

Internal Migration in India and Experiences from High Out Migration States: Challenges and Opportunities

I Key Message:

- *This paper is based on the research conducted to understand the current situation of migrant workers in high out migration states. This review includes secondary research as well as primary data collected through discussions with key stakeholders across government, non-government organisations, migrant workers and academia as well as data analysis of key sources¹.*
- *Migrant workers in India are not just numerically mapped in scientific manner, patterns of their migration are not properly known and social welfare programmes and economic policies do not recognize the realities of their precarious and vulnerable lives.*
- *India's development pattern has largely been uneven and seasonal migration have long been a livelihood strategy for the poorest households (primarily the marginalised communities- SC's, ST's and OBC's) through casual labour.*
- *The variegated experience of economic slowdown across people and places, coupled with the inadequacy of social protection policies for the most vulnerable populations, has revealed and enhanced existing inequalities in Indian society.*
- *There is an urgent need to develop robust institutional framework (migration hub) at the state and district level, that can act as repository of knowledge for successful policy formulation.*
- *To check rural-urban migration massive reforms will be required under MNREGS with respect to 'diversification of jobs' with high wages. Need conceptualization of NREGS 2.0*

II Background:

The COVID 19 pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis with countries seeking to control the spread of the disease by announcing lockdowns, restricting movement and closing borders. The variegated experience of economic slowdown across people and places, coupled with the inadequacy of social protection policies for the most vulnerable populations, has revealed and enhanced existing inequalities in low- and middle-income countries (in particular). One manifestation of this crisis was the severe impact on migrant workers in India.

Out of 133 billion people in India, as many as 120 million are estimated to migrate seasonally every year from rural areas to work in the urban spaces (CMIE, 2020). This population lives at the intersection of residential, social and occupational vulnerability. consisting of construction

¹ Census, NSS & IHDS (2011-12): The NSS uses place of last residence (PoLR) to define a migrant as a person whose place of enumeration is different from his/her last usual place of residence (UPR). In both the sources, PoLR & UPR is the place where person stayed continuously for at least six months immediately prior to moving to the place (village/town) of enumeration. IHDS provides information on non-resident members and not the migrants. The non-resident members of household were identified through household responses to the following questions: (a) Does any women/man in the household has a husband/wife who lives outside the household? (b) Is there any household member who has children staying outside the household? (c) Do any children under age 15 in the household have parents who live outside the household? (d) Is there any other family member who sends money to his household/receives it on a regular basis? Hence, IHDS is the unique and appropriate data set to study the stock of migration at two time periods (last 1 year and last 5-year information on migration)

workers, daily wage labourers, self-employed workers living with minimum or no means of social protection in India. According to CMIE, 122 million people lost their jobs in April 2020, 75 percent of whom were seasonal migrants, who are typically daily wage earners. Many of these migrant workers abruptly lost their livelihoods with the closure of economic activity, and were forced back to their places of origin. The scale of the crisis, and the lack of immediate government action and support, revealed that these groups have remained invisible in recent development policy discussions in India. Not only are they not numerically mapped, their patterns of their migration are not properly known and social welfare programmes and economic policies do not recognize the realities of their precarious and vulnerable lives.

The pandemic has brought the predicament of migrant workers in India to the centre-stage of discussions of the Indian economy. This has led to a flurry of studies, solutions and interventions being offered to ameliorate their plight. Most of these studies, however, are rapid appraisals or surveys conducted to map basic baseline information on demographic details and details of origin and destination of migration. The solutions offered, on the other hand, are short-term and top-down. This research seeks to address these shortcomings by, firstly, undertaking a more systematic and comparative study, locating the distress of migrant workers in the production system, the wider community and through their own experiences. This research would therefore feed into the question of sustainable livelihoods overall, which is the next big issue in the wake of the intensifying employment crisis in the Indian economy. And secondly, by co-designing the solutions and interventions with the rural communities that are the source of such migration. Thus, this research will give agency to the local people in whose interest the research is being conducted. The research is also novel in terms of being designed to find solutions at different levels of the government. The research will support policy reforms with regard to social safeguard policies and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, especially Goals 1,2,3,4,5,8,10 and 16 (See Figure 1).

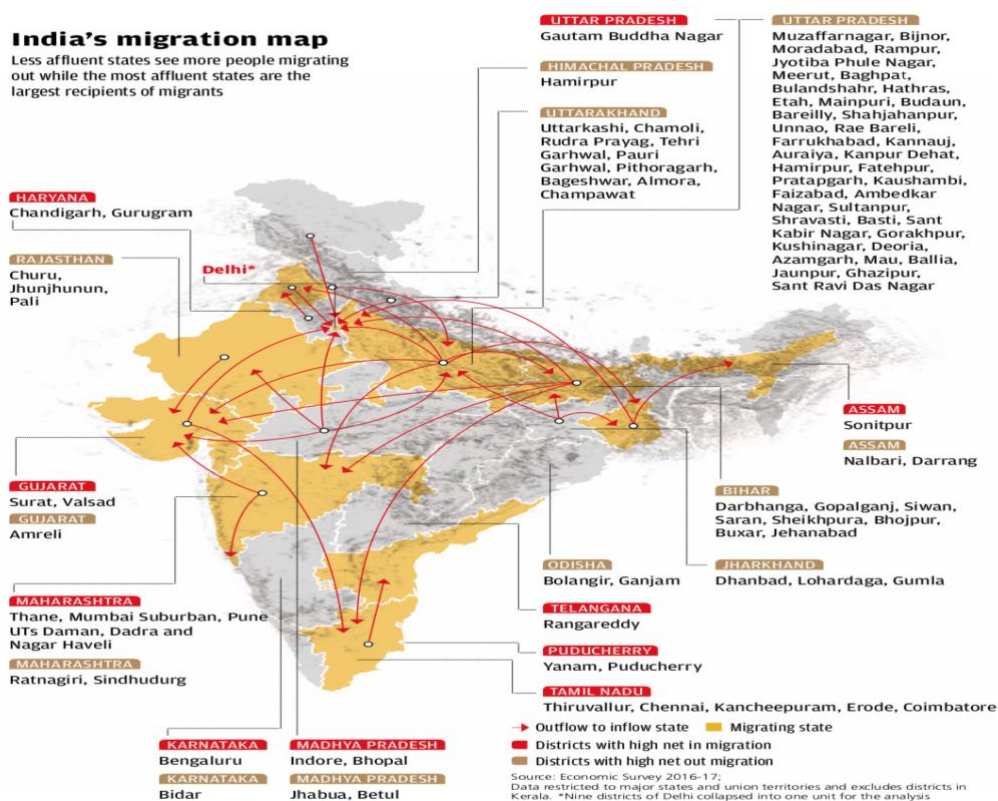
Figure 1: United Nation Sustainable Development Goals



Internal Migration in India

The inter relationship between migration and development are long recognised in development theories and practice. Migration in India is primarily of two types: (a) long term migration resulting in the relocation of an individual or a household and (b) short term or seasonal /circular migration, involving back and forth movement between a source and destination. Estimates of short-term migrants vary from 15 million (NSSO, 2007-08) to 120 million (CMIE, 2020). Yet, macro surveys such as census fail to adequately capture flows of short-term migrants and do not record secondary reasons for migration. At national or local levels migration is impacted by combination of economic, social, political and demographic factors. There are several socio-economic factors associated with the migration decision: household income, unavailability of sustainable source of income at one place leading to diversified livelihood portfolio and community networks in source and destination states. The migration of people is largely perceived as an ‘aspirational choice’, but considering the socio-economic realities of the Indian states and the poor communities, whether it’s a ‘distress call’ in search of livelihood or it’s an aspiration call, needs to be studied in detail. The uneven development pattern of the Indian states and the variation in demographics have significantly impacted the out flow of migration from less developed states to the more urbanised states of India. And as we move beyond the present pandemic, there will be a greater need to understand the pattern of migration and its determinants. There is a need to recognise that the drivers impacting migration are more structural, and not purely voluntary, and these structural features are embedded in the nature of development and the demographic structure across regions in India. Figure 2 reflects the in and out migration of Indian states.

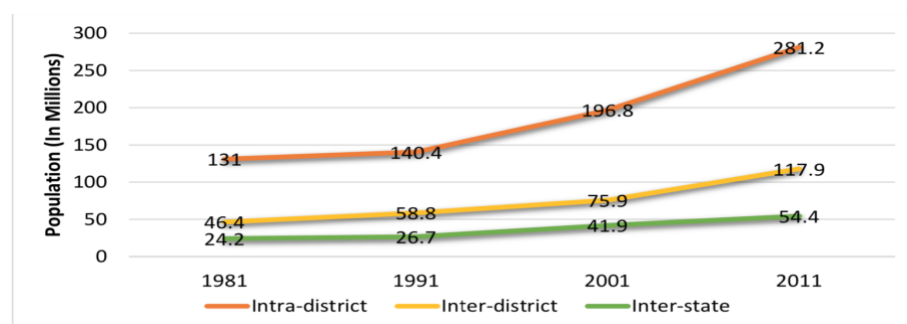
Figure 2: Migration pattern in India



Source: Economic Survey, 2016-17

Internal migration is an important feature of the Indian economy. According to the Census 2011, there are 450 million internal migrants in India based on place of last residence, i.e. approximately 37 percent of the total population. The Economic Survey (2017) estimated that an average of 5–6 million Indians migrated annually between 2001 and 2011, leading to an inter-state migrant population of ‘about 60 million’ and an inter-district migrant population ‘as high as 80 million’ (Government of India 2017a). The pattern of Migrants’ main places of origin has traditionally been the less developed and urbanized states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, with major receiving states being the more industrialized and urbanized states of Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.

