



The COVID-19 Pandemic and the 'stranded' Migrant Population: An Unequal pain

AKM Ahsan Ullah* · Diotima Chatteraj** · Wan Zawawi Ibrahim***

[*Abstract*]

This article aims to determine the vulnerability of migrant populations to COVID-19. Between March 2020 and November 2021, informal interviews with respondents who were stranded in various parts of the world were conducted through Skype and WhatsApp. COVID-19 endangers millions of individuals who were stranded between their homes and their destinations — and who were compelled to reside in overcrowded accommodation where the ideas of "stay home," "keep safe," and "social distancing" have little significance.

Keywords: COVID-19, migration, pandemic, lockdown, and refugee.

I . Introduction

Millions of people have had to postpone life-cycle events, including

* Associate Professor at Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam. akmahsanullah@gmail.com

** Adjunct Research fellow at the School of Social and Health Science, James Cook University, Singapore. diotima.chatteraj@jcu.edu.au

*** Professor at Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei Darussalam. wzi1947@gmail.com

weddings, anniversaries, family get-togethers, festivals, religious functions, graduations, and retirements, because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Arkin, Fichtel and Walters 2020). Coronaviruses have now infested every region of the globe. It is expected that the emergence of the COVID-19 epidemic will have a significant impact on our understanding of the early twenty-first century (Bedford et al. 2019). Not everyone experiences the infection in the same manner. Nationals and non-nationals can face vastly different outcomes as a result of this attack. Because countries that do not have universal healthcare can barely house their residents, let alone refugees and migrants, they are unable to accept these other populations (Gardini 2020). They suffer disproportionately from the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 problem since they are one of the most disadvantaged social groups (ILO 2020).

We have realized that wars do not have to be caused by large reasons (Sufian 2020). This means there will be many-sided consequences, like deteriorating global imbalances, those blamed for the virus spreading being forced to flee, and more cross-border criminality (Ullah 2016a). Italy's Matteo Salvini, for example, has said that African migrants caused the spread of disease in the country, and Viktor Orban of Hungary has blamed Iranian migrants for the spread of a virus. Meanwhile, President Trump has branded it the "China virus" (Condon 2020; Center for Migration Studies 2020; Anzai et al. 2020). The worldwide situation has been critical, with over 6.3 million people dying, over 530 million people infected, and around 507 million recovering (as of June, 8th 2022). The governments of many countries implemented lockdowns to stop the virus from spreading, leaving millions unable to leave their locations. Over a third of the world's population are at some degree of hindrance (Ullah, Nawaz and Chatteraj 2021). There are more people under lockdown today than during World War II (Ullah 2014; Ullah, Hossain and Islam 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the migrant community. Every day, during the pre-COVID-19 period, approximately one million people used to take flights. Vast mobility ceased (as about 90% of these travellers have stopped moving) (Ullah, Nawaz and Chatteraj 2021), with the vast majority of airlines

grounded and travel restrictions imposed (Johns Hopkins University 2020), and the entire global population forced to change their way of life: “stay home, stay safe” (Johns Hopkins University 2020; Kampf et al. 2020).

Most European countries implemented limits on both inbound and outbound travel during the initial wave of the pandemic, implementing universal restrictions that prevented all cross-border travel or, at the least, permitted business travellers and cross-border commuters to travel freely. During the second wave, however, the vast majority of nations restricted and regulated only inbound travel, issuing warnings for outbound travel. During the first wave of travel restrictions, governments grounded planes, suspended international train connections, and closed border crossings, whereas second-wave travel restrictions largely instructed incoming travellers to quarantine themselves or required a negative Sars-Cov-2 test either before or shortly after entry (Neumayer, Plümper and Shaikh 2021).

There is no doubt that immobility is vital in stopping or reducing the virus's spread. The issue is that migrant-receiving countries want them to leave, while their home countries appear hostile. According to Sirkeci and Yüceşahin (2020), migratory corridors increase migration volume over time. The challenges that migrants endured during the pandemic received little attention. This article looks at how the pandemic has affected the lives of migrant groups and how vaccination distribution has been politicized.

