

# Transforming India's Unorganised Workforce

## *Achievements and Potential of the e-Shram Portal*

June 2025

### Introduction

The total workforce in India, as per the Economic Survey 2023-24, is approximately 56.5 million, comprising 45% employed in agriculture, 11.4% in manufacturing, 28.9% in services, and 13.0% in construction. Over 80% of the total workforce (~44 crores) work in the unorganised sector. The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) has introduced numerous initiatives to improve the lives of unorganised workers in India. They are committed to advancing citizen welfare by leveraging extensive datasets from platforms such as E-Shram, EPFO, and ESIC.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment launched the e-Shram portal ([eshram.gov.in](https://eshram.gov.in)) to create a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) seeded to Aadhaar, providing workers with a Universal Account Number (UAN) on a self-declaration basis. As of 5th June 2025, over 30.87 crore unorganised workers have already registered on the e-Shram portal, with more than half of them being female (53.68%). The portal enables workers to access a wide range of social security and welfare initiatives launched by the government, which aim to improve their livelihoods and ensure their well-being.

### Key Achievements

- The World's Largest Worker Database:** The E-Shram portal has registered over 30.48 crore unorganised workers, **making it the world's largest database of unorganised workers, with an** average of approximately 60,000 registrations per day during the peak of the registration drive. This rapid adoption was widely recognised in international and national platforms, and is a testament to the platform's reach and trust among workers. The top five states by registration numbers—Uttar Pradesh (8.37 crore), Bihar (2.95 crore), West Bengal (2.64 crore), Madhya Pradesh (1.84 crore), and Maharashtra (1.73 crore)—showcase the portal's deep penetration across India's diverse regions.
- Integrated Social Security Access:** The "One-Stop Solution" launched in October 2024 integrates over 13 major welfare schemes—including PMSBY, PMJJBY, Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, PM-SVANidhi, and MGNREGA—into a single digital platform, simplifying access and eliminating the need to navigate multiple government portals.
- Policy Alignment and Data-Driven Governance:** Leveraging the e-Shram database has enabled unprecedented policy alignment at the national level by providing a comprehensive, Aadhaar-verified repository of over 30 crore unorganised workers, which is accessible to central ministries, state governments, and associated agencies. A few instances of how eShram can enable evidence-based policy making are:

- a. Through robust data-sharing protocols and API integrations, ministries can now verify, validate, and map worker data in real-time, allowing for targeted delivery and monitoring of welfare schemes and social security benefits.
- b. The integration of e-Shram with platforms like the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan ensures that workforce planning, skilling, and employment generation are closely aligned with national infrastructure and economic priorities<sup>1</sup>.
- c. Additionally, state-specific microsites and real-time analytic dashboards, built on the e-Shram database, empower policymakers to make data-driven decisions, identify gaps, and tailor interventions to local labour market needs. This whole-of-government approach ensures that policies remain responsive, inclusive, and effective in addressing the needs of India's vast unorganised workforce<sup>2</sup>.
- d. e-Shram is linked with the National Career Service (NCS) portal, allowing workers to search for job opportunities using their Universal Account Number (UAN). It is also integrated with the Skill India Digital portal to facilitate access to skill enhancement and apprenticeship programs<sup>3</sup>.

### Proposed interventions for strengthening systems

To further strengthen the impact and reach of the e-Shram portal, several strategic interventions and system enhancements are proposed. These measures aim to deepen welfare delivery, expand interlinkages with other government platforms, boost accessibility and inclusion, harness data for policy effectiveness, and incorporate citizen feedback for continuous improvement. Key areas of focus include:

- a. **Expanded Linkages for Holistic Support:** To maximise its impact, e-Shram should be further integrated with portals such as One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC), the Public Distribution System (PDS), Udyam (for MSMEs), ASEEM (for skilling and employment), and state-level welfare boards. Such linkages would provide unorganised workers with comprehensive support, covering food security, employment, skilling, and financial inclusion, through a single digital identity.
- b. **Data-Driven Policy and Scheme Saturation:** The integration of e-Shram data with national and state dashboards allows policymakers to identify gaps, monitor scheme uptake, and ensure saturation of welfare benefits. This data-driven approach enables better resource allocation, facilitates continuous improvement, and promotes the inclusion of previously overlooked or vulnerable groups. To further enhance data-driven policy and achieve accurate scheme saturation, e-Shram can leverage interoperability by:
  - i. **Tracking real-time analytics** can help state and central governments monitor uptake, **forecast demand**, and identify populations at risk. Meanwhile, granular data disaggregation by gender, age, occupation, and location will enable the tailoring of interventions to meet the needs of vulnerable populations. This database can also be used to track migration patterns, sectoral demand shifts, and

