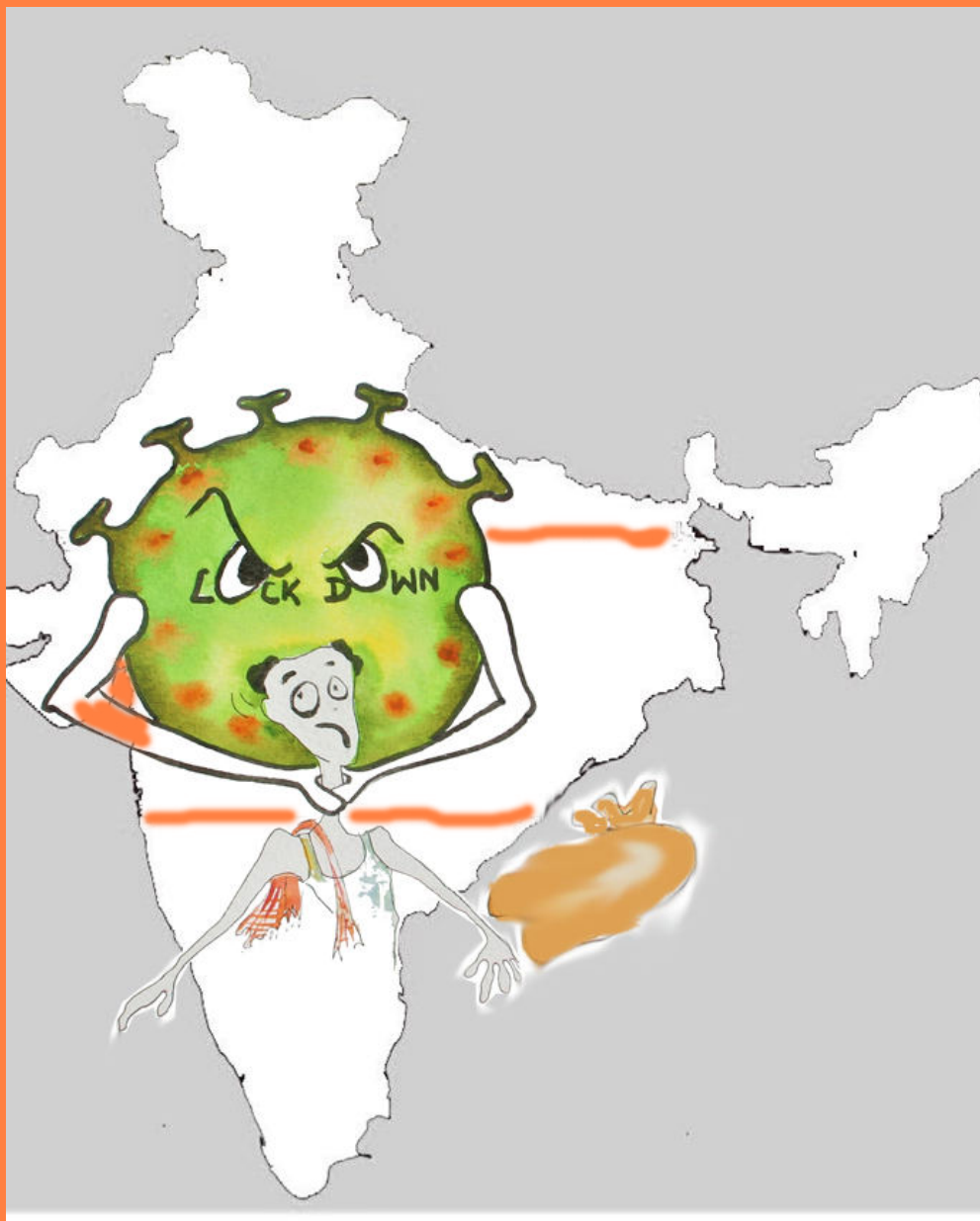


SURVIVAL OF MIGRANTS IN A CRISIS

*Distress of Migrants left behind during
COVID-19 Lockdown in Pune*



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PREFACE

The COVID-19 pandemic created havoc resulting in a nationwide 21-days lockdown announced on March 24th, 2020. The lockdown was later extended three times till May 31. The lockdown stirred the worlds of migrants across the nation and uprooted migrant families in the unorganized sector in India due to unemployment, hunger, and starvation. The crisis among migrant labourers and their families who tried to flee by all available means has predominantly been in the spotlight, but the migrants who were left behind in the cities were ignored by the news media. The resident migrants also faced similar levels of unemployment, physical, financial, and psychological distress.

The following report systematically uncovers the multiple dimensions of distress among the short and long term migrant workers in Pune during the lockdown period. The report is founded on a primary survey of migrant workers conducted between May and July 2020, an in-depth analysis of secondary data from Census 2011, and carefully selected articles published in news media, journals, and reports on migrant crisis. The report entails an analysis of the profile of intra- and inter-state migrants to Pune; wherein the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on the livelihood of short and long term resident migrants of Pune was assessed. The report also provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis of distress indicators such as lack of savings, expenditure cutbacks, access to ration, food aid, and accommodation. Further a fine-grained qualitative analysis of the psychological distress such as feelings of anxiety, stress, and worthlessness during the lockdown period further adds value in assessing the impact on migrant workers.

The report presents various dimensions of inadequacy of government response and relief measures during the migrant crisis. This analysis highlights the challenges migrants faced due to lack of identity and recognition as de jure residents of the city, battling with access to government welfare schemes and services such as PDS, LPG, and public housing. The report concludes with some pertinent recommendations on addressing the gaps proposing a scheme for guaranteeing livelihood for the urban poor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to FLAME University, Pune for the financial support they extended throughout the project. We also thank the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at FLAME University for their valuable feedback on the questionnaire and the approval to conduct this study. We especially thank Mr. Sagar Pagare, (Research Assistant, FLAME University) for his contribution including painstaking efforts in conducting the phone interviews and his support during the literature review. The authors are thankful to Ms. Prachi Agarwal (UG3, FLAME University), Ms. Prachi Nawathe (Clinical Psychologist, Goa) for her inputs on migrant crisis in Goa and conducting the pilot phone interviews, Ms. Shubhangi Deshpande (Ex-President & EC member, Nari Samata Manch, Pune) for conducting in-person interviews. Ms. Deshpande along with Dr. Suparna Tambe (Asst. Prof. of Chemistry) provided their valuable support in translating the newspaper article based on preliminary findings from the survey published in local Marathi newspaper Maharashtra Times in June 2020.

We personally thank Mr. Amar Pol of Bal Shikshan Manch, (Pune), Mr. Rajendra Bahalkar of The National Alliance of People's Movement (NAPM Pune), Mr. Anand Rithe (Corporator, Dattawadi, Sinhagad Road Pune), and Mrs. Sanjana Kamble (Housemaid Pune) for providing the contacts for migrant workers in Pune. The authors highly appreciate their support which made this study possible. Finally, the authors would like to thank Ms. Spoorthy Murali for the expressive illustrations which clearly depict the distressed situations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARHC	Affordable Rental Housing Complexes
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (US)
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease - 2019
EPF	Employees' Provident Fund
EPFO	Employees' Provident Fund Organization
EWS	Economically Weaker Sections
FLAME	Foundation of Liberal Arts and Management Education
IRB	Institutional Review Board
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MSME	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
NAPM	National Alliance of People's Movement
NFSA	National Food Security Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PDS	Public Distribution System
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PI	Principal Investigator
PMAY	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
PMC	Pune Municipal Corporation
PMGKY	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana
PPF	Public Provident Fund
PTI	Press Trust of India
RA	Research Assistant
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SWAN	Stranded Workers Action Network
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
UTS	Unreserved Ticketing System

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The sudden nationwide complete lockdown announced on March 24 2020, and its three extensions had a devastating effect on the livelihoods of millions of migrant workers in the informal sector in India. The migrants experienced severe distress due to loss of employment, lack of disposable income, lack of social security, and the resulting food insecurity, hunger, anxiety, and depression. The government response to the crisis was largely inadequate to address this distress. While the media highlighted the distress of migrant workers trying to reach back home by foot, cycle, trucks, and the Sharmik trains; the crisis of those left behind in cities was largely unnoticed and underrepresented. Some of the reports published on distressed migrant workers focused on the national and/or state level; whereas adequate documentation of a city-specific study is not to be found. Pune was considered as a hot-spot for COVID-19 infections and this led to a strict lockdown in the Pune district. Also, the literature review conducted for this study shows a paucity of reliable and scientifically conducted studies on the impact of lockdown in Maharashtra and specifically in Pune, therefore providing a strong rationale for focusing on Pune.

Migrant Profile of Pune

Analysis of the Census 2011 data show the following. Nearly two-thirds of the Pune district's population (60.94 lakh out of 94.3 lakh) are migrants, out of which about 12 lakh people have moved to the Pune district for employment. More than 85% (51.6 lakh) of the migrants are from Maharashtra, the remaining 8.93 lakh are out of state migrants (15%) to the district. 48% are long term migrants, having moved to Pune more than 10 years back. Men primarily move for work, women moved for marriage. 20. The largest pool of Interstate migrants to Pune come from Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh (undivided), and Bihar.

