



Delivering Effectively for Children Impacted by Migration: Role of Portable Social Protection and Services

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Abstract: Migration has been a core part of India's labour economy for a very long time. When it is discussed, it is largely framed as an issue to do with male labour. In reality, however, the migrant labour workforce contains a significant proportion of women, many of them accompanied by children

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to attention the way migrants access social inclusion mechanisms and welfare schemes, which aim to reduce the vulnerability of poor laborers, and would do better to better recognize circular and seasonal mobility patterns. The barriers remain particularly acute for interstate circular migrants. It is clear that social services need to be portable to meet the needs of most vulnerable migrant families.

'Functional portability' – social protection and welfare which can be carried more effectively within and across state borders – has advanced and strengthened by leveraging policy and technology. It will be necessary to buttress these efforts with specific mechanisms enabling migrant families to access schemes and entitlements as they move between locations.

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It is crucial that benefits become more portable for migrants, whether they are moving within or across state borders. Factors affecting this include the design, implementation and delivery processes, and institutional arrangements for the different schemes, whoever is responsible for administering them. The centre-state, rural-urban and source-destination axes all need to be considered. There is a new drive – especially post-pandemic – towards portability and there is a lot to further build on.

Keyword: Urban Migration, Portable Social Protection, Targeted Children

Introduction

Migration has been a core part of India's labour economy for a very long time. Such work as has been carried out on migrant labour is usually within the framework of labour rights and labour organisation – and considers this cohort to be largely or exclusively men moving alone. However, the migrant exodus of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic contained a significant proportion of children and women¹ – demonstrating that many migrants move as *families*; women migrate too, to a range of industries including informal domestic labour; and indeed older children migrate independently as well. There is also a substantial cohort of children left behind by migrating families as both parents are on the move for work.

The World Bank estimates suggest that more than 40 million internal migrants were affected by the pandemic in some way.² Women were particularly impacted, since many migrant women were working in domestic or similar fields, and/or in part-time temporary positions that were more readily laid off permanently.³ During the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges that migrants faced in accessing social protection in destination states became evident. That lack of access is not limited to the pandemic alone.

This chapter focuses on the early years of migrant children, and how they can be better supported in future. Many migrant parents, especially mothers, have high aspirations for their children (see below); yet at the moment, children's start in life is not equipping them for reaching their full potential.

The Overall Migrant Demographic in India

Who are the Inter- and Intra-state Migrants in India? And What Drives Them?

It is estimated from official surveys that around 10 to 13 million people in India migrate seasonally every year for employment.⁴ Other field and civil society surveys estimate a range between 40 and 150 million.⁵ Most of these are people from rural areas, and for many it is a regular occurrence, known as 'circular' migration as they move back and forth.



Often migration is seen as driven purely by economic distress and desperation, and a phenomenon that needs to be contained and prevented on the basis that migrants would prefer to stay in their villages. At the same time there are other drivers: notably aspiration, which motivates many people across the socioeconomic spectrum to move to another location in search of a better life.

A Closer Look

Two studies conducted by a team from the Development Management Institute supported by UNICEF in 2021 looked in more detail at the experiences and views of migrants in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar, two states from which many migrants originate. This was specifically in the context of the pandemic and surveyed only those workers who had returned to their villages as a result, but the results are still a useful collation of migrants' own views.

In both areas, around 80 per cent of those surveyed said that they had left because they did not have enough income to support their living expenses. Nearly 20 per cent of the total respondents also said that they had aspirations for a better quality of life. These two things are of course not mutually exclusive – most people who have insufficient income want a better quality of life – but it is also the case that people migrate for reasons that are not always solely economic.

As both reports point out, 'the exodus of rural workers to urban and peri-urban areas on a massive scale in India stems from a much deeper and structural crisis of migration in India'.⁶



Both studies also investigated the profile of the survey respondents in more detail. Almost all of them were aged between 14 and 35, and they were mostly either ‘marginal landowners’ or did not own any land. Over 71 per cent were supporting family members; 56 per cent (64 per cent of women and 48 per cent of men) were married. Importantly, in both groups around half said they were accompanied by their spouse and/or their family. They had access to identity documents and bank accounts, and the vast majority also had access to ration cards.

