Information Asymmetry and Digital Divide During the Pandemic

A Study of Internal Migrant Workers from Patna, India

Supported by
Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity

actionaid
ActionAid Association (India)

Information Asymmetry and Digital Divide During the Pandemic

A Study of Internal Migrant Workers from Patna, India

actionaid
ActionAid Association (India)

Information Asymmetry and Digital Divide During the Pandemic

A Study of Internal Migrant Workers from Patna, India

July, 2024

The data for this report was generated from the project "Social Media and the Crisis of Urban Inequality: Transnational analyses of Humanitarian Responses across the Middle East, South Asia and Africa". Dr Romola Sanyal was the Principal Investigator. ActionAid Association India, Triangle Lebanon, and Urban A were Co-Investigators. The project was made possible with support from the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity programme, administered by the International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science.

actionaid
ActionAid Association (India)

www.actionaidindia.org @actionaidindia

@actionaidcomms @company/actionaidindia @actionaid_india

ActionAid Association, F-5 (First Floor), Kailash Colony, New Delhi -110048.

+911-11-40640500

Contents

Foreword

There is need to recognize that, born out of the precarities, denials and deprivations they face, informal workers demonstrate significant amount of resourcefulness and initiative. The adaptability and self-reliance of informal workers demonstrate their resilience and ingenuity, as they continue contributing significantly to the broader economy despite the lack of formal recognition and support. Their efforts highlight the importance of fostering an environment that provides access to resources, training, and protections to support and formalize these endeavours.

We need to recognize that the expansion of mobile telephony in India owes much to the contributions of informal workers, especially migrant workers, moving from rural areas to urban centres, who created the great demand for affordable communication methods to stay connected with their families.

Despite the spread of mobile telephony, the digital divide persists in India, with a significant gap between those with access to digital technologies and those without.

COVID-19 made visible the precarities faced by workers in the informal sector, especially migrant workers. Within the broader developments outlined above, COVID-19 was the immediate context in which ActionAid Association undertook this study to discover how migrant workers from Patna, the capital of the eastern Indian state of Bihar, access information on work, wages, housing, daily essentials and social security, among others, and how the pandemic affected this access. This study is part of a transnational project titled, "Social Media and the Crisis of Urban Inequality: Transnational Analyses of Humanitarian Responses Across the Middle East, South Asia and Africa" supported by the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity programme, administered by the International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science. We thank them for giving us this opportunity of collaborating on this project.

The conclusions, while emerging from a small sample of migrant workers, are illuminating in showing how migrant workers are using mobile-based digital tools to access information. We are confident that this report will indicate the way forward for more comprehensive research into digital practices of informal workers so that we could ensure that information and communication technology (ICT) can be used in a mode democratic and inclusive manner.

We are confident that making digital tools and resources accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status, will empower all individuals by providing equal opportunities for education, communication, and economic participation. The process will foster innovation, reduce inequalities, and promote social inclusion, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and connected world.

We look forward to readers' comments and suggestions.

Sandeep Chachra
Executive Director
ActionAid Association

Executive Summary

COVID-19 and the consequent lockdown created a humanitarian crisis in India. It caused the loss of livelihoods of millions of workers in India's informal sector and the largest movement of people across the sub-continent since the 1947 partition. In this context, ActionAid Association took up this study to see how migrant workers from Patna, the capital of the eastern Indian state of Bihar, access information on work, wages, housing, daily essentials and social security, among others, and how the pandemic affected this access. This study is part of a transnational project titled, "Social Media and the Crisis of Urban Inequality: Transnational Analyses of Humanitarian Responses Across the Middle East, South Asia and Africa" supported by the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity programme, administered by the International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science. It studies how asymmetries in access to information during humanitarian crises leads to differential access to housing, livelihoods and other necessities for migrants and displaced populations, thus exacerbating inequalities.

2,500 migrant workers from Patna and adjoining districts were surveyed from August to December 2022 to collect data on migrant workers' access to information through various channels including social media and digital communications platforms. The multiple barriers they face to get this access dependent on their intersectional identities based on class, caste, religion, gender and age.

The study found that migrant workers rely heavily on social networks consisting of employers, labour contractors, friends and kinship networks as well as community leaders and civil society organisations for accessing and validating information. Inequalities in access to mobile phones, internet services and social media platforms reflect existing structural inequalities in the society. Civil society organisations played an important role during the pandemic by enabling access to information and social services to the migrant workers. Public service delivery in India through information technology has a long way to go as low levels of digital literacy lead to lower adoption of digital tools for such purposes

Acknowledgements

This report has emerged from the project Social Media and the Crisis of Urban Inequality: Transnational Analyses of Humanitarian Responses across the Middle East, South Asia and Africa with Dr Romola Sanyal as Principal Investigator. ActionAid Association, (India) Triangle (Lebanon) and Urban-A (Norway) as Co-Investigators. The work on the project was made possible with support from the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity programme, administered by the International Inequalities Institute of the London School of Economics and Political Science. We are grateful for this opportunity and collaboration.

We gratefully acknowledge the academic support provided by Dr Romola Sanyal, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), whose contribution helped make this research possible.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Divya Kumari, who served as the research assistant for this study, and to our team of dedicated enumerators — Md Tarique Ali, Md Adnan Rizwi, Anjali Kumari, Ankita Somya, Md Ehtesham Ibrahim, and Akriti Kumari — for their commitment, diligence, and respectful engagement with participants in the field.

A heartfelt thank you to the many informal workers who generously gave their time, experiences, and insights to participate in this survey. Your voices and stories form the foundation of this work, and your courage continues to inspire our efforts toward building safer and more equitable workplaces.

This work would not have been possible without the leadership and guidance of Saurabh Kumar, Regional Manager and the support of Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director, and Dipali Sharma, Director of Organisational Effectiveness. Thank you to Joseph Mathai, Head of Communications and Rajeevan for bringing this report into its final form.

We also thank the Policy and Research Unit — Iyce Malhotra, Koustav Majumdar, Lakshya Yog, and Prem Ranjan — for their critical inputs, coordination, and support throughout the process. Gratitude to Malini Nambiar from the Partnerships Unit.

Key Terms and Definition

Aadhaar is a biometric-based 12-digit unique identification number issued by the Government of India. Launched in 2009, it is intended to enable direct benefit transfer of social security provisions for residents of India.

Circular Migration is a pattern of migration where a worker temporarily migrates for work, for few months every year and works in their own native place for the remainder of the year.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) For the purposes of this study, CSOs include non-profit organisations and collectives which perform social work and may or may not be registered with the government, but are independent of the state.

Contractor, as defined under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, means a person who undertakes (whether as an independent contractor, agent, employee or otherwise) to produce a given result for the establishment by the employment of workers or to supply workers to the establishment, and includes a sub-contractor, agent or any other person, by whatever name called, who recruits or employs workers.

Destination in this study refers to the area (city/town/village) to which a person migrates for work, education, settlement or any other reason.

Digital divide is the unequal access to digital technology, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, and the internet among different groups of people based on, but not exclusive to gender, age, class, caste, religion, ethnicity and other social identities.

Digital tools refers to hardware and software including mobile phones, tablets, computers, internet and others which can be used to access programmes, websites, applications and other internet and computer based resources.

Employer or **principal employer** as defined under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 refers to the head of any government or local authority; the owner, occupier or manager of a factory; owner, agent or manager of mine; or any person responsible for the supervision and control in the establishment.

Informal Sector (commonly referred to as the **unorganised sector** by the Indian state), as per the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS), consists of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis. Similarly, **informal sector workers** (or **unorganised sector workers**), per the NCEUS, consist of those working in unincorporated enterprises or households, and workers in the formal sector without any employment contracts or social security benefits provided by the employers.

Migrant Worker refers to a person who has moved from his/her usual place of residence for work and lives in that place for a considerable time. Although migrant workers refers to different categories and classes of people who migrate to work in different destinations, this project only studies migrant workers primarily in the informal sector.

Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are castes and other social groups designated as socially and educationally backward classes by the Government of India, who are not scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. The National Commission for Backward Classes established by Article 338B of the Constitution of India maintains the list of castes and social groups categorised as OBC. For the purpose of this study, only those who reported having government provided OBC certificates were considered such.

Pandemic refers to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic which started in the year 2019 due to the spread of the SARS-CoV2 virus.

Reverse migration refers to the return of internal migrant workers from their destination regions to their source regions during the COVID-19 pandemic, typically between March and July 2020.

Scheduled Castes (SCs) are caste groups, as defined by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, who exhibit extreme social, educational and economic backwardness arising from the traditional practice of untouchability. Under the provisions of Article 341 of the Indian Constitution, The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 of the Government of India designates the caste groups categorised as SCs. Other terms are often used to refer to these caste groups, including 'Dalit', and they mostly include caste groups which were excluded from the Indian varna structures and considered untouchables. Per Census 2011, 16.63% of India's population are SCs. Only those who reported having government provided SC certificates were considered such in this study.

Scheduled Tribes (STs) are tribal communities, as defined by the National Commission of Scheduled Tribes, who were suffering from extreme social, educational and economic backwardness on account of the primitive agricultural practices, lack of infrastructure facilities and geographical isolation. The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 of the Government of India designates the communities categorised as STs. Per Census 2011, 8.61% of India's population are scheduled tribes. For the purpose of this study, Only those who reported having government provided ST certificates were considered such in this study.

Social Media, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communications, refers to a broad category or genre of communications media which occasion or enable social interaction among groups of people, whether they are known to each other or strangers, localized in the same place or geographically dispersed. In this study virtual platforms used for networking, entertainment and creation and sharing of information in the form of text, images, audio and video are included.

Source refers to the usual place of residence (city/town/village) of a migrant worker.

List of Abbreviations

CSO	:	Civil Society Organisation
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	:	International Labour Organisation
INR	:	Indian Rupee
KII	:	Key Informant Interview
LPG	:	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MG-NREGA	:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NSSO	:	National Sample Survey Organisation
PM-GKY	:	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana
PwD	:	Person with Disabilities
OBC	:	Other Backward Classes
SC	:	Scheduled Caste
ST	:	Scheduled Tribe
UN	:	United Nations
WHO	:	World Health Organisation

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Objectives

The humanitarian crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing government restrictions to contain the spread of the virus resulted in the biggest movement of people in India since the partition of 1947. To reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Government of India implemented a complete lockdown starting 25th March 2020. All government and private offices, educational institutes, shops and establishments were asked to close for 3 weeks starting from 25th March 2020. There was a complete restriction on mobility with all road, rail, air and water transportation facilities being suspended. However, exceptions were made for security personnel, healthcare facilities, media, petrol pumps, banks, telecom facilities, and manufacturing and sale of essential goods like groceries, medicines and health equipment. Declared initially for three weeks, the lockdown lasted more than two months, till the end of May 2020, albeit with some relaxations.

With the onset of the nationwide lockdown, the cracks in the Indian economic set up built on informal and migrant workers soon started to show. Daily wage workers lost their jobs as many industrial establishments suddenly laid off their staff, and there were limited possibilities of finding a new livelihood in the big cities and towns. Due to the loss of livelihoods, often followed by evictions and lack of resources to continue living in the cities, millions of migrant workers started to make their journey back to their native villages or towns, sometimes on foot.

The loss of income and livelihood had significant impacts on the consumption patterns of India's urban poor--a heterogeneous group consisting of long-term urban dwellers, people moving daily between the urban core and periphery, as well as seasonal migrant workers who migrate to the city in search of livelihood. But income and consumption

loss were not the only difficulties faced by the migrant workers in India's informal sector. Due to the rapidity of the crisis and the implementation of the ensuing policies, these workers struggled to access necessary information. Migrant workers depend mostly on information provided by their network of labour contractors for decisions related to their migration and work in urban destinations. However, during the pandemic, much of real-time information was mostly available only on social media and other digital communications platforms, which the migrant workers did not rely on for such information.

Figure 1: Map of India showing the location of the national capital territory of Delhi and the location of the study—the eastern state of Bihar.

Migrant workers often rely on peer-to-peer information sharing. The peer groups and social networks of different socio-economic groups of migrant workers vary greatly. The flow of information within these peer groups depends on the source of information, audience and the medium of information. The medium therefore, becomes important so that relevant information can reach the migrant workers.

