



# Life of Daily Wage Earners during and After COVID-19 Lockdown: An Interview Based Study on Construction Sector in Cuttack, Odisha

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 has disrupted the world economy. Almost all the countries including India resorted to the policies of lockdown, shutdown and curfews to contain the further spread of the pandemic. Both the waves of unprecedented COVID severely affected the unorganised workers working in different sectors like: manufacturing, construction, automobile and other production and service sectors. The daily workers were forced to come back to their natives with unemployment, hunger, health hazards accompanied by strict social isolation and lack of proper transport and communication facilities due to lockdown and closure of industries. The fear of spread of pandemic and loss of livelihood put them in stress and anxiety to survive. The main **objective** of this study is to throw light towards the issues faced by daily-labourers in construction sector during the situation of home arrest in pandemic and the resultant adverse effect on their socio-economic-psychological conditions. The **methodology** of the study is based on reviews along with interviews of wage-earners of Cuttack, Odisha. The **findings** of the study is based on the data collected from interviewees. The **conclusion** part covers both issue and strategies to curb those issues of daily workers during lockdown and post-lockdown period.

**Keywords:** Daily-Wage-Earners, Lockdown, Construction Sector, Socio-Economic-Psychological Issues.

## I. Introduction

The Corona virus has brought challenges on the most vital factors of production, “labour”, mobility of labour and reverse migration. The first wave of COVID-19 has ruined down the lives and livelihoods of daily labourers working in all most all sectors like: construction, manufacturing, automobile, electronics etc. (Shedletsy, 2020). To control the spread of the pandemic social isolation was one of the most important way to maintain precautionary measure for which the Government of India declared nationwide lockdown on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 for twenty one (21) days (1<sup>st</sup> phase of lockdown) which restricted the movement of around 138 crores of population. This first phase of lockdown was extended by our Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi from 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2020- 3<sup>rd</sup> May (2<sup>nd</sup> phase of lockdown), and on 4<sup>th</sup> May again the period of lockdown was extended for two weeks 17<sup>th</sup> May (3<sup>rd</sup> phase) and again it continued till 31<sup>st</sup> May (4<sup>th</sup> phase of lockdown, 18<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> May), 2020 as the growth rate of the pandemic was very high([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_lockdown\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_lockdown_in_India)). During the period of lockdown except essential services like: grocery, hospital, pharmacies etc. all other business premises were closed. There was shutdown of production houses, construction, and other factories, cancellation of transport facilities and prohibition of social, cultural, political, religious and academic togetherness. The productivity of labour was

heavily affected during the first wave of the pandemic. According to the report of “World Economic Forum, Future of Job Reports, 2020”, only 44% of employees performed from their homes (Work-From-Home). It was very challenging phase for the daily wage earners to arrange their bread and butter for their survival (Whitine, 2020). Due to the lockdown the reverse migration was started and mass labour force were forced to come back to their natives either availing the Government or charitable transportation facilities, and most of them covered miles of distance by walk or bicycle and own arranged vehicles. Many of the daily wage earners had to face difficulties related to basic needs along with health hazards and some of them loss their lives on the way to their home. The reverse migration again created temporary shortage of labour issues and hampered the production in construction, trade and commerce, rabi harvesting and hospitality in states like: Delhi, Punjab, Maharashtra and others.

(<https://www.firstpost.com/health/coronavirus-outbreak-reverse-migration-and-labour-shortage-likely-to-be-long-term-impact-says-report-8235641.html>)

## II. Review of Literature on the Basis of Daily-Wage-Earners in Construction Sector in Odisha

Kapoor (2020), studied on the disparities in Indian labour market and sufferings of casual workers and daily earners working in grass root level in different sectors of the economy in India. The labour class has faced very panic situation during pandemic as it belongs to less skill, lack of education, low financial stability and high social insecurity. Menon (2020), discussed on the impact of extended phases of COVID-19 lockdown on migrant workers who came back to their natives with unemployment, financial crises and health hazards. The author also focused on the initiatives taken by the Government through Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Ministry of Labour and Employment (MLE) to address the issues related to daily wage earners. Mohanty (2020), focused on the welfare measures taken by the Government of Odisha by mobilizing bus transport services for migrant labourers returning to their homes along with their children and elderly persons who covered miles of distances by walk. Barik (2021), stated that approximately 10,07,330 labourers from Odisha, India returned to their native villages during pandemic and out of them, 1,81,702 were skilled and 5,54,754 were unskilled. According to the registration in the portal of COVID-19 created by Odisha, Computer, Application, Centre (OCAC) out of 1.81 lakh workers, 21,972 workers were skilled in brick making, 21,572 aft masonry, 8240 in plumbing and in unskilled category in construction sector the number of daily wage earners was 82,956. The highest daily earners, 2,25,602 had returned to Ganjam district, Odisha. Similarly, the reverse migration was also high in districts like: Balangir, Balasore, Nuapada and Bhadrak. Rout (2020), focused that the State Government of Odisha has allowed the ongoing construction projects to solve the reverse migration issues as far as possible to protect life and livelihood of daily earners. But the construction sector has heavily affected due to the insufficient skilled workers as nearly 70% of workers have been from West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh and others. But due to lockdown the skilled labourers who returned to their natives and did not want to come back to their workplace because of fear of being infected even after unlock. The construction sector in Odisha has faced the problems of labour shortage along with increasing cost of production. Maharana (2020). Focused on the report of registration in Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board (OB & OCWWB) out of nearly 30 lakh daily wage earners two third of the workforce in construction and other labour intensive activities remain without work. They have lost their livelihood during different phases of lockdown and faced acute problems for their survival. According to the General Secretary of Odisha's Realtors' body “AFORD”, Mr. Nitish Nanda: the spread of Coronavirus has ruined the business of real estate projects and construction work. It has been observed that thousands of daily labourers are waiting in labour markets in different places in the capital of Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Bisoyi (2020) studied on basic precautionary measures followed in different sectors including construction sectors in Odisha. Both the Government and private construction activities obeying of COVID appropriate behaviours like: use of mask, sanitizer, thermal screening of employees and social distancing etc. have been allowed even during different phases of pandemic for the survival of livelihood and life of daily workers. The author focused on the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which should be followed in construction sites and during the mobility of labour as it ensures valid document verification of labourers. Bhusal (2020), focused on the situation of daily wage earners working in construction, manufacturing and different service sectors in India. Due to lack of employment during pandemic the daily wage earners have

