Inclusive by Design

CEMENTING THE FUTURE FOR INFORMAL WORKERS IN INDIA'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR
At Godrej Properties Ltd. (GPL), we believe that a socially responsible business is a successful one and our workers are a big part of that responsibility. While workers are brought on board by our contractor partners, we endeavour to ensure that their working and living conditions uphold human dignity. From an industry perspective, we invest in both skilled and unskilled construction workers in order to strengthen their capabilities/income potential and contribute to a future ready workforce.

We upheld this commitment even as the pandemic paralysed industry operations. Thousands of workers continued to stay on at our construction sites; we provided them with meals and sanitized living conditions through the lockdown. The unprecedented situation however brought with it the realisation that millions more were impacted differently and there is a lot more to be done. The lockdown and resultant migration underscored the need for us as an industry to better understand the fault lines that allowed for a human crisis of this scale.

GPL commissioned a report ‘Inclusive by Design: Cementing the future for informal workers in India’s construction sector’ that offers actionable insights on the systemic barriers that heighten the vulnerability of workers employed in this sector. Outside of agriculture, the construction sector is the largest employer of blue-collar workers. It is estimated that 80% of the workforce is informally employed, with a predominance of migrants.

We took away five points of strategic advice from this exercise that highlights the significance of convergence between multiple stakeholders:

• Improve data collection and integration across workers’ migration corridors and value chains to enable greater visibility and security
• Enable financial, social, and legal protection by securing requisite identity proof and worker registration
• Create expectation alignment for workers through a channel informed by industry demand
• Ensure gender equity in opportunities, working conditions and wages through inclusive policies and practice
• Empower construction workers’ families and communities by access to diverse livelihood opportunities to prevent distress led entry into the sector

The vision is ambitious. It calls upon systemic government support, on-ground insights, a coalition of industry peers, a network of non-profits and the patience of philanthropic/CSR capital to join forces. But most importantly, it calls upon us, the employers of this 50-million strong workforce, to champion this aspiration. We as business leaders must take greater responsibility for worker practices in our ecosystem. It also calls upon industry bodies to acknowledge the criticality of this workforce and uphold higher standards of worker wellbeing in a way that enables socially responsible businesses to continue as viable and successful ones.

As we emerge from the pandemic, India’s real estate and construction industries are faced with a choice, to rebuild as before OR to reset the foundation to one that befits an industry of the future that places worker wellbeing at the core of resilient/sustainable business. In these challenging times, the onus lies with us, to chart the future as one where workers join out of aspiration rather than distress.

At GPL we are committed to playing our part and invite you to join us on this journey.

PIROJSHA GODREJ
Executive Summary

The plight of the informal and migrant workers has remained unnoticed because of systemic barriers and our collective apathy until the pandemic hit us

The construction sector is one of the largest employers of informal and migrant workers in India, on account of fast-paced urbanization and a high demand for low-skilled workforce. Despite them being responsible for building our homes and cities, it took an unprecedented crisis brought on by the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), to spotlight the plight of this thus far invisible workforce.

Multi-layered systemic challenges faced by these workers are exacerbated by their intersectional identities;

The construction sector contributes to ~9% of India’s GDP. However, the inequalities faced by the vulnerable workers employed in this sector, are a stark contrast to its economic progress. While migration is a critical solution to build economic opportunity, for this demographic of workers, it is currently driven by distress. Further, vulnerabilities caused by gendered skill gaps and societal norms result not only in 10 times more men as compared to women being employed in the sector, but earnings at levels 30-40% lower than their male counterparts, specifically in urban areas.

Key stakeholders featuring at various touchpoints affect construction workers’ experiences through complex journeys;

Delving deep into the journeys of informal migrant workers in the sector, reveals not only the inequities arising from the primary breakpoints impeding their progress, but also how key stakeholders play defining roles in their interactions. The stakeholders are classified under the broad groups of the government, community, contractors, and industry, characterized as their principal employer. Since the phenomenon of migration is closely linked with their journeys – the challenges they face have to be analyzed across source, destination and at systemic levels. It is also important to adopt a gender lens, given the exclusionary practices towards women in the sector. The ‘key breakpoints’ at a glance are:

- Government and policy are backed by a strong legal framework but fall behind in implementation
- Industries survive due to underpaid informal migrant workers, amidst paucity of local laborers
- Contractors who are primarily responsible for recruitment and welfare, are often mired in informality themselves
- Exclusionary practices and policy inaction make gender equity a growing concern in construction
- Communities share experience of distress from source to destination, and over generations

Cornerstones can establish the foundation for a more inclusive tomorrow

The breakpoints can be transformed into opportunities for each stakeholder to seize, towards ensuring an equitable future for workers. In a nutshell, these ‘cornerstones’ are:

- Enable financial, social and legal protection by securing requisite identity proof
- Create expectation alignment for workers through a channel informed by industry demand
- Empower construction workers’ families and communities by access to diverse livelihood opportunities to prevent distress led entry into the sector
- Ensure gender equity in opportunities, working conditions and wages through inclusive policies and practice
- Improve data collection and integration across workers’ migration corridors and value chains to enable greater visibility and security

This report profiles change-making non-profit organizations, taking these workers from vulnerability to empowerment

Discussing leading interventions of these non-profit organizations that are changing the story on ground - the report landscapes their work across geographies and programs. Their efforts are laying foundation to improve outcomes for this workforce.

Industry leaders and the Government should now lead the way towards an inclusive future of work

The need of the hour is holistic transformation, for which it is imperative that all key stakeholder categories play a more catalytic role in bridging identified systemic barriers and promoting greater dignity and equity for informal workers in the construction sector. As the government plays its part in effectively safeguarding workers’ rights and easing access to entitlements, business leaders must take the first step to reset aspirations towards inclusive workforce participation and growth. Industry associations and similar influential stakeholders must play a supporting role too, by championing the cause of worker well-being to create a level playing field for responsible businesses, to ensure that they survive as successful businesses. Non-profit organizations can provide critical impetus to this movement through their ground-up insights and trusted networks, while philanthropists can offer risk capital and push for innovations that build missing bridges and address the most distressed communities, providing labour to the sector.

A combined effort, whilst upholding the abovementioned cornerstones, from all these stakeholders, has the potential to achieve triple wins: enhance lives and provide dignity to a major vulnerable population, conduct good business and boost the economy. This will also contribute towards 6 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, namely:

1. No poverty
6. Gender equality
8. Decent work and economic growth
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
17. Partnerships for the goals
Harnessing India’s strength in numbers

It is now requisite to count in the invisible workforce for creating a just, fair and transformational development story

India is home to 14% of the world’s labor force\(^1\) and yet contributes only ~7% of the world’s GDP share in PPP terms\(^2\). The latent potential of a high demographic dividend with 35% of the population being younger than 19 years old\(^3\), has been widely considered a promising narrative for the future of India.

However, India’s majority labor force of the present remains missing in India’s development story. 85% of the non-agricultural workforce is informal.\(^4\) They build our homes and cities, manufacture goods and provide daily services. The hard work of these ~270 million workers ensures that we live comfortably. Yet they have remained invisible because of systemic barriers and our collective apathy.

Human resource and employment are showing alarming trends that need to be addressed and prioritized with urgency.

India is experiencing the highest levels of unemployment in over four decades. This affects India’s most vulnerable groups most – Schedule Caste and Tribe groups achieved 59% & 66% literacy versus 72% literacy nationally\(^5\). Gender continues to be a barrier for women across socio-economic categories due to patriarchal societal norms in India – the World Bank data on female labor force participation rate (FLFPR) shows that India lagging far behind globally\(^6\).

Apart from these dismal trends in human development, informality and unemployment in India have also been considered as linked to economic planning, other cyclic factors, and labor legislation.

The growing informality of employment even in the formal sector is a matter of concern. The increasing uptake of contract labor across the supply chain, precarious work and the outsourcing of production has added to the informality burden.

Moreover, with the proliferation of platform businesses and the growth of the gig economy, this phenomenon is likely to stay. Based on current evidence, India’s informal sector is much larger compared to other low-middle income countries and warrants the necessary conversations.
The multiple vulnerabilities of this workforce, exacerbated by lack of opportunities, pushes them into the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

The systemic challenges faced by these workers are multi-layered and affected by their intersectional identities. Further, the lack of education and skills of India’s most vulnerable workers impedes their ability to gain formal employment. Despite wide acceptance that human-centric approaches to development are critical for India – these workers continue to suffer due to the following factors:

**What is informality of employment?**

Employees are considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is, by law or in practice, not subject to:

- National labour legislation
- Income taxation
- Social protection or entitlements
- Employment benefits

**Gendered vulnerabilities**

- Women’s work is not valued
- Precarious and menial work
- Wage disparity is wide

**Persistent inequalities**

- Poverty remains a challenge
- Lack of safe and decent work
- Unjust discriminatory practices

**Distress migration**

- High degree of financial stress
- Unequal regional development
- Unsafe and uninformed migration

**COVID-19 impact**

- Reverse migration to source
- Severely impacted livelihoods
- Lack of socio-economic security

**What are its real-world manifestations**

- Lack of registration in employers’ or government databases
- Wages less than the recommended threshold of Rs. 375
- No formal enforceable contracts, unaccounted time/effort

**Reasons for workers being informally employed**

- Non-declaration of the jobs/employees
- Employee’s place of work outside employer’s enterprise
- Casual or limited short duration jobs
- Labour regulations not applied/enforced/compiled with
- Jobs with inadequate number of working hours or wages
- Employment by unincorporated enterprises/within households

**Inclusive by Design**

In March 2020, when the lockdown was announced in India, millions of migrant workers, including women, most of whom were part of the informal workforce, were left stranded with no food or shelter. A year later – during the second wave of the COVID-19, the most vulnerable informal workers suffered the repercussions of the crisis the most, once again.

The first lockdown etched in public memory, images of hundreds of these workers walking back to their villages, as public transport was shut, and they had no monetary or other resources to ensure a safe passage home. Official records stated that about 63 lakh migrant workers travelled through Shramik Special trains from May-August 2020.

Despite comprising of such a vast majority, the informally employed workforce remained largely invisible until the Covid-19 pandemic.
Exploring redevelopment for construction workers

It is important to zoom in on the construction sector, that employs the largest number of informal and migrant workers

The construction sector employs the maximum number of informal workers, who are predominantly migrants. Fast-paced urbanisation and a high demand for low-skilled workforce are pull factors for this vulnerable demographic. Government data estimates that the sector employs 57 million workers, a total of 50 million men and 7 million women. The construction sector is also the single largest absorber of informal workers. Due to the low entry barriers for recruitment, the industry employs a large chunk of the surplus of India’s non-agricultural workforce.

Economic snapshot of the sector

- 9% of the share in GDP
- Construction is the third fastest growing industry
- >50 million workers engaged in Construction
- Several remain uncounted because of gaps in identification and data disaggregation
- 10 times more men than women are employed
- The demand for women is limited due to gendered skill gaps and societal norms
- >80% of Informality in Employment
- Outside of agriculture, construction employs the largest number of informal and migrant workers

Despite being an established industry, the knowledge on the inner workings, especially with regard to the wellbeing of its unit-level workers, remains fragmented. Industry and Government both play important yet distanced and apathetic roles for these workers. There is little actionable insight on the systemic breakpoints that undermine the construction sector’s ability to ensure greater dignity and equity for its informally employed workforce.
The migrant and gender status of individual workers further intensifies the complexity of the issues regarding informality of employment within construction. Most informal workers in construction, especially migrants and women, have negligible legal protection, and face a hostile and punitive policy and regulatory environment.

Though migration is a critical solution to build economic opportunity, for this section of workers it is currently driven by severe distress.

