

Study Report

Lives and Livelihoods of Migrant Workers Returned to their Homes in MP During COVID-19 Pandemic



**Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute
of Good Governance
and Policy Analysis**

Study Report

Lives and Livelihoods of Migrant Workers Returned to their Homes in MP During COVID-19 Pandemic



**Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance
and Policy Analysis**

© Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis (AIGGPA), Sushasan Bhavan, Bhadbhada Square, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India, PIN-462003. <http://aiggpa.mp.gov.in/>

This report is the property of the institute and we encourage dissemination of our work for non-commercial and non-executive purpose, so long as the source is properly acknowledged.

Under the guidance of

Shri Manish Rastogi

Director General AIGGPA

Shri R. Parasuram,

(Former- Director General AIGGPA)

Shri Girish Sharma

Director AIGGPA

Shri Mangesh Tyagi,

Principal Advisor,

Centre for Social Sector Development, AIGGPA

Shri Madan Mohan Upadhyay,

Principal Advisor,

State Health Resource Center, AIGGPA (Former Principal Advisor for Social Sector)

Project Coordinator

Ms Priyanka Gajbhiye,

Advisor, Centre for Social Sector Development, AIGGPA

Research Associates

Rajeev Kumar Vishwakarma

Field Support Team

Association for Social Advancement (ASA) – Alirajpur, Chhatarpur and Badwani

Centre for Advances Research and Development (CARD) – Jhabua, Dhar, Mandla

Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) – Dindori, Betul and Balaghat

Self Reliant Initiative through Joint Action (SRIJAN) – Chhindwara, Tikamgarh

Dharti Gramothan and Sahbhagi Gramin Vikas Samiti (DHARTI) – Morena, Bhind, Sheopur and Panna

Key Message

Migration of labour is an important factor affecting the course of socio-economic development in India. The COVID-19 triggered exodus is a sudden reversal of this cumulative migration of seven decades.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis initiated this study to get some of the practical and appropriate answers of migrant's problem in COVID context to promptly respond the crisis of migrant workers and work on long term strategies to improve their lives and livelihoods at source and destination (place of migration).

Department of Panchayati Raj has recorded a total of 14.79 lacs migrant workers returned from various parts of the country and from within Madhya Pradesh to their homes during 1st April 2020 to 10 June 2020. Majority of them either lost their jobs or not receiving any payments from their employer as a result of temporary shutdown of the business.

AIGGPA with the field support team conducted interviews with 450 migrant workers returned from various parts of the countries to the selected 15 districts where study is conducted. It has found that majority of migrant workers (71%) were between 20 to 40 years age group; 59% belongs to Scheduled Tribes and about 58% respondents hold a BPL card and 63% have MNREGA cards. At the time of the study conducted in July 2020, a majority of 84% had no employment after they returned home and has been there for an average of two months.

About 63% are willing to return to their work place once the pandemic is over, however 37% do not wish to return, but are willing to do some income generating activities or get a local employment nearby home town. Majority of them seek support from the government to generate more employment locally, through MNREGA, in setting up factories and support for employment activities and acquiring skills etc.

The study has suggested some immediate and long term strategies which includes immediate cash transfer, skills mapping, generating more employment under MNREGA and other government schemes, development of legal framework for migrants, interstate coordination mechanism, provision and distribution of essential services, like, food, shelter, education, health and social protection and security for migrant workers where they migrate.

The study output may help the government to make informed decision and formulate appropriate policies, framework and strategies while dealing with migrant workers in planning, provisioning of facilities and resources at their source and destination places. Such programme would facilitate them to access services and their entitlements at the source and destination as well as to improve their lives and livelihoods.

Girish Sharma
Director, AIGGPA

Preface

Every citizen is vulnerable to the containment and confinement strategy for COVID-19; however, daily wage migrant workers lie at the bottom of the pyramid. COVID-19 gave rise to a proactive response by the government, private, NGOs and politicians to ease the lives of the marginalized. Broadly the thrust of the current response strategy towards migrant workers is to fulfill their need for food. During COVID-19, migrant workers faced challenges due to lockdown. The conditions that pushed migrant workers to break the lockdown and assemble in thousands at a bus or train station are certainly more than food and financial need. The mental upshot of lockdown among migrant workers was a lack of certainty of an income and risk of becoming the victims of community spread of the Corona virus.

This study analyses the lives and livelihoods of the migrant workers returned back to their homes in Madhya Pradesh from different parts of the country. It estimated the scale of migrant workers returning home with the help of district administration. Understand the reasons of migration - whether migration is distress or aspiration trajectory. Examine their socio-demographic profile: constitutional status (BPL, SC, ST etc.), gender distribution, marital and family status, educational and skill levels etc. also examined the entitlements or benefits they are currently availing from government programmes. Based on the evidences collected recommendation are made for immediate measures with strategies for better relief and response towards the migrant labourers livelihoods in COVID-19 situation. Suggested strategies required for registration and management of migrant population and improve their lives and livelihoods of migrant workers / returnees in long-term. Madhya Pradesh has shown the way ahead by surveying returnee migrant workers and mapping their skill sets.

AIGGPA, being the pioneer institute in policy research and analysis, has conducted this study to provide first hand information on migrant worker's current and emerging situation in the state so, that government can take necessary actions to appropriately respond to the current crisis and intensify the efforts supporting migrant's lives and livelihoods, while also continuing to work on long term strategies as suggested in this study.

Mangesh Tyagi

Principal Advisor,
Centre for Social Sector Development,
AIGGPA

Acknowledgement

I would like to mention that the genesis of work started with several rounds of discussions at the AIGGPA team about the proposed study.

I would like to express thanks of gratitude to Mr. Manish Rastogi, Director General, AIGGPA for his support and guidance as and when required for completion of this study. I would like to thank to Mr Mangesh Tyagi, Principal Advisor, Center for Social Sector Development, AIGGPA for his valuable inputs, suggestions and support in conducting this study. I also express my thanks to all AIGGPA team members who have supported directly and indirectly in different phases of this study.

My sincere thanks to the organizations like CARD, PRADAN, ASA, SRIJAN and DHARTI Sanstha for participating in the data collections from 15 districts in short period in time. The meetings and discussions helped in understanding various aspects of migrant workers in COVID-19 context.

I would like to express my earnest thanks to all senior officials of Department of Panchayati Raj and District Administration who all contributed by sharing their valuable insights and information. The support received from District level officials especially from Jhabua, Alirajpur, Chhindwara, Dhar, Barwani, Panna, Dindori, Betul, Balaghat, Mandla, Sheopur, Morena, Bhind, Tikamgarh and Chhattarpur during the field work was very encouraging and helped add value to the data collection. I also thank to Mr. Rajeev Vishwakarma for consulting support in conducting the study.

Priyanka Gajbhiye

Advisor (Social Sector Development)
AIGGPA, Bhopal

Table of Content

Study Team	2
Key Message	3
Preface	4
Acknowledgement	5
List of Tables	7
List of Graphs	7
Abbreviations	9
Executive Summary	10
CHAPTER 1: Background of the Study	14
1 Introduction	14
1.1 Demographic Profile of Madhya Pradesh	14
1.2 Situation of Migrant Workers in India and MP	14
2 Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Migrant Workers	16
3 About the Study	17
CHAPTER-2: Results and Findings	19
Section-1: Estimation of Returnees Migrants in MP	19
Section-2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents	22
Section-3: Livelihood Resources and Income of Respondents at Source Place	24
Section-4: Migration of the Respondents	28
Section-5: Status of Employment and Facilities of Respondents at Destination Place	31
Section-6: Income, Expenditure and Savings of Respondents at Destination Place	33
Section-7: Situation in Lockdown and Return Journey	36
Section-8: Current Status of Respondents Skills, Employment and Entitlements	39
Section-9: Respondents Plan to Return Again	42
CHAPTER 3: Conclusions and Recommendations	44
1.1 Immediate Action and Intensification of Efforts	44
1.2 Long Term Strategies	45
References	48

List of Tables

Table No.	Description	Page No.
Table-1	List of sample districts and blocks	18
Table-2	List of districts with returnees from within and out of MP	20
Table-3	Sex of the respondents	22
Table-4	Age group of the respondents	22
Table-5	Reasons for not able to make any income from agriculture land	26
Table-6	Livestock details of the respondents	26
Table-7	Length of stay of respondents at the place of destination (Seasonal)	30
Table-8	Length of stay of respondents at the place of destination (long-term)	30
Table-9	Contact person for respondents while migrating	30
Table-10	Nature of employment of respondents at destination place	31
Table-11	Types of regular jobs respondents were doing at the destination place	31
Table-12	Months when respondents returned home	36
Table-13	Who provided support to the respondents in transit	37
Table-14	Who provided support to the respondents upon return	38
Table-15	List of districts with % of BPL and MNREGA cardholders	40
Table-16	Respondents plan to return back	42
Table-17	Reason for respondents who do not wish to return	42
Table-18	Respondents future plan to stay back	42
Table-19	Suggestions from respondents to improve livelihood in rural areas	43

List of Graphs

Figure No.	Description	Page No.
Figure-1	Map of India	14
Figure-2	Map of India with reverse migration flow	16
Figure-3	Sample districts	18
Figure-4	Migrants returned from within and out of state in MP	19
Figure-5	District wise %age of migrant workers returnees	19
Figure-6	District wise migrants workers returned from with-in and out of MP	21
Figure-7	Castes of the respondents	22
Figure-8	% age of district wise respondents (ST)	22
Figure-9	% age of district wise respondents (SC)	22
Figure-10	Family size of the respondents	23
Figure-11	Educational status of the respondents	23
Figure-12	Male, Female literacy level comparison	23

Figure-13 District wise landholdings of the respondents	24
Figure-14 Size of landholdings of respondents	24
Figure-15 % age of respondents making income from their agriculture lands	24
Figure-16 District wise details of respondents taking income from agriculture lands	25
Figure-17 Annual income of respondents from less than 1 acre of land	25
Figure-18 Annual income of respondents from 1-2 acres of land	25
Figure-19 Annual income of respondents from over 2 acres of land	26
Figure-20 Respondents taking income from livestock	27
Figure-21 Monthly income from livestock	27
Figure-22 Respondent's earning hands in the family	27
Figure-23 Year wise migration	28
Figure-24 States where respondents migrated	28
Figure-25 Reason for migration	29
Figure-26 Nature of migration	29
Figure-27 Types of work respondents were doing at the destination place	31
Figure-28 Types of facilities provided by the employer to the respondents	32
Figure-29 Individual income of respondents as sole earner	33
Figure-30 No. of family members earning with respondents	33
Figure-31 Gross monthly income of respondents having more than one earner	34
Figure-32 Average monthly expenses of the respondents	34
Figure-33 % age of respondents savings and sending money back home	34
Figure-34 Average monthly savings of the respondents	35
Figure-35 Annual remittance by the respondents to their families	35
Figure-36 Mode of transfer of money back home	35
Figure-37 Key reasons for returning back home	36
Figure-38 Mode of transport used by the respondents to return	36
Figure-39 Money spent by the respondents to return home	37
Figure-40 Amount of money borrowed by the respondents to return	37
Figure-41 Kind of support received by the respondents upon their return	38
Figure-42 Types of skills respondents possess	39
Figure-43 Institutions where respondents attended skills training	39
Figure-44 Respondents with BPL and MNREGA cards	40
Figure-45 Caste wise respondents do not have MNREGA cards	41
Figure-46 Caste wise respondents do not have BPL cards	41
Figure-47 Status of current employment of the respondents	41
Figure-48 Status of employment under any government scheme	41

Abbreviations

ASA	Association for Social Advancement
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CARD	Centre for Advances Research and Development
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
DHARTI Sanstha	Dharti Gramotthan Evam Sahbhagi Gramin Vikas Samiti
HDI	Human Development Index
MNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRADAN	Professional Assistance for Development Action
SC	Scheduled Caste
SRIJAN	Self Reliant Initiative through Joint Action
SRLM	State Rural Livelihood Mission
SRS	Sample Registration System
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

In India migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic have faced multiple hardships. With factories and workplaces shut down due to the lockdown imposed in the country, millions of migrant workers had to deal with the loss of income, food shortages and uncertainty about their future. Lacking jobs and money, and with public transportation shut down, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers were forced to walk hundreds of miles back to their home villages – with some dying during the journey.

About the study

This study was designed with an aim to understand the lives and livelihood status of migrant workers returned their homes during COVID-19 pandemic. The output of the study will help to design strategies which would facilitate them to access services and their entitlements at the source as well as to improve their livelihoods. It will also be helpful for the policy makers to formulate appropriate policies and programmes for migrant workers in MP.

The study has been conducted in selected 15 districts of MPs bordering Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Data were collected through survey in 15 districts, conducting at least 450 detailed interviews of the migrant workers returned home during COVID-19 situation in Jhabua, Alirajpur, Dhar, Barwani, Betul, Panna, Dindori, Balaghat, Mandla, Sheopur, Morena, Bhind, Tikamgarh, Chhindwara and Chhattarpur. At least 30 samples from 30 rural blocks have been collected from each district.

Key Findings and Results

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents:

Among 450 respondents 11% were female and 89% were male. It was found that majority 71% respondents who migrated were between the age group of 20 to 40 years; and 59% belongs to the scheduled tribes and 17% to the scheduled castes; only 69% found to be literate and attended primary school and above.

2. Livelihood Resources and Income of Respondents at Source Place:

About 68% respondents found to be small holding farmers as they own less than 3 acres of agriculture land. Among these, 86% are making some income, and the maximum average annual income of these respondents ranges are below Rs. 20,000. Among those 50% respondents who own livestock, 44% possess cows and buffalo, 42% goats and only 14% has chicken. Out of which only 60% are making some income from their livestock and their maximum (60% respondent's) average annual income range is below 12 thousand rupees.

3. Migration of Respondents:

A majority of 87% respondents migrated during 2016-2020. Overall, 72% respondents said, they migrate seasonally. Among those 87%, about 28% people migrated to Gujarat, while 14% remained in Madhya Pradesh but in different cities, similarly 14% people migrated to Maharashtra followed by Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

It has been revealed that 54% people migrated with their families to the states as mentioned above, while 46% were un-accompanied. Key reasons for migration includes - 76% respondents said was not able to manage their living and has severe financial crisis to meet basic needs; while the second major reason was

from 35% people, said they wanted to earn more money to meet other needs in life may also defined as aspiration trajectory migration.

4. Status of Employment and Facilities of Respondents at Destination Place:

It was found that majority 60% migrant workers were engaged in labour work / daily wages, 18% in farming related work, 17% in regular jobs and only three of them were doing their own small enterprise.

Study also reveals that only 34% people were provided with some facilities mainly housing and food in addition to the wages by their employer.

5. Income, Expenditure and Savings of Respondents at the Destination Place:

Study results show that, earning of 21% people ranges between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 12,500 monthly followed by 35% people's income between Rs. 7,501 and Rs. 10,000 per month, and 27.5% had even lower income range between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 7,500 per month.

Expenditure: Living expenses of respondents ranges between Rs. 2501 – Rs. 5,000 per month for 43.5%; whereas 23.7% people spend below Rs. 2,500 per month and 16% people's spending between Rs. 5,001 and Rs. 7,500.

Savings: The data shows good saving practices among migrants; however the size of saving is small as their income range is also small. 25% people were able to save an average between Rs. 2,501 – 5,000 followed by 20% people between Rs. 5,001 – 7,500 and 17.5% people savings between Rs. 7,501 – 10,000 per month.

Remittance: Average annual remittance made by 19% respondents is between Rs. 10,001 and 20,000 annual, whereas 17.7% respondent's were able to send maximum Rs. 10,000 which is below one thousand rupees per month.