Our primary survey had 234 respondents of whom 73% are male and 27% female migrants. All women respondents were married, whereas among men 63% were married. Close to 60%, either had no schooling or studied to Primary level. About 47% were of the respondents migrated less than 5 years ago and 41% were long term migrants. Only 4.6% of short term residents had self-owned house in the city, where as 60% of long term migrants (10 plus years) lived in self/family owned housing.

The majority of the migrants surveyed were from Maharashtra (43.8%). Maharashtra migrants are also largely long term migrants (72%) and most of them (60.8%) own a house. Among the Interstate migrants, Uttar Pradesh (22.3%), West Bengal (11.2%) and Chhattisgarh (8.5%) dominated the list. The survey could not capture migrants from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, as most of them had returned to their hometowns before the survey had begun. Ownership of houses is very unlikely in Interstate migrants. Apart from UP (5.8%), none of the other state migrants owns a house. Almost 1/4th of the respondents were involved in construction work, while the majority of the women were housemaids. Other main occupations were Security Guard, Carpenter, and Housekeeper.

Almost 98% had an Aadhaar Card, but the address on most of them was different from their current residence. About half of our total respondents did not have a ration card, the percentage was higher for Interstate migrants. Even those who had ration card, they expressed difficulties in accessing rations. About 41% did not have a smartphone, the number shoots up to 67% for women. Two-third of the respondents did not have a Jan Dhan account, and 93% of them did not have an EPF account.

Method of Study

This report is based on a primary survey of 234 migrant workers in Pune city conducted from 16th May to 10th July 2020 in different localities through phone and in-person interviews.

The report follows a mixed-methods approach allowing specific distress indicators to be analyzed in-depth. Most distress indicators were analyzed quantitatively to understand the real picture of the availability of meaningful resources to long-term migrant workers. Qualitative analysis was suitable for a layered understanding of the distress indicators allowing respondents to freely express their feelings and opinions.

The report highlights social-economic distress characterized by the loss of livelihood, access to health care, hunger, and food security issues, and the associated psychological distress such as anxiety, stress, feeling of worthlessness expressed by the migrant workers during the lockdown.

Key results

Loss of employment

The report successfully uncovers many aspects of the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on occupation and livelihood on long term resident migrants of Pune. The analysis involving mixed methods evidently shows a severe impact of employment losses on the selected sample of migrants in Pune, in casual workers, and self-employed workers. **The report indicated that almost 82% of migrants in Pune experienced joblessness as a result of the lockdown enforced by the government.** The qualitative analysis in this regard affirms the fact that this unforeseeable situation led to feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety when the lockdowns were further extended.

Lack of savings and food security

With regard to lack of savings, the quantitative analysis revealed that **almost 70% (150) of the respondents did not have any savings during the lockdown, and a worryingly low 10% of the migrants had enough savings lasting for 2 months.** Lack of savings and job loss forced them to cut back expenditures to make ends meet. About 25% of the respondents had to cut back on all expenditures, and more than 40% had to cut down on vegetable consumption. **Qualitative data confirms this result showing 87.18% (204 out of 234) admitted cutting down on food expenditures; raising serious concern about food security during the lockdown.**

Due to the above-mentioned facts, the migrants were no longer able to independently avail groceries and food due to expenditure cutbacks, lack of savings and had to resort to government authorities or private organizations for food, groceries and other daily supplies. **The study showed that 66.5% of migrants did not receive any kind of food aid** and the ones who received it, complained that the distribution was sporadic, unpredictable, inadequate for the family raising serious concerns about nutrition security. 33.5% of migrants did not receive any food from the local authorities. This food security issue was further aggravated by the hurdles caused by the use of ration cards.

The mixed methods uncovered a diverse list of reasons for the long-term migrants not being able to use their ration cards to avail groceries at ration stores. **About 67.5% of migrants our respondents either did not have or used the ration cards in the current place of residence. Those who were using ration cards still faced hurdles such as no stamp on card, ration not enough for family, ration was not regularly available.**

The qualitative data corroborated with this fact confirming that ration card hurdles increased their anxiety and stress.

Housing insecurity

The issue of accommodation is seen as central while assessing the negative impact of lockdown as the majority of the sample for the study were short-term migrants meaning residing in Pune for less than 5 years. The quantitative data revealed that only 28% of migrants, most of whom were intra-state migrants, lived in owned accommodation. The rest lived in either rented places, with family or friends or at their workplace. Considering the financial insecurity experienced by the migrants, it was worth analysing whether they availed the rental waiver facility as announced by the government. The migrants repeatedly highlighted their distress related to paying rent in spite of job loss and lack of savings. The results showed that in the months of May and June **only 1.63% of the landlords had waived the rent, many of them (67.4%) had deferred the payment of rent and about 12% of migrants could not pay the rent at all due to lack of savings.**

Psychological distress indicators

To understand the impact of lockdown four specific psychological indicators were chosen. A 'word analysis' (applied thematic analysis) was carried out to analyse qualitative responses. A table of the most frequently used words was created to get the following results.

- **Perception of lockdown:** Only 15% migrants accepted the lockdown extension as they received support from local authorities. **On the other hand, 36% expressed a feeling of insecurity after knowing about the extension.** Furthermore, 35% expressed feelings of fear and anxiety when they heard about the extension.
- **Anxiety: 74% of migrants were anxious about the lockdown and how it was affecting their daily lives.** The top anxiety-causing factor was job loss with 39% migrants experiencing anxiety, and 14% mentioned anxiety about financial stability and income as well as anxiety about the availability of food. Around 13% of migrants were anxious about their family's well-being in their hometowns.
- **Stress: 41% mentioned that they experienced disturbed sleep due to the stressful situation** and 6% experienced a loss of appetite due to increased stress levels.

- **Worthlessness: 44% of migrants never experienced the feeling of worthlessness, probably because they did not attach their self-worth with experiencing hardships related to the lockdown.** Nevertheless, 23% did experience that no one values them, 19% experienced the feeling of worthlessness sometimes and 10% migrants rarely experienced not being valued.

Efficacy of government aid

Efficacy of government aid during lockdown was ascertained using indicators such as access to money remittance, PDS, Jan Dhan account transfers, and other government support. Considering the struggle the migrant workers had to face, it would be worth assessing the efficacy of government aid provided during the lockdown. The facility of Jan Dhan accounts was assessed, which the government announced as a part of PMGKY, wherein a transfer of Rs. 500 to every Jan Dhan account holder was promised. Inferentially, it found that **about 67% (2/3rd) of the respondents did not have a Jan Dhan account.** 72% of them had this account and reported that they did not receive the government transfer, supporting the evidence of laggard government response in cash transfer.

As most of the sample in the study consisted of short-term migrants, money remittance holds significant importance, as their families depend on this money. This aspect was deeply analysed and the results revealed that **prior to lockdown 60-70% of semi-permanent migrants (migrated less than 10 years) remitted money to their families in their hometowns,** as compared to only 25.5% of longterm (more than 10 years) migrants. **During the lockdown, only 6.4% of the respondents sent money back home (who moved less than 5 years back),** the number is slightly higher at 15.38% for those with a duration of migration between 5-10 years. Remitting money has never been so difficult for them before the lockdown.

Some specific recommendations for averting a future migrant crisis

- Recognition of migrants as de jure residents of the city
- Devolution of power and fiscal transfer to local bodies to manage pandemics, address food security, and providing aid to informal workers
- Food Security for the migrants- Addressing Exclusion of Migrants under PDS
- Social Security and Safety net for the poor
- Direct Cash Transfer informal sector migrants during the crisis
- NGOs and Volunteer groups as partners and last-mile implementers
- Addressing Psychological Distress through Psychological First-aid (PFA), Mental health Initiative, Tele counselling/helpline for migrant workers

INTRODUCTION

The Novel Coronavirus outbreak was declared by the WHO on 30th January 2020 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, when China reported about 7,700 cases and India reported its first case on the same day in Kerala. The COVID-19 pandemic has infected more than 70 million people and claimed the lives of 1.6 million as of December 2020 (WHO, 2020), causing severe disruptions to the global economy, intra-national and transnational mobility and livelihoods across the world. Global supply chains have been disrupted, tourism devastated and the hospitality sector is in a crisis with “lockdown” and “social distancing” becoming part of everyday discourse. The system-shutting impacts of the containment policies adopted worldwide to slow the pandemic have also had profound implications for food security, right to livelihood, labour rights, access to health, education, and women’s empowerment.

As the epidemic turned into a pandemic across the world, Indian states closed schools and colleges, movie theatres while also prohibiting public gatherings. India eventually imposed a complete nationwide lockdown on March 24 for 21 days, which was eventually extended until 30 May. A maze of regulations emerged in this scenario to slow the pandemic ranging from restrictions on inter-state mobility to strictures on entry into and exit out of containment zones.

These restrictions resulted in an unprecedented economic contraction of 23.9% between April and June 2020 (Nahata, 2020 August) due to the disruption of supply chains and shuttering of industries causing widespread unemployment. India’s 140 million-strong migrant workforce (Irudaya Rajan *et. al*, 2020) was hit particularly hard by the humanitarian crisis of hunger, disease and psychological distress unleashed by the pandemic. Migrants suffered due to lack of knowledge about the lockdown, lack of employer support, absence of landlord support, last-mile implementation problems with state relief schemes and early absence of affordable travel options to return home across heavily restricted borders. The media discourse on migrants had mostly focused on the plight of short-term migrants who wanted to return home. The research literature mostly concentrates on the national and state levels and their focus on macro-indicators of distress which lacks a fine-grained, city-centric vantage point.

