

URBAN INDIA



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Special Issue on Migration

Overview of Migration
Seasonal Migration
Gendered Migration
Migrant Child Labour
Job Search and Labour Market Outcomes
Migration and Conflict
Legal Aspects of Migration
Book Reviews
Workshops





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Papers sent for publication should not have been published earlier or simultaneously submitted for publication to another journal.

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- Articles should not exceed 8000 words, including notes and references.
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- Research notes or book reviews must be not more than 4000 words.
- Graphs and charts need to be prepared in MS Office (Word/Excel) and not in jpeg or other formats.
- Full citation for all references and sources must be provided.
- Articles should be sent by email in MS Word format to the Editor, Urban India along with the declaration that the article is unpublished.
- Authors are requested to provide full details for correspondence (postal and email address).

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THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN BANGALORE AND INTERVENTION PLAN TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOODS

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K.G. Meenakshi, Hosalli Manjunath, T. Prema**

Sampark (Bangalore)

Abstract

Rural to urban migration is increasing in India for both short and long-term movements. Nearly half of the migrants find their destination in the construction sector. Bangalore, along with other urban areas of Karnataka has emerged as the main hub of the construction industry and draws migrants from within the State and from other States also. While it may seem that migration into construction industry would fetch workers higher income, but poor housing conditions, inadequate electricity supply, health afflictions and unhygienic living conditions are some of the intangible costs that the migrant workers have to incur. These unorganized workers are unable to bargain for fair wages and for good living and working conditions. This situation is very precarious, especially for inter-state migrants. This study looks at the situations of migrant construction workers in Bangalore with a view to help design programmes and policies for them.

Introduction

Unsustainable rural livelihoods are fuelling migration to urban areas, for both short and long periods. Much of this migration is seasonal, and even when it is for long periods, the status and condition of those who migrate for work to urban areas is well below acceptable standards.

Fifty percent of such migration is in the construction sector. The unskilled migrants depend largely on this sector for employment in the urban areas. It



is estimated that inter-state migration consists of about 80 million persons, of whom 40 million are employed in the construction industry; and women constitute more than one-third of the work force (Sarde, 2007). The boom in construction industry in Bangalore and other cities of Karnataka is sustained by almost 15 lakh migrant workers from distant states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Construction companies no longer seek workers from Karnataka; in fact, they specifically ask contractors to employ labourers from these states, because they work "harder". In attempt to escape from poverty and disease at home, these workers get sucked into a labour economy that is characterized by exploitative labour practices, unsafe working environments, inhuman living conditions with little access to basic amenities, and almost complete social exclusion (Sampark, 2008; Kameshwar, 2004).

Although cash incomes in this sector tend to be high, especially for skilled jobs, the migrants lack access to basic services such as health and education, and often their living conditions deny them both safety and decency - this is true especially with regard to women. The problems at the worksites get compounded and multiplied if the woman is pregnant or has small children. There is no provision at all within the system to take care of children at worksites. The women can neither afford to leave the children unattended nor can be absent from work as they would face extreme financial hardship (Kumar, 2004). Unfortunately, upon entry into cities, rural migrants find themselves living below acceptable standards, in terms of work, dignity and livelihood security. Nonetheless, millions of villagers continue to travel to cities in the hope that migration will prove to be a path out of poverty. Employment opportunities for migrant construction workers are at best irregular, the wages are low, and the migrant workers are often subject to workplace malpractices. Overall, the working conditions and the facilities provided at the construction sites are far from satisfactory and migrant construction workers remain an extremely marginalized and vulnerable group.

Being part of an unorganized sector of labourers, they are unable to bargain for fair wages. They are not paid the minimum wage; and often, even the agreed upon wage is not paid on time. Moreover, they have long working hours. They do not get overtime payment for excess work. Even after the construction work is completed, substantial dues remain with the builders or the contractors, who withhold these due wages on some flimsy pretext. Construction labourers work under very hazardous conditions as basic safety



norms and measures are hardly met. In the case of an accident, usually there is no provision for either financial or medical aid. It is up to the workers themselves to arrange for their own treatment, as there is no provision like ESI coverage for them; and even when a labourer dies, nobody takes responsibility (Sarde, 2007).

Despite the existence of adequate policies and legal provisions, unfavourable working conditions exist. In 1979, the Government of India introduced the *Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979*. More recently, the government enacted *The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996*. This Act mandates that construction workers are entitled to better working and living conditions, welfare, safety and health measures. But there is a huge gap between the legal provisions and ground realities. Needless to say, the Act remains only on paper. The majority of construction workers who are in the unorganized sector remain out of its purview. The record of prosecutions or dispute settlements for the migrant workers is almost nil (Sampark, 2010; Thakur, 2008).