Mode of transfers of money: Transfer of money / remittances made through various modes, including the majority 55% through bank transfers, followed by 20% and 17% by cash and by hand either through someone visiting home or by themselves when they travel back home in single or multiple time in a year.

6. Return of Respondents to their Home:

About 27% people returned immediately after the lockdown enforced on 24th March, 2020 whereas 24% returned in April followed by a major 32% return in May 2020. Key reasons of their return include enforcement of lockdown which affected their livelihoods and income and fear of infections of corona deadly virus.

The study reveals that, most of the respondents used their own little money available to return home. About 33% people borrowed money to meet the expenses to return home from the place they had migrated.

7. Current Status of Skills, Employment and Entitlements of Respondents:

A considerable percentage of respondents (40%) seems does not have any particular skill and reported that they can do multiple works; however, 60% respondents have wider range of skills related to various trades that include - 15% with farming skills, followed by 8% in construction works, and 16% said they have other mixed semi skilled work like construction labourer, tiles and marble work, guard, packaging, hotel waiter, cleaning work, boring work and driving. It also came out that only 8% attended a skills training in an institution.

58% respondent holds BPL card and 63% have MNREGA job cards. Among 58% who possess a BPL card about 81% of them also have MNREGA cards.

At the time of study conducted in July, 2020, a majority of 84% had no employment after they returned back home and has been there for an average of two months.

8. Respondents Plan to Migrate Again:

63% respondents are willing to return back to the place of work, however, 37% would like to stay back in their home / village.

Among those 37% people, who do not want to go back again to their place of migration, about 23% want to do their own farming, another 23% would like to do own business / open shops, however 37% said can do any type of labour work, 10% want to have jobs in government schemes like MNREGA.

Respondents were asked to give top three suggestions, how and what types of livelihood opportunities could be improved in rural areas so that people can work and earn at their own place. The major suggestions includes— 23% respondents suggested to create regular jobs under govt. schemes / MNREGA, other 23% said there should be some kind of employment opportunities for local people here, while 14% said there should be a factory nearby which should provide employment to the unemployed.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

It is important to note that a substantial portion of migration for all social categories is because of several socio-economic factors, but a high share of the both the ST and SC categories reported in this study migrating for employment when moving out, whether inter-district or inter-state. Many returnee migrant workers are from either the landless or marginal (or smallholders) farm households.

Immediate Action and Intensification of Efforts:

There is need to create awareness among returnees through panchayats and local leaders reaffirming their commitment towards welfare of returned migrant workers, as they need support in their current uncertain and stressful socio-economic conditions.

Majority of returnees came back with no or very little amount of cash, many of them even borrowed money for transit and meeting basic needs upon their return. Direct cash benefits should be made to the genuine individual and families for their survival in this crisis, until they get some regular source of income.

MNREGA could be an opportunity for government to make rural area infrastructure development plans especially in agriculture and irrigation system to provide employment to the people and at the same time get such plan implemented without any shortages of labour as there are many available at present in their respective areas.

Need to understand the gaps between existing skills of migrant workers and skill required by industry sectors. These gaps need to be filled by providing skill development training programs with the linkages of industry demand in mission mode.

Health, education and social protection are very essential for the migrants, their children and families. There is need to link them with various respective service provisions and programmes so that, they can receive such services as and when needed in this crisis.

Long-term Strategies:

A well designed management information system for migrant workers and a coordination framework to be agreed among states. A registration system at the source and destination is very essential to track the migrants, their skills and ensure they are supported appropriately.

Government should also regulate the employment system of migrant workers and have a legal framework for the employer especially of un-organized / informal sector. There should be minimum standards and legal contracting for migrant workers where they work and stay.

There is need to establish a permanent helpline and facilitation centre where the migrant workers can get all the information they may need. Using various media and activities are important to create awareness among migrant workers about issues e.g. skill development, registrations, schooling, legal aid, workers rights and entitlements etc.

Migrant workers should have access to skilling programmes offered under initiative such as *Skill India* in both rural (source) and urban (destination) areas. Government should map out the demand and supply side of the skills and employment opportunities to create a highly skilled workforce for various sectors.

Although, the government is implementing several schemes, that supports poor and marginalized population for their good living, but in this case of migrant workers, because their nature of stay it becomes challenging how the public services could be provided. However, such public services for poor and vulnerable population such as food security, health, and education, housing and social protection are vital in order to reduce migrant workers stress and sufferings. With the provision of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Ayushman Bharat Yojana, it should be coordinated among states and cities that migrant workers should have access to such provisions as long as they stay at the place or wherever they go next.

Raju Bhalvi
Age-40 years, Male, Education: 8th pass
Family: Wife and children
Village: Bhodwa, Lamta, Balaghat
Skill: Construction work

“It was not possible here to manage good family living and I was not getting any job here, so decided to leave family and earn money for my children's better education. I went to Hyderabad (Telangana) with the help of a contractor.”

“This is was time I went to Hyderabad, because I was new and had no contacts there so faced lots of challenges when started doing contractor work in house constructions. But, slowly when work starts growing my challenges were reduced.”

“Now, in this pandemic there was not work, all types of work was closed and I was facing enormous challenge to live there as my money were finished. That is why I have to come back to my home on 5th June 2020.”

“If I can get work in my state and district to manage my family living, then I want to live here. I want to live with my family and work together and do not want to go to other state.”

CHAPTER-1

Background of the Study

1. Introduction:

1.1 Demographic Profile of Madhya Pradesh:

Madhya Pradesh is centrally located in India (Figure-1), with a population of 72.6 million, is the sixth-most populous state in the country. Over the last decade, the state has witnessed a 20.3 % growth in its population. Out of the total population, about 72.4% live in rural areas and 29.63 % lives in urban area.¹

According to the 2011 census, Madhya Pradesh has one of the largest population of STs, which is 21.1% of the state population (15.31 million out of 72.62 million) and 15.62% population of SCs which is 11.34 million out of 72.62 million. Dindori, Chhindwara, Mandla, Betul, Seoni and Shahdol, Rewa, Khandwa, Shivpuri and Shahdol has highest number of STs however, Datia, Ujjain and Tikamgarh has the highest SC population in MP.

Madhya Pradesh had 20,059,666 urban populations in 2011, which is 5.3 percent of total urban population of the country. The states have eighth rank in urban population among India's states. In the state, the highest urban population lives in Indore (12.1% of total urban population of the state) followed by Bhopal (9.55%), Jabalpur (7.18%) and Gwalior (6.35%) and the lowest urban population found in Dindori (0.16% of the state urban population) followed by Alirajpur (0.28%), Jhabua (0.46%).

The state is rich in natural resources – fuels, minerals, agriculture and biodiversity. The state has largest reserves of coal and copper in India. Despite being endowed with vast natural resources like forest mineral, rivers, vast and valuable flora and fauna, Madhya Pradesh has ranked the fourth poorest in the country, with Alirajpur the poorest district in India in the recent Global Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index 2018, a shocking 76.5% of the population here is poor.²

1.2 Situation of Migration in India and MP

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. It can be over a short or long distance, be short-term or permanent, voluntary or forced, international or national. There are different streams of



Figure 1: Map of India

¹<http://www.censusmp.nic.in/censusmp/All-PDF/2Population21.12.pdf>

²Global multi-dimensional poverty index 2018

migration generally relating to the degree of economic and social development in the area of origin as well as area of destination.³

The Economic Survey of India, 2017 finds that inter-state migration in India was close to 9 million annually between 2011 and 2016. Migration of labour is an important factor affecting the course of socio-economic development in India. Comprising 20% of the workforce, migrant labour became vital to every economic sector, especially the informal sector and MSMEs, constituting nearly 50% of India's GDP.

The COVID-19 triggered exodus is a sudden reversal of this cumulative migration of seven decades.⁴ According to the 2011 census, five states in India face the maximum pressure, these are; Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Haryana. They host up to 50% of the inter-state migrants. Mumbai and Delhi top the list with approximately 9.9 million migrants. While 50 % of these migrant workers come from four northern states, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh, Out of these, approximately 20.9 million come from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Migration is not limited to inter-state movement; people migrate within states, from one district to another district or between two towns in a district.

As per data from Census 2011, about 16% of the total intra-state migrants in India belong to the SCs and 8% to the STs, almost equal to their share in the total population. This proportion has remained constant since 2001, when SCs made up 15.7% and STs 8% of intra-state migrants.

Migrant workers encompass a diverse group of individual, different in their skill, education background, languages, the purpose of migration etc. These unorganized groups of migrant workers face various problems like poor economic status, low income range, language barrier, no coordination etc., though there are studies on migrant labourers concerning international and internal migrant workers (within the country) but the local internal (interstate and intrastate) migrant workers problems are not clearly dealt with.

As per Census-2011, **in Madhya Pradesh** a total of 4.97 lacs people migrated within the state **from rural areas** which includes a total of 2.83 lacs from rural to rural and 1.96 lacs from rural to urban areas as compare to a total of 1.46 lacs within the state **from urban areas** including about 36 thousand from urban to rural and 1.1 lacs from urban to urban are for the purpose of work / employment and lived between 0-9 years at the destination.

Similarly, about 95 thousand people **migrated out of state from rural areas** including about 36 thousand from rural to rural and 59 thousand from rural to urban areas, as compare to a total about 69, thousand from urban areas including 11 thousand from urban to rural and about 58 thousand from urban to urban in other states. These migration were reported in Census-2011 as, the people migrated from MP to other states for work / employment purposes and has been living there since past 0-9 years.

³Census of India – 2001

⁴<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/view-india-should-use-migrant-labour-crisis-to-transform-economy-society/articleshow/76184723.cms>

2. Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Migrant Workers:

COVID-19 has caused a major havoc in the economic sector, globally. Indian migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic have faced multiple hardships. With factories and workplaces shut down due to the lockdown imposed in the country, millions of migrant workers had to deal with the loss of income, food shortages and uncertainty about their future. Lacking jobs and money, and with public transportation shut down, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers were forced to walk hundreds of miles back to their home villages – with some dying during the journey.

The outflow of migrant workers to their respective states has been depicted in Figure-2 (Map of India with reverse migration flow)⁵. According to a report by World Bank, more than 40 million internal migrant workers have been affected due to COVID-19. This internal migration of reverse nature is reported to be two and a half times that of an international relocation.⁶

The conditions that pushed migrant workers to break the lockdown and assemble in thousands at a bus or train station are certainly more than food and financial need.

The mental upshot of lockdown among migrant workers is a lack of certainty of an income and risk of becoming the victims of community spread of the Corona virus.

The phase 3 of the lockdown, which was extended from May 4 to May 17, resulted in the death of 118 migrant workers, the highest among all other lockdown periods. The phase 3 contributed to almost 60 per cent of all migrant worker deaths during the lockdown, while phase one, two and four witnessed 25, 17 and 38 deaths respectively.

There has been a surge in road crashes with lifting of the restrictions across the states in phase 3 and phase 4. It is critical that states enhance enforcement to prevent road crashes and the citizens inculcate essential safety habits for the road like they did for personal hygiene during the lockdown. In terms of states, Uttar Pradesh saw the maximum deaths of migrant workers with 94 deaths, while Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Telangana saw 38, 16 and 11 deaths respectively. The cause of deaths in maximum number of cases was found to be vehicle to vehicle collisions in which 70 migrants lost their lives. Speeding resulted in the death of 49 migrant workers while vehicle overturn resulted in the death of 32 migrant workers.⁷

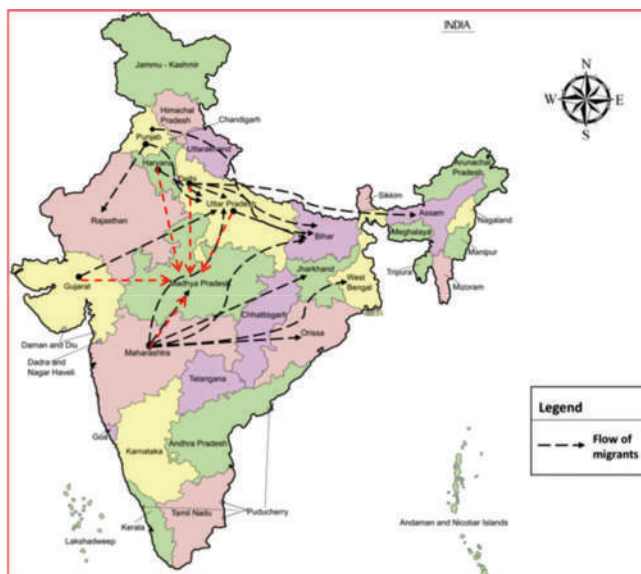


Figure 2 : Map of India with reverse migration flow

⁵ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0188440920309401>

⁶ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0188440920309401>

⁷ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2020/jun/03/most-migrants-died-during-covid-19-lockdown-30-savelife-foundation-2151565.html>

3. About the Study

In this COVID-19 pandemic situation, a large number of migrant workers are coming back from various states mainly from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi. These migrant workers are mix of seasonal, temporary and long-term who were away from their homes for some time.

During the lockdown they are now returning to their homes due to loss of their livelihoods and lack of social and health security at the place where they were working or living. These migrant workers may and may not necessarily be getting benefit from their home-based government schemes and their place of work due to various reasons.

Due to lack of information available with government about the migrated labourer, it is quite difficult to respond appropriately to help the returnees in immediate and long term with the means of their lives and livelihoods. In this context, it became very crucial for government to get appropriate scale and magnitude of the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers returning homes so that government can appropriately provide relief and respond to their livelihood needs and entitlements at their home village / town.

This study was undertaken to get some of the practical and appropriate answers of migrant's problem in COVID context to promptly respond the crisis of migrant workers and work on long term strategies to improve their lives and livelihoods at source and destination (place of migration).

3.1 Objectives:

This study was designed with an aim to understand the lives and livelihood status of migrant workers returned their homes during COVID-19 pandemic. The output of the study will help to design strategies which would facilitate them to access services and their entitlements at the source as well as to improve their livelihoods. It will also be helpful for the policy makers to formulate appropriate policies and programmes for migrant workers in MP.

3.1.1 The specific objectives were to:

- Estimate the scale of migrant workers returning home with the help of district administration.
- Understand the reasons of migration - whether migration is distress migration or to increase economic levels.
- Examine their socio-demographic profile: constitutional status (BPL, SC, ST etc.) gender distribution, marital and family status, educational and skill levels etc.
- Examine the entitlements or benefits they are currently eligible to avail / availing from government programmes.
- To recommend immediate measures with strategies for better relief and response towards the migrant labourers livelihoods in COVID-19 situation.
- To recommend strategies required for registration and management of migrant population and improve their lives and livelihoods of migrant workers / returnees.

3.2 Methodology:

The study has draw upon both primary and secondary data sources. Both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies have been used. The methodologies adopted to gather information includes personal interviews and individual case studies. Social distancing and other norms in the current context have been followed strictly.

A pre-defined questionnaire was used to collect the information through interviews with the migrant workers already returned their homes or temporarily living in quarantined / isolation camps (wherever the administration and situation allowed). Local NGOs and FIs were contacted to support data collection. Due to the fragility of the situation and various restrictions imposed by the government in virus affected areas, this study has considered the place where there were no restrictions. Secondary data was also collected from the appropriate district authorities and departments on returning migrant workers in all 52 districts of MP.

3.3 Sample Size:

The study has been conducted in selected 30 blocks as shown in Table-1 of 15 districts of MP, bordering Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. These districts are Jhabua, Alirajpur, Dhar, Barwani, Panna, Dindori, Betul, Balaghat, Mandla, Sheopur, Morena, Bhind, Tikamgarh and Chhattarpur as shown in Figure-3. At least 15 migrant workers were interviewed in each 30 blocks of 15 districts making a total of 450 detailed interviews of the migrant families returned home during the pandemic.