In this context, ActionAid Association undertook this study to see how migrant workers from Patna, the capital of Bihar, access information on work, wages, housing, daily essentials and social security, among others, and how the pandemic has had an impact on this access. It is part of a transnational project titled, "Social Media and the Crisis of Urban Inequality: Transnational Analyses of Humanitarian Responses Across the Middle East, South Asia and Africa" supported by the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity program, administered by the International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science. The project studies how asymmetries in accessing information during humanitarian crises leads to differential access to housing, livelihoods and other necessities for migrants and displaced populations, thus exacerbating inequalities.

The objective of this study is to understand that how inequalities among migrant workers lead to their differential access to social media and digital communications platforms, thereby leading to differential access to vital information. Migrant workers are heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, economic status, caste and gender identities. In this context, the project looks into the following questions:

- How did informal migrant workers use social and communications media during the pandemic to access information? What were the sources of information (own social networks, civil society, government sources)? Did they find this information actionable and reliable?

- What does differential access, understanding, and ability to use information technology imply for people's access to vital information and to what extent is this contributing to or mitigating inequalities across class, gender, caste, location and ethnicity.

- How can information about wages, relief and welfare measures and other vital information during a humanitarian crisis such as the pandemic be made more accessible and actionable?

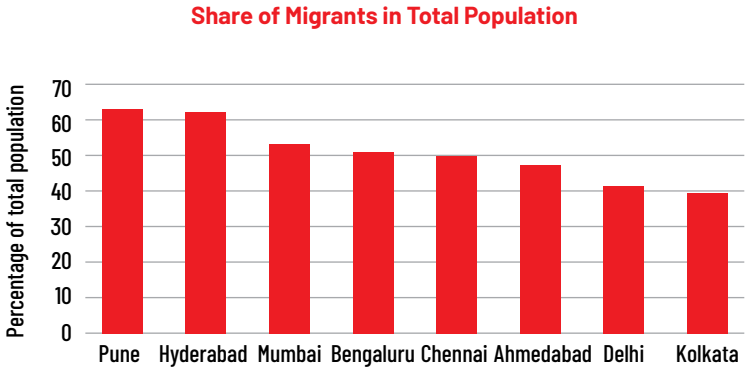
- How can digital technology be better integrated into and utilised by governance mechanisms and civil society initiatives while responding to humanitarian crises?

1.2 Background

Internal Migration in India

There is a long history of internal migration in India, especially linked to livelihood opportunities. During colonial rule, migrant labour was hired in tea, coffee and rubber plantations and coal mines (Srivastava & Sasikumar, 2003). As modern industries evolved, urban centres like Kolkata and Mumbai attracted labourers from the rural catchments of their respective states, West Bengal and Maharashtra and from neighbouring regions, particularly the eastern and central Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. The higher economic growth rate in the western and southern states of India has shaped the flow of migrant labour towards these regions since independence. However, major urban centres across the country continue to attract most of the migrant workers (Bhagat, et al., 2020).

Figure 2: Percentage of migrants to total population in eight largest urban agglomerations of India. *(Source: Census of India, 2011)*



The post-liberalisation phase has also seen an increase in circular or temporary migration flows within India (Srivastava, 2020). The Working Group on Migration, constituted by the erstwhile Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, in 2017 stated that temporary or circular migrants greatly outnumber permanent migrants. Among socially and economically backward households, the volume of circular migrants is 16 times that of permanent migrants, as per the last Migration Survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 2007-08 (ILO, 2020). Rural communities, especially marginal farmers and landless labourers have been victims of agricultural distress due to low crop yields, fluctuating prices of agricultural produce, high input costs, indebtedness, volatility due to frequent floods and drought and lack of access to credit, markets, and infrastructure. Such distress has been a major contributor to the growth in circular migration as evidenced by several studies showing the negative relationship between the size of agricultural landholding and probability of migration (Breman, 1996; Deshingkar & Start, 2003; Keshri & Bhagat, 2012).

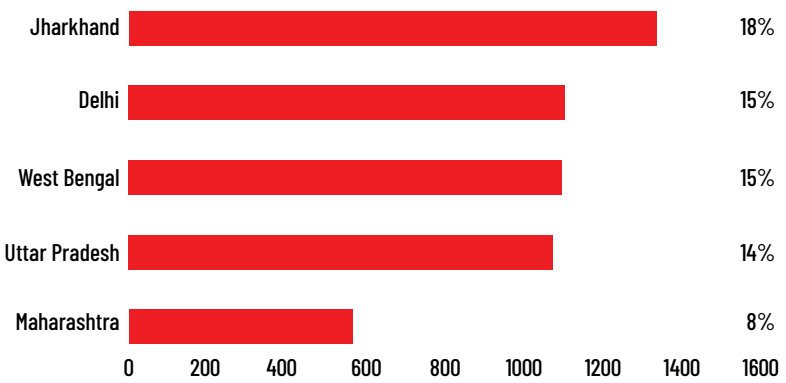
Several studies have shown that internal labour migration in India, especially temporary and circular migration, propagates through chain migration dependent on kinship networks and a chain of labour contractors and sub-contractors (Banerjee, 1983; Srivastava & Sasikumar, 2003; Srivastava, 2020). These chains and networks help in overcoming the information asymmetries that exist between the source and destination areas. Moreover, kinship and other social networks in the destination reduce the monetary and psychological costs related to migrating to new areas (Banerjee, 1983). While migration overall provides additional income generation and social alleviation, circular migrants often find themselves trapped in urban and rural informal labour markets. Breman (1996) calls them footloose labour–workers pushed outside due to agrarian distress and moving across the country to work in casual jobs in factories, brick kilns, construction sites, etc.

Labour Migration from Bihar

Bihar is one of the most impoverished states of India with the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) scores in the country, as per data released by UNDP in 2019 (The Hindu, 2020). With low agricultural

productivity and high numbers of households which do not own the agricultural land they work on, Bihar has a significant rate of outmigration, which has grown through the decades. Recent studies estimate that almost half of all households from the state has at least one migrant member (Kumar & Kumar, 2020). Census of India, 2011 reported that of Bihar's population of 104 million, around 7.5 million people had migrated to a different state, which is 14 percent of the total inter-state migrant population flow of India. Figure 2 gives details of major destination states for migrants from Bihar.

Figure 3: Major destination states for inter-state migrants from Bihar.



(Source: Census of India, 2011).

The major reason for migration from Bihar, as per the Census 2011 data, are work/employment (30%), moved with household (27%) and marriage (24%). However, there is a lot of variation in terms of gender and destination of migration. In general, Bihar has one of the highest likelihoods among Indian states of out-migration for work, with 55% male migrants reporting work as the reason, more than double the national average (Sarkar, 2019). Most of these work-related migration flows are also concentrated in a few districts in the destination states. Districts that have a high concentration of micro, small and medium enterprises, garment industries, brick kilns and construction work, attract the largest share of Bihari migrants (Sarkar, 2019; Roy, 2016). They work in a variety

of informal employment as labourers, head loaders, street vendors and rickshaw pullers, among others, in urban areas. There is also a flow of migrants from Bihar to the agricultural areas of north-west India, mainly Punjab and Haryana, where they work as agricultural labourers (Roy, 2016).

For female migrants from Bihar, marriage (49%) and movement with household (33%) are the main reasons for migration as per the Census 2011 data. But it is to be noted that while female migration might be reported as associational migration with husband or family members, there is an economic factor to those migration flows as well (Mahapatro, 2010). This means that while the migration decision for a woman might be based on her male family member's decision to migrate, female migrants also work in their destination areas along with their male counterparts, mostly as construction labour, agricultural labour or domestic worker.

Figure 4: Migrant Workers stranded at the New Delhi Railway Station during the lockdown.

(Photograph by Sumita Roy Dutta, sourced from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Pandemic and the Lockdown

India reported the first case of COVID-19 on 30th January 2020 and through the next two months, the number of cases continued to increase. To contain the spread of the virus country, on 25th March 2020, Government of India implemented a complete lockdown, initially for a period three weeks. This included closure of all state and private offices, educational institutes, shops and establishments. Mobility restrictions were put in place with most mass transportation facilities, including roads, railways, airways and waterways being suspended. However, necessary exceptions were put in place for security personnel, healthcare facilities, media, petrol pumps, banks, telecom facilities, and manufacturing and sale of essential goods, like groceries, medicines and health equipment (PIB, 2020a). The lockdown eventually lasted more than two months, till the end of May 2020, albeit with some relaxations.

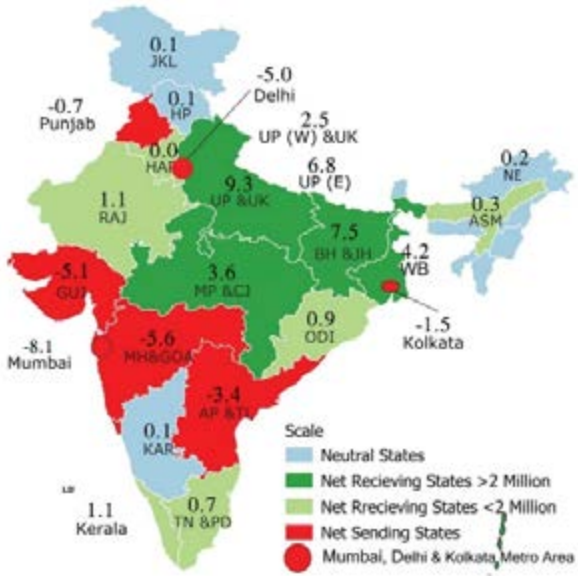
The Indian government's decision to impose the lockdown, giving a notice of merely 4 hours, has been heavily criticised for being hasty, unprepared and extremely restrictive (MCRG, 2020; Ghosh, 2020). The renowned economist, Jean Dreze, even called the lockdown measures "a death sentence" for the most vulnerable populations of the country (News18, 2020). The COVID-19 Government Response Tracker developed by the University of Oxford categorised India's measures as one of the strictest containment measures, with a Stringency Index score of 100 out of 100 (Ghosh, 2020).

The onset of the lockdown brought to the fore the cracks in the Indian economic set up built on the mantle of informal and migrant workers. Millions of daily wage workers lost their jobs, many industrial establishments suddenly laid off their staff. With limited possibilities for livelihood in the big cities and towns and no social safety net to fall back on, millions of migrant workers started to make their journey back to their native villages or towns, sometimes on foot (ActionAid Association, 2020b; MCRG, 2020; Srivastava, 2020). Informal workers across India were not only suddenly deprived of their income and faced consumption shortages, but the majority of them were also evicted from their homes (ActionAid Association, 2020b; ILO, 2020; MCRG, 2020). Reports emerged from different parts of the country of push back and violence by local authorities, including police, against

poor, helpless migrant workers who were trying to return home on foot or by other means during the lockdown (MCRG, 2020; Srivastava, 2020).

Although there is a lack of official statistics on the condition of migrant workers during the crisis, many studies were conducted by civil society organisations working to respond to the situation on the ground. While the results of these studies might not be statistically accurate, given their restricted sampling, they give an indicative picture of the situation on ground. A survey conducted during the initial weeks of the lockdown revealed that an overwhelming number of migrant workers had food

Figure 5: Net sending and receiving states for reverse migration during March to June 2020. States and metro areas marked in red, saw a net outflow of migrants, whereas, states marked in green saw a net inflow of migrants. It is to be noted that telecom circle boundaries, while mostly following state boundaries, often combine multiple states in the same circle and have separate circles for the three most populated metro areas.



Source: Nizam, A., Sivakumar, P. & Rajan, S. I., 2022. Interstate Migration in India During the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Analysis Based on Mobile Visitor Location Register and Roaming Data. Journal of South Asian Development, 17(3), pp. 271-296

rations or savings that would hardly last them one week (SWAN, 2020). Migrant workers were unable to access food ration through the public distribution system due to the location dependency of ration cards (Jan Sahas, 2020; ActionAid Association, 2020b; SWAN, 2020). Moreover, there was widespread reporting of informal and migrant workers being denied their due wages by the employers or contractors during the COVID-19 crisis (ActionAid Association, 2020b; Jan Sahas, 2020).