Women and Children

India’s National Sample Survey for 2007-2008 cites 27.5 million accompanied child migrants, 4.9 million independent child migrants, and 18.1 million left-behind children. Similarly, data from the Census 2011 shows that 92.9 million migrants in India in the



0 to 19 age group, roughly equally divided by gender (49 per cent boys and 51 per cent girls); and in addition, that child migration has more than doubled between 1991 and 2011. Yet the role of women, families and children in inter- and intrastate migration is largely left out of the discussions on the topic.

Migration overall is largely framed as an issue to do with male labour; this is valid – *but it is not the complete picture*. Among these migrant families there are many pregnant women and young children who are unable to access the available provisions. A 2021 report from the Centre for Policy Research and UNICEF India looking specifically at migrant children across five Indian states points out that ‘for example, Chhattisgarh found that 30–40 per cent of returning migrants were women, many of them accompanied by small children’.⁷ The same report understood from stakeholders that children find it difficult to adjust to a life of

continuous movement. Children on the move find it challenging to access centrally led welfare schemes.

In addition, many women migrants are employed in less formal sectors such as such as domestic work or associated work on construction sites, which means that their work is not documented to the same degree as that of male migrants. It also put them at additional risk during the pandemic.

Motivation and Aspiration towards Urban Migration

It is important to note that duty bearers working with migrants have pointed out that women and younger people are particularly attracted by the idea of moving to the city. While the realities of urban living may be very different from the expectation, migration potentially enables people to move beyond the impositions of caste (and, to some extent, of gender expectations) that restrict them in rural villages. It makes it possible for them to work in new areas and to live in ways that are not necessarily bound by these restrictions.

It also holds out the possibility of a different life for their children and this is very important to many families. One person working with community based organisation observed: “About 10 per cent of the migrants I interacted with (during the crisis) were ensuring a quality education for their children in the city. About half of the migrants were convinced that a city-based education would help them escape hard labour and poverty in the future.”⁸ Significantly, it is *mothers* here who are particularly ambitious for their children, with much the same hopes as many middle-class parents. Fathers were much less likely to express similar ambitions. Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of the mothers surveyed aspired for

their children to move into a 'government' job; 12 per cent for them to become a doctor; 9 per cent an 'academic'; 7 per cent to work in the police; and 5 per cent to become an engineer.⁹

The Reality of Many Children's Futures

Despite parents' stated wishes for their children's future, this is not always likely to happen. Although this volume focuses on early years, it is also worth looking briefly at what happens to migrant children over this stage. There are obvious implications for the future education of children who move out of their source state.

This is covered in greater detail in following sections. It is worth noting here that moving across states (and sometimes within states) often means moving to a place where a different language is spoken. This poses obvious problems even when children do



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access education (see below) and compounds other prejudices and assumptions about migrant and/or poor children, if they find instructions hard to follow because they do not understand what they are being asked. As a result, they are more likely to drop out.

In addition, according to multiple estimates, up to 20 million children of migrants are 'left behind'. Left-behind children fall into two categories: those who are left behind when their parents first migrate, and those who migrate with their parents and are then left behind when parents – or fathers – leave this work to move on or return to their source state. This group is also the most deprived in terms of social benefits.

Partly as a result of this economic insecurity, many children of migrant labourers will become labourers themselves, employed in industries such as brick kilns. The pandemic has exacerbated this: 69 per cent of women from migrant labourer families in UP and 89 per cent of women from Bihar reported that the pandemic had affected their children's education. In both states, under 10 per cent of parents of both sexes had bought books for their children for that academic term. The links between struggling at school and dropping out partly or completely are well-documented – and that is without the additional financial pressures which make children leave education to try to contribute to the family finances.¹⁰

Services for Migrant Families

In the Indian context, the federal structure means that social and welfare provision is a complex combination of universal and local. Given the vast size of the country, and the political, social and

economic variations between different states, this drive towards localisation is understandable and mostly appropriate.

Some aspects of social protection and welfare are provided by Central Government and are intended to offer universal coverage in particular, education and health. This includes the otherwise broad-based Public Distribution Scheme (PDS) which provides food rations wherein much progress has been achieved in creating the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) which provides access to the family based entitlements regardless of the location of the family members.