Approximately, ~27 million inter-state migrant workers are employed in construction. The Report of the Working Group on Migration by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2017 showed that the share of short-term migrants in the construction sector was much higher than long-term migrants. A significant proportion of this group of construction workers is made up of seasonal migrants, workers who migrate temporarily for employment. Migration has correlations to unequal development concentrated in hubs, severe distress at source and paucity of opportunities across the span of India. While there are severe shortfalls in data, proxies are able to establish these aspects.

Ten percent of the sector's workforce comprises of women, often employed in manual unskilled labor and remain lost because of the gender-neutral discourse that surrounds this space.

The starkness of gender inequity can be seen in the on-ground realities. Women are not only more likely to be engaged in the informal economy but also comprise a significantly higher number as informal workers within the formal sector. An added layer of vulnerability and time poverty surfaces from their burden of doing most of the domestic and care work.
Who are the workers in construction?

**Stressors**
- They aspire accessing better opportunities in the sector and have limited systemic barriers impeding their growth.
- They can afford to aspire for limited growth in the sector despite the lack of opportunities at source and economic distress.
- They have to find employment to emerge from debt cycles, effects of disasters, poverty, and food insecurity.
- They have to access the sector to address financial crisis, medical emergencies, and high-cost one-time expenses.
- The workforce has mostly circular or seasonal migrants from nearby districts. They migrate from tribal or disaster-prone regions, low on human and economic development. They manage primary needs at subsistence.

**Migration**
- The migration mix is variable for this section of the workforce and remains largely permanent. They migrate based on their aspirations and the opportunities available. They can access well-being across source and destination.
- The workforce includes locals and permanent migrants from across states. They migrate permanently from areas with relatively lower economic opportunities. They can address primary needs at source or destination.
- The workforce includes circular migrants who migrate from distant or remote areas that score low on human development and economic indicators. They struggle to meet primary needs at source and destination.

**Gender**
- The glass ceiling acts as a barrier for the few women employed in the space. Most women continue to face the burden of unpaid domestic and care work.
- There are negligible number of women employed under this profile.
- Women are employed in the lowest paying and most hazardous tasks (like lifting heavy loads). Women continue to face the burden of unpaid domestic and care work.

The gaps in last mile delivery have to be addressed to build a long-term response that transforms the aspiration for these workers

The Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996, (BOCW Act) provides a robust legislative framework for the social protection and well-being of workers engaged in the sector.

**However, there are severe gaps in last mile delivery of services for construction workers**

- **62%** of the BOCW cess is unutilized
- Out of ~50 million workers, less than 35 million are actually registered with the Boards
- **30%** of the total workers remain unregistered
- **50%** of workers are eligible for benefits under the BOCW cess fund
- **36%** accessed assistance through direct benefit transfer during the pandemic
- **26 million** BOCW workers are ‘live’ registered workers, whose registration have been renewed up-to-date
- ~26 million BOCW workers are ‘live’ registered workers, whose registration have been renewed up-to-date
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The abovementioned facts, drawing upon official data after the first lockdown, are a clear indication that there is a severe need to ensure social protection, rights, and dignity for workers in construction. However, in the few months following the first wave of the pandemic, there have been some positive trends emerging as a harbinger of improved worker registrations and well-being. The Ministry of Labour & Employment has developed eSHRAM portal for creating a National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW), which will be seeded with Aadhaar. This is the first-ever national database of unorganised workers including migrant workers, construction workers, gig and platform workers. Further, few states, like the Government of Gujarat, has also launched portals like e-Nirman, which will help construction workers avail smart cards, enabling access to a variety of welfare schemes.

It is important to undertake a thorough analysis of the breakpoints surrounding workers. Entire communities of workers share the experience of distress and exploitation. The interlinkages between critical stakeholders and the complex journeys of workers (as individuals and communities) need to be deconstructed fully to target approaches for resolving the most pressing problems.

Therefore, the report attempts to visualize their lives by building an understanding about their journeys, the role of different stakeholders and the breakpoints across the system. The objective is to generate actionable insights that promote transformational development and empowerment as well as induce expedited action for their wellbeing in the shorter term.
Identifying the cracks in the system

CHAPTER 2

The primary employers or industry are far removed from their on-ground realities as majority of the work is liaised out to a web of contractors and sub-contractors. The fragmented reach and accountability of the government is another overarching problem that affects their lives. Since the phenomenon of migration is interspersed so closely with their journeys across the system – it is important to layer this in while analyzing the breakpoints.

The challenges faced by workers are starkly visible across source, destination and at the systemic level. Focusing on gender is critical while discussing the challenges surrounding migrant workers given the exclusionary practices surrounding them.

The inequities faced by informal workers in the construction sector are multi-faceted. Amidst complex labor supply chains, a number of issues impede their social and economic growth.

Probing into journeys of informal workers in the sector reveals the primary touchpoints and critical stakeholders playing defining roles in their interactions across the system and well-being.

The key stakeholders at important touchpoints in workers’ lives are the government, industry, contractors and community.
Catch a glimpse of the journeys of these workers...

Please note that this is a fictionalized representation based on insights from the research process.

This is the story of **Rajib and Kanta’s family**, distressed like many others in their community, due to the harsh climatic conditions in Kalahandi, Odisha.

Rajib and Kanta went into **heavy losses due to drought** on their small land holding at Kalahandi.

They took an advance **loan of ₹ 80K** from the local money lender to support their family.

Irrespective of the number of hours, they earned **₹ 220/day** for their work at a brick kiln nearby for 2 years.
Biswa was left in the care of Devi, who supported her mother with domestic and care work.

When they weren’t able to pay back, the family started being harassed by the money lender to pay the debt back.

They started working double shifts. The children remained unattended except for the time they spent at school or Aanganwadi Centre.

The family of four was pressured into moving to Mumbai city with a contractor known to the money lender.

They travelled for 40 hours in crowded buses and trains with a group of 20 others from nearby villages, remaining hungry.
The family began working in a large luxury township on the outskirts of Mumbai.

The contractor arranged tin-shed of 100m² for the family to sleep in. They had to share a toilet with 50 others.

The site had 300 workers, 90 of whom were registered under the BOCW Act. Rajib and Kanta were not registered.

The family didn’t receive any ration or healthcare from the government because they did not have necessary domicile proofs in this city.
The site being located on the outskirts, had no schools or child-care facilities nearby.

The children were forced to drop-out and remained neglected.

Four months later, Rajib passed away due to an unfortunate mishap on-site.

In the absence of the BOCW registration, the family was paid a subpar compensation.
The contractor took away a part of the family’s share of the compensation as a repayment of the money-lender’s debt.

As a single woman, it was not easy for Kanta to adjust in the labour colony on site.

She decided to move back to her home village with the contractor’s support.

On returning to her village, five years later, Kanta with her two children continue to farm their small land holding in the hope of a better harvest.
In the sections below, critical breakpoints are highlighted across stakeholder groups including government, industry, contractors, and community. Furthermore, a section has been dedicated to gender, drawing attention to the problems in facilitating equitable outcomes.

**Government**

**Government and policy are backed by a strong legal framework but fall behind in implementation**

The BOCW Act along with the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979, and other schemes are progressive and intentional policies for worker wellbeing. Furthermore, the Union Budget 2021 seeks to address some of the challenges that emerged during the COVID-19 crisis with vigor. The Government of India is now taking proactive steps towards strengthening food provisioning through universalized ration availability and increased efforts towards enumeration of workers\(^1\). To address gender-specific needs, government policies to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace and provide maternity benefits are applicable to the construction industry. However, there are shortfalls in its implementation due to overburdened and fragmented public systems.

**Gaps in enumeration of migrant workers:** As the constituency of informal migrant workers gets split across local administrative bodies (across villages, cities and states) as well as departments (labor and urban local bodies), there are gaps in enumerating the large majority of the migrant workforce. This causes hinderances in the portability of basic services such as access to ration and accommodation.

**Fragmented implementation mechanisms:** The implementation of the BOCW Act is decentralized, which causes discrepancies in execution based on the political will of state governments. Further, there is a deficit in the human resources required for the project management and administration of the rules notified under the law.

**Shortfalls in monitoring of programs:** Service delivery at the last mile is also affected by shortfalls in monitoring. Insufficient reporting on key performance indicators affects the feedback loops and therefore the end beneficiary remains underserved.

**Inadequate utilization of funds available:** The BOCW Act provides for a financial mechanism to collect a fixed percentage of a project from construction companies as a cess that can be utilized for the welfare of workers. While a significant amount of cess has been collected, there is severe under-utilization. As of June 2020, 62% of the cess funds collected were unutilized, including emergency aid provided at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic\(^2\).

**Misappropriation of the legal provisions:** Practitioners have reported that cartels and mediators are exploiting the system by falsely registering non-construction workers under the BOCW Act. This is problematic because several studies have reported that many construction workers are not even aware of the BOCW Act. Corrective measures to stop such misappropriation are also often unsuccessful due to the additional regulatory burden they bring along. The lack of stringency in enforcement hampers actual beneficiaries (especially those from Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes) from accessing entitlements.

**Practitioners have reported that cartels and mediators are exploiting the system by falsely registering non-construction workers under the BOCW Act.**

\(^1\) To address gender-specific needs, government policies to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace and provide maternity benefits are applicable to the construction industry. However, there are shortfalls in its implementation due to overburdened and fragmented public systems.

\(^2\) The BOCW cess funds. Workers are able to live within means.}

**Welfare legislation for Mathadi workers in Maharashtra has proved to be exemplary in worker protection**

The term ‘Mathadi’ means a person carrying a load of material either on their head (‘matha’ in Hindi) or back, to stack at the appropriate place. Mathadi workers’ engage in loading, unloading, stacking, carrying, weighing, measuring or such other works including work preparatory or incidental to such operations\(^3\).

The Maharashtra Mathadi, Hamal and other Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment & Welfare) Act, 1969 was passed in response to the struggles of these thus far unprotected workers, and has gone a long way in ensuring their improved quality of life through better employment conditions and welfare provisioning.

The said Act (together with its various schemes for worker protection), is being implemented in the state through duly constituted tripartite Boards, comprising representatives of the employers, the workers and the State Government. In essence, the Board, as primary recruiter, not only ensures adequate supply of manual labour to the scheduled employments under the Act, appropriate utilisation of labour available, better overall working conditions, health, safety and welfare measures to the workers (including but not limited to contributions to provident fund, accident compensation, gratuity, bonuses, insurance, paid leave and medical benefits), but also regular payment of wages to the workers, by ensuring registration under the said Act.
Industries survive due to underpaid informal migrant workers, amidst a paucity of local laborers

The construction industry is a challenging one, where daily jobs are dangerous, posing numerous unaccounted risks for the worker, and can even be potentially life-threatening. Therefore, it is important for industry players, who are primary employers, to exercise even more caution and act responsibly in protecting the interests of workers on site. Unfortunately, the complexity of the labor supply value chain, places the ‘principal employers’ far away from the worker, such that they are either unaware or apathetic towards their plight.

Lack of awareness and limited accountability: Rarely is the principal employer aware of the ground realities faced by workers. On account of having several layers of contractors between the worker and themselves, employers do not concern themselves with ensuring ultimate wellbeing of workers. There is acute lack of initiative through formal company policies, to ensure payment of minimum wages, safe working and living conditions, food, health care and other basic services essential to life.

Subhash Bhatnagar
Chief Functionary | Nirmana

Construction is the only industry where the workers have to move out after finishing their work, in all other industries it is the product that moves out to the consumer.”

Inadequate worker registrations: A fundamental problem with respect to worker wellbeing in this industry, is the failure to register workers under the BOCW Act, which is the basis of all wellbeing provisioning for the worker. In the absence of enforcement of registration, and legal loopholes that can be leveraged to limit accountability, employers lack incentive to enable the process.

