REHABILITATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN INDIA

A PRIMARY REPORT, 2020

FICCI Skill Developement Committee Task Force

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Foreword

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There is growing evidence on migration (International and Domestic) that it is largely related to the broader economic, social, political and technological transformations that are affecting a wide range of high-priority policy related decisions. There were 272 million international migrants in 2019, comprising 3.5% of world population. India was the largest country of origin (17.5m), followed by Mexico (11.8m). The number of internal migrants in India was 450 million as per the most recent 2011 census. This is an increase of 45% over the 309 million recorded in 2001. This far exceeds the population growth rate of 18% across 2001-2011.

The current pandemic has triggered vast movements of migrant workers, across the length and breadth of the country, which is going to impact full resumption of operations in select industries. Migration is a diagnostic for the conditions of urbanization. Investments in labour intensive states and promoting sustainable urbanisation can control the problem of mass migration. The world, on an average, is at 55.3% urbanisation, whereas India lags at 34%. Rural employment is mostly in agriculture. 42.7% of India's workforce in 2017-18 was engaged in the agriculture sector, crawling at a 3.4% growth rate and contributing only 17.3% to the GDP. It further dipped to 14.39% in 2018-19. An increase in the demand for labour in urban areas and better wages are key reasons for increase in migration. The pull factors of better job opportunities, increased income, medical and educational facilities are further attracting the rural people to move towards the cities.

Migration has remained a sensitive subject in India and it requires an empathetic approach to develop a scientific mechanism of tracking the movement, data driven policy formation, and it's implementation road map. The right mechanism of data collation, aggregation and using it to produce data driven policy should be the first step. Helping migrants with national social security net will certainly help them to access the benefits of local government schemes. This report of FICCI Task Force aims to provide the context in which the pattern and trends in migration have been changing in India, international best practices on internal migration, and recommendations for rehabilitation of migrant workers. Recommendations under immediate, short-term, and long-term measures are certainly going to help relevant stakeholders with right direction in policy formation and its implementation.

I hope this primary report gets the wide readership it deserves, and is met with both reflection as well as action in response.

MESSAGE FROM TASK FORCE CHAIR

The Indian Labour Market has been experiencing a growing debate on job creation, especially with India being rich in demographic dividend. Migration for work is a pervasive reality in rural India. Over the years with the impetus on boosting economic activities, this trend has increased, especially with large movement from rural to urban labour markets and industries. Major Migration Corridors have developed along with large-scale movement of workers taking place. Though large numbers are employed in the construction, transportation, and agriculture sectors, many have been engaged with unorganised sectors. There has been a long overdue need for a review of the existing provisions for Migrant workers in India, which has gained fillip at the backdrop of recent mass exodus.

The Study on Rehabilitation of Migrant Workers in India is an initiative by the Skill Development Committee of FICCI. A Taskforce comprising of members from diverse fields was constituted. Besides Secondary Research, several rounds of interactions were held with Industry Representatives, CEOs of Sector Skill Councils besides agencies within India such as Aajeevika Bureau and ILO for an International perspective.

Viewing the urgency of the matter this Primary Report brings together insights into Migration - both Internal and International, the reasons for Migration, and select International perspective covering a few models and success stories from Overseas. The Primary recommendations in terms of immediate, mid-term & long-term bring out actions to be taken by Government, Industry, Skilling Agencies, and Training Partners. A detailed study is planned on the subject in the near future.

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CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

According to the State of World Population report (2018-19), more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and the number is steadily growing every year. India, where the majority of the population is still dependent on agriculture, is no exception to this trend. As per the census, the level of urbanization in India has increased from 27.81% in 2001 to 31.16% in 2011. Urbanization in India is a consequence of demographic explosion and poverty-induced rural-urban migration. The world, on an average, is at 55.3% urbanisation, whereas India also stands at 34%. Rural employment is mostly in agriculture, 42.7% of India's workforce in 2016-17 was engaged in the agriculture sector, crawling at a 3.4% growth rate and contributing only 17.3% to the GDP. Meanwhile, 57.3% of the workforce was engaged in industry and services, growing at 5.5% and 7.6%, respectively. Lack of opportunities at the local level has been accelerating large-scale internal migration towards India's few urban growth engines—such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad, and others.

At the International Migration front, India continues to be the largest country of origin of international migrants with a 17.5 million-strong diaspora across the world. As per UN Migration Agency, the country received the highest remittance of $78.6 billion from Indians living abroad. The International Organisation for Migration said in its 'Global Migration Report 2020' that the number of international migrants in 2019 is now estimated at 270 million and the top destination remains the US, at nearly 51 million. In its latest global report, the IOM noted that the overall figure represents just a tiny fraction of the world's population, although it is a 0.1 % increase on the level indicated in it's the report of 2018-19.