Other schemes are provided by States and are explicitly based on migrants providing, among other things, a local address. The documentation may include bank details, proof of address and/or ration cards. As a result, state schemes tend to exclude interstate migrants.

Without the appropriate official identity documents, migrant workers are unable to identify themselves and register for welfare and benefits. The pandemic has particularly highlighted this as an issue. For instance, construction workers (an industry that relies heavily on interstate migrant labour) are required to produce proof of duration of employment in order to access the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) fund.

Housing schemes may also require proof of length of stay: and in the case of slum rehabilitation/rehousing schemes may demand proof of several decades' stay in the respective city. In addition, many migrant families are based across multiple locations – especially if fathers are working in one area and mothers and children are left behind in another place. This can further complicate access to

location-based benefits, though there are attempts to make these more portable in future.

The rapid advancements in digitising information may alleviate this problem in future. In India, in particular, the biometric ID card (Aadhaar) has provided a unique opportunity for broadening inclusion for migrants and migrant families. The digitised data is already used to maintain databases on social benefits, and to facilitate cash transfers. Linking this further to trace claimants' mobility would further benefit migrants, especially circular migrants.

Perceptions of Migrant Labourer Families by States

The 2021 Centre for Policy Research and UNICEF India report on assessing the portability of social protection and services for children affected by migration identifies a sedentary bias in the way that migrant labourer families and their welfare needs are depicted, as well as the very strong division between rural and urban provision.¹¹

Migrants are usually considered to have their primary/sole address at 'source': that is, in the place – usually rural – from which they have migrated, rather than the place – often urban – where they arrived and where they now need accommodation, food and other benefits.

Source states in rural areas, while more aware of the needs of migrants and migrant families (including women and children), however, they are not necessarily fully aware of the needs of intrastate migrants; in particular and that people moving within the same state may need support to access existing schemes and benefits, even if they have previously been aware of and/or been claiming them. The assumption is that people will be able to

access these and will also have an existing social network which can support them, but this is not necessarily the case in practice. These people may in fact have travelled a long way across the state and know very few people in the new locality – and they are also very likely to have travelled from a rural area such as a village to a town or a huge urban area. It may even be the case that language is a problem. For instance, anyone migrating across Karnataka to Bangalore may find that Hindi rather than Telugu is required, because of the changing demographic in this city. Overall, the awareness of migrant-related issues can vary hugely among source states (see Box 9.1) and even in these it can be minimal.

Destination states tend to consider that their responsibilities are only the ‘universal’ entitlements such as health and education. There is relatively little consideration of labour welfare or migrant workers’ rights (and see above for access to the BOCW fund) – with NGOs and/or private employers offering such provision as is available. Migrants are also usually considered to be, once again, single/independent adult men; women, families and children are not given much additional thought or provision.

Circular Migrants and Migration Pathways

It is crucial that benefits become more portable for migrants, whether they are moving within or across state borders. Factors affecting this include the design, implementation and delivery processes, and institutional arrangements for the different schemes, who are responsible for administering them. The centre-state, rural-urban and source-destination axes all need to be considered. There is a new drive – especially post-pandemic – towards portability but there is still much to build on.

Box 9.1: State Initiatives and Approaches toward Addressing Migration Policy and Programmes among Some Source States

Odisha has a history of addressing the needs of migrants dating back over a couple of decades, and the approach has already shifted to one of facilitating safe migration, including migration registers, language interventions and seasonal hostels. The state has a Memorandum of Understanding with the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh to ensure migrants have access to social services. It is also focusing more broadly on poverty alleviation through improving access to and quality of housing and land, and it is also moving to enhance urban livelihoods.

In Chhattisgarh, the migrant crisis precipitated by the pandemic has driven a new policy response to the issue, focusing again on facilitating safe migration and working in collaboration with destination state governments and labour unions. Proposals have included a dynamic database of migrants and a labour portal which will also link to labour resource centres.