gone through a very tough phase. They have not money to arrange their basic necessities of life including buying vegetables and medicine.

### III. Objective of the Study

To focus on challenges faced by daily wage-earners during pandemic in construction sectors.

To throw lights on socio-economic and psychological conditions of daily labourers.

To focus on suggestive strategies by the respondents.

### IV. Methodology & Profile of Sample of Respondents

This small piece of study is based on qualitative data analysis along with review of literatures. Data is collected from daily wage earners working in construction sector through interview. The interview is based on open-ended or unstructured questionnaire. Both the authors have conducted interview of the daily earners while working on the work site. The respondents have given their own pictures and explained their situation during pandemic. The following table describes the demographic profile of 35 respondents.

Gender

Male	Female
30	4

Age

Below-20	20-30	31-40	41-50	Above-50
03	11	09	07	04

Nature of Work

Brick mason	Labourer	Fabrication	Plumber	Carpenter
4	17	6	2	5

### V. Cases of Daily-Wage-Earners



Case: 1 – Mr. Ashok Kumar Sahoo who is fifty two (52) years old living at CDA, Cuttack, Odisha. His family consists of five members including: mother (seventy two years old), son (doing graduation), daughter (studying in high school) and wife (home maker). Mr. Sahoo has thirty eight years of experience in construction sector as a brick Masson. He is guided by his father and he is also a labour contractor. During the unprecedented lockdown of pandemic and shutdown of construction work Mr. Sahoo has lost his livelihood.



The labourers who were working under him went to their natives as they remained unemployed. Mr. Ashok has spent his entire savings for day-to-day basic needs of family, education fees of children and medicine expenses of his mother and himself as he is suffering from sugar problem. He also borrowed money from his relatives and people well known to him. After the over of lockdown Mr. Sahoo comes back to his construction sector, but there is not any regularity of assignment. He has limited earnings as he has to repay the borrowings. At the same time the second wave of COVID has come to attack on life and livelihood. During this phase the Government permits for construction work, but the fear of being infected has made the work process slow down. Many of the labourers working under Mr. Sahoo hesitate to comeback and he has to manage with limited labour force. Hence, he continues his work during the third phase of the pandemic. He is very thankful to the Government for the vaccination and provision of distribution of ration. Mr. Ashok suggests that if the educational institutes have the provision of payment of fees on the basis of small instalments during COVID period, it would be helpful for all the parents of students who are daily earners.



Case: 2- Mr. Ramesh Mohali, aged thirty (30) who is staying at Balighata, Cuttack, Odisha, working as a brick-Mason. His family consists of six members who are living in village Narshinghapur about seventy kilometres away from him. He has to take care of his older parents, wife and two children who are studying in school. During lockdown period he has lost his job and wage and remained home arrested. Even he did not have food to eat and could not go to the labour contractor for help. Mr. Mohali has suffered a lot as he did not get the ration facility of Government. His family ration card was in his village and he has to travel from place to place for the purpose of work. One of his relative has helped him during lockdown period by sending money by phone pay and Mr. Ramesh has bought grocery for him. After three days of fasting he has got food. Now Mr. Mohali is back to his work and earning daily wage of Rs. 650. He is happy that he fulfils the basic needs of his family members. Mr. Ramesh is also thankful to the Government for providing ration to his family members who are staying in village and supporting them in such a crucial period.



Case: 3- Mr. Deepu Jena aged twenty-six (26) years old and working as a Brick mason in CDA, Cuttack. His family consists of eight members who are living at Narasyngh Pur, Cuttack. He has to take care of his elderly parents, education of his children and marriage of his sister during the period of pandemic. Mr. Jena got the benefits of “Ration card”, “Kalia Yojana” and “Indira Abasa Yojana” during COVID-19 period. He also borrowed money from his relatives during the Lockdown period as Mr. Jena remained unemployed. But now

he comes back to his profession and gets Rs. 600 per day and manages his family. He is trying to forget those difficult days of COVID-19.



Case: 4 – Mrs. Maiti Buddha who is forty two (42) years old and living at Purighat, Cuttack, Odisha. Her native is West Bengal and she has 15yrs of experience in the work of day-labourer. Her family consists of eight members including elderly in-laws and four children who are reading in school. Her husband Mr. Buddha who is fifty two (52) years old is also working as a brick Masson and both are contributing for the smooth running of family. During pandemic she and her husband were in Cuttack and the children were with grandparents in West Bengal. Mrs. Buddha and Mr. Buddha had no work and no wage. They have suffered a lot as they were home arrest and no food to eat for two-three days. Then they borrowed money from the labour contractor and went to their native with the help of Government transportation facility. In her village she has the ration card which has helped the family a lot. After release of lockdown both Mr. Buddha and Mrs. Buddha came to Cuttack, Odisha and joined their previous work. But unfortunately the second wave of COVID attacked and due to confuse and lockdown the couple has lost their livelihood and gone through both financial and psychological stress.