Construction is the only industry where the workers have to move out after finishing their work, in all other industries it is the product that moves out to the consumer.”

MYTH
Informal workers all over India earn standardized minimum wages. They are able to make ends meet.

FACT
An Expert Committee set up in 2019 recommended the methodology and contemporary amount of the national floor wage, proposing INR 375, however this has not been formally acknowledged yet. Even at the proposed amount – 31 days of work, would result in earnings of only INR 11,625/ month.

One of the primary reasons for workers in the construction sector being unable to secure social welfare measures, is the failure to get registered under the BOCW Act—the primary legislation aimed at ensuring the same through various schemes for healthcare, education, financial assistance, improved working conditions etc. Owing to several reasons described in detail in this report, that result in workers going unregistered, they find themselves in a highly disadvantageous position as regards their protection.

An effective way to combat this setback, has been through coordinated efforts between the industry (being workers’ primary employers) and the state government (through the welfare boards under the said Act). Benefits of such a partnership were demonstrated at one of Tata Realty’s project sites, (where a welfare program to register workers was already being run in tandem with the state government, with 900 workers having been registered). On account of the complexities and delay involved in getting workers registered, some workers were left without registration despite efforts being made in this regard through the said welfare program, which by extension meant no access to benefits for them under the BOCW Act. However, since the government was aware of these efforts being made to register workers, it acted dynamically in extending benefits under the Act, such as provision of midday meals at site, even to those workers who were not registered under the Act. Such a partnership can go a long way in ensuring worker welfare, especially during the period pending their registration, when they are in dire need of support on various counts.

Synergy between industry players and the government machinery is key to ensuring worker welfare

Inclusive by Design
Contractors are primarily responsible for recruitment and welfare, often mired in informality themselves

Contractors are key intermediaries in the construction ecosystem, as they are the primary figures responsible for recruitment and payments. The BOCW Act defines a contractor as “a person who undertakes to produce a given result for any establishment, other than a mere supply of goods or articles of manufacture, by the employment of building workers or who supplies building workers for any work of the establishment and includes a sub-contractor”. However, the prohibitive degree of informality and casualization of the labor force, has severely obliterated the scope of an “employer” to include even a petty contractor.

High level of dependency: More often than not, contractors belong to the same community as workers and may have started out as informal workers themselves. A paramount aspiration for workers is to eventually become contractors. This leads to an inherent level of trust in the contractor. Therefore, workers wholly rely on them for all employment related information and liaisoning. Owing to the high level of dependency on the contractor, the movement of the worker is intrinsically linked to the contractor, irrespective of where they move.

Contractors are only responsible for hiring workers for the principal employers and ensuring payment of adequate and timely wages.

Widespread exploitation: As a result of the worker being dependent on the contractor, for all practical purposes, it is the contractor and not the ‘principal employer’ who is responsible for the basic well-being of the worker – food, water, sanitation and shelter. There exists a large population of unscrupulous contractors, who seek to make personal gains by pocketing the worker’s hard-earned wages (already dismal) or place them into situations of forced labor. Further, the contractor has the absolute authority to determine skill levels and job suitability, governed by societal norms like caste and ethnic biases.

The banes of informality: The casual mode of operation of a large volume of contractors who in a majority of cases are unlicensed, directly contributes to the worker’s already precarious situation. Intentionally avoiding formal documentation and enumeration of the worker is convenient for the contractor. The contractors can escape liability for welfare provisioning with ‘hire and fire’ policies. Little effort is made to retain workers and ensure job stability.

It is difficult for informal workers and their families to break free from the inter-generational cycle of poverty. Irrespective of whether the family is moving together, the next generation is seldom able to access quality education and skill which can help improve their livelihood opportunities and well-being.

Punitive and adversarial actions towards informal workers: There is widespread stigma and discrimination towards informal workers in construction, mainly those from tribal areas, by authorities and citizens at destination. Eviction, fines, and other punitive actions are taken against them. Workers lack awareness about legal recourse against exploitation. Harsh circumstances prevail because workers are not empowered or organized to negotiate better.

Power centers by marginal actors within the community: The complex supply-chain and economic system that surrounds communities has created power centers by marginal actors. Money lenders, agents and mediators have emerged. Contractors sometimes double up as money lenders, further complicating the dynamics. These marginal actors provide quick fixes to systemic issues in the absence of formal provisions. This creates unregulated alternatives which can be exploitative for the community.

There is primarily a lack of livelihood opportunities because of which informal workers decide to migrate. Most workers don’t have personal land holdings. The agriculture sector doesn’t have enough work, so they need to move out. Some of them even face natural disasters like drought. Most of the workers in construction are here because of distress.”

Vrushali Naik
Programme Coordinator | Mumbai Mobile Creches

Socio-economic factors and geography are important determinants of breakpoints at the community level. The construction sector largely sees entire communities of migrants, seasonal and circular, moving together for working in adjoining districts or across state borders. Therefore, migration is imperative to consider, while studying challenges surrounding communities. The vulnerability of informal workers in construction is linked with inter-generational poverty, natural disasters, climate change, and discriminatory practices such as the caste system.

Limited opportunities for decent work and economic growth: The nature of work available to communities of informal workers in construction is fundamentally less paying. Their migration is led by distress and aspiration of economic growth. However, the opportunities at destination continue being precarious and underpaid. Further, the discriminatory practices based on social and cultural categories (of caste, gender, tribe, religion) reinforce inequalities.

Shortcomings in the accesses to services and entitlements: Workers’ communities lack proper access to healthcare, ration, financial security, water-hygiene-sanitation (WASH) facilities and accommodation on-site and in their source destinations. This affects their quality of life and well-being. Overburdened public systems are not able to adequately solution for the quantum of shortcomings at hand.

The vicious cycle of inter-generational poverty: It is difficult for informal workers and their families to break free from the inter-generational cycle of poverty. Irrespective of whether the family is moving together, the next generation is seldom able to access quality education and skill which can help improve their livelihood opportunities and well-being.

Communities share experiences of distress from source to destination, and over generations

There are up to 4-5 layers of petty contractors and sub-contractors between the worker and the principal employer. A lot of these belong to the same community as the workers. They not only perform the same work as them, but also sometimes double up as money lenders. This results in cases of debt bondage above the already high dependency for wage payment and provision of necessities.
Gender
Exclusionary practices and policy make gender equity a growing concern in the construction sector

Given the overarching patriarchal system, the construction industry too is not a level-playing field between genders. Employed in the lowest-paying, hazardous and labor-intensive jobs (like heavy lifting) – women workers are marginalized and unrecognized in the construction sector. Gender disaggregated data on women’s migration and actual participation in the construction industry is limited. There is an acute difference in their access to earn equal wages and skilling opportunities. This affects women’s competitiveness in the labor market. The on-ground response to their practical needs like maternity benefits, hygiene, sanitation, and day-care facilities, is dismal. Further, women are also at a higher risk of violence and sexual harassment. It is also pertinent to mention that India’s overall score as regards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (gender equality) is below 50 (on a composite score range of 0-100)\(^1\), and therefore gender equity demands special attention from an SDG progress point of view as well.

Shortfall in redressal of women’s practical needs: Women face the double burden of managing domestic and care work, along with paid work at construction sites. Therefore, the shortfall in implementation of maternity benefits, day-care and creches at the workplace with the support of industry and government affects women adversely. Women’s sanitation, hygiene and menstruation needs are also not addressed appropriately. This creates implicit barriers for women.

Policy fails to address strategic gender needs: While there are policies that focus on addressing women’s practical needs concerning maternity benefits and prevention of sexual harassment, the existing laws fail at transforming gender roles in the construction industry. There are no laws or policies that seek to transform women’s skill gaps or rationalizing wages equitably that can bring long-term changes. The lack of an overarching narrative on this front also affects practices on ground in similar light.

Backlash against gender-intentional policies: It has been observed that policies meant to create gender balance at the worksite are often met with skepticism by employers. Instead of taking them in the spirit of justice and affirmative action, employers and communities retort with backlash resulting in skewed hiring against women, due to patriarchal and societal norms. This causes gender imbalance and deters creating enabling or safe working environments for women.

Feminization of poverty in construction\(^2\): The gap in incomes between men and women persists among informal workers in the construction industry. Women are often employed as “assistants” on sites and paid lesser than their male counterparts. As women are “left behind” when men migrate, they are engaged in menial jobs on smaller construction sites and brick kilns, this further reinforces feminization of poverty.

Change in demand and recruitment patterns: There has been a change in the demand patterns in urban areas for women workers, with reduced hiring. The skill gap faced by women impedes their participation in an increasingly mechanized construction industry. Further, employers and contractors consider women less mobile, and the measures required for their safety and protection as added efforts.

Repeat Scenarios One Year Later:
Second Wave Impact

The second wave of the pandemic brought all-round devastation across the country, and the construction sector is no exception, rendering its worker population even more vulnerable than before, particularly women workers and young, inexperienced workers who tend to be more precariously employed\(^3\).

- Circular migrants in this sector, in particular, have borne the harshest impact, in terms of precarity of employment. Factors such as class, caste, ethnic or linguistic identity, and lack of stable residence and political voice contributed to this, as such workers were difficult to reach through social protection policies\(^4\).
- The loss of work as a result of the pandemic, as well as even after gaining work back, has seen further informalisation and falling income taking place over the past year, leading to extreme financial stress for vulnerable households – poverty, food insecurity and stress are some of the concerns they are faced with.
- While there was recovery in employment in as much as many who lost their jobs were able to find work after the first wave of the pandemic, most are engaged in employment that is even more uncertain than before, and in possibly worse conditions, especially due to mobility restrictions.

While the lessons from the efforts undertaken during the first wave of the pandemic continue to be helpful, the degree of human devastation caused by the second wave only highlights that strong fundamentals of a society such as impregnable public health and education systems, competent governance and administration, and basic social security for all, are irreplaceable\(^5\).

Against this background, and through proactive measures taken by various relevant stakeholders, it is possible to equip workers in this sector with the resilience needed to endure job instability, through a strong fiscal response and welfare provisioning ensuring support for the long term, in order to avoid such households being set back by many years.

**MYTH**

The construction sector employs both women and men. Women earn lower wages because their work is less intense compared to men.

**FACT**

There are 10 times more male workers employed in this sector. When employed, women are made to do the most hazardous and physically tedious jobs available. Gendered vulnerabilities affect women adversely as they earn ~30-40% less than male counterparts even when tasked with the same work, specifically in urban areas.
CHAPTER 3

Cornerstones for worker well being

The COVID-19 lockdown brought to fore the extent of the vulnerabilities of this workforce, highlighting an urgent need to put their well-being at the center of our development plans. The breakpoints reveal complex, systemic issues that plague the journey of the informal workers in the construction industry. However, they also contain inherent opportunities for each stakeholder to grasp, towards securing a more inclusive tomorrow. The abrupt pause brought about by the lockdown provides us a moment to reconsider how to build back in a more sustainable manner, in a way that makes all workers more resilient to such shocks going forward.

It's time to ensure that those who constructed our cities and towns, also have a place in them.

To trigger holistic change, there is a need to spotlight the informally employed workforce and account for them and their needs in policymaking and implementation. It is essential to bridge the gap between those with offices in high rises and those on site, by formalizing their employment and facilitating financial inclusion of the most vulnerable. Eliminating distress, providing support to families and communities, and ensuring information symmetry are key factors that will drive informed decision making and holistic welfare for workers.

