COVID-19 and the Risk of Displacement of Migrant Workers: An Analysis of Media Framing in the Indian State of Kerala

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Abstract. Migration and migrant movement are a global scenario, in which one of the main drivers, which facilitates migrant movement, is the search for better living conditions. One of the most vulnerable communities in this regard is migrant workers, especially in the developing world, who conduct cross-country migration. Labour migration is a significant national phenomenon in India in which the workers migrate across the states, which were facilitated by the interstate movement. The recent outbreak of pandemic COVID-19 poses the greatest challenge to the migrant workers who face the challenge of displacement due to the restriction of movement and public perception. One of the significant actors facilitating public discourse is the media, which explores the migrant scenario through framing. This article analyzes how the Indian newspaper portrays the plight of the migrant workers in Kerala through media framing using qualitative case analysis. The study reveals that the media frames portray the plight of the migrant workers during the pandemic situation, and the result could be helpful for policy developers on immigrant's integration.

Raktažodžiai: *dirbantys emigrantai, pandemija, medijų politika, viešoji politika*
Keywords: *migrant workers, pandemic, media policy, media framing, public policy*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly the most impacted health hazard of the 21st century, affecting all society sections and its wide-ranging impact worldwide.

Globally, as of 17 March 2021, there have been 120,383,919 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 2,664,386 deaths, reported to WHO. As of 15 March 2021, a total of 363,691,238 vaccine doses have been administered (WHO Coronavirus COVID-19, Dashboard, 2021). The pandemic spread across the globe heightened significantly in the Americas, Europe, South East Asia. The pandemics worldwide spread have affected the poor and the most vulnerable and are putting millions more at risk of people into poverty. The World Bank Group views that the "largest share of the "new poor" will be in South Asia, with Sub-Saharan Africa close behind. According to the latest Poverty and Shared Prosperity report, "many of the new poor are likely to be engaged in informal services, construction, and manufacturing – the sectors in which economic activity is most affected by lockdowns and other mobility restrictions" (World Bank, 2020). The following travel restrictions have revealed the apparent differences among workers and immigrants, showing which groups are at greater risk to be associated with economic, social, and particularly systemic inequalities (Foley & Piper, 2020). Also, the number of international migrants decreased in 2020, and the return migration has increased.

The south Indian state of Kerala is a well-known location for interstate migrants. According to Peter et al. (2020), about 3.5 million interstate migrant workers are working in Kerala, and part of the state's economic segment since Kerala does provide the highest wages for migrant workers in different jobs in the unorganized sector in the Indian subcontinent. Therefore, in Kerala, one of the

significant communities impacted by the pandemic's spread is the migrant workers. Owing to their relatively less secure working conditions and lower seniority on the job, immigrants may be in a more vulnerable position in the labour market (OECD, 2020). Therefore, to have proper guidance and support for migrants, it is essential to have strong support through different systems.

Regarding the wide range of actors who intervene and portray the plight of the migrant workers, media plays a crucial role through their discourse and framing. Media framing is a mechanism in which certain aspects of a particular incident will be highlighted in the media using framing, thereby facilitating public perception towards various societal issues. This mechanism enables possible outreach to the cause of the incident, which will invite the attention of the political and social actors (Iyengar, 1994). With its mechanisms, the media highlight the incidences, thereby influencing the perception of other social actors and institutions (Hjarvard, 2008).

Thus, through the mechanism of framing, the media facilitates possible policy measures to various societal issues, like in the case of the plight of a migrant during COVID-19 (Guadagno, 2020), which otherwise get into oblivion due to the lack of social and political attention (Nisbet & Myers, 2010). Hence, it is essential to analyze the media's impact through its framing in portraying migrant's plight during COVID-19scenario. To accomplish this aim, we use the case example of the plight of migrant workers in Kerala during the COVID-19period from 01 March 2020 until 30 September 2020.

