

# Migrants Resilience Collaborative

A grassroots-led multi-stakeholder collaborative to ensure the safe and responsible recovery of migrant families and their livelihoods in India post COVID-19



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# There are ~140 million individuals and their families who migrate annually in search of viable livelihoods

## Who are “migrant workers”?

- 140 million individuals and their families who migrate due to lack of livelihood opportunities – in most cases, lack of even subsistence opportunities – at home<sup>1</sup>
- Pre-dominantly belong to excluded groups: 63% Scheduled Caste (SCs), 8% Scheduled Tribe (STs), and 25% Other Backward Class (OBCs)<sup>2</sup>
- Include working children of ages 15-16

## What does migration look like?

- Most migrant workers are short-term, seasonal or circular migrants,<sup>1</sup> generally coming home only during the harvest season or for festivals
- 76% travel with dependents;<sup>2</sup> often as young as 2-4 years old; older children are left behind with an adult at home
- Majority work as unskilled labourers in the agriculture, construction, and textiles sectors. Some migrate while still looking for a job, or look for second and third jobs during a given period at the destination.
- 35% do not have any formal education; 43% educated past 8<sup>th</sup> grade; ~2% have a college education.<sup>2</sup>



A set of Dalit families in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh. The man narrates his community's stories about migrant work and cornering of opportunities, entitlements by dominant caste communities of his village. His daughter is in college, but many college graduates are unable to find jobs and have to fall back on manual labour, generally through migration.

# They have to contend with systemic disenfranchisement and loss of dignity, basic rights

## Power inequity

- Utilizing debt up front
- No written agreements (for 94%), dependence on middleman
- No accountability due to complex, informal contractor network<sup>1,2</sup>



## Vulnerability

- Daily wages
- Low or unskilled
- Marginalised castes
- Lack of recognition / unable to receive govt. entitlements



## Loss of dignity and violation of basic rights

- Forced labour, verbal and physical abuse, withholding of wages
- Poor working conditions: long working hours (avg. >10 hours/day) and unrealistic targets; 64% work 7 days a week; 30% not paid overtime;<sup>3</sup> lack of safety equipment and clean water and sanitation
- Poor living conditions: congested accommodation (temporary sheds, ~70% live in fenced-in, guarded work sites)



A family at their home in Khargone. Anil (right) in his mid-20s migrates to Maharashtra. He was once deceitfully taken to Karnataka. On realizing this after 3 days of work, his phone was taken and he was beaten on refusing to work. His father (middle) also migrated for many years.

# Even among excluded communities, women face additional, disproportionate challenges

- **Lack of recognition:** Females are treated as ‘associational migrants’ by surveys (NSSO), and not given independent recognition, limiting access to social protections, despite majority of migrant women working jobs
- **Lower, unequal wages:** women receive 20-30% lower wages for the same work, across different types of work<sup>1</sup>
- **Sexual abuse:** women facing sexual abuse have little recourse, with poor implementation of sexual harassment at workplace norms; poverty may even push women migrants into sex work<sup>2</sup>
- **Poor working conditions:** unrealistic targets, forced to work overtime without increments,<sup>3</sup> and lack of sanitation facilities are characteristic of women migrant workers’ work conditions; this leads to drop in women workers (especially construction);<sup>4</sup> 70% women voice fears about the unsafe work environments away from home<sup>5</sup>
- **Added risks and burdens for non-migrating women in migrant households:** women remaining behind in the villages face added risk of violence, greater difficulty in accessing social protection services like the Public Distribution System (PDS), and complete load of household unpaid labour



Women migrant workers from Bundelkhand at Labour Chowk in Delhi looking for work. People wait at such transit points for contractors looking to hire workers for specific projects, mostly for construction work.

