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# Building a Safe Labour Migration Ecosystem: Reforms for Delivering Social Protection to Internal Migrant Workers in India

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SHWETA SINGHA<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*The paper examines the nature and scope of existing social protection measures, designed, to protect the internal migrant workers and mitigate dislocation, discrimination, during COVID pandemic and in future.*

*According to the Economic Survey of India 2017, interstate migration in India between 2011 and 2016 averaged close to nine million people each year. There are approximately 100 million migrants in the workforce, according to other estimates. Since many migrants come from socially and economically disadvantaged groups, they have been driven from their homes and into cities in search of work for decades. In contrast, marginal or landless farmers have inconsistent incomes, little to no access to social security or entitlements, and limited access to credit, training, or alternative sources of income. They largely find employment in the unorganized sector with no protection against workplace-related accident/injury, wage or job loss, and limited social protection. They are compelled to live in filthy, congested, and unsafe housing because their company does not supply housing and the formal rental market is inaccessible. Dense living and working conditions make internal migrant workers susceptible to contracting COVID-19. Restrictions on internal travel and the fall in domestic commercial transportation options resulting from the COVID19 has led to distress among migrant labourers. Many internal migrant workers lost jobs and were left without income, food, and accommodation; others sought to return home but have been stranded in transit due to travel restrictions.*

*The first section sets the context around importance of social protection measures for internal migrant workers in India. The second section discusses the existing social protection measures for this cohort and the third section reflects upon the status of delivery of these social protection measures. In the last section, we present the benefit delivery-related issues and suggestions to improve access to social protection benefits.*

**Keywords:** Migration, Internal migrant, COVID, Unemployment, Social Protection.

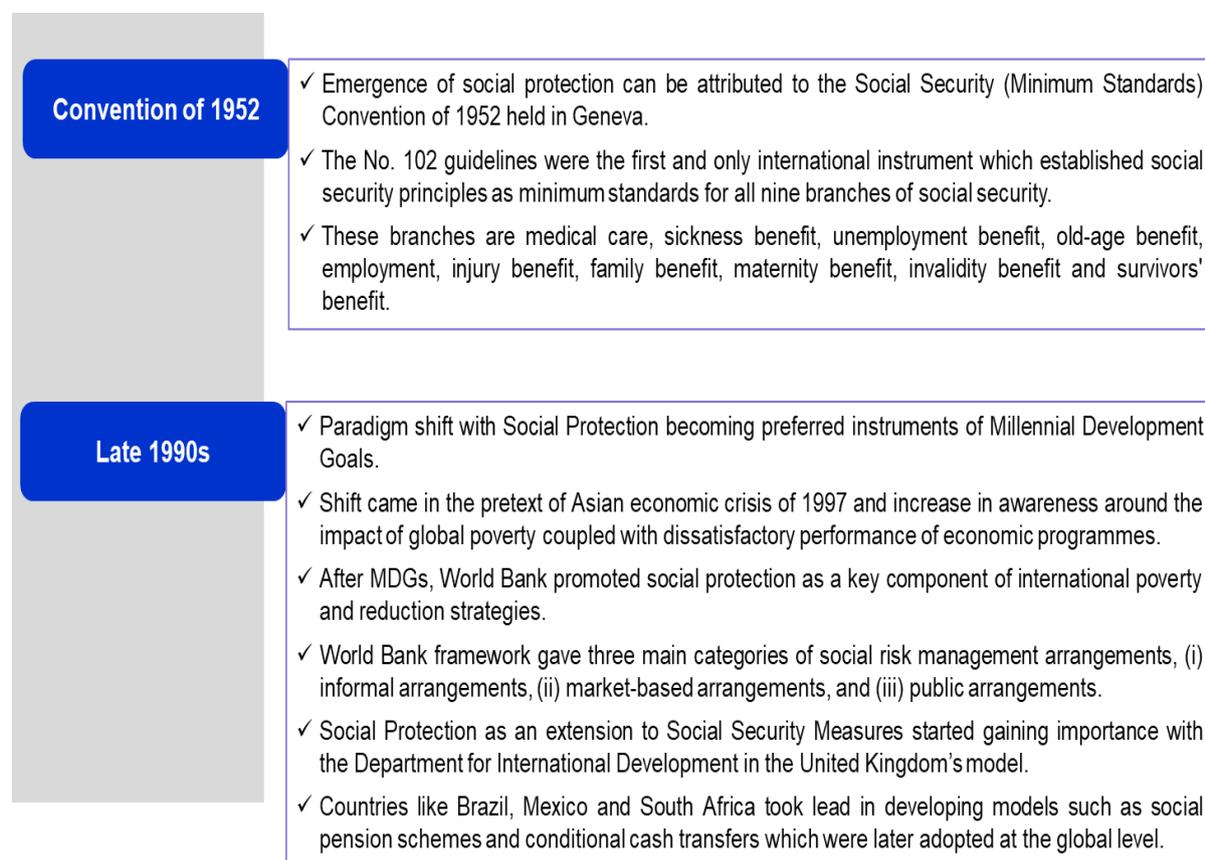
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<sup>1</sup> Author is a Ex-Consultant at KPMG, India.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social protection is recognized as a fundamental human right by various international agreements (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966) and is a key pillar for driving equitable economic growth and eradication of poverty. It acts as a safeguard to protect the right to life and dignity for all, particularly the most vulnerable sections of society, providing assistance and welfare for vulnerable children, unemployment, disability, maternity, accident, illness, old age and other risks arising out of unforeseen crisis and shocks. The Social Protection Floors Recommendation (No. 202), 2012 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) also reaffirms the social and economic need for social protection.<sup>2</sup>