In UP, the policy is more towards containing migration, on the basis that if people are migrating in search of work, equipping them with skills and employment at source will meet their needs more effectively and spare them the other difficulties associated with migration. At the same time, the financial contribution of skilled migrants who send money home is considered beneficial to the state.¹²

The barriers remain particularly acute for interstate circular migrants because the onus is continually on them to prove their status in destination states. The documents they are required to produce for registration and/or re-registration, such as proof of residence, bank accounts and ration cards, may quite simply not be available; or the holders may not have been present in their destination state long enough to be eligible for specific provision in any case.

Finally, there is a growing acknowledgement of the role of policy in facilitating safe migration pathways, with key elements of documentation, identification, information availability and access to recourse in the case of injustice and discrimination.

Impact of Migration on Children during their Early Years

Women and children are some of the worst off among circular migrants when it comes to accessing schemes and their provision.¹³ The previous section of this chapter flagged up the barriers in accessing housing, including public housing (which usually requires both proof of identity and proof of residence). In some states, documentation and proof of minimum durations of stay are even required for accessing urban homeless shelters. While this affects everyone who attempts to access this provision, pregnant women and children are especially at risk if they cannot find housing or shelter. Migrant children are known as being more likely to be malnourished, and there are concerns that the pandemic exacerbated this gap.¹⁴

Access to Services Specifically Targeted at Pregnant Women and Early Years

India operates an Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme which is envisaged to be universal and which is specifically aimed at the early years demographic: pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and children up to the age of six. This scheme has four components: early childhood care education and development; maternal care and nutrition counselling; health services; and community mobilisation, awareness, advocacy

and information, education and communication. These offer six services: supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition and health education, immunisation, health check-up and referral services. All services are provided through Anganwadis.

A central government cash benefit scheme, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), for all first live pregnancies and while breastfeeding continues, is provided on the basis that women fulfil certain conditions including giving birth in a government hospital; registering the birth; taking the baby for antenatal checkups; and immunisation. This scheme is explicitly designed to be portable, with the guidelines referring to 'intrastate and interstate migration' and making it clear that beneficiaries should produce their Aadhaar number or similar identity documentation.

Migrant Children and Primary Education

Under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, all children in India are entitled to free education up to the age of 14. This and other legislation covering primary school education make explicit provisions for migrant children, whether left behind or moving with parents. This includes attempts to ensure that all children who have dropped out of education partially or completely can be readmitted to classes of their own age group, and given the catch-up classes that they need; mobile schools; financial assistance; examinations on demand; other courses and classes to keep children at the level they should be; and residential camps and drop-in centres. There is a new National Education

Policy which enables all children to access primary education in their mother tongue.

The provision, as outlined, is fairly comprehensive (and see earlier sections for parents' aims for their children, which certainly require education). In practice, however, it is hard to usually maintain the records of migrant children or to access specialised funding. This compounds the difficulties they may face in any case with an education system provided in a different language from the one they speak at home, particularly for interstate migrant families. The CPR and UNICEF study documented state governments' efforts to provide education in the children's mother language through additional teacher coaches and as a result of inter-state government collaboration between Governments of Telangana and Odisha. Such initiatives are welcome and must scale and replicate elsewhere to avert knock-on effects of any disruption in education.

Food and Nutrition for Pregnant Women and Early Years

The ICDS requires Anganwadi workers (AWW) to maintain monthly records of food distribution to both temporary and permanent residents. That includes recording new claimants who have migrated into the area, and deleting those who have left. AWWs are also required to provide claimants who migrate from the place (usually the village) where they made their first claim with a certificate, so that they can present this at the Anganwadi in the place they move to, with the aim of providing a seamless service. This may be improved by the new software which aims to improve the monitoring of service delivery and nutrition outcomes.

Health

Health is another area where provision is intended to be both universal and centrally directed. The National Health Mission provides healthcare coverage through government hospitals nationwide, and a number of other schemes including the ICDS are intended to provide for marginalised families, the urban poor and/or the early years cohort. However, the lived experience of migrant women and children points to barriers – many of them familiar ones. There are also further issues with the practicalities in destination states. The institutional infrastructure, which is already under extreme pressure, is often incapable of responding to the additional demands of meeting the needs of migrant workers. Both Anganwadis and primary healthcare centres are working in areas of extreme population density, and many migrant workers (especially given their difficulties with accessing quality housing) live in urban slum areas where this density is at its highest.