This article sets the following objective:

1. To analyze the frames employed by the media in highlighting the plight of migrant workers during the COVID-19.

Literature Review

Media framing can be perceived as a mechanism of the interlining web of connection to various aspects of a scenario, which were carefully crafted, thereby enabling to uncover the series of events connected in the whole theme (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). It can be attributed to the lack of proper theoretical footing for framing, which leads to the mechanism of framing as a fragmented field (Entman, 1993). Migration, especially of the migrant workers in the Indian context, is a comprehensive phenomenon that acts as a backbone of the Indian economy. The people, especially from the rural areas and hinterland, rely on migration for livelihood. Migration happens both internally and internationally. According to World Bank (2019), Internal movement is usually unrestricted in India, unlike in most other countries. According to the most recent 2011 census, India's internal migrants numbered 450 million. This represents a 45 % rise from the 309 million reported in 2001. This is slightly higher than the 18 % population growth rate between 2001 and 2011. Internal migrants increased their share of the population from 30% in 2001 to 37% in 2011.

In such cases, unlike other socio-cultural scenarios and natural calamities and hazards, migrant workers will be the ones whom the COVID-19 pandemic will directly inflict. The main attributing factors are attributed as constrained "living and working conditions," the lack of awareness about the preventive measures against the pandemic such as hygiene and social distancing due to the lack of proper education, lack of language and other societal skills in identifying the preventive measures and messages in the local communities which keeps them odds in the pandemic situation (Liem et al., 2020). The majority of migrant workers who work in Kerala are in the informal sectors (Chitra, 2019; Peter et al., 2020; Waite, 2001). The sudden disruption of living means due to the pandemic will directly impact the local society's survival and livelihood. Together with this, the lack of proper documentation inhibits the migrant workers from availing themselves of the essential health and other social facilities from the host communities (Bhagat & Keshri, 2020). Therefore, the media highlights the pressing societal issues through the thematic framing mechanism, thereby drawing public and policy actor's attention.

In this paper, we look at the aspect of COVID-19 and its impact on Kerala's migrant communities and depict the media incident with framing. The media uses the "linguistic" methods in which significance has been given to certain aspects through the framing mechanism, highlighting

those aspects. Through this measure, the media highlights the positive aspects and "marginalize" the "dissenting" voices (Herman, 2000). One of the first scholars who defined the concept of framing was Goffman (1974), who defines the aspect of framing as the perception and comprehension of an event by an individual who "locate, perceive, identify, and label" with the cognitive mechanism, thereby differentiate it using the interpretative mechanism into regular and societal frames. However, Entman (1993) is considered as providing the most fundamental definition of framing and its relationship with the media mechanism. Unlike others, he conceptualizes framing as a mechanism in formulating the individual and society's perception without directly correlating to the media mechanism. He defined framing as a mechanism that focuses on the aspect of "selection" and "salience." Selection is the process of selecting the specific aspect of an incident or phenomenon with the process of framing, thereby overshadowing other areas of the incident.

The incident's aspect is highlighted and magnified through salience, which will create wider public attention to this specific incident, creating public perception. This process is facilitated with "catchy titles, words, images" and through the method of uniquely highlighting them overshadowing other incidents, which is primarily being employed by the media actors such as journalists, reporters, and editors (Druckman, 2001). With the identification of the migrant issues during the pandemic, the media explores the "thematic" issues of the society, thereby enhancing the public outreach of those incidents. The media visualizes the pandemic's impact on the migrant communities through the media frames, thereby facilitating political dialogues and policy changes for promoting migrant accommodation. Thus, with the thematic frames, the media depicts the plight of the migrant workers during the pandemic using the frames that will portray the various socio-political and cultural aspects the migrant communities face together with the local aspects.

The aspect of thematic framing is one of the significant developments in the framing mechanism as it facilitates the demonstration of societal issues. Since the societal issues, especially regarding migration and the plight of the migrant workers, are a broader phenomenon, the media using thematic framing enables conceptualizing and concise the issue from a broader abstract perspective, allowing the public to visualize and perceive the problem. With the thematic framing, using the specific frames towards the risk of migrant workers enables the publics cognitive mechanism to perceive the issue (Kim, 2015). Thus, through the mechanism of framing, various societal incidences get the significance, which the media actors mainly attributed through framing (Entman, 1993). It enables the incidents to be perceived by the public and policy actors, thereby rectifying the policy measure's odds. These are especially significant in the case of migrant worker's plight during the pandemic.