### *Figure 1: Evolution of Social Protection*



ILO's latest World Social Protection 2017/19 reveals that more than half (approximately 55 per cent or 4 billion people) of the world's population still remains excluded from any social protection coverage.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, only 29 per cent of the population has adequate coverage to

<sup>2</sup>International Labour Organization, The ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), August 12, 2012, [https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/legal-advice/WCMS\\_205341/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/legal-advice/WCMS_205341/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>3</sup>International Labour Organization, The ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), August 12, 2012, [https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/legal-advice/WCMS\\_205341/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/legal-advice/WCMS_205341/lang--en/index.htm)

enjoy this fundamental right. The importance of social protection in global development is also reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, with one of the targets under Goal 1: No Poverty specifically encouraging countries to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”.

The COVID-19 crisis has not only upended the lives of many across the world but also eroded the development gains in a span of months. It has also exposed the fault lines in the social protection architecture across countries. Many people have been left vulnerable as a result of the pandemic, and those already vulnerable have been left behind entirely. Oxfam research revealed that more than a third of the global population had no access to social protection to cope with the damaging economic consequences brought about by the pandemic.<sup>4</sup> People lost their livelihoods, remittances from migrants reduced, women and children faced disproportionate burden, and those already vulnerable suffered further exclusion. On the contrary, it has also reignited conversations and reprioritized policy focus toward the important need for developing a strong social protection architecture including fair labour market policies, necessary spending on social security, strengthening institutional and delivery mechanisms, focusing on data systems and monitoring, amongst others, not only to tide over the current crisis but also to help vulnerable populations, prepare and cope with future crises, demographic changes, rising urbanization and other socio-economic and environmental transitions.

India has been implementing large scale welfare and social assistance programmes, as highlighted in *Table 1*, to forge a sustainable path toward economic development, in the form of food distribution, employment guarantee programs since many years, executing national and state level targeted programs for the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged, and has also institutionalized direct benefit transfers, opening up of bank accounts for the poor and unique identification for ensuring efficient and effective delivery of benefits.

**Table 1: Major Social Protection initiatives undertaken by Government of India**

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
Food Security	National Food Security Act:	Public Distribution System: The Targeted	Social Assistance	High	High

<sup>4</sup> Oxfam International, 2.7 billion people have had no social protection to cope with Covid-19 economic crisis, December 15, 2020, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/27-billion-people-have-had-no-social-protection-cope-covid-19-economic-crisis>

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
	<p>The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) is universal in its application to all citizens irrespective of residence covering entitlement and access to food for citizens. It provides up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population with the right to obtain 5 kg of subsidised food grains per person per month. It also focuses on special nutritional needs of</p>	<p>Public Distribution System (TPDS) is implemented in alignment with NFSA. The scheme functions through Ration Shops and the benefits can be availed in the locality of residence.</p> <p><b>Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):</b> AAY was implemented in 2000 for 10 million of the poorest of the poor families as a step-in reducing hunger among BPL population through TPDS.</p>			