II . Objectives and methodology

This article is based on 43 remote interviews (via Skype and WhatsApp) with respondents selected through the snowball method. They were migrants living or were confined in Singapore, Brunei, Hong Kong, Macau, Italy, Spain, Maryland, New York, Newark, Florida, Atlanta, Dusseldorf, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, France, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. The respondents come from the low- and semi-skilled brackets who are at most risk from COVID-19. Conducting qualitative research with labour migrants was

significantly more difficult during the pandemic. Migrant workers were difficult to reach due to a lack of internet connection, illegal status, and the possibility of facing public suspicion or even disgrace in a foreign country. The workers who took part in the research came from various segments of the unorganized sector. 55% or majority of them (55%) are low-skilled, while 18% are skilled. In general, they were all employed in the informal sector and received scant social protection. Only a few migrant workers engaged in small trades, accounting for 2% of respondents, and 8% of these respondents worked in other areas such as transportation.

III. COVID-19 and migrant restrictions

Imposing travel restrictions is one of the oldest methods of controlling the spread of infectious diseases. According to historical accounts, restrictions were originally used in 1347, when Genoese traders were believed to have brought the plague from the Crimean harbour city of Kaffa. European port communities quarantined sailors on board ships for 40 days before allowing them to disembark. Travel restrictions throughout history have been a mechanism to limit social contact between the local population and tourists from epidemic-affected areas (Gensini, Yacoub and Conti 2004).

The migrant community is expected to be disproportionately affected by any pandemic. COVID-19 disproves the widely held belief that a pandemic knows neither racial nor social borders. Overshadowing conventional migration arguments (IOM 2020), the COVID-19 situation has made migration more difficult. Numerous studies have already shown that migrant workers are the most vulnerable occupational category (Koh 2020). Regardless of origin or destination, most of our respondents expressed concern about food scarcity, job loss, xenophobia, and overall uncertainties (Figure 1), all of which have implications for their families and the economy back home. According to research carried out by Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and International Labour Organization:

“during the second and third quarters of 2020, an estimated 17.3 and 12.1 percent of worldwide working hours (equivalent to 495 million and 345 million full-time jobs) were lost owing to the pandemic” (2020:8).

It is well recognized that border restrictions hurt population migration. In order to combat the spread of COVID-19, many governments have taken harsh measures against migrants, refugees, and other displaced people. Measures included border closures, quarantines, expulsions, and lockdowns of migrant labour settlements and refugee camps. Outraged by the situation of migrant laborers, public policy professionals referred to the COVID-19 quarantine as a "choice between virus and starvation" (Chen 2020). Between 11 March 2020 and 22 February 2021, about 105,000 movement restrictions were imposed around the world (IOM 2021). Estimates based on a zero-growth assumption in the number of migrants between 1 March and 1 July 2020 suggest a global fall of nearly two million international migrants between mid-2019 and mid-2020, compared to the previously expected estimate of 1.5 million (UN DESA 2020).

Around 1.5 billion young people, or more than 90% of the world's students, have had their education disrupted in 188 countries (United Nations 2020). Salary cuts among migrant and refugee workers reduced remittances by USD\$109 billion. Remittances – a critical source of income for over 800 million people (Ullah, Nawaz and Chatteraj 2021b; Ullah 2010; 2018) – account for more than 10% of global GDP in 30 countries (Ullah and Huque 2019).

The low-skilled or unskilled migrants do not have the luxury of working from home. Their physical presence at the workplace is critical, increasing their chances of contracting COVID-19 and transmitting it to others (Ullah 2016; Ullah and Haque 2020). As a result, lockdown (Avato et al. 2020; Dustmann et al. 2010; Sanchez and Achilli 2020) has been considered a successful measure for slowing the spread of cases through human-to-human transmission. Government response to prevent migrants from going home was motivated by the worry that they might bring the Coronavirus back

to their hometowns and villages (Ullah, Haji-Othman and Daud 2021c; Chen 2020). Because of the COVID-19 outbreak (Condon 2020), majority of European Union (EU) member states prohibited all relocation, return, and resettlement plans and limited services for migrants (Bloomberg 2020). Austria, Greece, Belgium, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic rejected immigration quotas (Roslan 2020).