Several factors has been taken into consideration for selection of 450 samples from 15 district that includes – unknown status of migrant workers, very dynamic situation during the pandemic, several restrictions on travel and interacting with people especially those coming back from outside, limited time availability for the study. Having 15 samples mainly from a migrant family was a reasonable number for the study to understand the scenario within the given scope of work.

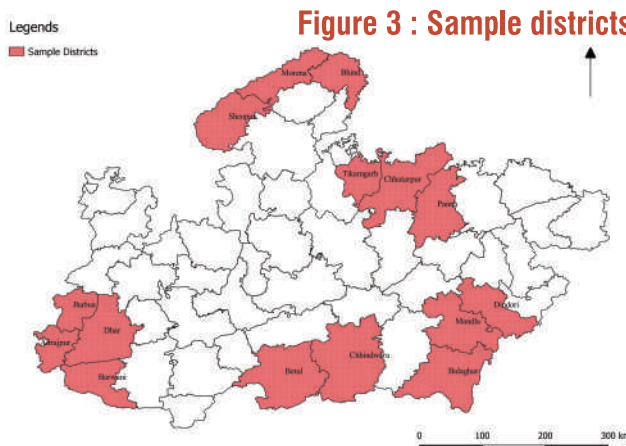


Table 1: List of Sample Districts and Blocks

S.N.	Districts	Blocks	S.N.	District	Blocks
1	Jhabua	Rama, Jhabua	9	Alirajpur	Jobat, Udaigarh
2	Dhar	Nalchha, Tirla	10	Badwani	Raipur, Paati
3	Betul	Shahpur, GhodaDongri	11	Balaghat	Paraswada, Lamta
4	Mandla	Ghughri, Mandla	12	Tikamgarh	Jatara, Palera
5	Dindori	Samanpur, Karanjia	13	Chhindwada	Chhindwada, Mokhet
6	Morena	Pahadgarh, Ambah	14	Sheopur	Vijapur, Karahal
7	Bhind	Gohad, Ater	15	Chhattarpur	Naugaon, Bijavar
8	Panna	Gunnaur, Shahdhar			

3.4 Limitations of the Study:

Key limitations in this study includes

- 1) the fragility during COVID-19 pandemic, several restrictions on travel, public gathering and meeting individuals during
- 2) because of the nature and purpose of the study, it did not investigate about rights and entitlements; and criteria and eligibility of the migrant workers, but we looked at their current status around BPL and MNREGA only.

CHAPTER-2

Study Results and Findings

Section-1: Estimation of Returnee Migrants in MP

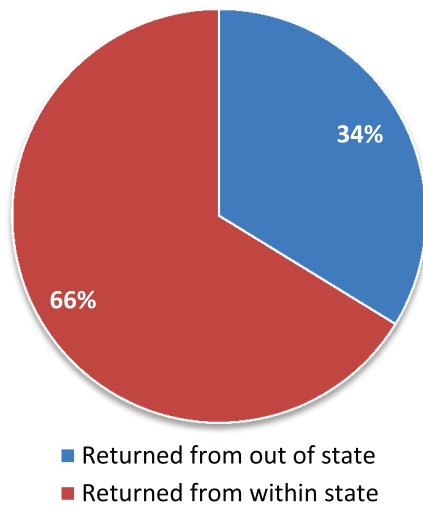


Figure 4 : Migrants returned from within and out of state in MP

Madhya Pradesh has recorded a total of 14,79,395 migrant workers returned from various parts of the country. This includes 4,99,472 (34%) from out of state and 9,79,923 (66%) from within Madhya Pradesh during 1st April 2020 to 10th June 2020 as shown in Figure-4. This period was the first complete lockdown enforced in the entire country.

It is estimated that majority of them either lost their jobs or were not receiving any payments from their employer as a result of temporary shutdown of the business.

Figure-5 shows district wise %age and number of migrant workers returned to their homes during 1 April 2020 and 10 June 2020.

Legends

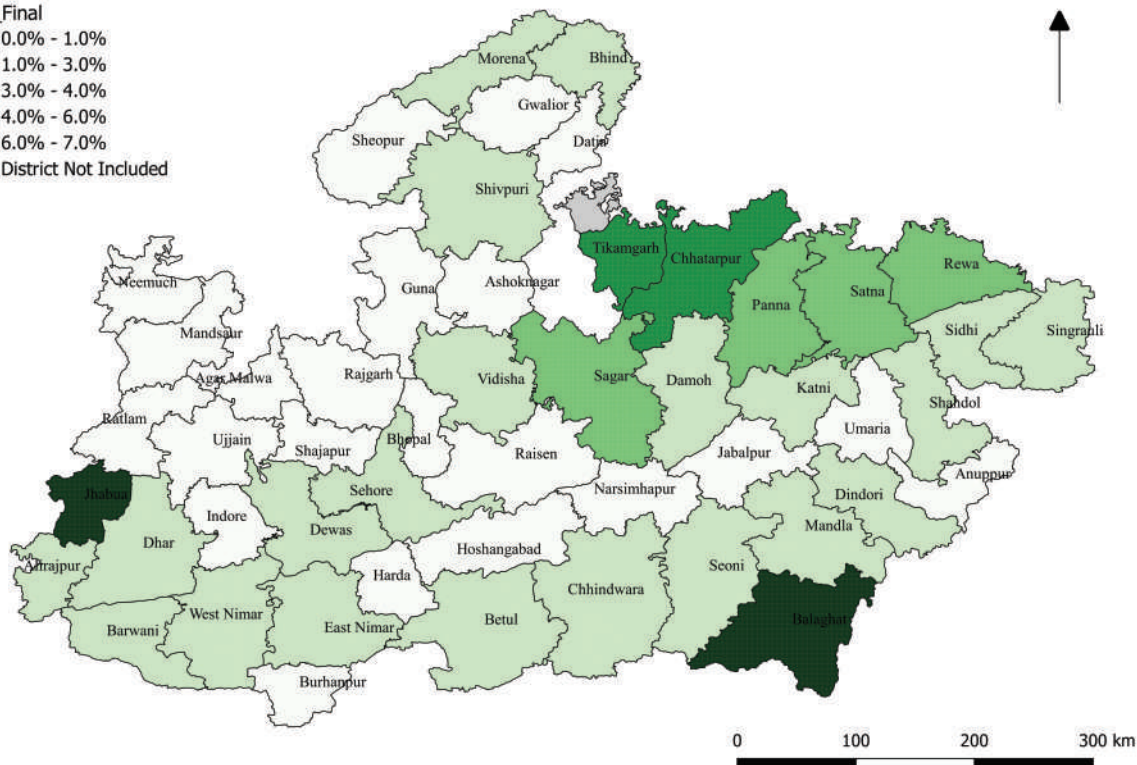
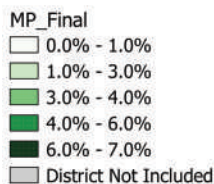


Figure 5 : District wise % age of returnees to sample districts

As shown in Table-2, the top 10 districts where highest number of migrant workers returned are Balaghat, Jhabua, Tikamgarh, Chhattarpur, Rewa, Satna, Sagar Panna, Bhind and Betul with over 40,000 returnees makes a total of 44% of the entire states returnees.

Table 2: List of districts with returnees from within and out of MP

Districts	Returned from out of state		Returned from within state		Total returnees	
	Numbers	% age	Numbers	% age	Numbers	% age
Balaghat	44,150	9%	60,485	6%	1,04,635	7%
Jhabua	9,093	2%	77,480	8%	86,573	6%
Tikamgarh	21,181	4%	61,285	6%	82,466	6%
Chhattarpur	35,866	7%	34,037	3%	69,903	5%
Rewa	35,398	7%	27,659	3%	63,057	4%
Satna	23,572	5%	36,777	4%	60,349	4%
Sagar	8,669	2%	46,486	5%	55,155	4%
Panna	39,060	8%	12,246	1%	51,306	3%
Bhind	13,243	3%	27,430	3%	40,673	3%
Betul	10,142	2%	30,321	3%	40,463	3%
Alirajpur	21,245	4%	18,599	2%	39,844	3%
Khandwa	4,140	1%	33,588	3%	37,728	3%
Shahdol	7,780	2%	28,015	3%	35,795	2%
Chhindwara	8,338	2%	26,361	3%	34,699	2%
Dindori	6,678	1%	27,935	3%	34,613	2%
Dhar	10,795	2%	22,946	2%	33,741	2%
Seoni	9,386	2%	24,324	2%	33,710	2%
Katni	7,587	2%	25,807	3%	33,394	2%
Mandla	11,183	2%	21,115	2%	32,298	2%
Singrauli	23,251	5%	7,914	1%	31,165	2%
Khargone	11,675	2%	18,625	2%	30,300	2%
Shivpuri	4,169	1%	25,742	3%	29,911	2%
Sidhi	20,734	4%	9,086	1%	29,820	2%
Barwani	10,466	2%	18,838	2%	29,304	2%
Dewas	2,152	0.4%	22,614	2%	24,766	2%
Vidisha	3,463	1%	21,267	2%	24,730	2%
Sehore	1,474	0.3%	22,020	2%	23,494	2%
Morena	6,332	1%	16,411	2%	22,743	2%
Damoh	16,563	3%	5,473	1%	22,036	1%
Datia	12,391	2%	9,041	1%	21,432	1%
Guna	5,860	1%	14,529	1%	20,389	1%
Raisen	1,074	0.2%	18,895	2%	19,969	1%
Mandsaur	5,529	1%	13,728	1%	19,257	1%
Ujjain	6,885	1%	10,802	1%	17,687	1%
Umaria	4,769	1%	10,838	1%	15,607	1%
Sheopur	4,514	1%	10,681	1%	15,195	1%
Ratlam	4,108	1%	9,551	1%	13,659	1%
Gwalior	4,431	1%	8,741	1%	13,172	1%
Burhanpur	4,402	1%	7,201	1%	11,603	1%
Anuppur	2,929	1%	7,960	1%	10,889	1%
Rajgarh	393	0.1%	9,866	1%	10,259	1%
Jabalpur	5,052	1%	4,179	0.4%	9,231	1%
Shajapur	2,738	1%	6,145	1%	8,883	1%
Agar Malwa	2,582	1%	5,109	1%	7,691	1%
Ashoknagar	807	0.2%	5,811	1%	6,618	0.4%
Harda	318	0.1%	5,930	1%	6,248	0.4%
Narsinghpur	508	0.1%	2,553	0.3%	3,061	0.2%
Indore	49	0.01%	2,891	0.3%	2,940	0.2%
Bhopal	1,258	0.3%	1,643	0.2%	2,901	0.2%
Hoshangabad	602	0.1%	2,266	0.2%	2,868	0.2%
Neemuch	488	0.1%	677	0.1%	1,165	0.1%
	4,99,472		9,79,923		14,79,395	100%

As shown in Figure-6, top 10 districts where highest number of migrant workers returned are Balaghat, Panna, Chhatarpur, Satna, Singrauli, Alirajpur, Tikamgarh, Sidhi and Damoh has over 15,000 to 44,000 returnees which make 56% of the total returnees from outside of the state. Total 9,79,923 people returned from within state which makes 66% of the total returnees in the state. Top 10 highest districts where migrant workers returned are Jhabua, Tikamgarh, Balaghat, Sagar, Satna, Chhatarpur, Khandwa, Betul, Shahdol, Dindori as shown in Fig-6 has over 27,000 to 77,000 returnees which make 45% of the total returnees from within the state.

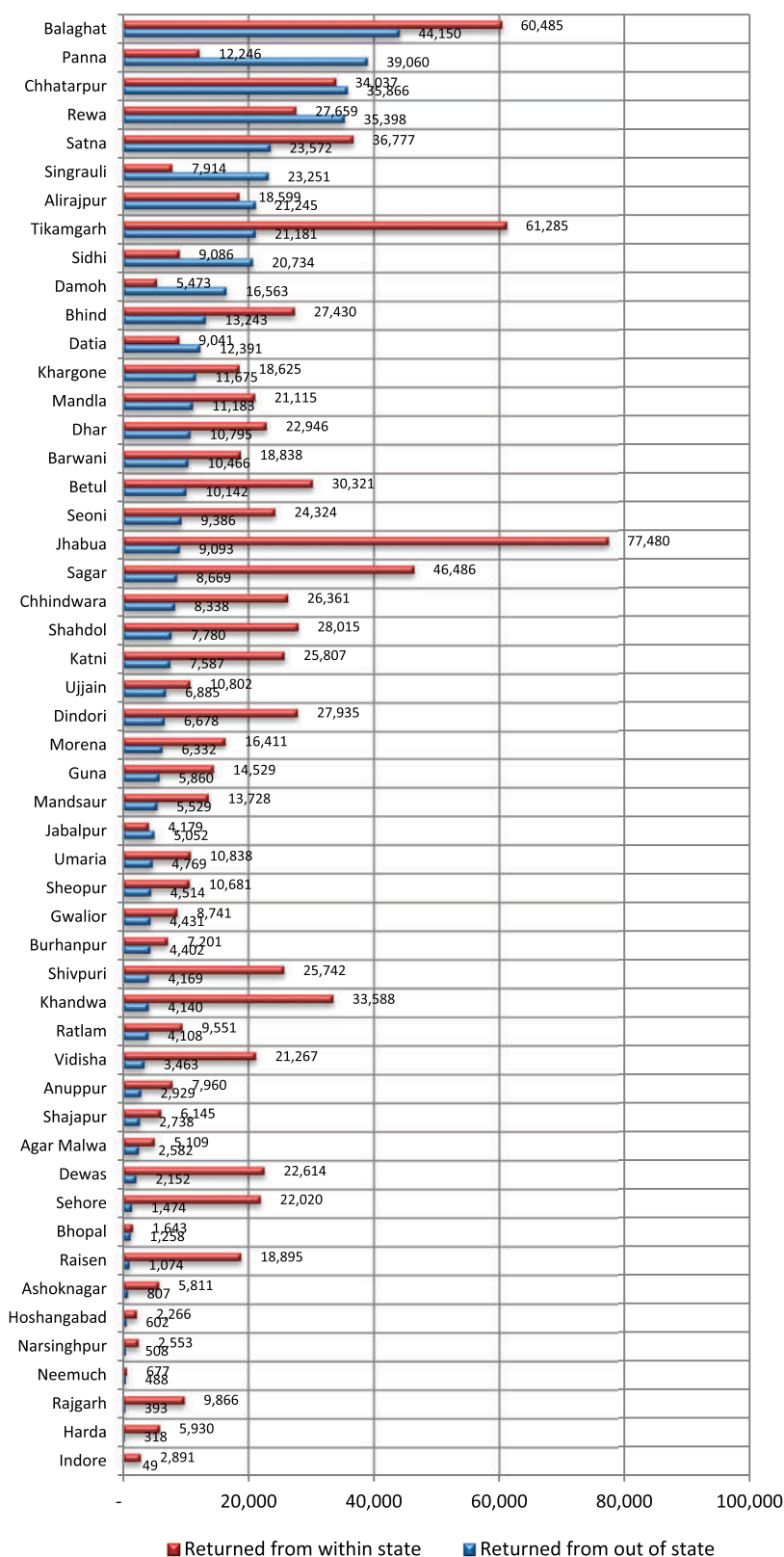


Figure 6 : District wise migrants returned from within and out of MP

Section-2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S2.1: Sex, Age group and Marital Status of the Respondents:

Out of 450 respondents from 15 districts, 89% were male and 11% were female as shown in the Table-3.

Analysis also shows that majority, 44% respondents were from the age group of 20-30 years followed by 27% among 31-40 years of age, whereas 41-50 years of age accounts for 14% and 3% were above 50 years. It is important to see that 12% respondents were below the age of 20 years as shown in Table-4. 75% respondents were found to be married and 24% were unmarried.