Case: 5- Ms. Sumitra Munda who is thirty five (35) years old is working as a day-labourer under the contractor Mr. Ashok. Her native is Mayurbhanja, but since last ten years she is living in CDA. Cuttack, Odisha. During the period of lockdown and shutdown of pandemic: Covid-19 she has lost her job and lived in under construction building with her husband, a co-worker. She wanted to come back her native, but as there was not any transport facility she had to stay there. Ms. Sumitra did not get food for two days however, she came to her rented home by walk. While sharing about those days she is feeling very sad and says that she could not imagine such type of sorrowful days even in dreams. Ms. Munda did not get any relief from the Government as she does not have the ration card in Cuttack, but she is very thankful to the Government for providing ration to her family members who are staying at Mayurbhanja in these crucial days. Life after lock down creates a hope for Ms. Sumitra as she is back to her livelihood. She gets the wage of Rs. 450 per day which is helpful

for her survival and to redeem the debts of her relatives who has helped her during the panic period. Ms. Munda has nine years of experience of working as day-labourer in construction and she is happy that the life is going to be normal.



Case: 6- Mr. Subrat Nayak, aged twenty three (23) is working as a day labourer. His native is Anugul, but he is residing at Sector-6, CDA, Cuttack. During Covid-19 lockdown he has worked as a driver in “Parvati Firm”, Paradeep, Odisha and supplied rice from Chennai to Odisha by his truck. Mr. Nayak has not faced financial problems at the time of pandemic, but he has spent his life in hunger for two days due to shutdown of hotels and restaurants. Most of the times he had to drive in empty stomach which created health problems. When he wanted to comeback his village there was strict prohibition to entry as he travelled many places. The villagers and family members especially his aunt Ms. Tikili Nayak (working as Asha Karmi) did allow him to the family due to fear of Covid virus. Mr. Nayak had to sleep in the market under the roof of a shop and after RT-PCR test having negative report he was allowed to meet his family. After lockdown Mr. Nayak is working as a daily labourer and earning Rs. 450 per day. His wife is hospitalised for the operation of appendices and he takes care of her. Mr. Subrat is thankful to the Government for providing ration to his family during pandemic in his native village.



Case: 7- Mr. Sanjay Gop who is thirty seven (37) years old and working as a day labourer. He is living with his wife Ms. Sumitra Munda who is also a day labourer in CDA, Cuttack, Odisha. His native is Mayurbhanja and his family consists of six members. The couple is taking the entire responsibly of the family. But during the lockdown and shut down period Mr. Gop has lost his work and he did not have a single coin. Both Mr. GOP and Mrs. Munda were in hunger and walking to their rented home from the work place. With the help of their co-workers they got food to eat after two-three days. Mr. Gop is thankful to the Government to help his family for proving ration during the pandemic period. He is now back to work with his wife Mrs. Sumitra Munda and each is earning Rs. 450 per day and taking family responsibilities gladly.





Case: 8- .Mr. Mukesha Nayak who is eighteen (18) years old is working as a day labourer in construction sector. His native is Dhenkanala, Odisha, but he is staying at CDA, Cuttack. His family consists of five members. His father is a brick-Masson and his elder brother is a driver. The younger brother of Mr. Nayak is reading in class-IX. Mr. Mukesha has got experience of working in fast-food Center and restaurants also. He has contributed about Rs.4000 for the education of his brother and family well-being. But during pandemic the hotels and restaurants have been closed and he has lost his job. He has no money even to arrange the food for him as his savings were exhausted. His relative Mr. Tikina Nayak has sent money of Rs. 500 to him by phone pay and he has purchased grocery and got food after three days of hunger. Mr. Nayak was not allowed to his village because of strict prohibition of “no entry” of outsiders. During this period his elder brother has faced a severe accident and unable to drive for life long. His father has also lost his job because of shutdown.

Now Mr Mukesha is working as a day labourer and earning Rs. 450 per day and he again contributes to his family. He is also hopeful that by working hard he can arrange some funds to set a grocery shop for his elder brother and to complete education of his younger brother. He believes that his father will join his profession soon and with his support the family will run happily. Mr. Nayak is also thankful to the Government for providing ration to his family members during pandemic.



Case: 9- Mr. Chandana who is nineteen (19) years old is working as a day labourer and living at CDA, Cuttack. His family consists of three members who are living at Nayagarh. His father is a differently abled person and his mother is a housewife. During COVID-19 lockdown period Mr. Chandana was in his village. He started cultivation by taking a personal loan of Rs. 50,000 on interest from local Union Bank. He also got Rs. 5000 under “Kalia Yojana” of Odisha Government which supported him in his farming. After the lockdown he again comes back to his profession. Now he is earning Rs. 450 per day and he has also redeemed the loan amount. Now he is very happy that the situation is going to be normal.