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
	children and pregnant or lactating women, guaranteeing them nutritious meals or a food subsidy allowance in lieu of the same.				
<b>Health</b>	<b>Employees Health Insurance Act, 1948</b> provides a legal basis for right to health coverage in the organised sector.	<b>ICDS:</b> Integrated Child Development Scheme administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development provides health support to children below the age of six and pregnant or lactating women. Aanganwadi Workers are key facilitators of the scheme in both urban and rural areas.  <b>Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY):</b> National Health Insurance Scheme (Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana) provides health insurance for	<b>Social Assistance</b>  <b>Social Assistance</b>  <b>Social Insurance</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
		<p>Below Poverty Line families and other defined categories of unorganised workers by facilitating financial protection against catastrophic health costs and improving access to quality health care for vulnerable groups in the unorganized sector.</p> <p><b>Employees State Insurance Scheme:</b></p> <p>The scheme covers workers in factories and other establishments in the event of sickness, maternity, temporary or permanent disablement, occupational diseases or death due to employment injury, which may have a bearing on wages and earning capacity. It also extends medical benefits to workers and their immediate dependents.</p> <p><b>Pradhan Mantri Jan</b></p>	<p><b>Social Insurance</b></p>		

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
		<p><b>Arogya Yojana:</b> Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) was launched in 2018 and aims to cover 500 million persons with an annual cover of around 7000 USD per household. The benefits package under the PMJAY includes cashless treatment up to Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year on a family floater basis. The scheme allows the beneficiaries to avail free services from either public or an impanelled private hospital.</p>			
<b>Education</b>	<p><b>Right to Education:</b> Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides every child between the</p>	<p><b>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:</b> Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a CSS focusing on the universalisation of elementary education. It provides schools and teachers in habitations which lack them and strengthens</p>	<b>Social Assistance</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
	<p>ages of 6-14 the right to free education in a neighbourhood school. The Act is universal in its application to all children, irrespective of residence.</p>	<p>infrastructure in existing schools.</p>			
<b>Employment</b>	<p>According to Articles 38 and 43 of the Constitution, the State must make an effort to provide enough jobs for the populace so that they can use their labour-force potential and make a respectable livelihood. However, Right to Work is not a</p>	<p><b>The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) of 2005</b> aims to improve livelihood stability in rural regions by offering every household with adult members who volunteer for unskilled manual labour at least 100 days of guaranteed paid employment in a fiscal year.</p>	<b>Labour market programmes</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
	fundamental right in India.				
<b>Skill</b>	During the 11 <sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act was enacted that called for greater inclusion of unorganized workers to address the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups.	<b>Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana:</b> Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) implemented by National Skill Development Corporation. The goal of this scheme is to make it possible for many young people in India to enrol in training that is relevant to their industry and would improve their chances of finding employment. Under the Recognition of Prior Learning programme, individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be evaluated and certified (RPL).	<b>Labour Market Programmes</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>

Component	Legislative Framework	Associated Government Schemes	Category	Coverage	Accessibility
<b>Housing</b>		<p><b>Indira Awas Yojana:</b> This scheme, under Ministry of Rural Development, was created to address the housing requirements of the rural poor. It was launched in 1985 as a sub-scheme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and implemented as an independent scheme in 1996. The Indira Awas Yojana aims to help the rural people below the poverty-line (BPL) belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs)/Scheduled Tribes (STs), freed bonded labourers, and non-SC/ST categories, minorities in the construction of dwelling units and improvement of existing unserviceable kutch houses by providing assistance in the form of full grants.</p>	<b>Social Assistance</b>		

However, the pandemic has exposed the fault lines in terms of access, coverage, convergence,

and portability of benefits including but not limited to the absence of a universal social protection coverage, weak monitoring and impact assessment of the numerous schemes, absence of data for targeting beneficiaries, and inefficiencies in delivery of benefits.

## **II. NEED FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR MIGRANT WORKERS**

Populations, households and individuals face various risks such as natural disaster, civil conflicts, economic crisis, unemployment, illness, accident, disability, death, and old age, which need to be mitigated in order to reduce their vulnerability and help them cope with the after effects. Sometimes development interventions may themselves create new vulnerability and risks through unintended effects such as inflation, temporary unemployment, loss of common property, displacement<sup>5</sup>.