Figure 3: Internal Migrants in India



Source: Census of India 1981-2011

The majority of internal migrants in India are short-distance, intra- and inter-district migrants (figure 2). Kone et al. (2018) note that the proportions of long-distance inter-state migration is considerably less than other fast developing economies such as Brazil and China. However, there are no legal restrictions to inter-state migration in India. Some of the factors affecting the long-distance migration are the non-portability of social welfare architecture such as public distribution system, access to healthcare, education and the requirement of state domicile for government jobs.

Rural to rural migration is the most prevalent stream of migration, accounting to 62 percent, followed by rural to urban stream at 20 percent, then urban to urban at 13 percent and urban to rural migration at 5 percent (Government of India, 2010). According to Census 2011, female migrants constitute 68 percent of the total migrants and the main reason indicated for the migration of females has been marriage followed by employment (Rajan and Neetha, 2018). On the other side, the reasons for male migration has been primarily employment and education. However, the underreported fact is women while primarily migrate for marriage but they do enter the labour market at destination and the male centric view of migration leaves the issues of women migrants too often invisible (Rajan, Sivakumar and Srinivasan, 2020).

It is important to note that rural areas are still heavily dependent on agriculture that is impacted by various seasonal factors that further shapes the rural-urban migration stream. As far as seasonal or circular migration is concerned, India accounts for more than 120 million people who seasonally migrate to urban areas to work in various sectors on casual or contractual employment with little or no means of social security. However, there are evidence from number of developing countries that seasonal migration is not necessarily a response to destitution (Lucas, 2021). But in India, there is a preponderance of economically and socially marginalized communities in seasonal migration (Keshri and Bhagat, 2013).

According to Census of 2011, almost 46 percent of India's urban population is migrants and they occupy a significant space in India's large urban centres. They work in both formal and informal sectors, such as in manufacturing and construction, as well as occupation such as brick making and textiles (Srivastava and Sutradhar 2016; Deshingkar and Akter 2009).

To boost the Indian economy, series of urban centric policies have been introduced to turn urban centres into 'engines of growth'. The contribution of urban centres to India's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise from 47 percent in 1980–81 to an expected 75 percent in 2030, provided that urban infrastructure development keeps pace with its potential (Gupta 2019). Some of the recent schemes claimed to have a holistic urban renewal program are the Smart Cities Mission and Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Transformation (AMRUT), launched in 2015.

However, previous research and migrants' interviews² has noted how migrants have been excluded from most benefits in cities, including access to social security programs, with many residing in cramped slums (Chandrasekhar and Mitra 2019). The invisibility of migrants is also reflected in inadequate statistics. For instance, migration data as a part of employment and unemployment data were last collected by the National Sample Survey in 2007–08. In order to link migrants with urban development, much needs to be done by way of public policy. Recent announcements by the central government during the COVID-19 pandemic on the portability of ration cards and rental housing for migrant workers are some important steps in this direction (Rajan 2020).

Characteristics of Seasonal Migrants

The available literature (Brauw, 2007; Deshingkar and Ferrington, 2009; Keshri and Bhagat, 2013; Yang and Guo, 1999) suggests that there is widespread occurrence of seasonal migration for employment in the developing countries. Seasonal migration is a kind of mobility where economic activity of a person has moved but not the usual place of residence (Bilsborrow et al., 1984). If individuals migrate leaving their families, land and property in the area of origin, they do so with the intention of returning to the usual place of residence. This is primarily due to the migrant's precarious jobs condition in the destination states or if the cost of permanent relocation is relatively high to its benefits (Srivastava, 2012a). An important group of circular migrants consists of seasonal migrants those who combine activities in several places and they have a diversified livelihood portfolio. Six to eight months is generally used as the maximum duration of the temporary move (Mberu, 2006; Pham and Hill, 2008; Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003).

The analysis presented in the paper draws from two sources: firstly, the India Human Development Survey conducted in 2011-12 and 64th round of National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted in 2007-08 for estimating the number prevalence and characteristics of seasonal migrants. The NSS has captured information on short term migration by asking 'whether any person who had stayed away from the village/town for a period of 1 month or more but less than 6 months during the last 365 days for employment or in search of employment'. On the other hand, IHDS asks 'have you or any member of your household left to find seasonal/short term work during last five years/one year and returned to live here?'

² Interview: State Co-ordinator, Chattisgarh, Ekta Parishad

Table 1: Estimates of seasonal labour migrants (last five years) according to place of origin by states, IHDS, 2011-12

States	Rural	Urban	Total
Bihar	3382065	270692	3652757
Jharkhand	556304	34928	591232
Chhattisgarh	888341	28825	917166
Madhya Pradesh	2147222	132595	2279817
Odhisa	675438	30899	706337

{Focus States of the Study}

State wise results related to last five years of seasonal migration suggests that Bihar followed by Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Rajasthan (more than 2 percent) have a higher share of seasonal migrants. In urban areas, Bihar has exceptionally higher prevalence of seasonal migrants (2.4%). While in other states its less than 1%. In rural areas it is higher in Madhya Pradesh followed by Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Rajasthan (more than 2.5 %).

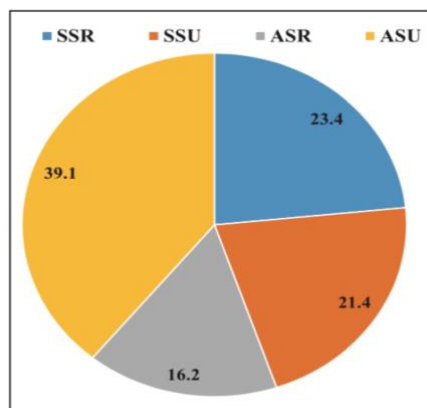
Table 2: Estimates of seasonal labour migrants (last five years) according to type of place of destination by states, IHDS, 2011-12

States	SSR	SSU	ASR	ASU	Total
Bihar	129876	172243	1000056	2350582	3652757
Jharkhand	63794	79824	137142	310472	591232
Chhattisgarh	195768	189853	174478	357067	917166
Madhya Pradesh	323623	531718	311058	1113418	2279817
Odhisa	128353	146970	15671	408792	699786

Note: SSR: Same State Rural; SSU: Same State Urban; ASR: Another State Rural; Another State Urban

Results related to pattern of seasonal labour migration according to type of place of destination by states suggest that the most of the states from eastern, northern and central India have a higher proportion of other state urban areas migrants. On the other hand, more than half of the seasonal migrants from Daman & Diu and other south Indian states like Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu move to urban areas of same state. The states like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, North eastern states; Gujarat and Maharashtra have a higher percentage of migrants that move to rural areas of same state.

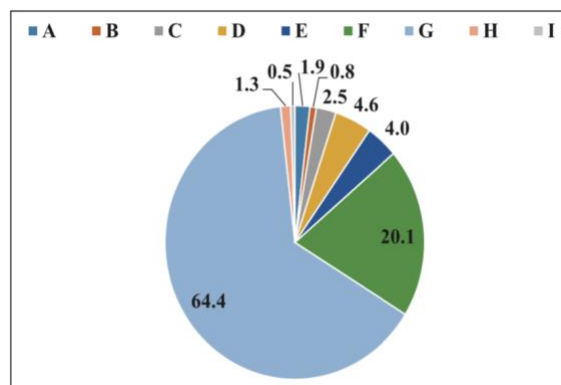
Figure 4: Percent distribution of seasonal labour migrants (last one year) according to type of place of destination, IHDS, 2011-12



Legends: SSR: Same State Rural; SSU: Same State Urban; ASR: Another State Rural; Another State Urban

Percentage distribution of seasonal migrants between 2007-12 according to occupation is presented in figure. Migrants engaged in ‘production, transport and labour work’ constitutes the largest category of seasonal migrants (more than 60%) followed by ‘farmers, fisherman, hunter, loggers and related workers’ which is the second most common category (more than 20%).