Case: 10- Mr. Gopal Nayak who is twenty five (25) years old and working as a day labourer in CDA, Cuttack. His family consists of five members who are living at Nayagarh. His father is a tenant farmer who is seventy-one years old, his elder brother is psychologically imbalanced who returned his home after twelve years and his younger brother is studying in class IX. Mr. Nayak runs the entire expenses of family. He has six years' experience in his profession. During the pandemic lockdown period his family suffered a lot as he remained unemployed. The expenses of medicine for his elderly parents and elder brother, the school fee for his younger brother and other household expenditures put him in a great pressure and he borrowed money of approximately Rs. 60,000 during the pandemic. He is very thankful to the Government for providing timely ration. Now he comes back to his profession and earns Rs. 450 per day. He has also approximately paid Rs. 50,000 which he borrowed.



Case: 11- Mrs. Shimaron Bhutan who is 35 years old and belongs to Medinapur, West Bengal. In Cuttack she lives with her husband and two children. She is working as a day labourer since 6 years and her husband is a brick Mason. During COVID-19 shut down her family has suffered a lot. At that time the couple did not have any work and no wage. They have a ration card in Medinapur, but due to sudden lockdown they did not move to their state. Even the children and the couple were in hunger for two days as they had spent their entire savings. Then they borrowed money from the relatives and well-wishers. Mrs. Bhutan states that the pandemic is a curse for her family and entire society. Even after release of the lockdown she is not getting work every day and she is always a fear of being infected as she has to move to different places for work. Mrs. Shimaron offers prayer to God for protection of her family members from the pandemic.





Case: 12- Mr. Gautam Sahoo is thirty nine (39) years old and working as a daily labourer since he was 18 years old. He lost his parents in his child hood and has taken the responsibility of his younger sister. Mr. Sahoo is living at a slum area in Krushak Bazar, Cuttack. He has a little cultivation field in Badamba, Cuttack. During the pandemic lockdown he has lost his work and wage also. He has gone to his native and utilised his small piece of land for cultivation. He is thankful to the Government for ration card facility. Then he joins his work under the contractor and gets Rs. 450 per day after release of lockdown. After the first phase of COVID-19 Mr. Biswal has arranged the marriage of his younger sister which is the greatest responsibilities of him. Again due to the second phase of COVID-19 he has lost his job and back to home. Due to lockdown, curfews and other restrictions Mr. Sahoo suffered a lot like Mr. Deepu Jena and Mrs. Shimaron Bhutan. Now he is re-joining his work, but in fear of the third wave of the COVID-19. It is also difficult for him to repay the loans he has collected from relatives during the marriage of his only sister.



Case: 13 – Mr. Abhimanyu Behera, aged thirty eight (38) who is living at Bidanashi, Cuttack, Odisha. He is working as a plumber and the only earning person who runs the joint family of seven members. During first phase of COVID-19 he has lost his job and wage. The entire saving has spent to fulfil family needs. Mr. Behera has gone through heavy financial crisis like Mr. Mohali and Mr. Jena. He borrowed money with high rate of interest which is very difficult to repay. After release of lockdown he again starts his work as a daily earner and whatever he earns is very difficult to manage his family. The irregularity of construction work, fear of Corona virus and family obligation have put him in psychological pressure. At the same time the attack of second phase of COVID again brings him to the financial hazards. Mr. Abhimanyu is thankful to the Government for the provision of ration card which helps his family to survive and also the scheme of full vaccination which is helpful to protect them.



Case: 14 – Mr. Nityanda Das, age thirty two (32) is living at Cuttack, Odisha. Her native is Bhadrak where his family lives. His family consists of five members including elderly parents, wife and a child who is reading in school. Mr. Das has come to Cuttack when he was eighteen years old and joined in a labour force under the contractor. During COVID-19 lock down phases in both the waves Mr. Nityanda was in his workplace and he faced financial crisis. He is the only earning member of his family and as he has lost his job and wage. With the help of Government ration card provision his family members were able to survive, but they had to face financial problems. Mr. Das has also undergone with social and psychological crises like: Mr and Mrs. Buddha. When the situation comes towards normal he is back to his work, but now also Mr. Nityanda is in fear of third wave of COVID and survival of his life and livelihood.



Case: 15- Mrs. Patina Swang who is fifty five (55) years old and staying at Telenga Bazar, Cuttack, Odisha. Her family consists of nine members and they are staying at Bhadrak. She is working for the last thirty four years as a day labourer. During both the phases of COVID-19 lockdown she was in her home. Her family gets ration from the Government which is the only source of their survival. Mrs. Patina has lost her work and wage and her two sons have lost their jobs due to pandemic. She is also worried for the interruption of schooling of her grandchildren. Now she is back to work, but does not get work on regular basis. Therefore, it is very difficult for her to contribute towards family, especially for the ongoing educational expenses of her grandchildren. She is also going through psychological pressure for the coming up different waves of COVID-19.



Case: 16- Mr. Ranjan Nayak, aged twenty eight (28) and lives in Balighata, Cuttack, Odisha. His family consists of seven members including elderly parents, wife and three children who are reading in school. In normal days he earns Rs.500 per day regularly in working construction sectors as a day-labourer. The entire family responsibility lies in the shoulder of Mr. Ranjan. During different phases of COVID-19 lockdown, shut down and curfews he has lost his livelihood. He has not any second source of income and on the principles of guidelines of pandemic he even did not move outside for work. He and his family members have gone through mental stress due to financial and social crises. Mr. Nayak has consumed medicine for his elderly parents by borrowing money from his friends. Even he has suffered a lot for daily consumptions like: vegetables, milk, grocery etc. During this crucial phase the Government has provided ration which is very helpful for his family members. Now Mr. Ranjan starts his work, but it is very difficult for him to get daily engagement. The fear of third wave of COVID has also made him stressful.



