BHARATI INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (BIJMRD)

(Open Access Peer-Reviewed International Journal)

DOI Link : https://doi.org/10.70798/Bijmrd/03120016

Available Online: www.bijmrd.com|BIJMRD Volume: 3| Issue: 12| December 2025| e-ISSN: 2584-1890

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Rural Employment Patterns

Rajib Jana[1] & Dr. Ashok Kumar Srivastava[2]

1. Research Scholar, Mansarovar Global University, Sehore, M.P
2. Professor, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Science, Mansarovar Global University, Sehore, M.P

Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic created a major global economic crisis, with its impact being felt most severely in rural areas. Since rural economies largely depend on agriculture and informal labor, lockdowns, mobility restrictions, and disruptions in supply chains caused serious difficulties for rural labor markets. As a result, many people lost their jobs, income insecurity increased, and noticeable changes occurred across different sectors of employment.

This research paper analyzes changes in rural employment using secondary data sources and selected case studies from various regions. It examines labor participation rates, changes in wages, migration patterns, and access to social protection schemes. Special emphasis has been placed on the return migration of workers from urban to rural areas, increased pressure on agricultural employment, and the vulnerable condition of informal workers.

The findings indicate that the pandemic led to immediate employment crises in rural areas, along with long-term structural changes in the rural economy. The study also evaluates various policy measures adopted by the government to restore employment and protect rural livelihoods. Overall, this paper highlights the need for inclusive and sustainable employment policies to strengthen the rural economy and enhance its resilience in order to better cope with future crises.

Keywords: *Covid-19 Pandemic, Un- Employment, Rural Affections, Sustainable Employment..*

1. Introduction:

The outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 rapidly evolved into a global health crisis, instigating lockdowns and stringent mobility restrictions. These measures, while essential to control infection spread, inadvertently disrupted economic activities worldwide. Rural economies, often characterized by limited industrial diversity and high dependence on seasonal and informal work, were significantly impacted. This paper investigates how rural employment patterns changed due to the pandemic, assessing both immediate effects and potential long-lasting changes.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 rapidly escalated into an extraordinary global health emergency, convincing governments across the world to implement strict restriction measures such as nationwide lockdowns, travel bans, and social distancing protocols. While these interventions were crucial for limiting

the spread of the virus and reducing mortality, they continuously triggered severe disruptions in economic activities. The strike sudden stop of production, closure of markets, and breakdown of supply chains created widespread employment instability, particularly affecting vulnerable populations.

Rural economies experienced anunequal impact from these disruptions due to their structural characteristics. Unlike urban areas with diversified industrial bases, rural regions largely depend on agriculture, allied activities, seasonal employment, and informal labor markets. A significant portion of the rural workforce is engaged in daily wage labor, migrant work, and self-employment, sectors that lack job security and social protection. The unexpected lockdown measures resulted in loss of income, reverse migration from cities to villages, and increased pressure on already limited rural employment opportunities.

The pandemic also exposed long-standing structural weaknesses within rural labor markets, including underemployment, low wages, limited access to healthcare, and insufficient social safety nets. Government initiatives such as rural employment guarantee schemes, direct cash transfers, and food security programs played a critical role in mitigating immediate distress; however, their effectiveness varied across regions. At the same time, new forms of work, changes in agricultural practices, and increased reliance on local economies began to reshape rural employment patterns.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced employment patterns in rural areas.

2. To identify changes in sectoral employment distribution.

3. To assess the impact on wage levels, job security, and livelihoods.

4. To evaluate policy measures addressing rural employment challenges.

3. Methodology

A combination of field studies, indigenous knowledge studies, population studies and bases on primary & secondary data were employed to comprehensively assess Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Rural Employment Patterns.

Primary data were collected from selected rural households through structured interviews and questionnaires. Respondents included agricultural labourers, migrant workers and workers engaged in informal and non-farm activities. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents so as to avoid bias. The primary data focused on changes in employment status, income levels, migration patterns and participation in government employment schemes during and before the pandemic.