Objectives

The overall aim of the study is to understand the livelihood status of unorganised migrant construction workers employed in Bangalore and to design long term interventions which would facilitate them to access their entitlements as Indian citizens/unorganised workers, both at the destination and at the source as well as to improve their livelihoods.

The specific objectives are to:

- Understand the reasons of migration at source states- whether migration is distress migration or to increase economic levels.
- Examine their socio-demographic profile: gender distribution, marital and family status, educational and skill levels etc.
- Examine the livelihood status and earning capacity, living and working conditions and status of the health services available to them.
- Document the possibilities for construction workers of collective action like Self Help Groups, Cooperatives and Unions.



- Understand the types of interventions required for improved livelihoods of migrant workers from the NGOs like Aajeevika Bureau¹, Disha Foundation² and others.

Methodology

Karnataka is rapidly developing state in India with a Gross State Domestic Product growth of 8.2 percent in the fiscal year 2010-2011. Bangalore is the largest city and the capital of Karnataka, with a sizeable base of IT employees coming in from different parts of India. Due to the increase in the number of employees in IT sector there is an increasing demand for housing in private sector and in infrastructure development like construction of flyovers, metro rail and new international airport etc. The boom in the construction sector has created a demand for labourers in Bangalore. Due to this reason the construction industry in Bangalore is being sustained by almost 15 lakhs migrant workers.

The study draws upon both primary and secondary data sources. Both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are used. The data was collected through survey of 363 construction workers at construction sites and in labour colonies set up on road sites or in vacant land, as well as through primary field studies in source regions. The methodologies adopted to gather information were personal interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs) and case studies.

Contracting System in the Construction Sector

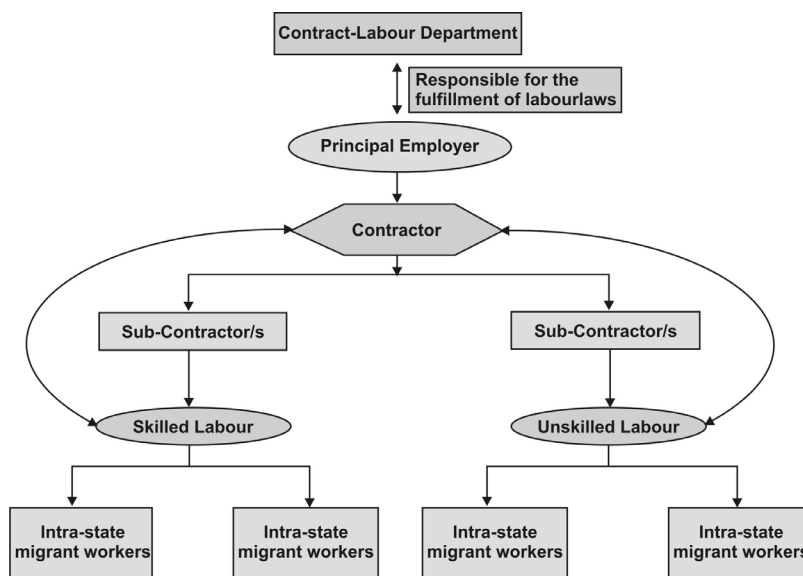
The principal employer is supposed to register the company with the State Labour Department. The principal employer then appoints the contractor(s) to take up the construction activities. This contractor is required to acquire the license from the labour department by submitting the required documents, along with the employer's certificate stating that he is employing the contractor. Under the *Certificate of Contract Act*, the principal employer declares that he is bound by all the requirements of the *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970* and *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Rules, 1970*.

¹ Aajeevika Bureau is a non-profit, public service organization, provides solutions, services and security to seasonal migrants who leave their villages to find work in cities, factories and farms.

² Disha Foundation, an NGO based in Nasik, Maharashtra is dedicated to work on inter and intra state seasonal labour migration and public health, and related development issues.

The principal employer hires a contractor(s) who in turn either hires workers directly or further hires sub-contractors who then hire the workers. These workers could have migrated from within Karnataka or might be brought from other states (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Construction Sector Contracting System



Source: Authors', 2011

The principal employer thus is the only entity who is responsible and accountable to the labour department for the fulfilment of all the required norms and legalities under the relevant Acts. On the other hand, the contractors and sub-contractors, who work directly with the workers, are not legally bound to do so.