Case: 17 – Mr.Saila who is forty four (44) years old living at Krushakbazar, Cuttack, Odisha. His family consists of six members including elderly mother, wife, younger brother and sister and a child and they are living in Medina Pur, West Bengal. Mr. Saila has twenty five years of experience in construction sector. He has joined as a labourer, but now he is working as a brick Masson. During first phase of COVID-19 lockdown he was in Cuttack and remained unemployed. His suffering has increased day by day due to financial hazards. He has lost his job and savings. He was in hunger for two days and many times he has to depend on single meal a day. The Government of West Bengal has provided ration to his family members, but as Mr. Saila lives in Odisha he has not ration facility. With the help of the Government transportation he has gone to his native and stayed there till the normality. His family has gone through financial hazards as he is the only earning person of the family. His younger brother and sister are reading and not employed. Mr. Saila states it is even very difficult to arrange money to buy medicine for his mother who is seventy years old. Hence, when he comeback to his workplace after few days the second wave of COVID has captured the life and livelihood. He again has lost his job and wage for which he is very stressful. When life seems to normal Mr. Saila joins his construction work and gets daily wage. He is also in fear for next waves of pandemic, but puts the courage to overcome from such situation.



Case: 18 – Mr. Sujan who is nineteen (19) years old and living at CDA, Cuttack, Odisha. His family consists of four members. He is working as a day-labourer and moving from state to state. His native is Medinapur,



West Bengal. During the first phase of COVID-19 lockdown his mobility was restricted and he has stayed in the under construction building with his co-workers without work, wage and food. With the help of his contractor he arranged grocery and prepared food. Then he has reached to his family by facing lots of troubles. In the second wave he has been with his family and as they have ration facility provided by the Government, it helps a lot for the survival. In the third wave he is continuing his work, but in the irregular manner as many people opt for constructing have faced financial loses. Hence, Mr. Sujan is thankful to the Government for the vaccination and creation of employment opportunities. He is also hopeful that his work will run in the full phased manner in few months.



Case: 19 – Mr. Tikina Nayak who is twenty two (22) years old and living at Balighata, Cuttack, Odisha. His family consists of eight members including widow mother, three younger sisters, one younger brother and an elder sister with her kid. Mr. Tikina is working as a day labourer from last six years. During first wave of COVID pandemic lockdown he has lost his work and wage also. By facing lots of difficulties and fasting of three days he has reached to his family living in Dhenkanala. The entire responsibility to run the family lies in the shoulder of Mr. Nayak and as he has not any other substitute job it was a very tough time for him. He has borrowed money with high interest to fulfil family needs and education of his younger brother and sisters. He states that it is his duty to take care of his elder sister and her kid also. All the family members share the small amount of meals and sometimes they do fasting. When Mr. Tikina has come back to work again he faced the sufferings of second wave of pandemic and returned his native. He is thankful to the Government for ration facility and vaccination. He continues his work even in the third phase of COVID and hopeful that life will be normal after few months. His main aim is to contribute more and more for the education of his brother and sisters by putting high effort and to make her mother happy.



Case: 20 – Mr. Ananta Kumar Das, aged forty one (41) belongs to a joint family. During the period of Covid shutdown he has lost his job and monthly salary Rs. 12,000 per month. He was working as an employee in the shop of fabrications which was closed due to lockdown. At the same time his elder brother remained unemployed as he was working as an auto-driver. At that time the family has gone through the phase of financial crisis. Mr. Das with his elder brother has started a grocery store in a small place which was the only way of arranging basic necessities of life for fifteen family members. He did not have enough fund to expand the grocery business and he has also borrowed from his relatives to establish the shop. However, he has

managed the tough phase of Covid lockdown period. Mr. Ananta with his brothers have to take care of their mother who is at the age of seventy, education fee of children and other basic needs of family. Hence, in the second wave of COVID-19 Mr. Das has faced the same psychological pressure and financial insecurity just like in the first wave, but he also states that the third phase of Pandemic does not put him high stress. Now Mr. Das is back to his shop, but with the low payment approximately Rs. 10,000 due to small orders of customers. In holidays he is taking private orders and earning Rs. 500 per day. However, he is very hopeful that the problematic situation will be over soon and things will go normal. Mr. Ananta is very thankful to the Government for supporting him and his family members by providing ration during pandemic.



Case: 21- Mr. Bharat Behera who is forty nine (49) years old living at Bidanashi, Cuttack, Odisha. His native is Kendrapda and he has a small piece of cultivated land. His family consists of five members. For the last three years Mr. Bharat is working in construction sector in fabrication segment and earner income in daily basis. During first phase of COVID-19 lockdown he has lost his job and earning. The unprecedented pandemic has interrupted the daily life and livelihood of his family. Mr. Behera has borrowed money from his relatives to run the family. His two sons are reading as well as preparing for competitive examination for which a big portion of the earnings is contributed towards the coaching fee. The family has gone through heavy financial crises which put them in stress. Due to social isolation, even after release of lockdown Mr. Behera has not employed in regular basis. Again the second wave has attacked and the life is under heavy restriction and no work for few months. During this phase Mr. Bharat has focused on cultivation which helped him a lot and his two sons are also contributing towards the family by providing online coaching to the students. He is also thankful to the Government for both provision of ration and vaccination. He is also hopeful for the new normal situation.