Secondary data were collected from government reports, research journals, newspapers, etc. Special attention was given to rural unemployment rates and return migration during the lockdown period.

The collected data were analyzed using simple statistical tools such as percentages, averages, and comparative analysis. Qualitative responses were interpreted to understand the socio-economic pattern of rural peoples.

4. Data analysis & Interpretation

Data analysis indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic caused widespread disruptions across economic, and social sectors. Employment data show sharp job losses, particularly in informal and service-based occupations, while income and productivity declined significantly during lockdown periods. Overall, the interpretation suggests that the pandemic not only created immediate shocks but also deepened existing

inequalities and led to long-term structural changes in employment.

Employed before pandemic

Table 4.1: Employed Before Pandemic

Option	No of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	423	84.6%
No	77	15.4%
Total	500	100%

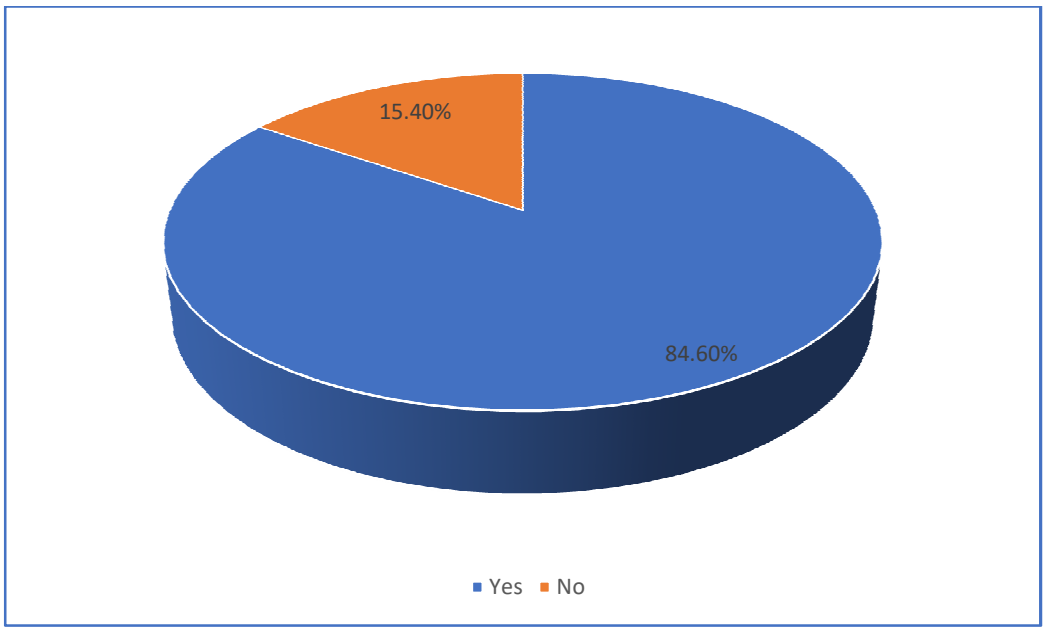

Fig. 4.1: Employed Before Pandemic

Table 4.1 and Graph 4.1 reflect that, Out of 500 respondents, 423 (84.6%) have employed before Pandemic whereas 77 (15.4%) were not employed before Pandemic and found that most of the respondents had employed before pandemic.

Type of jobs engaged

Table 4.2: Types of Jobs Engages

Types of job	No of Respondent	Percentage
Agriculture	71	14.2%
Daily Wage labour	119	23.8%
Small business shop	35	7%
Government job	11	2.2%

Private job	179	35.8%
Others	22	4.4%
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