Globally, in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, approximately 40% of urban growth results from internal migration from rural to urban areas. Urban growth is the result of a number of factors besides net rural-urban migration, including natural increase, the net increase in new towns, and jurisdictional changes. In the year 2008-09, UNDP came up with the global estimate of 740 million internal migrants; an estimate they admitted was "conservative". Clearly, the more populous the country, the greater the number of internal migrants, and in the large, populous countries, UNDP took the largest of administrative units, states in India or provinces in China, to define internal migration. However, going down to districts or township level will certainly give larger numbers. Worldwide, rural-to-rural, urban-to-urban, and urban-to-rural flows also play a role, although as populations become concentrated in urban areas, migration out of and within the rural sector declines as movements within the urban sector come to dominate. In this changing matrix of migration, the cities are enduring destinations.

Migrants in India do not constitute a homogenous category, and migrants are differentiated according to gender, class, ethnicity, language, and religion. Regardless of the duration of their stay, labor migrants face myriad challenges at their destinations in a country that is dizzying in its

diversity of languages and cultures. Among the challenges: restricted access to basic needs such as identity documentation, social entitlements, housing, and financial services. Many migrants—especially those who relocate to a place where the local language and culture is different from that of their region of origin—also face societal discriminations. Broadly, Migrants in India can be categorized into three segments:

Long-term migrants are those who are likely to have unsecured jobs/livelihood in their destination cities/places. While they may reside in their destination cities/places for years or decades, they are likely to have their houses and families in sending districts/places.

Seasonal or circular migrants, by contrast, they are likely to move from place to place in search of employment or to continue returning to the same place year after year. Such circular flows encompass migrants who may stay at their destination for six months or more at a time and hence need social services at their destination.

Many of the **women who migrate** with their husband after marriage are also participants in the labor market, even if their primary reason for migration is marriage. The domestic maid industry in urban areas, for example, is a rapidly growing sector that employs women, most of whom are rural-to-urban migrants.

India also has an Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, which is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to regulate the condition of service of inter-state labourers in Indian labour law. The Act's purpose is to protect workers whose services are requisitioned outside their native states in India. However, current migrant exodus underlines the fact that the Act's framework and its implementation should be revisited. A World Bank report says that the lockdown in India has impacted the livelihoods of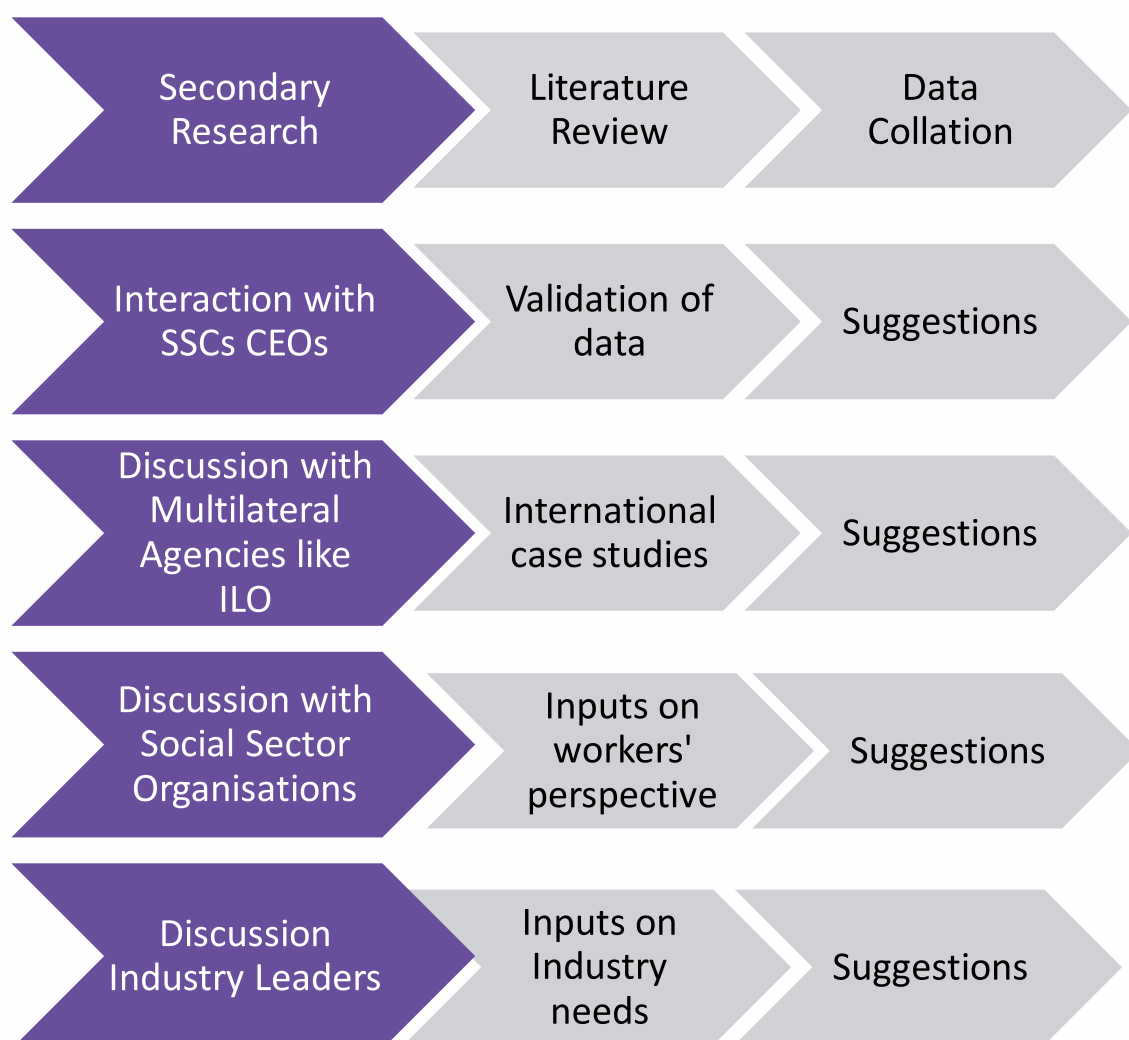 a large proportion of the country's nearly 40 million internal migrants. More than 65,000 migrant workers have moved from urban centers to rural areas of origin till 30th April, 2020. Due to an unprecedented outbreak of COVID- 19 and the restrictions imposed on routine activities as part of social distancing norms to prevent the spread of the disease, most of the migrant workers tend to move back to their native places. The sudden displacement of migrant labour would have a far-reaching impact on the Indian economy and states should be prepared to deal with the consequences of behavioural changes caused in them by the lockdown. A number of migrant workers who fled the big cities may never return, preferring to take out a living on their marginal farms or find work in nearby towns. It would deprive industrial centres such as Gurugram, Surat, and Tiruppur of labour for a long period of time, likely raising the wage burden on small- and medium-sized units struggling to crawl out of an economic slowdown.