Source and Profile of Migrant Construction Workers

This section gives a detailed account about the source areas of migrant construction workers, reasons for migration, migration patterns and demographic particulars including gender, age, education and skill levels.



Source Area of the Migrants

The survey on construction sites in Bangalore showed that migrant workers migrate to Bangalore from various states and districts. Many workers are from Karnataka itself, mainly migrating from Raichur, Gulbarga and Bellary. Among the inter-state migrants, important source areas are Andhra Pradesh (Kurnool and Mehabubnagar) followed by West Bengal (Koch Bihar, Murshidabad and Malda); Bihar (Begusarai, Samastipur and Patna); Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat); Odisha (mainly from Cuttack, Kendrapara and Bhadrak) and other states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand³ (Table 1).

Table 1: State wise Number of Migrant Construction Workers in Bangalore

States	Number (N)
Karnataka	117
Andhra Pradesh	75
West Bengal	58
Bihar	39
Madhya Pradesh	29
Odisha	21
Other States	24
Total	363

Source: Authors', 2011

Migration Patterns and Reasons for Migration

Insights from FGDs reveal that the main reasons for migration include the following: small land holding or landlessness; no regular work in the local construction sector; low wages paid at local worksites; limited resources and are therefore unable to acquire advanced skills for employment; the lure and attraction of the large cities, especially for the youth, and also lack of support from government schemes to enhance their resource base.

³The number of migrants from Maharashtra (11), Tamil Nadu (8), Chhattisgarh (3), Jharkhand (2) are very few and hence these states are merged together.



Field visits to source villages in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Rajasthan showed that migration is an important coping strategy, mainly attributed to unsustainable rural livelihoods. Most of the migrant workers are landless and are Below Poverty Line (BPL) cardholders. A few, who are landowners, have dry and arid lands. Unpredictable rainfall, unavailability of labour, and the low quality of the natural resources to which they had access or control all contribute to unsustainable agriculture.

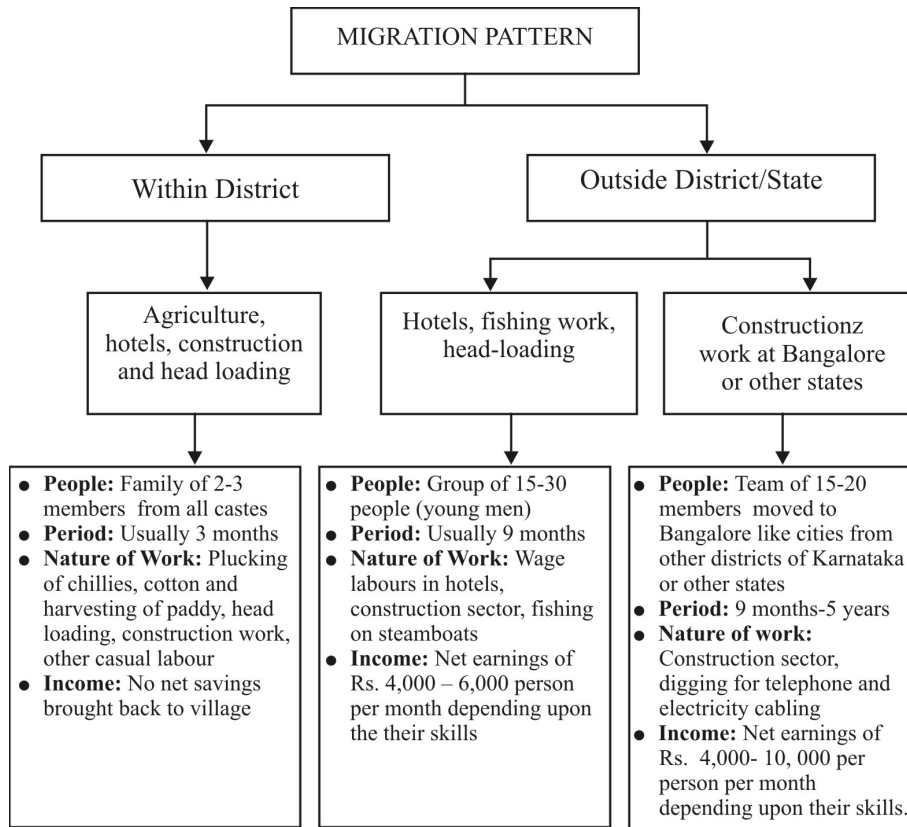
Fieldwork in source areas revealed that about 20 percent of households had one or more family members migrating within and outside the district or state for labour work. In rural areas, the migrant workers do not have regular work in agriculture and do not have any other business opportunities. Workers migrate to earn money to meet expenses like children's education, marriage, etc. Insights from secondary sources reveal that the intra-district migrants were mainly engaged as in agriculture, hotel and in construction sector while the inter-district and inter-state migrants mainly work in hotels, construction sites, fishing industry etc. The intra-district migrants relocate for a shorter time span of generally three months while the inter-state migrants move for longer duration of nine months and sometimes they stays at the destination for nearly five years. In general, inter-state migrants return home with higher remuneration of their work (to the tune of Rs. 4,000-10,000) as compared to almost no saving in case of intra-state migrants (Premchander et.al., 2009, Figure 2).