Table-3
Sex of the respondents

Male	Female
89%	11%

Table-4
Age group of the respondents

below 20 years	20-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	above 50 years
12%	44%	27%	14%	4%

S2.2: Castes of the Respondents:

Among the selected 15 districts for study, six districts namely—Mandla, Jhabua, Chhindwara, Dindori, Balaghat and Betul are one of the major hold of tribal populations in MP. However, in Alirajpur, Badwani Dhar, Sheopur also has considerable scheduled tribes followed by scheduled castes population. As shown in the Fig-7, majority 59% respondents were STs, 17% were SCs and 20% were from other backward castes whereas only 4% were from general category as shown in Figure-7. Figure-8 and 9 shows the distribution of SC and ST respondent district wise

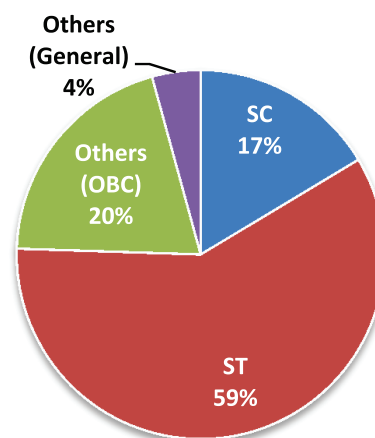


Figure 7 : Castes of the respondents

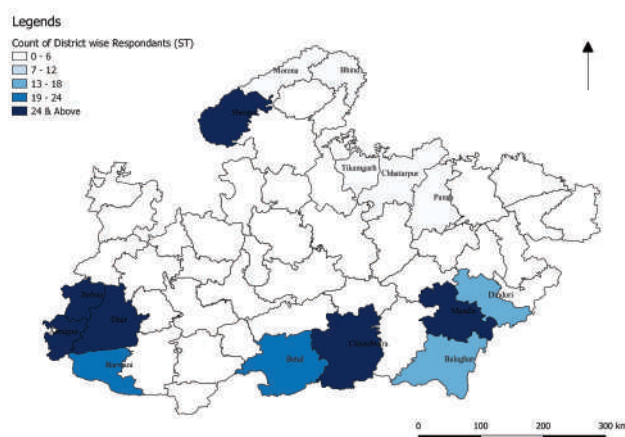


Figure 8 : Count of district wise respondents (ST)

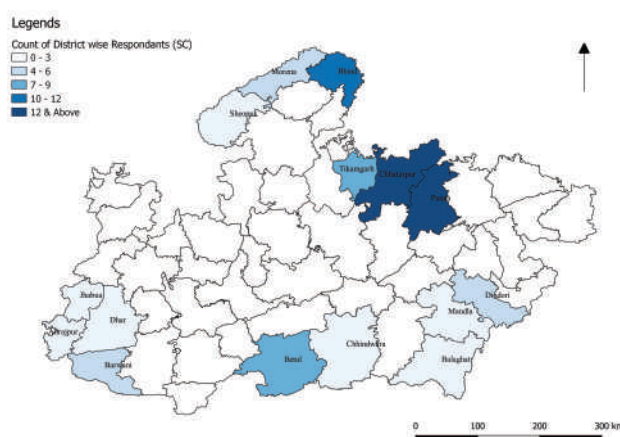


Figure 9 : Count of district wise respondents (SC)

S 2.3: Family Size

The average family size in Madhya Pradesh is five members per family. As shown in Figure-10, 50% respondents has an average family size between 6-10 members followed by 42% are having average number of members below 5, only 7% having an average of 11-15 members, which mostly seems belongs to a joint family living together.

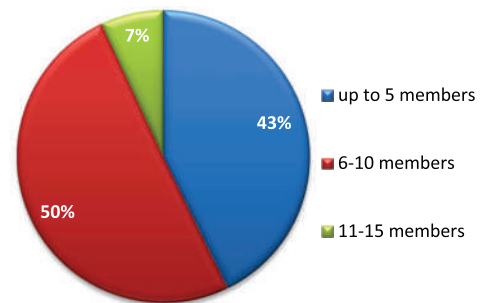


Figure 10 : Family size of the respondents

S 2.4: Educational Status of the Respondents

As per Census 2011, overall literacy rate of MP is 70.6%. In the study districts, as shown in Figure-11, overall literacy among people interviewed is 69% that is further categorized as 17% respondents attended primary school, 31% middle school, 7% higher secondary school and only 3% attended college. 12% are categorized as functionally literate as they can only put their signature, where as 19% were completely illiterate.

Between 89% male and 11% female of total respondents the literacy level among female is very low as compare to male shown in the Figure-12, 76% male are illiterate, and 87% male are functionally literate as compare to the female with 13%. Only 8% female attended primary school as compare to 92% male, followed by only 5% female up to middle school, 10% higher secondary and only 14% attended college.

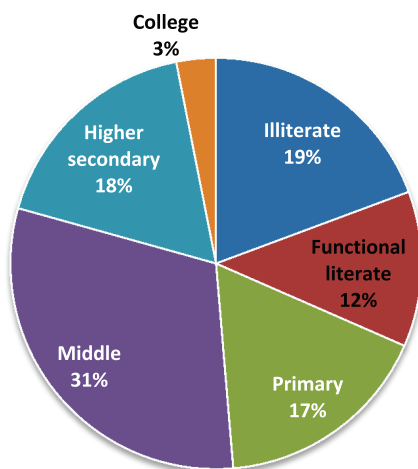


Figure 11 : Educational status of the respondents

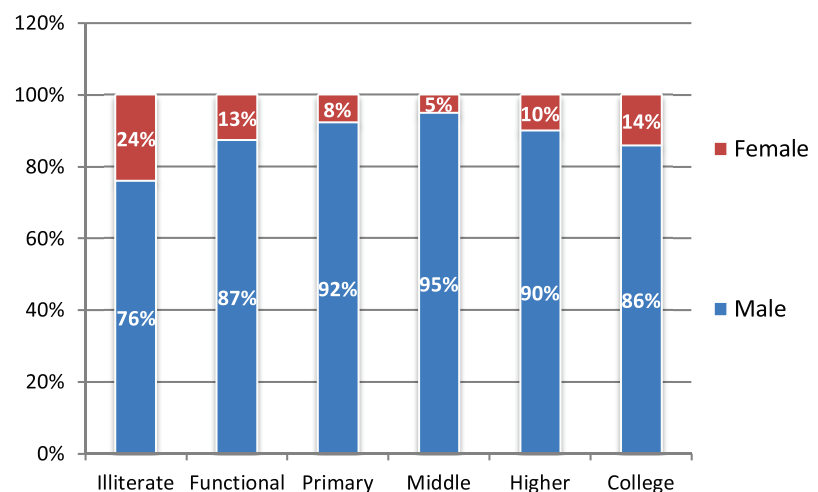


Figure 12 : Male, Female literacy level comparison

Section-3: Livelihood Resources and Income of Respondent at Source Place

S 3.1: Agriculture Landholding of Respondents:

Among 450 respondents from 15 districts who were mainly from rural areas, 68% possess agriculture land; where as 32% does not possess any agriculture land.

As shown in Figure-13, 100% respondents from two tribal district's Alirajpur and Dindori posses agriculture lands, followed by Jhabua, Dhar and Mandla has 90% above respondents posses agriculture lands. However, districts like Panna, Balaghat, Bhind and Sheopur where less than 50% respondents own agriculture land.

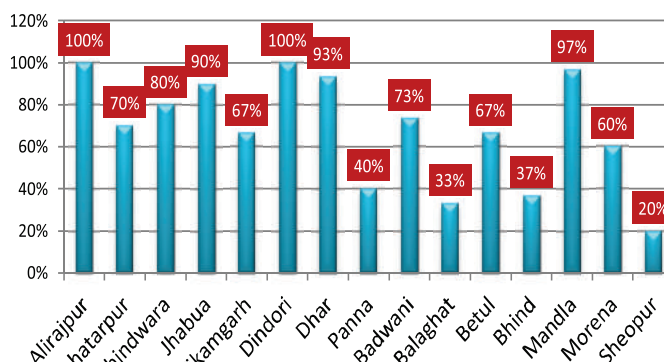


Figure 13 : District wise landholdings of the respondents

S 3.2: Size of Agriculture Landholding

Analyzing the size of the landholdings among 308 respondents who responded to have agriculture land, 26% people have one acre of agriculture land, followed by 21% have over 2 acres and 19% of them have between 1 to 2 acres which accounts 65% of the respondents who possess agriculture land. However, remaining 35% respondents possess below 1 acre that includes 10% holds 0.75 acre, 9% holds 0.5 acre and 15% respondents holds 0.25 acres as shown in the Figure-14.

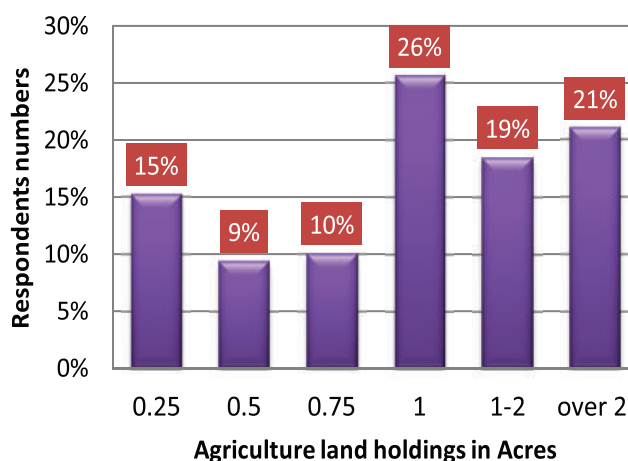


Figure 14 : Size of landholdings of respondents

3.3: Income from agriculture lands

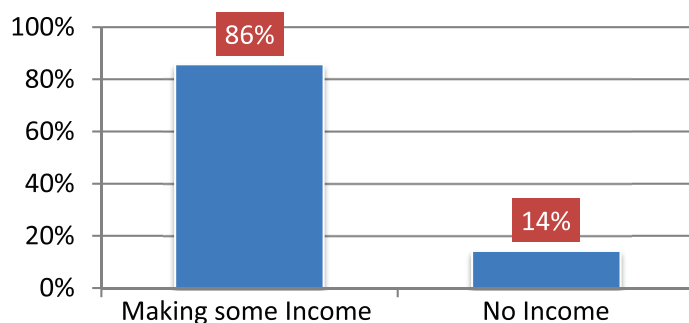


Figure 15 : % age of respondents making income from their agriculture lands

Among those possess agriculture lands, 86% respondents said they do generate / receive some income from their agriculture lands in possessions as shown in Figure-15. A 14% respondent does not make any income especially those have less than one acre of land.

Analysis of district wise income from agriculture land shows, that in Alirajpur, 100% respondents are making some income

followed by Jhabua, Dindori and Dhar with 90% respondents making some income as compare to the lowest in Sheopur, Bhind, Balaghat and Panna as shown in Figure-16.

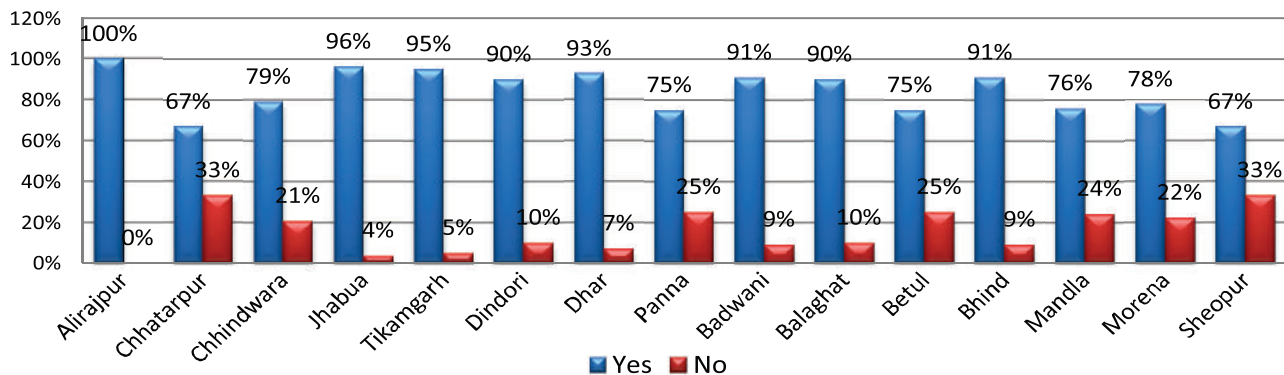


Figure 16 : Size of landholdings of respondents

As shown in the Figure-17, respondents who owns less than 1 acre of agriculture lands their highest income for 37% respondents are below Rs. 10,000 per annum, and 35% are making between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 20,000 and the highest Rs. 40,000 income taken by only 9% respondents. The medium income range between Rs. 20,001 and Rs. 30,000 is taken by 14% followed by a very small 5% are making an annual income between Rs. 30,001 and Rs. 40,000.

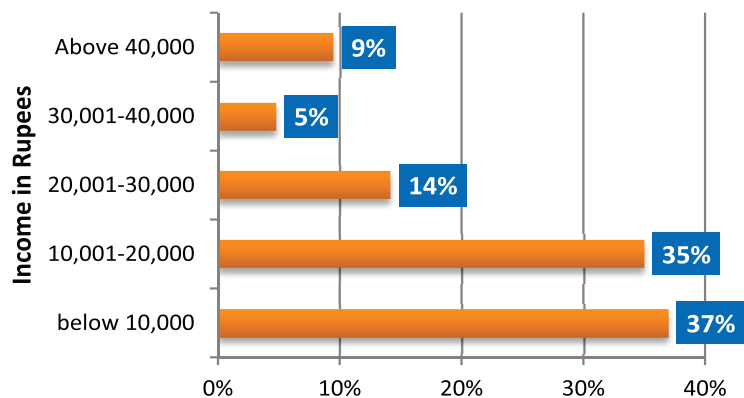


Figure 17 : Annual income of respondents from less than 1 acre of land

As shown in Figure-18, those having agriculture land between 1 and 2 acres, their highest 37% respondents income range is between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 20,000 which is close to the people who owns less than 1 acre of land. Maximum annual income above Rs. 40,000 made by only 10% respondents. The medium range of annual income ranges between Rs. 20,001 and Rs. 30,000 are taken by 24% respondents followed by 16% between the range of Rs. 30,001 and Rs. 40,000 per annum.

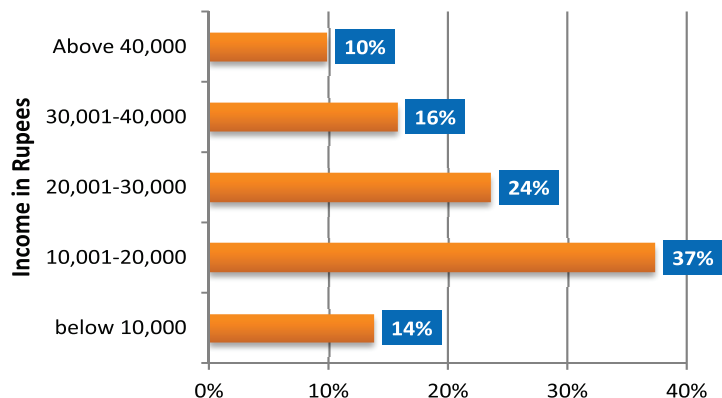


Figure 18 : Annual income of respondents from 1-2 Acre of land

Respondents who own more than 2 acres, but mostly having less than 3 acres, a good percentage of 17% are making over Rs. 40,000 income per annum, however the lowest income range below Rs.10,000 is taken by 24% which is highest among this size of landholders, followed by 20% making income between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 20,000; another 20% making between Rs. 20,001 and Rs. 40,000 followed by 14% between Rs. 30,001 and Rs. 40,000 and only 5% reported getting income between 1-2 lacs per annum as shown in Figure-19

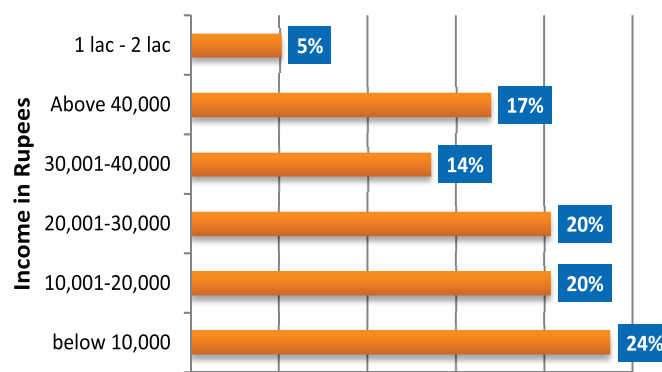


Figure 19 : Annual income of respondents from over 2 acres of land

The above analysis reveals that there is need for appropriate agriculture development strategies for smallholding farmers to increase their income.