Case: 22- Rajesh Sethi, who is twenty three (23) years old living at Deulasahi, Cuttack, Odisha. He is working in the field of fabrication for construction sectors under the contractors. Mr. Sethi has 5 years of experience in this sector. During the COVID lockdown period the construction sector where Mr. Rajesh was working remain closed. He belongs to a joint family and as all the members were at home they got the time for sharing with

family. He has spent the days of pandemic period by playing different types of indoor games like: cards, loodu etc. he has also engaged in online teaching of his younger brothers and sisters. Sometimes, he has visited to the grocery shop of his elder brother. He is thankful to the Government for the ration card facility which has helped his family members.



Case: 23- Mr. Ganesware Behera, aged forty three (43) and his native is Dhenkanala. His family consists of fourteen members out of which there are four elderly parents and six children who are reading in school. The entire family responsibility lies in the shoulder of Mr. Behera. During COVID-19 lockdown he was in his working place, Cuttack. He has lost his job of brick mason in which he has experience of twenty five years. He went to Dhenkanala and started farming with his brother in his small piece of land. His elderly parents guided him in farming. Mr. Ganesware has faced financial crisis like Mr. Gautam and Mr. Bharat. After release of lockdown he was back to his profession, but suddenly the second wave of pandemic has come which again put the life and livelihood in stake. Mr. Behera states that it is very difficult to get job regularly and daily earnings. He has to repay the borrowings which he used in cultivation. He is thankful to the Government for the provision of ration which helps his family for survival. Again Mr. Ganesware is in stress for the fear of third wave.



Case: 24- Mr. Divya Singha Lenka, aged thirty six (36) living in DhobaSahi, Cuttack, Odisha. He belongs to a joint family of seven members including grandparents, parents, wife and a daughter of four years old who are living in Dhenkanala. Mr. Singh is working in fabrication work in construction sector. He has fifteen years of experience in this sector. During the different phases of COVID-19 lockdown Mr. Divya was with his family members in Dhenkanala. The first wave of pandemic has brought a pathetic situation for him and his family members as they have gone through financial crisis. He has to borrow money from his relatives with high rate of interest. Bur during the second phase of pandemic the family has focused on agriculture which has supported them a lot. His family also gets ration facility and othe Government facilities. Now he returns to his workplace after the over of second wave regulations. But he is not getting work regularly for which it is very difficult for him to contribute to the family. He also states that it is very difficult to arrange school fee for his kid, medicines for parents and grandparents. Hence, he is hopeful for progress of his work and defeat COVID.





Case: 25- Mr. Badal Kumar Nayak who is twenty one (21) years old working in Cuttack, Odisha in a construction sector. His family consists of four members and they are living in Dhenkanala. Mr. Badal has four years working experience in fabrication. His parents are farmer they have their own field of agriculture. During First phase of COVID-19 Mr. Nayak was away from home, unemployed, and home arrested. It was very pathetic for him to reach in Dhenkanala with lack of finance and transportation facility. In second and third phase he was with his family. He does not have much family burden as his parents are very active in agriculture business, but he has faced psychological issues due to social restrictions and fear of being affected. Hence, after taking double doses of vaccine he has joined his previous work and remains self-dependent.



Case: 26- Mr. Dharmendra Biswal, aged forty six (46) is living in Deulasahi, Cuttack, Odisha. He is working in fabrication segment in construction sectors who runs the family of eight members. His work has completely stopped during the period of Covid lockdown. He has a workshop which was completely closed. It was very difficult for him to run the family as he did not have any work. His younger brother and sister were remained unemployed during shutdown period. The family has gone through heavy financial crisis like the family of Mr. Das. Mr. Biswal has managed the family expenses with the savings and borrowings. He is thankful to the Government for providing timely ration for the survival of his family. Even now Mr. Biswal is back to his work, he is not satisfied with the limited earnings. As a skilled person he was earning approximately Rs. 800 per day which is reduced to Rs. 300. It is very difficult for him to fulfil the family needs within this limited earnings. He also shares that his younger brother and sister are also contributing towards the family expenses. Hence, the family is also affected financially, socially and psychologically by both the second and third waves also. Mr. Dharmendra has praised the vaccination scheme which is helpful to protect the people from COVID-19 virus.



Case: 27 – Mr. Krishna Chandra Jena who is thirty eight (38) years old and living at Deulasahi, Cuttack, Odisha. He is working as a plumber in construction sector for last fifteen years. His family consists of five members including elderly parents, wife and a daughter reading in school. During the first wave of COVID-19 he has lost his job and wage. It was very troublesome to reach with his family living in Bijapur, Badamba by his bicycle as there was strict restriction on mobility and transportation facility. He even did not have food to eat in his journey as the hotels were being closed. By putting his life in danger he has reached his native, but there he faced high entry barrier to meet his family. His village has made him isolated which has made him stressful. He had to fight with social isolation, psychological pressure and financial hazards. Hence, he is thankful to the Government for ration and vaccination. After release of lockdown, when construction works have been started Mr. Krishna comeback to his work. But unfortunately the second wave of pandemic has captured the people. The sufferings of Mr. Krishna has again started as he borrowed money from his relatives in first wave and he has to repay it. At the same time, he spends Rs. 3000 for the medicine of his elderly parents and deposits the school fee of his daughter. Hence, the second wave is over and Mr. Krishna is now on his work field even in the continuing of the third phase. But his daily income is reduced as compared to the normal situation and he has also lost many construction projects due to diminishing financial status of investors.