Many countries adopted policies disallowing new migrant workers (Yoyboke 2020; Mashal, Timory and Rahim 2020). No new work permits for foreign workers were issued until further notice (Ullah, Kumpoh and Haji-Othman 2021a). There was rising evidence that as many as 100 million migrants preferred illegal routes to leave since regular ones were insufficient (Sohini and Jha 2020). Desperate migrants sought assistance from smugglers, traffickers, and other illicit organizations (Legrain 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic, to some, appeared as a source of hope for many migrants. They saw rays of hope primarily because of the likely rising need of migrant workers to restart the business. The pandemic has transformed their invisibility and underlined their vital role in society. Some respondents mentioned that the pandemic helped raise awareness of migrants' contributions as "essential workers," especially in health, supply chains, and agriculture (Freier et al. 2020). Hence, as a recognition, the Portuguese government began granting citizenship to all migrants and asylum seekers awaiting a verdict on their residency petitions. France already granted citizenship to hundreds of migrant frontline workers (Willsher 2021). A genuine moment of reckoning has emerged: economies and societies cannot function without key workers. Nurses, care workers, delivery drivers, supermarket staff, etc., were considered heroes. Moreover, it is indisputably clear that migrants figure prominently amongst these workers. Globally, only 4.7% of the workforce was made up of migrants (Kumar 2021).

Some European industries, including agriculture, became concerned about potential economic losses caused by travel restrictions that prevent many refugees from arriving. Germany's farm sector, which relies heavily on migrant labourers from Bulgaria,

Poland, and Romania, was anxious that border closures would jeopardize the harvest. Other migrants could be brought in to assist with the rescue attempt. As a result, Germany's agriculture minister urged that refugees be granted temporary work permits (Taylor 2020). For example, in Luxembourg and Australia, more than half of the doctors were foreign-born. In London, two-thirds of the nurses and half of the doctors are migrants (Kumar 2021).

IV. Migrants' potential consequences

It was only in March 2020, that the world witnessed hundreds of hapless migrants anxiously trying to catch a bus back to their home countries in a three-kilometre-long wait at Delhi's Bus Terminal in India, a scene that shook the nation and the world (Singh 2020). As the days passed, additional terrible images and accounts of migrant labourers travelling hundreds of miles across states became public.

4.1 Harrowing return journey

Migrant laborers (Sainath 2020), one of society's most disadvantaged groups, have been squeezing under capitalism's weight for generations. The pandemic has exacerbated their suffering. As a result, many migrants have suffered, particularly those who are low-skilled or work in the informal economy. The majority of receiving countries hastened to implement a state-wide lockdown, and employers and intermediaries, who were the last line of defence, turned their backs on these hapless people.

Mobility restrictions (travel to and from work) have had a severe impact in a myriad of ways on migrant families, livelihoods, and food security. As a result, governments were condemned for imposing lockdowns too swiftly or too slowly, with too tight or too lax restrictions. Millions of migrants were left stranded in transit, destination, or countries of origin. Earlier studies on the economic impacts of lockdown restrictions concentrated on their impact on consumption, the supply chain, inequality, and the overall economy. The aggregate economic impact of shutdown restrictions, on the

other hand, is difficult to quantify for a variety of reasons (Smolyak et al. 2021). Migrant workers who are presently working overseas may be unable to return home, and families who are already dealing with complex immigration and visa systems may be split up for an entirely new reason (Yayboke 2020). As a result of “politically” motivated restrictions, migrants were forced to face the monumental effort of returning home on foot, despite unmet biological needs, a harsh climate, and an equally unfriendly attitude from law enforcement.

4.2 Stranded

Migrant workers, who have long struggled with poverty and marginalization, were shocked to learn that the lockdown notice was the start of a lifetime of agony. As a result, the pandemic has had a devastating effect on low-skilled migrant labour and informal workers. They are fighting for their lives in areas where they work and when they arrive on their way back to their home countries. With no end to the pandemic disaster in sight, these populations are stranded.

As a result of the "lockdown" restrictions, those unable to work in their intended destination nations were stuck in economic limbo with no access to any social safety net.