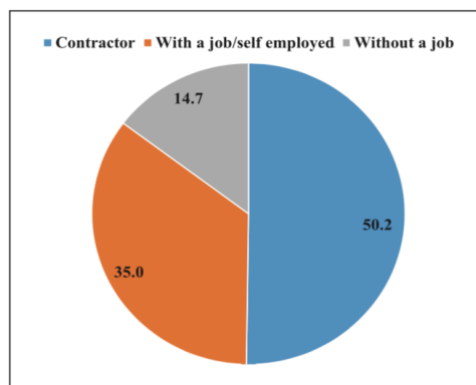
Figure 5: Percent distribution of seasonal labour migrants (last five years) according to occupation, IHDS, 2011-12



A “Professions, Technical and Related Workers; B “Administrative, Executive and Managerial Workers” C “Clerical and Related Workers” D “Sale workers” E “Service workers” F “Farmers/fisherman, hunters, loggers and related workers” G “Production, Transport and Labourers” H “Unidentifiable occ” I “Housewives, Student/too young, and Out of labour force”

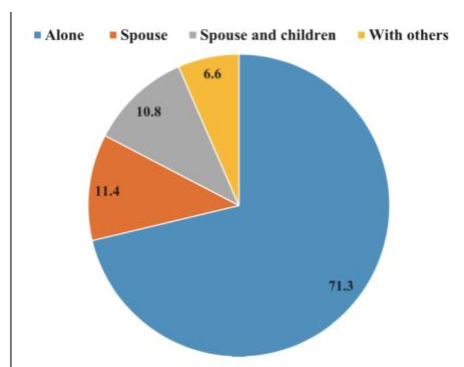
Seasonal migration flows appear to be mediated by contractors and middlemen who perform critical function of sourcing and recruiting workers. Around half of all seasonal migrants migrated through the contractor while another 35.0 percent migrated with a job and 14.7 percent without a job. More or less similar pattern is found in last one year. More than 50 per cent of seasonal migrants engaged in sales work and ‘production, transport and labourer related works are migrated through a contractor. While, a majority of migrants engaged in ‘professional, technical and related works’ and unidentifiable occupation move with a job or are self-employed.

Figure 6: Percent distribution of seasonal labour migrants (last five years) according to middlemen (migrated through), IHDS, 2011-12



Around 70 percent of seasonal migrants move alone whereas 10-13 percent move with spouse or spouse and children both (Figure). Less than 10 percent migrate with others. This pattern has rarely changed in the last few years.

Figure 7: Percentage of seasonal labour migrants (last five years) accompanied with, IHDS, 2011-12



Uneven Development

In the last seven decades, Indian states have largely experienced an uneven development pattern, with few industrialised and urbanised states on one hand and large number of underdeveloped states with less economic or employment opportunities on the other side. The unprecedented economic growth in India, especially after the economic liberalization in the early 1990s has misallocated the resources in favour of capital owners, both physical and human, and created a spatial rift of unequal development. The demand for cheap labour created an asymmetric pattern of flows of the people, with the two poorest states of India, UP and Bihar becoming major source of labour. The migrant labourers, lacking human capital, became sources of cheap labour but remained excluded from the positive spill overs of exploding growth cities and urbanisation. The high cost of living coupled with unavailability of adequate social safety nets for meeting food, health care, and housing needs made the places unaffordable to the migrant labourers in the cities they migrated to.

However, there are several other factors that affects the rural-urban migration. Demographic variables are considered to exercise an important influence on migration. However, labour force has a more proximate influence on migration since labour force is a direct determinant of

labour supply and demand. Labour force, and changed therein is influenced by the population and its structure but also by other economic and behavioural variables, the nature of which may change over time. Economic growth may be considered to have an influence on employment growth and the relationship between them is given by employment elasticity. Per capita income (GSDP), being a proxy for the level of living in a state, has an independent influence on migration and finally, wage differentials also have an important influence on migration.

III Regulatory/Legal Frameworks

Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979

This law is applicable to all the establishments employing five or more migrant workmen from other states. In addition to this, this law is also applicable to contractors who have employed five or more inter-State workmen. The establishment must be registered with the local authority while employing migrant workers. This means that if an establishment is prohibited from employing migrant workers from other states if they do not have a certificate from the concerned authority. The same law applies to the contractors too who employ workers from one state and deploy them in other states. Key Features:

- 1 The registration of the establishments deploying the migrant labours creates a system of accountability and acts as the first layer of formalising the utilization of their labour.
- 2 It also helps the government to keep a track about the number of workers employed by the establishments and provide a legal basis for improving the conditions of the migrant workers.
- 3 As per this law, the contractors deploying the migrant workers must provide terms and conditions of the recruitment to the workers. For instance, the remuneration payable, hours of work, fixation of wages and other essential amenities.
- 4 The wage rates, number of holidays, working hour and other conditions of recruitment of a migrant worker must be same as those extended to other local workmen in the same establishment provided that nature of their work is same.
- 5 The wages of the migrant workers must not be lower than the wages mentioned in the Minimum Wages Act.

Currently, there are 44 labour laws in the country. The Central Government want these 44 laws to be coded under 4 laws-- Wage Code, Industrial Safety and Welfare, Social security and Industrial relations. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019 was passed in Lok Sabha on July 23, 2019, and was referred to the standing committee on October 9, 2019, and a report was made by the standing committee on February 11, 2020. This Code repeals 13 out of 44 labour laws related to safety, health and working conditions. The Interstate Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 is also be included under this code. These 13 laws include the Factories Act, Mines Act, Dock Workers' Act, the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, and other enactments relating to those working in plantations, construction, cinema, beedi and cigarette manufacture, motor transport, and the media.

The new Code (2019) has similar provisions of the 1979 Act. It envisages the allowance of displacement and journey to the inter-State migrant workers. However, The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has highlighted the fact that the 2019 code and 1979 Act must not be merged together and must be implemented strictly for improved conditions of the migrant workers.

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 is largely a regulatory law failing to incorporate welfare rights of the migrant labourers. The most urgent revision is to introduce a National Migrant Workers Commission at the

Central level backed up by State level Migrant Workers Commissions (few states for instance, M.P. and Chhattisgarh have already established the labour commission). Also, we need to expand the definition of migrant labourer and include next generation skills like IT, mobile repair, Amazon/Swiggy/Zomato delivery workforce, financial services related works. Also, the Act needs to include provisions for State-supported skill training services for migrant labourers. The Act was enacted to prevent the exploitation of inter-state migrant workmen by contractors, and to ensure fair and decent conditions of employment. Since the Act is barely implemented, it exists as another law that potentially provides rent seeking opportunities to enterprising government inspectors while failing in its main objective. Another consequence of weak implementation is the absence of government preparedness and the consequent failure in preventing genuine hardships for vulnerable groups.

IV Experiences from the high out migration states

A Bihar

The choice of more than 84 percent of Bihar districts under the “Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan” (PMGKRA) of Government of India suggests it is one of the most affected states in India by the reverse migration of workers from big cities to their hometowns and villages. In July 2020, it is estimated that a total of 1.88 million migrant labourers returned to Bihar, more than 94 percent of them were male. The Government of Bihar identified four categories to capture the profile of returned residents: migrant workers, dependents, students, tourists and other professions, of which majority of them (80%) were young migrant workers under the age of 40.

Figure 8: Category of Migrants & Gender

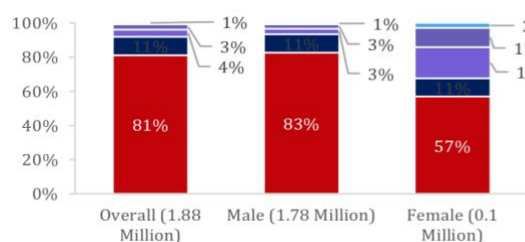


Figure 9: Age Wise Distribution

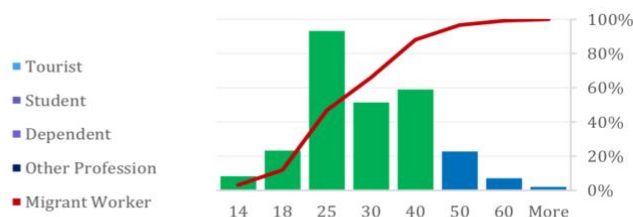


Figure 10: Destination States of Migrants

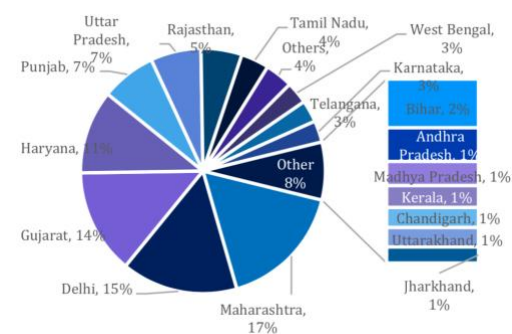
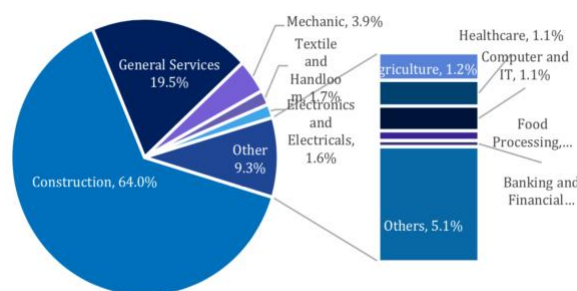


Figure 11: Occupation wise Registered Migrants



Source: Govt of Bihar and Unicef 2020

It is important to note that, 70 percent of the returned migrants belong to socially backward category. The distribution of migrants as per their social category are: 29 percent belong to Other Backward Castes (OBCs), 23 percent belong to Extremely Backward Caste (EBC), 21 percent belong to General category, 20 percent in Scheduled Caste (SC), 3 percent in Scheduled

Tribe. Figure 11 indicates that majority (64%) of the migrants were working as construction workers in different States of India.