# Prior to COVID, migrant families were already facing a broken situation

- **Rising unemployment:** India lost 6.1 million jobs between 2012 and 2018 despite a ~50% growth in GDP;<sup>2</sup> Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of rural women fell from ~25% to ~18%<sup>1</sup>
- **Low wages:** majority earn below statutory minimum, with average wages at a third or two-thirds of minimum wages; women earning 20-30% below men<sup>1</sup>
- **Poor, often hazardous working conditions:** 2.2% workers faced severe forced labour, and 10.1% faced medium violations<sup>3</sup>
- **Broken social security system:** 94% migrant workers unregistered with labour departments and without access to basic Government entitlements<sup>3</sup>
- **Disproportionately affects women** (across wages, unemployment, sexual abuse) **and excluded castes** (>95% of migrant workers from SC, ST, OBC communities)<sup>3</sup>



A Dalit man who was bonded to an upper caste family for over 2 decades. Locally known as a system of “Varsudiya” in southern MP, he lived with and worked for the family, remaining on call 24/7 for the period. His son now works for the same family under the same system. For their service, the son’s family gets paid ~INR 50-60k for the year. Implicit in our mission is breaking intergenerational systems such as these by ensuring better opportunities for such families.

# With COVID, migrant families are facing a disastrous crisis of subsistence

## Immediate impact

- **Loss of livelihoods:** 90% of migrant workers lost their incomes within 3 weeks during the April lock-down<sup>1</sup>
- **Food insecurity:** 42% workers did not have enough food for the day, with 33% not having enough money to buy food, within 3-4 weeks of national lockdown<sup>1</sup>
- **Mass migration back to source-states:** unprotected travel back to source states, many on foot, have led to unnecessary and tragic loss of life

## Medium-term expected impact

- **High unemployment:** over 80% of small and medium-sized enterprises – a key engine for jobs – expect to scale down, shut shop, or sell off in six months<sup>2</sup>
- **Reduction in household income:** greater proportion of migrant workers pay will be through lower paying MGNREGA work
- **Increase in forced labour:** reduced employment, income will likely lead to greater indebtedness, child labour; relaxation of labour laws will exacerbate this further



Naseema (left), from Tarana tehsil of Ujjain district, works as a daily wage farm laborer. A few years ago her husband died from an illness, following which she and her five children have found it hard to meet daily needs. Two of her sons work as construction laborers. They lost their livelihoods and income due to the lockdown. Within a week they had to borrow money to buy food and ration supplies.

# Migrant communities required rapid response and immediate relief



*"Forget COVID, we will die of hunger first."*

- various, repeated statement

*"All our money is over and neither do we have any food left."*

- Maya - a migrant worker from Panna, Madhya Pradesh

*"What will happen if we stay here? We'll die of hunger. So we will walk home."*

- Dilip - part of a group of ~30 migrant workers stuck at the Gurgaon railway station for several days

*"We are hungry, our children are hungry."*

- Veeraj, a migrant worker, over the phone to a Jan Sahas correspondent

# Government, the private sector, and civil society actors took initiative to facilitate relief



## Government

### Employment drives

- ~\$12 billion new funding for Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana (GKRY), MGNREGA<sup>2,3,4</sup>
- ~4 million migrants' skills mapped across Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar alone by first week of June<sup>5</sup>

### Social security drives

- >14% BOCW funds utilized since March<sup>6</sup>
- “One Nation One Ration”, and potential welfare funds and special commissions for migrants at central and state level<sup>7</sup>



## Private sector & CSR

- Companies (and their CSR divisions) making large emergency contributions and setting up initiatives to support migrant workers<sup>8,9,10</sup>
- Large companies in real estate imploring government to deploy worker welfare funds, and seeking to collaborate with civil society and government



## Civil society

- Majority (76%) of nonprofits are actively engaged in COVID relief, including providing relief materials, direct cash transfers, and offering rehabilitation to stranded migrant laborers; this includes diverting programmatic funding for relief work
- Prioritization of investments / strategic prioritization to support migrant workers by various institutional philanthropies

# Jan Sahas partnered with each of these stakeholders to ensure relief reaches workers and their families



## Government

- Garib Kalyan Rojgar Yojana - partnering with govt. in 62 of 116 districts to implement
- Worker data – contributed 1m of the 4m data points for Govt’s skill mapping initiative in June; will grow to 3m-4m by July
- Social security registration - partnering with govts. of Delhi, MP