Migration has remained a sensitive subject in India and it requires an empathetic approach to develop a scientific mechanism of tracking the movement, data driven policy formation, and policy implementation solutions. The Right mechanism of data collation, cleaning it up, aggregating, and using it to produce data driven policy should be the first step. Helping migrants with national social security net will certainly help them to access the benefits of local government schemes. The FICCI Task Force on 'Migration' aims to provide the context in which the pattern and trends in migration (for low income group) have been changing in India, international best practices on internal migration, and recommendations for rehabilitation of migrant workers. This primary report covers recommendations under immediate, short-term, and long-term measures not just for internal migrant workers but also for migrants who have returned to India due to the current crisis. The Task Force also intends to come up with a detailed report on the subject in near future.

APPROACH FOR THE STUDY

The main objective of this paper is to suggest key recommendations for the rehabilitation of low-income migrant workers (domestic and international). The Task Force under the leadership of Ms Veena Swarup, Former Director, HR, EIL, has taken a multi-pronged approach to come up with recommendations. At the first stage, Task Force members did an extensive literature review, conducted desk research, and collated secondary data. During subsequent stages, members validated the collated information through primary research. The approach for this study is depicted under following stages:

Secondary Research	Literature Review	Data Collation
Interaction with SSCs CEOs	Validation of data	Suggestions
Discussion with Multilateral Agencies like ILO	International case studies	Suggestions
Discussion with Social Sector Organisations	Inputs on workers' perspective	Suggestions
Discussion Industry Leaders	Inputs on Industry needs	Suggestions

MIGRATION: DATA AND PERSPECTIVE

The long-term and growing body of evidence on domestic & international mobility shows that migration is in large part related to economic, social, political, and technological transformations. In India, Migration has been an important factor in the changing demographics and with multi-faceted implications. In recent years, several changes in India are likely to have impacted on the pattern and pace of migration. The pattern of growth in the last two decades has steadily widened the gap between agriculture, non-agriculture, rural and urban areas, and it has steadily concentrated in a few states. The growing inequalities in economic opportunities have also impacted the pace and pattern of migration. It is also a recognised fact that migration has historically played a role in fuelling growth in some of the key labour intensive sectors. The crucial question is whether, and to what extent, recent reverse migration will impact re-starting economic activities. Even a bigger question is what steps can be taken towards the rehabilitation of migrant workers.