According to IHDS (2011-12), percentage distribution of seasonal migrants (of last five years i.e. 2007-2012) according to social groups, indicates that 30 % of the state's seasonal migrants belong to SC's & ST's, 60 % belong to OBC's and 10% to general castes.

The review of media reports and other secondary information suggest that the sudden announcement of lockdown created panic and fear among migrant labourers. Along with the losses in income and livelihoods, they did not receive adequate support from their employers or the state. This environment of uncertainty and abandonment, and loss of livelihoods forced them in desperation to return to their 'source' native place on foot. The crisis emerged during the pandemic indicates challenges at several institutional and policy levels.

In the backdrop of the pandemic, the Central Government has announced '*Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKY)*' for the high out migration states and Bihar is one of the beneficiary states with maximum number of districts with migrant workers. The programme is targeted towards 116 districts (including 27 aspirational districts) across 6 states namely Bihar, Jharkhand, Odhisa, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The scheme focusses on creating local employment opportunities and supplementing employment activities under MNREGS and other government schemes. If the objective is to check rural-urban migration to other states, massive reforms will be required under MNREGS particularly with respect to 'diversification of jobs' with high wages. Without increasing the wages and ensuring disbursement of the 'fair' wages to the workers it will be difficult to encourage migrant workers to stay back in the state.

Table 3: List of districts with high migration rate (PMGKY)

S.No.	District	District	District
1	East Champaran	11 Rohtas	21 Kishanganj
2	West Champaran	12 Samastipur	22 Madhepura
3	Muzaffarpur	13 Banka	23 Sitamarhi
4	Vaishali	14 Khagaria	24 Bhojpur
5	Darbhanga	15 Begusarai	25 Siwan
6	Purnia	16 Supaul	26 Patna
7	Gaya	17 Bhagalpur	27 Nalanda
8	Madhubani	18 Saharsa	28 Gopalganj
9	Araria	19 Aurangabad	29 Jamui
10	Saran	20 Buxar	30 Nawada
			31 Kaimur
			32 Sheikhpura

Source: Field Survey, 2020

B Jharkhand

Discussion with NGOs and social activist³ revealed a very complex pattern of outmigration, varying across districts, and even blocks, with migration to diverse sectors – agriculture, mining, construction, plantations, diamond polishing, domestic work, brick-kilns and so on; to varied destinations – from Bihar and West Bengal to the East, to Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in the South, and Gujarat and Haryana in the West. Migration, while predominantly male, is also family-based, single women as well as single boy or girl child. Reasons for out migration are also complex ranging in the case of the girl child to Naxalism and conflict, to domestic violence, poverty, mining and forced displacement. Trafficking situations co-exist with labour migration, and the former particularly target children and young women.

According to IHDS (2011-12), percentage distribution of seasonal migrants (of last five years i.e. 2007-2012) according to social groups, indicates that 60 % of the state's seasonal migrants belong to SC's & ST's, 20 % belong to OBC's and 20% to general castes.

Being an industrial and mining centre, Jharkhand is also a destination for migrants and some of the larger cities are also expanding rapidly due to migration. There is labour influx in the construction and mining sector from the states of West Bengal and Odisha.

As discussed above, Jharkhand is a sending state for single women and child migrants (both girls and boys), who are vulnerable and are often trafficked into exploitative conditions, including sexual trafficking. Jharkhand also acts as a hub for trafficked women from other states. The Government of Jharkhand, in collaboration with multilateral and other agencies, and NGOs have been taking steps to encourage safe migration and to curb the migration and trafficking of children. Many steps have also been taken on the direction of the courts. Under the direction of the court, the responsibility of various departments (Home, Social Welfare, Women and Child, Rural Development, Labour, education, and Health) have been laid down by the government and coordinated by the DCs at the district level, and Chief Secretary and Chief Minister at the State level. Anti-Human Trafficking Units have been set up in eight districts, Juvenile Police Units (under the Juvenile Justice Act), Child Welfare Committees, and Child Protection Units (under the ICPS) have been set up in all units. Shelter homes are functioning under the government as well as NGOs. However, issues exist regarding proper staffing and infrastructure, sensitization of the staff etc.

Under the Department of Labour, since 2015, a scheme for the identification of inter-state migrant workers, with a focus on migrant women workers, is under way. Migrant workers are issued red and green cards, with personal details, details of employer (if known), and details of contractor (for red card holders). The migration register is also expected to be maintained at the panchayat level. "Labour Mitras" are offered an incentive of Rs100 for the registration of such workers. Under the Scheme migrant workers can received an assistance of up to Rs 150,000 in the case of death or disability.

Women inter-state migrant workers who are identified are encouraged to return and a rehabilitation package is offered to them. If the women workers are trafficked or are working as forced/bonded labour then the appropriate provisions of law are invoked with the assistance of the authorities in the destination areas. The rehabilitation comprises skill training, linking with employment assistance and self-help groups (for women workers) as well as other schemes for housing, land, ration card, pension etc. There is a provision for tracking the status of the returnee women workers. A standard operating procedure (SOP) and a livelihood

³ Interview: John, Ranchi, Jharkhand

package has been developed for such workers. A special survey of migrant workers was carried out in Gumla, Khunti, Dumka, Lohardaga and Simdega districts with the help of Anganwadi workers and 78,730 interstate migrant workers were identified (67,651 male and 10,879 female). Data provided by the government for eight districts showed that 938 families had been rehabilitated in three districts (Khunti, Gumla, and Ranchi).

Table 4: Districts with high migration rate (PMGKY)

S.No.	District
1	Giridih
2	Hazaribagh
3	Godda

The construction sector involves a very large number of intra-state and inter- state migrant workers. The Building & Construction Workers Welfare Act and the counterpart Cess Act is the most important legislation implemented at the State level for regulating the conditions of work and safety in the sector and for providing social security to Building and Construction Workers. The Welfare Board provides fifteen benefits to its members. These include toolkit assistance, cycle assistance, an integrated life-cum-accidents-cum-education insurance benefit scheme providing cover up to 4 lakhs and education expenses for students in Class 9 to 12; wedding assistance; pension of Rs 1000 per month (minimum three years contribution); disability pension; family pension (Rs 500 per month); safety kit assistance; assistance for sewing machines; maternity benefit; skill training; and medical assistance.

The registration fee for a worker is Rs. 10 and the annual contribution is Rs 100. The Welfare Board reported a registration of 750,845 workers up to March 2018, and 78,655 registrations during the first seven months of 2018-19. Between 2014 and October 2018, total cess of Rs. 452.19 crores were collected and a total benefit of 236.82 crores had been received by 19.57 lakh beneficiaries.

Schemes for Unorganised Workers (Jharkhand)

In a modification of earlier orders issued in 2015, the state issued a fresh notification in July 2018, and has provided for the registration of unorganized workers and the benefit of the following schemes under the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008: (i) the Unorganised Workers Insurance Scheme (Prime Minister's Suraksha Bima Yojana and the Prime Minister's Jeevan Jyoti Yojana); (ii) Funeral Scheme (assistance of Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000 for occupation disease related death); (iii) CM Scholarship Scheme; (iv) Skill Enhancement Scheme; (v) Maternity Benefit Scheme. A total of 9.11,073 workers had registered till March 2018 and an additional 3,52,586 workers registered during April 2018 to October 2018.

C Odhisa

Like other states, Odisha experiences both in- and out-migration, and rural-urban migration contributes to the growth of its urban population. A comparison of the 2001 and the 2011 migration rates shows an increase in (in)migration with the total and urban migration rates increasing from 30.03 and 42.41 in 2001 to 34.94 and 42.41 in 2011 respectively. The IHDS survey of 2011, reports that 15.2 percent households in Odisha had one or more non- resident members while the 2007-08 NSS survey reports that 1.7 percent of the population out-migrated seasonally for work. There is a significant variation between these two sources of information.

The state is known to be an important source state for seasonal migrants, although large number of Odiya migrants also migrate for longer periods all over the country.

Table 5: Migrants share between 2007-2015

Year	Total Migrants	Seasonal Migrants
2007	55000	
2008		87000
2012		105000
2013		120000
2014		135000
2015	1,46000	

Source: Odhisa Labour Department

Note: Maximum migrants were from the Bolangir district as high as 45000 in 2015. These figures are for registered migrant workers reported by registered contractors under the ISMW, and are known to be gross underestimates (Pradhan, 2016⁴).

According to IHDS (2011-12), percentage distribution of seasonal migrants (of last five years i.e. 2007-2012) according to social groups, indicates that 30 % of the state's seasonal migrants belong to SC's & ST's, 60 % belong to OBC's and 10% to general castes.