Methodology

To find out the media frames uses for depicting the plight of the migrant workers in Kerala, this study focuses on analyzing the news report of The Times of India from Times News Network (TNN), the prominent English language newspaper in India with the highest circulation (The Times of India, 2019). The period selected for the news report analysis is from 01 March 2020 until 30 September 2020. The significance of selecting the initial period of March is its significance of declaring COVID-19 as a pandemic by the WHO and initiating the subsequent lockdown and quarantine measures by the national and state government. Through the media frames, the article explores the risk of migrant workers in Kerala during COVID-19 and uncovers Kerala's government and other institutions in facilitating the assimilation and repatriation of migrant workers. The paper also explores the impact of the repatriation of the migrant workers on the Kerala economy who depend heavily on the migrant workforce.

The news articles for identifying the scenario of COVID-19 and its impact on the migrant workers and their displacement were selected by employing the key search words, "Migrants Workers in Kerala," "Guest Workers in Kerala," by applying Google search from the newspaper online portal. It facilitates the classification of the targeted articles related to the pandemic's scenario and its implication towards the migrant workers. The selection process identified 110 articles related to the

search category in the specified time frame. The article's selection and categorization for identifying the media frames have been compiled as per their compatibility in depicting the specified frames in the article title and body. It portrays the article's selection procedure, which complies to the maximum extent to find the aim the researcher is investigating to unravel the specific issue (Scheufele, 1999). The main frames used to find out the aim are the *victim frame, threat frame, responsibility frame, administrative frame, and economic destabilization frame*. Thus, through the frames, the articles examine the situation of the migrant workers in Kerala during the pandemic period and the measures by the governmental institutions in averting the risk.

Results

The aspect of media framing of incidences, especially those which have broader implications such as the outburst of the pandemic scenarios, like of COVID-19, will facilitate the public perception of those incidences, and through the visualization of the responsibility frames enabling the public institutions to rectify the odds in the decision making. The frames employed by the media signifies the impact it will facilitate regarding a specific issue and how the public will perceive it. The study proceeds with the qualitative content analysis of 110 articles in the Indian English newspaper, The Times of India, over seven months, following the declaration of the virus COVID-19 as a pandemic. The period's selection is due to the pandemic's impact on the migrant workers as the period following March till September led to the continuous exodus and displacement of the migrant workers and the governmental policies in providing shelter and repatriation. The media discourse focuses on the frames mainly employed by the newspaper to portray the risk and displacement of migrant workers. The mainframes used by the newspaper were victim frame, threat frame (Van Gorp, 2005), responsibility frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), administrative frame (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2012), which were the universal deductive frames, and economic destabilization (author) frame which is locally developed inductive frame. However, these frames were not depicted linearly over the period. The intensity of the frames, especially the administrative and responsibility frames, intensified in the middle and later stages, which led to amicable measures for the migrant accommodation and repatriation. In contrast, the economic destabilization frame got significance in the last stage during the heightening of the migrant repatriation.

From Table 1, the total number of articles with the frames on the aspect of pandemic and its implication of migrant workers is 110. During the seven months of the pandemic declaration, the victim frame was mentioned 23 times. The threat frame was mentioned four times, the responsibility frame was mentioned 48 times, the administrative frame was mentioned 32 times, and the economic destabilization frame was mentioned three times.

Table 1. **Summary of Frames Used by Newspapers**

MAJOR FRAMES	THE TIMES OF INDIA
Victim Frame	23
Threat Frame	4
Responsibility Frame	48
Administrative Frame	32
Economic Destabilization Frame	3
Total Articles	110

Source: Authors

The article analyses the plight of migrant workers in Kerala during the outbreak and the heightening of the pandemic, COVID-19, and the consequent national and state lockdown and quarantine measures. The article uses the universally acclaimed frames and the local frame to analyze the frame's aspect. The paper categorizes the discourse into victim frame, threat frame, responsibility frame, administrative frame, and economic destabilization frames. The victim frame focuses on migrant's portrayals as victims and positions them as someone outside the state's borders. It comes

searching for a livelihood and temporary residents for meeting the primary needs (Van Gorp, 2005). The second frame employs to explore the plight of the migrants is the threat frame. It is based on the stereotype with the characterization of the migrants as "others" regarding the immigrant communities and the depiction of the actual threat, which hampers the socio, economic, political, and cultural aspects of the Kerala society (Ibid).