Over the years, the pattern of growth and new Industry trends have led to changes in the pattern of demand for workers and consequent changes in the labour market structure. First, there has been an overall growth in certain labour intensive sectors like construction and textiles and this has generated a demand for unskilled & semi-skilled workers. Second, the premium which employers place on flexible labour and reducing labour costs appears to them to be higher than the gains that could accrue to them from a dedicated and long-term labour force. As a result, there is an increase in informal employment. Select states are contributing more towards this geographical shift of the workforce. As per the 2011 census, the North Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have the highest percentages of rural populations, with 18.6% and 11.1% of people living in villages. These states are also the largest migrant-sending states. Substantial flows of labour migrants relocate from Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Haryana, Gujarat, and other states across northern and central India. Migrants from Bihar relocate with the highest numbers to Delhi and West Bengal. Other major migrant-sending states are Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Orissa

Data on internal migration in India is principally drawn from main source of the survey carried out by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The Census defines a migrant as a person residing in a place other than his/her place of birth (Place of Birth definition) or one who has changed his/ her usual place of residence to another place (change in the usual place of residence or UPR definition). The NSSO confines itself to the Usual Place of Residence (UPR) definition. As per the last census of 2011, the cities of Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata are the largest destinations for internal migrants in India. Many of the migrants to these cities are intra state migrants, relocating from rural areas of Maharashtra and West Bengal. All three cities also absorb large numbers of people from other states across India.

Table-1 Reasons and Streams of Internal Migration (as % share of each stream)

	Work and Business		Education		Marriage		Family related		Others		Total	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	200	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Rural to Rural	9.3	6.4	1.9	2.7	61.2	59.0	19.4	24.1	8.3	7.7	56.3	47.4
Rural to Urban	29.9	24.3	4.9	4.8	21.8	22.4	34.5	40.6	8.8	7.9	21.8	22.1
Urban to Rural	14.5	8.9	3.0	2.7	28.1	25.5	42.9	55.6	11.4	7.3	6.6	7.9
Urban to Urban	21.8	17.5	4.3	3.4	21.9	18.4	42.6	47.9	9.5	12.9	15.2	22.6
Total	**16.0**	**13.1**	**3.0**	**3.3**	**44.4**	**39.1**	**27.8**	**35.6**	**8.8**	**8.9**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Census of India 2001 & 2011

As a result of rapid economic growth for the past few decades, since the reforms of 1990, India has been experiencing rapid urbanization flow from rural to urban migration. Urban population growth in the developing countries is far more rapid than migrants generally, about half the urban growth account for the population growth from rural areas. As per census 2011, a total of 32,96,340 men and 21,61,216 women have migrated in India for better education opportunities. Of those who migrate for education, 60.4% and 60.5% from rural and urban areas respectively are men and the rest constitute women. The 2011 Census data also shows that, for education, the largest migrant state is Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana) which has 9,33,354 migrants or more than 16% of the total migrants in this category. In the age group of 10-29 years, females account for 41.3% of the total migrants who moved for education. Marriage is one important social factor for internal migration and in the case of intra-state migrants majority of the migration is from one rural area to another, due to marriage in the case of females.

The last census shows that there were 454 million migrants in India. This had risen by 139 million from 315 million in 2001 to Census 2011. As seen in Table 2, marriage and other family related migration, which was 72.2% of all migration during 1991 to 2001, now is 74.7% of all migration during 2001 to 2011. The share of marriage is diminishing while the share of other family related migration is growing.
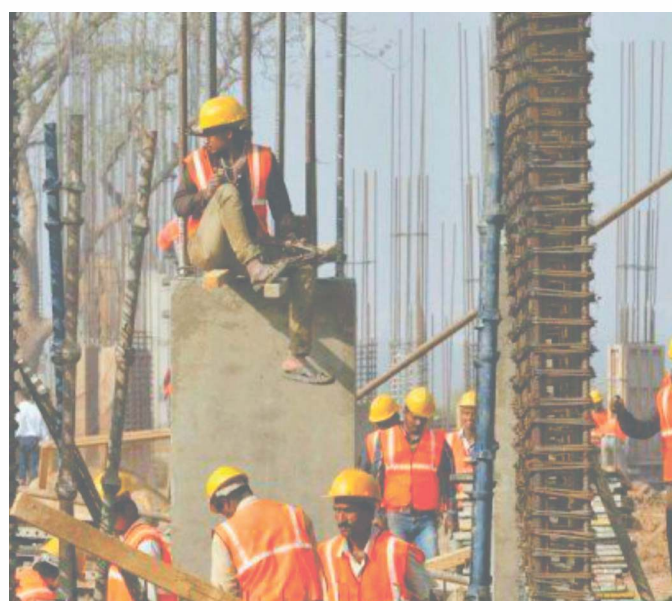
Table-2 Reasons for Migration from Rural to Urban (2001, 2011)