S 3.4 Reason for not getting any Income from Agriculture Land

As shown in Table-5, among 14% respondents who reported that they don't make any income from their farm lands, among them 43% respondents says the land size is too small, 25% lack of water / irrigation system, 12% said resources are not available to do farming, 11% does not have enough money to do invest in farming and 9% said, because of the poor soil quality they don't do farming. To encourage small landholding farmers it is necessary to design agriculture package which can encourage very small landholding farmers to make use of their agriculture lands productively to make some income.

Table-5: Reasons for not able to make any income from agriculture land

Lack of water / irrigation system	Very small size of agriculture land	Resources not available to do farming	Poor Soil quality	Not enough money to do farming
25%	43%	11%	9%	11%

S 3.5: Livestock Details

Livestock is one of the ways of making livelihoods in rural areas. In this study, 50% respondents said they have few live stocks, where 50% does not. Examining further about the types of livestock they have, 44% respondents said they have cows and buffalo to make milk, where as 42% possess goats and 14% has small poultry at home as shown in Table-6. Only few reported have pigs and mix of above animal.

Table-6: Livestock details of the respondents

Types of livestock	Cow / Buffalo	Goat	Chicken
% age of respondents owns the livestock	47%	32%	21%

S 3.6: Income from Livestock

Among 217 respondents which is almost 50% as shown in Figure-20, of the total respondents who reported having some livestock at home, only 48% of 217; i.e. 102 people are making some income from the existing livestock.

As per their responses about estimated income from livestock, majority of respondents who posses cows and buffalo makes some income, ranging from below Rs. 1,000 per month up to little over Rs. 10,000. As shown in Figure-21, 60% respondents make a monthly income between Rs. 100 to 1000, whereas 15% people makes Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2500 followed by 13% (18) people is between Rs. 5001 to Rs. 7500 a month. Only three people makes above Rs. 10000 a month, 4% (5) people between Rs. 7501 to Rs. 10000 and 6% of them makes between Rs. 2501 to Rs. 2500 monthly.

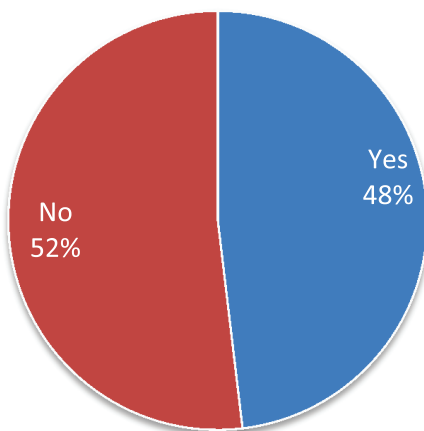


Figure 20 : Respondents taking income from livestock

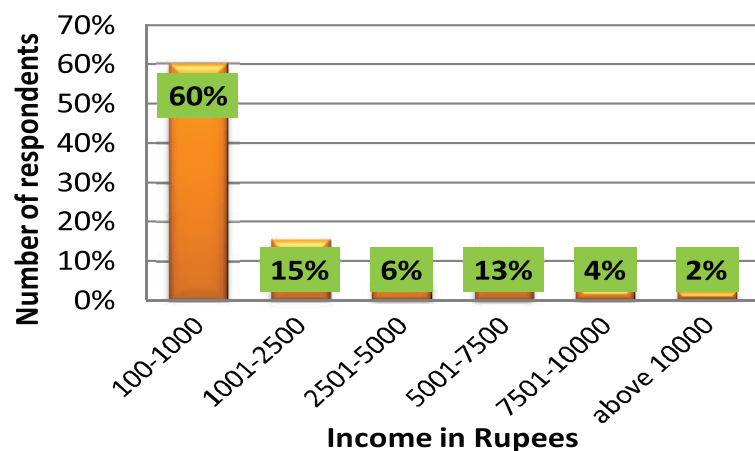


Figure 21 : Monthly income from livestock

S 3.7: Family Income at Home

Among 450 respondent's, about 40% have more than one members earning hand in the family while 60% have sole earner or the respondent as sole earner in family at home as shown in Figure-22. Among 40% with more than one earning hand includes wife, father, son or brother. 13% (33) having one additional person whereas 22.52% (41) have 2 additional members as earner. Respondents who have more than one earner in the family, their income ranges from Rs. 10,000 per month to Rs. 20,000 per month.

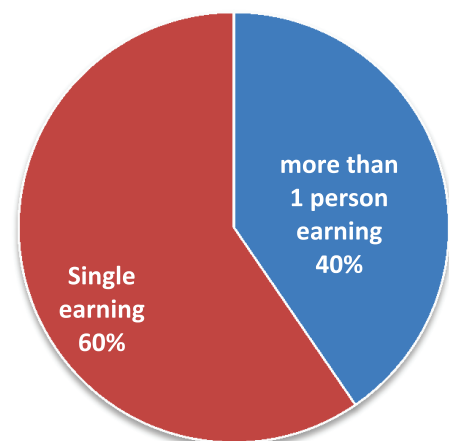


Figure 22 : Respondents earning hands in the family

Section-4: Migration of the Respondents

S 4.1: Year Wise Migration

As shown in Figure-23, it is mostly in the year 2019 when people migrated which makes 41% (181), followed by 31% (138) in 2020 of the total number of people interviewed. According to the statistics above, it seems the long-term migration is very less from the area study was conducted.

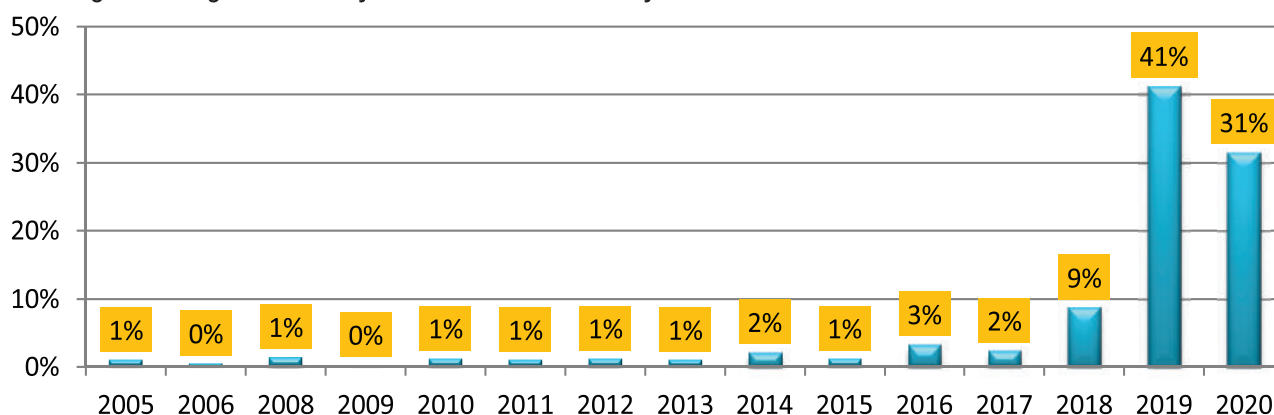


Figure 23 : Year wise migration

S 4.2: Place of Migration

Majority of respondents about 126 (28%) people migrated to Gujarat, while 66 (15%) remained in Madhya Pradesh but in different cities, similarly 64 (14%) people to Maharashtra followed by Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. However, there are other states where people migrated, but the numbers are very small as shown in Figure-24.

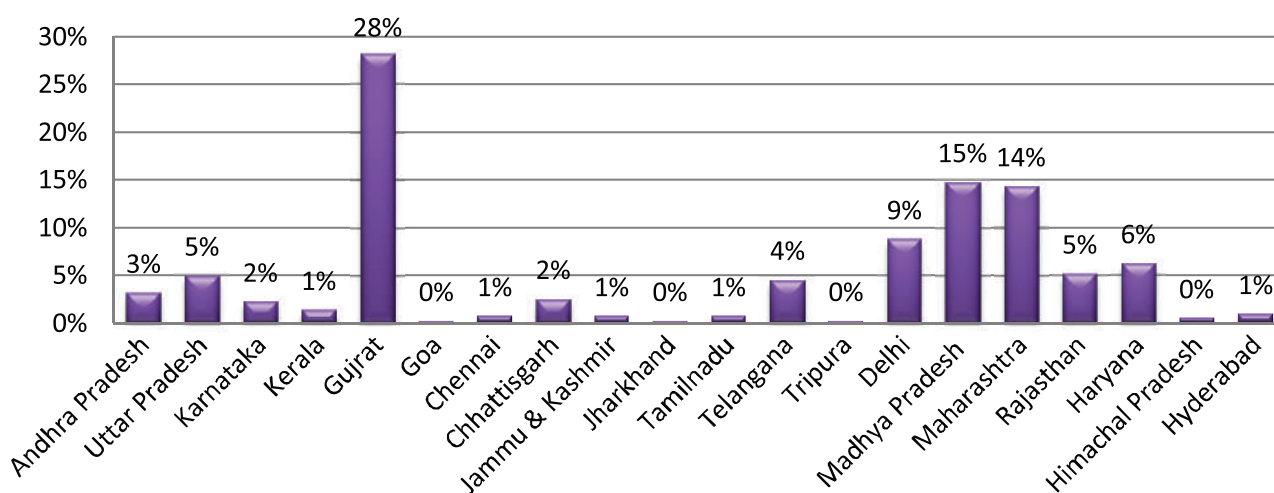


Figure 24 : State where respondents migrated

Further analysis the places where they migrated in the respective states are Badodara, Surat, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Morbi in Gujarat state; Indore, Hoshangabad, Gwalior, Jabalpur and Pithampur in Madhya Pradesh; Pune, Mumbai, Nagpur and Aurangabad in Maharashtra, Gurugram and Ambala in

Haryana and Ghaziabad, Noida, Mathura, Agra and Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh.

It is notable that the above cities are considered to be metro cities and industrial areas where enormous development and expansion work is happening, these cities attract most of the rural and urban migrants from across India. Key development and job sectors include – real estate, infrastructure development, factories, transports and domestic and commercial services.

S 4.3: Accompanied / Un-accompanied Migration

It has been revealed that most 54% respondents migrated with their families to the destination places as mentioned above, while 46% were un-accompanied. 84% (185) of them were accompanied by their spouse mainly and those have their children. Very few respondents were accompanied by their mothers (15), Father (21), brother and sisters (30) and other 30 of them had other people like friends, brother-in-laws, sister-in-laws etc.

S 4.4: Reason for Migration

This was an important part of the study to identify the reasons for people migrating to the other state and cities. As shown in Figure-25, Majority 349 (56%) respondents said was not able to manage the living and has severe financial crisis to meet basic needs in the life; while the second major reason was from 159 (25%) people said they wanted to earn more money. Other reasons includes in chronicle order is for better education of the child by 40 (6%) people; followed by loss of farming by 33 (5%); not able to provide good living to the family with better child education by 28 (4%), 8 people said was not able to get appropriate job locally and 7 people had to migrate to earn more so that they can clear their debt.

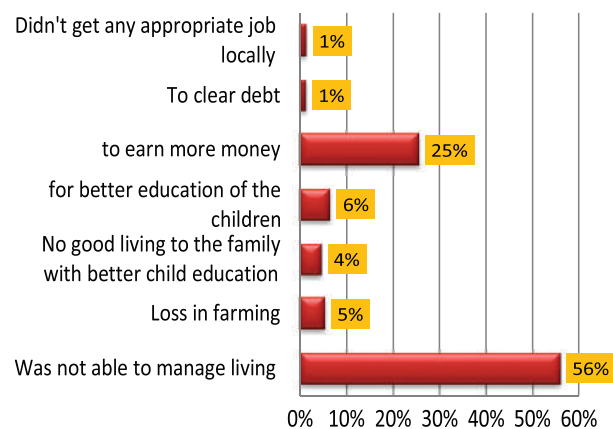


Figure 25 : Reason for migration

S 4.5: Nature of Migration

72% people said they migrate in particular season for livelihood and earning in a year, while 28% said their migration is not seasonal as shown in the Figure-26. The seasonal cycle is during winter starts from late October to November up to February. In some cases people stays up to the summer till the rainy season starts in late May or June which is farming season in rural areas. But this is also the time for landless people to migrate during peak farming season to other state to do farm labour work.

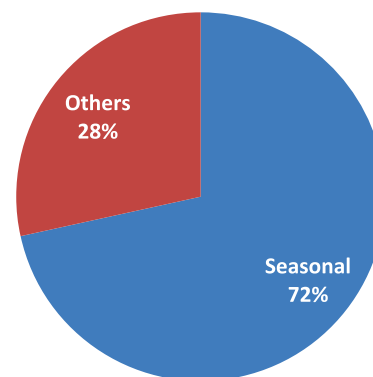


Figure 26 : Nature of migration

S 4.6: Length of Stay at Destination Place in Terms of Seasonal and Long-term Migration

Responding to the questions about the length of stay by the respondents when they migrate, it seems majority of them which is 40% stay for 4-6 months in a year, while 27% said they stay for 1-3 months followed by 25% for 7-9 months and 8% for more than 9 months in any of their stay plan during a year as shown in Table-7.

Table-7: Length of stay of respondents at the place of destination (seasonal)

Length of stay	1-3 months	6 months	7-9 months	More than 9 months
% of respondents	27%	40%	25%	8%

Respondents who said they have migrated for long-term and does not fall in the criteria of seasonal migration, it seems majority of them which is 38% has been staying at the place of destination between 1-5 years, followed by 28% for more than 10 years; and 17% for less than a year and also between 6 to 10 years as shown in Table-8.

Table-8: Length of stay of respondents at the place of destination (long-term)

Length of stay	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	Above 10 years
% of respondents	17%	38%	17%	28%

In both the above scenario of seasonal and long-term migration the responses overlaps with the duration of stay below one year, but in the table-8, those 17% who stayed for less than a year were intended migration was for longer period but returned due to the pandemic.

S 4.7: Source of Information/ Contacts for Migration

Asking about what was their source of / contacts for their migration to other cities, as shown in Table-9, majority 41% respondents said their contacts were close friends who facilitated their migration; whereas 39% said they went along with their nearest relatives followed by 16% through the labour contractors / job companies only few people said they manage by themselves or with other people from the village to travel and get job at the place of migration.

Table-9: Contact person for respondents while migrating

Contact persons	Nearest relatives	Close friends	Labour contractors / job company	Others self	Others Villages
% of respondents	39%	41%	16%	3%	1%

Section-5: Status of Employment and Facilities of Respondents at the Destination Place

S 5.1 Nature of Employment of Respondents at the Destination Place

The study also mapped out nature of employment migrant workers had for income at the place of their stay in various states and cities. It was found that majority 64% migrant workers were engaged in labour work/ daily wages, 17% in farming related work, 18% in regular jobs and only three (1%) of them were doing their own small enterprise as shown in Table-10.