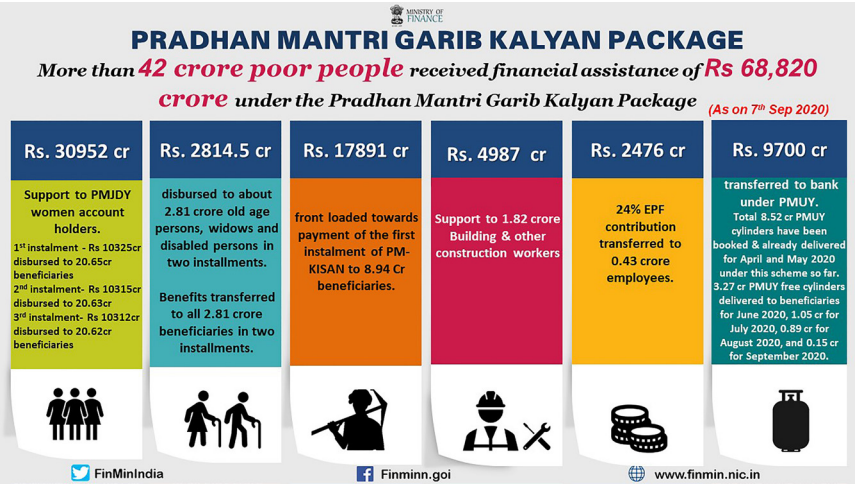
AP&TL	Andhra Pradesh & Telangana
ASM	Assam
BH&JH	Bihar & Jharkhand
GUJ	Gujarat
HAR	Haryana
HP	Himachal Pradesh
JKL	Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh
KAR	Karnataka
MH &Goa	Maharashtra & Goa
MP&CJ	Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh
NE	North East
ODI	Odisha
RAJ	Rajasthan
TN&PD	Tamil Nadu & Puducherry
UP&UK	Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand

In a reply to the Parliament in September 2020, the Minister for Labour and Employment, Government of India, stated that more than 10 million migrant workers returned to their home states between March and June (The Print, 2020). However, this number did not include data for various states and was therefore an underestimate. Nizam, et al. (2020), studying the monthly mobile subscription data across the states of India, as released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, suggested that around 44.1 million people moved across the country

between March and June 2020. During this period, most of the reverse migration happened from the western, northern and some southern states mostly to the eastern and southern states (Nizam, et al., 2022).

Following the lockdown restrictions, the Finance Minister, Government of India, announced certain assistance programs for the poorer sections of society under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PM-GKY), which loosely translates to the Prime Minister's Welfare Package for the Poor, on 26th March 2020 (PIB, 2020b). The PM-GKY funds provided 5kg wheat or rice and 1kg pulses free for three months initially to 800 million people through the public distribution system. 200 million women who had bank accounts opened under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana[1] were provided INR 500 per months for three months as cash transfers. Daily wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MG-NREGA), the national rural public works programme, was increased

Figure 6: Infographic depicting the assistance provided under the PMGKY scheme as released by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.



(Source: https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/pradhan-mantri-garib-kalyan-package-pmgkp)

1. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (Prime Minister's Public Finance Scheme) is a financial inclusion programme of the Government of India ensuring access to various financial services like basic savings bank account, need based credit, remittances facility, insurance and pension to the excluded sections of the Indian society. (Source: https://www.pmjdy.gov.in/about)

from INR 182 to INR 202. Another INR 1000 was provided as ex-gratia cash transfer to 30 million poor senior citizens, widows and persons with disabilities (PwD).

The first instalment of INR 2,000 under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Scheme, a cash transfer scheme for 87 million Indian farmers, for FY 2020-21 was expedited and paid in the first week of April 2020. 80 million families were to be provided free Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders for the next three months. The Central Government also directed the State Governments to utilise the funds collected through the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Fund for supporting registered construction workers in their respective states. While many of these schemes were initially announced for three months, they were subsequently extended as per the government's subsequent response plans.

However, the initial response of the government to the crisis faced by the migrant workers, was primarily to control the law-and-order situation. The Central and State Governments issued guidelines to close state borders, penalised migrant workers for moving across state lines and police forces across the country resorted to violence against these workers (Srivastava, 2020). After widespread reporting of the crisis, including through media coverage, the state authorities did acknowledge the problem, but the initial reaction of different government agencies at different levels was to blame each other (MCRG, 2020).

Almost a month into the crisis, the Central Government allowed inter-state bus services for returning migrant workers to operate, organised and funded by state governments (Ghosh, 2020). Responding to the need of people stranded across the country, the Ministry of Home Affairs directed the Indian Railways to operate "Shramik Special Trains" for migrant workers, students, tourists, pilgrims and others who were stranded due to the lockdown from 1st May 2020 (PIB, 2020c). The cost of operating these trains were borne by the governments of the states to which the trains were running.

The Chief Minister of Bihar launched a financial assistance scheme for natives of Bihar stranded in other states at the time of lockdown. INR

1,000 of direct fund transfer (DBT) was made to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. A total of INR 103.5 million was transferred on the inaugural day to 1,03,579 people from the Chief Minister Relief Fund. Eligible beneficiaries who were stranded outside the state had to contact one of the various helpline numbers released by the Government of Bihar for the purpose. They were then provided an online registration link via SMS on their phone numbers. (*NDTV,* 2020).

Civil Society Support to Migrant and Informal Workers

As the pandemic overwhelmed India's public systems and cut off the livelihoods of millions, civil society organisations offered a lifeline to its cities' poorest and most vulnerable residents. During the pandemic, CSOs across India provided relief materials to millions of migrant and informal sector workers, poorer households and the most marginalised. The Prime Minister appealed to CSOs to complement government efforts to minimise the impact of the lockdown on informal sector workers in India (The Indian Express, 2020). As mentioned earlier, CSOs also collected real-time data during the lockdown in order to gauge the humanitarian needs of migrant workers who had lost their livelihoods or were stranded on the roads. Such data was used by many agencies of local administration and state governments for providing support to those in need from time-to-time (ILO, 2020).

Figure 7: A relief distribution drive organised by ActionAid Association on 4th April 2020 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Image

Source: ActionAid Association

The major task that CSOs performed was providing immediate relief to migrant and informal sector workers in the form of dry ration kits, health and hygiene kits, cooked food, shelter for stranded migrant workers and in many cases cash support (CSIP, 2020). During the first wave, ActionAid Association provided relief to 4.5 million people across 229 districts in 23 States and one Union Territory (ActionAid Association, 2020a).

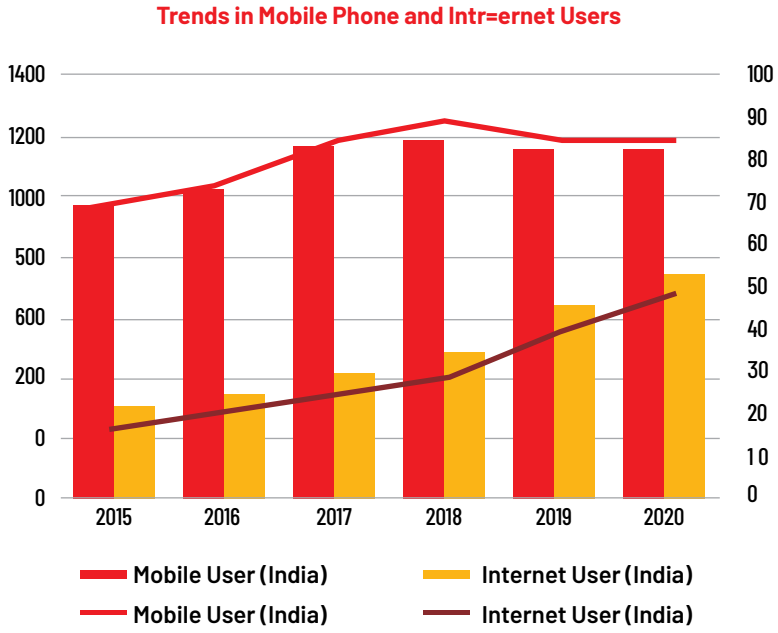
Apart from providing immediate support, CSOs also ran helplines for various purposes, including awareness on COVID-19, social security schemes, distress redressal, and psycho-social counselling (Tandon & Aravind, 2021). Moreover, during the second wave of infections in the summer of 2021, CSOs also set up oxygen plants and distributed medical supplies to medical establishments, including oximeters, thermometers, PPE kits, sanitiser, face shields, surgical masks and gloves (PRIA, 2021). CSOs also assisted many migrant and informal workers access COVID-19 vaccine, register on the newly formed National Database of Unorganized Workers called e-Shram portal, and get access to other social security schemes. Government of India, various state governments, Supreme Court of India, and international agencies like the UN, WHO and ILO have praised the efforts of the CSOs across India in providing support to crores of people in need (Down To Earth, 2021).

Mobile and Internet Infrastructure Penetration in India

Indian telecommunications have grown fast, both in numbers of users and financial value since the 1990s. The Combined Annual Growth Rate of the number of telephone subscribers in the two decades of 1990s and 2000s has been 22% and 33% respectively, with the sector's share in India's GDP rising from 1% in 2000 to 4% in 2010 (TRAI, 2012). Economic growth, investment in telecommunication infrastructure, growth of the mobile phone manufacturing market in India and increased foreign direct investment have been some of the contributing factors to this growth. As per the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, India had the world's second largest telecommunication market and also the world's second highest internet user base with 1.17 billion telecom subscribers and 825 million internet subscribers in 2022 (*Economic Times*, 2022).

As per the Telecom Statistics in India, 2020, the number of mobile phone users in India has risen steadily since the turn of the century and has peaked in the year 2018 with more than 1.18 billion users in India in 2018 (GoI, 2022). Internet use has seen a steady rise since the beginning of the 2010s and increased by 50% in the two-year period from 2018, with more than 743 million internet users in 2020 (GoI, 2022). However, there are large variations among states and between rural and urban parts of the country. Overall tele-density in India stood at 88.66 telephone users per 100 inhabitants, with Bihar having the lowest numbers at 59.04 users per 100 inhabitants. The urban-rural divide in tele-density is stark. It is three times denser in urban areas as compared to rural areas in 2020. Internet use also show similar geographic trends with 99 users per 100 inhabitants in urban India compared to 32 users per 100 inhabitants in rural India.

Figure 8: Trends in Mobile Phone and Internet Users in India and Bihar from 2015 to 2020.



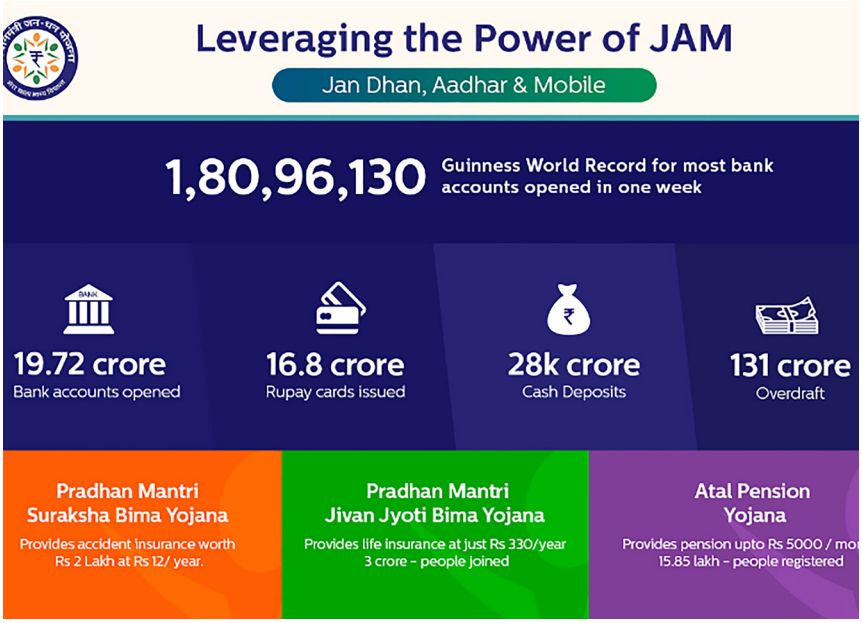
Source: GoI, 2022. Telecom Statistics India-2020, Delhi: Statistics Unit Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, Government of India

Gupta, et al. (2019) argue that the growth of internet users in India, especially mobile internet users, can be attributed to the entry of the private telecom operator, Reliance Jio in 2016 in the Indian market which resulted in a huge drop in the price of internet data across the country. In fact, India has one of the lowest prices per unit of data compared to other countries in the world, which has resulted in wider internet penetration in the country (BBC, 2019).