	MALE					Female				
	Work	*Study	Family*	Others	Total	Work*	Study	Family*	Others	Total
Total in 2011	49.7%	4.1%	36.4%	9.9%	100%	5.1%	2.0%	86.5%	6.4%	100%
Total in 2001	55.2%	3.7%	27.8%	13.3%	100%	4.1%	1.2%	85.3%	9.3%	100%
Within District	42.2%	5.5%	35.2%	17.0%	100%	3.1%	1.6%	85.7%	9.6%	100%
Other District	54.7%	4.4%	28.3%	12.7%	100%	4.7%	1.2%	84.6%	9.5%	100%
within State Inter-State	66.6%	1.6%	21.1%	10.7%	100%	5.0%	0.6%	85.8%	8.6%	100%

Source: Census of India 2001, 2011 (*work/employment and business and marriage, moved after birth and moved with household have been consolidated into work and family respectively) Each of the rows (separately for male and female) will add to 100, subject to rounding errors.

Urbanization has been a global phenomenon with major implications on the shift from rural to urban areas. Only 20% of the countries with an average annual per capita income of US $ 1,000 to 2,000 were significantly urbanized in 1960; in 2016, this number had risen to over 50%. It is estimated that by 2030, the gross number of the urban population in developing countries will have doubled compared to 2005, while the extent of built-up urban areas may even rise by 300%. Besides its demographic impact, large-scale, rural-urban migration affects both the patterns of urban growth at the destination and land cover and land use in the region of the migrants' origin. India is also rapidly urbanizing. According to the 2011 Census, the urban population grew to 377.1 million as compared to 286.1 million in the 2001 census showing a growth of 2.76% per annum during 2001-2011. The level of urbanization in the country as a whole increased from 25.7 percent in 1991 to 27.82

percent in 2001 and to 31.14 percent in 2011 – an increase of 3.3 percentage points during 2001-2011. A large number of new towns emerged during the decade, contributing significantly to the speeding up of urbanization and shift in migration patterns from rural to urban areas. 2011 Census also highlights that 43,324 uninhabited villages were presumably abandoned due to rural-urban migration.

The occupation pattern shows that rural-urban migration not only describes the geographical movement of a physical residence, but also a profound shift in lifestyle. Trends show that lack of adequate economic opportunities is accelerating large-scale internal migration towards India's few urban growth engines such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad, and others. As per the report of the working group on Migration (formed by GoI), in the manufacturing sector in urban areas, 38 % of the

4Urban economics for the developing world, by Glaeser E., Henderson J.V.

male workforce is composed of migrant workers, with a similar share in modern services. In contrast to the stereotype of migrants being largely in low-income occupations like street vending, etc., they are employed across all sectors and have proven to be essential for the growth of select sectors. It also contributes to the very high share of informality in India's workforce.

As a significant component, migrants play an important role in the labour market and India's growth story. After the launch of the 'Make in India' program, various sectors were opened up for investments, along with a relaxation of regulatory policies to facilitate investments and ease of doing business. Five industrial corridors were also finalized to be developed across various regions of the country, with industrial cities envisaged to come up along these corridors. Given historically low levels of manufacturing in India, the impact on migration is expected to be high. The experience of China also suggests that a boom in manufacturing results in large-scale movements of labour, indicating further growth in internal migration. The share of migrants in the work-force is quite high, as shown in Table-3, not just for women, where women move to their husband's house after marriage (there by becoming a migrant), it is also high in the male workforce in urban areas. In manufacturing in urban areas, 38% of the male workforce is composed of migrant workers, with a similar share in modern services.

Table: 3- Share of Migrant Workers of Total Workers by Major Sectors

Sector*	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Primary	4%	75%	20%	65%
Manufacturing	13%	59%	38%	51%
Public Services	16%	69%	40%	56%
Construction	8%	73%	32%	67%
Traditional Services	10%	65%	29%	55%
Modern Services	16%	66%	40%	52%
Total	**6%**	**73%**	**33%**	**56%**

Source: Report of working group of migration, 2017 (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, GoI).
Primary includes agriculture, hunting. forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying, Traditional services include wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage and communications and Modern services includes Financial Intermediation, Real estate, renting and business, education, health, social work, other community, social and personal services

Construction work does constitute a major area of work for short-term and vulnerable migrants. As per estimates of NSS 2011-12, there are about 50 million building and other construction workers. Two principal legislations concerning the building and other construction workers are: the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare CESS Act, 1996. As per these, building and other construction workers (such as brick-kiln workers) are required to be registered with state-level Construction Workers Welfare Boards. Minimum safety standards and conditions of employment for construction workers have also been prescribed. Other than construction, other sectors' labourers may also be based in locations other than where they have been trained or lived.