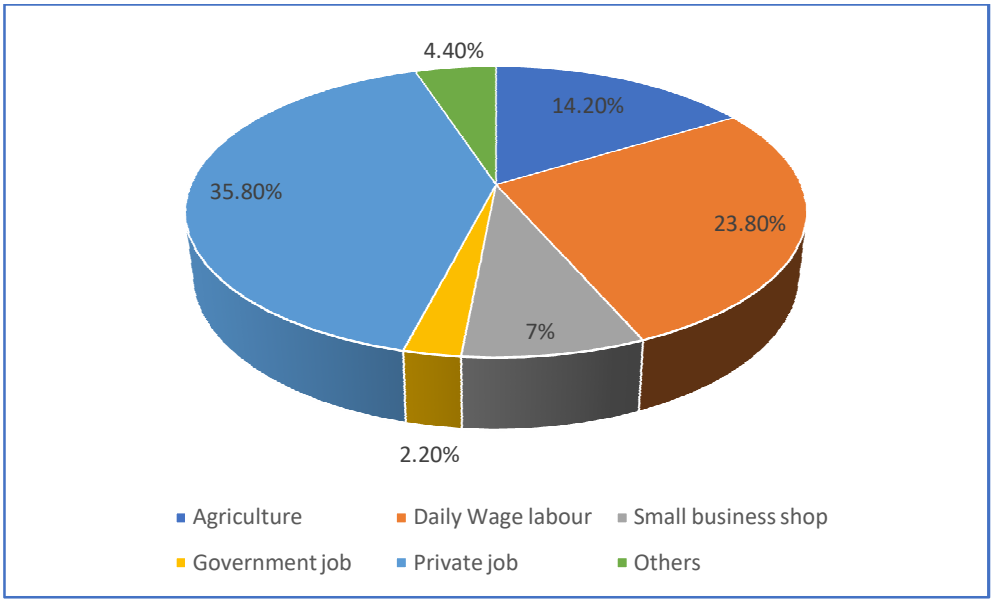

Fig. 4.2:Types of Jobs Engages

Above Table and Figure Reflect That Out of 500 respondents,71 (14.2%) respondents are engaged in agriculture, 119 (23.8%) respondents are engaged Daily Wage labour, 35 (7%) respondents have small business shop, 11 (2.2%) respondents are engaged in government job, 179(35.8%) respondents are engaged in private jobs, 22 (4.4%) respondents are engaged in other jobs.Most of the respondents are Daily Wage Labour and Private Job holders.

JobSatisfaction before covid 19 pandemic

Table 4.3:Job Satisfaction beforeCovid 19 Pandemic

Types of job	No of respondent	Percentage
Very Dissatisfied	53	10.6 %
Dissatisfied	117	23.4 %
Neutral	182	36.4 %
Satisfied	42	8.4 %
Very satisfied	106	21.2 %
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

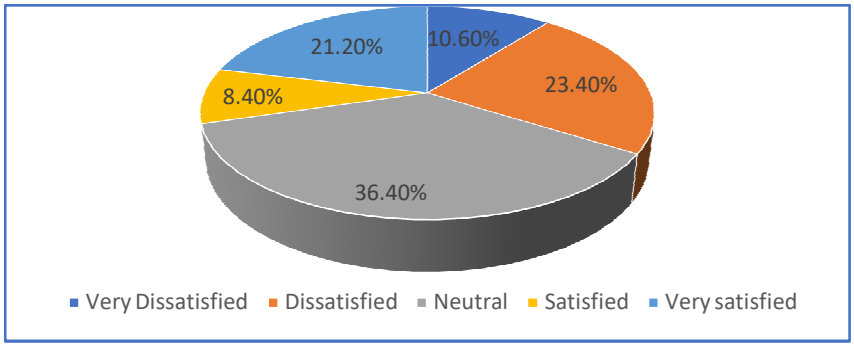

Fig. 4.3:Satisfaction of Job before Covid 19 Pandemic.

Table 4.3 and Graph 4.3 reflect thatOut of 500 Respondents,53 (10.6 %)—Very dissatisfied with job before Covid 19 pandemic.117 (23.4 %) -- Dissatisfied with job before Covid 19 pandemic.182(36.4 %) -- not gave any opinion regarding job before Covid 19 pandemic.42 (8.4 %) -- Satisfied with job before Covid 19 pandemic.106 (21.2 %) -- Very satisfied with job before Covid 19 pandemic.