This report seeks to understand the humanitarian crisis caused by the COVID-19 lockdown by examining the social, economic, and psychological distress among short and long-term migrants in the city of Pune, many of whom were left behind, as they struggled to navigate the lockdown. The report uses primary interviews and secondary sources to estimate Pune's migration profile, assess lockdown's effects on livelihoods of long-term resident migrants and estimate impacts of employment loss on migrants.



illustration by Spoorthy Murali

The report evaluates the distress indicators due to the lockdown ranging from financial to food insecurity and evaluates the effectiveness of state-aid such as Jan Dhan account transfers.

The quantitative analysis in this study is complemented by a qualitative investigation of the nuances of the lockdown's impact focusing on two key aspects:

- a) Psychological distress suffered by migrants during the lockdown and
- b) Their perception of the lockdown in general and its impact on their lives in particular.

The report ends with an analysis of the inadequate government response to the plight of migrant workers and offers long term policy measures to avert such a crisis in the future.

UNFOLDING OF A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

National mobilization began on March 22 2020 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's televised address calling on all Indians to observe a one-day *Janata Curfew* (People's Curfew) by staying at home, observing social distancing and clanging vessels in solidarity with the country's frontline medical personnel. The stated rationale was to slow the rate of infections but the government seemed to be preparing the country for an Italy-like, system-shutting lockdown as India's number of infections rose to 360 by March 22 (Bhatia, 2020 July 21; Buyan A, 2020 Dec 19).



MIGRANTS ON THE MOVE (SOURCE: NDTV, APRIL 30)

At 8:00 pm on March 24 Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a complete lockdown across the entire country for 21 days with a goal to 'flatten the curve' and prevent community transmission (Bhuyan, 2020). The lockdown was considered the strictest lockdown in the world according to Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker (India Today, 2020 April). Announced with just four hours of prior notice, the lockdown shut the economic engine of the nation.

Industries, cinema halls, schools, shops and gyms came to a grinding halt. International travel was banned. National and local travel (except for emergency and essential services) slowed down to a trickle as Inter-state travel bans and intra-state containment zones required government clearances. Employees in some formal sectors grappled with the sudden loss of income even as more location-independent service sectors such as IT and education managed to switch quickly to the fully online mode of working. But for the 92% of India's labour force working in the unorganized sector or as informal workers in the organized sector (Punia, March 12, 2020), work from home was largely infeasible, and many of them lost their employment. The sweeping ban on travel (barring goods and services), lack of work, lack of adequate state support, lack of employer support and the financial strain's effects on food and rent began to cause desperation among workers to return to their hometowns and villages.

Delayed and Inadequate Government response

The Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN) reported the migrant crisis in their second and third report, wherein they documented the hunger and distress among the migrant workers, and the inadequacy of institutional response in dealing with them (SWAN Team, 2020 May; SWAN Team, 2020 June). The following summary of the government response largely derives from these reports.

On March 26, 2020, two days after the announcement of the lockdown, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the first major 'relief package', the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) of Rs 1.70 Lakh Crores in order to help the poor 'fight the battle against Corona Virus' (Ministry of Finance- India, 2020, Mar 26). Although the package included an announcement directing state governments to use a central government fund (Building and Construction Workers Welfare Fund) to help unemployed construction workers, the effectiveness of this policy was blunted by the reality that most construction workers were unregistered and were hence not eligible to receive cash transfers (Yadav, 2020). The package did not even mention other types of migrant labourers. The effect of the package was further limited by the difference between the announced allocation (1.70 lakh crores) and the actual allocation (1.42 lakh crores) of funds. Another unanticipated aspect that would become clear in the later months and is well covered later in our report in detail was the difficulty in 'last-mile delivery' of even the allocated funds to construction workers due to complications in ration card migration and absence of fundamental enablers such as working bank accounts (SWAN Team 2020, May).

On March 29 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs order noted that “the movement of large number of migrants has taken place in some parts of the country to reach their home towns” and found this to be a ‘violation of the lockdown measures on maintaining social distance’ (Ministry of Home Affairs - India, 2020 March 29). The order directed state governments to ensure that such migrants would be redirected to the nearest government quarantine facility for the minimum 14-day health screening. Some migrants were forced to return to their workplace locations by state authorities (SWAN Team, 2020 May).

An April 19 2020 order by the MHA established Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) for the “stranded migrant labourers within States/UT where they are currently located.” While noting categorically that movement of migrant workers between states not be allowed, the order allowed for asymptomatic migrants wishing to return to their workplaces within states to be screened and transported back while ensuring social distancing norms and nutritional requirements (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020). Ten days later on 29 April 2020, the MHA allowed movement of migrants across state lines “by road”, provided there was an agreement between sending and receiving states (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2020b April 29). The April 29th order of the Ministry of Home Affairs allowing movement of inter-state migrants across state borders was quickly followed by May 1 directive to directing the Indian Railways to operate special trains called Shramik trains (workers’ trains) along with “detailed guidelines for sale of tickets; for social distancing and other safety measures” on train platforms. (Press Information Bureau - Government of India, 2020) (SWAN, 2020 June).

However, this effort could not fully address the sheer scale of the migrant crisis, despite the railways paying 85% of the total cost of operating the trains with 15% recouped by states by way of fares (PTI, 2020). With inadequate transportation, workers struggled for an alternative, paying large sums to truck drivers to be transported in highly congested trucks, often surviving on just biscuits and water (Venkatraman, Chauhan, Dey, & Mishra, 2020). Groups of migrants, some cycling as much as 1600 kms, suffered extreme dehydration and deaths due to heat stroke and accidents (New Indian Express, 2020). On May 30, the MHA ordered the “phased reopening of areas outside the containment zones” also known as Unlock 1.0; under which religious places, hotels and shopping malls were to be opened while the railways were directed to continue operating Shramik trains (Ministry of Home Affairs- GOI, 2020 May 30; SWAN, 2020 June).

On May 12, in the midst of the unfolding migrant crisis, Prime Minister Modi announced the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' (Self Reliant India Campaign) with a stimulus package of 20 lakh crores at around 10% of India's GDP (Prime Minister of India, 2020 May 12), most based on loans and interest subsidy to business and MSMEs. New welfarist measures were announced including the Centre's decision to allot 5 kgs of grain per person and 1 kg of chana per family for two months to migrants. These migrants were outside the ambit of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and state card system; with an additional 3500 crores earmarked for rations (SWAN Team, 2020 June). The second tranche of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan totaling to ₹3.10 lakh crore included free food grains to stranded migrant workers for two months and credit to farmers (Soni, 2020).

However, the last-mile implementation problems were severe with state governments struggling to account for a complex milieu characterized by the unavailability of comprehensive migrant numbers and mobility data at the Ministry of Labour, as many migrants were unregistered in any database. Orders by the Centre for States to dispense emergency rations to non-ration card migrants fell flat as state governments struggled to complete household surveys (SWAN Team, 2020-June).

Informal workers, Migrants, and Migrant occupations

The informal economy accounts for more than 90% of the workforce and about 50% of the national products (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2017). Informal workers such as vegetable vendors, beauty-parlour workers, hawkers, construction workers sustain through daily wages or instant cash. The formal sector depends considerably on the informal sector for sub-contracting, cheap labour, and the production of raw materials. The informal sector does not exist separately from the formal sector; instead, it produces for, trades with, distributes for and provides services to the formal sector (Chen, 2002). Many informal workers in Indian cities are migrant labourers.

Estimating the number of migrants and the migrant workforce is a challenging task. According to Census 2011, India has 450 million internal migrants, and 41 million migrate for work or employment (Census-2011 D03 series). The Economic Survey of India 2016-17 points limitations of Census in capturing circular migration and female migration for work. It estimates a stock of more than 100 million migrant workforce, and an average annual flow of inter-state migrants for work to be at least 9 million

a year (Ministry of Finance- India, 2017). The largest numbers of migrants hail from the northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar with other important source states including Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Jammu & Kashmir. As the Census figures are almost a decade old, a recent estimate adding the migration in the last 9 years and decadal growth estimates it to be 600 million and migrant workforce to be 140 million in 2020 (Irudaya Rajan et. al, 2020). A sizable fraction of these migrant workers live in cities and towns across India.

According to Census 2011, Maharashtra has the largest number of internal migrants at 57 million of which 48 million are intra-state and 9 million are inter-state migrants. About 6.1 million have moved to urban areas for work or employment in Maharashtra (Census-2011, D03 series). Mumbai receives the largest number of migrants followed by Pune city, which is the focus of this report. A detailed migration profile of the Pune district is provided in a later section of this report.