Much of the highlighted points refer to what is called - pull migration, i.e., people seeking an opportunity. This is an inevitable and positive part of the growth process and the location of non-agricultural jobs in specific cities and areas. The resultant diversification of income sources for households with migrants spreads risks across the farm and non-farm income, making them more resilient to sectoral shocks. However, there is also - push migration, i.e., people leaving due to the lack of local options. In this, we recognize the role of employ-ment guarantee schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Rural Housing Schemes such as Prime Minister's Awas Yojana-Rural (PMAY-Rural) in mitigating pressures for push migration.

- According to the 2011 Census, the maximum number of migrants comes from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; approximately 20.9 million people migrated from these two states. This is 37% of the total number of people who were inter-state migrants.

- Delhi and Mumbai are widely considered migrant magnets and the 2011 Census bears that out. Migrants from other states in Delhi and Mumbai numbered 9.9 million, or almost a third of the combined population of 29.2 million.

- The Hindi belt is the main source of migrants. According to the census, four states, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh accounted for 50% of India's total inter-state migrants.

- On the other hand, Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana housed 50% of the country's inter-state migrants.

- Uttar Pradesh has the highest share of outflow of migrants while Maharashtra has the highest share of inflow of migrants.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Internal migration is inevitable in countries that undergo rapid economic and social development. India, Indonesia, Thailand, China, and other Asian nations have recently experienced substantial increases in internal migration, particularly in interprovincial migration. Vietnam has also witnessed a surge in internal migration. Such migration has helped in eradicating poverty by meeting labor demands but bears risks for migrants due to limited access to social security services and lack of access to information on better employment, welfare, and health opportunities.

In Vietnam, the transformation from a centrally planned economy with public ownership of production to a market economy that encouraged individual entrepreneurs and foreign investment (renovation, or Doi Moi in Vietnamese) began in 1986 and has led to significant economic growth and poverty reduction. However, the benefits of Doi Moi have been unequally distributed among regions: while cities such as Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi as well as surrounding provinces have received large levels of industrial capital, the northern mountains, north central coast, central highlands, and other rural areas have lagged behind. These disparities have triggered a flow of rural-to-urban migration. In Vietnam, the government classifies migrants according to two groups: (1) organized/sponsored/government-controlled migrants (i.e. people who migrate within the country and are directed by government plans due to the loss of land or natural calamities, or who volunteer to go to a new economic zone) and (2) spontaneous migrants (i.e. people who migrate within the country but who are not organized by the government).

Most migrants in Vietnam have a secondary school education or less. Therefore, they usually work in manual labor jobs that are associated with low salaries, long working hours, no health insurance, and huge work pressures. In addition, the development of industrial zones, the expansion of cities, and large national construction projects have a critical relationship with migration. In the last 3-4 years, the Government has taken various initiatives to empower local migrant workers. Industry and Social Organisations have played a crucial role in all such initiatives. Tailored models of health and education services have been created for migrant workers, information centres have been set up to give them access to the right information and better understand their rights. Hotline and website have been set up for migrant workers to disseminate information on employment, provide online counseling, and work closely with local authorities to advocate for additional support. Consultation to migrants on life skills, legal education, and workers' rights has also been started.

Thailand has taken significant steps towards improving conditions of internal and inbound (international) migrant workers. Recognising the contributions of social organisations Thailand has incorporated several critical improvements in migration related laws. Various steps have been taken to the elimination of worker-borne recruitment fees, increased opportunities for mobility within local labour markets, establishment of a guarantee deposit and clearer licensing requirements for in-bound recruitment, creation of a fund to assist migrant workers (domestic and international), prohibition on the withholding of identification documents and the formation of a tripartite committee to oversee the development of migration policy.

Indonesia had launched a massive data capturing exercise to cover migrant movements within the country. The new dataset included the villages of

origin of an individual and the current city in which the person resides (destination). A unique initiative called Building User "Home Cell Tower" Profiles helped the country in creating a scientific database. The cellular tower used most frequently by each subscriber between midnight and 5 AM over the course of a month was considered as subscriber's "home cell tower". This method is based on the assumption that people would be at their regular places of residence at that time of day. Also, it helped in tracking the movement of an individual.

Hukou System is followed in China with three key functions: tracking of internal migration, the management of social protection and, the preservation of social stability. Tracking of internal migration is the first objective of the system of hukou. Each citizen must be registered at birth, similar to a census. The register, which is the hukou itself, contains each individual's basic demographic information including among others, the following: 1) Status (urban or rural); 2) Legal address; 3) Sector of activity; 4) Religion; 5) Physical Description.