Strategies to Address Functional Portability

The pandemic has highlighted many of the gaps through which migrant labourers and their families fall. The early years cohort, which is under-invested in much policy and practical planning, is particularly at risk. In highlighting these gaps – as well as the areas in which provision *is* being made – it has also driven momentum for reform.

The post-pandemic examination of priorities and practicalities offers the opportunity to address needs of migrant children more effectively, while the UNICEF social protection framework also

recognizes that social protection must address the impacts on children of macro trends such as climate change, demographic shifts, urbanisation and forced displacement.

This section looks at policies, interventions and schemes across a range of different areas affecting children impacted by migration. Although they are tailored to the specific Indian context, they all have useful implications for similar strategies which could be applied elsewhere.

Policy

The role of policy in facilitating safe migration pathways and portable services is increasingly being acknowledged. A round table discussion on state-led migration initiatives for families and children organised by UNICEF in December 2022 brought together different stakeholders including representatives from six state government across India, NGOs, CSOs and researchers to discuss initiatives led primarily by state governments. A number of these focus on families overall, and some specifically on children, including those in the early years cohort.

Improving Digital Tracking and Inclusion

A robust tracking system is widely agreed to be important, not only to inform policy (because state and central government will have more realistic and accurate understanding of who is migrating, where and when) and also because this helps make it possible for migrants themselves to access services as they move across locations. The states of Odisha and Chhattisgarh have both attempted local/village-level databases and registers to document the movement

of seasonal migration and track the migration of individuals and families in real time.

Box 9.2: Tracking Migration in the Mumbai Area

The Maharashtra Tracking System (MTS), which includes the state capital Mumbai, is an online system set up in October 2022 to track seasonal migration and collect data about malnourishment. It was established in recognition that migrants are often unable to access services – or do not know that they are eligible for these services in the first place – and aims to connect them with services including school enrolment, immunisation, training opportunities, shelter, drinking water, sanitation, and ration provision.

Schemes Benefiting the Whole Family

A number of schemes and projects aim to improve the lives of families, which will also improve the experiences of children in their early years. The Governments of Gujarat and Odisha use Mother and Child Protection cards, which serve as records of immunisation and maternal health and are also, importantly, linked to tracking systems (which should make it more possible to claim ICDS benefits when pregnant women move across locations), while Gujarat also provides incentives to health schemes to include migrants.

One urban area in Gujarat (the Surat Municipal Corporation) has also taken the step of ensuring that Anganwadis are sited in areas of high population by migrant families, which ideally also make it more possible to access the ICDS. Government officials report that the corporation also issues birth certificates to migrant children born in Surat hospitals even if their parents do not have local documentation.¹⁵

Box 9.3: Inclusion Mechanisms in Kerala

Kerala is an area which receives a high number of migrant workers, including from Bihar and UP, as well as West Bengal and neighbouring areas of South India. A district-level scheme, funded by a mix of funding provided to different departments to support migrant workers, provides health screening and other health provision; inspections of living conditions; worksite inspections; and a migrant 'link worker' system to enable these different professionals and departments to work together. The medical professionals involved include a medical officer, junior health two inspectors and a lab technician; and the frontline workers are also paid.

Box 9.4: Improving the Lives of Migrant Brick Kiln Worker Families in Telangana

A pilot scheme in Telangana is working with 9,000 brick kiln workers, working closely with Anganwadis and other frontline workers to ensure that midday meals are provided during the summer; living conditions have improved; and that migrant children and families are provided with education and healthcare.

Some states have also set up their own food security schemes, targeting poor and needy workers and construction workers in particular; though this may also depend on registration with the BOCW.

Women and Children Focused Food Programmes

A number of states have set up their own specialised food security schemes to supplement the provisions of the National Food Security Act, which entitles pregnant women and children aged up to 14 to a daily nutritious meal (often provided by Anganwadis) as well as

to some cash benefits to women. For example, the Mukhyamantri Suposhan Yojana in Chhattisgarh is specifically aimed at pregnant women and young children.