Estimates of return migrants in Maharashtra

Trains are the lifeline of mobility for migrants in India, especially for long-distance travel. Economic Survey of India 2016-17 used the Indian Railways Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) data from 2011-2016 to estimate the annual flow of interstate migrants (Ministry of Finance- India, 2017). Every year special trains are announced during the time of Holi festival (Goyal, 2020) to accommodate the surge in the migrants going back to their home, especially to Northern States. After lockdown was announced, all passenger trains were cancelled by the Indian railways. More than a month into the lockdown and unfolding of migrant crisis, an order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on April 29, allowed states to coordinate individually to transport migrants using buses. On May 1, Shramik trains were started by Indian Railways to facilitate movement of migrants stranded outside their home states.

Shramik train data has been useful in estimating inter state migrants from Maharashtra. As of June 1, Maharashtra estimated that 11.86 lakh migrants have returned to their home states in about 822 Shramik trains, mostly to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal (Laskar, 2020). Pune sent back about 1.22 lakh migrants to their home states in 97 Shramik trains as of June 13, but many who wanted to stay were left behind (Express News Service, 2020, June 13).

Survey of Migrant Distress

An estimated 12.2 crore people lost their jobs during the lockdown period, raising the unemployment rate to 27.1% (India Today, 2020, Aug 21). It had a devastating impact on the lives of the migrant workers who mostly work in the unorganized sector. The impact of the first 21 days of the lockdown on the migrant workers has been documented by the Stranded Workers Action Network in their first report (SWAN Team, 2020 May).

The SWAN team interviewed about 11,000 stranded migrant workers in various states, 4000 in Maharashtra alone. Migrants faced a severe shortage of food and rations. **About 50% of the workers had rations left for less than one day**, In Maharashtra in particular, the situation was more severe, with 71% migrants with rations lasting for one day. The uncertainty in food availability had forced them to eat sparingly, sometimes eating only one meal a day. **The government's response has been totally inadequate, with 96% not receiving any rations from the government and 70% not receiving any cooked food.** The ones who did receive cooked food, reported availability to be sporadic, waiting in long queues, and poor quality of food. None of the migrants in Maharashtra reported receiving any rations from the government.

Although the government “ordered” employers to pay the wages (on March 29), SWAN survey showed that 89% of migrant workers have not been paid by their employers at all during the lockdown. The reports also found that the percentage of people who have not received rations from the government, largely remained stagnant around 95% in the first half of April (SWAN Team, 2020 May), and marginally declined to 82% by the end of April, largely attributed to better partnerships between local administration and civil society organisations and better response from states like Karnataka (SWAN Team, 2020 June). While in the entire phase, **Maharashtra continued to fare the worst in terms of the government response to providing ration and food.**

Accommodation is a major challenge for most of the migrant workers who live in densely populated cramped tenements, which made social distancing impossible and defeated the very purpose of imposing the lockdown.

The initial government response to prevent migrant movement towards their homes was informed by the fear that they would carry the contagious coronavirus to their hometowns and villages, leading to community transmission of COVID-19, consequently, migrants were not allowed to leave cities (Sengupta & Jha, 2020).

Need for regional studies on short and long term migrants

The lockdown impacted not only the migrants who tried to head back to their native homes but also those who made their resident city their new home and stayed back. According to Census 2011, about 55% of total migrants reside in the current place for more than 10 years. **In Maharashtra, 29 million out of 57 million are long term migrants (Census 2011 - D02 series).** The SWAN team primarily documented short term migrants, but have also documented distress calls received from long term “settled” migrants, who reported a loss of income, liability to pay rent and accessing government benefits (Adhikari, et al., 2020, p. 10).

Long term migrants (henceforth ‘resident migrants’) live with their families and have social ties within the city they reside in. The resident migrants who work in various occupations as construction workers, housemaids, security guards, auto drivers, vegetable sellers, grocers, and industrial workers form the backbone of the economic engine of the city. Households in economic distress tend to rely on short term circular and seasonal migration, while long-term migration is driven by economic opportunities (Desai & Chatterjee, 2019; Rukmini, 2020). Much of the media reporting on the migrant distress has been focusing on the short term migrants who wanted to return back to their home. There is a paucity of studies on the distress experienced by long term resident migrants. Most of these resident migrants work in the unorganized sector or as contractual labourers and are likely to have experienced similar levels of joblessness, loss of livelihood, absence of savings, lack of food security, and curtailed access to health care as that of short term migrants.

The studies conducted on migrants so far have also been largely at the national and state level focusing on macro indicators of distress. Large cities, which are also the hub for migrants were severely affected by the pandemic during the lockdown period. The focus of the news media was primarily on mega metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru. Migrant crisis in relatively smaller metropolitan cities is largely underrepresented.

ABOUT THE REPORT

Pune is being the second largest district by population in Maharashtra. Pune city and Pimpri Chinchwad dominate the economy through major manufacturing and service sectors. According to Census 2011, Pune district has 94 lakh population, of which 2/3rd (60.94 lakh) of whom are migrants, of which about 12 lakh people have moved to Pune district for employment (Census 2011 D-series). It remained the top one in the cumulative COVID-19 cases in the lockdown period and continues to be on the top even as of December 2020.

As the migrant crisis unfolded, thousands of migrant workers left Pune city on foot, tried to travel by trucks and other modes of transport (Rashid, 2020 May 17). Many of them tried to return to their hometowns but were prevented from leaving the city (News18, 2020). Although reliable figures are not available, it is likely that a large number of migrants migrated from Pune to their hometown or other districts of Maharashtra. It is estimated that Shramik trains carried 1.22 lakh persons to their home states (Express News Service, 2020 June 13). This excludes the majority of the migrants, including resident migrants who stayed back and suffered due to loss of employment and livelihood.

Many of the labourers living in the Bastis were surviving on food aid from police, NGOs, and locals (Paraste, 2020, April). Shutting of all industries and services during lockdown caused a huge surge in unemployment, which is unlikely to reduce much after lockdown. This merits a detailed study of the situation of employment in the unorganized and organized sectors across Pune and surrounding areas. The lockdown is likely to have differing impacts on different segments of the workforce (Anand & Thampi, 2020). This report provides documentation of the Pune city migrants physical, financial, psychological distress, and analyzes the inadequacy of government policy interventions and provides policy suggestions to avert any future migrant crisis in Urban India.

In this report, the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on the lives and livelihood of short and long term migrant workers in Pune city and its outskirts is studied in depth. In particular, the report relies on:

- Secondary sources, and estimation of the migration profile of Pune including factors such as migrant origin, age, gender, family size, education, type and duration of migration into Pune.
- Assessment of the effect of COVID-19 lockdown on occupation and livelihood of long term resident migrants of Pune.
- Impact of employment losses on the selected sample of migrants in Pune, in casual workers, and self-employed workers.
- Evaluation of the distress indicators such as lack of savings, expenditure cutbacks, access to ration, food, food aid, and accommodation.
- Evaluation of efficacy of government aid using indicators namely access to PDS, Jan Dhan account transfers, and other government support.

In an effort to understand the nuances of the impact of lockdown, qualitative speculation was essential. The qualitative study focused on two major areas:

- Understanding the psychological distress of migrants.
- Perception of lockdown and its impact on the lives of migrants.

Qualitative speculation was imperative in understanding the diverse reasons for the distress experienced. It was anticipated that the unprecedented conditions brought along by the pandemic resulted in severe psychological distress for migrants. Most surveys and studies conducted so far lack a detailed study of the psychological effects of the lockdown on migrants. The qualitative responses shall shed light on the nuances and details of the distress. This gave migrants an opportunity to express their concerns, narrate their current situation and reflect on how they were coping with the COVID-19 situation. The qualitative questions were selected carefully to address specific stressors that emerged from literature, expert opinions and researchers' observations of the COVID-19 situation in Pune.

Based on a systematic and in-depth study, the report puts forward recommendations and policy inferences to ensure livelihood guarantee, food security and social security for long term migrants in cities. The paramount motive has been to identify critical gaps in the last-mile along with policy implementation that has adversely affected the availability of state-provided relief to migrants.

Methods of the study

Data collection

Due to the strict lockdown conditions, phone interviews and some in-person interviews were considered appropriate for collecting data. As a first step, a list of potential NGOs was generated through the investigators' personal and professional contacts. The study used a mixed-method approach with

- (a) Primary survey using phone and in-person interviews with the target population in Pune,
- (b) Analyzing secondary data sources on migration and employment,
- (c) Analysis of media reports and literature on migration and COVID-19 crisis.

Secondary data analysis: Migration Information from Census 2011 and Periodic Labour force Survey were used to analyze the migration profile of Pune city and labour force, and comparison to Maharashtra and India.

Analysis of other media reports: The data and insights were from various media reports and published articles during the COVID-19 timeframe.

Oral informed consent was taken during phone and in-person survey. Interviews were mainly conducted by Sagar Pagare (RA), PI, Co-PIs.

Primary survey & Sample description

The study is based on phone and in-person surveys of 234 migrants residing in Pune city and surrounding areas conducted between May 16-July 10, 2020, after the first lockdown and its extension.

The survey overlapped with the following lockdown and unlock phases announced by the Government of India:

- Lockdown 3: May 4 - May 17 (14 days)
- Lockdown 4: May 18 - May 31 (12 days)
- Unlock 1.0: (June 1 - June 30)
- Unlock 2.0 (July 1 - July 31)

Sample description

Selection of migrants was based on:

- **Snowball sampling** - Identification of migrant pockets in different parts of the city and conducting physical interviews based on snowball sampling.
- **Cluster random sampling** - A list of migrants and their phone numbers were provided by NGOs. Cluster random sampling was used to select the sample from the list and people were interviewed via phone.