## Private sector & CSR

- Co-created a pledge with industry, that 5 of the largest real estate companies in the country have already signed
- Facilitated BOCW registration for 12,800 workers in partnership with companies and governments of Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Telangana to enable access to relief



## Civil society

- Facilitated relief for 1m across 19 states with 40+ CSO and CBO partners, including food support to ~500k, cash transfer to >25k, safety/PPE kits for >34k (including front-line workers)
- 40+ institutional donor partners (foundations, companies)  
\*See next page for partners



Highlights from the call to action letter: 1. Urged government to strengthen BOCW registration, and increase worker welfare fund use; 2. Emphasized developer-government collaboration, with CSO support



# Detail: over the past four months, we worked with 40+ CSOs/CBOs and 40+ institutional donors to deliver relief for migrant families

## CSO/CBO partners

(non-exhaustive)



## Donor partners

(non-exhaustive)



# It is now time to transition from relief to focusing on core needs of migrant workers to build medium- and long-term resilience

## Short-term: relief

- Food
- COVID hygiene
- Transport
- Emergency cash

## Medium- and long-term needs: resilience building / systems change



**Social security:** Access to basic benefits (e.g., health, insurance, housing), portability of benefits across states, and financial inclusion (for access to schemes and supports)

*How can we accelerate the delivery of Government social security and entitlements to tens of millions of migrants?*



**Income / livelihoods:** Employment opportunities through public and private works, at both destination and source

*How can we safely return and match millions of migrant workers to employment to restart / build the economy?*



**Protection of rights:** Decent working conditions, prevention of forced labour (e.g., timely and full payment of wages, no restrictions of movement)

*How can we ensure safe and fair working conditions for migrant workers across the board?*



**We cannot do this alone. This will require a collaborative effort with a unified strategy, ability to move different systems components, and leveraging government and private sector.**

# Our strong track record and grassroots network means we can deliver high leverage, value for money, and build on existing scale

## Our track record

1

Direct, large scale access to communities and largest NGO database on migrants

- Jan Sahas was able to reach **hundreds of thousands** of beneficiaries in rapid time (75 days) due to its direct, large scale access to communities. The relief work mobilized **922** Jan Sahas team members and **42** partner CSOs/CBOs across **19** states;
- Jan Sahas has the largest, most extensive civil society database on migrant workers (Over **1 million** on our database through COVID relief work; **~122,000 detailed profiles** on our Longitudinal Migration Tracking System (LMTS); **38,000 cases** on our helpline detailing the situation of **128,000**).

2

High leverage and value for money

- From past experience (see below), we estimate we can achieve between **14x - 45x leverage** on program funding for social security with Government social security funds;

3

Strong track record of delivering results at scale for migrant workers / families

- Over the past 7 years, we have delivered **128,400 entitlements to ~86,000 migrant workers and their families**, with a cumulative **value of ~56.3m USD** delivered. 40% of this value was specifically for women in the family;

4

Sustainability through Government and private Sector partnerships

- Jan Sahas **works with multiple state governments** on its priority for social security delivery for migrant workers, and has been **on various central government committees. Contributed 1m data points** to the Government's recent 6m migrant worker database, and plans to contribute another 3-4m by end of July. Central and State depts regularly liaise with Jan Sahas on migration issues;
- Jan Sahas can help Industry to care for its workers and provide responsible, safe recruitment of migrant workers. Jan Sahas has an **MOU with Godrej** in Construction and are discussing similar arrangements with other large real estate companies.