"We are stuck here," "we are spending our time remaining at home watching movies and connecting with people via social media," were the most common responses from our respondents who are stranded in various parts of the world to our "how are you?" question. "Every two weeks, we go shopping for groceries." While governments in Southeast and East Asia are supposed to have



<Figure 1> COVID-19, migration and consequences.
Source: Authors, 2022

taken care of domestic helpers, some respondents (mostly domestic helpers-DH) from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, and Singapore said that their employers were reluctant to discuss their health issues. Their bosses made them wait in line for hours for masks and hand sanitizers, despite the fact that the masks were only for their employers. Many governments made it clear that they would not care for foreigners in their country, meaning that foreigners would bear full financial responsibility if they succumb to COVID-19.

Measures affecting people's movement (both domestically and internationally) and the resulting labour shortages have an impact on agricultural value chains, changing food supply and market pricing globally. Simultaneously, a significant proportion of migrants work under informal or casual arrangements, leaving them unprotected, vulnerable to exploitation, poverty, and food insecurity, and frequently lacking access to healthcare, social safety nets, or government-enacted regulations (FAO 2020).

Migrants have been stranded for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, travel restrictions and a reduction in foreign flights. The loss of jobs and money, a lack of work, residency permits, and a lack of finances to return home have all restricted mobility. As their visas and permissions expire, migrants face deportation (IOM 2020). Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers are either on their way home or are stranded somewhere along the way (Ahmed 2020). Due to job losses, around half a million Filipinos are likely to return home in the next six months (ibid). Countries have enforced quarantines, curfews, and border closures to stop the spread of Coronavirus, detaining many refugees. According to some of our Italian, French and Spanish respondents, they could not go grocery shopping unless they had their passports. Those who lack identity have no choice but to live in poverty and famine.

The majority of people in similar situations indicated anxiety that they would perish from hunger rather than disease. To prevent the virus from spreading, drastic and sudden lockdown measures are required; nevertheless, the decision to lockdown came far too soon for the migrants whose jobs had vanished overnight. Around 90 million domestic workers, tens of millions of migrant

construction workers, and approximately 10 million street vendors migrate to work in middle-class metropolitan households in India. These people spread unchecked into rural areas. Bangladesh, the world's second-largest garment exporter, is losing orders at an alarming rate, threatening the livelihoods of millions of people. Millions of garment workers (about 1.2 million migrant labourers) are internal migrants from rural Bangladesh (Yan 2020). Because of their close proximity, overcrowding, a lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities, and a lack of access to healthcare services, the host communities are in the most perilous scenario (Chattoraj et al. 2021). The camps may become a "death trap" due to their vulnerability to the infection (IOM 2020; Ullah, Hossain and Chattoraj 2020b).

4.3 Experience of harassment

Migrant suffering has worsened as they were unable to return to their home countries or receive assistance in the countries where they are currently residing. Their native states regard immigrants as a threat when it comes to disease. A sudden surge in cases could overwhelm under-equipped and under-prepared healthcare facilities in several countries. One can see how states are reluctant to allow migrants to return home. Once the COVID-19 pandemic ends, migrants are still at risk because they have already lost their jobs and spent their meagre funds on food and transportation.

Respondents made endless complaints from many countries that landlords did not reduce rent for accommodation (Kottai 2020). Major issues in South Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal were that after an arduous trek across multiple states, the migrant workers were humiliated by law enforcement agencies. The governments viewed workers from outside the state/country as prospective virus carriers, and the approach employed by government officials was humiliating and offended the dignity of migrants in general.

With millions of people dying as a result of the pandemic, migrant laborers have become an untouchable class in modern times. Members of the upper classes socially isolated them during

their laborious trek across states in order to reach their home states and avoid transmission. Locals have been known to bar migrant workers from accessing their own homes, and the situation was no different when they returned home.

4.4 Scary uncertainties

Due to the pandemic and its associated quarantines and travel restrictions across borders, there has been a resurgence of public discussion on poverty, susceptibility, and deprivation. For many migrants and informal workers, "if coronavirus is not lethal, hunger is," a well-known quote from a migrant worker who has personally experienced hunger (Dhillon 2020; Dhungana 2020). New research indicates that internal migrants' economic and health circumstances are deteriorating, with limited access to preventive health care and insufficient social security protections in areas such as basic income, food, and shelter (Pulla 2020; Sen et al. 2020; Sohini and Jha 2020).

