



V.V. Giri National Labour Institute

Online National Workshop on Labour Migration: Issues and Way Forward

September 15, 2020

Concept Note and Registration Modalities

A rapid increase in internal labour migration flows is a distinctive feature of the contemporary labour landscape in India. This trend of accelerated internal labour migration has been deeply shaped by three coeval processes which in turn affect the pattern of labour migration: the ongoing structural transformation of the Indian economy; trend towards informalisation; and demographic transitions.

The on-going structural transformation of the Indian economy is resulting in an absolute decline in the number of workers in the primary sector and consequent movement of workers to secondary and tertiary sectors. However, in contrast to the earlier experience of advanced industrial economies and the more recent experience of the East Asian countries, the movement of workers from agriculture in India has not been to formal manufacturing but rather to low-end services, informal manufacturing and the construction sector.

A surge in informal labour and employment has been a significant feature of the labour scenario of the last two decades and has coincided with the rise in temporary, short-term and circular migrants. Major studies on migration argue that the persistence of informal labour is largely due to the continuous absorption of temporary migrants in the informal sector, which is marked by low wages, low technology and absence of social security.

One of the critical issues related to internal labour migration in India is the absence of reliable information on migration flows. Several national-level reports and studies have shown that the numbers reported in the Census and NSSO reports severely under-

enumerate the total number of migrants, especially short-term and circular migrants. It has also been pointed out that the absence of reliable and up-to-date data on migration is itself indicative of the vulnerability of migrants.

The precarious situation of India's short-term and circular migrants was clearly highlighted in recent months during the lockdown induced by COVID-19. As the crisis and the lockdown unfolded, the absence of social protection measures for these vulnerable workers was made strikingly obvious. In fact, lack of reliable data and information about these migrants acted as a major deterrent in formulating and implementing contingency measures to meet their basic subsistence needs in many parts of India.

It was underscored that the overall vulnerability of these workers, stemming from their short-term migration status, is often compounded by limitations arising from their social position. Importantly, their social mobility – which is an expected concomitant outcome of migration – is often hindered by their entrenchment in low-end informal work (resulting from their short-term migrant status).

Although internal labour migration has been an integral feature of India's development journey, paradoxically the issue has received very little attention in public policy. The existing legal architecture is mainly in the form of the Inter State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, which primarily regulates migration of labour recruited through registered contractors and those moving across state boundaries. Vast changes have taken place in the pattern of migration in the last four decades in the country and issues like lack of coordination between sending and receiving states in many instances make the position of migrants very vulnerable.

Given such a context, it is quite evident that policy measures could be further strengthened to improve the migration outcomes of the individual migrant, on the one hand, and reinforce the migration-development synergy, on the other.

It is against this background that this Online National Workshop will provide a forum to deliberate on contemporary themes and questions related to internal labour migration in India. The specific issues that will be discussed include: How effective are existing secondary sources of data in India in capturing all forms of labour migration flows? What are the recent and major trends and patterns of labour migration streams across space and over time? How do labour regulations and public employment programmes (like MGNREGA) affect the different types of migration flows? What are the major vulnerabilities encountered by the migrant workers, particularly short-term and circular migrants, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic? How far have the

measures taken by different stakeholders been effective in mitigating the insecurities of the migrant workers? How do we situate the intersection of labour migration and future of work at a time of rapid change, uncertainty and disruption?

Detailed deliberations on these and related aspects and their outcomes will be pivotal for evolving an evidence-based, coherent and comprehensive policy architecture to respond to contemporary labour migration and make it integral to the process of development.

Registration Modalities

Those who are nominated/interested for participating in this Workshop may kindly fill the following link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdNnaeRD6Q6AyVagFDYJSrL8-ZDMb84k3e-wbz_CbDyTQ_5dw/viewform

Once the registration is accepted by the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, the participants will be informed the login credentials for the Workshop.

Date and Time:

September 15, 2020: 10.30 hrs. – 16.30 hrs.

Workshop Coordinator

Dr. S.K. Sasikumar, Senior Fellow, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, NOIDA

E-mail - sasikumarsk2.vvgnli@gov.in



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Programme Schedule

- 10.30-10.40 **Welcome Address and Setting the Context**
Dr. H. Srinivas, Director General, VVGNI
- 10.40-11.00 **Inaugural Address**
Ms. Kalpana Rajsinghot, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India
- 11.00-11.30 **Keynote Address**
Prof. Ravi Srivastava, Institute for Human Development
- 11.30-12.15 **Panel Discussion - I**
 - *Shri Mihir Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary (Labour), Government of Bihar*
 - *Shri Virjesh Upadhyay, General Secretary, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)*
 - *Mr. Rahul Banerjee, Vice President & Head-Corporate Affairs, Quess Corp Ltd. All India Organisation of Employers (AIOE)*
- 12.15-13.00 **Open Discussions**
- 13.00-14.00 **Lunch**
- 14.00-14.45 **Panel Discussion - II**
 - *Dr. K. Ravi Raman, Member, State Planning Board, Kerala*
 - *Dr. Rajesh Tandon, President, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)*
 - *Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, Professor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research*
- 14.45-16.15 **Open Discussions**
- 16.15-16.30 **Summing Up and Vote of Thanks**
Dr. S.K. Sasikumar, Senior Fellow and Workshop Coordinator, VVGNI