Numerous social security benefits like health insurance, retirement allowances, unemployment insurance, maternity benefits, work insurance, housing fund, as provided by the employer also come with hukou. These benefits are the "mandatory benefits" provided to all Chinese workers; subject to the only exception that- worker is working at the same locality as his/her place of residence.

It is important to note that internal migration is one of the defining megatrends of the last 2-3 decades. It is hard to overstate the scale of this phenomenon: UNDESA (2016-17) cited the number of internal migrants globally to be more than three times the number of those moving internationally (763 million internal migrants, compared to 244 million international migrants). This trend of internal movement has continued till the recent past and is expected to continue till the foreseeable future, permanently shifting the population and spatial demographic of countries and posing fresh and urgent challenges to policymakers at all levels. Despite the current crisis of Covid-19, in longer term people will move towards urban areas for fresh employment opportunities. Within Southeast Asia, the reasons for moving in and between regions vary from country to country, though demand for labour in urban centres is often a key pull factor. Low income in agricultural activities coupled with exploring better economic opportunity remains a key reason for migration. Other reasons for movement are as diverse as a desire to rejoin family members, marriage, access education, and environmental instability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The movement of labour from slow to faster growing parts of the economy is inexorable and far higher than that has been captured in various surveys. Whilst infrastructural and other investment are still needed in the remote parts of India, these places are approaching their limits in terms of creating any employment opportunities, including engage-ment in agriculture related activities. Providing a strong social safety net to low income migrant workers has been a long drawn demand. This may include access to subsidised food, housing, health, and education. Such safety nets could also reduce vulnerability by promoting efficient labour market information, diminishing exposure to risks, and helping the poor to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income, etc.

After multiple rounds of discussions with relevant stakeholders, the Task Force of this study proposes the following recommendations to rehabilitate the migrant workers-both internal and international who have returned during the current crisis. The recommendations are categorised under short-medium and long term action points.

Action Plan for the Government (Immediate)

1. **Financial support for Migrants for immediate relief**

   Due to the impact of a recent pandemic on economic activities, most of the migrant workers have either lost their income fully or partially. The majority of them are in crisis situation and need immediate financial support. The possibility may be explored to utilize funds collected under Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act 1996, which is managed at state level by Construction Workers Welfare Boards and meant to be used for provisioning of social security and related services for construction workers. Other such sources may also be identified. Further payments as provisioned under Inter-state Migrant Workmen Act 1979, such as displacement allowance & travel allowance may be ensured.

   Employers may be encouraged to ensure payments of pending dues. Incase of cash-flow issues, at least 50% payments should be made immediately.

2. **Mandatory Registration for all workers**

   The Interstate Migrant Workers Act stipulates registration of Migrant workers before deployment. This needs to be enforced. Once a worker is registered in one State, it could be sufficient for movement to any State in the Country.

3. **Creation of Migration Support Centres (State/ District wise)**

   Consider creating the Migration Support Centre at every district and state level. It could be set up on the lines and patterns of how 'Mission Offices' operate and facilitate structured migration of labour. These

Centre can act as a Help Desk to handhold and facilitate services like the creation of Ration Card, Guidance of Banking, Gas Connections, Medical support, Local Information regarding Transportation, Accommodation, and any other welfare related information, and also act as an Employment Consultant. The Centre can also help in integrating Migrant Workers into the urban social and economic fabric through the mentioned services.

4. **Counseling**

Counseling will be key for migrant workers to get back to work. The Infrastructure of select local institutions (Colleges) can be designated and used to run these counseling centres. Skilling and Training Partners should work in close co-ordination with designated counseling centres. Counseling will help migrants in making more informed choices about locations, employers, and markets.

5. **Skill Training**

Since most of the labour is back in villages, the opportunity is there to establish a robust skilling & training activities. Skilling & training under RPL or new trade skills could help migrant youth to move up the value chain in labour markets. Rural Hubs can be set up for training on new job roles. Training on local trades like tailoring can be promoted with the help of self-help groups. Agricultural activities can also be revived through training on 'organic farming' etc.

6. **Implementation of Apprenticeship**

Apprenticeship is widely accepted as a workforce development tool that could offer substantial benefits to both workers and businesses. Expanding Apprenticeships in the local industries can help migrants develop more floor ready skills. The Thrust should be given by industry to engage Apprentices.