Case: 28- Mr. Alekha Biswal who is eighteen (18) years old consisting of four family members. His native is in Badamba, Cuttack, but he was working as a technician in an automobile firm, “Rope Polymer” in Pune. Mr. Biswal was engaged in the activity of machine fitting work and earning monthly salary of Rs. 12,000. During Covid shutdown he had to leave his work and comeback to his village. He has faced the entry barrier and after getting of Covid negative report he entered his home. In lockdown period he remained unemployed and his family suffered a lot. Mr. Alekha sent money monthly for the family consumption, education of his younger brother and other needs while he was on the job, but as there was lockdown and lack of job and salary all the family members were harassed. His father is a farmer and for cultivation he has to depend upon borrowed capital. After release of lockdown parents of Mr. Biswal do not allow him to go back to his service place, Pune. Now he is working as a plumber with his cousin brother in Cuttack and his father is engaged in the farming. Gradually he tries to refund the loans by working hard. He is now getting Rs. 400 per day. The second wave has captured the occupation and standard of living very badly. Due to curfews and lockdowns the family members have suffered in stress and financial hazardous. After release of second wave the work has started, but the third wave has come. But Mr. Alekha works hard with full energy and tries to defeat the situation. He

is thankful to the Government for vaccination for the safety and providing ration for their survival during pandemic.



Case: 29 – Mr. Gautam Mandal, twenty eight (28) years old and his native is Paradeep, Odisha. He is working as a carpenter in construction sector for the last 10 years and moving different places in Odisha. During COVID-19 lockdown Mr. Madal was working in a construction project and staying at Cuttack. The sudden home arrest and lack of work and wage created very panic situation for him. He belongs to a joint family which consists of 11 members. His family depends upon his earnings only. Mr. Gautam has to take care of elderly parents and the education of 5 children along with all other expenses. But due to pandemic he did not have any job and with difficult circumstances he reached to his native. He is thankful to the Government for the provision of ration facility which is helpful for the survival of his family. Even after release of lockdown there is the irregularity of work and wage both. The second wave has put psychological pressure due to lockdown and curfews. Similarly, he is also in fear of the third wave and financial hazards. Hence, he is fully vaccinated and obeying all COVID-19 guidelines.



Case: 30 – Mr. Ganesware aged twenty nine (29), lives in Bidanashi, Cuttack, Odisha. His family consists of five members including elderly parents, wife and a school going kid. He is the only earning member of his family. He is working under a labour contractor as a carpenter for last ten years in construction sector. In normal circumstances he travels in different places within the state and earns a normal wage to run his family. But during the first wave of COVID-19 Mr. Ganesware has lost his job and wage also. He has spent his entire savings to take care of elderly parents, tuition fee of the child and other day to day expenses. He has stated that it was very difficult to run the family in such situation, but his wife tried to manage all the family expenses within his savings. After the over of lockdown Mr. Ganesware has joined his previous work and earned daily wage of Rs. 500. But the second wave again put the kick on his livelihood and for few days he has remained unemployed which has made him psychologically imbalance. But he has accepted the global problem and continued his work with proper precautionary measures even in the third wave. Hence, he is thankful to the Government for vaccination and ration and suggesting that if the Government can be able to make a fund for the unorganised labourers, it would be more helpful to fight against financial and social crisis.





Case: 31 – Mr. Pramod Tarai who is forty one (41) years old and living at Ramagada, Cuttack, Odisha. He is working as a carpenter for last twenty two years in construction sector. He belongs to a joint family consisting of eight members who are residing in Dhenkanala. Mr. Tarai is the only earning person of his family. Though his father has a small farm of cultivation, but due to old age he is unable for farming. During both the phases of COVID-19 lockdown Mr. Pramod has lost his job and payments also. By facing lots of troubles in his journey he reached to his native in first lockdown phase. Just like, Mr. Deepu, Mr. Subrat and Mr. Krishna he had to face high entry barrier and after completion of isolation period he was able to meet his family members. During the second phase of the pandemic he was in his native due to the restrictions of his parents not to travel. Mr. Pramod has explained his tough phase of life during the pandemic as he did not have job and wage which forced him to borrow money to run the family. He has undergone through a stressful life because of financial and social insecurity. But after the over of the lockdown and curfews of COVID-19, Mr. Tarai again is back to his work and he is also working during the third wave of the pandemic by taking all safety measures. He is thankful to the Government for provision of vaccination which protects people from the virus and ration facility which is helpful for their survival.



Case: 32- Mr. Pradeep Swain aged thirty two (32) years old is living at Krushakbazar, Cuttack, Odisha. He is working for last fifteen years in construction sectors as a carpenter. He is the only earning member of his family who has lost his job during the first phase of COVID-19 lockdown. He has gone through the financial problems along with heavy stress. Similarly, in the second phase lockdown of pandemic Mr. Swain has faced the same problem along with heavy financial borrowings which he incurred to run his family and take care of elderly parents and children. He is also thankful to the Government for both ration and vaccination. He also suggests that it will be very helpful for the daily labourers if the Government provides loans with low rate of interest to start a small business, then the unorganized workers would be self-dependent.



Case: 33- Mr. Surya Guru who is fifty nine (59) years old living at Krushak Bazar, Cuttack, Odisha. His native is Berhampur and his family consists of six members. He is working as a carpenter when he was sixteen years old. Within his limited income he is able to establish his two sons. His sons have their own grocery store and he has a small piece of cultivated land. During the first wave of sudden lockdown Mr. Guru was in Cuttack and did not have any job. With the help of his two sons he returned to his native. In the second wave also he was with his family. After release of lockdown Mr. Surya again comes to his workplace and starts his daily duty with a new hope that everything will be normal soon with the blessings of “Lord Jaganath”. Mr. Guru works on his own will to contribute towards for his grandchildren and remain self-dependent.