Though several anti-poverty programmes have been planned and implemented to reduce poverty and migration, they have not reached the migrant workers in a significant way. This is due to their frequent mobility and the fact that they no longer belong to either the origin or the destination state.

As most of the migrants are illiterate, they are unable to get any jobs other than as daily wage labourers (Table 5). There is pressure on them to earn money to meet the regular household expenses - for children's education; for marriages and other family functions. Some of the villagers migrate to the big cities in the hope of earning more money in a city and repay the debts that have taken to meet marriage and medical expenses.



Figure 2: Observed Migration Pattern



Source: Premchander et.al (2009)

A delve into whether the workers migrate with or without family reveals that inter-state migrant workers from Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha generally do not migrate with families. Factors like, distance, language⁴, socio-economic and cultural background of the source states influences family migration, however this is beyond the scope of this present study. For example, although Madhya Pradesh is not a neighbouring state of Karnataka, yet more than half of its migrants have moved with family. For the migrants from southern states

⁴ Apart from the fact that the migrants have difficulty in communication, a major factor is that their children cannot be put in the local schools where it is compulsory to learn the local language.



like Andhra Pradesh, distance is not an issue and large number of construction workers moved with family. Also the north-south divide in terms of culture plays a role in influencing family migration of women⁵ (Table 2).

Table 2: Family Details of Inter and Intra-State Migrant Construction Workers

States	With Families	Without Families	Total
Andhra Pradesh	85.0	15.0	100.0
Karnataka	76.0	24.0	100.0
Chhattisgarh	67.0	33.0	100.0
Jharkhand	50.0	50.0	100.0
Madhya Pradesh	45.0	55.0	100.0
West Bengal	17.0	83.0	100.0
Maharashtra	9.0	91.0	100.0
Orissa	5.0	95.0	100.0
Bihar	3.0	97.0	100.0
Tamil Nadu	0.0	100.0	100.0
Total numbers	184	175	363

Source: Authors', 2011

Majority of the intra-state migrant workers move with family and are seasonal migrants, staying in Bangalore for 8-9 months and then visiting their native places during the harvest season. On the other hand, the inter-state workers mainly move without family and stay in the city for more than 2-3 years duration, visiting their native places at most twice a year especially during festivals like Diwali/Dasara/Holi. Inter-state migrants do not visit their native places during the sowing or harvesting season as their family members look

⁵ Studies have shown that culture plays a crucial role in determining migration of single men from north India, leaving women behind. People from north India, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa generally hold view that women should not work. Studies also confirm higher work participation rate of south Indian women migrants as compared to that of their north Indian counterparts. Even if the north Indian women earn, they have a minimum contact with the outside world, especially men. Whereas, the south Indian women are more likely to explore more options and are often the main breadwinners in the family (Kaur 2006; Basu 1990; Singh 1984). These regional differences were attributed to the different social position of women in these two regions.



after the land. Irrespective of their origin areas (within and outside the state), migrant workers pay a visit to their native places for emergency purposes. Marriages are usually conducted in the months of October or March when Diwali or Holi is celebrated; so that the workers can use the visit for both the purposes.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profiles of construction workers were studied in terms of gender, age, education and skills.

Table 3: Gender Division

State	Male	Female	Persons
	Number (N)		
Karnataka	93	23	116
Andhra Pradesh	53	22	75
West Bengal	54	3	57
Bihar	38	0	38
Madhya Pradesh	26	3	29
Orissa	21	0	21
Other states	23	1	24
Not reported	3	0	3
Total	311	52	363

Source: Author's, 2011

The migrant workers are predominantly male (86 percent) and only 14 percent are females. Interestingly, wherever the females are present, they are largely from the southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh⁶. The main reason for fewer female migrants is that there is no safety and privacy in the sheds, which are made on ongoing construction sites. As mentioned earlier the female members of the family generally stay back at home to look after their children and the older family members (Table 3).