Enable financial, social and legal protection by securing requisite identity proof and worker registration

Why? / The rationale

Less than ~35 million workers are registered with State Welfare Boards under the BOCW. Workers either do not know of or may not have easy access to entitlements or redressal mechanisms, especially with regard to registration under BOCW, banking and Aadhaar. At the onset of the pandemic, 64% of the workforce was not able to avail Direct Benefit Transfers, finding themselves in dire conditions without requisite essentials like food

Catalytic impact

Identity proofs and registrations can unlock 4X advantages, with workers rightfully benefiting from:
• Formal financial systems for savings, credit, insurance and pensions
• Safe accommodation and drinking water, especially for migrants
• Fundamental on-site facilities like creches, first-aid, canteens and toilets
• Fixed hours of working, timely payment and due compensation for overtime

Digitizing wages benefits informal construction workers in two ways:

First, it addresses the invisibility of labor. Unlike cash, a digitized wage transfer leaves a paper trail and make this transaction formal. It recognizes the worker and the volume of their labor in a way that can never be denied. It links the worker inextricably to the employer, something that's been particularly difficult to do in the construction ecosystem, whether its remote brick kilns in Bundelkhand or large construction sites in Mumbai.

Secondly, it ensures that the workers (and their families) are financially included. Transacting through a bank account generates the data that the financial services industry needs to be able to develop products and services for this customer segment. This includes products for small savings, urban to rural remittances, life and health insurance and credit.

Amit Garg
Senior Manager | The Global Development Incubator

Create expectation alignment for workers through a channel informed by industry demand

Why? / The rationale

Employment is the reason for a total of ~10 million workers in India undertaking rural – urban migration. Of these less than 14% are skilled in terms of formal education

Catalytic impact

Information symmetry means a double win with empowered workers and a resilient industry:
• Informed, aspiration-led migration for communities and individuals
• Prevention of exploitation through seamless redressal across locations
• Improved power dynamics by capacity building contractors to negotiate for worker rights
• Boost to industry and economy with workers upskilled to meet market demand

Raghav Mehrotra
Researcher | Center for Migration and Labour Studies, Aajeevika Bureau
Empower construction workers’ families and communities by access to diverse livelihood opportunities to prevent distress led entry into the sector

Why? / The rationale

The choice of work undertaken by the vast demographic of informal workers arises out of compulsion resulting from financial distress. Entire families and communities rarely have opportunities that allow them to break away from the inter-generational cycle of poverty. There is a paucity of viable livelihood options at source, a fragmentation in services for building individual capacities at destination and limited access to market-led training across locations. This pushes children and youth to end up in the same occupation as their family/elders.

Catalytic impact

Diversifying livelihood opportunities for families and communities will lead to 4 high-potential gains:

- Demographic dividend by quality education and skilling of children and youth
- Self-reliance and improved earnings from entrepreneurship programs
- Uniformity in development with expanded base of urbanization in non-metros
- Enhanced source of income for women through self-help groups and cooperatives

Ensure gender equity in opportunities, working conditions and wages through inclusive policies and practice

Why? / The rationale

Women are most affected by informality of employment, more likely to be engaged in low-paying unskilled work, that protracts inequity. The responsibilities of care and domestic work further adds to their burden. In India, women spend 84% of their working hours on unpaid activities, while men spend 80% of their working hours on paid work. Not only are they likely to be paid 30–40% less than their male counterparts, but they were also 1.8 times more vulnerable to job loss during the pandemic.

Catalytic impact

An enabling environment boosts women’s participation in the workforce, which can add 27% to GDP.

- Wage parity and competency-based reward mechanisms
- Unbiased access to skilling and entrepreneurship opportunities
- Addressing practical needs including maternity benefits and day care facilities
- Safe workplaces free from all kinds of violence against women and children

Improve data collection and integration across workers’ migration corridors and value chains to enable greater visibility and security

Why? / The rationale

The biggest hurdle in accounting for the needs of the informal workers in government and business policies has been the lack of a comprehensive database that captures their numbers by industry, migration patterns and demographic profiles. Even for available data, there are gaps with regard to timely updating and disaggregation. Only 50% of the workers registered under BOCW are eligible for benefits, since the rest do not have updated profiles.

Catalytic impact

Mainstream visibility and integration of these 50 million workers will lead to inclusive growth:

- Streamlined human resource practices through updated worker profiles
- Increased linkages to opportunities through sectoral database
- Effective delivery of social security benefits, leveraging comprehensive data
- Evidence-based policy and action through research and contextualized insights
- Safe workplaces free from all kinds of violence against women and children

Despite the multiple setbacks in the form of demonetisation and introduction of new taxes and laws, India has seen a boom in the construction activity due to fast-paced urbanisation and infrastructural development in the past few years.

This is only set to soar further, given estimates that 40% of India’s population will be living in cities by 2030. This translates to a requirement of 700-900 million square feet of urban space each year to meet the growing demands that accompany this trend.

We are at an inflection point where businesses have a chance to reset aspirations towards inclusive growth, taking along all its workers. Creating more lucrative opportunities and fostering a work environment of fairness and dignity will go a long way in improving productivity and the socio-economic well-being of a large section of society.

Secretary | Centre for Labour Research and Action

Sudhir Katiyar

One major lacuna that can be covered is mapping of workers. If you have more information about them, it can be made use of by others. That’s a stepping stone, bringing their conditions out in public. So, more documentation, more research on migration schemes and mapping of workers is necessary. That should be the first thing we do.

To think about a longer-term vision, we need to ask informal workers – would you like your child to do that work? And that’s a litmus test because if they say no, that means there is no future in it. They themselves are in it out of compulsion.

Mouleshri Vyas

Professor | Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Why? / The rationale

Previously families used to migrate for work. Nowadays, only few local women join the sector. Construction companies find it risky to have women staying on site. Among migrants, the number of women has reduced to a great extent. Companies are responsible to a great extent for this.

Santosh Parulekar

Director | Pipal Tree Foundation

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Director | Pipal Tree Foundation
Playing our part, to build back better

Business leaders must take the first step to reset aspirations towards inclusive socio-economic growth, as the government plays its part in effectively safeguarding workers’ rights. Non-profits can provide impetus to this movement through their rich on-ground insights and networks. Philanthropists should plug the gaps by supporting novel solutions in this underserved sector.

One of the ways in which philanthropy can support the government is by focusing on facilitating pan-India collaborations among non-profits across geographies, to enable data sharing and cross-learning through technology driven solutions. This can help migrant workers at source and destination. We need to focus efforts on building innovative solutions to address the basic needs of informal workers such as, decent accommodation and affordable food. For example, it would be great if philanthropy could support innovations around makeshift temporary housing at worksites.”

Alex Paul Menon
Labour Commissioner | Chhattisgarh
Industry

There is an urgent need for business leaders to extend welfare measures to all workers in their ecosystem through an inclusive approach.

Industry players have not only the ability and resources to create change, but also stand to gain from investing in the well-being of their workers. Human-centric outcomes that increase productivity result in a win for both parties. As the global ESG paradigm becomes increasingly relevant for Indian companies as well, there is an urgent need for business leaders to focus on the social inclusion aspect, by extending wellbeing measures to all workers in their ecosystem through an inclusive approach.

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Improve on site responsibility: Undertake greater oversight of working conditions on site, including routine visits or reports to senior management, for maintaining workplace safety and an overall healthy environment.

Promote digital formal modes of payments: Enable payments through bank accounts as a first step towards financial inclusion that eventually leads to economic security, access to formal credit and utilization of other products like insurance.

Institutionalize measures to create gender equity: Enforce policies of equal pay for equal work, activate targeted behavior change communication regarding gender equity and champion the same within supply chains, and address practical needs of women to boost participation of women in the workforce.

Introduce robust and stringent sub-contracting policies: Instill better checks and balances while hiring contractors to ensure prescribed standards of minimum wages (including timely payment cycles), fair treatment, health and safety measures are met.

Support implementation of government measures: Mandate registration of all workers on the site, facilitated through awareness generation measures, enable access to entitlements and aid in decoding legal processes and requirements.

Facilitate data collection: Create and share worker databases with peers in the same region/geometry to build a repository of profiles that can be used to facilitate registrations, match with future opportunities and build a legitimate work history that enables upward mobility.

Create a level playing field: Leverage the voice and influence of industry associations/bodies to enable systemic improvements that incentivize the adoption of improved worker practices within the entire ecosystem to ensure that responsible businesses continue to thrive as successful ones.

Government

The government should not only strengthen implementation and monitoring, but also simplify procedures to ensure wider access.

While both the central and state governments have undertaken progressive efforts from policy perspective, practically, and from an implementation point of view, much remains to be done in order to see any tangible change in the overall situation of the informal workers in the country. The government should not only strengthen implementation and monitoring, but also simplify procedures to ensure wider access.

Undertake effective enforcement and monitoring: Ensure stringent implementation of existing and new laws and put in place robust mechanisms for monitoring to secure those entitled for registration and keep ineligible persons at bay.

Improve inter-state co-ordination: Create an effective system for portability of social security measures and consistency in procedural requirements for existing regulations to ensure easy access to legal provisions; improve synergy between relevant departments even within the state.

Labour Codes: Examine the practical effects of the new labor codes passed in 2020. An example of how the codes have not necessarily improved the worker's situation, is the increased size threshold of an establishment, which excludes the migrant workers employed on smaller worksites from availing OSH benefits.

Housing policies: Incorporate the needs of migrant workers for affordable housing in urban planning and provide better access to government-led rental housing schemes in destination regions to ensure secure living arrangements.

Foster social integration: Avoid taking unrequired punitive action with regard to housing, against the urban poor, and put in place mechanisms to address discrimination faced by them to enable better inclusion in society.

Gender mainstreaming: Adopt a gender lens across budgets, schemes, programs, and policies, and run campaigns to the narrative, for enabling women in the workforce and making outcomes more inclusive.

Incorporate the needs of migrant workers for affordable housing in urban planning and provide better access to government-led rental housing schemes in destination regions to ensure secure living arrangements.

Gender mainstreaming: Adopt a gender lens across budgets, schemes, programs, and policies, and run campaigns to the narrative, for enabling women in the workforce and making outcomes more inclusive.

The long-term idea is that welfare should not be seen as CSR, because the BOCW cess goes from the company. We have to pay 1-2% of the cost of construction to the labour department, then why not ensure that that cess is also getting utilized."

Itika
Deputy Manager – CSR | Tata Realty

Inclusive by Design
Non-Profits

Non-profits must leverage the current momentum to build stronger collaborative movements to create sustainable impact at scale.

There are many examples in India where civil society organizations played a key role in spotlighting the plight of informal and migrant construction workers. They stepped up during the most critical hour to serve communities by garnering support from all directions. It is imperative that they leverage the current momentum to build stronger collaborative movements to create sustainable impact at scale.

Strengthen collaboration: Actively pursue partnerships with like-minded organizations through resource, data and solution sharing for nationwide scale and to deepen step-change impact; these alliances can also be useful to create a seamless channel of support availability across source and destination

Undertake gender-transformative programming: Design and implement gender-transformative programs that go beyond societal norms and ensure equity for women workers in a way that changes the structural barriers to their development; set benchmarks for improving outcomes for women and girls

Expand base in source areas: Work with communities, including women and youth in source areas to provide easier access to alternative and additional livelihood opportunities

CSOs have great inroads into the communities they work with, which they leveraged on effectively to support vulnerable workers in the aftermath of Covid. At the same time, the state at all levels have resources and large systems at their disposal that can be plugged into to ensure facilitation of entitlements. Synergizing the strengths of all critical stakeholders will be key to ensuring that last mile access is enabled for the most vulnerable workers.

Divya Varma
Programme Manager, Policy and Partnerships | Aajeevika Bureau

Collective action focused on bettering the lives of informal workers in construction, is the need of the hour

While the vulnerable state of the informal workers in the country, especially those in the construction sector, has been a cause of concern for a long time, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, there emerged promising collective action-oriented efforts. These multi-stakeholder efforts bring together civil society, the private sector and philanthropists in a unified strategy aimed at visibilizing and solutioning for the grossly unequal treatment meted out to these workers so far. Two such efforts are highlighted here.