Table-10: Nature of employment of respondents at the destination

Types of employment	Daily wages / casual worker	Farm labour work	Regular job	Own business
% of respondents	64%	17%	18%	1%

As shown in Figure-27, out of 68% daily wages workers, majority 59% migrant workers were engaged in construction related work, while 16% people were working at farm, followed by 7% doing specialized marble and tiles related work in construction sector or in factory. There are other trades where people were engaged are cooking and hotel services, cleaning work, electrical work, driving, painting and helper in factories ranging between 2% and 3%.

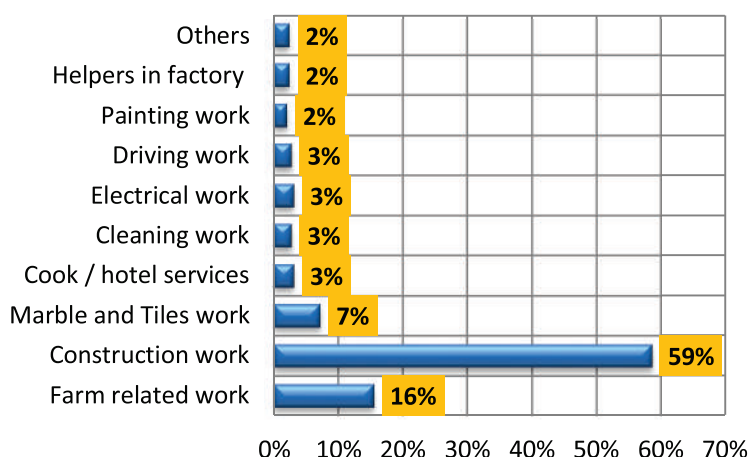


Figure 27 : Types of work respondents were doing at the destination place

Table-11: Types of regular jobs respondents were doing at the destination place

Working in the factory	28%
Security Guard	2%
Driver	2%
Mechanic	5%
Retail shop	3%
Domestic work	18%
Others	44%

S 5.2: Those Who Were Doing Regular Job

Those 18% who were doing regular jobs, they were engaged in different trades / skilled works including 28% were working in factories, 17% doing domestic works, 4% in mechanic shops and 44% were in various other small trades as shown in Table-11.

S 5.3: Types of Facility Provided by the Employer to the Respondents at Place of Stay

Good living at destination place for respondents were also a challenge, only 34% people were provided with some facilities in addition to the wages; however a majority 66% said they did not have any other facilities in their place of work / stay.

Further looking at the types of facilities provided by the respective employer, as shown in the Figure-28, includes majority 55% of them provided with housing, this may because most of the migrant workers were engaged in construction work at the place of stay / work.

Other facilities include 24% getting food, 7% accidental insurance, 6% health expenses and 2% child education. Only few received transport, EPF and life insurance.

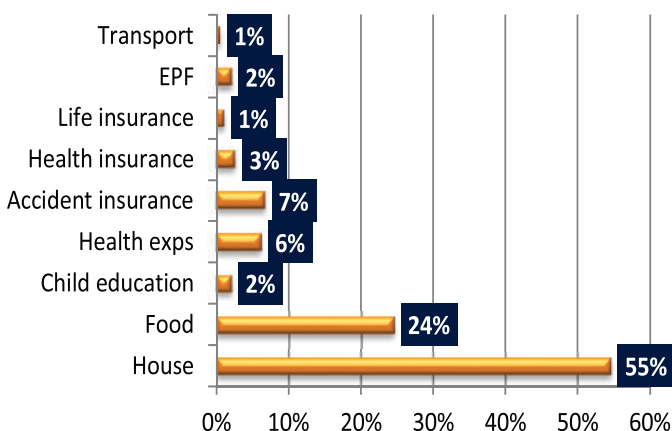


Figure 28 : Types of facilities provided by the employer to the respondents at destination place

Kishori Lal Chaudhary
Age-32, Male, Education: 12th pass
Village-Patna Kalan, Satna
Family: Wife with three kids

Skill: Construction worker and domestic help.

"There was no employment opportunity nearby and have no agriculture land. I had very less money and it was difficult to bear the expenses of the family."

"With the help of relatives, I went to Haryana 10 months ago in July and used to do building work there. During lockdown, I could not get ration. I used to stand several hours in the line to get ration and food packets."

"When I heard the news that lockdown will increase further, I decided to return. I had finished all my money, because there was no work. Due to the end of the ration I come back home on 8th May with the help of the government by train. I will return to work after the lock down is complete, till then I will work in others farm here."

Kamal Kasde
Age-30, Male, Education: 10th Pass
Betul
Family: Wife, Mother, Brother, Sister and Daughter

Skill: Secretarial work

I like doing official work in the company and do the same. I am doing this work since past six years because I like such work very much. I went with my friend to Gujarat. He told me there is a company name RCFIB; they have work and also pay good salary. I was paid Rs. 18,000 so I decided to go there. I did not face any challenge there. I was doing Supervisory work. I came back home due to Corona on 18th May 2020. I used government of India bus from Jhabua.

I have not decided to start any business here, because I don't have money. If I get money then I will start my own provisional store.

Section-6: Income, Expenditure and Savings of Respondents at the Destination Place

S 6.1: Income of the Respondents at The Destination Place

As shown in Figure-29, majority 36% migrant's individual monthly income ranges between Rs. 7,501 to Rs. 10,000; followed by 28% people were earning between Rs. 5,001 – Rs. 7,500 per month. Other income ranges includes between Rs. 10,001 to Rs. 12,500 by 49 migrant workers each month, whereas 10% people were earning between Rs. 12,501 and Rs. 15,000. Very few people had higher income range above Rs. 15,000 per month including 5% migrant workers monthly income range between Rs. 17,501 and Rs. 20,000 except only 2% people had over Rs. 20,000 monthly income.

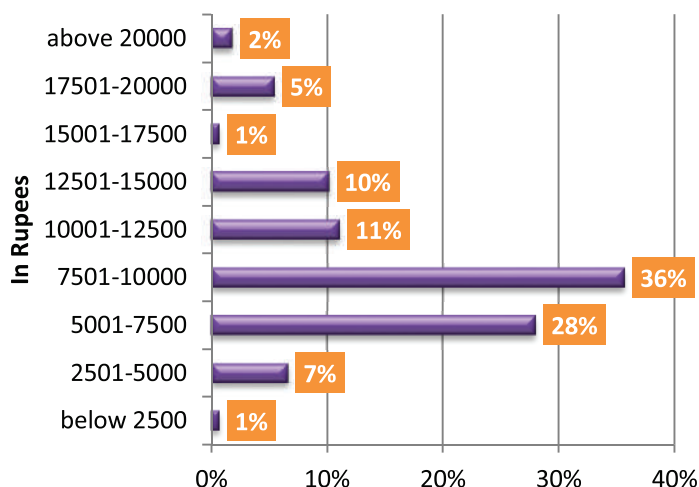


Figure 29 : Individual income of respondents as sole earner

S 6.2: Respondents Doing more than One Job at the Destination Place

94% respondents said they were not doing any additional job whereas 6% were doing an additional job to meet their living requirements. As per the other details given in the data for those who were doing extra work were mainly including rickshaw pulling, extended their work hours / overtime, as night guard, fitness work, labourer work, playing music instruments, doing farm work and packaging in factory.

S 6.3: Earning Members in the Family

34% respondents are the single earner in their family however, 33% said they had more than one earning hand in the family that mainly includes their spouse which makes with 15% respondents; however in 18% responses they had other family members also as earner including their children, brother or father as shown in Figure-30.

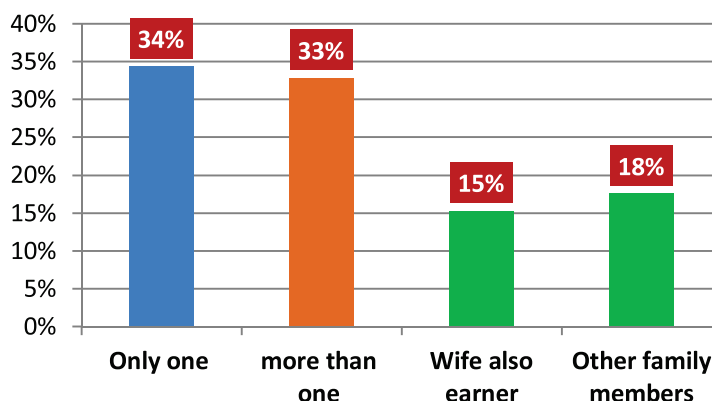


Figure 30 : % of family members earning with respondents

S 6.4: Gross Monthly Family Income of Respondents:

Additional monthly income by other family members those had more than one person as earning in the family, their income in majority 34% respondents ranges between Rs. 7501 and Rs. 10000, where as 30% people are between Rs. 5001 – Rs. 7500 followed by 11% between Rs. 2501 – Rs. 5000 as shown in Figure-31.

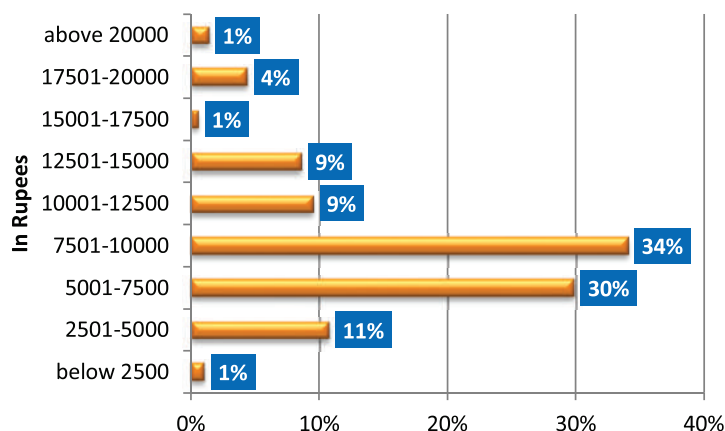


Figure 31 : Gross monthly family income of respondents having more than one earner

S 6.5: Total Expenditure for Living at the Place of Stay

It is recorded from the responses of migrant workers that majority 44% of them spends average between Rs. 2501 – Rs. 5000, whereas 24% people spends below Rs. 2500. Other average spending are between Rs. 5001 – Rs. 7500 by 16% people and 9% spends an average Rs. 7501 – Rs. 10,000 monthly on living which includes food and other essential services as shown in Figure-32.

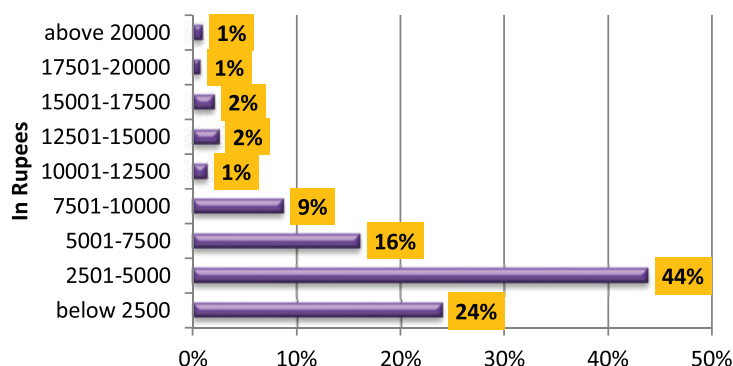


Figure 32 : Average monthly expenses of the respondents

S 6.6: Respondents who were able to Save and Send Money Back Home

As shown in Figure-33, responding to a question about savings from their income, about 77% respondents said yes they were able to save some money and send back home for the family, whereas 23% were not able to save any money at the place of work.

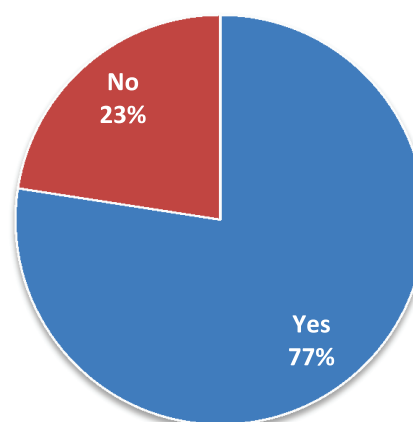


Figure 33 : % age of respondents saving and sending money back home

S 6.7: Savings from Income

The data shows good saving practices among respondents as shown in Figure-34, the largest 25% people was able to save an average monthly money between Rs. 2501 – Rs. 5000, followed by 20% people with an average savings between Rs. 5001 – Rs. 7500 followed by 18% people savings ranges an average between Rs. 7501 – Rs. 10000. Figure also shows good number of people having savings above Rs. 10000 on monthly basis.

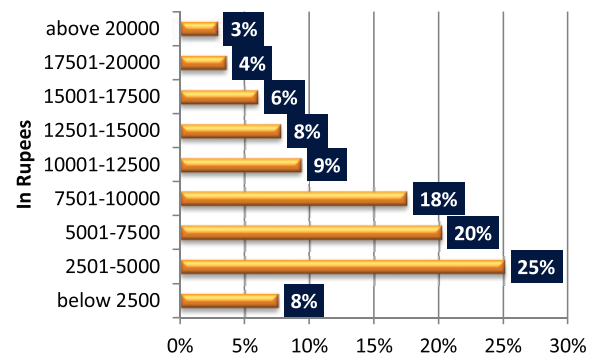


Figure 34 : Average monthly savings of the respondents

S 6.8: Remittance sent back home

Annual remittances are recorded in the study as shown in Figure-35, the highest average annual remittance made by 4% people was over Rs. 1 lakh, and the lowest average is up to Rs. 10000 by 24% people followed by an average between Rs.10001 and Rs. 20000 by 26% people. Others had their range including an annual transfer of average between Rs. 20001 and Rs. 30000 by 15% people; 9% people made an average between Rs. 40,001 and Rs. 50,000; 5% people between an average Rs. 50001 and Rs. 60000 and 4% people made an higher average between Rs. 70,001 and Rs. 80,000

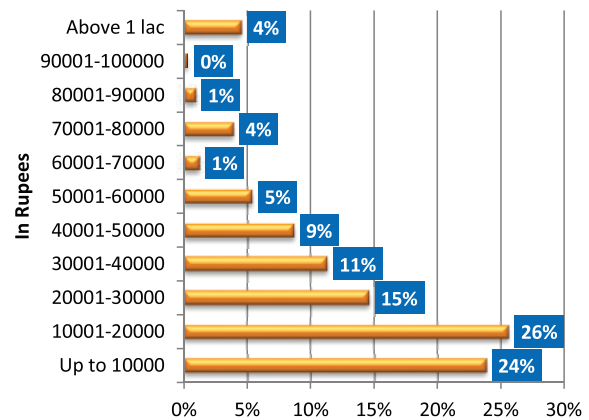


Figure 35 : Annual remittance by the respondents to their families

S 6.9: Mode of Transfers of Remittance

Transfer of money / remittances made through various modes, including the majority 55% through bank transfers, followed by 20% and 17% by cash by hand either through someone visiting home or by themselves when they travel back home in single or multiple time in a year as shown in Figure-36.