The primary survey covered the following areas in Pune city : Janata Vasahat Parvati, Kondhwa, Deccan, Hinjewadi, Gultekdi, Swargate, Kokate Chawl Sutarwadi, Lohgaon, Pashan, Sutarwadi, and Chakan. Out of a total of 233 respondents, 171 were male (73%), and 63 were female (27%). Majority of the migrant respondents came from Maharashtra (43.8%) followed by Uttar Pradesh (22.3%), West Bengal (11.2%), and Chhattisgarh (8.6%).

Table 1. State-wise distribution of migrants

ORIGIN STATE	SAMPLE	PERCENTAGE
MAHARASHTRA	102	43.8
UTTAR PRADESH	52	22.3
WEST BENGAL	26	11.2
CHHATTISGARH	20	8.6
JHARKHAND	17	7.3
BIHAR	11	4.7
ASSAM	2	0.9
NEPAL	2	0.9
MADHYA PRADESH	1	0.4
TOTAL	233	100.0

The data was collected with support from the following NGOs and contact persons.

NGOs

- Bal Shikshan Manch Pune - Mr. Amar Pol
- National Alliance of People's Movement - Mr. Rajendra Bahalkar

Individuals resources for snowball sampling

- Mr. Anand Rithe (Corporator) Dattawadi, Sinhagad Road
- Mrs. Sanjana Kamble (Housemaid)
- Mr. Sagar Pagare (RA, FLAME University) of phone and in-person interviews

Questionnaire formulation for primary survey

The survey questionnaire was designed by the Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-PIs of the project. The questionnaire was tri-lingual including questions in English, Hindi, and Marathi. Considering the nature of this study, an applied thematic approach to qualitative data analysis was thought to be suitable as the responses were recorded through phone interviews, which may somehow limit the narration and expression by the migrants. The survey design and questions were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of FLAME University, Pune.



Questionnaire formulation process

Survey Questions

The primary survey was conducted between May 16 - July 10 through phone and in-person interviews for assessing the migrant profile, hardship and the psychological distress experienced by the migrant workers during the lockdown phase. Oral Informed consent was taken from all the respondents during the survey. The survey questions were from the following categories:

- **Demographic profile of respondents:** basic personal information like name, age, sex, marital status, highest education level, current residence in Pune, number of family members living and earning. The personal identifiers like name, age and mobile number of the respondents have been strictly kept confidential.
- **Migration profile:** basic information like state and district of origin, year of moving to Pune helped in estimating the duration of migration, in case of migrants within Maharashtra, the migration profile was derived from the village/taluka from where they moved to Pune.
- **Identity documents for availing government services:** Aadhaar card, ration card, smartphone, Jan Dhan account, and PPF account.
- **Remittances:** remittances sent home prior to the pandemic and post lockdown.
- **Employment:** type of occupation, kind of work and place of work in Pune.

- **Distress indicators:** status of employment after lockdown, savings at the time of lockdown and duration of sustaining a livelihood, attempts to go back home, barriers faced while trying to return to hometown, expenditure cut back, difficulties in paying rent, availability of ration, whether they received food and ration aid during the lockdown and finally verbal account of other hardships faced.
- **Psychological distress:** feeling associated with lockdown, anxiousness, stress, worthlessness experienced during distress days.
- **Government inaction:** availability of ration, food and ration supply by government, Jan Dhan money received etc.
- **Perception of lockdown:** whether the respondents approve of the lockdown and its extensions, their perception of government and employer responsibilities during the distress time.

Rationale for selection of specific qualitative questions

The qualitative questions were categorized into two parts in the phone and in-person interviews. One set of questions focused on the distress experienced and its perception by the migrants. To understand the hardships faced by the migrants, it was essential to know how they felt when they first came to know about the lockdown and when the lockdown was further extended. This would help in understanding the impact they envisaged on the lockdown condition. To understand their perception of governments' decision to lockdown the nation, it was important to ask them about their opinion of the same.

It was also important to understand their expectations from the government in supporting them for ration, transport, medical facilities etc. It becomes salient from the policy implementation perspective, in particular, prompting questions such as what were the critical, minimum expectations of assistance that migrants had from the government? Was there a rank-order of expectations at the psychological level that aligns with the quantitative analysis conducted in this study? Furthermore, it was anticipated that job loss will have a major impact on the migrants as most of them survive on daily wages or serve on a contractual job. Based on this anticipation, they were asked about their expectations from their employer. Furthermore, considering the restrictions enforced by the lockdown, it was necessary to know the source of news they relied on to get information about the happenings around them.

The second set of questions focused on psychological distress experienced by the migrants. It was anticipated that the lockdown may have severely affected the psyche of the migrants. The aim of the chosen questions was to uncover the specific aspects that led to psychological distress. The barriers that the migrants came across led to a substantial amount of stress. The most common psychological conditions were taken into consideration in the study: stress, anxiety, perception of lockdown and feeling of worthlessness.

Set 1: Questions focusing on perception of lockdown

1. From where did you get the news, updates about lockdown?
2. Do you think the government took the right decision to lockdown?
3. Was the extension of the lockdown right according to you?
4. How did you feel, when the lockdown got extended?
5. What should the government have done for you during the lockdown?
6. What should the employer have done for you during the lockdown?
7. Describe other hardships faced during the lockdown

Set 2: Questions focusing on aspects of psychological distress.

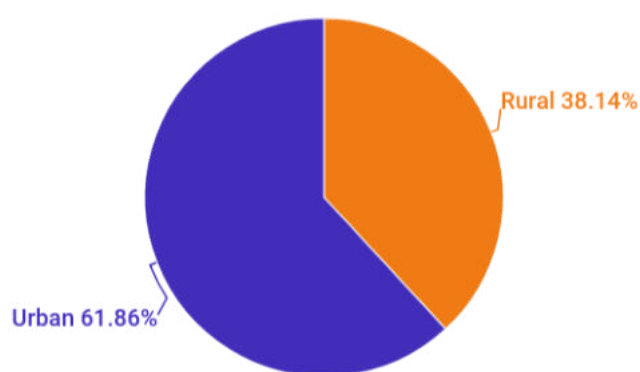
1. How did you feel when you first came to know about the lockdown?
2. Did you feel anxious? If yes, what all made you feel anxious?
3. Did you feel stressed? Can you explain how you felt?
4. Do you feel like no one values you?

MIGRATION PROFILE OF PUNE - CENSUS 2011

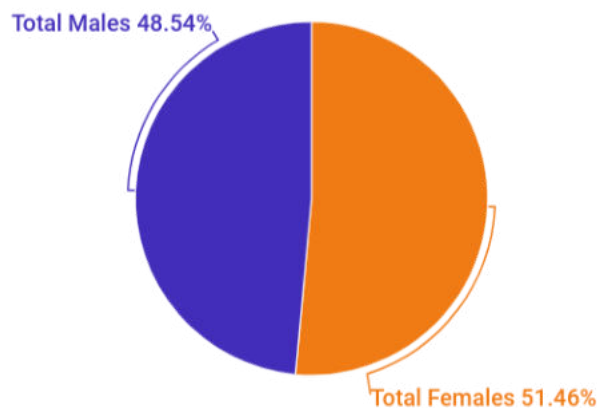
According to Census 2011, Pune district has 94.3 lakh population, with 36.78 lakh rural, and 57.51 lakh urban population. Pune city's population was 33 lakhs in 2011, 99% of which is urban. The decadal growth rate in Pune is 22.6% with a sex ratio of 943 females to 1000 males (comparable to national sex ratio). (District Census Handbook Pune, 2014). The Pune Urban Agglomeration (which includes Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Dehu Road, etc.) had a population of 50.5 lakhs according to Census 2011. Pune-UA roughly captures 87% of the total urban population in the district.

Pune District Migration Profile

Nearly two-thirds of the Pune district's population (60.94 lakh out of 94.3 lakh) are migrants. About 12 lakh people have moved to the Pune district for employment. The majority of the migrants from outside the district and state live in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad Urban agglomeration.