Social Compact is a multi-stakeholder initiative aspiring for greater dignity and equity of industry engaged informal workers and their families in India and mainstream the aspiration that responsible business = successful business. The most critical needs and vulnerabilities of the workers have been translated into six human centric outcomes spanning wages, health, safety, gender, access to entitlements and future of work. To achieve these, Dasra, alongwith core NGO partners Aajeevika Bureau and Center for Social Justice work along with corporates to take them on a journey of remedial action comprising of three steps of reflection, integration of worker well being standards into business as usual and thereafter monitoring key metrics via a dashboard.

Migrants Resilience Collaborative (MRC), an initiative of Jan Sahas, a community centric non-profit organization, is a grassroots-led collaborative focused on ensuring safety, security, and mobility for vulnerable migrant families across India. This is being done through delivering social security entitlements, providing access to responsible recruitment, strengthening tracking, worker protections, welfare and redressal.

Philanthropy

Philanthropic and CSR funds need to be directed towards grassroots initiatives and innovative solutions that address systemic breakpoints.

Philanthropy has played a role in enabling scale for proven models across sectors. At this critical juncture, funders and CSR units need to provide patient capital and expand focus to include grassroots initiatives and innovative solutions that address systemic breakpoints.

Boost catalytic areas: Divert CSR funds towards catalytic areas including skilling and affordable housing to create transformational change for communities in source areas and workers at destination

Align with government priorities: Invest strategically in areas that match government and sectoral priorities to complement ongoing efforts

Promote data collection: Fund data collection and research for policy advocacy to promote evidence generation and analysis which can strengthen the sector

Foster innovative experimentation: Provide long-term risk capital to nurture innovative experiments that attempt at resolving complex systemic issues and holistically transforming the lives of vulnerable workers

So, in the long run, our investment should be to ensure that nobody migrates out of a source area of work without a plan to work in construction industry. Working in construction industry should be an informed choice when you are in a financial crisis, but you should also have access to formal financial services including credit and banking. Most importantly, migrant children should be getting out of work without a plan to work in construction industry. Working in construction industry should be an informed choice when you are in a financial crisis, but you should also have access to formal financial services including credit and banking. Most importantly, migrant children should be getting out of

Benoy Peter
Executive Director | Center for Migration and Inclusive Development

A combined effort from all these stakeholders in the construction sector, holds the potential to achieve triple wins: enhance lives and provide dignity to a major vulnerable demographic group, conduct responsible business and boost the economy.

This will also contribute towards 5 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals
## Interventions by Non-profit Organizations

A landscaping of the sectors revealed that credible non-profit organizations are serving the needs of informal workers in the construction sector. These organizations vary in size, scale, and experience, but are all trying to make a difference in the lives of this vulnerable demographic. An analysis of their programs shows that there are 11 primary types of interventions that exemplify distinct practice, operating on ground.

In this section, we provide a glimpse of the action landscape and spotlight some of key non-profits working in this space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVENTION TYPE</th>
<th>ORGANISATIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues</td>
<td>Nirmana, Sampark, Prayas, Kotla Adivasi Sansthan, Mumbai Mobile Creches, Mobile Creches, Tara Mobile Creches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements</td>
<td>Jan Sahas, Centre for Social Justice, Aajeevika Bureau, Disha, India Migration Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services</td>
<td>Aajeevika Bureau, Jan Sahas, Sampark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Create a database and/or tracking mechanism for workers and their families</td>
<td>Jan Sahas, Disha Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development</td>
<td>Aajeevika Bureau, Pipal Tree Foundation, Kothala Organization for Agriculture and Rural Marketing Initiative (KARMI), Saath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices</td>
<td>Aajeevika Bureau, Jan Sahas, Centre for Social Justice, Disha Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children</td>
<td>Mumbai Mobile Creches, Mobile Creches, Tara Mobile Creches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women</td>
<td>Mahila Housing Trust, Aajeevika Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Run day care centers for children of construction workers</td>
<td>Mumbai Mobile Creches, Mobile Creches, Tara Mobile Creches, Diya Ghar, Sampark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Undertake policy advocacy and/or research</td>
<td>Aajeevika Bureau, Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action, India Migration Now, Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation</td>
<td>Disha Foundation, Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development</td>
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</table>

The mapping undertaken in this table is indicative, and not exhaustive. To see a more detailed listing of the landscape of actors – please visit [here](https://www.aajeevika.org/).

### Aajeevika Bureau

**https://www.aajeevika.org/**

**ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW**

**Founded:** 2004 | **Head Office:** Udaipur, Rajasthan | **Coverage:** Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra | **Annual Budget:** INR 8.34 crore

Aajeevika Bureau's vision is to achieve an equitable and dignified world of work for communities dependent on labour migration. It works with informally employed workers (including those in the construction and manufacturing sectors, domestic workers, headloaders, hotel workers) at the source and destination and helps them access better services across their interaction with government, industry, contractors and their own community.

**PROGRAM FOCUS**

Aajeevika's programs are focused on providing legal aid, skill and employability training and access to social security. It also undertakes research and advocacy on issues of migration and labor across its areas of operation and beyond.

- Offering legal aid and improving the legal literacy for construction workers
- Empowering women via creches to help with childcare, health and nutritional needs and by bringing them together to articulate their needs and claim entitlements from local administration
- Building technical and life skills for rural youth who are at the cusp of the labor market, engaged in low waged and hazardous work
- Creating financial inclusion through affordable credit, savings, insurance, old-age pensions, remittances and payments and a significant financial literacy program
- Building knowledge and policy perspectives on informal work and labor migration via their knowledge hub, the Centre for Migration and Labour Solutions (CMLS)
- Supporting workers’ collectives to engage in collective bargaining and representation for labour and citizen rights
- Driving change by facilitating improvement in business practices to ensure greater dignity and equity of informal workers, through Social Compact

**IMPACT**

- Since the time Aajeevika has been operational, about INR 14 crores have been recovered in lost wages, mostly from the construction sector
- Over 13,000 women are organized across rural south Rajasthan which has helped thousands of families in being linked to basic social protection
- Shram Sarathi’s (Aajeevika’s partner org) work has resulted in the direct inclusion of nearly 50,000 previously unbanked migrant families having helped them gain a sense of dignity and better future

### Interventions

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and/or tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

### Leadership

- Rajiv Khandelwal is the Co-Founder and Director of Aajeevika Bureau where he leads programs and administration. He holds a degree in Management from Institute of Rural Management Anand and was elected as an Ashoka Fellow in 2005. He went on to receiving the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Schwab Foundation in 2010.

### Credibility

- 15+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Key partner to ILO and Government of India

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Basic Healthcare Service (BHS)
https://bhs.org.in/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 2012 | Head Office: Udaipur | Coverage: Rajasthan, Gujarat | Annual Budget: INR 2.67 crore

Basic HealthCare Services (BHS) is a leading organization focusing on healthcare needs of vulnerable tribal and migrant prone communities. It is driven with the vision to enable marginalized and vulnerable communities to lead a healthy life with dignity through a responsive and effective healthcare ecosystem, rooted in the community.

PROGRAM FOCUS
BHS offers a continuum of preventive, promotive, and curative care while using a combination of innovations in human resources and technology. They provide low cost quality healthcare to remote and underserved populations with a special focus on migration prone tribal communities.

- Setting up nurse-led (Amrit clinics) facilities to provide low cost quality healthcare
- Public-private-partnership with the Government of Rajasthan to run a primary healthcare center
- Day care centers (Phulawaris) for young children at source and destination (at construction sites) to provide nurturing environment and nutritious food
- Public-private-partnership with Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation for a program on tuberculosis control amongst migrant populations
- Linking migrant workers with urban services through partnerships with the municipal ICDS and health systems for immunization of children, care of pregnant women and provision of dry food for children
- Thought leadership through research and publications on primary healthcare, migration and the interlinkages

IMPACT
- 90,000 people reached through 6 Amrit clinics, 90% tribals and 56% migrant households
- In a remote community the rate of home births has been reduced from 80% to 20%. The proportion of severely underweight children among those enrolled has reduced from 29% to 6%
- Communities are estimated to save INR 3.5 Crore annually on account of inexpensive healthcare

Interventions
- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skill training for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
- Dr. Pavitra Mohan is the co-founder and director at Basic HealthCare Services. Previously, he worked at UNICEF’s India Country Office for ten years, leading its child health programs across India. Pavitra is a Fellow with the prestigious National Neonatology Forum and is also the recipient of the Ashoka Fellowship for social entrepreneurship.

Credibility
- Research partnership with IIM-Udaipur
- BHS case study published as innovative model for primary healthcare in rural India by Harvard Business Publishing
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Healthcare Leadership award at the World Rural Health Conference in 2018

Centre for Labour Research and Action (CLRA)
http://clra.in/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 2006 | Head Office: Udaipur | Coverage: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh | Annual Budget: INR 2.81 crore

CLRA is a civil society organization promoting workers’ rights in India’s vast informal sector economy. Brick kilns and construction are its primary focus areas. Its vision is to build a society free from discrimination; and improve the lives of the workers in this sector, with a focus on seasonal migrants.

PROGRAM FOCUS
CLRA’s primary agenda and mission is to support workers to organize so they can negotiate for their rights collectively. Research is a key component of CLRA’s agenda, and they have undertaken mapping exercises that document socio-economic profiles of workers, migration patterns, modes of recruitment, working and living conditions, and wage rate.

- Facilitates mobilization of workers, enabling them to demand better wages and working conditions, and undertake policy advocacy with the state for improved access to entitlements
- Facilitates issuing of identity cards for workers and their families to enable access to schooling for children, and ration through the public distribution system
- Engages in ongoing efforts to prevent eviction and ensure security of tenure for seasonal migrant workers living in temporary, informal settlements across Gujarat

IMPACT
- Active in brick kilns across Gujarat and Rajasthan that employ 100,000 workers from Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and UP
- Focused on the construction industry in Ahmedabad and Surat employing 150,000 workers comprising mostly seasonal tribal migrants from surrounding districts.

Interventions
- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skill training for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
- CLRA is run by its Secretary, Sudhir Katiyar, a seasoned professional in the development sector, whose journey in the sector has been focused on facilitating organization of informal workers.

Credibility
- 14+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)

https://www.centreforsocialjustice.net/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 1993  |  Head Office: Gujarat  |  Coverage: Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand  |  Annual Budget: ~INR 4 crore

Centre for Social Justice is a socio-legal NGO whose vision is to strengthen human rights culture and to secure social justice, equity and equality, and fraternity. It is unique organization in India that uses the judicial system to fight for the rights of marginalized people, to ensure access to justice and further create leaders amongst them for empowering their people and harboring peace and harmony.

PROGRAM FOCUS
CSJ operates through law centers across the different states that they are present in, and the centers consist of lawyers, paralegals, and researchers, to create an enabling policy and a legislative environment that respects, promotes and protects human rights of vulnerable communities.