Digital Push by Government of India

The development of internet communication technology and the vision for a 'Digital India' has been one of the major policies of the Government of India since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power. Government of India launched the 'Digital India' programme in June, 2015 to enhance the public service delivery ecosystem through

Figure 9: Infographic showcasing the success of the JAM trinity on the Prime Minister's website



(Image Source: https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/government_tr_rec/leveraging-the-power-of-jam-jan-dhan-aadhar-and-mobile/)

information technologies and reduce the gap between urban and rural India in terms of access to digital communications infrastructure (Vijayan, 2019). Government of India also introduced the 'JAM' Trinity of Jan Dhan Bank Accounts, Aadhaar Cards and Mobile Phones. The main idea behind the initiative is that zero balance Jan Dhan Bank Accounts would be opened to maximise financial inclusion of Indian citizens. Such bank accounts would be registered with the account holder's mobile phone and Aadhaar number to enable direct transfer of subsidies and social security benefits to beneficiaries without any intermediate leakage (Vikram Srinivas, 2017).

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Study Design

To investigate the questions based on the research objectives, the study adopted a mixed-method approach. This research was conducted in the region surrounding Patna, Bihar's capital city, including parts of the districts of Patna, Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Nalanda, Arwal, Jehanabad and Bhojpur, highlighted on the map in Figure 10. Based on the literature

Figure 10: Map showing the districts in Bihar where the study was conducted.

(Map is sourced from Wikimedia Commons, under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 CC-BY 3.0 and labelled by ActionAid Association)

review and considering the research questions, data collection tools were developed by the research team. After the first draft of the tools were created, a pilot survey of 120 migrant workers from the area was conducted in June 2022. This was followed by a consultation workshop in Patna in July 2022 that included representatives of workers organisations, trade unions and other civil society organisations who work extensively on the issues of migrant workers. The feedback from the pilot survey and inputs from the workshop were used to finalise the data collection tools.

2.2 Data Collection

Employing a mixed-method approach the following tools were used for data collection:

- Literature Survey: Secondary data from various published sources, including but not limited to journal articles, books, legislations, government reports, media reports, and studies conducted by CSOs, research institutions, and other international organisations was analysed.

- Field Survey: Using structured questionnaires, 2,500 migrant workers who returned to their source between March and June 2020 period were surveyed between July and October 2022. The structured questionnaire pertained to the demographic profile of migrant workers and their households, their socio-economic profile, their migration and livelihood profile, their living conditions in the destination cities, access to social and communications media, access to information at the destination areas and their attitude towards social media. To reduce the logistical challenges of the data collection and data entry process, a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method was used. For this, the Kobo Toolbox, an open-source Android app for collecting survey data developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative was used.

- Key-Informant Interviews: 17 key informant interviews of humanitarian workers, civil society leaders, community-based first responders, researchers, trade union leaders and representatives of informal workers, district level officials and other relevant officials

from state and central governments was conducted. The KIIs were used to understand how migrant workers access information and depend on various stakeholders, including state and non-state actors.

- Focus Group Discussions: 15 Focus Group Discussions with migrant workers were conducted between November and December 2022, after preliminary analysis of initial observations and data trends from the field survey. The FGDs were used to collect qualitative data to understand the situation of migrant workers during pandemic related to sources of information during the lockdown and access to information on social security and pandemic protocols among others.

2.3 Data Limitations

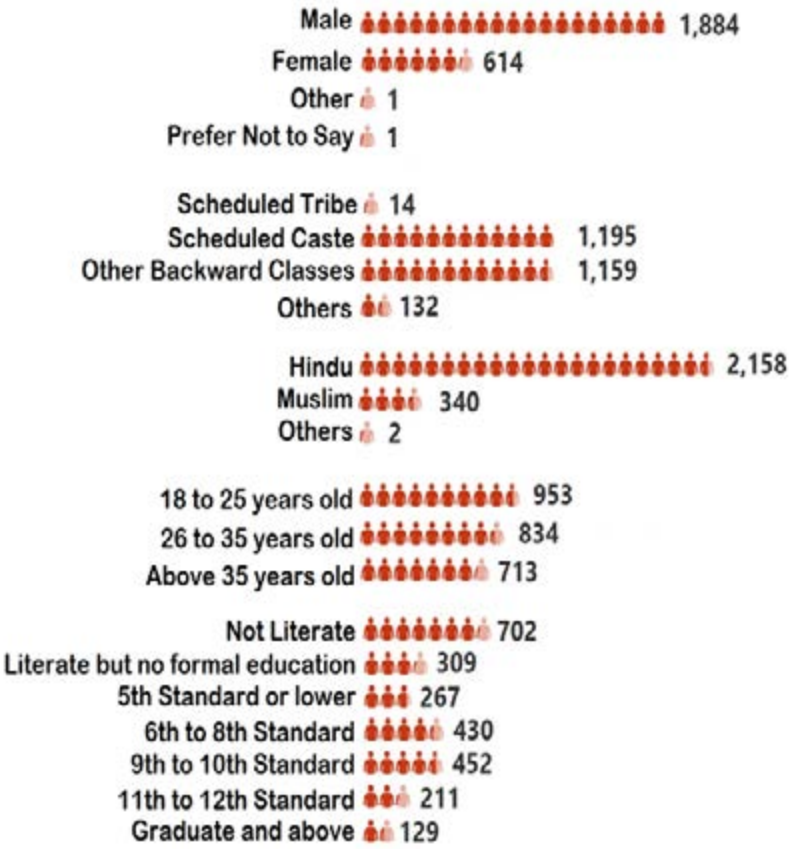
There has been no official survey of migrant workers and migration patterns in India since 2008 and the last Census was conducted in 2011. Therefore, other secondary sources with data from smaller samples have been referenced. The lack of data became a significant issue during the first lockdown of 2020 and since then Government of India has initiated many surveys, although data from these have still not been published. This has created problems in determining the statistically significant sample proportions for our survey. Hence the respondents for this survey were selected on a basis of non-probability sampling method with the minimum criteria that they were at the destination when the first lockdown was announced. Only migrant workers who were based in the urban informal sector when the first lockdown was announced have been included. Moreover, the sample is biased towards regions where ActionAid Association works in the areas of labour rights and other rights of marginalised communities. For this reason, there is higher proportion of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities in the sample compared to other categories. The low proportion of respondents of Scheduled Tribes (ST) community in the sample is due to the fact that Patna and adjoining districts have very low population of members from the community.

Chapter 3

Preliminary Results

3.1 Respondent Profile

Figure 11: Demographic profile of respondents from the survey



Demographic Profile

Of the 2,500 migrant workers surveyed 25% are females and 75% males. In terms of social diversity, less than 1% belong to scheduled tribes, 48% belong to scheduled caste, 46% belong to other backward classes. In of religious diversity, 86% of the respondents are Hindus and 14% are Muslims. 80% of the respondents speak Hindi as a mother tongue while 16% speak Magahi. The rest speak Maithili, Bhojpuri, Urdu and other languages. 80% of them are married, and 19% are unmarried, with less than 1% being divorced, separated or widowed. The average size of each household is five members, with two dependent members on average.

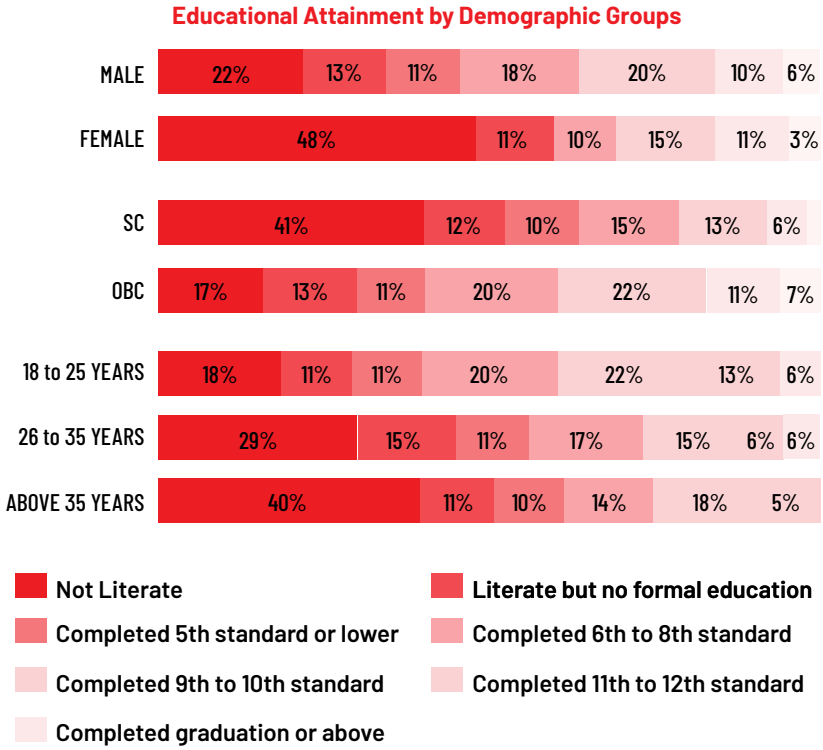
Age-wise there the vast majority are young, 38% being 18 to 25 years, 33% being between 26 and 35 years. 28% of the respondents are not literate, 12% are literate but have no formal education, 11% studied up to 5th standard, 17% between 6th and 8th standard, 18% between 9th and 10th standard. 4% of the respondents either have knowledge of traditional arts or have received on the job training in technical work. Only 3% of the respondents have a degree or diploma in vocational education.

The data presented in Figure 12 clearly indicates that the highest level of education attained is a function of gender, social group and age. Almost 60% of all female migrants surveyed reported that they were either not literate or had no formal education, compared to 35% of all male migrant workers surveyed. Similarly, on the opposite end of the spectrum, 36% of male respondents attained education beyond 8th standard, compared to only 16% of female respondents. We see similar variations between social groups as well. 53% of SC respondents reported being not literate or without formal education compared to 30% OBC respondents. 22% of SC respondents had completed education beyond 8th standard, compared to 40% of OBC respondents.

Age is also an important factor in determining educational attainment. Given the historic socio-economic progress of India, it is expected that younger generations will have higher educational attainment. This is consistent with our findings. 29% of those between 18 and 25, 44%

of those between 26 and 35 years and 51% of those above 35 years reported being not literate or having no formal education. In contrast, 40% of those between 18 and 25 years, 27% of those between 26 and 35 years and 25% of those above 35 years have schooled beyond 8th standard.

Figure 12: Educational attainment by gender, social group and age group among surveyed migrant workers.

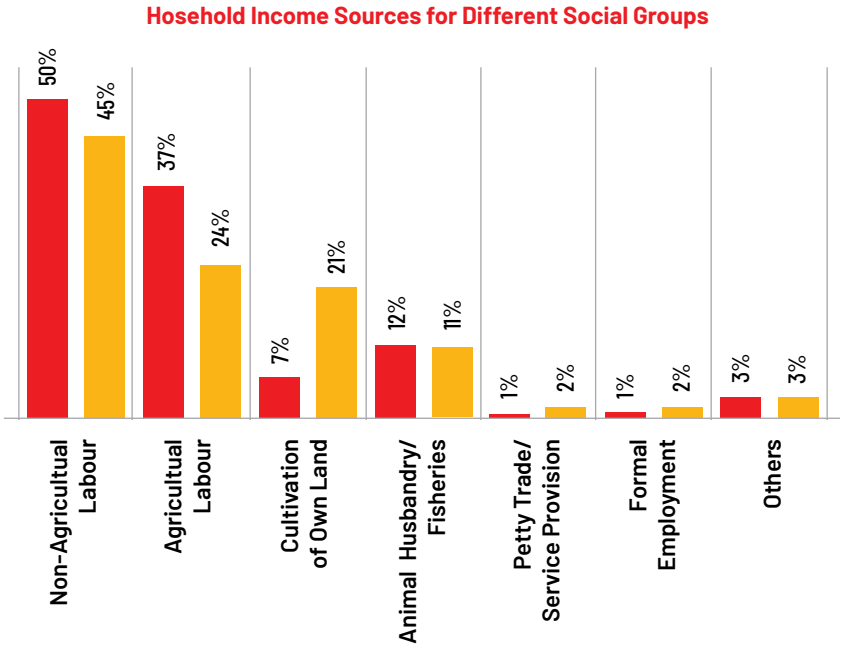


Socio-Economic Profile

The socio-economic profiles of households vary greatly by social group. Intuitively, OBC households would be comparatively better off in terms of socio-economic position compared to SC households given that SC communities were historically denied ownership of land, and

the few who own land now, do so because of land reform policies initiated after 1947. Our field survey findings are also consistent with this assumption. Only 12% of all SC respondents own agricultural land compared to almost 40% of OBC respondents.