⁶The number of females among the construction workers is not at par with the number of migrants moved with family. This disconnect can be explained by arguing that those women who moved with family are not engaged as construction workers in Bangalore. Either they are engaged in some other occupation or are out of the labour force.



Table 4: Age Composition of the Migrant Construction Workers

Age -years	Male	Female	Persons
Less than 18	5	0	5
18-25	146	16	162
26-30	63	10	73
31-35	39	8	47
36-40	29	10	39
41-45	10	4	14
46 and above	17	4	21
Not reported	2		2
Total	311	52	363

Source: Authors', 2011

In the age group of 18-25 years, 146 workers (47.3 percent) are male and only 16 (10 percent) are female. The primary reason for this is that younger male workers are not yet married and are willing to move and work at any other place. On the other hand, female workers in the age group of 18-25 years are either unmarried or have just married and their parents or in-laws do not send them to new places where there is no safety and privacy.

As their age increases, the percentage of men migrating decreases; whereas the percentage of migration of female workers increases. The reason for this is that at higher ages of 40-45 years, women have fewer family obligations (like child rearing) that enable them to move to new places for work (Table 4).

Table 5: Education of Migrant Construction Workers

Education	Male	Female	Persons
Illiterate	144	24	168
Primary	84	11	95
High School	66	14	80
PUC	15	2	17
Degree	2	1	3
Total	311	52	363

Source: Authors', 2011



About half of migrant construction workers (both male and female) are illiterate. Nearly one-fourth of them are educated up to the primary and secondary levels respectively. Low education level is one of the main reasons for people to migrate to other places as they do not get any employment at the given level of education (Table 5).

56 percent of male construction workers are unskilled and the rest of them are skilled. These skills include plastering, carpentry, marble fitting, painting, electrical, bar-bending, masonry and plumbing. Most of the workers have learned these skills on the job.

Working and Living Conditions⁷

The lack of opportunities in the less developed areas is drawing thousands of people from rural and semi-rural areas to migrate towards the big cities like Bangalore. As a burgeoning industry, the construction sector offers work. With limited skills and little or no formal education, migrant construction workers face a lot of problems in their work areas. Some of these are detailed in the following sections.

Living Conditions

The workers stay in small sheds, either on the construction sites/basement or on neighbouring vacant sites or on roadside. These tents/sheds, are made with plastic sheets and do not have any ventilation. About 5-6 members live in these types of sheds. Those who work for construction companies and stay on sites do not pay for these sheds but the workers who work for small contractors and stay on the neighbour's vacant sites have to pay Rs. 250-300 per month for the tent. Out of the 12 sites visited there was electricity only in 3 sites (provided by the construction company), but none of them had provided sanitation and bathroom facilities. Because of the lack of privacy, the female workers find it difficult to bathe during the day. The workers who stay on construction sites get water that is used for construction purpose but the workers who stay on the roadside, tents/sheds have to buy water from the neighbouring houses. Lack of safety is a major issue in these sheds, several workers have complained about losing money and mobile phones.

⁷ Qualitative data on migrants' working and living conditions are collected from Focused Group Discussions.



Workers' Food Security

Most of the workers cook their food in the temporary sheds or outside the sheds. They purchase the food items from the local markets in Bangalore. Thus, 60-80 percent workers spend a lot of their earnings to buy food items because the cost of living is very high in Bangalore. A few of the intra-state migrant workers purchase rice from the PDS shops when they go back home on a visit, and they purchase all the other food items in Bangalore. Usually, the intra-state migrants eat rice, jowar and dhal, whereas the inter-state migrants eat wheat and dhal. Also, most of the migrant workers stated that except for onions and tomatoes they cannot afford to buy other vegetables and fruits.

Health Issues and Access to Services

The workers often suffer from various diseases. The intra-state migrant workers visit the government hospital as they can speak the local language Kannada, whereas, the inter-state migrants workers, especially those from the eastern states cannot speak Kannada and hence go to private doctors/hospitals where the doctors and nurses speak both in Kannada and in Hindi. In private hospitals they spend about Rs. 300-400 per person in a month for the treatment of normal ailments. Sometimes, they spend huge amounts for treatment of severe illnesses such as infections in stomach/lungs or skin disease. The reasons for frequent illness are dirty water and surroundings, living places infested with flies and mosquitoes etc. (Box 1).