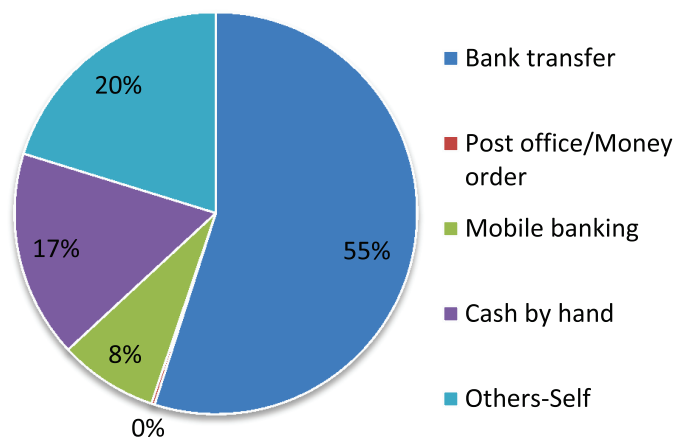


Figure 36 : Mode of transfer of money back home

Section-7: Situation in Lockdown and Return Journey

S 7.1: Reason for Returning Home

According to the respondents, the main reason was lockdown enforced from 24th March 2020 followed by its ripple effects on the lives and livelihoods of the migrant workers at their place of stay and work. Majority 35% respondents returned because all the works were stopped, 28% had fear of spread of corona virus, 15% said their wages were stopped and was not receiving any money from the employer, 14% had problem in managing living and food because of work and financial crisis, 8% said they returned because everything was closed during lockdown as shown in Figure-37.

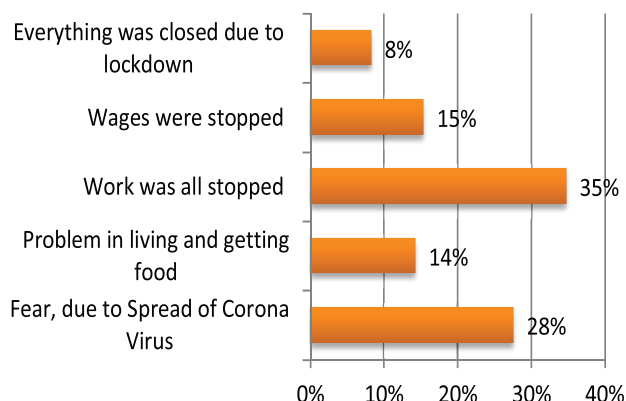


Figure 37 : Key reasons for returning back home

S 7.2: Month when Respondents Returned Home

As shown in Table-12, about 29% people returned immediately after the lockdown enforced on 24th March, 2020 where as 26% returned in April followed by a major 34% returned in May 2020.

Table-12: Months when respondents returned home

Months and Year	February,20	March,20	April,20	May,20	June,20	July,20 onward
% age of respondents returned	1%	29%	26%	34%	9%	0%

S 7.3: Mode of Transport used in Returning Home

People used several types of transports during lockdown to return to their homes. Most of their transport was arranged with their own efforts and support. About 26% used bus, 16% of them walked throughout to return home while large number of people 46% used mix transport of Rail, Bus, foot and taxi as shown in Figure-38.

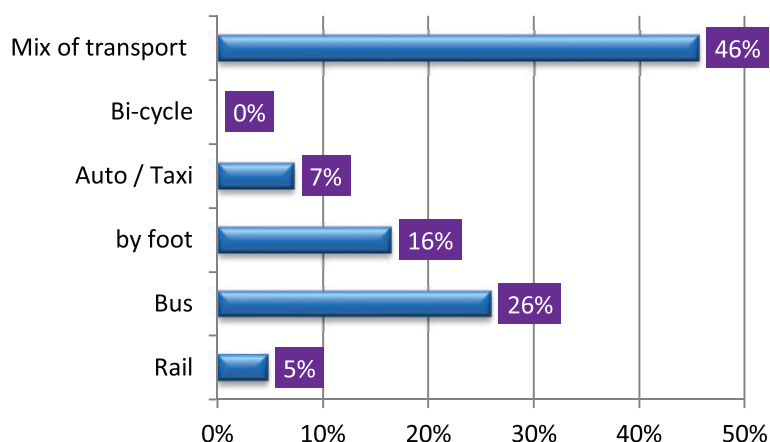


Figure 38 : Mode of transport used by the respondents to return

S 7.4: Money Spent by Respondents to Return Home

The study reveals that, most of the respondents used their own little money available to return home. As shown in Figure-39, 32% people spent below Rs. 2,000 on transport, however a majority of 46% people spent between Rs. 2,001 and Rs. 4000 on transport followed by 14% people spent between Rs. 4001 and Rs. 6,000. Money spent on higher side was mainly who returned from far states.

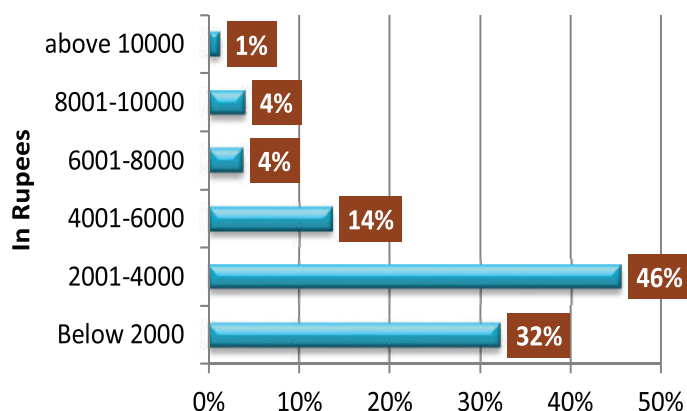


Figure 39 : Money spent by respondents to return home

S 7.5: Respondents Borrowed Money to Return Home

About 33% people borrowed money to meet the expenses to return home from the place they had migrated. A majority of 40% people (as shown in Figure-40) borrowed an average between Rs. 2,001 to Rs. 4,000, followed by 25% people between averages of Rs. 4,001 to Rs. 6,000, whereas 19% people borrowed below Rs. 2,000. The highest money borrowed by 4 people is above Rs. 10,000, followed by 9% people who borrowed an average between Rs. 8,001 and Rs. 10,000; and 4% people borrowed between Rs. 6,001 and Rs. 8,000.

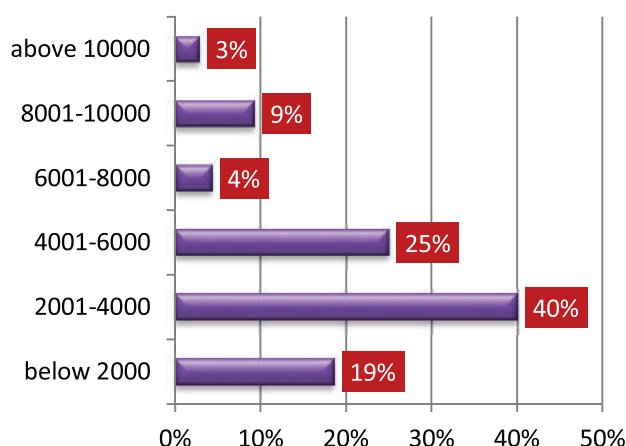


Figure 40 : Amount of money borrowed by the respondents to return

S 7.6: Support Provided to the Migrant Workers in Transit and upon Return

During transit, as shown in Table-13, a majority of 43% people were self supported to return home, in terms of transport etc. whereas 26% received some support from private people and 20% said they were supported by the government. A very minimum of 6% and 5% people were supported by their parent company and several anonymous people in their transit back home.

Table-13: Who provided support to the respondent in transit

Supported by	Govt.	Private person	Your company	Yourself / Community	Several people
% age of respondents received support	20%	26%	5%	43%	6%

Upon return, as shown in Table-14, majority 44% were supported by government of MP, 17% by VOs /private, 28% said they received support from both the government and VOs, however, 11% did not receive any help from any of these. Only 64 people from Alirajpur, Chhatarpur, Badwani and Morena received some cash ranging between Rs. 500 and Rs. 2,000.

Table-14: Who provided support to the respondents upon return

Supported by	Govt.	Voluntary Organization / Private	Both	No help from anyone
% age of respondents received support	44%	17%	28%	11%

S 7.7: Type of Support Received by the Respondent upon their Return

As shown in Figure-41, about 36% respondents received ration support upon their arrival, 21% received medical help, 2% got work at local level, similarly 2% received cash transfers, 11% said they did not receive any support; however a majority of 28% received very much mixed support of essentials including food, cash.

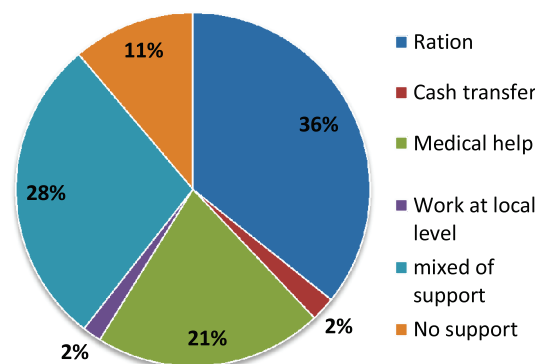


Figure 41: Kind of support received by the respondents upon their return

Dhruv Prahlad Bhalvi

Age-45 years, Male, Education: Class 3 pass

Family: Wife and three children

Village: Loniamaran, Umarialsra, Chhindwara

Skill: Bricks making

There was no job in the village; it was difficult to manage living expenses of family. So, I spoke to a contractor, name Guddu Seth in Nagpur, he said there is Bricks making job here you can come. I locked my home completely and travelled to Mansar, village Masada by bus from Chhindwara along with my wife and children.

My friends and other labourer helped me in this. I was making clay bricks in a coal power plant.

It was very challenging there to live, as I was living with my family in a slum where water was dropping from roof. Due to rain, the entire bricks were melted and the Bhatta collapsed. It took 15 days to make it again.

There was no facility to get help in illness; my children did not go to school because of several reasons.

Because, I had my family with me, so the time has passed somehow. We got some ration during lockdown, but were difficult to remain there as the entire work was closed and the bricks contractor chased us away from his house he provided. So we came back on 29 May 2020.

Whatever labourer work I may get, I will do and also thinking to start goat farming and also do labourer work. If, I get small loan, will open a small provision store for my son.

Section-8: Current status of Respondent's skill, Employment and Entitlements

S 8.1: Types of Skill Respondents Possess

The study also looked at the areas of skills⁸ the respondents possess. As shown in Figure-42, large number of respondents 40% seems does not have any particular skill and reported that they can do multiple work, however, the second major skills reported is farming by 15% followed by construction by 8%, work as helper in a factory; 3% of them have tailoring / embroidery skills, 3% people knows about painting, 2% have cooking skills. 16% said they have other mixed semi skilled work like construction labourer, tiles and marble work, guard, packaging, hotel waiter, cleaning work, boring work and driving.

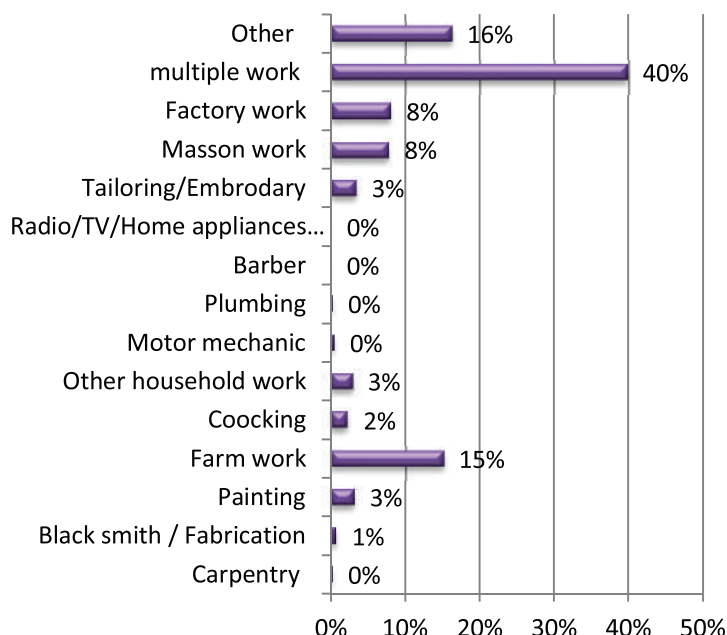


Figure 42 : Types of skills respondents possess

S 8.2: Any Vocational / skill Training Attended

Those who possess some skills, were further asked whether they attended any skill based training or not, in response majority 92% of them said NO, they have not attended any formal training. Only 8% who attended the skilled based training, among them 54% received training in a private skill training centre, while 20% learned their skills by working as intern / helper in respective trading shops locally or place of stay, only 14% attended skill training in a government institution followed by 12% in a NGO skill training centre as shown in Figure 43.

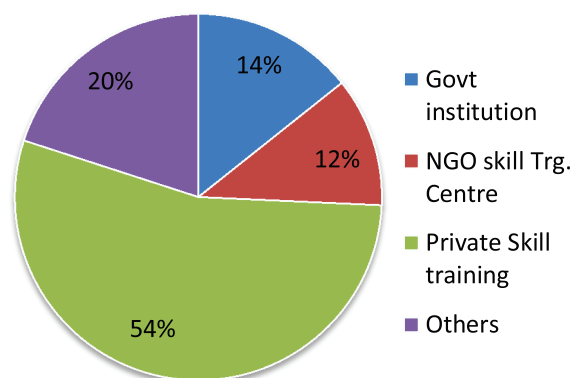


Figure 43 : Institutions where attended skills training

S 8.3: Types of Skills in which Respondents Trained in Institutions

Among 12% respondents who were trained in institutions on various skills includes- 19% on embroidery / tailoring, 8% on mason work, hotel management / hospitality, iron fabrication, tiles and granite cutting and fitting, 6% trained on Machine operator, sweet making, motor mechanic, factory work, driving and security guard; other 3% got training on painting, computer hardware, diamond cutting, ITI and irrigation system.

⁸ skill is defined as a person is trained formally or informally having set of knowledge, abilities, and experience needed to perform a job e.g. carpentry

S 8.4: Status of BPL and MNREGA Cards

As shown in Figure-44, among 450 respondents 58% holds BPL card, however 42% did not have a BPL card. 63% respondents have MNREGA job cards whereas 37% does not. Among 58% (259) who possess a BPL card about 81% (209) also have MNREGA cards.

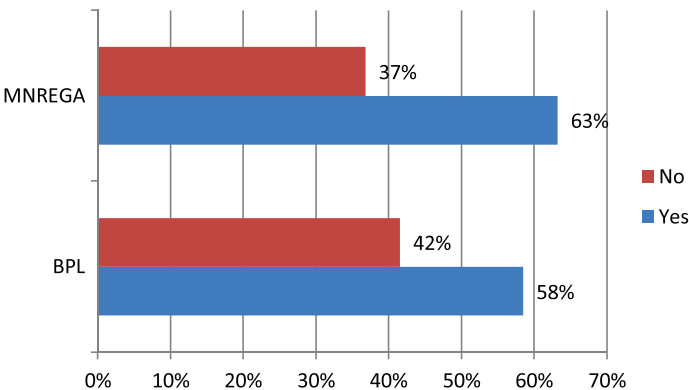


Figure 44 : Respondents with BPL and MNREGA cards

Those 42% (184) does not have BPL card, among them only 38% (70) people have MNREGA Card. Districts like Bhind, Morena, Chhattarpur and Tikamgarh minimum MNREGA card holders among the people who were interviewed in this study as shown below in the Table-15.

Table-15: List of districts with % age of BPL and MNREGA cardholders

District	% of respondents holds BPL Card	% of respondents holds MNREGA Card
Bhind	17%	3%
Morena	20%	3%
Chhattarpur	27%	37%
Chhindwada	40%	73%
Tikamgarh	43%	33%
Mandla	50%	87%
Dhar	53%	87%
Panna	60%	33%
Balaghat	63%	73%
Betul	67%	90%
Sheopur	73%	67%
Dindori	77%	77%
Jhabua	87%	90%
Alirajpur	87%	100%
Badwani	100%	80%
Total	58%	63%

Among 209 (81%) people with MNREGA cards, 98.7% people had their cards issued before COVID struck.

As shown in Figure-45, Among the 36% (160) respondents does not hold MNREGA cards are 29% from STs, 25% from SCs, 37% from OBC and 9% are from general categories.

As shown in Figure-46, among the 42% (184) respondents do not hold BPL cards are 44% from STs, 28% from SCs, 20% from OBC and 8% are from general caste categories.