According to the Census of India 2001, 309 million people, or close to 30% of the entire population, are affected by internal migration in India. This figure is indeed staggering when compared with estimates of Indian emigrants, i.e. 11.4 million. Internal migrant workers, of which 70.7 percent are women, are excluded from the economic, cultural, social and political lives of society and are often treated as second-class citizens. Migrant workers are subject to a

### **Vulnerability to crises and disasters (COVID)**

- ❖ Millions of migrant workers were asked by their house owners to immediately vacate the rented premises or worksites where they lived.
- ❖ Tens of thousands of others realized that they could not survive the lockdown at the destination region, being unable to manage the consumption expenditure without income from work.
- ❖ Lacking access to transportation, the desperate migrant workers and their families—including women and children—had no alternative but to walk hundreds of kilometres back to their homes while carrying all of their possessions.
- ❖ The option to collect unpaid wages was denied to many of the workers who went home, and they also lacked funds to cover travel costs.
- ❖ For individuals who were stuck, access to WASH facilities and medical care was also restricted.
- ❖ Many of those who managed to reach their villages were not allowed to enter. They faced discrimination and stigma for fear of being carriers of the infection.

variety of restrictions, including a lack of official residency rights, a lack of identity documentation, a lack of political representation, low pay, unstable employment, or hazardous

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<sup>5</sup> Asian Development Bank, Social Protection - Asian Development Bank, July 2003, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/32100/social-protection.pdf>

work; restricted access to state-provided services such as health and education; and discrimination on the basis of race, religion, class, or gender. In the absence of registration or with a lack of data, it is often difficult to reach migrant workers for relief, as is evidenced by the relief challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, absence of social protection, emerged as a critical factor in shaping the experiences, vulnerabilities, and disadvantages migrant workers across destinations.



### III. EXISTING SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

Social protection in India exists mostly in form of fragmented schemes and not as an integrated system. The Government of India runs various social security programmes for the vulnerable groups such as women, children, senior citizens, victims of substance abuse, unemployed in the direction of health, nutrition, education, skilling, employment and social insurance. However, India is reported to have been spending less than 2% of its GDP on the social security measures. There are three major acts that are relevant to India's migrant workers' population, as highlighted in *Table 2*.

*Table 2: Legislations and policies for Inter-state Migrant Workers*

Social protection Acts	What does it offer?
<p>Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all the establishments employing five or more migrant workmen from other states as well as the contractors who employ inter-state workers.</li> <li>• Registration of the inter-state migrant worker in both source and destination states within 15 days of recruitment</li> <li>• Provides security to the migrant workers with regards to minimum wages, displacement allowance, journey allowance, suitable conditions of work; suitable residential accommodation during the period of their employment; prescribed medical facilities free of charge and protective clothing.</li> </ul>
<p>The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction workers are required to register with the state level Construction Welfare Boards.</li> <li>• These Boards are responsible for providing social security benefits to the registered construction workers.</li> <li>• Provides medical assistance and accident cover, pension, loans for construction of house, financial assistance for the education of children of beneficiaries, maternity benefits, assistance to family members in case of death (by accident, at worksite or even in case of natural death), funeral assistance, and in some states, marriage assistance for children of workers.</li> </ul>
<p>Unorganized Workers Social Security Act (2008).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the welfare and social security of unorganized workers</li> <li>• State governments' registration of informal workers</li> <li>• Provide benefits of welfare schemes</li> <li>• Provides basic social security schemes of the Central Government such as life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits, and old age protection.</li> </ul>

The current Social Protection frameworks provides various access and benefits to internal migrant workers with regards to food security, education, health, employment. Some of the major initiatives taken by Government of India are provided in the table below. **Table 3: Central Schemes: Social Protection Schemes for Inter-state Migrant Workers**

Social Protection Schemes	What does it offer?
Social assistance	
Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Yojana. The existing Sub Centres and Primary Health Centres are transformed as HWCs	Maternal and child health services and non-communicable diseases, including free essential drugs and diagnostic services
National Food Security Act Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India	Eligible beneficiaries, mainly migrant labourers and daily wagers, will be able to avail their entitled food grains under the National Food Security Act from any Fair Price Shop) at the subsidized using the same ration card, after a biometric/Aadhar authentication on the earlier mentioned electronic PoS machines.
PM Ujjwala Scheme	Free gas cylinders for cooking for Women in the eligible age group in BPL households
Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana	Housing scheme
ICDS, Ministry of Women and Child Development & NHM, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Nutritional support and healthcare to pregnant and lactating women, children under six and adolescent girls. Anganwadi workers at the Anganwadi centres provide health services
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY Ministry of Women & Child Development	Women taking antenatal care pregnant women and lactating mothers receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 i; early registration of pregnancy, antenatal check-up and registration of the birth of the child
National Crèche Scheme,	Day care facilities to Eligible Children of Working