Box 1: Illness Depletes Savings of Migrant Workers

"When I fall sick I have to spend a lot of money on my treatment. Due to water stagnating near the construction area there are a lot of mosquitoes near the shed. Because of the mosquito bites, I got fever and went to the local doctor for treatment but did not get cured. The doctor insisted that I must go to the Victoria hospital, where I was admitted for about 2 months; I also had to undergo stomach operation and spend Rs. 10000-15000/-for the medication. Whatever money I had saved to send back home has been spent on my treatment. I had managed to save money with great difficulty to send it to my family. Finally all my 4 months savings I have spent on my illness and also could not work for 3 months."

- A migrant worker



When the female workers become pregnant, most of the intra-state migrant workers go to their native places where they go to the nearest PHC (Public Health Centres) for regular check-ups and also consult the *anganwadi* workers in their villages. The women workers do not get any maternity leave. After delivery they come back with the child.

The workers who have migrated with their entire family cannot go back to their village, so they have to stay back in their sheds and do not go to any doctor/hospital for regular checkups and even for the delivery unless there are any critical health issues. Some of the women workers reported that they had 2-3 miscarriages as their work involves hard labour and also because they do not take nutritious food; due to this they face harassment from their in-laws as well as their husbands. On an average, each family has 3 children; a few of them have as many as 5 girl children to have a boy child. Except for one site⁸, none of the other sites have crèche facility. The women can neither afford to leave the children unattended nor absent themselves from work as they would face extreme financial hardship.

Box 2: Health Hazards Faced by Children in Construction Sites

The new born do not get any immunization because of the parents' lack of knowledge and even when they are aware about immunization, they do not know where to avail of these facilities in Bangalore. The infants often suffer from malnutrition, cholera, cold and cough caused by inhaling paint fumes and cement/dust particles. In all the construction sites children are found playing in work areas and are prone to small accidents in the sites.

Although the children of intra-state migrant construction workers can be enrolled in local government schools, they do not do so as they move frequently. In the case of inter-state migrant families, along with frequent moving their children do not know the local language which is a barrier for admission in local schools.

Means of Communication

Most workers used mobile phones as a means of communication. About 63 percent males and 32 percent females have mobile for communication

⁸ Sampark has set up a crèche for the children of construction workers.



purposes. They use them to talk with their family members. This makes them feel happy and also less homesick though they stay away from their families for long periods. Mobile phones are also used to keep in touch with contractors to talk about work details.

Working Conditions

Wages

The majority of the migrant workers are illiterate and unskilled which makes them vulnerable to being exploited by the subcontractors/contractors. They have low bargaining power and fear that they may not get work regularly if they demand more wages. A large proportion of the unskilled workers gets Rs. 150-220 per day depending upon the sub-contractor/contractor. Skilled workers get Rs. 250-400 per day, which clearly shows that the workers get the minimum wages stipulated by the state. The workers work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., with a one-hour break for lunch. Most of the skilled and unskilled labourers work for about 9-10 hours in a day. According to the labour law, workers have to be paid double the amount of the actual wages for working overtime, but none of the contractors on the studied sites paid them any overtime wages. Except for one site, in all other sites, there is difference in

Table 6: Minimum Wages for Skilled and Unskilled Workers

Classification of Employees	Minimum Daily in Wage Karnataka's urban areas	Minimum Daily Wage in Gujarat's urban areas
Skilled labourer - (carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, stone polisher, pump driver, etc)	229.93	A: 244.8 B: 229.9
Semi-skilled labour (Fitter, driller, mason, carpenter, etc)	224.93	232.4
Unskilled mazdoor	225.91	230.3

Source: Labour Commissioner's Offices of Karnataka, For Gujarat, website Paycheck.in powered by IIM, Ahmedabad

Notes: These are notified current minimum wages rates, effective from 1/04/2010 as specified by Department of Labour, Government of Karnataka applicable to Bangalore City Agglomeration Area and District Head Quarters Agglomeration Areas. In case of Gujarat also, they are effective on 1/04/2014 and applicable to municipal corporations and areas within their 10 kilometre radius.



wages among female and male workers; i.e., if a female worker get Rs 150, the male worker get Rs 170 for the same type of work. The female workers have accepted this as they believe that male workers do more hard work so they get Rs 20 more. For example the women workers carry bricks only up to two floors, whereas the male workers carry bricks even up to seven floors.

The figures include basic wages plus VDA, which is an allowance, mandated to be paid in addition to the basic wages to all Category of Employees at the rate of 4 Paise per point over and above 3944 points.