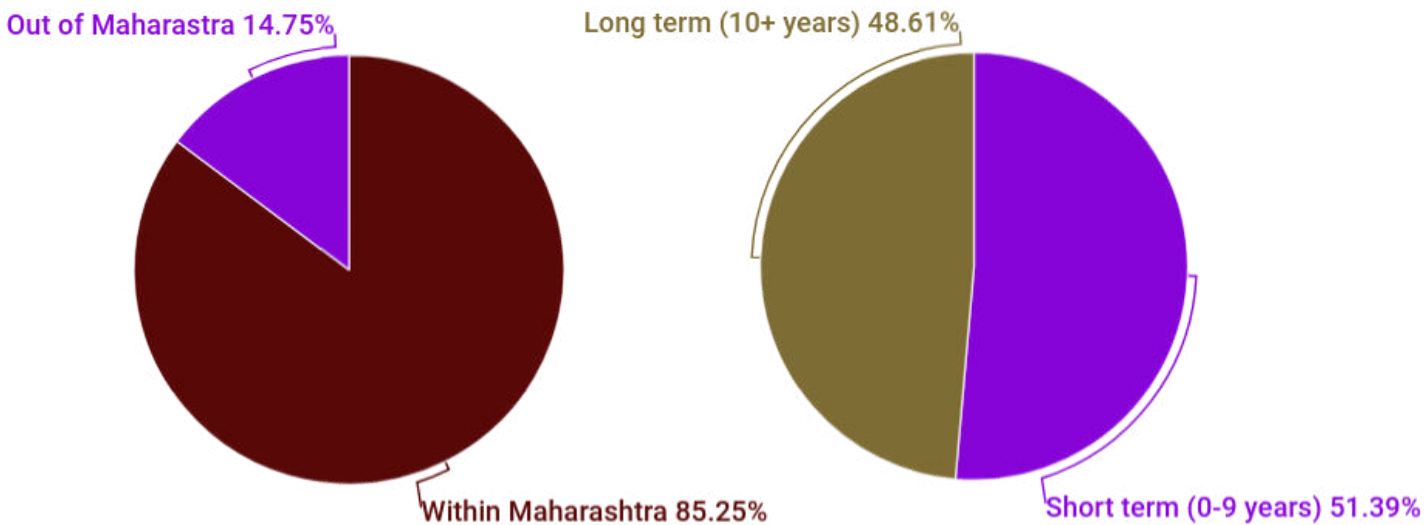


About 37.7 lakh (61.9%) have migrated to urban Pune, remaining 23.24 lakh (38.14%) migrated to rural Pune.

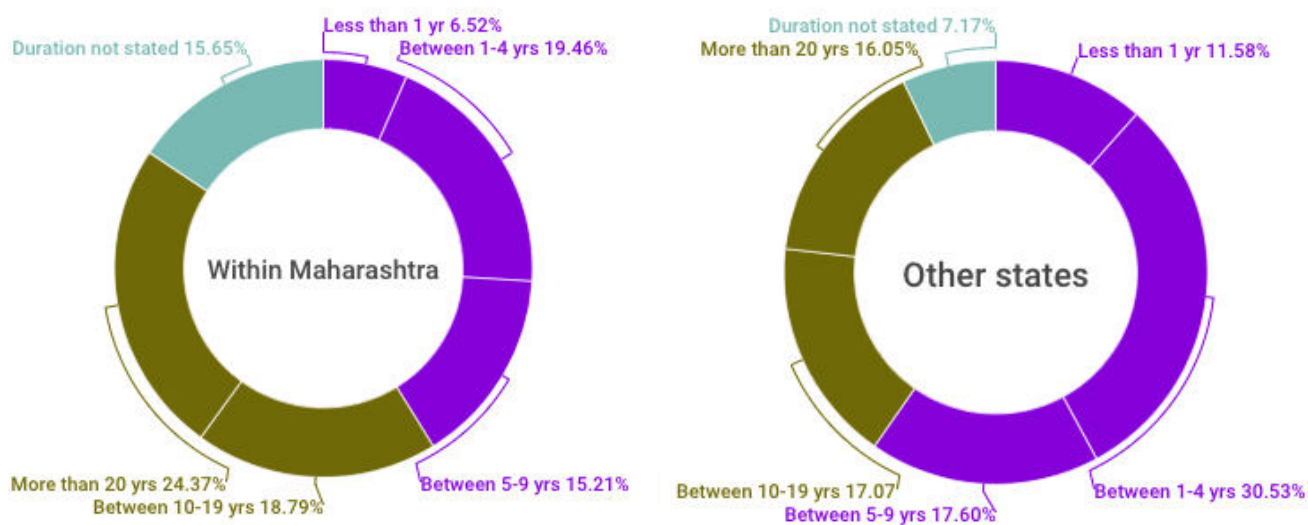


Gender composition for Pune shows more females 31.35 lakh (51.5%) in comparison to males 29.6 lakh (48.54%).

More than 85% (51.6 lakh) of the migrants are from Maharashtra, the remaining 8.93 lakh are out of state migrants (15%) to the district. Among the migrants within Maharashtra, 52% are from other parts of Pune districts. Close to 48.61% of them are long term migrants, having moved to the city more than 10 years from the time enumeration.

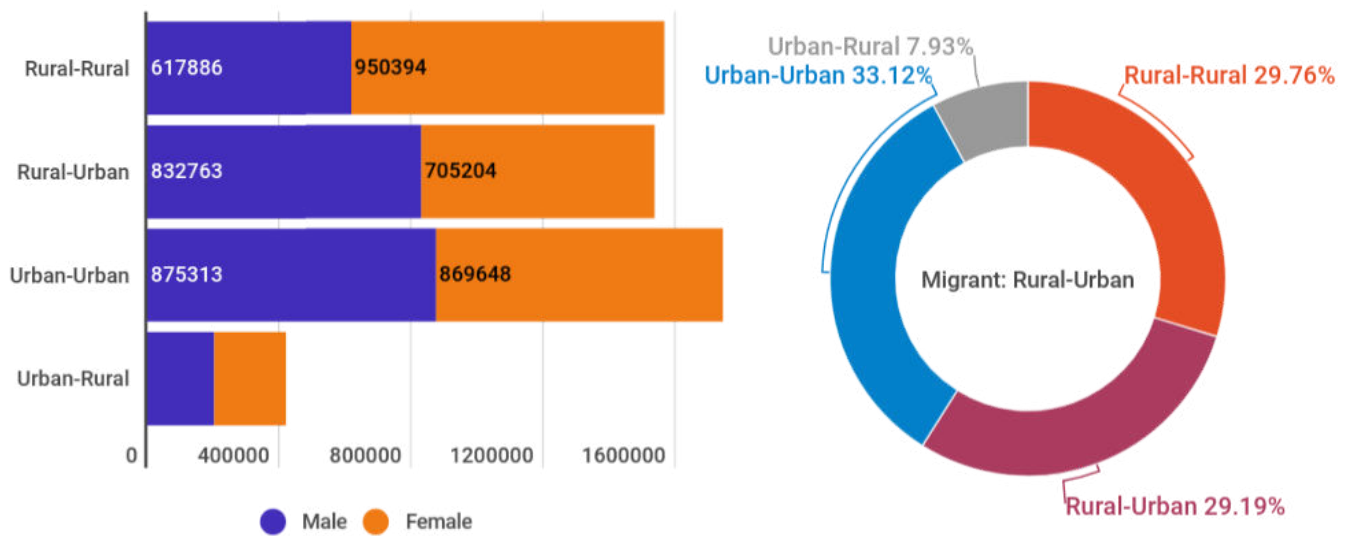


Duration of the residence - Intra and Interstate migrants



Of the people who have migrated from within Maharashtra to Pune, at least 41% are short migrants (0-9 years), 43.16% have migrated for more 10 years back.

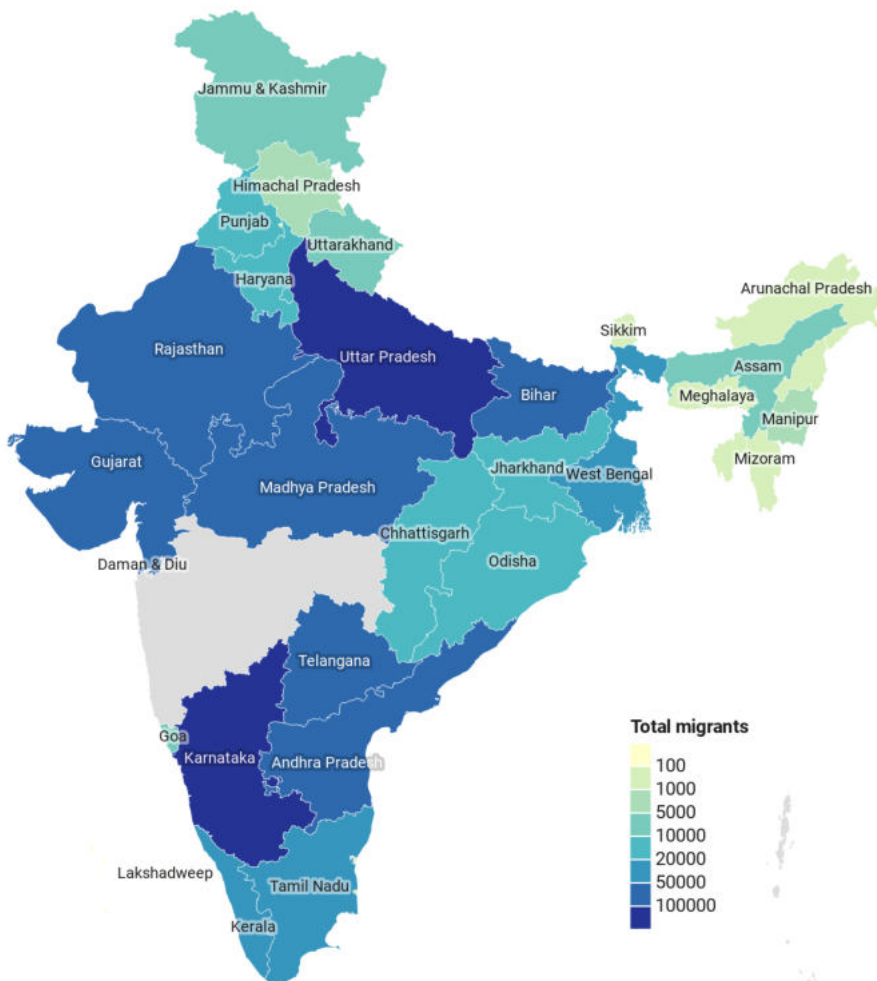
Among the interstate migrants, about 60% are short term (0-9 years) migrants, whereas about 33% are long term migrants (10 years or more), 7% have unknown duration of migration.