The third frame which the paper explores to identify the situation of the migrant workers is the responsibility frame. It refers to presenting the challenges and issues the migrants face in COVID-19 and the responsibility measures taken by the government of Kerala and other individuals and communities for accommodating the migrants and facilitating their repatriation (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The fourth and final universal frame, which explores the aspect of migrant workers, is the administrative frame. It refers to any bureaucratic and legal measures from the police and court for creating awareness among the migrants concerning the measures to be taken for combating the pandemic, providing facilities and resources and efforts for combating false news, information, and conspiracy theories to the migrants regarding the pandemic, thereby creating social and cultural tensions (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2012). The final frame, which has been envisaged as per Keralas pandemic scenario, is the economic destabilization frame. It refers to the catastrophic effect on the Kerala economy with the sudden withdrawal of the migrant workers, which led to the economic collapse and destabilization of the industries and other private sectors.

Discussion

To analyze each of the five frames, the paper analyses Times of India (TOI) media discourse to identify the frames carried out to depict the plight of migrant workers in Kerala during the pandemic.   The victim frame identifies the victimization and the helplessness of the migrant workers during the pandemic and the lack of resources and governmental mechanisms in accomplishing their basic human needs and return home.

These are visible in the frames like, "No special trains, guest workers in Kerala borrow money to fly home" (TNN, 2020e), in which the frames are visualized as,

> "*Desperate to return to their villages and Shramik trains no more in operation, guest workers, borrowing money from family members and friends back home.*"
>
> *(TNN, 2020e)*

Another article titled, "Actor Sonu Sood flies out 169 Odia migrants stuck in Kerala" (Pradhan, 2020) in which the frames are depicted as,

> "*They were not getting proper food and were desperate to return home," said Sood, who has been actively helping migrants reach home.*"
>
> *(Pradhan, 2020)*

Another article titled, "Kerala: Returning guest workers must pay for quarantine" (TNN, 2020c) in which the frames are portrayed as,

> "*The government has decided to impose paid quarantine on these workers when they come back to Kerala…will have to shell out money to go on a 14-day quarantine here*".
>
> *(TNN, 2020c)*

Another article selected in the victim frame titled "Kerala: Migrant workers made to pay for their home journey" (Sreemol & Karunakaran, 2020) in which the frames were envisaged as,

> "*Many of them who had no jobs and income support for weeks…, should pay for their journey.*"
>
> *(Sreemol & Karunakaran, 2020)*

The final article selected for this frame titled "Suicide of guest workers in state puzzles officials" (Kumar, 2020), in which the frame was visualized as,

> *"It could be lockdown stress or personal issues…Seven suicides among guest workers have been reported from five districts in the state, with most of the cases being reported in April".*
>
> *(Kumar, 2020)*

Thus, through these articles, the media portrays the victimization frame and the helplessness of the migrant workers. These are specially visualized in the lack of proper land transportation mechanism and the lack of availability in the trains, forcing them to acquire money somehow to find them to get accommodated through air transport to get back home. The frame also showcases the vulnerable scenario of the migrant workers where they lack the basic facilities of food and accommodation and the humanitarian measures taken by individual actors to get them transported home. It also showcases the lack of administrative mechanisms and lack of funds from the Government of Kerala in assisting in quarantine and transportation back home. The desperation and lack of hope without proper monetary means lead the migrant workers to commit suicide while on the verge of poverty and uncertainty of the future. Thus, through the victim frame, the newspaper is vocal at the victimization of the migrant workers and the state of helplessness in Kerala, thereby implying rectifying the odds in the policy measures.

The second prominent frame depicts in the newspaper is the threat frame. Even though compared to other frames, the paper was unable to portray much of the threat frame, mostly attributed to the appreciation of the migrant workforce in the state of Kerala who acts as the backbone of the workforce in the state due to the massive outflow of local human resources and the migrant workforce integration into the society. However, some articles depicted these frames, especially during the pandemic period.