In some areas, there have also been important efforts to ensure that pregnant women and children aged up to 6 have *portable* benefits. The state of Gujarat makes the Mamta card, which provides basic information and also give access to services including rations available to interstate migrants, portable by linking it to an online system which generates a unique tracking number for each applicant. Importantly, the information is also now provided in Hindi as well as Gujarati, which goes some way to overcome other difficulties.

Provision Targeted Specifically at Early Years

There are several schemes providing day-care for the children of construction workers, mostly led by community based organisations. These have been recognised as important for children who are no longer breastfed, but they are not always so suitable for infants because mothers are not able to take breaks to feed their children. If mothers are then encouraged or feel under pressure to stop breastfeeding small babies, this has knock-on consequences for their children's health and nutrition, especially if other sources of clean nutritious food are scarce or unavailable.

Provisions for Children of Different Age Groups

A range of strategies include seasonal hostels and residential schools for left-behind children; schools at worksites; better tracking of children to ensure continuity in their education; and volunteers moving with families to provide children with education while they are between

schools. All of these programmes show potential for supporting children and young people and need to be scaled up effectively.

Several states have established hostels for children aged 6 and over, who are either left behind while their parents migrate for a period or whose parents prefer to leave them if adequate provision is available. These have managed to ensure continued education and reduce the risk that children will drop out of school.

Not all parents wish to use this kind of provision, however. Other options that are being explored are kinship care programmes, under which support is given to grandparents or other close relatives in order to help them look after children whose parents have migrated.

Recommendations

These recommendations are again drawn from the Indian experience and would apply well and also have resonance for other countries. Migrants make a huge contribution for a country's economic growth and while the challenge is enormous, the positive cases exemplify the potential of collaborative and focused efforts in the right direction. The following actions are recommended to provide impetus to the ongoing efforts in furthering outcomes for families impacted by migration.

Policy

- Reframe the discussion, and the associated service provision, from one that depicts migrants as single men to a wider consideration of the entire family, and address migration as an intersectional axis of vulnerability.

- Identify a basic set of rights that all citizens must have access to, irrespective of their migrant status.
- Keep migration central to policy discourse across different states' departments, and create awareness of migrants' related vulnerabilities and lived realities, especially those of children and women.

Data and Monitoring

- Use and enhance existing data from health and welfare systems (such as the ICDS) to help build a robust understanding of circular migration.
- Review data systems to include gender- (and in India, caste-) disaggregated data on migration by incorporating appropriate variables in the management information systems.
- Build IT-enabled data systems to converge multiple scheme databases and village-level migrant registers to track circular and seasonal patterns on a broader level. Strengthen existing IT interventions (such as the ONORC) while taking care to avoid technology-related exclusions.
- Ensure that migration- and family-related questions are included in employment surveys, and release migration data from the next census.
- Build in adequate safeguards to ensure that people are not excluded if there are gaps in ITI systems, and devise offline mechanisms to connect services such as PDS shops which rely on digital access, in areas of chronically poor internet connectivity.
- Set up helplines to support new-arrived migrants with information about social protection services in the locality.

Box 9.5: Examples of Provisions for Different Migrant Child Cohorts

Providing own language teachers for migrating children

A large number of migrants leave the state of Odisha to work in Telangana and Tamil Nadu. Working in conjunction with the NGO Aide-et-Action, the state government is providing textbooks and teachers to accompany children to ensure that their education is continued in their own language. This addresses the language issue flagged up above and plays a crucial role in reducing dropout rates.

Supporting left-behind children and young people in Odisha

In Odisha, 44 hostels have been opened since 2003, supporting approximately over 2,000 migrant children. The hostels are based in localities with which children are already familiar and are staffed by one male and one female caretaker. The young residents are provided with meals, medical insurance and healthcare, and other utilities.

Trained support for kinship carers in Maharashtra

The Society for Action in Creative Education and Development (SACRED) in the Jalna area of Maharashtra set up its Kinship Care Programme in 2016, to support children aged 6 and over whose parents migrate to work in sugarcane cutting. Under this programme, AWWs were trained at the district level and then encouraged to make at least one village volunteer in each village, covering around 1,700 Anganwadis in total. The scheme reports that in 2019, around 4,000 to 5,000 children remained in kinship care across the Jalna district while their families migrated.