Figure 13: Sources of income (apart from remittances and social security transfers) for households by social group.



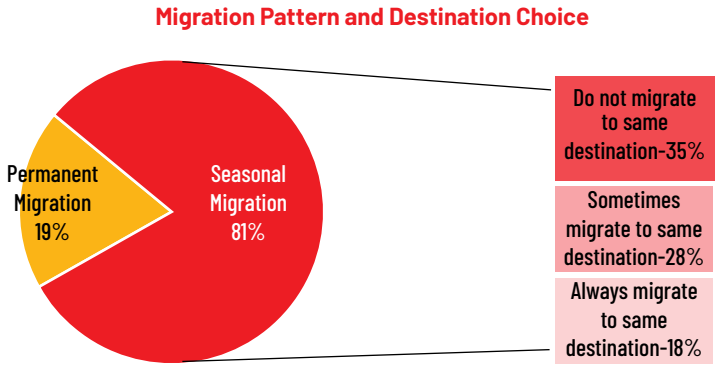
Though households have multiple sources of income they mostly dependent on manual labour. Remittances from migrant members of households contributed to the income of all surveyed respondents. For almost 48% of the respondents, non-agricultural manual labour was the main source of household income, whereas for 29% it was earned from working as agricultural labour on other's land. For about 14% of the respondents, cultivation of own land was the main source of household income while for roughly 11% it was animal husbandry or fishing. For 5% of all respondents, sources of income included petty trade, small businesses, service provisions or formal employment.

However, there is a significant difference between SC and OBC households regarding agricultural income source – own land vs other's land, as shown by figure 13. More OBC households own agricultural land compared to SC households. Therefore, income from working as agricultural labour on other's land is reported more by SC respondents (37%) compared to OBC households (24%). Similarly, for only 7% SC respondents, cultivation of own land was the primary source of household income compared to about 21% OBC respondents. However, for 90% of land-owning respondents farming only provides subsistence yield as they had less than 1 acre of land. Very little of what the farmers grow is traded in the market but completely consumed at the household level necessitating other sources of monetary income. For this reason, although 40% and 12% of OBC and SC respondents own agricultural land, only 21% and 7% respectively reported cultivation of own land to be an income source.

Among the surveyed 80% have bank accounts and more than 98% have Aadhaar cards. However, only 77% of the respondents possessed a ration card. 93% of the respondents are not covered under any health insurance scheme, public or private.

Seasonal migration is the most common form with more than 80% of workers being seasonal migrants. Among the seasonal migrants, 18% always migrate to the same destination while 28% sometimes migrate to

Figure 14: Migration pattern and destination choice for seasonal migrants.

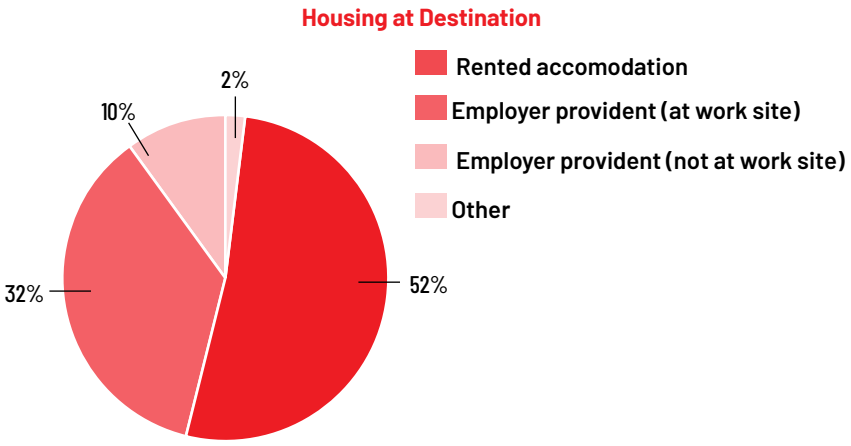


the same destination. Around 31% of all respondents migrate with their family, with more than 80% of female respondents reporting the same. 72% of the respondents migrate only after securing work beforehand. 60% of the respondents are engaged in the same occupation every migration period, but for the remaining 40% the occupation often changes with the destination.

In the last migration period, 68% worked as casual labour while another 27% worked as regular labour. Only 5% had any written formal contract for their work at the destination during the last migration period. During the last migration period 22% were compensated in daily wages, 55% received monthly compensation while another 10% earned piece-rate wages.

As evident from figure 15, more than half of the migrant workers stay in rented accommodation while 36% stay at employer provided housing at the worksite and 10% at employer provided housing away from the worksite. However, there is a significant difference among seasonal and permanent migrant workers with 51% of seasonal migrant workers staying in employer provided housing compared to just 36% of permanent migrants.

Figure 15: Housing provisions at destination for migrant workers.



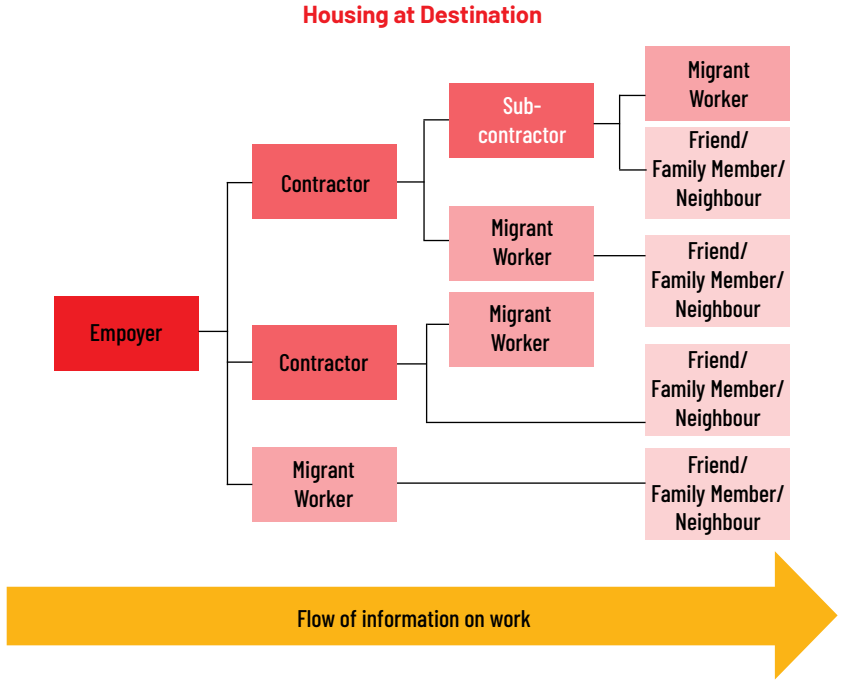
3.2 Migrant Workers' Access to Information

Migrant workers are highly dependent on peer-to-peer information sharing for decisions related to their migration, work and stay in urban destinations. Employers, contractors, friends, relatives, neighbours, and co-workers are all important sources of information. However, they do not depend on all of them equally for all types of information.

Information in general

Employers and contractors play an important role in providing information on work and wages. Information on work pertains to the nature and type of work, type of contract, and hours of work, among others. 27% of migrant workers depend on employers for information on work and 45% depend on contractors. 62% of migrant workers depend on friends, relatives and neighbours and 25% depend on their networks at destination, mainly co-workers and local community members. These figures are not exclusive and the same worker can depend on multiple sources for information on the same topic. However, the nature of information also varies by source. For example, information from employers and contractors relate to the work for the employer, such as working hours, production requirements, details of output among others. Information from peer group networks and kinship networks does not necessarily pertain to the specifics of the job situation, but can also be more generally to understand the job market. Another important aspect that has been discussed in the existing literature and confirmed from the KIIs and FGDs is that the migrant workers follow a chain migration pattern. This means that newer migrants follow migrants who have some history of migration to seek work in the destination. Such chain migrations often follow kinship networks of caste and family relations, as well as village networks. What often happens is that once a migrant worker completes a certain number of migration-periods they also become contractors and sub-contractors and pass on information on work and wages within their networks while receiving some sort of extra compensation from the employer or main contractor. Even employers prefer to recruit workers through the networks of existing or known workers as certifications of skillsets are extremely rare and the existing workers act as guarantors of the skills of the newer workers. Figure 16 illustrates how information often flows from employers and contractors to migrant workers and their networks.

Figure 16: Illustration of how information on work often flows from employers and contractors to migrant workers and their networks.



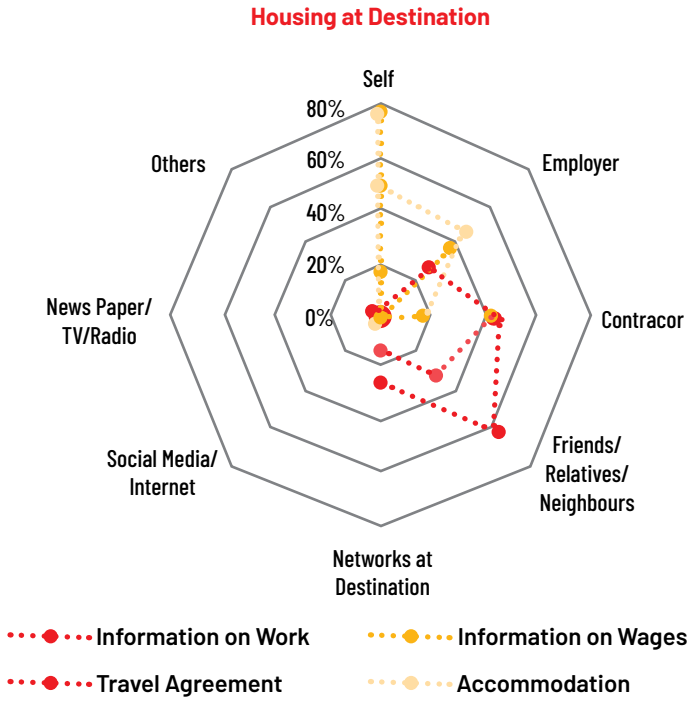
Information on wages include information on amount of compensation, schedule of payment of wages and the prevailing compensation rate for the same type of work, among others. Migrant workers are highly dependent on employers (38%) and contractors (43%) for such information. However, compared to information on work, migrant workers have lower dependency on friends, relatives, neighbours (31%) and networks at destination (12%) when it comes to information on wages.

Migrant workers are generally self-reliant in making their travel and accommodation arrangements for their migration period. While contractors have some role to play in arranging travel (17%) and accommodation (18%), employers only play a key role in arranging the accommodation. In fact, almost 50% of all workers depend on

the employers for accommodation arrangements, a point that was observed earlier as well in figure 15. Among the migrant workers who arrange their travel by themselves only 3.5% use internet facilities while rest depend on physical ticket booking offices. 12% of migrant workers reported that their travel expenses are borne by the employer or contractor subject to deduction from wages. 7% migrant workers reported that employers or contractors pay the travel expenses without any deduction from their wages. The rest said that they had to pay for their travel by themselves without any support from employers or contractors.