These are visible in the frames like "Kerala: Militants masquerading as migrants (Saikiran, 2020b), in which the frames are visualized as,

> *"The arrests of three sympathizers of an Al-Qaida-affiliate module in the state have revived the debate on preparing a comprehensive database on migrant labourers."*
>
> *(Saikiran, 2020b)*

Another article significant for the threat frame titled "COVID-19 in Kochi: More guest workers testing positive a cause for concern" (Sreemol, 2020), in which the frames are portrayed as,

> *"The living conditions of guest workers is also a cause for concern for authorities as one case can spread the infection like a wildfire… does not have adequate facilities like an attached bathroom".*
>
> *(Sreemol, 2020)*

Another article titled, "Kerala: Migrant workers hit Kottayam streets, demand food, return to native places (Nair, 2020), which the frames are depicted as,

> *"Violating the lockdown orders, hundreds of migrant workers hit the streets of Paippad near Changanassery in Kerala's Kottayam district on Sunday."*
>
> *(Nair, 2020)*

The final article selected for the frame titled "Police warn guest workers who hoard essential items" (TNN, 2020g); the frames are envisaged as,

> *"A video of policemen visiting a camp of guest workers has gone viral …laborers are seen hoarding essential commodities even as they sought the assistance of the authorities in arranging the food."*
>
> *(TNN, 2020g)*

Thus, through the threat frame, the media is depicting how the migrants, either through their actions or behavior, led to the perception of the migrants as a threat by either the local society or the administrative and bureaucratic actors during the pandemic period. These are especially visible in the articles in which the militants who try to infiltrate society disguised as migrant laborers create social and political unrest. It led to the visualization of the migrants as a threat. However, to avert it, the government decided to make a comprehensive database, thereby averting further incidences and segregating terrorists from the migrant workforce. It also concerns the lack of personal hygiene and other safety measures among the migrant workers and communities, which can further accelerate the pandemics spread, which acts as a threat mechanism. Another aspect that depicts the migrant workers as a threat is the lack of proper awareness of the pandemic. However, the stringent governmental measures and the humanitarian actor's intervention mitigated the scenario. Only four threat frame incidents have been reported of the total 110 articles during the whole-time frame of seven months.

The third frame, which depicts the situation of the migrant workers during the pandemic, is the responsibility frame. Unlike the previous two frames, the administrative frame is so prominent in the news articles. It depicts the state government's response measures and the individual and collective actors taking measures to properly accommodate the migrant workers and facilitate effective repatriation measures back home. We found some appropriate measures to provide accommodation with the victim frame and provide basic facilities and repatriation. However, due to the media's proper reporting of the incidents and the outcry by the public and associations facilitating the migrant accommodation, significant policy changes were promoted over time, which led to positive measures towards migrant workers. These are visible in the limiting of the victim frame and the enhanced reporting of the administrative frame in which the frame has been mentioned 48 times in the total of 110 articles.

These are visible in the frames like, "Kerala govt to modify order allowing asymptomatic COVID-19 migrants to work" (Press Trust of India PTI, 2020), in which the frame has been depicted as,

> *"The Kerala government has decided to modify an order that allowed asymptomatic COVID-19 guest workers in the state to work in places exclusively marked for them by taking all health precautions".*
> *(Press Trust of India PTI, 2020)*

Another article titled, "Factories woo back migrant workers with food, air tickets" (Bloomberg, 2020) in which the frames are visualized as,

> *"Had more than 500 migrant laborers working in various plants, I am willing to offer food and other incentives for those wanting to return.".*
> *(Bloomberg, 2020)*

Another prominent article titled, "Gods Own Country plays perfect host to Assam migrants" (Prabin, 2020) in which the frames are portrayed as,

> *"Approachable and caring government machinery right till the panchayat level, employers with big hearts and kind locals…Assamese youths in Kerala who have preferred to stay back without pressing the panic button to reach home".*
> *(Prabin, 2020)*

Another significant article in this regard titled, "Kerala to use PM CARES fund to aid guest workers" (TNN, 2020d) in which the media frame the incident as were mentioned as,

> *"The state decided to meet the relief, welfare and quarantine expenses of guest workers from the prime minister's citizen assistance and relief fund, and it will be utilized for arranging accommodation facilities…to guest workers".*
> *(TNN, 2020d)*

The final article in this regard titled, "Kerala: Man sends guest workers home in four buses" (TNN, 2020b) in which the frames will be depicted as,

> *"The journey was part of the humanitarian mission undertaken in the time of the pandemic… said Shihab Shiya, the owner of the bus fleet."*
>
> *(TNN, 2020b)*

Thus, the government and individuals' measures with a humanitarian approach facilitate the accommodation, providing facilities, and enabling repatriation from the administrative frame. These are visible in the governance mechanisms of giving opportunities to work for the asymptomatic workers in designated areas, thereby providing the option for livelihood and utilizing the prime minister relief fund for providing them with the necessary facilities. Also, the measures taken by individual actors, especially by the companies and business enterprises with food and accommodation, were depicted. These administrative measures offer relief to the migrant workers and feel confident in the steps, thereby holding together with the state during the crisis.