# Introducing the Migrants Resilience Collaborative, to sustainably impact 10 million migrants in 3-5 years - summary

## Migrants Resilience Collaborative (MRC)

A grassroots-led multi-stakeholder collaborative of nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sector actors focused on ensuring safety, security, and mobility for vulnerable migrant families across India, by:



**Mobilizing funding**



**Building systemic infra, facilitating implementation/ research**



**Driving government and private sector advocacy**

### Strengthen social security delivery systems

- Establish scalable, govt-integrated system
- 6 million registered and receiving key benefits
- 14-45x return on funding

### Enable responsible recruitment

- Advocate for ethical/responsible recruitment
- Partner with 25+ large companies
- 1 million responsibly recruited

### Enable worker protection

- Establish a scalable migrant tracking system, and national helpline
- 10 million tracked
- 8-10% reduction in forced labour

### Develop the civil society ecosystem support migrant families

- Build a capable network of 50+ CSOs / CBOs, and strengthen cross-learning



### Geographic focus:

Work in 100 districts and cities across both source and destination

### Sectoral focus:



Construction



Textiles



**The MRC will be India's largest grassroots-led collaborative, with partners from across the social sector**

# Our mission is to ensure safety, security, and mobility for vulnerable migrant families across India

## *Vision*

*Dignity for all*

## *Mission*

*To ensure safety, security, and mobility for vulnerable migrant families across India*

## *Values*



**Dignity:** we recognize and value the struggles and leadership of people we aim to support



**Workers-first:** all our work will prioritize the interests of the workers, even as we seek to engage a multitude of actors



**Co-creation:** we will intensively engage communities, as well as all who ally themselves to our mission



Devi Dayal with his wife and 11 others from Garootha village in Jhansi (UP) travelled to Palwal, Haryana (~50km from Delhi) like hundreds of thousands of other workers who flock to NCR. He left his village hoping to get a better job, a better life. He was approached by a local contractor in his village and was promised wages of INR 350/day (below minimum wage). Each family took an advance of INR 3,000 from the contractor. The families ended up wage less, enslaved and trapped in the unfamiliar national capital. They were not given enough food and were occasionally beaten up.

# For this, we will facilitate interventions, pilots, infra to support interventions, and advocate with government and industry...

	Strengthen social security delivery systems	Enable responsible recruitment	Enable worker protection
Sample implementer interventions/ pilot areas	BOCW	Worker awareness / agency (barefoot lawyers, CBOs)	
	MGNREGS and 10+ other schemes	Skills mapping and training	Emergency support
	Access to credit / financial inclusion	Training contractors and companies	Legal support
Infrastructure made available to all partners	Migration tracking   District Migration Centre   Capacity building for CSOs/CBOs		
	Jan Saathi mobile application	Skills mapping platform	Labour helpline   Lawyer's Initiative Forum
Advocacy supported by research/ data from interventions	Policy research and government advocacy (including with migrant commissions)		
	Private sector advocacy		

## Key / notes

Source

Destination

Source and destination

**Systemic interventions:** Though interventions are laid out distinctly, the collaborative will aim to integrate these – for example, integrating social security interventions into a single system

**Source and destination classification:** Interventions are classified based on where they are significantly dominant. For example, BOCW is dominantly destination related, and MGNREGS is dominantly source related.

**Systems classification:** interventions are classified based on which system they are linked to. For example, MGNREGS could be seen as being a 'recruitment' tool; however, delivery is through government social security systems, hence it is classified under social security.