• Providing legal aid, helping document complaints, and leading fact-findings, filing cases, contacting relevant authorities, pushing entitlement claims
• Spreading legal awareness among workers and beneficiaries by undertaking public advocacy campaigns
• Training young lawyers and paralegals to serve on legal aid, gender, and non-violent campaigns
• Spreading legal awareness among workers and beneficiaries by undertaking public advocacy campaigns
• Providing legal aid, helping document complaints, and leading fact-findings, filing cases, contacting relevant authorities, pushing entitlement claims
• Spreading legal awareness among workers and beneficiaries by undertaking public advocacy campaigns
• Training young lawyers and paralegals to serve

Interventions
✓ Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
✓ Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
✓ Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
✓ Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
✓ Conduct sector-specific training, upsckilling and/or entrepreneurship development
✓ Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
✓ Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skillling for children
✓ Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
✓ Run day care centres for children of construction workers
✓ Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
✓ Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
• CSJ’s Chairperson Dr. Nivedita Haran I.A.S(Retired) was the former additional Chief Secretary of the Government of Kerala. She has also been the Principal Secretary, Department of Labour of Kerala state. Benoy Peter, a co-founder of CMID currently serves as the Executive Director. He is an expert on internal migration in India, with over two decades of progressive experience particularly in the area of Migration and Social Inclusion. Benoy Peter has a Ph.D. in Population Studies (Migration) from the International Institute for Population Sciences and a Master Degree in Social Work.

IMPACT
• Facilitated travel of ~15,000 laborers and currently assisting wage recovery for 450 migrant workers impacted due to the COVID 19 induced lockdown since Mar ’20.
• Responds to an average of 3000 cases annually for ensuring access to justice on multiple issues, for the most marginalized workers

Credibility
• 27+ years of service to the sector
• Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
• ‘Gold’ certificate by Guidestar India for transparency.
• Certificate of Accreditation by Credibility Alliance
• Two of CSJ’s lawyers received Kannabiran Peace Prize

Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID)

http://cmid.org.in/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 2016  |  Head Office: Kerala  |  Coverage: India

Annual Budget: INR 1.86 crore

One of the very few NGOs in India with a focus on migrant workers, CMID is an independent non-profit devoted to migration and inclusive development, advocating for and promoting the social inclusion of migrants in India. With a vision of a world without borders, CMID identifies migration as a solution where a person is able to leverage a world of opportunities and his/her aspirations to excel in life are not restrained by boards.

PROGRAM FOCUS
CMID’s work ranges from policy to grassroots interventions. The organization engages with key stakeholders at national level on policy and incubates innovative solutions for resolving challenges of migrant workers collaborating with a range of partners.

• Designs, pilots, and implements programs for mainstreaming as well as improving the quality of life of migrants and vulnerable populations in health, education, and other critical areas
• Provides technical support to governments and relevant institutions in the formulation, refinement, and implementation, of strategies for inclusive and sustainable policies/programs
• Commissions and undertake research and training in relevant social issues independently or in association with relevant development actors; identifies, reviews, documents and disseminates locally and globally
• Empowers the migrant workers to become market ready, enjoy jobs with social security, realize value for money for their products and services and become economically resilient
• Fosters migrant-friendly local governance by advocacy with local self-government institutions; enhances social protection and affordable housing of migrant workers and their families

IMPACT
• Prepared with International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Aajeevika Bureau, a roadmap for developing a policy framework for the inclusion of internal migrants in India in the context of the lockdown.
• CMID’s Bandhu Clinic, is India’s first active mobile COVID screening for migrant workers Implemented in Ernakulam district of Kerala state - Bandhu Clinic covers 40000+ migrant workers every month, at their residences or workplaces providing free and quality healthcare services including COVID testing and vaccination

Interventions
✓ Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
✓ Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
✓ Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
✓ Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
✓ Conduct sector-specific training, upsckilling and/or entrepreneurship development
✓ Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
✓ Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skillling for children
✓ Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
✓ Run day care centres for children of construction workers
✓ Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
✓ Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
• CMID’s Chairperson Dr. Nivedita Haran I.A.S(Retired) was the former additional Chief Secretary of the Government of Kerala. She has also been the Principal Secretary, Department of Labour of Kerala state. Benoy Peter, a co-founder of CMID currently serves as the Executive Director. He is an expert on internal migration in India, with over two decades of progressive experience particularly in the area of Migration and Social Inclusion. Benoy Peter has a Ph.D. in Population Studies (Migration) from the International Institute for Population Sciences and a Master Degree in Social Work.

IMPACT
• Facilitated travel of ~15,000 laborers and currently assisting wage recovery for 450 migrant workers impacted due to the COVID 19 induced lockdown since Mar ’20.
• Responds to an average of 3000 cases annually for ensuring access to justice on multiple issues, for the most marginalized workers

Credibility
• 27+ years of service to the sector
• Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
• ‘Gold’ certificate by Guidestar India for transparency.
• Certificate of Accreditation by Credibility Alliance
• Two of CSJ’s lawyers received Kannabiran Peace Prize
**Disha Foundation**

http://www.dishafoundation.ngo/

**ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW**

Founded: 2002 | Head Office: Nasik | Coverage: Nasik, Nagpur, Shirli, New Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, North and South Goa | Annual Budget: INR 4.5 crore

Disha’s vision is to create a just and equal society where every person has equal opportunities for holistic development. Disha’s core mission is to provide a conducive environment to marginalized communities for their sustainable development by improving their quality of life and well-being, and to provide them with opportunities to become more productive assets of the society – through interventions linked to health, livelihood, food security, better living conditions and access to public services.

**PROGRAM FOCUS**

Disha Foundation (Disha) supports marginalized social groups, mainly migrant and unorganized sector workers of tribal and other social groups through direct intervention, research, and policy dialogue with regional and national governments.

- Runs migration Information Resource Centers for facilitating positive migration with comprehensive approach via skill training, entrepreneurship development & job placements and access to health services and social security measures
- Run a legal aid and grievance handling cell jointly with the Labour Department and National Legal Services Authority of India to address employment, wages, and other related grievances of migrant workers
- Actively engage local, state, and national government authorities towards bringing policy reforms and changes to ensure inclusive development among marginal communities
- Building a ‘digital eco-system’ for migrant workers – Shrangaurav app, integrated helpline, and physical migration support centers

**IMPACT**

- Reached over 6 lakh migrant workers till 2020 through migration support programs in Maharashtra, Goa and Delhi NCR
- Over the last 7 years, conducted over 3,000 trainings for over 10,000 workers in various trades including construction
- 21120 / 21135 registered cases successfully resolved for non-payment of wages and fraud, resulting in compensation recovery worth INR 1.5CR
- 5,60,000 Workers screened for Tuberculosis & other health problems & 20,000+ workers treated
- 4,35,000 Migrants made aware on social security; 15000 + Workers linked to social security schemes

**Interventions**

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

**Leadership**

- Disha is led by its Founder Director, Dr. Anjali Borhade, social and public health professional, advisor to the WHO headquarters and SEARO office for strategy and action plan for migrant and refugee health.

**Diya Ghar**

https://www.diyaghar.org/

**ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW**

Founded: 2016 | Head Office: Bengaluru | Coverage: Bengaluru | Annual Budget for FY 2021-22: ~INR 2.5 crore

Diya Ghar focuses on the migrant by working to give this community a leg up through the power of education. Their mission is to set up pre-schools and day-care centers for children of migrant workers (specifically those living in blue tent settlements) in the city of Bangalore. They are in the process of expanding to other cities in India.

**PROGRAM FOCUS**

They provide holistic care for preschool age children. For this, they have set up community centers and their intervention include:

- Run preschool classes for Early Childhood Education in their Community Centers – teaching children basic Math, English and Kannada, also improve children’s fine and gross motor skills through various activities
- Provide nutritional supplements (milk, eggs, fruit, protein bars, porridge mix) for the children in the preschool program, and all their siblings
- Support families with childcare by providing clothes, slippers, blankets, and hygiene kits for children
- Facilitate healthcare by conducting quarterly health camps and support children who need treatment
- Empower parents through a curriculum of weekly videos, teaching parenting skills and activities

**IMPACT**

- Until March 2020, they had impacted 400 children and 50 children enrolled in Primary schools
- Through Covid Relief in Bangalore (between end of March and end of May 2020), the organization distributed 78,500 dry ration kits impacting 3.25 lakh people
- Currently, the organization serves 600 preschool children and 700 siblings in 12 Communities

**Interventions**

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

**Leadership**

- Saraswathi is a trained Montessori teacher and Counsellor, and she is driven by a vision to make a difference in education underprivileged children. Shyamal wanted to ease the challenge migrant workers faced in providing education for their children and hence started Diya Ghar along with Saraswathi, his wife.

**Credibility**

- Requisite 12A and 80
- GuideStarIndia Transparency Key award
**ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW**

**Founded:** 2000  |  **Head Office:** New Delhi  |  **Coverage:** Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana and Maharashtra  |  **Annual Budget:** INR 5820 Lakh

Jan Sahas aims to end violence against women and children and to ensure safe migration and dignity of India’s most marginalized groups. It currently operates in 80 districts across 11 states of India. By 2025, under its migration theme, Jan Sahas aims to serve 10 million migrant workers and their families by scaling their model to 20 additional districts, in collaboration with ~40 civil society organizations.

**PROGRAM FOCUS**

Over the last 20 years, Jan Sahas has worked closely with more than two million migrants to ensure access to social protection and enable safe migration. This includes:

- Enabling a safety net for vulnerable families and rehabilitate workers, they facilitate access to entitlements, land rights, and livelihood support.
- At a policy level, the organization partners, shares policy recommendations, and builds capacity of various state and central government agencies.
- It also partners with private sector stakeholders to improve supports available to their workers.
- They have a migrant tracking system to respond to migrant worker issues and providing legal aid as well as emergency support, including through a 24*7 helpline and case management system.
- They have initiated the Migrants’ Resilience Collaborative (MRC), a multi-stakeholder collaborative to scale this work across 100 districts and sustainably impact 10 million vulnerable migrant workers and their families.

**Credibility**

- Requisite 12A, 80G (in process) and FCRA
- Key Partners - ILO, Dvara Trust, IFMR LEAD, TATA Trusts Government’s Migration cell

**Leadership**

Ashif Shaikh is the Co-Founder and CEO of Jan Sahas and has been working in the social sector for the past 20 years gaining national and international acclaim for his work. He has previously been a member of various committees of NITI Aayog, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and other ministries and departments of central and state governments. He was also elected as an Ashoka fellow in 2016.

**Interventions**

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

**Impact**

- >15 million migrant workers have been registered, and have received entitlement or worker protection supports.
- Facilitated delivery of 1 million entitlements to 900 K migrants

**Leadership**

Ashif Shaikh was awarded Social Innovator of the year 2020 by World Economic Forum.
Kalahandi Organization For Agriculture And Rural Marketing Initiative (KARMI)

https://www.karmiodisha.org/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 1977 | Head Office: Kalahandi | Coverage: Odisha | Annual Budget: INR 1.39 crore

KARMI is an organization that caters to the tribal and rural development in Odisha, with a special focus on livelihood and socio-economic improvement of rural poor with support of the government, national and international agencies. The organization focuses on education for all round development, building capacity for the community, health management, and agricultural development to enhance livelihoods. KARMI focuses on sustainable livelihoods, awareness on safe migration, counselling, registration, and record-keeping through its Migration Resource Centre. It also coordinates with organizations at destination to ensure legal protection and entitlements are delivered.

PROGRAM FOCUS
KARMI’s mission is to ensure sustainable societal development by capacitating the marginalized groups and the institutions surrounding them by organizing trainings, exposure workshops, seminars, and research. The organization focuses on the construction industry intentionally because a large number of migrants from here work in the sector. Some of their interventions affecting construction workers lives are:

- Organizing training and awareness programs on labor laws among migrant families at source areas with Labour Department, Government Officials, and Media to address issues related to migration and the Construction Welfare Board
- Helping register the workers at the source itself so that ID related issues do not arise at destination
- Supporting linkages to financial and legal services
- Strengthening the community through leadership building and developing managerial skills so workers have the agency to settle their own disputes
- Running skill development training camps for the migrant youth

IMPACT
- 112000 people in 341 villages across 2 Kalahandi and Nabarangapur districts have been helped by KARMI
- 62% workers are from the most vulnerable sections, namely the SC and ST groups and women workers

Interventions
- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
- Abhimanyu Rana leads KARMI and has been with the organization since inception. Abhimanyu has over 30 years of experience in progressive programme coordination of social sector organizations.