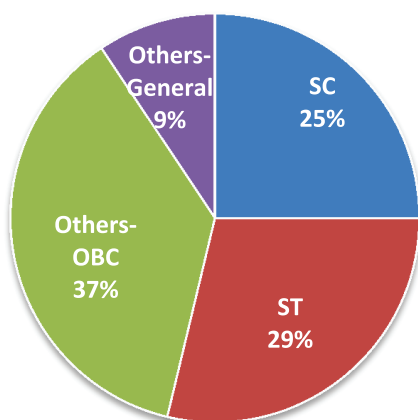


Figure 45 : Caste wise respondents do not have MNREGA cards

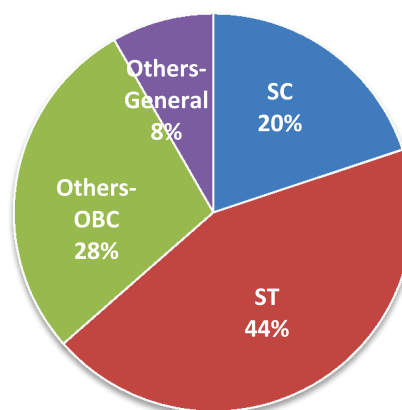


Figure 46 : Caste wise respondents do not have BPL cards

S 8.5: Status of Current Employment of Respondents

As shown in Figure-47, only 18% respondents reported that they got some employment after they returned, however majority 82% did not have any employment during the time the interviews were conducted.

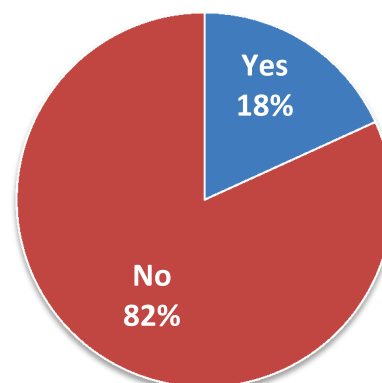


Figure 47: Status of current employment of the respondents

S 8.6: Status of Employment under any Government Scheme

At the time of study conducted in July, 2020, a majority of 84% did not get any employment under any government scheme after they returned back home and has been there for an average of two months as shown in Figure-48. Only 16% said they got some employment locally. Among those who got employment, majority of them were given seven to 30 days work under various government schemes mainly MNREGA and PM Awas Yojana for construction of ponds, roads, buildings, house constriction and repairing respectively.

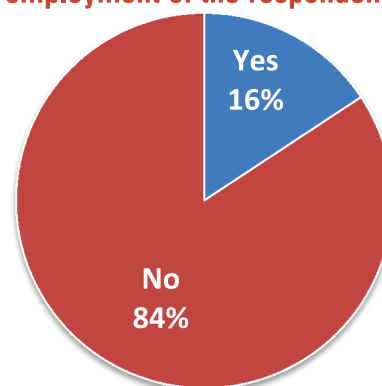


Figure 48: Status of employment under any government scheme

Section-9: Respondents Plan to Return Again

S 9.1: Respondents Willingness and Plan to Return Again

63% respondents are willing to return back to the place of work, however, 37% would like to stay back in their home / village.

Among the 63% respondents who wish to return back to their place of work has given several reasons and their plan of return that includes – 16% respondents said will return after the situation normalized, 27% after the pandemic is over, 21% after the lockdown is lifted, 9% said will go next year, 14% when the train and bus will start, 8% after the work will start there and 5% after the diwali festival this year i.e. after November, 2020 as shown in Table-16.

Table-16: Respondents plan to return back

After situation normalized	16%
After Pandemic is over	27%
After lockdown is lifted	21%
Next year	9%
When the train and Bus will start	14%
After the work starts there	8%
After Diwali Festival	5%

S 9.2: Respondents Willingness and Plan to Stay Back:

Among those 37% respondents who wish not to return back, has their reason and plan in this situation.

The key reasons includes – 21% respondents said will not return due to Corona pandemic, 13% said there are lots of problem in the cities, 9% said, they were not able to save money, 8% the place is too far from their homes, 5% sad there was no facility at work place, 8% said was not getting appropriate wages followed by 6% respondents said family needs them, 6% also they are not willing to go back, however, 7% were not able to manage good living, however 17% said will do some work here as shown in Table-17.

Table-17: Reason for respondents who do not wish to go back

There was no facility at work place	5%
Because of Corona pandemic	21%
Did not getting appropriate wages	8%
There are lots of problem in the cities	13%
Place is too far	8%
Was not able to save money	9%
Was not able to manage good living	7%
Families needs us here in the village	6%
No willingness to return	6%
Will do some work here	17%

S 9.3: Respondents Future Plan for Livelihood at Home

Among those 37% people do not want to go back to the city and have shared about their plan are categorized as below – 23% want to do their own farming, 23% would like to do own business / open shops, however 37% said can do any type of labour work, 10% want to have jobs in government schemes like MNREGA, 5%

Table-18: Respondents future plan to stay back

Want to do own farming	23%
Will do my own business / shops	23%
Any type of labour work	37%
Jobs in Govt. Schemes	10%
Collection and sell of Forest produce	2%
Animal husbandry	5%

want to do animal husbandry and only 2% said to do business of collections and sell of forest produce / herbs as shown in Table-18.

S 9.4: Suggestions to Improve Livelihood Opportunities in Rural Areas

Respondents were asked to give top three suggestions, how and what types of livelihood opportunities could be improved in rural areas so that people can work and earn at their own place. The major suggestions includes the following – 23% respondents suggested to create regular jobs under govt. schemes / MNREGA, other 23% said there should be some kind of employment opportunities for local people here, while 14% said there should be a factory nearby which should provide employment to the unemployed, 8% emphasised to create more job opportunities locally, followed by 4% suggested to have free employment training for youths, 7% said agriculture work should be supported for small farmers, another 4% said there should be easy loan / subsidy facility for own small business, 3% Panchayat should create more works for local people, 3% said to have employment for women, production of vegetables and market linkage suggested by 2% respondents to absorb local unemployed people who do not wish to go back to the city as shown in Table-19.

Table-19: Suggestions from respondents to improve livelihoods in rural areas

There should be a factory near by	14%
Agriculture work to be supported	7%
Create regular jobs under govt. schemes / MNREGA	23%
There should be some employment here	23%
Easy loan / subsidy facility for own small business	4%
Panchayat should create more works	3%
Self Employment should be encouraged	4%
Creating more job opportunities locally	8%
Free employment training for youths	4%
Animal Husbandry	3%
Employment for women	3%
Vegetable production	2%
Provide market linkage	2%

Shrimati Babli Bai Yadav
Age-32 years, Female, Education-Class 5
Family: Husband, a daughter and a son
Village-Dungariya, Samanpura, Dindori

Skill: Sewing and embroidery

We have very small agriculture land and was doing farming, but was not enough to manage living here in the village so we left our home in a very difficult circumstances. We went to Bani village in Maharashtra to get some work with the help of a relative in February month.

I was doing harvesting work of clove and cardamom, but it was not a daily job so I have to stay home three days every week. We were facing enormous challenges, and were not getting any job due to this corona pandemic.

Due to this disease, we had to come back home. We did not get any facility to come back, so we and other about 14 people hired a vehicle for Rs. 32,000 to come back to Dindori. Here we had to stay for 14 days in quarantine centre then only came to our home.

For now, will do whatever labour work can get in the village. After the rain if, transport opens then will plan to go out for work.

CHAPTER-3

Conclusions and Recommendations



The shocking images of migrant workers forced to walk in desperation showed the enormity of the crisis as well as some of the challenges posed by an extended lockdown in the state and the country where so many people live hand to mouth and cannot afford not to work.

It is important to note that a substantial portion of migration for all social categories is because of several socio-economic factors, but a high share of the both the SC and ST categories reported in this study migrating for employment when moving to urban areas whether inter-district or inter-state. Many returnee migrant workers are from either the landless or marginal (or smallholders) farm households.

The following conclusion and recommendations are drawn based on the primary and secondary information collected which makes some evidence based for further review and action in order to improve lives and livelihoods of the migrant workers wherever they are.

Strategies for short and long-term are suggested to be implemented simultaneously for migrant workers to better support them in recovery and rehabilitation while the COVID is still on. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive system, which is adaptive and flexible to needs and provides adequate social and income support to the migrants.

1.1 Immediate Action and Intensification of Efforts:

Migrant workers are mostly daily-wage workers, and are particularly vulnerable, with limited or no access to social security and most living in poverty. Living hand to mouth, their loss of livelihoods has led to a lack of money to pay rents or pay for food. Women are impacted whether because of their gender, responsibilities as caregivers, or as members of disadvantaged castes and communities.

There is a risk, with extended lockdown and risks of further waves of infection, that labour shortages could negatively impact the economy. There is a wider need to support re-entry back into the workforce and support livelihoods.

1. Migrant workers have faced such neglect and humiliation as to have developed trust deficits, lack of trust on their employers and on the governments. This was because they were not treated well either at the host cities or in transit during the lockdown. There is need for the government to regain the trust of lacs of returnees as they lost hopes and trust on government. There is need to create awareness among returnees through panchayats and local political leaders reaffirming their commitment towards welfare of returnees.
2. MNREGA has often been considered in policy circles as a panacea for absorbing rural wage seekers. Returnees in rural areas are looking at MNREGA as shock absorber; many of them are employed under various types of work. This could be an opportunity for government to make rural area infrastructure development plans especially in agriculture and irrigation system to provide employment to the people and at the same time get such plan implemented without any shortages of labour.
3. There is need to take consideration of wages which migrant workers received at their destination places and existing skills of migrant workers while designing livelihood support programs
4. There is need to implement and strengthen government schemes focusing on agriculture and allied sector. Focus on schemes providing livelihood options other than agriculture
5. Majority of returnees came back with no or very few amount of cash, many of them even borrowed money for transit and meet basic needs upon their return. Direct cash benefits should be made to the genuine individual and families for their survival in this crisis
6. Though, the MP government has started central portal for registration of skills on a portal, but the mapping should be done as soon as possible and a plan of action should be developed for their training and absorption in the local or in the nearby job market.
7. Need to understand the gaps between existing skills of migrant workers and skill required by industry sectors. These gaps need to be filled by providing skill development training programs with the linkages of industry demand in mission mode.
8. Health, education and social protection is very important for the migrants, their children and families. There is need to link them with various respective service provisions and programmes so that they can receive such services as and when required in this crisis.

1.2 Long-Term Strategies:

Future migration for work is likely to be severely impacted. As restrictions begin to ease, employers and businesses cannot necessarily rely on cheap available labour. Having faced destitution and hardship, many

may wish to stay closer to families and local support networks.

Current challenges can also be an opportunity. The scale of the migrant crisis has made visible an often-overlooked population of workers. With political will, and investment at central and state levels, this could be an opportunity to transform livelihoods.

As thoughts will turn to how to stimulate economies and get people back to work, it is imperative that those in authority turn their minds to how to create a more just society that invests in good living, healthcare, and has a social protection system that supports the most vulnerable in society.

1. Information System and Legal Framework for Migrants

One key challenge is the lack of robust data on the scale of internal migration. While estimates abound, there is no proper data collection system in place to accurately record temporary, seasonal and circular migration patterns. However, it is estimated that more than 90% of migrant workers in India are engaged in the un-organized and informal economy.

There is no inter-state coordination and information sharing system which can better inform the government in service provisions for migrants. Another issue of migrant's protection from exploitation by their employers where safety and security is not guaranteed.

Recommendations: Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the government should have a well designed management information system for migrant workers and a coordination framework to be agreed among states. A registration system at the source and destination is very essential to track the migrants, their skills and ensure they are supported appropriately.

Government should also regulate the employment system of migrant workers and have a legal framework for the employer especially of un-organized / informal sector. There should be minimum standards and legal contracting for migrant workers where they work and stay.

2. Facilitation for Migrants

The pandemic, is giving many lessons to the people, government, thinker and policy makers to look into the matters which was never given adequate attention such as migrant workers welfare and social protection. Migrant workers are often not aware about what are the policies and programmes that provide and support their social protection, welfare and legal assistance. It is because there is no helpline or a single window where they can get all these information.

Recommendations: There is need to establish a permanent helpline and facilitation centre where the migrant workers can get all the information they may need. Using various media and activities are important to create awareness among migrant workers about such issues.

3. Skills and Employment

The task of developing migrant workers skills is complex and challenging. Their use of available training opportunity is circumscribed by poor information and awareness about skill training and absence of formal

and informal career counselling. The majority of current skills training have an inflexible and set duration and educational qualifications and it becomes difficult for a migrant, whose living depends upon daily wages, to dedicate this time. Candidates also need to possess —soft skills (e.g. communication). All these combine to limit the migrant workers' choices.

As revealed in the study, that majority of migrant workers do not possess any good employable skill which can give them better opportunities with good wages in the city. It seems, there is huge demand of construction worker as majority of them were engaged in construction work. There are several skill based tasks in the sector. Other sector is agriculture, followed by service sector where large number of opportunities are created in the urban and also semi urban areas. By providing good skills to the people they can be in better place to make informed choices of their employment and negotiation of wages.

Recommendations: Migrant workers should have access to skilling programmes offered under initiative such as *Skill India* in both rural (source) and urban (destination) areas. Government should map out the demand and supply side of the skills and employment opportunities to create a highly skilled workforce for various sectors.

4. Service Provisions

Although the government is implementing several schemes, that supports poor and marginalized population for their good living, But in this case of migrants, because their nature of stay it becomes challenging how the public services could be provided. However such Public services for poor and vulnerable population such as food security, health, and education, housing and social protection are vital in order to reduce migrant workers stress and sufferings.

Food security: One of the major benefits that migrants lose is access to PDS, especially those short term migrant worker, who move without their household.

Recommendations: There is also a continued need for social safety net programmes, such as the PDS to focus on the vulnerable sections of rural society. In this context, the “One Nation, One Ration card” policy can particularly be effective in enhancing food security of the most vulnerable migrants.

Education of the Migrants' Children: For some children, parents may decide that continuous travel may affect scholastic achievement and this can lead to another cycle of struggle for next generation.

Recommendations: Under the education guarantee scheme, such children should have special provisions in the government programme so that they can continue their education wherever their parents stays. Provisions for hotel facilities could also be included in the plan.

Other areas of housing and health services are also one of the major challenges while a migrant travel and migrate for employment.

Recommendations: With the provision of Pradhan Mantree Awas Yojana and Ayushman Bharat Yojana, it should be coordinated among states and cities that migrant workers should have access to such provisions as long as they stay at the place or wherever they go next.

References

Global multi-dimensional poverty index 2018

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0188440920309401>

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/covid-19-hidden-majority-indias-migration-crisis#>

<https://criticaledges.com/2020/07/12/covid-19-on-indian-migrant-workers/>

Directorate of Panchayat Raj, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Report of The Working Group On Migration, January 2017, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation

https://censusindia.gov.in/Data_Products/Data_Highlights/Data_Highlights_link/data_highlights_D1D2D3.pdf

<http://www.slbcmadhyapradesh.in/economy.aspx> and Economic survey of Madhya Pradesh 2017-18

Emerging Pattern of Urbanization and Economic Development in Madhya Pradesh Dr. Lokesh Shrivastava D. Litt, and Rajneesh Kumar Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Geography, Rani Durgavati University, Jabalpur, (Madhya Pradesh), INDIA (Corresponding author: Rajneesh Kumar) (Received 09 September 2017, Accepted 15 October, 2017)

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2020/jun/03/most-migrants-died-during-covid-19-lockdown-30-savelife-foundation-2151565.html>

Photo Credit:

Deccan Herald

DNA India



Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis

Sushasan Bhavan, Bhadbada Chouraha,
T.T. Nagar, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh 462003