Roughly one-third of the migrants are Urban-Urban migrants in the Pune district, Rural-Urban migration is also close to 30%. The Rural-Rural migration at 29.76% is largely female migration due to marriage.

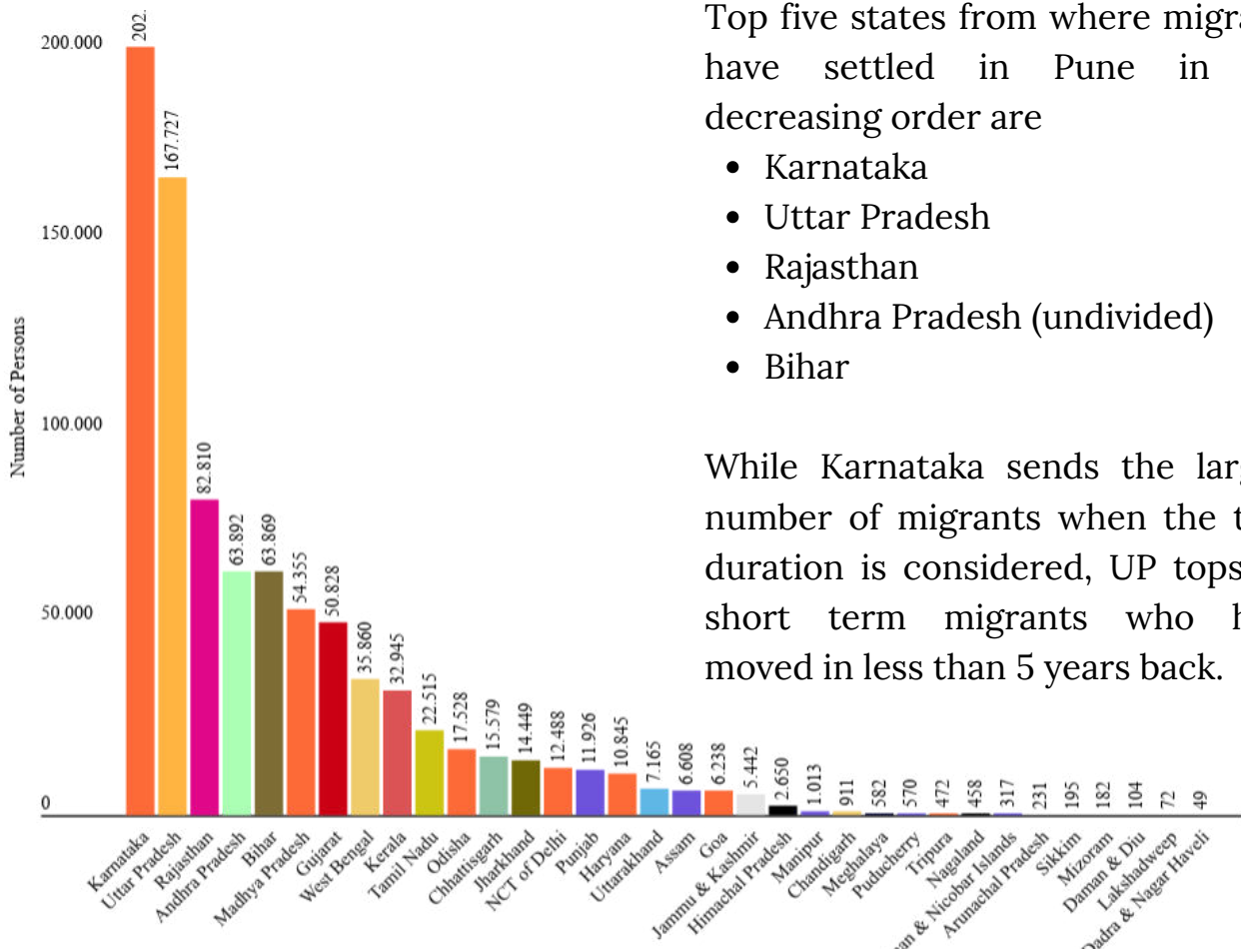
Pune: Migrants from other states

Total migrants into Pune district according to Census 2011



Inter State Migrants

Among 8.93 lakh interstate migrants, close to 88% of them move to urban areas in Pune district.



Top five states from where migrants have settled in Pune in the decreasing order are

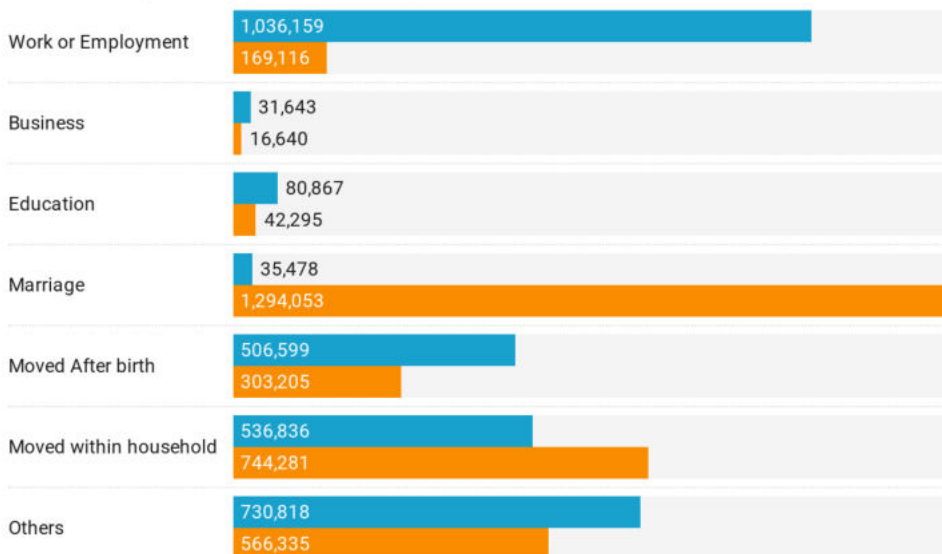
- Karnataka
- Uttar Pradesh
- Rajasthan
- Andhra Pradesh (undivided)
- Bihar

While Karnataka sends the largest number of migrants when the total duration is considered, UP tops for short term migrants who have moved in less than 5 years back.

Reason for Migration

Pune Migrants: Reason for Migration

Reason for Migration by gender according to Census 2011



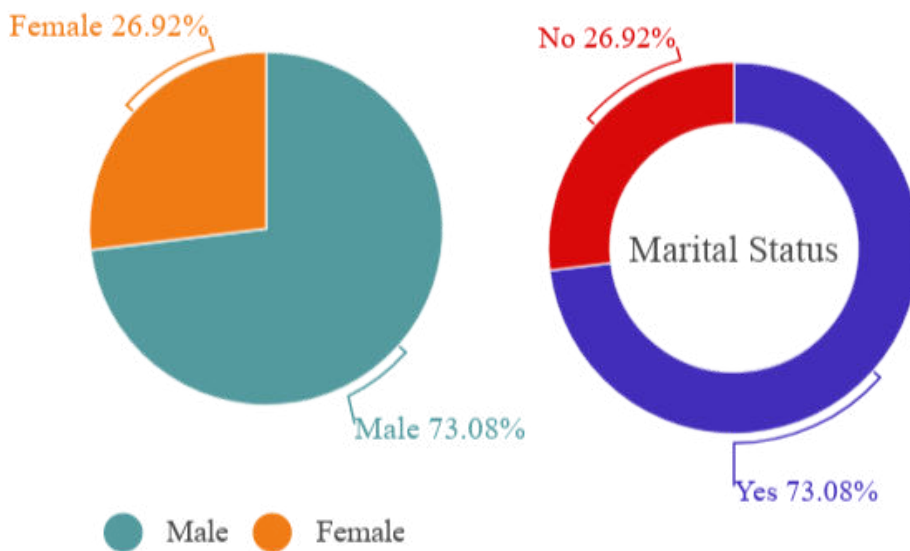
Men primarily move for work or employment (1 million) to Pune, women mainly move for marriage (1.29 million). Other reasons for migration are moving within the household, moving after birth, education, and business (in the decreasing order of numbers).