The uncertainties they spoke about are their job and money loss, reassuming the job, going back to destination countries, visa renewal, the children going to school and sick people in the family. One respondent from Europe says, "our basic survival is contingent upon donations. We are cash-strapped. Please let us go." Is it feasible for you to speak with the police and explain the situation? It is disgraceful to live in this manner. This, in fact, resonates the voices of most migrants trapped overseas.

4.5 Loss of dignity

Most of the respondents said they were badly treated by immigration staff, airport staff and even airline staff. They feel they receive this treatment only because of their status. Many of them lamented that they did not deserve this treatment. It's a clear encroachment on their human dignity.

While human dignity is a contentious issue, it is inextricably linked to the liberal concept of human rights in contemporary global governance discourse. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," according to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the interdependence of these two

concepts in the pursuit of global equality and justice (United Nations 1948). The majority of contemporary “Kantian deontology” has had an impact on our concept of human dignity. According to the deontological ethical stance, humans, as “ends in themselves,” have a moral component, which results in their dignity. The concept runs counter to the notion that utility is synonymous with dignity. Rather than that, it is envisioned that humanity as a whole has a feeling of dignity (Sensen 2016). In contemporary society, Kant's deontological worldview has shaped the current concept of human dignity.

The pandemic politicization appears to be common, resulting in stigma and exclusion. Almost all of our respondents agreed that stigmatizing and excluding migrants raises the risk of infection because migrants, for example, conceal potential symptoms rather than seeking treatment. Migrants face health risks due to their socio-economic status, living in overcrowded or otherwise unhealthy environments, being denied eligibility or access to services, such as health services, due to their [migration] status, cultural-linguistic barriers, or a lack of access to health information (IOM 2020).

Police routinely urge migrants to depart the land they are occupying, confiscating and occasionally destroying any tents, tarps, or sleeping bags they were unable to take with them. In 2020 and the first half of 2021, police evicted majority of encampments in Greece daily. The police have also been known to regularly evict residents from encampments under the guise of performing "shelter" operations. Additionally, officials undertaking mass evictions fail to appropriately identify and protect unaccompanied youngsters.

4.6 Growing disparity

Migrant views of impotence and exploitation at the hands of the privileged class were mentioned as contributing to their distress. As a result of the conviction that the system is prejudiced against the poor, they have lost faith in it and regard it as an agency that works against them rather than for them. If the economic shocks significantly disrupt migrant labour overseas, such sources of income for developing-country families would be disrupted, generating

ripple effects across their economies and, as a result, widening the gap between richer and poorer countries. When COVID-19 arrived, global inequality had already reached an all-time high. More than 160 million people have fallen into poverty as a result of reduced international trade and decreased foreign tourists (Chattoraj and Ullah 2022; Ullah, Lee, Hassan and Nawaz 2020a). Meanwhile, new multi-millionaires have been minted on a near-daily basis (BBC News 2022). The world's wealthiest 22 men have more money than Africa's whole population. In fact, the pandemic's long-term migration impacts are expected to exacerbate global inequality in the long term.

The forcibly displaced—refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons—as well as other forced migrants are already vulnerable to COVID-19. There is emerging evidence that restricting safe, orderly, and legal migration leads vulnerable people—perhaps as many as 100 million people globally—onto shady illegal pathways. Because of COVID-19, routine migration choices are fewer than they were a few months ago. When taken together, the economic, inequality, political, and displacement-related factors will exacerbate desperation at a time when migratory choices are limited (Yayboke 2020).

For example, the free economy in India has widened the divide between rich and poor, forcing the poor and excluded to seek jobs in cities. It is not merely poverty that drives people out of rural areas and into cities; poverty and caste are coupled. In India, unskilled labourers may relocate within or between states. Interstate migration accounted for 13% of India's overall population of 307 million people in 2011, including 41 million people who had migrated from their birthplace, and 140 million of the 307 million migratory workers are jobless (Misra and Gupta 2021).