Social Protection Schemes	What does it offer?
Ministry of Women & Child Development	Mothers
National Social Assistance Programme, Ministry of Rural Development	Consists of Old Age Pension Scheme, Widow Pension Scheme, Disability Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Programme and the Annapurna Scheme
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) & RTE 2009 Ministry of Human Resource Development	Educate migrant children; Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and the Scheme for Alternative & Innovative Education
<b>Social insurance</b>	
Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Yojana also known as Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PM JAY) ; National Health Authority, Government of India	Health insurance scheme. Free treatment in empanelled private hospitals for the eligible people.
Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana ( PM-JDY), National Mission , Government of India	Provide access to financial services: Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension.
Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana (PMGKBY), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	Free food grains, cash transfers during the COVID – 19 for poor
<b>Labour market interventions</b>	
Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM- SYM) Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India.	Poor labourers get a minimum assured pension of Rs 3,000 per month. Workers contribute to this pension monthly, and on the death of a recipient, their spouse receive 50% of the pension
BOCW Act Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India	Provide safety, health and welfare measures to registered construction workers

Social Protection Schemes	What does it offer?
MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005) Ministry Of Rural Development	MGNREGA provides work under the employment guarantee scheme to local labourers (In exceptional cases, ISMW gets job cards either in home State or host State)

**States with migrant friendly policies:** The internal migrant workers travel from poorer states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Assam to more developed states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu to work in the industrial hubs of these states.<sup>6</sup> However, amongst the destination states, only Kerala have been most successful in integrating migrant workers. On the other hand, states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat have done poorly on the Interstate Migrant Policy Index (IMPEX)<sup>7</sup>, 2019, as highlighted in

**Table 4.**

**Table 4: IMPEX score of states with high migration**

State	Interstate Migration Census (2011a)	IMPEX Score: Overall (out of 100)	IMPEX Score: Social Benefits (out of 100)
Kerala	0.6 million	63	54
Maharashtra	9 million	44	50
Gujarat	3.9 million	35	22

Source: India Migration Now

Analysis of social protection measures for internal migrant workers in states with high migration has been provided in

<sup>6</sup> Anoop Khanna, Journal of Health Management, Impact of Migration of Labour Force Due to Global COVID-19 Pandemic with Reference to India June, 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0972063420935542>

<sup>7</sup> Interstate Migrant Policy Index : This index was developed by India Migration Now that measures whether a state has equitable policies for residents and migrants in terms of labour policies, child welfare, housing, social welfare, education, health, sanitation and political participation. IMPEX 2019 uses various social, economic and political indicators to calibrate the ease and opportunities for internal migrants to participate in destination states.

**Table 5: Social protection measures in states with high migration**

Kerala	Maharashtra
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Of the four destination states, Kerala has the fewest immigrants</li> <li>– Only Indian state to have introduced provisions to recognize and protect the needs of migrant workers</li> <li>– Refer to migrant workers as ‘guest workers’ in order to reduce social stigma</li> <li>– Conducted a migration census of its own to calculate the number of workers entering or departing Kerala</li> <li>– High IMPEX score reflects the introduction of welfare schemes for migrant workers coming into Kerala such as the Migrant Workers Welfare Scheme of 2011</li> <li>– <i>Due to the difficult enrollment procedures and the qualifying requirements of a maximum monthly income of Rupees 7,500, which is low relative to what migrant workers normally earn, accessibility continues to be a problem</i></li> <li>– State’s child education policy, Project Roshni, recognizes the special needs of migrant children in terms of care, education, and protection</li> <li>– Provides social security, labour protection and welfare through</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Maharashtra has the greatest rate of migration between states</li> <li>– Yet the IMPEX scores suggest that its policies pay only moderate attention to migrant workers</li> <li>– The Domestic Workers Welfare Board under Department of Labour, Maharashtra (established in 2008), has launched a number of social protection programmes, including insurance and financial aid for education</li> <li>– However, <i>migrant workers face domiciliary barriers in accessing these schemes, as seen during the lockdown</i></li> <li>– As the lockdown was partially lifted, the Maharashtra government simultaneously exempted industries from certain central labour laws including the provision under the Factories Act, 1948 limiting working hours (Ram 2020)</li> </ul>