Credibility
- 23+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Supported by TATA Trusts and American India Foundation

Kotra Aadivasi Sansthan (KAS)

https://kaskotra.org/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 1998 | Head Office: Udaipur | Coverage: Rajasthan | Annual Budget: ~INR 1 crore

KAS addresses the concerns of the tribal communities in Udaipur and Sirohi, often engaged in frequent seasonal or circular migration for employment in construction and agriculture work, at adjoining districts and states. Its on-ground strategy operationalizes through people’s institutions at the village level and through a strong focus on village level development. The organization provides support to tribal migrant and youth as well as enables women’s empowerment.

PROGRAM FOCUS
KAS focuses on programs and activities for the issues of the tribal community. The organizations support tribal communities by helping them to assert their rights, develop resources and get access to education and other government programs. Their key interventions include:

- Developing opportunities at source by improving livelihood opportunities for migration dependent households through a focus on natural resource management
- Nurturing community leadership among migrant women and youth as well as organizing them to negotiate better for their rights
- Reforming holistically access and awareness on education among tribal communities to stop early drop-outs among youth and support the next generation
- Providing labourers with help and support for awareness generation, skilling, registrations, legal aid and tertiary services

IMPACT
- The organization has set up a model Pro-Labor City in Sumerpur town, Pali district, Rajasthan, sensitive to migrant and unorganized workers, as part of its program to make small towns migrant-friendly
- Focusing on migrant workers’ livelihoods at source – 3778 tribal families in Udaipur district have been supported with accessing their rights to live in the forest for their livelihood
- 2250 workers engaged in stone quarrying work, vulnerable to silicosis, have been supported with social security measures and the state government has announced INR 14 crores has been unlocked with the support of authorities

Interventions
- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
- The organization’s founding members were tribal women and men who believed that to solve problems of the tribal region, the involvement of the community was necessary. Even today, the president of the organization is Napi Bai – who is a woman tribal leader from the region. The organization lays emphasis on building community leadership as way of sustaining the impact and has a strong gender focus.

Credibility
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- The organization has partnered with Gooraj, UNDP, CRY and Aajeevika Bureau
Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT)

https://www.karmiodisha.org/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 1994 | Head Office: Ahmedabad | Coverage: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, New Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh among other states, also collaborates with partners in Bangladesh and Nepal | Annual Budget: INR 11.85 crore

MHT was founded, in 1994, to facilitate better housing and infrastructure for its members. Today, it is a leading advocacy organization with expertise in policy development, grassroots organizing, community development and technical know-how in housing, basic infrastructure, climate change, governance land tenure, construction management and oversight of infrastructure projects.

PROGRAM FOCUS
MHT’s mission is to organize and empower women in poor communities to improve their habitat. It believes that a quality habitat is a home with all basic services such as clean water, toilets, electricity, and adequate light and ventilation, and is a key financial asset supporting livelihoods, and making the poor more resilient to heat stress, disease, and other hazards of climate change.

- Trains poor women in construction skills like basic masonry, electrification, toilet unit construction, hand pump repairing, basic plumbing and 12 construction related trades - Undertakes advocacy efforts towards ensuring access to financial products and services by vulnerable groups, including housing finance for the informal sector
- Supports linkage of the poor to subsidized housing schemes through provision of information, assistance in the application process as also mobilizing earnest money, as well as advocating with government at all levels for instituting pro-poor housing policies
- Builds the capacities of poor women to participate in city planning and Governance processes to ensure better habitats, including access to water, sanitation, energy, housing
- Develops and implements a poor women led model of climate change resilience, for urban informal settlements and cities

IMPACT
- Through its Karmika School of Construction Workers, it has providing training and skill development to over 22,000 workers across states like Gujarat, Delhi, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Bihar
- So far, its support has enabled 1,56,767 poor families across 19 Indian cities to construct toilets in their homes
- Ensured property titles for over 26000 households across India

Interventions
- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
- MHT is headed by its Director, Bijal Brahmbhatt, a civil engineer by training. She is also a recognized expert in habitat improvement through women’s empowerment, community development and housing finance.

Credibility
- 26+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Received the 2019 United Nations Global Climate Action Award for Women’s Action Towards Climate Resilience for Urban Poor in South Asia

Mobile Creches (MC)

https://www.mobilecreches.org/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 1998 | Head Office: Udaipur | Coverage: Rajasthan | Annual Budget: ~INR 1 crore

Mobile Creches (MC) is a pioneering organization that focuses on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) through providing and supporting services, enhancing capacities, and undertaking advocacy to influence multiple stakeholders at National, State and Local levels.

PROGRAM FOCUS
The work of Mobile Creches spans from grassroots level interventions to policy advocacy at the national level. Their solution is three-pronged comprising of running programs on ground, nudging advocacy on this and functioning as training centre to enhance capacities of field staff and other organizations.

- Run field programs with interventions focused on health, nutrition, early learning, and care – for birth-12-year-old children at both construction sites and slum settlements in the National Capital Region
- Undertake advocacy through dialogue with a range of decision and opinion makers and alliance building – MC’s advocacy is to ensure policy change, effective legislations, and improved services with a focus on early childhood care and development and maternity benefits
- Provide specialized training to families/communities/individuals/others for responsive caregiving, to enable inculcation of sensitivity, the right attitude, adequate knowledge, and appropriate skills ensuring the best interests of children

IMPACT
- 867,000 children reached through 1000 day care centres run in collaboration with 250 developers
- 6500 women have been trained as childcare workers
- MC led from the front in providing inputs to the formulation of the National ECCE Policy, 2013 to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach and content

Leadership
- Sumitra Mishra is the Executive Director at MC. She comes with over twenty years of work experience in the development sector in India. Sumitra has steered organizations through the process of program delivery and partnerships, CSR development, strategic communications, and governance processes.

Credibility
- 50+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Platinum Certificate, Guide Star India, 2018
Organizational Overview

Mumbai Mobile Creches (MMC)

Founded: 1972 | Head Office: Mumbai | Coverage: Mumbai Metropolitan Region | Annual Budget: INR 5.35 crore

MMC is a pioneering organization in the field of child rights, with over four decades of experience. Their vision is for all children to have a nurturing and happy childhood. Along with a focus on delivering services in communities, the organization also develops capacities to build a cadre of professionals in the field.

Program Focus

The organization’s mission is to promote ‘child-friendly sites’, where every child living on a construction site is safe, healthy and educated, and able to enjoy their childhood. Their operating model is highly responsive to addressing children’s real needs. They set up creches in collaboration with the developers in a manner that is replicable and mobile, so everything can be easily packed up and transferred to a new site once the construction is completed. MMC runs training programs for women from vulnerable communities. They have forums for community outreach.

- Set up cost-effective day-care centers for children living on construction sites, in collaboration with developers
- Run programs focusing on children’s education, nutrition, health, and hygiene
- Build capacity of women from vulnerable communities as teachers in child development and education, with a formally recognized pedagogy
- Community outreach on sites to raise awareness on topics such as prevention of violence, education, health, along with locally relevant issues
- Facilitate access of construction workers to banking and other financial services

Impact

- 150,000 children reached in over 270 construction sites over 4,000 children reached every year
- More than 1,000 women and men trained through teacher training programme, 30 of the women are from the construction community

Interventions

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, and children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership

Vaibhavi Amle holds a Master’s in Development Sector from S. P. Jain Institute of Management, Mumbai and has over 15 years of experience in CSR, social sector, and media.

Credibility

- 48+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Part of the Credibility Alliance

Pipal Tree Foundation

http://www.pipaltreefoundation.com/

Organizational Overview

Founded: 2011 | Head Office: Mumbai | Coverage: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra | Annual Budget: INR 3.5 crore

Pipal Tree Foundation aspires to empower 1,00,000 underprivileged youth and women across India in the next 5 years. Their objective is to empower the most vulnerable with employability skills in various sectors, leading them to be financially independent.

Program Focus

Pipal Tree Foundation’s program is focused on improving incomes and unlocking the potential of sustainable livelihoods for youth and women. The organization undertakes a host of programs linked with employability skills in construction, retail, healthcare, BFSI and other fields, based on market demand. They also provide necessary support for placement. To ensure holistic development, they also train women in the skills for agriculture and allied businesses.

- Providing holistic skills training including counselling by sector executives for youth from the underprivileged communities, between the ages of 18-35
- Training women in food processing, horticulture, and livestock development, to provide them technical and financial assistance to build their own businesses and earn better incomes
- Ensuring sustainable livelihood opportunities at source areas by promoting livelihoods like apiculture and Neem processing

Impact

- Benefited more than 80,000 underprivileged youth and women through their 22 training centers across 8 States and other projects such as initiatives in vocational education, sustainable livelihoods and women’s empowerment
- Impacted skills training to 10,000 migrant workers during the pandemic in a short span, across many villages in 8 states in India

Interventions

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, and children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership

Santosh Parulekar leads the Pipal Tree Foundation. As an experienced management professional, over the last 10 years, he has led the way improving income generation opportunities for the youth through innovative strategies.

Credibility

- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Supported by credible corporate partners including Godrej, Tata Housing, NSE Foundation, SBI LIFE, HSBC, Hyundai
NIRMANA
https://nirmana.org/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 1988 | Head Office: New Delhi | Coverage: New Delhi, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh | Annual Budget: INR 1.11 crore

NIRMANA engages primarily in advocacy for social security and livelihood amongst unorganized sector workers, in order to achieve its overall vision of ‘Building an Inclusive India’, where workers are empowered to achieve social security and dignified livelihoods.

PROGRAM FOCUS
NIRMANA’s mission is to build an active ecosystem for unorganized sector workers in India through (i) empowering workers to initiate and lead people’s organizations and movements for social security and dignified livelihoods, (ii) collaboration with other networks, movements, organizations and initiatives for policy and systemic change and (iii) promoting advocacy, education and public awareness programs for government, employers, and citizens to become allies of the workers. In order to achieve its mission, NIRMANA addresses the entire continuum of Advocacy-to-Access (A2A) for the workers.

Interventions
✓ Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
✓ Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
✓ Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
✓ Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
✓ Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
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✓ Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
✓ Run day care centres for children of construction workers
✓ Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
✓ Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
Subhash Bhatnagar is the chief functionary of NIRMANA, and has, for over 30 years, been working towards promoting and supporting the rights of construction workers and domestic workers.

Credibility
32+ years of service to the sector
Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
Supported by a multiplicity of donors such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), Oak Foundation and Terre Des Hommes

IMPACT
✓ Successfully supported, empowered and improved the quality of life of over 4,00,000 individuals at the bottom of the economic pyramid
✓ Trained 1,695 workers in the construction sector, including 224 women, in the trades of carpentry, electrician, plumbing and masonry
✓ The URCs have reached 27,000+ slum households and provided over 10,000 services to them

Saath Charitable Trust
http://saath.org/

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW
Founded: 1989 | Head Office: Ahmedabad | Coverage: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh | Annual Budget: INR 58.15 crore

Saath works closely with the vulnerable communities and empowers the socially marginalized by providing them livelihood linkages, imparting skills leading to employment, health, and education facilities. The focus areas for the organization are livelihoods, skill development, health and education, rights, urban governance, financial inclusion, rehabilitation and resettlement and other community development initiatives. It engages organizations, corporates, and individuals from India and globally as partners and supporters.

PROGRAM FOCUS
Saath’s mission is to make human settlements equitable living environments where all residents and vulnerable people have access to health, education, essential infrastructure services and livelihood options, irrespective of their economic and social status. It envisions inclusive and empowered communities and individuals.