4.4 Earnings per Month before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation

Earnings	No of respondent	Percentage
Less than 6000	142	28.4 %
6001-10000	81	16.2 %
10001-14000	138	27.6 %
14001-18000	107	21.4 %
Above 18000	33	6.6 %
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

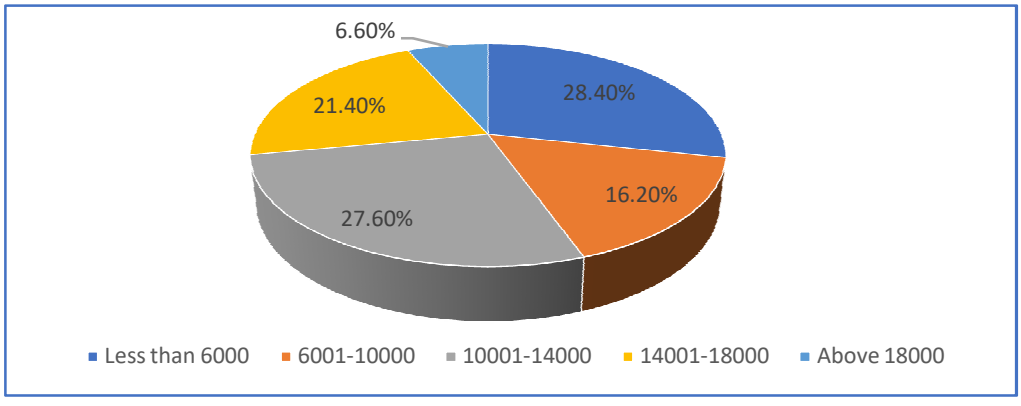

Fig. 4.4:Earnings per Month before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation

Table 4.4 and Graph 4.4 reflect regarding the earning per month, Out of 500 respondents it is evident that 142 respondents (28.4%) had less than 6000 earnings per month Before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation whereas 81 respondents (6.2%) had 6001-10000 earnings per month Before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation, 138 respondents(27.6%) had 10001-14000earnings per month Before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation, 107 respondents(21.4%) had 14001-18000 earnings per month Before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation, 33

respondents(6.6 %) had above 18000 earnings per month Before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation.

Before the pandemic monthly expenditure

Table 4.5: Before the Pandemic Monthly Expenditure

Expenditure	No of respondent	Percentage
Less than 4000	142	28.4%
4001-6000	272	54.4%
Above 6000	86	17.2%
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

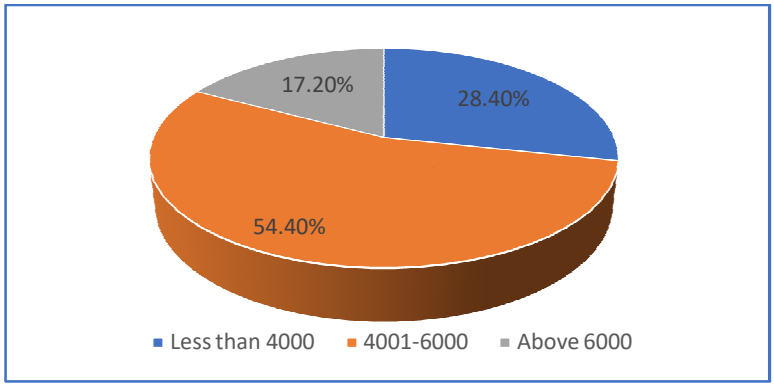

Fig. 4.5: Before thePandemic, Monthly Expenditure

Table 4.5 and Graph 4.5 reflect regarding the earning per month, Out of 500 respondents it is evident that 142 respondents (28.4%) had less than 4000 expenditureper month Before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation whereas 272 respondents (54.4%) had 4001-6000expenditure per month before Covid-19 Pandemic Situation, 86 respondents(17.2%) had above 6000 per month expenditurebefore Covid-19 Pandemic Situation.