## VI. Conclusion

Different waves of COVID-19 has disrupted the life and livelihood of people basically working in unorganized sectors and daily wage earners. The pandemic not only reduces their standard of living but also makes them morally down. It has invited social insecurity, financial instability and psychological imbalance along with heavy stress across all most all the daily wage earners in construction sectors. It is very difficult for them to manage their family as they belong to the hand-to-mouth group of citizens. These labourers are of opinion that this pandemic may continue in future as it has crossed already three phases and they are apprehending how to maintain a peaceful life in future. Hence, the attempts of both the Central Government and the State Government are very helpful for the life and survival of the grass- root level workers. The daily income group is very thankful to the Governments (Central and State) for their different schemes like: free ration, vaccination and creation of awareness towards COVID-19 precautionary measures. These respondents are appreciating the Government who has taken initiatives to enrol these unorganized labourers as “e-Shramik”, a welfare measure. This small piece of study may be helpful for the researchers who are contributing their focus on daily-wage-earners working in similar sectors.

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## Appendix

Case-Respondents List (All the respondents are from different districts and states, but they are working in Cuttack, Odisha).

1. Mr. Ashok Kumar Sahoo, Brick-mason, aged-52, (Dt:10-10-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
2. Mr. Ramesh Mohali, Brick-mason, aged-30, (Dt:10-10-2021, Narshingapur, Cuttack, Odisha)
3. Mr. Deepu Jena, Brick-mason, aged-26 (Dt:11-10-2021, Narshingapur, Cuttack, Odisha)
4. Mr. Buddha, Brick-mason, aged-52 (Dt:11-10-2021, Medinapur, West Bengal)
5. Mrs. Maiti Buddha, Daily-labourer, aged-42 (Dt:11-10-21, Medinapur, West Bengal)
6. Mrs. Sumitra Munda, Daily-labourer, aged-35 (Dt:12-10-2021, Mayurbhanja, Odisha)
7. Mr. Subrat Nayak, Daily- labourer, aged-23 (Dt:12-10-2021, Anugul, Odisha)
8. Mr. Sanjaya Gop, Daily-labourer, aged-37 (Dt:15-10-2021, Mayurbhanja, Odisha)
9. Mr. Mukesh Nayak, Daily-labourer, aged-18 (Dt: 16-10-2021,Dhenkanala, Odisha)
10. Mr. Chandan, Daily-labourer, aged-19 (Dt: 18-10-2021, Nayagarh, Odisha)
11. Mr. Gopal Nayak, Daily-labourer, aged-25 (Dt: 21-10-2021, Nayagarh, Odisha)
12. Mrs. Shimaron Bhutan, Daily-labourer, aged 35 (Dt: 21-10-2021, Medinapur, West Bengal)
13. Mr. Gautam Sahoo, Daily-labourer, aged-39 (Dt: 21-10-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
14. Mr. Abhimanyu Behera, Daily-labourer, aged-38 (Dt: 25-10-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
15. Nityanda Das, Daily-labourer, aged-32 (Dt: 27-10-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
16. Mrs. Patina Swang, Day-labour, aged-55 (Dt: 30-10-2021, Bhadrak, Odisha)
17. Mr. Ranjan Nayak, Day-labour, aged-28 (Dt: 01-11-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
18. Mr. Saila, Day-labourer, aged-44 (Dt: 03-11-2021, Medinapur, West Bengal)
19. Mr. Sujan, Day-labourer, aged-19 (Dt: 03-11-2021, Medinapur, West Bengal)
20. Mr. Tikina Nayak, Day-labourer, aged-22 (Dt: 06-11-2021, Dhenkanala, Odisha)
21. Mr. Ananta Kumar Das, Fabrication, aged-41 (Dt: 11-11-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
22. Mr. Bharat Behera, Fabrication, aged-49 (Dt: 12-11-2021, Kendrapda, Odisha)
23. Mr. Ganesware Behera, Fabrication, aged-43 (Dt: 15-11-2021, Dhenkanala, Odisha)
24. Mr. Divya Singha Lenka, Fabrication, aged-36 (Dt: 19-11-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
25. Badal Kumar Nayak, Fabrication, aged-21 (Dt: 21-11-2021, Dhenkanala, Odisha)
26. Mr. Dharmendra Biswal, Fabrication, aged-46 (Dt: 21-11-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
27. Mr. Krishna Chandra Jena, Plumber, aged-38 (Dt: 27-11-2021, Badamba, Odisha)
28. Mr. Alekha Biswal, Plumber, aged-18 (Dt: 27-11-2021, Badamba, Odisha)
29. Mr. Gautam Mandal, Carpenter, aged-28 (Dt: 01-12-2021, Paradeep, Odisha)
30. Mr. Ganesware, Carpenter, aged-29 (Dt: 01-12-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
31. Mr. Pramod Tarai, Carpenter, aged-41 (Dt: 01-12-2021, Dhenkanala, Odisha)
32. Mr. Pradeep Swain, Carpenter, aged-32 (Dt: 03-12-2021, Cuttack, Odisha)
33. Mr. Surya Guru, Carpenter, aged-59 (Dt: 03-12-2021, Berhampur, Odisha)