Interventions
✓ Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
✓ Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
✓ Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
✓ Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
✓ Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
✓ Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
✓ Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
✓ Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
✓ Run day care centres for children of construction workers
✓ Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
✓ Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

Leadership
Saath Charitable Trust is run by its Managing Trustee Rajendra Joshi, who has been facilitating substantial interventions in livelihood, health, education, affordable housing and financial inclusion for low-income communities.

Credibility
31+ years of service to the sector
Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
Part of the Credibility Alliance
**SAMPARK**

https://www.sampark.org/

**ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW**

Founded: 1991  |  Head Office: Bangalore  |  Coverage: Pan India  |  Annual Budget: INR 10 crore

Sampark works to empower India’s most vulnerable women, children and migrant workers through education interventions that help in increasing their incomes. Sampark focuses on providing information to increase access regarding entitlements in various sectors such as health, education, finance, social security and legal aid.

**PROGRAM FOCUS**

Sampark's operating model is built around Workers Resource Centres (WRCs). Along with this, they also focus on implementing activities for raising awareness, information provision, and linkages. The organizations run a support helpline to provide workers with access to information across geographies.

- Run Worker Resource Centres (WRCs) as a one-stop place for migrant workers for all their information needs and support them in accessing socio-economic and health-linked entitlements
- Undertake capacity building in leadership and communication, for workers who are actively engaged with the community members to raise their awareness about the services and entitlements
- Build evidence through in-depth studies on migrant construction workers to highlight their problems
- Operate Early Childhood Care and Education Centers for migrant workers' children and address their safety, nutrition, educational and health-related needs

**IMPACT**

- Reached out to more than 25,000 workers with over 11,000 registered with Boards
- INR 1.5 crore worth of Board benefits unlocked

**Interventions**

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

**Leadership**

- Prameela has pioneered the urban projects of SAMPARK and played an important role in opening and running Early Childhood Care and Education Centers for children of migrant workers. She manages team of Workers Resource Centers and have knowledge and information related to labour issues. She has also led research and study involving gender, microenterprises, and livelihood activities.

**Credibility**

- 30+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Member of the Credibility Alliance and registered in NIITI Ayog and Drapan portals

**Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA)**

https://yuva-india.org/

**ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW**

Founded: 1984  |  Head Office: Mumbai  |  Coverage: Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, New Delhi  |  Annual Budget: INR 6 crore

YUVA strives to mitigate poverty and promote human rights in the developing world. Its vision is a humane society based on the values of equality, distributive justice and secularism; one that is liberated from oppression on the basis of caste, class, creed, gender, age, ethnicity and language; free from all forms of exploitation and violence; and which demonstrates integrity and democracy.

**PROGRAM FOCUS**

YUVA facilitates the formation of people's collectives that ensure sustained collective action in communities. It also engages in partnerships with the government, other civil society actors, academic institutions and the private sector to enable and strengthen the people's empowerment process. The organisation's work is complemented with research and policy advocacy.

- Running a Migrant Resource Centre and Labour Facilitation Centres for workers (including seasonal and semi-permanent migrants), to facilitate access to identity documents, welfare schemes and registrations in welfare boards to enable social protection
- Operating a wage recovery helpline that provides mediation support for recovery of unpaid wages, legal aid and counselling
- Establishing and running resource centres for children of informal workers with reading libraries, digital learning, educational games, and sports for development to offer space for expression and interaction
- Creating a support system for informal workers by building collectives of workers and spreading awareness on rights, conducting health camps at construction sites, nakas and informal settlements

**Leadership**

- YUVA is headed by its Executive Director, Roshi Nugarthali. Her work is focused on issues of urban poverty, migration, informal economy and gender justice. She has also worked with the child rights movement, facilitating children's research and advocacy towards claiming their rights.

**Interventions**

- Build awareness among workers on rights and critical issues
- Facilitate on-site registration for services and entitlements
- Provide legal aid, information support and/or helpline services
- Create a database and tracking mechanism for workers and their families
- Conduct sector-specific training, upskilling and/or entrepreneurship development
- Capacity building of businesses for better worker practices
- Supplement holistic education via linkages with schools, tutoring, skilling for children
- Develop diverse livelihood opportunities for women
- Run day care centres for children of construction workers
- Undertake policy advocacy and/or research
- Provide technical support to government in policy formulation and implementation

**Credibility**

- 36+ years of service to the sector
- Requisite 12A, 80G and FCRA
- Awarded gold seal by GuideStar India
- Verified by Global Giving

**IMPACT**

- Since 2012 YUVA helped informal workers recover over INR 65 lakh in unpaid wages
- Since 2016 YUVA has registered 1100 construction workers in Navi Mumbai, Thane, Panvel, Nagpur and Guwahati
- 150 children between the ages of 1 to 6 years were reached through the crèches at sites and child resource centres in 6 different migrant communities in Navi Mumbai
Appendix

References

Executive Summary

Prelude: Harnessing India’s Strength In Numbers

Chapter 1: Exploring redevelopment for construction workers
2. https://www.workersinvisibility.org/
5. The Government of India has recently introduced four Labour Codes, namely (a) Code on Social Security, 2020; (b) Code on Wages, 2019; (c) Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020; and (d) the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 (collectively, “Labour Codes”) to consolidate 29 central labor laws in India. These Labour Codes have received assent from both houses of Parliament and the President of India in September 2020. However, the date of their enforcement is yet to be notified. Public consultation on the Draft Rules under each of the Labour Codes is underway. The policy landscape described in this report is based on the existing governance mechanisms.
Chapter 2: Identifying the cracks in the system
5. The effect of the new labor codes on registration rates remains to be seen

Chapter 3: Cornerstones

Chapter 4: Playing our part, to build back better
2. 2 - https://www.workersinvisibility.org/social-compact.html
3. 3 - https://jansahas.org/mrc

Acknowledgements
Dasra would like to extend its sincere thanks to all the non-profit organizations, industry stakeholders including funders and experts including individuals, academics, experts, government officials that have made invaluable contributions to its research and this report.

Non-Profits

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<tr>
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<td>Anjali Borhade</td>
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<td>Benoy Peter</td>
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<td>Bijal Brahmbhatt</td>
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<td>Divya Varma, Raghav Mehrotra</td>
<td>Ajjeevika Bureau</td>
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<td>Basic Healthcare Services (BHS)</td>
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<td>Gagan Sethi</td>
<td>Center for Social Justice (CSJ)</td>
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<td>Marina Jospeh</td>
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<td>Nitish Davande, Kirti Khandare</td>
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<td>Varun Aggarwal</td>
<td>India Migration Now</td>
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<td>Varun Behani, Prateek Priyadarshi*</td>
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*ex Jan Sahas
Experts

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<td>Alex Paul Menon</td>
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Industry

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Methodology & Limitations

Methodology

The construction sector employs the maximum number of informal workers, who are predominantly migrants. Fast-paced urbanisation and a high demand for low-skilled workforce are pull factors for this vulnerable demographic. Government data estimates that the sector employs 57 million workers, a total of 50 million men and 7 million women. The construction sector is also the single largest absorber of informal workers. Due to the low entry barriers for recruitment, the industry employs a large chunk of the surplus of India's non-agricultural workforce. It is important to zoom into the problems of the workers and examine on-ground solutions, to bolster the philanthropic capital available in this space. With this objective, the report demonstrates the lay of the land, the roles of different stakeholders involved (industry, government, non-profits, contractors, and community), challenges across workers' journeys (at source, destination and across), as well as, how their social locations shape their interactions within the construction space.

The report was completed using a mix of primary and secondary research. The different steps involved in putting the report together are defined below.

Literature review

- Articles/ reports/documents by think tanks, government, non-profit sector, newspaper/news website, and multi-lateral agencies examined
- Relevant information gleaned and collated to form central premises and arguments

Primary research

- 30+ non-profits working with informal and migrant workers to identify resource persons for requisite interviews, shortlisted
- Key experts from academia, government, industry, think tanks, and multi-lateral agencies, identified for interviews
- Semi-structured interviews with a selected cohort set up based on purposive sampling and availability of resource persons

Analysis and collation

- Breakpoint analysis undertaken to identify critical challenges where non-profit interventions can be posited as solutions
- Stakeholder, personas, and journeys, mapped to understand the sector from a worker-centric perspective
- Insights from interviews and secondary analysed thematically, across breakpoints and intersections in workers lives

Writing and consolidation

- Narratives and critical messages, emerging from the analysis played back to experts, for due validation
- Report collated and written thematically to detail out the different aspects linked with workers lives, and provide an overview of the non-profit sector that is working to improve their lives

Limitations

The report was written during the pandemic (the first and second wave), and therefore, the availability of resource persons and non-profit actors, for interviews and conversations, was affected and remained limited. However, ~30 experts were interviewed for this report and the sample attempts to reflect key perspectives available in the sector, covering diverse stakeholders engaged in workers' journeys. Further, the data available is largely qualitative, and the knowledge gleaned could be subjective and influenced by the researchers' biases.
Tools Used
Interview Guide | Non-profit organizations and experts

CONTEXT: Please elaborate on the migration patterns for informal workers in India, with a focus on the construction sector.

Prompts
- What are the roles and kinds of work available to India's informal migrant workers in the construction industry? In your experience – how has demand for workers and the type of work changed in traditional construction sites viz. mechanized ones?
- What are the roles played by stakeholders (such as industry, government, non-profits and community including contractors)?

CHALLENGES: Please describe the key challenges for India's informal migrant workers in construction.

Prompts
- What are the challenges for India's informal migrant workers in construction? (probes: at source, destination and across)
- How do workers' socio-economic (specially gender, caste, tribe) locations affect their journeys across the system?
- Could you share your perspective on the impact of recent developments, specifically with regard to the COVID-19 crisis and the enactment of the new labor codes?

SOLUTIONS: Please share your thoughts on the opportunities or solutions that should be prioritized and strengthened in the medium and long-term to enable transformational change for the workers.

Prompts
- Could you share with us details of any successful interventions or best practices which have benefited informal workers in construction? What are the key factors that made this solution successful?
- Given that there are limited resources at stake – what are the actions that should be prioritized by interested stakeholders, specifically industry and philanthropists, over the next 3-5 years?
- What are some of the long-term transformational changes needed to enable greater equity, dignity and opportunities for informal construction workers and their families?

Additional Questions
Could recommend any further reading material or experts we should consult?

Interview Guide | Industry Stakeholders

CONTEXT: Please elaborate on the mix of formal and informal workers on your construction sites.

Prompts
- What % are on your payroll and how many are through contractors?
- How are contractors typically selected?
- What kinds of checks and balances are in place between you and the contractor? What is the level of involvement in selecting sub-contractors?
- How are accidents / other issues on site resolved (by contractors or by the Company)?
- What is the level of interaction between the company and on-site workers (formal and informal)?
- What are the other dependencies of the informal labour on the company? Are there standard procedures to meet these across sites?

CHALLENGES: Please describe the key challenges faced by your company during and post the lockdown, wrt labour and restarting of work on sites.

Prompts
- How did the lockdown affect the on-site operations?
- What was the main impact on the labourers at your site (formal and informal)?
- What were the main initiatives taken by the company during this time?
- When the lockdown eased, how easy / difficult was it to restart work? What additional measures had to be taken to ensure that workers come back from their home towns? Were any changes made to the working conditions wrt safety and hygiene?

SOLUTIONS: Please share your thoughts on the opportunities or solutions that should be prioritized and strengthened in the medium and long-term to enable transformational change for the workers.

Prompts
- What are the key breakpoints in their journeys at the industry, policy and community level? What breakpoints do you think should be prioritized by interested stakeholders, specifically philanthropists, over the next 3-5 years?
- What are some of the long-term transformational changes needed to enable greater equity, dignity and opportunities for informal construction workers?

Additional Questions
Could recommend any further reading material or experts we should consult?
To know more, visit:

workersinvisibility.org