The fourth frame in this regard is the administrative frame. It looks at the aspect of bureaucratic, legal, and judicial mechanisms during pandemics, which facilitates the assimilation of migrant workers. These measures and the administrative measures got tremendous significance in the total frames of the migrant aspect as the article has been portrayed 32 times in a total of 110 articles.

These are visible in the frames like - "Job loss due to COVID-19: Kerala HC seeks views of Centre, the state on legal aid to NRIs" (Haneef, 2020), in which the frames are depicted as,

> *"All non-resident Indians (NRIs), including migrant workers and workers who are undocumented or in irregular status, should have access to legal remedies for facing unfair treatment."*
>
> *(Haneef, 2020)*

Another article titled, "Protests by migrant workers: HC seeks report from Kerala government" (Haneef, 2020) in which the frames were visualized as,

> *"The Kerala high court on Tuesday sought a report from the state government on protests conducted by migrant workers at Payippad and Perumbavoor violating coronavirus lockdown."*
>
> *(Haneef, 2020)*

Another prominent article in this regard titled, "Rural police use soft power to manage guest workers" (Tom, 2020), in which the frames are portrayed as,

> *"Rather than using brute force, police relied on intelligence operations and soft power to keep thousands of guest workers in their respective camps for nearly a month, thus effectively controlling any possible disease spread."*
>
> *(Tom, 2020)*

The final article selected for this frame has been titled, "Awareness program resumes at a relief camp for guest workers" (TNN, 2020a), in which the frames are depicted as,

> *"Police and revenue officials have resumed the sensitization program in guest workers relief camps across the district. The initiative is in the backdrop of odd incidents of agitation. Such incidents are being created as a result of attempts to spread rumors".*
>
> *(TNN, 2020a)*

Thus, these frames depicted the legal and judicial measures for combating the pandemic and providing orientation and fair treatment for the migrant workers. These are visible in the High Court ruling measures for availing fair legal treatment for the migrant workers and the judicial inquiry enquiring the administrative failure in overseeing the migrant workers protest in public, which can further aggravate the pandemic situation. These judicial measures created the facilitating scenario.

The police and legal actors also at the subsequent stages focus more on creating orientation and soft powers, thereby increasing awareness among the migrant communities, mitigating further situations, and combating the virus spread.

The paper's final frame explores the aspect of the migrant workers in the state of Kerala during the pandemic in the economic destabilization frame. Unlike the other frames which explore the situation and wellbeing of migrant workers and the measures taken for accommodating them and the repatriation during the time of the pandemic, whereas the frame of economic destabilization looks at the aspect of economic instability and destabilization, the state of Kerala is facing with the return of the migrant workforce who act as a backbone of the state workforce.

These are visible in the frames like "Plywood industry hit as migrants leave" (TNN, 2020f), in which the frames are depicted as,

> *"The exodus, in turn, affected the functioning of the plywood industry, which largely depends on migrant workforce. The production in plywood industry has been reduced to half after the exodus of migrant workforce started a few days ago".*
>
> *(TNN, 2020f)*

Another article titled, "58% of migrant workers go back, Kerala to feel the pinch" (Saikiran, 2020a), in which the frames are visualized as,

> *"Those working in the sector said the workers were returning owing to multiple reasons, and this could affect various industries in the state. However, the exodus will adversely affect the states industries".*
> *(Saikiran, 2020a)*

The final article in this regard titled, "Flood of queries as ULCCS launches recruitment drive in Kerala" (Rajeev, 2020), in which the frames were portrayed as,

> *"Around 1,500 of our guest workers have returned to their home states, and we thought of giving job opportunities for skilled workers here".*
>
> *(Rajeev, 2020)*

Thus, from the frames mentioned above, the states' economic destabilization with the exodus of the migrant workforce is depicted. These frames were visible, especially during the later stage, when the workforce was compelled to return due to the lack of job opportunities during the lockdown. It shows the leaving workforce's impact, especially the industrial areas where most migrant workers were employed. Thus, the repatriation of the migrant workforce led to the economic destabilization of the industrial sector of Kerala state.