Wage rates vary by State and Karnataka seems to have lower minimum wage rates than Gujarat, for example (See Table 6). In general, intra-state workers get better wages as compared to inter-state migrant workers because they are more aware of local market rates and can negotiate better with the contractors. Most intra-state migrant workers are not dependent on a single sub-contractors/contractor and are confident that they can get work easily from some other contractor. Sunday is a holiday for all the workers; however, inter-state migrants do not have their families with them, they prefer to work half day on Sundays and earn money.

Safety, Harassment and Political Agency

The inter-state migrant workers, especially those who work through the sub-contractors are unable to keep their money safely in the sheds. Usually, they take only 50 percent of their wages and keep the remaining with the sub-contractor so that they can take the money home when they go to their native places. This makes them vulnerable to fly-by-night operators who disappear overnight with their money. These workers often do not know the principal contractor, due to which they not only lost money, but also their employment. At such times the workers become helpless, as they do not have money even to go back home.

Some of the inter-state migrant workers face police harassment, especially when they travel late at night to work on construction sites. Most of the intra and inter-state migrant workers do not have any identity proof, such as a voter ID card or a ration card. Lack of IDs and inability to vote owing to mobility means politicians are uninterested in working towards the migrants' welfare.



Safety Measures at Worksites

Out of the 9 construction sites visited, workers were provided with helmets only on 4 sites. Other safety measures such as usage of spectacles during welding and stone cutting were not followed in any of the work sites visited. On the remaining 5 sites where the workers work for small contractors, there was no safety officer and no safety measures were being followed. In some cases, the contractors have provided helmets but the workers do not wear them. This is especially true of the women as they are shy and are also not aware of the importance of helmets. Workers are prone to small accidents like getting pricked by nails lying on the construction sites, which leads to infections; or falling from a height while doing plastering or roof moulding work, etc. None of inter- and intra-state migrant workers have health or life insurance.

Financial Inclusion

Only 15 percent of the migrant workers have bank accounts. Among them, 13 percent of them have it in their native place in the name of one of the family members. Only 2 percent of them have a bank account in their own names in Bangalore, and these are mostly those who have migrated from Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh. The main reason why the workers don't have a bank account in Bangalore is their lack of knowledge on how to open bank account and the lack of identification and address proof documentation.

Remittances

Intra-state migrant workers either carry cash home themselves once or twice a year or send the money through neighbours and relatives, whereas inter-state migrant workers cannot travel frequently due to the long distance involved. Alternately, migrants transfer the money to the bank account of a neighbour or a commission agent who charges them Rs. 25 per Rs 1000 as a commission to pass on money to the workers' families. Intra-state migrant workers stated that they could not open bank accounts in the names of their wives or other family members in their native places, because they do not know how to open a bank account. Moreover, they noted that since opening up an account requires several visits to the bank, they find it difficult to make



time for this process as they do not spend sufficient time in their native place.

Collectivization and Formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs)

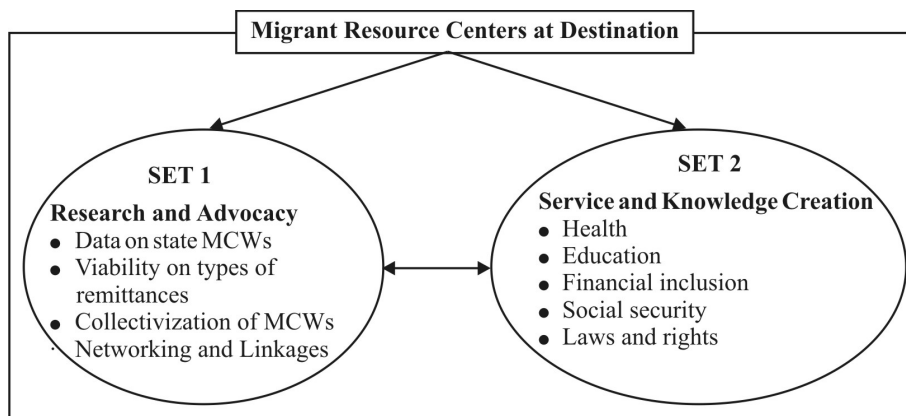
Most of the female intra-state migrants and those from the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh are members of self help groups (SHGs), and send monthly savings home every month through their relatives or friends who go back to their village. But several inter-state migrant workers are not familiar with SHGs or trade unions and the SHG movement has bypassed the migrant workers.