4.7 Job loss

During the pandemic, immigrants in most developed, immigrant-receiving countries faced much greater job losses than native-born workers. In the early phases of the epidemic, the lower job mobility of immigrants made them more susceptible to losing their jobs.

According to the ILO, 255 million full-time jobs and \$3.7 trillion in lost labour revenue were lost as a result of a reduction in working hours in 2020 compared to pre-pandemic levels (Richter 2021), with migrants bearing the brunt of the burden (Bizimungu 2020). The price of jet fuel has dropped dramatically. Major airlines around the world have cancelled flights (IATA 2020). Almost 200,000 flights were cancelled within China alone in the first several weeks after the pandemic began. Virtual modes, such as conferences and meetings, which are now held over Skype, have substituted the way we live and conduct business (Ullah and Ferdous 2022; Ullah and Chatteraj 2022). Due to trip cancellations and country-specific restrictions on international flights, the sector has lost \$880 billion (WHO 2020). According to the International Air Transport Association, the airline industry lost \$371 billion in revenue in 2020 compared to 2019 and is estimated to have \$313-324 billion in 2021 (ICAO 2021). All this has ramifications in job loss globally.

Despite their status as cornerstones of the contemporary world and an integral component of our culture, migrants are frequently forgotten, underappreciated, and swept under the rug. An excerpt from a respondent in Europe says it all: "I work as a labourer in the construction industry. When the lockdown was declared, I lost my job. I am fully aware that if we enter lockdown, it will be impossible for me to survive".

4.8 Disunity

The pandemic has widened political and diplomatic gaps among countries around the world. Discord over the origins of the virus was stoked by debates on vaccination effectiveness and vaccine promotion and administration, making the world more divided than ever. At the very least, within the civic community, the concept of sympathy for migrants and refugees is well-founded. As a result of this, and in accordance with the rules of social distance, direct solidarity is becoming increasingly rare, if not extinct. These tactics were frequently evolved into more official and long-term support actions as part of the welcome and integration network.

According to Italian responders, they are referred to as "the

invisibles": illegal African migrants who scraped by as day laborers, prostitutes, freelance hairdressers, and seasonal farmhands prior to the coronavirus outbreak that plunged Italy into catastrophe. Their precarious situation has deteriorated further due to a lack of income, food, and hope after being imprisoned for two months in decaying flats in a mob-infested village north of Naples.

"I am dying. Kindly assist me, someone. My children and hubby require my assistance, and hence I am requesting it." In a small apartment, a Nigerian hairdresser and mother of three. She is without milk for her six-month-old infant and is relying on a neighbour's compassion. For the "invisibles," a group of volunteers and medical professionals is ensuring that they do not go unnoticed by delivering groceries and giving health care to their quarters. Due to virus restrictions, Italy's lawful seasonal farm employees have been detained in Eastern Europe. A proposed bill would permit migrant farmworkers to pick strawberries, peaches, and melons. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have requested that all illegal immigrants be granted amnesty. However, no legislation has been enacted as a result of any suggestions. "While poverty existed, it was more humane. The way these people are treated as a satanic aura about it."

4.9 Lessons not learned

In the name of freedom, we stopped millions from getting vaccinated. We tend to forget that self-care is not self-indulgence. The world witnessed how right-wing politicians helped flare up politicizing vaccine and COVID-19. The pandemic's devastating effect on social and economic systems has elevated it to a top priority. When confronted with a pandemic, governance has become critical. Due to the virus's rapid spread and potential for harm, governments worldwide implemented precautionary measures such as banning public venues and establishing travel restrictions (Choolayil and Putran 2021).

The world's most powerful nations appear to have forgotten about the predicament of migrants and refugees. They appear to be unconscious of COVID-19's effect on them. It is unknown how a

pandemic will influence the relationship between migrants and non-migrants and the emergence of anti-immigrant sentiments and solidarity actions. This dilemma has not discouraged powerful nations from engaging in wars that create further migrants and refugees. COVID-19 developed fast during a period of the rising conflict in Asia (Afghanistan; Rohingya) and the Middle East (Syria and Yemen). Migrants congregated in and around the Mória camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, and suffered a severe deterioration in their living conditions. The rate at which individuals attempt suicide or die tragically is disturbing.