Thus, from the victim, threat, responsibility, administrative, and economic destabilization frames, the newspaper gives weightage to the administrative and responsibility frames rather than the victim, threat, and economic destabilization frames. It shows the measures taken by the government of Kerala and the local individuals and groups, which shows compassionate and humanitarian steps towards the migrant workers. It also highlighted the bureaucratic, legal, and judicial measures taken by the police, the high court in upholding the rights of the migrant workers and educating them about the need for proper hygiene, measures, and the need for being in quarantine averting the pandemic and to deescalate it. However, it also explores the lack of policy measures in the initial stages, especially when there is a lack of proper facilities and basic amenities, which vocalizes it through the victim frame, leading to rectifying those measures by the governmental agencies with the legal and humanitarian groups.

Conclusions

The outbreak of the COVID-19 proves to be fatal, especially for the migrant workers, especially in the Indian context. It led to the mass exodus of migrant workers from various parts of the country back to their homes. The primary mechanism the newspaper enables these through the

aspect of framing. Through the means of framing, the newspaper portrays the situation of the migrant workers. It highlights the lack of amenities, challenges, policy, and public measures through the lens of framing.

Thus, the study complies with the above-mentioned theoretical framework of media framing and how the media employs frames to signify and highlight a specific aspect of the issue over the broader frame of the issue, thereby complying with the particular aspect of framing they are oriented towards. These are particularly visible in the frames when the frames progressed over the time frame. These show that the holistic picture of the plight of the migrant workforce during the pandemic has been sub-framed periodically as per its relevance and the measures taken towards combating it.

One of the main limitations, which can be perceived from the study, can be a subjective inclination towards identifying and interpreting the media frames. As the codes have been formulated for the first seven months, starting from the virus's declaration as a pandemic in March till September, the frames further significance can be altered in the later periods as the pandemic is getting heightened the remaining months of the year. However, as media framing and its impact on migration and migrant communities are among the unexplored areas and evolving aspects, further research can act as a catalyst and rectify the odds of this research. Thus, through the media framing mechanism, the media highlights the plight of the migrant workers, thereby gaining the public's attention, which formulates their perception of the issue. It also enables the policymakers to perceive the plight of the workers, thereby facilitating possible policy measures for facilitating the migrant workers and repatriation during the pandemic.

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COVID-19 ir dirbančių emigrant iškraustymas: medijų rėminimo analizė Keralos valstijoje, Indijoje

Anotacija

Migracija ir migrantų judėjimas yra pasaulinė tendencija, kurią įtakoja keletas veiksnių. Vienas iš jų, palengvinančių migrantų judėjimą, yra geresnių gyvenimo sąlygų ieškojimas. Viena iš labiausiai pažeidžiamų bendruomenių šiuo atžvilgiu yra migrantai, ypač besivystančiame pasaulyje, vykdantys migraciją iš vienos šalies į kitą. Darbo jėgos migracija yra reikšmingas nacionalinis reiškinys Indijoje, kai darbuotojai migruoja po valstijas, o tai palengvino tarpvalstybinis judėjimas. Neseniai kilęs pandemijos COVID-19 protrūkis kelia didžiausią iššūkį darbuotojams migrantams, kurie susiduria su perkėlimo problema dėl judėjimo ir visuomenės suvokimo ribojimo. Vienas iš svarbiausių dalyvių, palengvinančių viešąjį diskursą, yra žiniasklaida, kuri rėmėsi migrantų scenarijaus formavimu. Šiame straipsnyje analizuojama, kaip Indijos laikraštis vaizduoja Keralos darbuotojų migrantų sunkumus per žiniasklaidos rėminimą naudojabt kokybinę atvejų analizę. Tyrimas atskleidžia, kad žiniasklaidos rėmuose vaizduojama migruojančių darbuotojų padėtis pandemijos metu ir rezultatas gali būti naudingas imigrantų integracijos politikos kūrėjams.

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