However, estimates of the Migration Information and Resource Centre (MiRC), Aide et Action South Asia, a local non-government organisation, put the number of migrant labourers at five lakhs, mainly drawn from the southern and western districts of the state. As per MiRC, more than 60,000 families, or two lakh people are from the districts of Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Boudh, Sonapur and Bargarh that go to Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Additionally, around 40,000 to 50,000 people find work at the 150 brick kiln units that are located within a 40- kilometre radius of the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. But, it's not easy keeping a track of these migrants.

A study of Bargarh district found that inter-state migrants are usually engaged in the secondary or tertiary sectors (Majhi et. al 2014). For example, in Tamil Nadu most of them are factory workers, security guards or brick-makers. In Andhra Pradesh their main occupation is brick making, factory work, masonry and industrial work. In Uttar Pradesh, they are mainly factory workers. Those who move to Chhattisgarh are primarily scrap workers, vegetable sellers or hotel boys and in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh the migrants are mainly factory workers. However, intra-state migrants who migrate to agricultural rich/ irrigated areas often work in agriculture sector. For example, migrants moving to Bargarh, Sonapur, Sambalpur work as agricultural labourers while workers in Jharsuguda, Ganjam, Bolangir, Puri, Baleswar, Kordha are mainly employed in construction sector, brick makers and factory workers. In

⁴ See for details, Number of migrant labourers from Odisha rise three fold in three years Read more at:http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/55911040.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

contrast, migrants in Nuapada and Kalahandi are scrap workers. The majority of these migrant families work in the construction sector and brick kilns as unskilled labour.

The Centre of Labour and Migration Study (CMLS 2014) found that the two regions show distinctive patterns of migration. For the coastal region, Kerala emerges as the most important destination state, receiving about 24 per cent of the inter-state migrants. One-sixth of the migrants from the region go to Gujarat. The Coastal region also sends sizeable number of migrants to Tamil Nadu, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Small but not insignificant migration streams flow to West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka and Delhi. A large number of inter-state migrants from Western Odisha, about 26 per cent, find employment in the neighbouring state of Chhattisgarh; Raipur and Durg districts. Other prominent destinations for inter-state migrants are Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, each receiving about one-fifth of the migrants from the region. About 8 per cent of the inter-state migrants from the western region travel to Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Vishakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh, where they get employed as brick makers. Gujarat, Goa and Tamil Nadu are other important destinations.

Migration for work in the brick-kilns constitutes an important economic activity, especially for workers in the KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput region). The region dispatches more than 0.2 million brick-kiln workers to the southern states alone (Daniel 2014). Migration begins immediately after the festival of Nuakhali and continues till June. Workers take advances from local labour contractors, known as Sardars, who are intermediaries for bigger contractors (usually called Seths). Most studies note that the number of contractors has continued to rise and the Government's efforts to register them has only driven the industry underground. Most seasonal workers recruited by agents are no better than bonded labourers (ibid.).

Table 6: List of districts with high migration rate (PMGKY)

S.No.	District
1	Ganjam
2	Bhadrak
3	Balasore
4	Bolangir

Policies for Labour Migration

The condition under which seasonal migration takes place has been a focus of policy attention in Odisha for several decades. Odisha was the first state in India to formulate its own law – the Dadan Labour (Control and Regulation) Act (ORLA), 1975, an act to protect and safeguard the interests of dadan or 'debt migrants' in the state. The Act had provisions for creation of a 'registering authority' for registration of agents and workers, compliance with minimum wage and basic labour welfare facilities at the workplace, appointment of a Chief Inspector and other inspectors as well as the appointment of a 'competent authority' for dispute redressal. Taking a cue from the Odisha Dadan Labour Act of 1975, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India felt the need for a Central Act on similar lines as the ORLA and thus enacted the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (ISMWA) in 1979. As a result, the ORLA was nullified on the passage of the new Act.

Odisha has been one of the most active states in implementing the ISMW Act. However, although several thousand contractors and workers are registered each year, these are a fraction

of the total contractor based labour migration. This is partly due to the lack of adequate enforcement, under-staffing and poor infrastructure of the District Labour Office in Odisha. More important, however, is the fact that the brunt of implementation of the Act is in the destination states, which have been very tardy in regulating the condition of work of the migrants.

In view of the high percentage of child migration in western districts of Odisha, the State Government initiated a unique programme called 'Residential Care Centre' for retaining and providing education to the seasonal migrant children accompanying their parents. The programme was initiated under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 2001, and resulted in the retention of 3000 children in the hostels. Later the programme was up-scaled and expanded to Nuapada and Bargarh district. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has further built in support to cater to the education needs of migrant children both at source and destination. In recent years, with the involvement of civil society organisations, education of migrant children at destination has been initiated in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

In order to provide health insurance to the BPL and unorganised workers, the Government of India launched the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) in 2008. One of the provisions of the insurance programme is to cater to the health insurance of migrant households.

Being concerned about the prevalence of exploitative labour practices including bondage situations in brick manufacturing activities that engage poor and vulnerable migrant workers, the Government of Odisha initiated discussions with the Government of Andhra Pradesh with facilitation from the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Government of India and the ILO to develop a coordination mechanism between the sending and receiving states. The objective of the MoU was to improve access of the brick kiln workers to social security and other entitlements, facilitate safe migration, and make the migrants aware of their rights through coordinated efforts of the two states. A framework for such coordination in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between GoI (MoLE) and State Labour Department of Governments of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh in 2012, with the facilitation of the ILO. Both states have formulated a result-oriented action plan to benefit migrant workers, especially those working in the brick kilns sector. Subsequent to the signing of MoU, an Inter State Coordination Committee was constituted at Central Level on July 6, 2012, to create a sustainable institutional mechanism to look into the issues of inter-state migration across India.

Following the signing of the MoU, The Department of Labour and ESI has already constituted the state coordination cell for migrant workers at the office of labour commissioner, Odisha and the district level facilitation cells at the district level in the state to track distressed seasonal migrant workers.

In order to track the movement of migrant workers along with information on their employers / contractors / agents etc, Data Collection formats were circulated to the District Labour Officers (DLOs) in the month of October, 2012 to capture data at the gram panchayat level. The data has been shared with the Dept. of Labour, Andhra Pradesh for necessary action as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between GoI (MoLE) and State Labour Department of Governments of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The ILO office has been facilitating a tracking software to track the migrant workers on line who migrate to Andhra Pradesh every year to work in the Brick Kiln sectors.

The concern for hygienic living for the migrant workers of Odisha at Andhra Pradesh has been taken care of by taking initiative to build semi pucca houses for migrants. The Govt. of Andhra Pradesh has agreed to ensure the same and the expenditure for this shall be borne equally by the states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Seasonal hostels have been opened in the districts of Nuapada, Bolangir and Bargarh of Odisha by the School and for education of the children of migrant workers during the seasonal migration.

The Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority (OPEPA) has been sending Odiya Teachers and Odiya text books, for schools in Andhra Pradesh to ensure education at the work sites for the children of Migrant Workers.

In December 2014, the Government of Odisha came out with a comprehensive state action plan for ensuring enforcement, welfare, entitlements and protection of rights of interstate migrant workers moving within and to various states as seasonal workers. A detailed advisory and action plan was issued by Dept of Panchayat Raj on December 17, 2014. The Action Plan details, and builds upon existing initiatives taken by the government. The plan was laid out for 11 districts of Odisha which are considered as key migration prone district of Odisha. The targeted district includes, Bolangir, Bargarh, Subranapur, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada and Khorda. The department of Panchayat Raj has also allocated a budget of Rs.7.5 crores to carry out wide range of initiatives both at the district and state level.

The action plan builds on coordinated action between several state departments. The labour and ESI department, Government of Odisha has been assigned the responsibilities to conduct periodic survey of migrant people in this district to understand various aspects and trend of migration. The government has recommended computerizing the migrants' data and a develop a separate software for the purpose of tracking. Strict implementation of the ISMW Act along with other labour laws has been emphasised. A helpline has been set up to provide support for rescue and repatriation of migrant labourers in crisis from other states. The ESI Department has also determined to provide financial resources for sending of rescue team to rescue of migrant labourers living in crisis in other states.

The Action plan emphasis to signing of MOU with destination States to protect the migrant's workers' rights, welfare and social security and establish contacts with various welfare organization at the destination states to create contact points to reach out to migrant labourers. The Government of Odhisa policy initiatives and programmes are important learnings to draw experiences on what has worked and how other states can learn from their experiences.

D Chhattisgarh

In terms of migration pattern, Chhattisgarh has significant intra state and inter state migration. The 2001 census reflects an interesting fact that Chhattisgarh has significant in migration (2.04%) and out (2.68 %) migration. Being an industrial state it's an important observation on the number of people moving in and out of the state in search of employment. According to IHDS (2011-12), 3.57 lakhs Chhattisgarh migrant workers migrated to another state's urban areas for employment activities. Migration from Chhattisgarh to another states rural areas were 1.74 lakhs. Intra-state migration was also very significant at 1.95 lakhs to rural areas and 1.89 lakhs to urban areas within state.

According to data released by the Chief Labour Commissioner (June 2020), which falls under the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, Chhattisgarh has significant migrant workers (10.85 lakh), who were affected post announcement of the lockdown. There is discrepancy in the data provided by the state and central government. And hence, migration resource centre has a critical role in keeping a track of the updated information on the migrant workers. The table below reflects the number of districts that have high migrants' workforce.