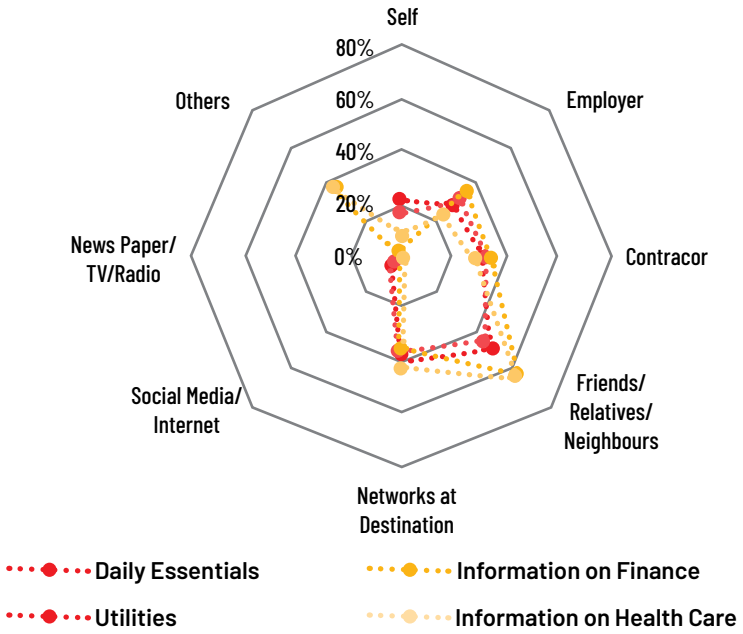
While employers and contractors are during the initial establishment of the migrant worker in the urban area by providing information on work,

Figure 17: Dependency of surveyed migrant workers for information on initial setup and establishment.



wages, travel and accommodation, peer-group networks of friends, relatives, neighbours and co-workers are important for information on the daily living requirements of the workers. 48% of migrant workers depend on friends, relatives and neighbours and 40% on other peer-group networks at destination for information on daily essentials like groceries, food and other household consumables. Similarly, 44% of migrant workers depend on friends, relatives and neighbours and 42% on other peer-group networks at destination for information on utilities like electricity, water and cooking gas supply.

Figure 18: Dependency of surveyed migrant workers on information on day-to-day needs



In case of information on financial and healthcare services also, peer group networks are most depended on by migrant workers. 62% of migrant workers depend on friends, relatives and neighbours for information on financial services like bank accounts and transfer of money while 63% of the migrant workers depend on the same for

information on general and emergency healthcare needs. On the other hand, 34% and 42% of migrant workers depend on peer group networks at destination for information on financial and healthcare needs respectively.

The field survey data shows that migrant workers do not depend on social media or traditional mass media like TV, newspaper or radio for accessing information on work, wages or daily essentials at the destination. Discussions with migrant workers revealed that there is an issue of trustworthiness or the lack of it in social media and traditional media when it comes to such information. As the destination is a relatively unknown place for the migrant worker, they rely on information sources who have prior personal knowledge of the place. Moreover, since employers also prefer to recruit new workers through existing channels of contractors or workers, there is no incentive for a new migrant worker to search for information in mass or social media.

This is further corroborated by the fact that word of mouth was reported as the best mode of information for 77% of all respondents. 43% of all respondents also stated that community leaders good for information dissemination, while 44% said the same for phones. Less than 20% of the respondents chose newspaper or radio and television for the same purpose. Overall, because of chain migration, contractors, work and kinship networks are the main channels of information for migrant workers.

Information during the lockdown

Due to the rapidity of the enforcement of the national lockdown measures, migrant workers were left without any regarding the new rules and pandemic protocols. It was a novel experience for everyone which was both the cause and result of the government's unpreparedness. There was no prior information of the places where the migrant workers were located. As a result, sending relevant information to migrant workers was a challenge. Even before the lockdowns were announced in India, certain information was being propagated via mass media but people in general were not adequately aware of the precautionary protocols until the lockdown was announced.

Traditional mass media like newspaper, radio or television or internet as well as social media play a rather insignificant role in providing essential information to migrant workers on a daily basis. However, this changed with the pandemic and the enforcement of the lockdown. When the first lockdown was announced, the major source of information for migrant workers were traditional media like newspaper, television and radio. However, first-hand access to such information was limited to those who were able to access television and those who were literate enough to read newspapers. Others had to depend on word of mouth as information was being shared within their networks.

Social media also played a key role in delivering information to migrant workers during the pandemic and lockdown. However, it is notable that information from social media was accessed mostly through peer group networks. Migrant worker withs social media access during the crisis got relevant information they passed it on within their peer networks. Word of mouth amplified information from mass media, social media and internet portals in general. Discussions with migrant workers indicate that social media provided quicker information than mainstream media. It was more real-time and distressing news spread through social media more rapidly. The content and news that became "viral" on social media had a great impact on migrant workers in general.

Discussions with migrant workers and civil society leaders also indicate the importance of civil society organisations, trade unions and other collectives of informal workers during the lockdown. Workers who were stranded and unable to access food and essentials reported that they relied mostly on camps organised by CSOs and other groups for meeting their daily requirements. CSOs also actively shared information among stranded workers. Civil society leaders reported that they used mobile phone calls, text messages and digital communications platforms like WhatsApp to convey relevant information like lockdown conditions, transport availability, and details of relevant social security schemes, among others, to stranded workers. Informal and migrant workers, who found themselves trapped in conditions of forced labour due to the lockdown measures also said that they contacted CSO leaders who then contacted local authorities and ensured their rescue. A CSO leader from Gaya district, Bihar stated that he and his team were present in

the major railway stations where Shramik trains were arriving, in order to provide assistance to returning workers and families.

Information after the lockdown

After the migrant workers returned to their source villages and towns the role of local political leaders as sources of information grew. Several focus group discussions indicate that local politicians, like village chiefs and ward councillors, provided information regarding lockdown restrictions, precautionary measures, necessary testing and relevant government schemes. Many respondents claimed that since the elections in Bihar were nearing, local politicians found the perfect opportunity to try and win votes. However, it is to be noted that migrant workers felt that even after elections were over local politicians continued to provide information and facilitate access to the vaccination as well as registration on the e-Shram portal.

Peer to peer information sharing was highly prevalent both at the source and destination. Migrant workers relied significantly on discussions and communications with close relatives and friends regarding regulations and information. Most people found information received from relatives, especially those considered educated or those living in bigger cities, to be highly reliable. Information received from traditional mass media was further verified and discussed with relatives, friends and co-workers.

The role of civil society organisations and workers' groups continued to be important even after the lockdown was lifted. CSO networks provided workers with information on relevant social security provisions and supported their registration for such schemes. CSOs played a very important role in outreach to workers once the vaccination was rolled out. Since there was hesitancy among workers, due to lack of information and awareness, among other reasons, CSOs prepared and distributed IEC materials in local languages in order to ensure that workers got themselves vaccinated. Apart from awareness, CSOs also played an important role in registering workers and their families on the government's CoWin platform. Similarly, registration of workers on e-Shram, the government's the online database launched on August 2021 relied strongly on the efforts and advocacy of CSO and workers' groups across the country.

3.3 Migrant Workers' Usage and Access to Digital Infrastructure

Access to technology among migrant workers is varied. Some only have access to mobile phones but not smart phones. Those who own smart phones may not be able to afford internet at all times. Moreover, handling of smart phones requires some amount of digital literacy which is often missing among informal sector migrant workers, particularly the older generation.

Mobile Phone and Internet Access

Overall, more than 87% of all respondents have access to mobile phones. However, this does not translate directly into access to internet and social media. Only 56% overall have access to internet and 55% have access to social media platforms. Barring a few, most who have access to internet have access to social media platforms. Access to online financial platforms is very low among migrant workers. Only 17% of used online financial platforms for banking or remittance.

55% of those with mobile phones have been using it for more than 5 years. 31% have been using it for the past 2 to 5 years, almost half of them being 25 years or below. Work and travel related reasons were the most common reasons why they started using the mobile phone. For 92% of those with mobile phones work was one of the main reasons for buying a phone for the first time. For 60% it was local travel and for 59% it was migration. Education, for self or for family members, or general personal use was the reason for only a handful. Affordability was the major reason for not owning mobile phones for almost two-thirds of those who do not own mobile phones.

Access to internet among surveyed migrant workers correlates with ownership and usage of mobile phones. Less than 1% of all respondents owned any other electronic communication device like desktop, laptop or tablet. Almost all those who access internet, do so either on their own mobile phones or on those of family members. Almost all internet use through mobile data only around 1% also use private and public Wi-Fi.

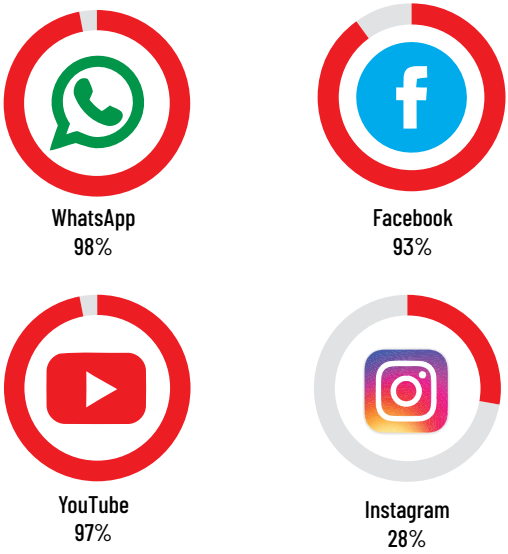
Access to internet is often hampered due to public infrastructure issues. Around 40% of internet users said that power cuts impede their regular access to internet services while 50% of internet users said the same for bad network coverage.

Around 15% of all mobile phone users stated that employers confiscated their mobile phones during work and among them, two-thirds worked in the manufacturing sector.

Social Media Usage

As with internet usage, social media access is also predominantly through mobile phones. WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube are the most commonly used social media platforms. 98% of all social media users use WhatsApp, followed by YouTube at 97% and Facebook at 93%. 28% also use Instagram. Twitter and LinkedIn are used very little by the respondents of our survey.

Figure 18: Usage of different social media platforms among surveyed migrant workers who use social media. (N = 1,368)



The types of social media platforms used are indicative of the reason for social media usage. Messaging, connecting with friends and family, watching videos or films and listening to music are high on the list of uses for more than 80%. 59% share images or videos on social media. Around 38% and 22% use social media to get news updates and gain knowledge or for educational purposes respectively. Almost 28% of social media users also reported playing online games. Other uses of social media like finding things to do or buy, finding work or political activism was reported by very few social media users. Among those who do not use social media, 85% stated that the main reason was their inability to understand or operate social media platforms. Other reasons for not using social media include lack of time, interest and financial resources.

Differential Usage among different groups

Table 1 gives the differential levels of access to mobile phones, internet and social media among different demographic groups of migrant workers as computed from the field survey. Gender, caste, education and age influence differential access, understanding and ability to use information technology.

Males are more likely to use mobile phones, internet, social media and online financial applications. 92% males use mobile phone compared to 73% females. Only 64% of females who used mobile phones had sim cards in their own name, compared to 83% of male mobile phone users. The difference in use of internet and social media by gender is even higher. 62% males use internet and 61% males use social media compared to 36% and 34% females respectively.

Caste status is important in determining the use of mobile phones, internet and social media. 80% of SCs used mobile phones compared to 94% of OBCs. Similarly, only around 46% of SCs used internet and social media compared to around 62% of OBCs. Use of online financial platforms also show similar trends. They are used by 9% of SCs compared 23% OBCs. There can be several reasons, including differences related to ownership of land, educational status and income and livelihood profile, for the gap between SC and OBC workers.

Table 1: Differential access to digital infrastructure among different groups of migrant workers surveyed

Category	Use Mobile Phone (%)	Use Internet (%)	Use Social Media (%)	Use Online Financial Platforms (%)
Male	91.72	61.94	61.31	19.27
Female	73.13	35.99	34.36	8.31
SC	79.92	46.27	45.27	9.21
OBC	93.61	62.64	61.95	23.04
Others	95.21	76.02	74.66	25.34
18 To 25 Years	90.97	76.92	75.13	25.08
26 To 35 Years	89.69	56.47	55.16	15.95
Above 35 Years	79.10	26.09	25.53	5.89
Not Literate	68.66	30.77	28.61	2.13
Up To 5th Std	90.97	55.73	53.13	8.33
6th To 8th Std	94.19	62.55	62.55	16.05
9th To 10th Std	96.24	71.24	70.13	28.32
Above 10th Std	97.94	81.18	80.29	45.29
Total	**87.08**	**55.52**	**54.64**	**16.56**

Moreover, OBC migrant workers often end up in relatively better jobs with regular contracts compared to those from SC communities.

Age is also important in determining access to mobile phones and social media. Around 90% of workers aged 35 or less use mobile phones compared to only 79% above 35 years. However, there are significant differences even among those aged 35 years or below. More than 75% between 18 and 25 years used internet and social media platforms whereas only 55% of those between 26 and 35 used internet

and social media. These numbers go down further to 25% for those above 35 years of age. Expectedly, 25% of migrant workers up to 25 years of age, 16% of between 26 and 35 years and only 6% of those above 35 years used online financial platforms.