Loss of Job or Source of Income Due to COVID-19

Table 4.6: Loss of job

Option	No of respondent	Percentage
Yes	419	83.8%
No	81	16.2%
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

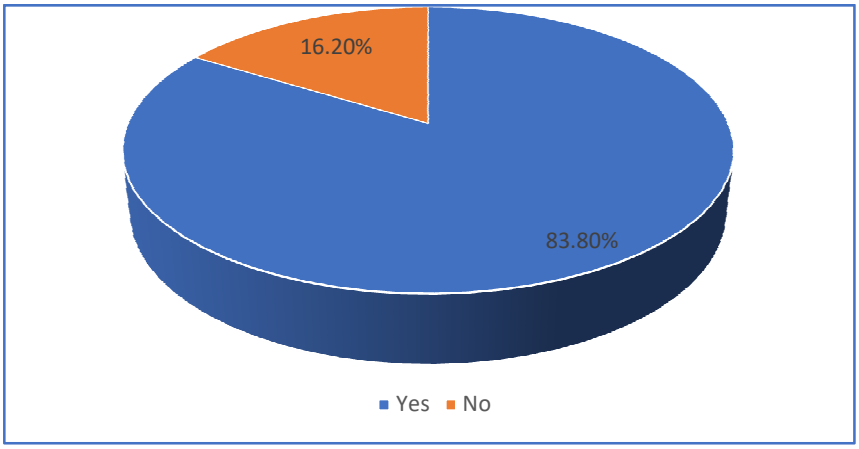

Fig 4.6 Loss of job

Table 4.6 and Graph 4.6 reflect regarding the earning per month, Out of 500 respondents it is evident that 419 respondents (83.8%) had lost job/source of income on account of Covid 19 pandemic whereas 81 respondents (16.2%) had not lost job or source of income on account of Covid-19 pandemic.

When Job was Lose

Table 4.7: Job was loss

Year of job losing	No of respondent	Percentage
March-May 2020	11	2.2%
June-December 2020	67	13.4%
In 2021	422	84.4%
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

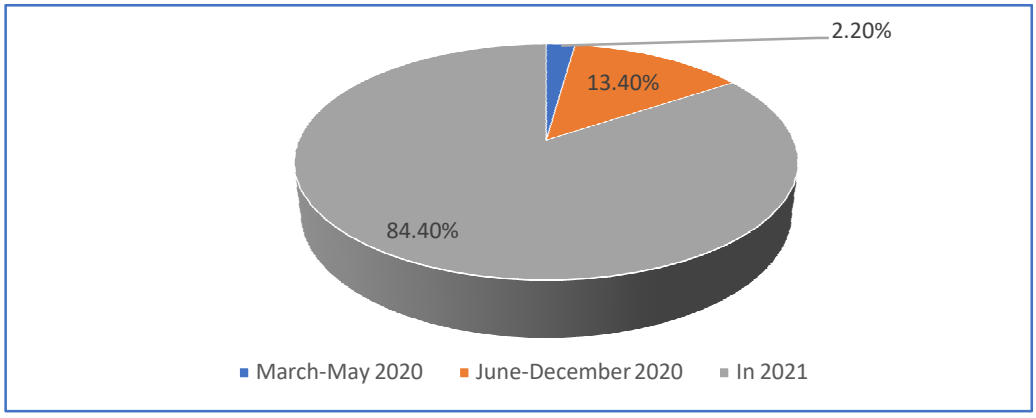

Fig 4.7: Job was loss

Table 4.7 and Graph 4.7 reflect regarding the earning per month, Out of 500 respondents it is evident that 11 respondents (2.2%) had lost job during March-May 2020 on account of Covid 19 pandemic whereas 67 respondents (13.4%) had lost job during June-December 2020 on account of Covid 19 pandemic, 422 respondents (84.4%) had lost job in the year 2021.