7. **Effective Communication Strategy**

Comprehensive Sensitization and Communication efforts are paramount for migrant workers. Migrant workers need to be communicated about potential risks associated with a crisis, where and how to obtain assistance, and how to inform stakeholders of their needs. Most of them are also not aware

of recent government provisions; legal framework and other announcements. Few of the best practices could be:

- A multi-linguistic community radio may be used besides other means of communication

- Multiple mediums for communication in the languages migrants speak, at diverse literacy levels, to accommodate ways in which people absorb information, including accessible formats for persons with disabilities

- Mobile applications and social media as a cost-effective, user-friendly, and widely accessible mechanism to provide crisis-related information

- Helplines, hotlines, and call centers as an accessible and low-tech means through which one-way or two-way communication with migrants can be facilitated

8. **Social Security Policy Review**

There is an urgent need for a robust Social Security Scheme for all the workers including daily wage labourers. Basic necessities such as health care & insurance, old-age security, unemployment insurance, the minimum wage could be part of the scheme. It is suggested that all related existing acts & laws are comprehensively reviewed.

Action Plan for Government and Industry (Immediate)

9. **Compliance of rules/laws**

An urgent advisory may be issued for strict compliance and reporting of the same by all the stakeholders. In the current circumstances, compliance and reporting become extremely important, as the inter-state migrant workers are generally not educated, engaged with organised & unorganised sectors and have normally to work under adverse conditions. In view of these hardships, some administrative and legislative arrangements both in the state from where they are

recruited and also in the state where they are engaged for work are necessary to secure effective protection against their exploitation.

10. Skill Development Fund for Migrant Workers

Under Public-Private Partnership a dedicated fund for skilling of migrant workers is proposed. The fund can be used to re-skill and up-skill them on emerging job roles in respective sectors. This will also help them in navigating better employment and earning opportunities.

11. Housing Facility

Affordable housing for workers can be the foundation of a new social contract. The government and Industry should consider adequate & decent housing accommodation and a suitable living environment for migrant workers and their families. A degree of priority should be accorded to those whose needs are most urgent. The government may incentivize industry for additional housing welfare schemes provided by Industry.

12. Improved Working Conditions

Most of the migrant workers get involved in low-paid jobs that offer limited upward mobility. Long working hours, evening & night shifts, limited or no weekly off leads to mental and physical impact on health factors. A national charter could be developed to ensure better working conditions for migrant workers, especially for women workers.

Action Plan for the Government (Medium-Term)

13. A National Level Robust Database

Registration of migrant workers should be taken up on an urgent and priority basis to create a robust and dynamic database for labour mobility in India. The lack of a robust database and unique worker identification number has not just prevented frequently mobile inter-state migrants from accessing existing social welfare schemes but has also been a hindrance in formulating & implementing the right policies/laws.

14. Review of provisions of Inter State Migrant Workmen act 1979

The fallout of the Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown measures have worst affected the migrant workers. There is an urgent need to rationalise the legislative framework for migrant labour in India. A key piece of legislation governing inter-state migrants in India is the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979. The Act was enacted to prevent the exploitation of inter-state migrant workmen by contractors and to ensure fair and decent conditions of employment. The current situation has underlined a significant gap between intentions of the act and its implementation and hence there is an immediate need of review of the provisions of the Act.

Action Plan for the Government and Industry (Long-Term)

15. Development of Traditional Clusters

Providing livelihood opportunities in the residence state is key to check mass migration. Developing local traditional clusters could help to create substantial number of livelihood opportunities. The government along with other stakeholders should focus on the following:

- Expedite organization of the traditional industries into clusters to make them, competitive and provide support for their long term sustainability

- Enhance marketability of products of such clusters by providing support for new products, design intervention, and improved packaging and also the improvement of marketing Infrastructure

- Re-skill and up-skill locals through training on various skills

- Build up innovative and traditional skills, improved technologies, advanced processes, market intelligence and new models of public-private partnerships, so as to gradually replicate similar models of traditional cluster development across India

- Engage and encourage self-help groups to work with local clusters

16. Future Trends & Forecasting of Industrial landscape and jobs

There should be periodic research and forecasting on 'emerging jobs'. Local authorities and social sector organisations should sensitize workers on 'vulnerable job roles/occupations'; this may curb mass migration and also will help in aligning 'right workers for right jobs'.

17. Setting up investments in Small Towns

Better income, adequate employment opportunities, and comparatively low living costs can drive the migrant population to closest smaller towns that are emerging as counter-magnets to megalopolis. Focus on developing the right infrastructure (civic and digital) and hassle free investment clearances can boost such investments. It will also help workers to be placed closure to their native place.

18. Scheme to provide smart mobile phones

Migrant workers should be given smart devices/phones. It will also help in the building of the migration database, tracking the movement, e-training, e-counseling, etc. Such devices could have pre-loaded training modules and other relevant apps in local languages. It can further help them in navigating adequate work/employment opportunities.

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