Kerala	Maharashtra
“Aawaz health and accident insurance programme” for migrant workers	

Other states such as Goa, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh has favourable policies for migrant workers and leads the IMPEX scoreboard, after Kerala. Rajasthan does not have restrictions based on domicile certificate--granted to those born or resident for 10 years in the state or women married to Rajasthani men--for state employment. The state has favorable educational policies for all children, irrespective of their migrant status. All children in Rajasthan (whether residents or migrants) have access to elementary education, according to the Rajasthan Right to Education Rules 2011. In addition, regardless of residency status, local authorities are required to keep a record of every student. It also requires the local authorities to record details of children requiring special/residential facilities on account of migration.

With a respectable IMPEX score of 49, Andhra Pradesh serves as an example of how bilateral agreements between states can advance integration. The governments of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha signed a deal in July 2012 to develop a long-term system for integrating migrants from Odisha in Andhra Pradesh. This effort included child migrants, for whom education would be provided in their native language by engaging Odia teachers to teach using Odia language textbooks.

### Status of delivery of social protection measures

The table ( <i>Table 6</i> ) below lists major databases used for social protection schemes in India along with their criteria, links to bank accounts, and local delivery nodes: Database	Beneficiaries reached as per PMGKY implementation update in September 2020 (one time or per-month) (in crores)	Criteria	Entitlement in usual times	Entitlement during COVID-19	Is a bank account linked to the registration?	Is there localised delivery ?
NREGA	~195 cr person days since April 2020 or ~39 cr person	Rural households having adult members desirous		Conditional cash transfer	Yes	No

	days month	a of seeking unskilled wage employ- ment				
NFSA/ TPDS	~75 cr individual ~22 cr hh as per annavitaran	<a href="#">BPL[1]</a>	Ration	Ration	No	Yes
Women PMJDY account holders	~20.6 cr (individual of most likely distinct households as per the criterion of PMJDY )	The househol d should not have any bank account in the name of any of its members prior to it	Financial inclusion	Cash transfer	Yes	No
_PMUY/ Ujjwala	~4.25 cr (cylinders)	BPL	Conditional cash transfer	Conditional cash transfer	Yes	No
NSAP/ Social assistance	~ 2.81 cr (individual)	BPL	Pension payments	Augmented and advanced pension payments	Yes	No
BOCW	~ 1.82 cr (individuals )	Construc tion workers	Several	Cash transfers, Ration	Yes	No

ICDS	---	Place based identification of pregnant and lactating mothers and children under 5 years seeking support for delivery and nutritional supplements, a proxy for vulnerability.	Food and nutritional supplements	Food and nutritional supplements	No	Yes
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**Source:** *Gautam Bhan, Antara Rai Chowdhury, Neha Margosa, Kinjal Sampat, Nidhi Sohane, IIHS, Lessons for Social Protection from the COVID-19 Lockdown, 2020, <https://ihs.co.in/knowledge-gateway/lessons-for-social-protection-from-the-covid-19-lockdowns/>*

No database architecture exists that approaches social protection from the individual or the household, integrating their needs across food, wage, rent and health care. Instead, each type of entitlement has its own database, delivery system, and institutional architecture. This means that, in the normal course of social protection, there is no layering.<sup>8</sup> As shown in the table above, the beneficiary identification and database for the largest food and social security program in India, TPDS, is not linked to bank accounts or to any other scheme for cash transfer. Thus, at a time when food and cash relief were both equally important to protect vulnerable populations

<sup>8</sup> Barca, V., Archibald, E., Beazley, R., & Little, S., COVID 19 Response Portal, Preparing for Future Shocks: Priority Actions for Social Protection Practitioners in the Wake of COVID-19 (SPACE - Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19: Expert Advice),2020, <https://covid19.alnap.org/help-library/space-preparing-for-future-shocks-priority-actions-for-social-protection-practitioners>

from multidimensional vulnerabilities, there was no basis to create a layering of food and cash entitlements to the same database. The absence of any basis for layering here exposed the vulnerable populations to other risks despite registering themselves and being the beneficiary to one of the many databases for social protection. As of September, 22 crore households received ration entitlements while only 20.6 crore households (via as many women's Jan-Dhan accounts, assuming each one is unique to a household given the scheme guidelines) received cash transfers.