# ...in 100 high-migration districts and cities across the country, with a focus on the construction and textiles sector

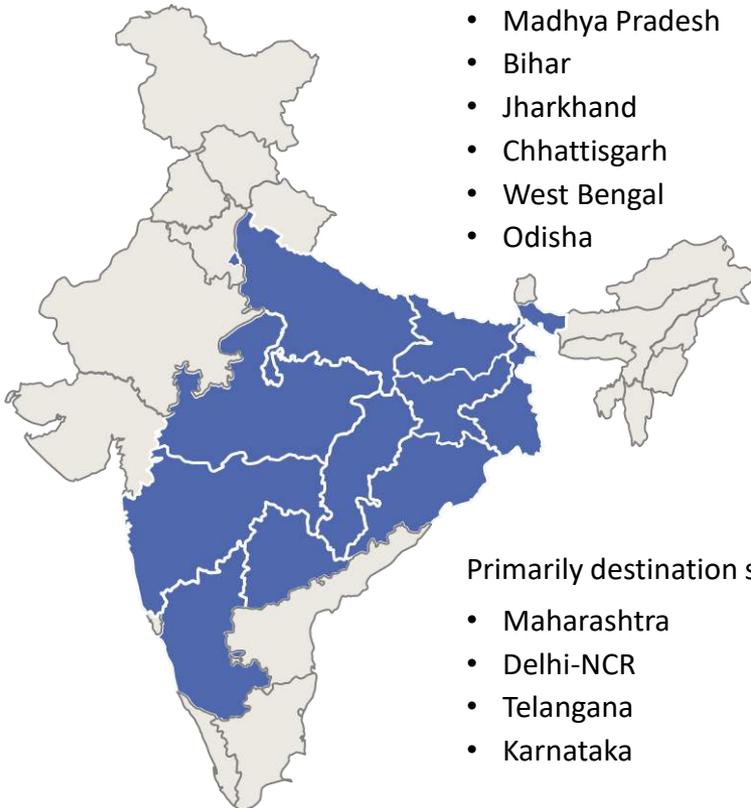
## Geographic focus:

### Primarily source states

- Uttar Pradesh
- Madhya Pradesh
- Bihar
- Jharkhand
- Chhattisgarh
- West Bengal
- Odisha

### Primarily destination states

- Maharashtra
- Delhi-NCR
- Telangana
- Karnataka



## Sectoral focus:



**Construction:** leverage momentum on BOCW and collaborative intent of India's largest developers

- Largest non-agricultural employer with >50 million jobs, and demonstrated interest from large employers<sup>1</sup>
- Majority of employees (>40 million) are migrant workers
- Steady stream of available funding for worker welfare under state BOCW cess funds (1-2% of costs of construction projects across India)



**Textiles:** need to convert supply chain focus to on-ground worker support – requires national policies, innovative pilots, advocacy

- >45 million workers employed directly and 50+ million indirectly across the farm-to-market value chain<sup>2,3</sup>
- Most workers are migrants<sup>4</sup>
- Significant appetite on worker welfare (e.g., minimum wages, working conditions), especially from international buyers/brands (~30% of textiles market is the fast-growing exports section)<sup>4</sup>

# The steering council - comprising leaders with diverse experiences and deep engagement across sectors - will guide the MRC



**Rati Forbes**

*Forbes Marshall Limited*



**Anu Aga**

*Former  
Thermax Limited*



**Vidya Shah**

*EdelGive Foundation*



**Lalita Vadia**

*Former migrant worker*



**Kumar Gera**

*Gera Developments Pvt. Ltd. /  
Founder CREDAI*



**Arun Maira**

*Former Member,  
Planning Commission of India*



**Ashif Shaikh**

*Co-Founder, Jan Sahas*

## Our champions and advisors bring diverse strengths and perspectives to support the MRC



**Shankar Venkateswaran**  
ECube Investment Advisors



**Srinivasan Iyer**  
*Ford Foundation*



**Ingrid Srinath**  
*Centre for Social Impact  
and Philanthropy*



**Trishna Mohan**  
*Thomson Reuters Foundation*



**Subhalakshmi Nandi**  
*Bill & Melinda  
Gates Foundation*



**Rajendra Mewada**  
*Yuva Vikas Mandal*



**Svati Chakravarty**  
*Independent communications  
specialist*



**Gayatri Divecha**  
*Godrej Group*

# Strategic partners will help lead and guide specific strategic aspects of the collaborative



## Role

Provide strategic support to the collaborative on topics including, but not limited to:

- Collaborative strategy, design, and governance
- Program strategy and design
- Fundraising
- External stakeholder engagement (e.g., private sector)
- Partner management



## Current strategic partners



*GDI brings deep expertise in building collaboratives and multi-stakeholder initiatives, including providing support on design and strategy*



*EdelGive Foundation brings deep expertise in anchoring cross-sectoral partnerships across the social, corporate, and government sectors*