Table 7: Districts with high interstate migration

S.No.	Districts
1	Bilaspur
2	Janjgir Champa
3	Koriya
4	Surguja
5	Korba
6	Balodabazar
7	Mahasamund
8	Rajnandgaon
9	Dhamtari
10	Kanker

Source: Field Survey 2020

Considering, it's a tribal state the share of Adivasi families is significant in the overall migrant workers. And to understand the migration experience and socio-economic challenges faced by this segment of vulnerable population a detailed survey will be required. According to IHDS (2011-12), percentage distribution of seasonal migrants (of last five years i.e. 2007-2012) according to social groups, indicates that 60 % of the state's seasonal migrants belong to SC's & ST's, 35 % belong to OBC's and less than 5% to general castes.

In July 2020, the Chhattisgarh government established the State Labour Commission to formulate the policies and programmes for the welfare of the migrant workers. The Labour Department has formulated a draft 'Migrant Workers Policy' for the protection, welfare, and social security of the migrant workers. For safe interstate or intra state migration of the migrant workers, the labour department in coordination with various other departments such as Revenue, Panchayat, and Rural Development Department, Skill Development Authority, Employment Planning, Department of Industries, Health, Finance and Home has formulated the policy for migrant workers to provide them better employment opportunities through registration and database compilation. The department will prepare a database and do maintenance of it after registration of migrant workers. The Labour Department will implement the policy in coordination with Revenue, Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Skill Development Authority, Employment Planning, Industry Department, Health, Finance and Home Department. The objective of Chhattisgarh State Migrant Workers Policy 2020 is to create a fear-free environment at the workplace to protect the dignity of workers to do capacity development of migrant workers on the values of equality and to provide adequate employment opportunities at the local level. Other objectives of this policy include simplification of operation in the existing systems to increase accessibility to migrant workers, to strengthen the management of information related to workers, to increase participation of migrant workers in the development of Chhattisgarh and formulating a strategy for their welfare and safety.

Chattisgarh Migrant Policy 2021

Key Features:

- 1 Efforts at Source State: Identification and registration of migrant workers (labour information portal); financial literacy, legal awareness, estimation of skill and establishment of labour resource centre.
- 2 Operationalization Strategy: Joint efforts with destination states; monitoring of wages and payments; clearly defined responsibility of other line departments, participation of trade unions and voluntary organisations.
- 3 Measures for financial resources: In the recovery of building and other construction cess, the present gap will be identified and the migrant's policy aim to close the gap by increasing the gross tax collection. The policy recommends fixation of 2 percent cess in the agriculture mandate for the welfare of the landless labour labourers, border labourers and Reza, Kuli, Hamal employed in the mandi. To collect 1 percent cess for labour welfare in the form of building and other construction cess out of the budget provided for labour welfare from construction work carried out under the scheme.

However, there are several challenges at the state and district level in successfully implementing the policy, the capacity and skills of the labour department to manage the proposed activities is of primary concern. The financial resources at the department is essential to manage the proposed activities and the policy aim to raise the funds through collection of additional cess and taxes, which is a political decision guided by several factors and stakeholders. This brings a level of uncertainty and risk in the implementation of the policy. Lastly, active civil societies need to be involved from planning to the implementation of the policy and their association with the migrant's workers and trade unions will be extremely useful in the implementing the action plan. The previous experiences with the implementation of schemes like NREGS, FRA, RTI etc substantiate this proposition.

E Madhya Pradesh

According to IHDS (2011-12), the State of Madhya Pradesh has significant share (more than 2 million) in migrants' workforce and particularly in the seasonal migration. Internal, seasonal migrations act as a distress mitigation strategy among the poorest communities who are the most socially and economically vulnerable. A significant share in seasonal migrants belong to Tribal communities, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Class. As per 2011 census, 36.69% of the M.P. population constitutes of SC's and ST's. According to IHDS (2011-12), percentage distribution of seasonal migrants (of last five years i.e. 2007-2012) according to social groups, indicates that 60 % of the state's seasonal migrants belong to SC's & ST's, 30 % belong to OBC's and 10% to general castes. State wide migration specific survey is required and this should not be attached with the census survey of 2021. As the previous census surveys failed to capture holistic information of the migrant families that is important for bringing policy reforms.

In the background of the pandemic and plight of the migrant workers, the Govt of Madhya Pradesh has formulated some new schemes like Naya Savera Yojana particularly for the welfare of migrant workers. The scheme is particularly targeting the workers in the unorganised

sector and the workers below poverty line. Some of the schemes that are targeted towards migrant workers are highlighted in the below table.

Table 8: Social welfare schemes targeting migrant workers

Name of the Scheme
Naya Savera Yojana for labourers
Shram Siddhi Abhiyaan
MP Jeevan Shakti Yojana
MP Rojgar Setu Yojana 2020
Mukhya Mantri Jan Kalyan (Sambal) Yojana
MGNREGA
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Grameen

Table 9: Districts with high interstate migration

S.No.	District
1	Sheopur
2	Shivpuri
3	Jhabua
4	Dhar
5	Damoh
6	Sagar
7	Sidhi
8	Tikamgarh
9	Mandla

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Madhya Pradesh is one of the significant State with focus on 24 districts under PMGKY. However, the field survey indicates that there are few districts that are not covered under PMGKY but they still have high migration rate. The setting up of migration hub will play a critical role in correctly identifying the districts and the migrant worker.

Table 10: List of districts with high migration rate (PMGKY)

S.No.	District	District	District
1	Balaghat	11 Betul	21 Shipuri
2	Jhabua	12 Khandwa	22 Barwani
3	Tikamgarh	13 Shahdol	23 Sidhi
4	Chhatarpur	14 Dhar	24 Singrauli
5	Rewa	15 Dindori	
6	Satna	16 Katni	
7	Sagar	17 Chhindwara	
8	Panna	18 Seoni	
9	Bhind	19 Mandla	
10	Alirajpur	20 Khargone	

Source: PMGKY, 2020

Reflections from the field 2020-21

Ekta Parishad conducted a brief survey of the migrant workers post announcement of first lockdown by the Central Government in March 2020. The objective of the survey was to gather preliminary information on the migration pattern of the source and host states, nature of the employment and economic activities of the migrant workers and kind of assistance they needed during the lockdown period. The survey was executed in 12 states (Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Bihar, Odhisa, Assam, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Delhi and Telangana) with the support of field co-ordinators and affiliated organisations in respective states between April 2020 to July 2020. This survey was executed primarily with the objective of providing immediate humanitarian relief and assist the migrants with the short-term needs. For a comprehensive understanding on the status of internal migration in India, state wise survey is required to guide the policy reform and formulation. Currently, there is no data source at the state level that can provide updated details of the seasonal and other migrants that migrate to other states (interstate) or within states (intra state) for short term or long-term employment. The pandemic has exposed the social reality and precarious situation of the migrant workers and there is an urgent need for policy intervention to support this vulnerable section of the society.

The table 11, indicates gender wise total number of surveyed migrant workers from the 12 states and the survey also highlights that there is significant percentage of children (21.46 %) that are being accompanied with the migrant's families.

Table 11: Survey of migrant workers

Migrant Workers	Numbers	Percentage
Men	16640	52.95%
Women	8041	25.59%
Children	6742	21.46%
Total	31423	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The table 12, indicates the number of surveyed migrants from the study states according to their source of origin. The highest number of migrants were from Madhya Pradesh (32.39%), followed by Bihar, Odhisa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

Table 12: Number of migrants from the source of origin

States	Number of Migrants	Percentage (%)
Madhya Pradesh	10177	32.39
Chhattisgarh	1639	5.22
Bihar	4183	13.31
Jharkhand	1758	5.59
Odhisa	3125	9.94

Source: Field Survey, 2020

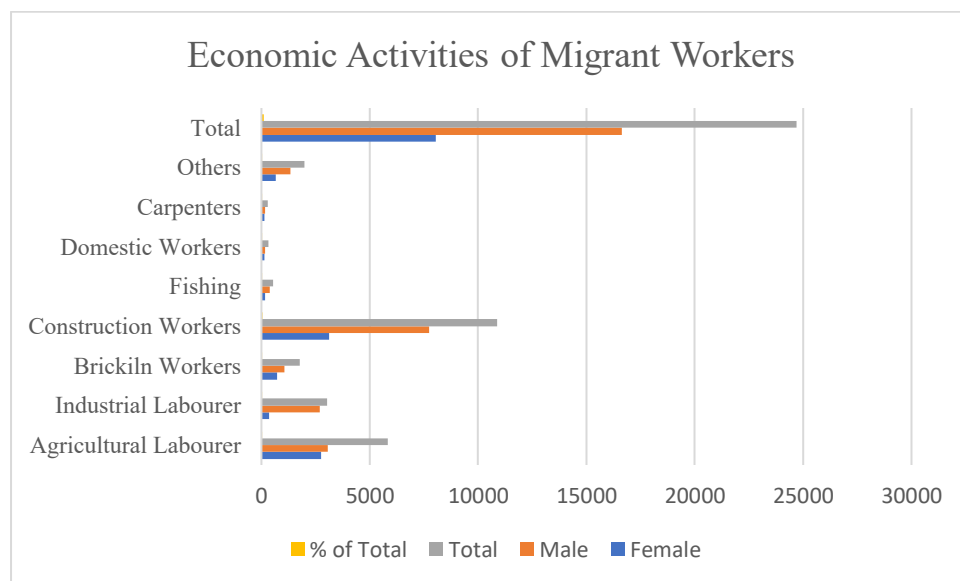
Table 13: Nature of Economic Activity (Out of 24681 Workers)