To combat the COVID-19 outbreak, public health measures and social distancing restrictions proposed for implementation in Italian jails sparked riots that killed multiple inmates. Due to prison overcrowding, where a virus breakout is likely to be disastrous, it is critical that anti-contagion precautions are rigidly implemented. A crowded site is also a detention or transit facility that houses a significant number of asylum seekers and irregular migrants worldwide. Numerous countries' solutions to the migration issue in the aftermath of the COVID-19 disaster have aimed to restrict or halt the influx of newcomers.

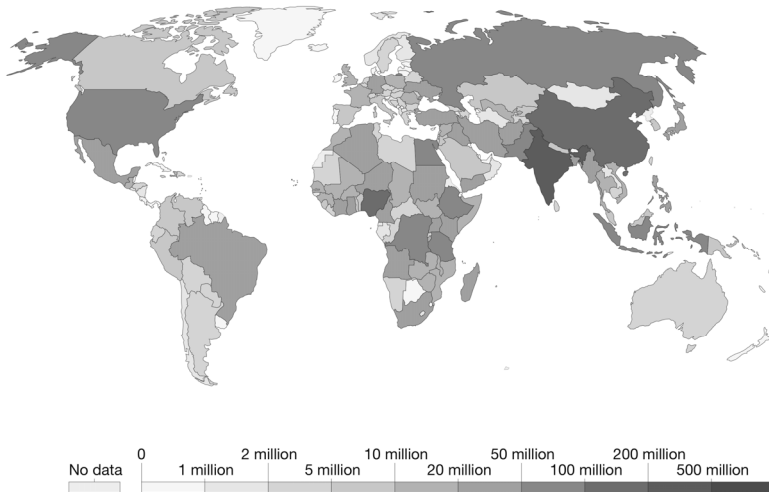
V. Migration and vaccine diplomacy

The epidemic has undeniably devastated the worldwide healthcare system. As a result, the post-COVID geopolitical world order is projected to change. Gardini (2020) believes that a variety of conspiracy theories were produced during this time period in order to make someone a scapegoat and shift attention away from the seriousness of the issue. Individuals and countries are facing a double whammy in the geopolitical world, with the global economy already in crisis as a result of the trade war between the United States and China (Guattam et al. 2020).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic policy debate, which took place in the industrialized world, the debate focused on crisis management, economic recovery, and the virus's origins. As of June 11, 2021, the outbreak appears to decline, with huge percentages of

their populations at least largely vaccinated (Mathieu et al. 2021; Ullah, Nawaz and Chatteraj 2021b; Ullah and Ferdous 2022). Countries in the developing world have a very different set of problems. According to official government estimates (Bhattacharya 2021), the second wave of the pandemic has killed over 200,000 people in India. The risk of a major outbreak may not be completely eradicated, as immunization rates in underdeveloped nations remain low. On the aforementioned date, 25% of Brazil, 15% of India, and 1% of Nigeria have had at least one dose of vaccines (Mathieu et al. 2021). The third epidemic has already begun. The country of Tunisia, for example, has already witnessed more than 3,000 deaths attributable to the third-wave political crisis (Dong et al. 2020) in a country with a population of just 11.8 million people.

Vaccine diplomacy refers to the use of diplomatic influence by countries to access a scarce medical resource, such as the Corona vaccine. The COVID-19 epidemic has transformed the global political scene. Health diplomacy, which had previously gotten little attention compared to political, economic, and military diplomacy, has regained significance in the last year.



<Figure 2> World's unvaccinated people
Source: Oneworldindata, 2022.

As of June 8, 2022, around 11.83 billion doses have been administered globally. However, the distribution has been uneven, as countries with the highest incomes have been vaccinated 10 times faster than those with the lowest (Bloomberg 2022). Many of our respondents said it was extremely difficult for them to register for immunization. Many people are scared that getting vaccinated would result in deportation or detention due to a lack of identity or access to vaccine database information by law authorities. Many agriculturally rich countries have been slow to make labourers eligible for vaccinations, infuriating environmentalists and lawmakers who say farmworkers and other critical food industry workers have been ignored throughout the pandemic.