Child labourers in Telangana

Worksite schools are being provided for child labourers in Telangana, using teachers who have come from Odisha and teach children in the Odia and Marathi languages. This has been made possible through multi-agency work, including the cooperation of the brick kiln owners.

- Provide digital literacy programmes for front-line workers such as AWWs who are required to record the details of claimants and clients.

Functional Portability

- Establish mechanisms for interstate portability. This requires the full range of state and non-state actors – including multiple government departments at state, district and city level, front-line workers, civil society organisations and informal community leaders – to clarify the frameworks and processes that are best suited to deliver social protection to vulnerable migrant populations and early years in particular.
- Establish clarity on fiscal frameworks to ensure that each party takes full responsibility for its own area of work.
- Recognise the aspirations of migrants and facilitate safe migration from source states.
- Recognise the contribution that migrants make to the workforces and economies of destination states, and seek to actively include them in social protection schemes.
- Source and destination states should work more closely together to monitor child migration corridors and improve the effectiveness of rescue operations for children forced into labour.
- Facilitate State Governments' collaborative arrangements with NGOs, civil society organisations and employers to facilitate migrant incorporation and make potential beneficiaries aware of their entitlements.

- Explore whether it is possible for claimants to access benefits such as rations and access to shelter/housing without the need to provide identity and other documentation.
- Clarify whether entitlements, such as the ONORC, are portable across split households. If they are not at the moment, expand and enable different family members to claim wherever they are currently based.

Nutrition

- Ensure that ration cards are issued to everyone who is entitled to them, and that these cards can only be cancelled when the beneficiary dies. A ration card holder should be able to retain their ration card after migration without the need to reapply, transfer, surrender or submit additional documentation.
- Expand the ICDS programme and ensuring active enrolment of migrant women and children in rural and urban areas.

Accommodation

- States should minimise forced evictions of slum dwellers and support improvements in the quality of housing in informal settlements.
- In municipalities that see a lot of family-based migration, states must set up adequate family shelters and/or, alternatively, facilitate affordable rental housing. The new Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC), component of the *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* (PMAY) government housing programme can be used for this purpose.

Childcare and Education

- Introduce simplified portability systems that allow the children of seasonal migrants to access schooling at both source and destination. As part of this, destination and source states should work together to ensure that children are able to continue their education in their first language.
- Increase access to Anganwadis in urban and peri-urban areas, especially the areas of mass density and low-quality housing where migrants are typically located. This could potentially be supported by a referral system, which would enable migrants to know the location of Anganwadis. A monitored referral system would also help ensure that Anganwadis do register and support migrants.
- Increase the number of hostels in source districts for children aged 6 and over.
- Set up systems for onsite schools, working with NGOs, civil society organisations and employers.
- Provide childcare facilities such as crèches at construction sites and brick kilns.
- Children rescued from child labour must be reintegrated into the education system with close monitoring at local level to ensure that they do not drop out. They also need to be connected to all social protection schemes that they are eligible for.

Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women

- State governments should ensure that left-behind women from migrant households are prioritised for support, including support with accessing employment.

- Build frontline worker capacity and the infrastructure such as Anganwadis, to improve the delivery of pregnancy, antenatal care and early childhood nutrition services for migrant families.

Specialised Support for Families

- Involve municipal bodies at urban destinations in planning and programmes such as the ICDS, along with training and incentives to frontline workers for covering migrants as a priority group.
- Ensure that migrants have access to helplines and resource centres they can approach for support and at times of distress, in order to ensure that they are rescued from dangerous situations and given safe passage home, and can also obtain legal aid in situations such as abuse and wage theft.
- Make large employers more accountable for fulfilling their legal obligations towards migrants.
- Support the work of independent organisations which work with migrant labourers and their families.
- Give clear information to officials and people from migrant communities explaining that claimants will not lose the welfare and social benefits to which they are entitled when they give data for collection and recording.
- Consider providing training and incentives for covering migrants as a priority group to frontline workers such as AWWs in destination states.

Endnotes

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