Work Category	Female	Male	Total	% of Total
Agricultural Labourer	2765	3069	5834	23.64
Industrial Labourer	345	2695	3040	12.32
Brickkiln Workers	722	1057	1779	7.21
Construction Workers	3116	7748	10864	44.01
Fishing	173	375	548	2.22
Domestic Workers	141	182	323	1.31
Carpenters	124	179	303	1.23
Others*	655	1335	1990	8.06
Total	8041	16640	24681	100

Others Include: Weaving, Electrician, Driving, Tailoring, Hotel Staff, Marble Industry, Sand Mining, Petrol Pump Staff, Courier Staff, LPG Delivery Staff, Security Guard, Coconut Factory etc.

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Figure 12: Economic activities of surveyed migrant workers



Source: Field Survey, 2020

The interviews⁵ with the migrant workers indicates that post announcement of the lockdown, they received no immediate support from their employers or the respective governments from the host states to assist them with transportation, transient accommodation or food availability. Thousands of workers (many of them with families) walked back to their home states on foot.

Source: Interviews Migrant Workers from M.P. & Chhattisgarh

⁵ The interviews were conducted over phone and migrant details and experiences were collected by the field coordinators of Ekta Parishad.

The stakeholder consultation meeting⁶ highlighted the harsh reality that there was no available data on migrant workers either with the host states or with the origin states to assist them with the transportation and other logistics support.

Source: FGD 2

The brief survey highlighted the fact that there are many socio-economic challenges faced by the migrant workers and the potential solutions would require involvement and co-ordination with multiple state governments, employers and civil societies. The survey also suggest that a large segment of migrant workers is engaged in the informal sector without any social protection. Formalization of workforce remains a greater concern for the Indian economy but concerned employers and state governments must ensure some basic employment rights and social protection to these workers.

Post lockdown, we were left with no food, no money, no transport and assistance. The Ekta Parishad volunteers approached us and delivered 15 days dry ration for our survival. It was a big support during that period as we had small children. We initially thought the support is coming from the government but later we were informed that it's a non-government organisation that work for the poor and vulnerable population.

Interview: Migrant Worker, Chhattisgarh

The main reason for seasonal migration is the unavailability of work at the source states round the year and higher wages that are provided in the urban areas. But the wages are not that high, that one can plan to settle in the cities. The transaction cost of permanent settlement is very high, moreover agriculture back home is the backbone of the household and that cannot be ignored. These jobs are available today but there is no long-term guarantee that whether we will get the same job next year as well. But agriculture is a sustainable source of livelihood and at least no body dies because of hunger back in the villages.

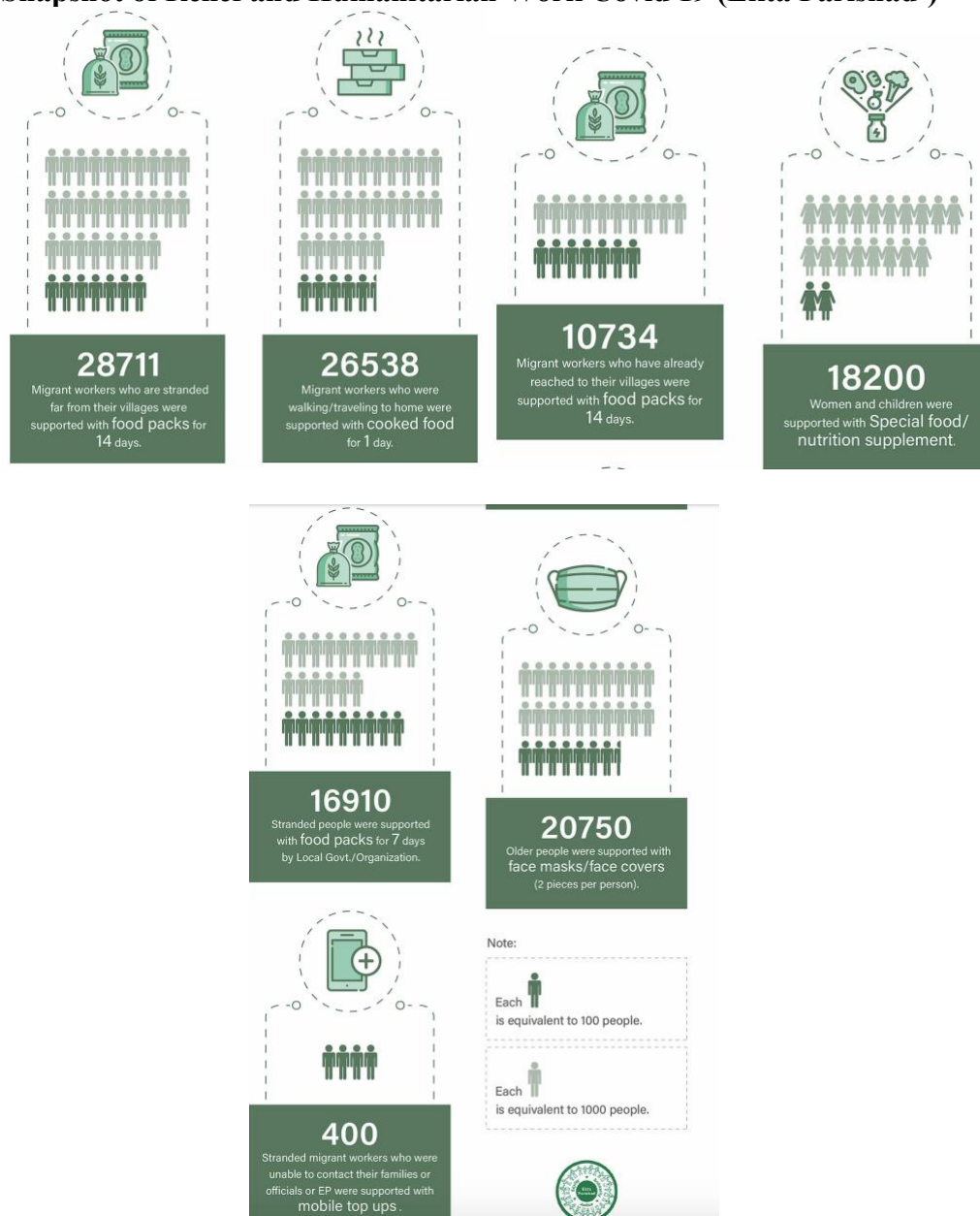
Interview: Migrant Worker, Chhattisgarh

Migrants workers are the most disenfranchised invisible citizens of this country and their rights will not be recognised unless they get a political voice. According to the Census of India, 2011, more than 450 million Indians (37%) are internal migrants who change their residence within a country's national borders. About 30% of the migrants are youth aged 15-29 years and another 15 million are children. A long pending issue is portability of migrant workers' voting rights. The Election Commission of India is already working, so time has come to empower migrant workers so that they gather better bargaining power and political voice in the system. Other laws relating to workers must be synergised with the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act. For instance, the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1996 should be integrated into the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act. And it needs to be implemented by the Secretary of the Migrant Workers Commission. In this digital age, we must stress more digital administrative techniques such as smart cards and leverage Jam — Jandhan/Aadhaar/mobile payment infrastructure for portability of all.

Interview: Prof Ashwani Kumar, TISS, Mumbai

⁶ The research team consulted the Chhattisgarh Labour Department, Civil Societies, Labour Unions and Migrant workers to capture their lived experiences and challenges faced by them.

Snapshot of Relief and Humanitarian Work Covid 19 (Ekta Parishad⁷)



Source: Ekta Parishad, February 2021

With the kind support of the funding partners, the Ekta Parishad (EP) reached out to the migrant workers and vulnerable communities in 16 states to assist them with the transport facilities, dry ration and cooked food, masks and sanitisers and special food supplement for women and children. The EP also assisted the returned migrant workers in registering for NREGS jobs. EP mobilised the community in 8 states for developing community-based assets to create sustainable source of income for instance, ponds for fishing, dams and wells for irrigation, canals and plantation. These works were done through free donation of labour from Madhya Pradesh (79), Chhattisgarh (72), Odhisa (58), Jharkhand (19), Bihar (22), Assam (5), Manipur (2) and Uttar Pradesh (3). Many villages with no migration profile also participated in these works and they stood in solidarity with the migrant workers.