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2086193>

<sup>2</sup> <https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/pib2097431.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2086193>

skill gaps, thereby further informing the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

- ii. Adding **more regional languages** and embedding voice-assisted navigation using NLP models trained on regional dialects (e.g., Bhashini API) for critical workflows can significantly expand eShram's saturation.
  - iii. By carefully monitoring data analytics, the government can share select insights with private companies. By **collaborating with companies' CSR initiatives**, one can offer targeted skill development programs that help bridge the skills gap in key sectors. These collaborations provide workers with access to industry-relevant training, certifications, and direct job placement opportunities.
  - iv. **Blockchain technology** can help governments create **tamper-proof and non-leaky records** for benefit disbursements, wage payments, and training certifications.
  - v. Enhancing the **mobile app accessibility features** such as offline form submission, document upload via SMS, and voice-based grievance redressal can be effective in reaching remote, low-digital-penetration areas, ensuring that essential services and support remain within reach for all workers.
- c. **Dynamic beneficiary-scheme mapping:** Implementing dynamic scheme eligibility would help workers by automatically notifying them of the new benefits they qualify for as their profile changes. These variables can be job status, income, or skills. This transfers some of the citizens' administrative burden to a system. By delivering personalised alerts in regional languages, we can encourage more uptake of benefits for people.
- d. **Strengthening the eShram portal and BoCW LMIS with citizen insights:** Leveraging on-ground support from civil society and ground staff, detailed user interface (UI) testing can effectively enhance the usage of eShram. This would include:
- i. Gathering direct input from users across diverse demographic backgrounds to identify specific challenges, usability issues, and navigation pain points
  - ii. Engaging with partner organisations that have on-the-ground insights from construction workers and informal labourers, ensuring the feedback reflects genuine user experiences and needs
- e. **System improvement recommendations and real-time data tracking:** Based on the findings, real time tracking can offer tangible design improvements grounded in the lived experiences of workers and best practices from varied citizen-state interactions. These could include:
- i. Highlighting user interface elements that are effective and those that need enhancement
  - ii. Suggest modifications to improve accessibility, readability, and the overall user journey, making these platforms more intuitive and user-friendly for non-technical users.
- f. **Geo-Tagged Job Matching Integration:** By utilising workers' geographic and profile data, the system can recommend nearby jobs and training programs, thereby reducing

relocation barriers and enhancing job search efficiency. This targeted approach would help bridge regional skill gaps and improve workforce placement nationwide.

- g. **Inter-state interoperability:** India's unorganised workforce, which comprises of mainly migrant workers, regularly move across state boundaries in search of employment. Without seamless data sharing and coordination between states, these workers often face disruptions in accessing social security benefits, welfare schemes, and essential services when they migrate<sup>4</sup>. Interoperability ensures that a worker's registration and entitlements are portable, allowing them to receive benefits regardless of their current location, and not just in their home state. This is also critical for resource usage optimisation, enabling both central and state governments to dynamically share and update worker data, tailor benefits to local needs, and avoid exclusion or duplication of support.

## Conclusion

In every individual's life, there are key "moments that matter" which are those pivotal life events, such as birth, starting school, marriage, childbirth, illness, migration, retirement, or the death of a family member. These moments are when individuals and families are especially vulnerable, and when support can be truly transformative. By leveraging the e-Shram platform, the government can proactively identify and respond to these key junctures in the lives of unorganised workers. Integrating life-event triggers into e-Shram's data systems would enable the timely and targeted delivery of essential benefits, such as maternity or child education support, health coverage, pension entitlements, or survivor assistance.

By harnessing interoperability and advanced data integration, e-Shram not only enhances routine welfare delivery but also acts as a critical tool for shock-proofing India's social protection system. In times of crisis, such as pandemics, natural disasters, or economic shocks, the unified and real-time e-Shram database enables governments to rapidly identify, reach, and support vulnerable groups, ensuring timely interventions. This capability enables the deployment of emergency cash transfers, food security measures, or targeted health support with speed and precision, minimising exclusion and hardship among unorganised workers.

In doing so, e-Shram can help ensure that no worker is left without a safety net during life's most critical transitions, making social protection more responsive, compassionate, and effective for those who need it most.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/ie-thinc-migration-series-e-shram-social-security-linkages-7950033/>