Education is the most significant factor in determining access to information technology. Less than 69% of illiterate migrant workers own mobile phones compared to more than 90% of all migrant workers who have different levels of literacy. The numbers are much higher, above 95%, for workers who have completed at least secondary education. The higher the level of education, the higher the access to internet and social media platforms. Among all demographic groups, 80% of those educated at least till the 10th standard have the highest levels of access. Since online financial platforms require higher digital and financial literacy, as the educational levels increase, the proportion of workers accessing online financial platforms increases.

Education and age are inter-related variables in determining access to information technology. Younger generations have higher levels of education. This is also true for other identities, including gender, as the educational levels of males is higher than that of females.

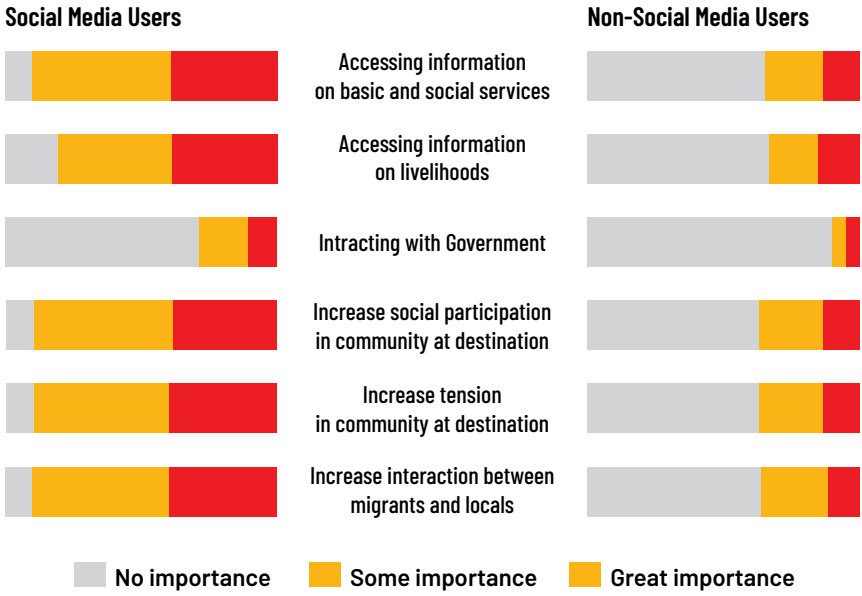
3.4 Attitudes towards Social Media

One of the biggest challenges in conducting the field survey was the inability of respondents to understand the role of social media in their daily lives. The underlying perception among them is that social media is a luxury and meant for entertainment and general contacting. The initial perception was also that urban elites have more to gain from social media or digital communications than the rural or marginalised communities. However, as a general trend, there were differences by age on perceptions of how social media can contribute to overcoming daily challenges, with the youth being more positive.

Importance and Relevance of Social Media

The perceived importance of social media varied according to whether they use social media or not. In general, social media users underlined the importance of social media in accessing information on basic

Figure 20: Perception of importance of social media in lives of different migrant workers surveyed.



services and livelihood, interacting with government agencies and participating in community relationships in urban destinations. 38% of social media users stated that social media played great importance in accessing information on basic and social services and another 51% said it was of some importance. Compared to that, 13% and 21% of non-social media users reported great importance and some importance respectively in this respect. 35% of social media users felt it of great importance in accessing information on livelihood and another 45% reported some importance. Compared to that 15% and 18% of non-social media users reported it of great importance and some importance respectively in accessing information on livelihood. Only 22% of social media users reported that it plays a role in choosing the destination for migration.

Social media also plays a key role in community bonding and interactions in urban destinations according to more than 35% of all social media users. Half of all social media users also reported that social media had

some importance in this aspect. In the case of non-users, around 12% said it was of great importance while it was of some importance for 24%. Social media has a rather ineffective role in providing feedback to government institutions. Only 9% of social media users placed great importance on social media in providing feedback to government and another 19% placed some importance. On the other hand, 91% of non-users felt social media was not important at all in providing such feedback.

Accessibility of Social Media

Language is an important factor in access to social media. More than 54% of all respondents stated that social media was available in a language familiar to them, 86% of them being social media users.

For more than 54%, access to social media is not affected or hindered by gender.Yet, less than 40% of all women reported the same. 51% of all workers felt that age is not important in determining access to social media. 57% stated that social status does not play an important role in access to social media.

The perception of third party or outside interference in social media is also not significant among the workers who use it. 68% do not feel that any outside agency, like government or big corporations, influence their activity on social media. However, self-restriction is practiced more significantly by social media users. 15% of social media users often choose not to post on social media in view of social consequences, issues of acceptance and fear of reprimands. Another 31% sometimes chose not post for the same reasons.

Misinformation and Trustworthiness

Perception of misinformation and trustworthiness of information on social media is also determined by extent of social media use. 38% of social media users have great trust in social media information while another 49% have some trust in it. On the other hand, among those who do not use social media, less than 38% have any trust in such information.

Trust appears to be a constant issue with regard to news. Many people showed disbelief in the existence of the virus, unless they saw people getting actually sick. There were fallacies like the "pandemic being a conspiracy of the government", "there is no such disease". Such misinformation and fallacies were even observed in educated populations, the migrant workers who are less educated were even more misinformed and in disbelief of information regarding the pandemic. For the migrant workers, losing their livelihoods due to the lockdown was a greater emergency and concerned rather than the disease. Since, until then Covid-19 was not showing very significant death results.

As mentioned, information shared via social media is generally conveyed by an individual source, for example, messages forwarded by contacts, Therefore, the trustworthiness of the individual sharing information is the basis of reliability of information received through social media. If the person sharing the information is considered to be educated, intellectual or trustworthy, the information is believed to be reliable. Information received through social media along with the observation that many people in the community are sharing the same information, is further verified by people considered to be "knowledgeable". Only then is the veracity of the information decided.

Chapter 4

Preliminary Results

4.1 Importance of Social Networks

Migrant workers depend mainly on information provided by their peer group network and the network of labour contractors and employers for decisions related to their migration and work in urban destinations. However, there is significant variation in the type of information being accessed by migrant workers from different networks.

Migrant workers generally tend to secure work before migrating to the destination. Due to the information asymmetry between the source and destination, networks of labour contractors are important in closing this gap. The support provided by contractors in the form of information or money, is called 'migration capital' (Taylor, 1986). Such networks not only help migrants by providing information and resources, but also facilitate migration flow by linking migrants to such networks. Entry into this network creates new ties of everyday friendship and kinship among those migrating to the same destination. Thereby, each act of migration creates new social capital and increases their own chances of outmigration (Reja & Das, 2019). However, unlike Srivastava & Sasikumar's (2003) observation that contractors also make travel provisions for migrants by advancing them money, very few respondents from this study received travel advance.

Employers are also an important node in the information dissemination network and provision of access once the migrant worker arrives at the destination, especially with regard to information on or provision of accommodation. Short-term migrants in particular tend to reduce establishment costs in the destination by getting accommodation arranged by the employer. On the other hand, employers get greater control over the workers and thereby the production process by having workers reside in accommodation provided by them. Banerjee (1983),

Srivastava & Sasikumar (2005), Fernandes & Paul GD (2011) and Reja & Das (2019) share similar conclusions.

After establishment needs are met, peer group networks gain relevance in providing information on daily needs and necessities. Such peer group networks include co-workers, relatives, members from the same village and kinship networks based on caste and other social identities. Due to the relative homogeneity within such peer networks, consumption needs based on similar preferences are common. This relative homogeneity enhances the interaction within these groups and also enables migrant workers to maintain their identity at the destination (Banerjee, 1983; Fernandes & Paul GD, 2011; Marchang, 2022).

Apart from providing information, peer group networks are also information validators. The perceived authenticity of information correlates with its source. Educational level, economic status and social position are important in perceptions of credibility of the information source. For many workers, educated relatives in cities are trusted sources of information, as they have socio-economic status. However, credibility also depends on the type of information being accessed. For example, for information on work and wages, contractors or employers are considered more reliable, whereas for information on government benefits, local political leaders and CSO leaders are considered more reliable.

4.2 Existing Inequalities Increase Digital Divide

Educational attainment and age are important determinants of the digital divide. These two variables are interlinked. Joshi, et al. (2020), studying the digital divide in the slums of New Delhi, also suggest that individual education and age play a key role in determining access to internet. However, education or literacy are only one set of factors digital literacy as we see that more than two thirds of those not literate own mobile phones and around one-third also use internet services. Smyth, et al. (2010) argue that motivation is the biggest factor in technology adoption, which can enable non-literate people adopt technology without knowing the intricacies involved. Educational attainment is influenced by existing historical determinants such as gender, caste,

economic status and geographic location. Such inequalities have continued over time to take newer forms as is evident from this study.

The major reason for not owning mobile phones is unaffordability, as per the survey results. To understand this, we need to look at the segmentations and fragmentations within the migrant worker population. Srivastava (2019) argues that the economic growth trajectory in India has perpetuated entrenched processes of social discrimination. Socio-cultural factors and social reproduction responsibilities of women have led to gender-based segmentation of the labour market. Such segmentation reduces the economic progress of lower castes and other socially vulnerable households overall and of women within households. This makes mobile phones unaffordable to such individuals and they end up on the wrong side of the digital divide.

4.3 Importance of CSOs in tackling uncertainties

Civil society organisations have played an important role in reducing the distress faced by workers. CSOs not only distributed relief in the form of dry rations, cooked food, health and sanitation kits, they were also conducted mass outreach and awareness campaigns on the dangers of the virus and the preventive protocols to be followed. In the initial days of the lockdown, when the migrant workers' crisis was at its peak, CSOs rescued stranded labourers and set up temporary shelter and camps for workers in transit. Working in tandem with government agencies or independently CSOs set up isolation facilities, medical and vaccination camps. CSOs also acted as the last node in public service delivery by facilitating registration of workers in the national unorganised workers portal and other social security schemes which were available at different times.

The role played by CSOs in addressing the concerns of the migrant workers and other marginalised groups is not novel to the pandemic. A civil society leader who has been working with informal workers in Patna for more than two decades explained how CSOs and other social movements have always been a silent part of the lives and livelihoods of the marginalised sections of India. Civil society has been involved in various social movements, especially on the issues of land and livelihood. The adoption of a rights-based approach since the 1990s

meant that civil society regularly interacted with their constituents and supported in creating their agency. This sense of agency and empowerment garnered trust towards CSOs among the marginalised communities and led to long lasting networks that are very important crises. Barhate, et al. (2021) provide evidence that individuals and communities who have been involved or associated with a CSO before the pandemic approached the same CSOs when the lockdown was enforced.

They also observe that CSOs in India have for long been the first responders in the times of natural calamities like cyclones, floods, tsunami, earthquakes and others. This has led CSOs to develop standard procedures to implement during crises and but also build working relations with local administration, which was very useful during the pandemic. Tandon & Aravind (2021) argue that the pandemic demonstrated that co-existence and cooperation between state and civil society can be effective in tackling emergencies in India.

4.4 Technology in Public Service Delivery

Government of India's push for using technology to provide public service delivery saw a major boost during the pandemic. The registration for COVID related social security schemes and the vaccination show that information and communication technology has played a vital role. Government has often hailed the ICT-based approach in reducing costs and time for service delivery during the pandemic.

However, further investigation shows that while ICT has been pushed by the government to reach the so called 'unreachable', the intended beneficiaries had to depend often on personal connections to use the technology to access services. These personal connections include educated and younger family members who have better digital literacy, CSO leaders and local political leaders. The fact that government had to start on-spot registration of people who lined up for COVID vaccination on the COWIN database shows that a vast majority are still unable to fully utilise digital modes. Similar is the case for the importance of Common Service Centres (CSCs) for the enrolment of unorganised workers on the e-Shram portal. Although mobile based registration was

possible for workers, CSCs accounted for more than 60% of the 285 million registrations on the e-Shram portal.