⁷ Additional information on relief and humanitarian work during Covid 19 can be found at: <https://www.ektaparishadindia.org/covid19>

National Draft Policy on Migrant Workers

Highlights:

- **Rights Based Approach:** The policy rejects a handout approach, opting instead for a rights-based framework. The draft describes two approaches to policy design: one focussed on cash transfers, special quotas (reservations), and the other which enhances the agency and capability of the community and thereby remove aspects that come in the way of an individual's own natural ability to thrive
- **Acknowledgement:** Migration should be acknowledged as an integral part of development and government policies should not hinder but seek to facilitate internal migration.
- **Policy should have Long Term Goal:** The goal according to draft policy should not be to provide temporary or permanent economic or social aids that is rather limited approach, but goal should be on a more permanent basis
- **Legislation:** The NITI Aayog's policy draft mentions that the Ministry of Labour and Employment should amend The Inter State Migrant Workers Act, 1979 for "effective utilisation to protect migrants".
- **Need for Effective Coordination:** It identifies the Ministry of Labour and Employment as the nodal Ministry for coordination between various agencies/ department and implementation of policies related to Migrants.
- **Institutional Mechanism through Special Unit:** The draft suggests to create a special unit under Labour Ministry to help converge the activities of other Ministries. This unit would manage migration resource centres in high migration zones, a national labour Helpline, links of worker households to government schemes, and inter-state migration management bodies.
- **Inter-State Coordination:** On the inter-state migration management bodies, it says that labour departments of source and destination states along major migration corridors, should work together through the migrant worker cells. Labour officers from source states can be deputed to destinations – e.g., Bihar's experiment to have a joint labour commissioner at Bihar Bhavan in New Delhi.
- **Enhanced Role of Local Bodies:** Policies should "promote the role of panchayats to aid migrant workers" and integrate urban and rural policies to improve the conditions of migration. Panchayats should maintain a database of migrant workers, issue identity cards and pass books, and provide "migration management and governance" through training, placement, and social-security benefit assurance
- **Ways to stem migration:** Even as it underlines the key role of migration in development, the draft recommends steps to stem migration. The draft asks source states to raise minimum wages to "bring major shift in local livelihood of tribal that may result in stemming migration to some extent".
- **Importance of Data:** The draft calls for a central database to help employers "fill the gap between demand and supply" and ensure "maximum benefit of social welfare schemes". It asks the Ministries and the Census office to be consistent with the definitions of migrants and subpopulations, capture seasonal and circular migrants, and incorporate migrant-specific variables in existing surveys.
- **Education for Migrant Children:** The Ministry of Education should take measures under the Right to Education Act to mainstream migrant children's education, to map migrant children, and to provide local-language teachers in migrant destinations.
- **Grievance Redressal:** The National Legal Services authority (NALSA) and Ministry of Labour should set up grievance handling cells and fast track legal responses for trafficking, minimum wage violations, and workplace abuses and accidents for migrant workers.

V Policy Recommendation

The analysis of the literature and field survey suggests that immediate policy interventions are required to support the welfare of the migrant workers.

1. Scientific and updated data is critical for successful and meaningful policy formulation. Robust institution (**migration hub**) at state and district level needs to be developed and migrants' workers profile and employment status should be updated every quarter (See Appendix 1).
2. There is an urgent need of '**portability of social welfare architecture**' with new generation information technology to make social benefits accessible at any location. For instance, the public distribution system (PDS) or allowing migrant labourers to use their NREGA job cards in any part of the country. This portability of NREGS will be a great relief, if any migrant labourer is in crisis like the pandemic, they can withdraw ration from any part of the country and he or she can take up NREGS work at the destination site rather than returning home. Similarly, healthcare, education, housing and other sectors needs to recognise the social reality of migrant workers and make the benefits easily accessible. Aadhaar project has been successful in creating the digital identity of the citizens, and it is now easier to develop portability of schemes. Over the years, a push to use better mobile facilities along with the use of the Aadhaar system to ensure greater financial coverage have occurred through governmental programs like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), which oversaw a massive increase in the opening of bank accounts. However, despite the opening of bank accounts, access to credit facilities is still limited, especially in rural areas (Sinha and Azad 2018). This is an area that needs to be developed. Further, the increase in digital coverage should make access to food security, housing, health, and education of migrants' children a top priority. While state and local governments are the implementing authorities, the central government is required to create favourable legislative and policy frameworks with respect to all internal migrants, including inter-state migrants.
3. For improved '**social and economic protection**' the multiple legislations need not be merged into new code. The new Code (2019) has similar provisions of the 1979 Act, it envisages the allowance of displacement and journey to the inter-State migrant workers. However, The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has highlighted the fact that the 2019 code and 1979 Act must not be merged together and must be implemented strictly for improved conditions of the migrant workers. Because many establishments are excluded and many labour migrants are not registered, the benefits of labour laws do not reach most migrant workers.
4. Programs should be developed for '**skill development centre**' and enhancement of capabilities in order to upskill migrant workers to better their conditions in terms of both work and wages. Learnings can be drawn from Govt of Odhisa and Govt of Andhra Pradesh, to provide education for migrant children it will also stimulate more long-term and robust migration to urban areas.
5. Development of '**labour banks**' an innovative *Gandhian* proposition on the lines of 'grain banks', where human labour can be deposited as security against food grain with an undertaking, so that the most vulnerable group doesn't remain hungry during distress period and they don't have to migrant long distance due to hunger. And the labourer can return the grain when (S)he finds the work. Further, with the help of new generation information technology, labour job portals can be developed to connect the labourers with the day to day job market (employers) on the updated basis so that they have broader access to the job market with geo mapping (within nearby villages/within

district/adjoining districts/within state/nearby states) with prior information on the job and work duration.

6. It is important to promote **‘financial literacy and inclusion’** to ensure that migrants get access to formal financial institutions for legal channels for migrant remittance transfers.
7. It is critical to **‘integrate migrants with the development process’**, the UNESCO (2012) policy brief indicated that migrants are denied of many rights in the urban areas, where they live and often work in the informal sector with inadequate social, economic, health security or education for their children. In view of this, the Government of India, through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA), constituted the “Working Group on Migration” in 2015 and submitted a report in 2017. The report made a number of recommendations and provides a roadmap for the better inclusion of migrants at their destinations (Government of India 2017b). The source and destination states with high migration rates needs to form a working group for better co-ordination and implementation of policies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the social reality and the vulnerability of the migrant workers. Larger urbanization policies will have to dovetail with rural empowerment programs, which seems to be absent in most discussions on urbanization policies, including the recent “Smart Cities Mission.” A holistic rethinking of welfare measures, both legislatively and operationally, would ensure that internal migrants are not left vulnerable and excluded in the future.

As discussed earlier, the Central Government led by Bhartiya Janta Party announced the scheme *‘Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKY)’* for the high out migration states to address the long-term concerns of the migrant workers. The programme is targeted towards 116 districts (including 27 aspirational districts) across 6 states namely Bihar (32), Jharkhand (3), Odhisa (4), Rajasthan (22), Madhya Pradesh (24) and Uttar Pradesh (31). There is a serious concern over the rationality and selection of these states only. As there are several other states with high migration rate that have been excluded from this scheme. The state like Chhattisgarh which is a tribal state with 60% of the state’s SC&ST migrants and with 10 aspirational districts have not been included in the list. The Adivasi migrants are the most vulnerable section of the society and need special attention of the government. From the state like Odhisa only 4 districts have been included in the scheme, however the districts like Koraput, Bolangir, Kalahandi etc also have very high out migration rate. Similarly, West Bengal is another state with high interstate migration which is not included in the PMGKY scheme. The selection of the states appears more a politically driven agenda rather than of a scientific selection process. If the objective is to safeguard the interest of the migrant workers and bring a long-term transformation in the society and economy, then a holistic approach would be required by the central government and it will have to extend the requisite support to all the relevant states.

VI Way Forward

Considering the current pace of development and growth of urbanization it is likely that migration to urban areas will increase in future as also across the poorer economic classes. Policies should propose to not only to ensure employment opportunities but also increasing standard of living of the poor. The challenge for policy makers is to formulate migration policies that are linked to employment and well-being of the migrant families living in urban areas as well. Moreover, efforts should generate employment and infrastructure base in rural areas to improve the living standard of rural people besides bridging the rural-urban gap. To start with, states with high out migration rate needs to set up migration hub for registration and updation of migrant's data. The migration hubs at state and district level needs to work in co-ordinated manner for collection of data. Necessary policy reforms and interstate co-ordination for jointly implementing programmes would require updated data with migrants' profile. The civil societies in the respective states have a critical role to play since they are well connected with the local communities and their way of living. Previous experiences from the State of Andhra Pradesh, Odhisa and Kerala suggest that, state and civil society led institution can play a successful role in establishing migration hub and facilitating the implementation of the social welfare programmes for migrant workers. Considering the scale of internal migration in India, the challenges are humungous and the stakeholders (Central Government, State Governments, Line Departments, Civil Societies and Trade Unions) will have to work together for achieving the desired objectives.

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Appendix 1
Migration Hub

State Labour Department and Civil Society Led Initiative
(Potential Institutional Set up for the Sustainable Management of Migration Hub)