Emerging powers are significant in health diplomacy. The immunization campaign comes at a critical point in the country's history. In recent years, China and India have been active in using Corona vaccinations to further their diplomatic goals. China regards its vaccines as "public goods" and has offered preferential access to Asian and African countries. While China gives immunizations to 69 countries and exports dosages to 43 others, the number of vaccines exported is 100 times greater than the number of vaccines donated (Yang 2021).

In January 2021, India unveiled the Vaccine Maitri (Vaccine Friendship) project, a huge diplomatic effort to supply made-in-India vaccinations to the rest of the world (Ullah and Chatteraj 2022). India planned to provide millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccine to South Asian countries as part of its neighbourhood-first policy, eliciting praise from neighbours and challenging China's supremacy in the region (Al Jazeera 2021). Unfortunately, India has suspended its vaccine deliveries since March 2021, with the second wave of infections and fatalities caused by the Delta variant. As a result, several Asian country's COVID immunization efforts have been significantly impeded.

VI. Discussion and Conclusion

More than any other phase of growth, migration acts as a reminder

that we all share the same environment and that impediments to movement impair our potential to progress. Pandemics like COVID-19 demonstrate how interconnected the world has become, as demonstrated by the virus's geographic expansion which quickly spread from Wuhan, China, to over 200 nations. As a result, COVID-19 has shed light on migrants' emotional relationships to their "homes." COVID-19 has brought ruptures to the forefront, where "opportunities and hazards proliferate, the spectrum of possible outcomes expands, and new structural scaffolding is produced" (Suhardiman et al. 2021).

COVID-19 has magnified existing social disparities and exacerbated vulnerability among low- and high-income countries. People who have found themselves most disadvantaged by these inequalities include refugees and migrants (particularly those in irregular situations). Some populations have an increased susceptibility to the pandemic. The vulnerability of migrant workers to COVID-19 infection has resulted in stigma, job and income loss, loss of dignity. In locations where migrants are suspected of having the virus, discrimination is common. This is also true for migrants who went home and were ostracized because they were suspected of being virus carriers. The migrant population in host countries is already vulnerable, and the pandemic and government-imposed lockdowns have worsened their situation further (Fasani and Mazza 2020; Avato et al. 2010; Dustmann 2010).

Travel restrictions enforced early and with adequate firmness changed the picture. They greatly limit disease proliferation in this case by helping governments and health authorities accomplish their goal of developing a test, trace, and isolate strategy. Straining travel restrictions works best when used in conjunction with other approaches that allow governments to use randomized, traceable, and isolating pandemic-fighting techniques (Pueyo 2020).

The pandemic is likely to change the global migratory landscape and policies. The world has changed, and so have the laws governing (im)migration. Many governments in receiving countries have been seen making significant changes to their migration policy in order to adjust to the current situation. Policy

enforcement has already begun. Many governments, for example, are extending stay permits to individuals from third countries who have already arrived in the destination country. Migrant communities, including refugees, displaced people, and asylum seekers, have been caught between health and food crises, job insecurity, a desire to return home, the need to stay at home to be safe, and the need to go out to survive. As COVID-19 cases continue to emerge in their cramped quarters, migrants living in overcrowded shelters, camps, or camp-like settings face growing health risks.

According to several respondents, respect for a lockdown has something to do with the country's political structure (Ullah 2014, 2016a). In dealing with the pandemic, leadership is crucial. New Zealand and the United States are the best examples of two extremes (Chan et al. 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak has provided nationalists with greater opportunities to use migrants as scapegoats in order to boost their anti-migration stance. This is because the vast majority of cases are found in migrant-receiving countries (such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Spain) (Ullah, Hossain and Islam 2015; Ullah 2018).

The pandemic's socio-economic and societal repercussions could ultimately be curtailed by providing access to the crucial scientific know-how for vaccine manufacture. The coronavirus pandemic is both a menace and an opportunity. As a challenge, it causes disruption, misery, short- and long-term adjustment, finally, economic loss, and, tragically, human casualties. While the virus has thrown the planet into chaos, the migrating people had the opportunity to reconsider their plans. The outbreak could act as a wake-up call for policymakers. More people than ever are calling for the healthcare system to be strengthened so that it can handle future calamities of any scale.

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