Reason for Job Loss

Table 4.8: Reason for job loss

Reasons of job loss	No of respondent	Percentage
Lockdown	62	12.4 %
Business Closure	73	14.6 %
No transportation	48	9.6 %
Decreased demand	22	4.4 %
Migrated back to village	332	66.4 %
Others	63	12.6 %
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

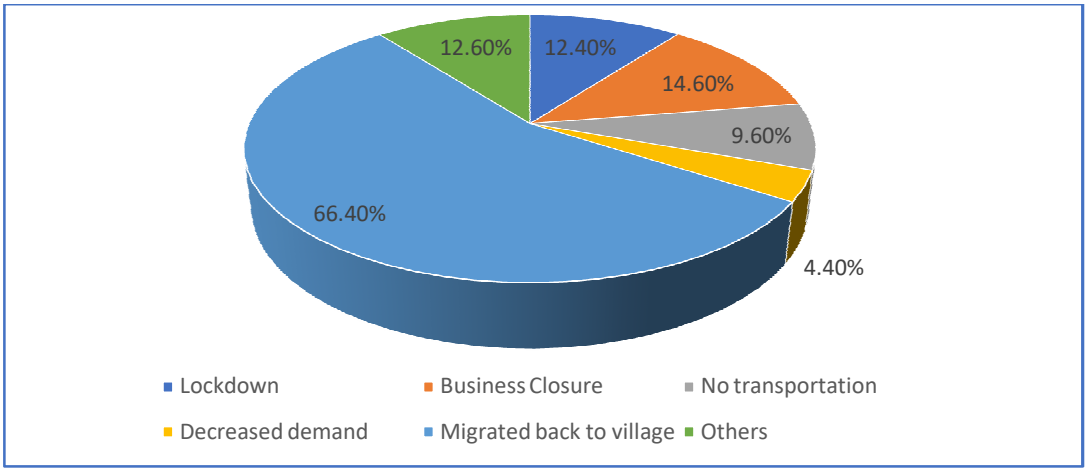

Fig. 4.8 Reason for job loss

Table 4.8 and Graph 4.8 reflect regarding the earning per month, Out of 500 respondents it is evident that 62 respondents (12.4%) had lost job for lockdown whereas 73 respondents (14.6%) had lost job due to business closure, 48 respondents (9.6%) had lost job due to not availability of transportation, 22 respondents (4.4%) had lost job due to decreased demand, 332 respondents (66.4%) had lost job due to Migrated back to village and 63 respondents (12.6%) due to other reasons.

Types of Jobs Engaged in

Table 4.9: Jobs engaged

Types of job engaged in	No of respondent	Percentage
Construction Related job	87	17.4 %
Agriculture Related job	254	49.0 %

Sericulture	00	00 %
Livestock related job	55	11.0 %
Transport related job	00	00 %
Employed under MGNREGA	104	20.8 %
Total	500	100%