Interventions at Destination

To address the specific needs of migrant construction workers, the project implementation strategy includes establishment of two Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Bangalore (one in North and another in South), which would be a common meeting place for all the migrant workers. These centres will support the migrant construction workers; assist them in minimizing the hardships of migration and facilitate institutional building of the Migrant Construction Worker's Forum so that the migrants are empowered and are able to access their entitlements. These centres will cover 40-50 construction sites, covering about 2000-2500 construction workers over a period of five years. Over a period of 5 years, these two migrant resource centres will become sustainable and will be run by the unions that are formed and built during the implementation. The two broad sets of activities of the centres are shown in Figure 3.

The first relates to filling the knowledge gap in the sector by generating relevant and authentic data and information. This in turn can be used for advocacy. The ultimate objective of the data gathering and advocacy is to change policies in favour of migrants and create a positive, enabling environment for them. The second set of activities is directed at the destination and encompasses issue-based interventions pertaining to knowledge creation, provision of services and rights based linkages with official programmes as shown in Table 7.

Figure 3: Interventions at Destination



Source: Authors', 2011

Table 7: Snap Shot of Issues and Interventions

Field of Interventions	Existing Issues	Types of Interventions
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsanitary living conditions. Mosquitoes and flies breed in large numbers. • High levels of dust which cause frequent infections amongst the workers. • Inadequate levels of security measures at the construction sites. • Inter-state workers go to the more expensive private hospitals since they cannot speak the local language. • No maternity leave for women. • Lack of awareness results in low levels of immunization for the workers' children. • Small children prone to accidents on the construction sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Preventive measures • Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Health camps ◦ Nutrition/food ◦ Immunization • Rights based linkages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Linkages to BCWWB and PHCs
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant workers have low levels of education. • Lack of crèches at the work site that can take care of the workers' children while the parents are at work. • Children of inter-state workers cannot study in local schools as studying a local language is mandatory. • Constant mobility, and therefore the absence from schools, impedes the momentum for learning amongst the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Parents meetings • Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Health camps ◦ Day care centres ◦ Capacity building of teachers ◦ Nutrition/food ◦ Immunization • Rights based linkages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Linkages with government anganwadis and schools



Field of Interventions	Existing Issues	Types of Interventions
Financial inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 15 percent of the surveyed workers have formal bank accounts • Lack of knowledge regarding account opening process. • Lack of suitable documents and identification to complete the process. • Migrant remit money through informal means, which are expensive and unsafe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Financial literacy o Leaders' development • Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Opening bank accounts
Social security, laws and rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of suitable documents and identification due to which workers are unable to access relevant government schemes. • Lack of awareness about BCWWB and its schemes amongst the workers, contractors and sub-contractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Labour laws o Government institutions and schemes • Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Registration with BCWWB o Legal counseling o Placements o Formation of trade unions. • Rights based linkages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Linkages with BCWWB and NALSA centres o Linkages with formal organizations and trade unions

Source: Authors', 2011

Conclusion

The studies show that though the contribution of migrant construction workers to economic growth is immense, they remain largely invisible. These rural migrants are predominantly young people who migrate due to poverty, face poor living and working conditions and lack of education and skills. At the destination, in this case Bangalore, they lack proper identity and representation; thus they remain excluded from public services, protection and opportunities for advancement in a growing economy. Conditions are even more challenging for the inter-state migrant construction workers who, in search of livelihood, leave their home states, and lose their official identity and political protection. Therefore, the study findings demonstrate that migrant construction workers largely escape the purview of welfare and legal services, because they lack a permanent and proper identity as well as representation. For example, for workers in construction, the study found that the principal employers and contractors are unaware of protective mechanisms like the Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board (BCWWB) and its welfare schemes especially designed for the construction



workers.

To ensure that migrant constructions workers are safe and secure, and are able to access their entitlements as Indian citizens/unorganized workers both at the destination and source states, the project enumerates a host of interventions: promoting awareness within the migrant workers' community to sensitize members to their vulnerability to discrimination and exploitation, as well as to their health, education and legal rights, addressing the concerns of woman migrants specifically. Promoting dialogue with the state and central governments for influencing policies, legislations and programs targeting migrant construction workers, fostering the collectivization of migrant workers to lend them a voice and thus empower them.

The proposed programme interventions aim to support migrants in attaining sustainable livelihoods. The expected impacts of the interventions on the migrant construction workers will include improved awareness about general health and personal hygiene, occupational health hazards and health, education and legal entitlements; increased confidence and better negotiations with principal employers, contractors/sub-contractors; increased employability and getting wages as per the market rates and finally, having improved living and working conditions.

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