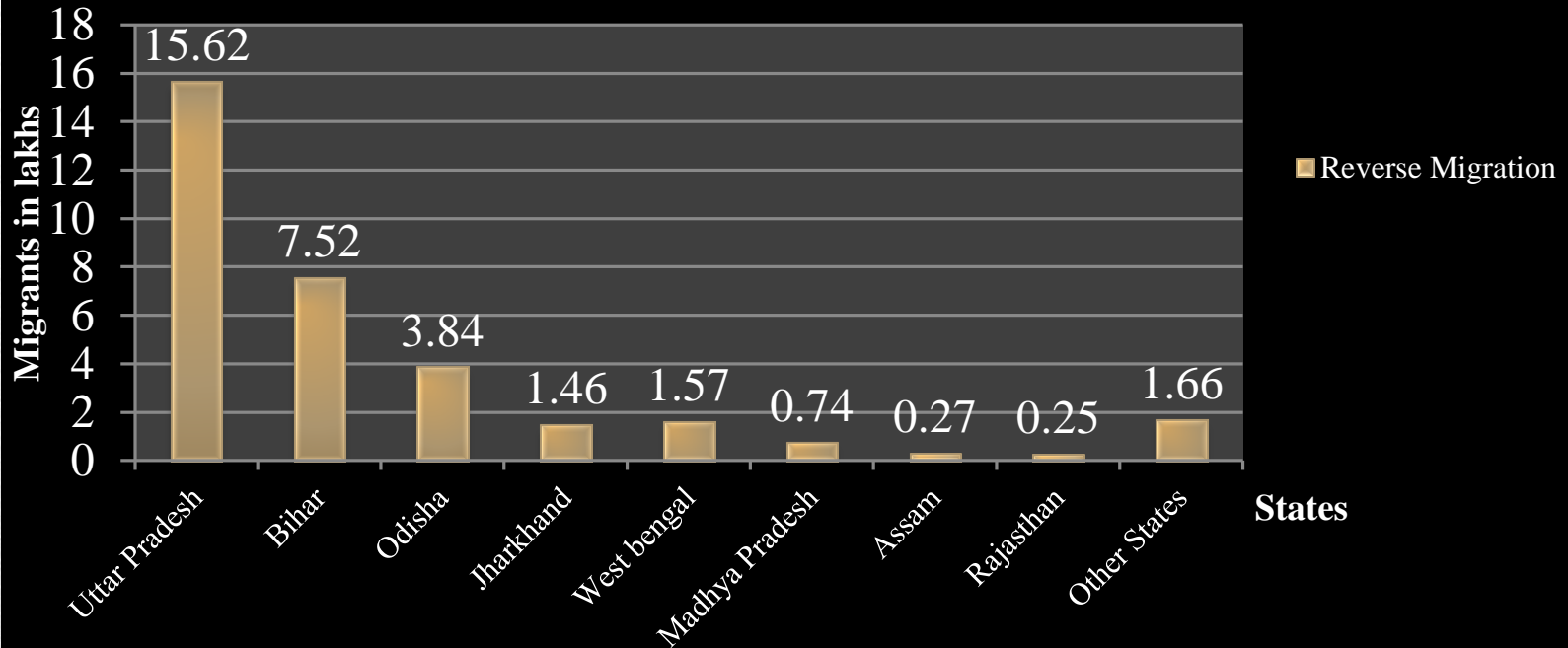
Migration in India

During the lock down due to COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, India witnessed, the movement of migrant workers in masses from urban areas back to their villages across the different states of the country. This exceptional behaviour of migratory workers has been termed as "reverse migration". The mass exodus has been penned down as a pandemic induced migration originating in the sudden loss of livelihood – the very cause for which migration in the first place took place. According to an article in the online newspaper edition of "The Wire" dated 16th October 2020, "This COVID-19-triggered reverse migration was the second largest mass migration in the recorded history of India, after the Partition, where more than 14 million people were displaced".

Reverse Migration

Reverse Migration to Different States in Shramik Special Trains Post Lock Down in 2020

Chart — Migrants in lakhs (Reverse Migration) by State:

State	Migrants in lakhs
Uttar Pradesh	15.62
Bihar	7.52
Odisha	3.84
Jharkhand	1.46
West bengal	1.57
Madhya Pradesh	0.74
Assam	0.27
Rajasthan	0.25
Other States	1.66

Source: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/when-will-reverse-migration-reverse/articleshow/

Reverse Migration

- *The COVID -19 pandemic in 2020, forced the central and state governments in India to declare a total lockdown in the country. The abrupt and forced cessation of different economic activities rendered the migrants jobless overnight. Most migrants in India are daily wage earners. The worst hit were the workers of the construction and manufacturing sectors. The state governments on the directives of the Central government set up relief camps for the migrant workers to prevent mass migration. However, the unexpected loss of income, food shortage, hunger and uncertainty led to the return of migrant workers to their rural home base in masses.*

- *Desperate to return home and finding no means of transport, there were instances of some walking or bicycling more than hundred kilometers to reach their destination. There were instances of 198 deaths in the transit. Later the government provided different means of transportation like buses and Shramik Special trains for stranded workers to return home.*

- *An article in the online edition of "Times of India" dated 31st October, 2020, states citing RBI estimates that about 40 million inter-state migrants were compelled to return to their native villages . The same article analyzing the data on migrants returning by Shramik Special trains state that Uttar Pradesh and Bihar witnessed largest reverse migration.*

Reverse Migration

On return to the native villages, most migrant workers received discriminatory treatment on grounds of being "corona virus carriers".

Funds were released from NDRF and PM CARES Fund to provide support to the migrants.

The Central Government of India declared the Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyaan to address the adverse impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers.

The demand for employment opportunities under the MGNREGA schemes in rural areas increased by 66% (The Wire, 16th Oct, 2020)

Many migrants abhorred the idea of returning to cities once normal economic activities were resumed unless there was absolute necessity for relocating once more.

During lock down, the reverse exodus adversely affected the economy with remittances decreasing and unemployment increasing. This indirectly affected the effective demand and disrupted the supply chain in the economy as there were signs of the Indian economy shrinking.

According to an article in the online edition of Economic Times dated 29th September 2020, "During the lockdown, approximately 71.31 percent of the businesses dealt with reduced cash flows with the manufacturing sector being the worst hit".

Reverse Migration

Reverse Migration – Ground Reality

- *Need for strengthening the poor base of rural infrastructure.*

- *To strive to built self sustaining rural economies by adopting developmental schemes for both farm and non-farm sectors*

- *To incorporate sustainable development through participatory approach*

- *To create adequate employment opportunities so as to rehabilitate the families of the migrant workers and prevent the process of rural urban migration in search of employment*

Inference

- Title Picture: Inspired by https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/coronavirus-lockdown-reverse-migration-will-affect-informal-economy-labourers-daily-wagers/story/400209.html
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- *Reverse Migration: Mantasha Hussain (Third Semester)*
- *Reverse Migration: Bandita Kumari & Kajal Kumari Singh (First Semester)*
- *Illustrations on Reverse Migration: Mantasha Hussain (Third Semester)*
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