Source: Primary Data, Survey

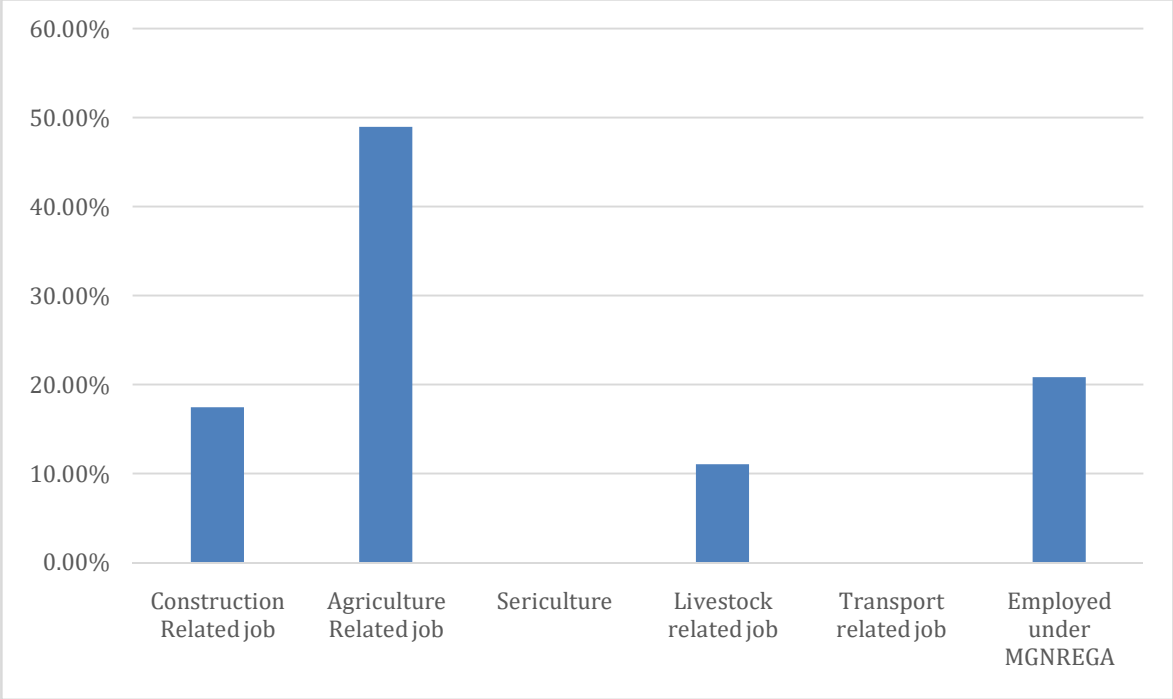

Fig. 4.9: Job engaged

Table 4.9 and Graph 4.9 reflect regarding the engagement in types of jobs. It is evident that 87 respondents (17.4%) had lost job in construction related Job, whereas 254 respondents (49.0 %) had lost job in Agriculture Related job, 00 % in sericulture, 55 respondents (11.0%) in Livestock related job, 00% in Transport related job, 104 respondents (20.8 %) Employed under MGNREGA. It found that most of people are engaged in agriculture sectors.

5. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted rural employment patterns, causing job losses, altering sectoral shares, and catalyzing migration changes. Short-term coping mechanisms and medium-term structural adjustments emerged, but long-term resilience requires targeted policy action. Investments in diversified rural employment, social protection, and skills training are essential for sustainable rural livelihoods in a post-pandemic world.

6. References

- Bashar, A., Hasan, N.A. &Haque, M.M. (2024). Exploring sustainable livelihood options for COVID-impacted rural communities in Bangladesh. *Heliyon*, 10(1), 1-13.

- Bhatt, V., Bahl, S. & Sharma, A. (2021). COVID-19 Pandemic, Lockdown and the Indian Labour Market: Evidence from Periodic Labour Force Survey 2018–2019. *The Indian Economic Journal*, 69(4), 750-769.
- Bista, R. et al. (2022). Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of rural households in the community forestry landscape in the Middle Hills of Nepal. *Trees, Forests and People*, 9 (100312), 1-11.
- Chakravorty, B. et al. (2023). Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on India's rural youth: Evidence from a panel survey and an experiment. *World Development*, 168 (106242), 1-14.
- Chaudhuri, S., Mahata, S. &Chaudhuri, S. (2022). COVID-19 disaster and employment generation program in a developing economy. *J. Soc. Econ. Dev.*, 24 (1), 46–64.
- Ghatge, S.K. &Parasar, A. (2022). Impact of Covid-19 on Rural Livelihood: A Review. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 14 (7), 514-522.
- Kakarlapudi, K.K. &Shagishna, K. (2022). COVID-19 and unemployment: How does Kerala compare with other States? *Kerala Economy*, 3(4), 57-66.
- Kumari, M. (2025). An Analysis of Migration during Covid-19 Pandemic. *South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics*, 22(2), 48-59.
- Samanta, S. (2020). Pandemic Scenario of Tamluk in Purba Medinipur District. *Int. J. Adv. Res.*, 8(12), 705-708.

Citation: **Jana. R. & Srivastava. Dr. A. K.,** (2025) "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Rural Employment Patterns", *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-3, Issue-12, December-2025.