Smyth et al. (2010) argue that adoption of technology is often dependent on what the adopters, in this case the migrant workers, feel is necessary for them rather than what the providers, in this case the state, feels can be important to them. Although 98% of the survey respondents have Aadhaar cards and more than 80% have bank accounts, only 16% use online financial platforms. It is quite evident that migrant workers use internet and social media mostly to connect and communicate with their peer groups or for purposes of entertainment. The near unanimous perception that social media is not that important to interface with government agencies indicates that social media and digital communications platforms are still to become relevant for government service delivery, at least for the poorer sections of the society. Until workers themselves feel that internet and digital communications technology have other relevance in their daily lives, any push by the government may not be as fruitful as intended. However, social media and digital communications platform can be useful to spread awareness about new schemes and policies, as often used by many civil society organisations.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

This project studied the channels of information used by migrant workers of India's urban informal sector during the humanitarian crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The relevance of and access to internet and social media among migrant workers was investigated.

Migrant workers rely on peer group, kinship and contractor networks to access information on livelihood and daily needs in the destination areas. These social networks have various nodes and the importance of each node differs with the kind information being sought. Contractors and employers are important when the information require is about livelihood and initial setting up in urban areas, like working conditions, wages, travel and accommodation. On the other hand, peer group networks of friends, relatives, co-workers, and others members of the kinship networks of caste and other social identities are important in providing information on daily needs in the city, like food, groceries, utilities, financial and healthcare needs. During emergencies, like the pandemic, the social networks expand to include civil society leaders and local political leaders to access important information. Social networks not only act as information providers, but also as information validators for the migrant workers.

Access to digital infrastructure like mobile phones, internet and social media are linked to several demographic factors. Education and age are important in determining access to services, with younger and more educated respondents reporting higher access to and use of digital tools. Historical inequities arising due to gender, caste and other social identities feed into the digital divide, reducing consumptive capabilities and socio-economic progress, both of which necessary for digital literacy.

Civil society is play important in bridging the information asymmetries during the pandemic. The networks that CSOs had built over time

with marginalised communities across India, migrant workers included, gained relevance during the humanitarian crisis resulting from the sudden lockdown. Having addressed several natural calamities over the years, CSOs have gained enough experience and nurtured valuable relationship with local administration which them to respond swiftly during the pandemic. CSOs used social media and digital communications platforms, especially WhatsApp groups, to share necessary information.

Government of India's 'Digital India' mission of public service delivery through ICT, is successful to an extent but has created newer dependencies for migrant workers and other marginalised groups. Due to the lack of digital literacy intended beneficiaries of ICT-based services depend on human interaction, whether with CSOs or government sub-contractors. There is still a perception among migrant workers about the limits of internet and social media in accessing public provisions and interfacing with government agencies.

This study can provide critical inputs for information dissemination and last-mile public service delivery through digital tools. Public awareness about government schemes and other necessary information can be propagated through online messaging platforms which are more widely used by the migrant workers. Such information can be provided through those who are more trusted by migrant workers and their households, like local government functionaries. This model was highly successful in, where primary healthcare workers used WhatsApp groups to share information during the pandemic. This served purposes of information dissemination and information validation. The government must also recognise historical inequalities that accentuate the digital divide and should continue public service delivery in the offline mode as well.

The findings are limited in their scope as it is based on a small sample of migrant workers residing in one Indian city. Nevertheless, they can contribute to understanding the general information asymmetries and digital divide among marginalised communities in India. This study calls for further explorations on how information technology can be leveraged to reach marginalised sections of the society and how the adoption of digital communication platforms by the state needs to be more democratic and inclusive in nature.

Bibliography

ActionAid Association, 2020. *Together against COVID: An update on humanitarian response across India*, Delhi: ActionAid Association (India).

ActionAid Association, 2020. *Workers in the time of COVID-19: Round I of the National Study of Informal Workers*, Delhi: ActionAid Association (India).

Banerjee, B., 1983. Social Networks in the Migration Process: Emperical Evidence on Chain Migration in India. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 17(2), pp. 185-196.

Barhate, B. et al., 2021. Crisis Within a Crisis: Migrant Workers' Predicament During COVID-19 Lockdown and the Role of Non-profit Organizations in India. Indian *Journal of Human Development,* 15(1), pp. 151-164.

BBC, 2019. *Mobile data: Why India has the world's cheapest*. [Online] Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47537201 [Accessed 9 August 2022].

Bhagat, R. B. et al., 2020. The COVID-19, *Migration and Livelihood in India,* Mumbai: International Institute of Population Sciences.

Breman, J., 1996. *Footloose labour : working in India's informal economy*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CSIP, 2020. *The Impact Of COVID-19 On India's Nonprofit Organisations: A Snapshot Report,* s.l.: Ashoka University.

Deshingkar, P. & Start, D., 2003. *Seasonal Migration for Livelihood in India: Coping, Accumulation and Exclusion,* London: Overseas Development Institute.

Down To Earth, 2021. *Celebrating the role of Indian NGOs in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/celebrating-the-role-of-indian-ngos-in-combating-the-covid-19-pandemic-75697 [Accessed 5 May 2022].

Economic Times, 2022. *With 117 crore subscribers, India is world's 2nd largest telecom market,* says TRAI chairman PD Vaghela. [Online]
Available at: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/with-117-crore-subscribers-india-is-worlds-2nd-largest-telecom-market-says-trai-chairman-pd-vaghela/articleshow/95305746.cms [Accessed 5 May 2023].

Financial Express, 2017. *Indian telecom sector second largest market in world; significant contribution to country's GDP growth.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/tapping-the-telecom-sector-for-next-phase-of-gdp-growth/980877/
[Accessed 5 May 2023].

Fernandes, D. & Paul GD, B., 2011. Social Networks of Migrant Construction Workers in Goa. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations,* 47(1), pp. 65-77.

Ghosh, J., 2020. A critique of the Indian government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Industrial and Business Economics,* Volume 47, pp. 519-530.

GoI, 2022. *Telecom Staistics India-2020,* Delhi: Statistics Unit, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, Government of India.

Gupta, A., Raghav, K. & Dhakad, P., 2019. The Effect on the Telecom Industry and Consumers after the Introduction of Reliance Jio. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research,* 9(3), pp. 118-137.

Harris, J. R. & Todaro, M. P., 1970. Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis. *The American Economic Review,* 60(1), pp. 126-142.

ILO, 2020. *Road map for developing a policy framework for the inclusion of internal migrant workers in India,* Geneva: International Labour Office.

Jan Sahas, 2020. *Voices of the Invisible Citizens: A Rapid Assessment on the Impact of the COVID-19 Lockdown on Internal Migrant Workers; Recommendations for the State, Industry and Philanthropies,* Delhi: Jan Sahas.

Joshi, A. et al., 2020. Gender and the Digital Divide Across Urban Slums of New Delhi, India: Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research,* 22(6).

Keshri, K. & Bhagat, R. B., 2012. Temporary and Seasonal Migration: Regional Pattern, Characteristics and Associated Factors. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 47(4), pp. 81-88.

Kumar, A. & Kumar, M., 2020. Marginalised Migrants and Bihar as an Area of Origin. *Economic and Political Weekly,* 55(24), pp. 21-24.

Lewis, W. A., 1954. Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour. T*he Manchester School,* 22(2).
Available at: https://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/368/368lewistable.pdf
[Accessed 5 May 2023]

Mahapatro, S. R., 2010. Bangalore: The Institute for Social and Economic Change.

Marchang, R., 2022. Social Networks, Job Search Flexibility, Employability, and Mobility of Migrant Workers. *Economic & Political Weekly,* 57(30), pp. 60-67.

MCRG, 2020. *Border of an Epidemic: COVID-19 and Migrant Workers.* 1st ed. Kolkata: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group .

NDTV, 2020. *Nitish Kumar Launches Scheme To Assist People Stranded Outside Bihar Amid Lockdown.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/covid-19-bihar-chief-minister-nitish-kumar-launches-scheme-to-provide-special-assistance-to-people-s-2207300
[Accessed 5 May 2022].

News18, 2020. *Lockdown & Labour Pain: The Demand for MNREGA Work Has Never Been so Strong,* Says Economist Jean Dreze. [Online]
Available at: https://www.news18.com/news/india/lockdown-labour-pain-the-demand-for-mnrega-work-has-never-been-so-strong-says-economist-jean-dreze-2600383.html
[Accessed 5 May 2022].

Nizam, A., Sivakumar, P. & Rajan, S. I., 2022. Interstate Migration in India During the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Analysis Based on Mobile Visitor Location Register and Roaming Data. *Journal of South Asian Development,* 17(3), pp. 271-296.

PIB, 2020. *Annexure to Ministry of Home Affairs Order No. 40-3/2020-D.* [Online]
Available at: https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/Guidelines.pdf
[Accessed 5 May 2022].

PIB, 2020. *Finance Minister announces Rs 1.70 Lakh Crore relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana for the poor to help them fight the battle against Corona Virus.* [Online]
Available at: https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1608345
[Accessed 5 May 2022].

PIB, 2020. *Indian Railways operationalizes 4197 "Shramik Special" trains till 3rd June, 2020 (0900hrs) across the country and transports more than 58 lacs passengers to their home states through "Shramik Special" trains since May 1.* [Online]
Available at: https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1629043
[Accessed 5 May 2022].

PRIA, 2021. *Civil Society Support to Covid-19 Affected Families,* Delhi: Participatory Research in Asia.

Reja, M. S. & Das, B., 2019. Labour Migration within India: Motivations and Social Networks. *South Asia Research,* 39(2), pp. 125-142.

Roy, I., 2016. *Labour migration from (and in) Bihar: Continuities and change,* Oxford: International Growth Centre, University of Oxford.

Sarkar, P., 2019. 2011 Census Snapshot Out-Migration from Bihar: Major Reasons and Destinations. *Journal of Migration Affairs,* 2(1), pp. 132-140.

Smyth, T. N., Kumar, S., Medhi, I. & Toyama, K., 2010. *Where There's a Will There's a Way: Mobile Media Sharing in Urban India.* Atlanta, ACM.

Srivastava, R., 2019. *Emerging Dynamics of Labour Market Inequality in India: Migration, Informality, Segmentation and Social Discrimination*. Mumbai, The Indian Journal of Labour Economics.

Srivastava, R., 2020. *Understanding Circular Migration in India: Its Nature and Dimensions, the Crisis under Lockdown and the Response of the State*, Delhi: Institute for Human Development.

Srivastava, R. & Sasikumar, S. K., 2003. *An overview of migration in India, its impacts and key issues.* Dhaka, Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia.

SWAN, 2020. *21 Days and Counting: COVID-19 Lockdown, Migrant Workers, and the Inadequacy of Welfare Measures in India,* s.l.: Stranded Workers Action Network.

Tandon, R. & Aravind, R., 2021. Source of Life or Kiss of Death: Revisiting State-Civil Society Dynamics in India during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Nonprofit Policy Forum,* 2(1), pp. 147-163.

Taylor, J. E., 1986. Differential Migration, Networks, Information and Risk. In: O. Stark, ed. *Research in Human Capital and Development.* Greenwich: JAI Press, pp. 147-71.

The Hindu, 2020. Data | *How Bihar fares in various socio-economic indicators compared to other states.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-how-bihar-fares-in-various-socio-economic-indicators-compared-to-other-states/article32744361.ece
[Accessed 5th May 2022].

The Indian Express, 2020. *Help govt serve poor: PM Modi to NGOs.* [Online]
Available at: https://indianexpress.com/article/india/crime/coronavirus-india-lockdown-help-govt-serve-poor-pm-modi-to-ngos-6339236/
[Accessed 5 May 2022].

The Print, 2020. *Over 1 cr migrants returned to their native states after lockdown, UP sees most returns — govt.* [Online]
Available at: https://theprint.in/india/over-1-cr-migrants-returned-to-their-native-states-after-lockdown-up-sees-most-returns-govt/502456/
[Accessed 8 May 2022].

TRAI, 2012. *Telecom Sector in India: A Decadal Profile,* Delhi: Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

Vijayan, A., 2019. Digital India - A Roadmap to Sustainability. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering,* 8(5), pp. 571-576.

Vikram Srinivas, A. K., 2017. *Direct Benefit Transfer, Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile, GOI, 2017-18,* Delhi: Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research

actionaid
ActionAid Association (India)

www.actionaidindia.org @actionaidindia

actionaidcomms @company/actionaidindia actionaid_india

Actionaid Association, F-5 (First Floor), Kailash Colony, New Delhi -110048.

+911-11-40640500

ActionAid Association is an Indian organisation working for social and ecological justice in 24 states and two union territories. Together with supporters, allied organisations, communities, institutions and governments, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all.