In the lack of a reliable database, it was up to the state governments to implement food and cash delivery in order to reach the greatest number of beneficiaries as effectively as possible using social security infrastructure and already-existing databases. For example: Tamil Nadu delivered cash transfers of Rs 1000 through identification of 'rice only' ration cards, while Uttar Pradesh designed to deliver ration for a month to those without ration cards through identification in cash transfer registers of informal workers such as the list of construction workers with the welfare board and NREGA enrolment list. By using the delivery channel of food entitlement for cash transfer and the database of cash transfer entitlement for food relief, the respective state governments crafted a sure way for the same household to receive both, irrespective of the position of a beneficiary in all the appropriate databases.

**Table 7: Strategies for strengthening delivery mechanism of social benefits to internal migrant workers in India**

Policy-level challenges	Solution	Approach	Good practice
Absence of migrant workforce data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Source and destination states need to maintain a dynamic database of interstate migrant workers</li> <li>– Interministerial coordination to provide social protection benefits to migrant workers</li> <li>– Develop a National Migrant Information system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Migration app should be developed to collect accurate migrant information</li> <li>– The indicators for collecting the migrant data are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Basic socio-economic profile</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– MigApp, International Organization for Migration- Migrant data collection app</li> <li>– Migrant database developed by Aajeevika Bureau in Rajasthan.</li> <li>– Migrant database developed by Labornet in Bangalore</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Skill-mapping</li> <li>✓ Migration patterns of migrants- Source and destination states</li> <li>✓ Work profile</li> <li>✓ Daily income</li> <li>✓ Availability of proof of identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– States should engage Migrant Resource Centres in developing the state database for migrant workers using the migration app</li> <li>– A Migrant Resource Centre should be set up in the Centre to develop the National Migrant Database. This centre will be assigned the responsibility of overall monitoring of the database</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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Lack of inter-state portability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enabling portability of various entitlements</li> </ul> <p>related to food supplies, health, early childcare</p> <p>and education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universal delivery by Place-based supply points, distribution centres. Delivery nodes leveraged for delivery</li> <li>- One stop delivery platform should be set up in high migration prone areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disha organisation helped seasonal migrant workers in Nashik get temporary PDS cards for a period of 4 months (extendable to 12 months) with relaxed documentary requirements. A migrant must cancel his card upon leaving in accordance with established procedure so that his or her PDS at the origin can be renewed</li> <li>- Apna Seva Kendras are centres set up in high migration prone areas. They are counselled on the schemes they are eligible for, and are provided support in the documentation process until they receive access to the benefits. This is currently functional in Odisha, Rajasthan and UP</li> </ul>
Lack of knowledge about entitlements and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employers need to be accountable to sign up employees for social insurance. Non-compliance should be penalized by the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual compliance checks with employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Shramshakti” Digital Data Solution for Migrant Workers-Training manual for tribal migrant workers (ShramSaathi) which talks about safe migration,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increasing awareness of interstate migrants could be accomplished more successfully through community outreach workers and educational initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dissemination of information through training manual which will provide the following information:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Available social protection schemes</li> <li>✓ Supporting documents required</li> <li>✓ Steps to register for various identity cards</li> <li>✓ Renewal process of registration cards such as BoCW cards</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>available programmes and schemes, do's and don'ts, resources they can leverage</p>
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#### IV. CONCLUSION

A new set of transformative and sustainable strategies need to be formulated for strengthening delivery mechanisms and paving the way for sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development. Technology enabled delivery mechanisms and data systems need to be implemented for ensuring the delivery of benefits to the intended beneficiaries. Camps must be organized, citizen information and consent for data sharing must be sought, program users need to be informed and counselled, bank accounts and identification proofs need to be produced; all these tasks require various agencies to coordinate at the local level. Private businesses and governmental IT cadres have emerged in a number of states to support the routine parts of this task, such as data input, system development, and digitization. The role of private players in supporting last-mile delivery needs to be recognized and leveraged for to truly unlock the potential of collaboration in enhancing social well-being. Finally, a risk-responsive social protection strategy needs to be formulated to ensure better planning as well as enabling the population to

become more resilient to future crises.

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