Chart: Shivakumar Jolad • Source: Census India -2011 • Created with Datawrapper

PRIMARY SURVEY: MIGRANT PROFILE

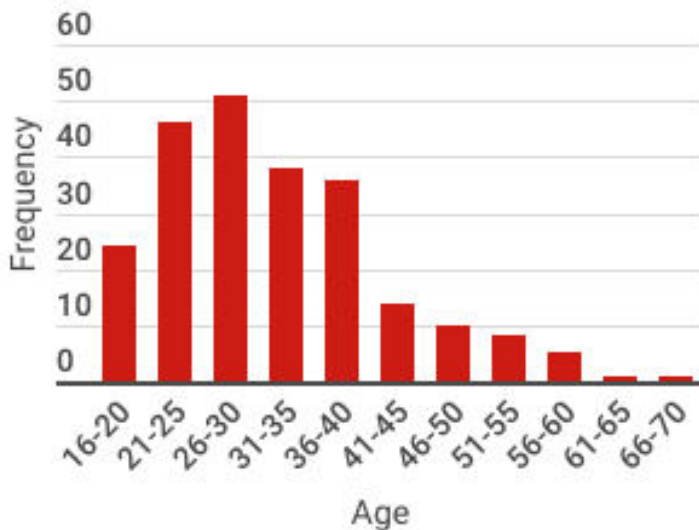
Profile of Respondents

The survey captured the profile of 234 migrant respondents in Pune. The gender composition reflected 73% male and 27% female migrants. All the female respondents were married; whereas 108 (63.2%) of the male respondents were married. About 62% of the respondents lived with their family.



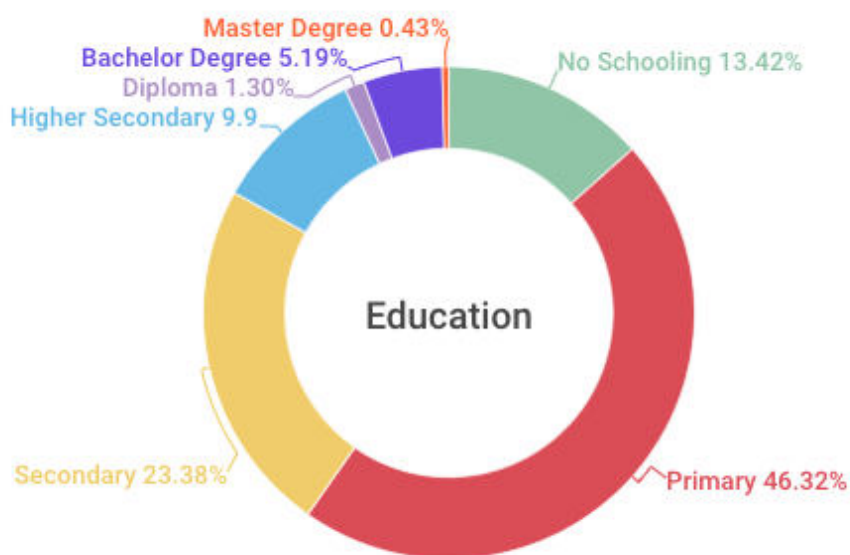
Marital Status	Male	Female
Yes	108	63
No	63	0

Age Distribution of respondents



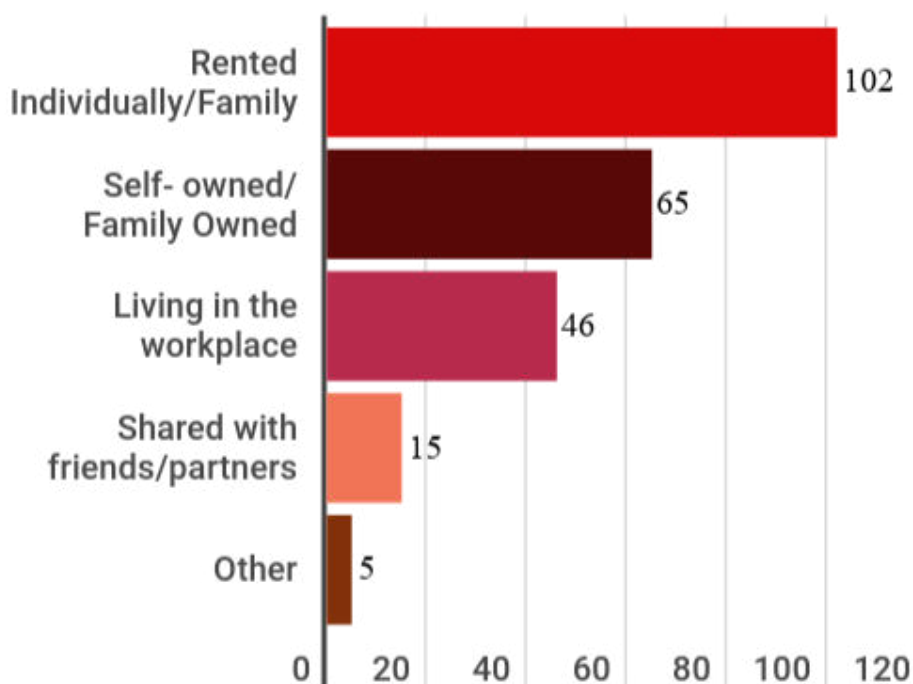
Majority of the respondents were between years 21 to 40, with a median age of 30 years.

EDUCATION



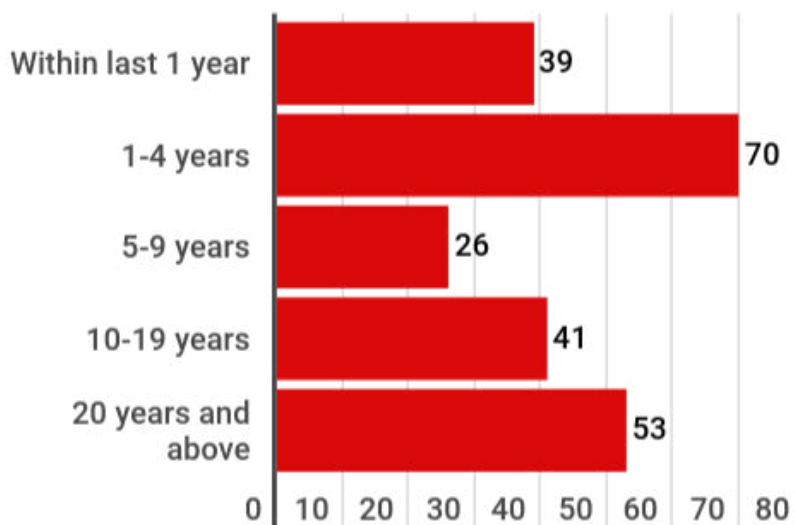
About 13.4% had no schooling, 46% of the respondents had studied only upto primary level. 24% had done secondary school (upto 10th std.), 10% studied upto higher secondary level, and 5% had bachelor degrees. Only one migrant was found to have a Masters degree. Conclusively, women had lesser education on an average.

TYPE OF RESIDENCE

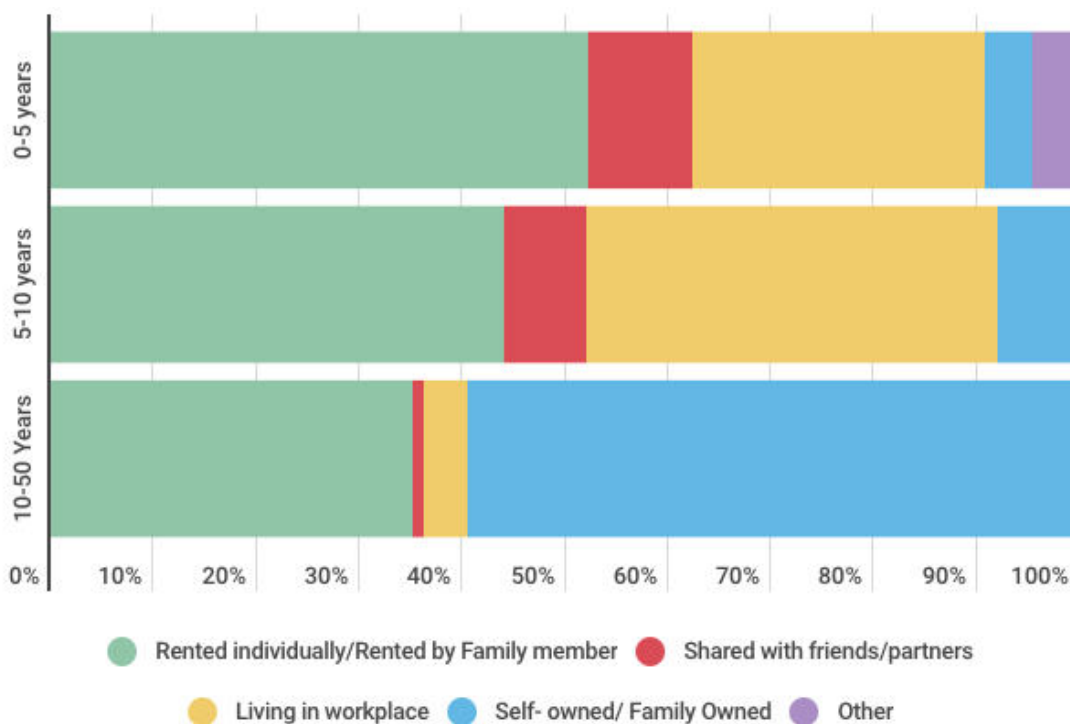


Type of Residence: 102 out of 234 (44%) of the migrant respondents lived in rented accommodation. 65 persons (28%) lived in their own house (self-owned/family-owned), 46 (20%) lived in the workplace, and 15 (6.4%) with their friends or partners.

DURATION OF RESIDENCE



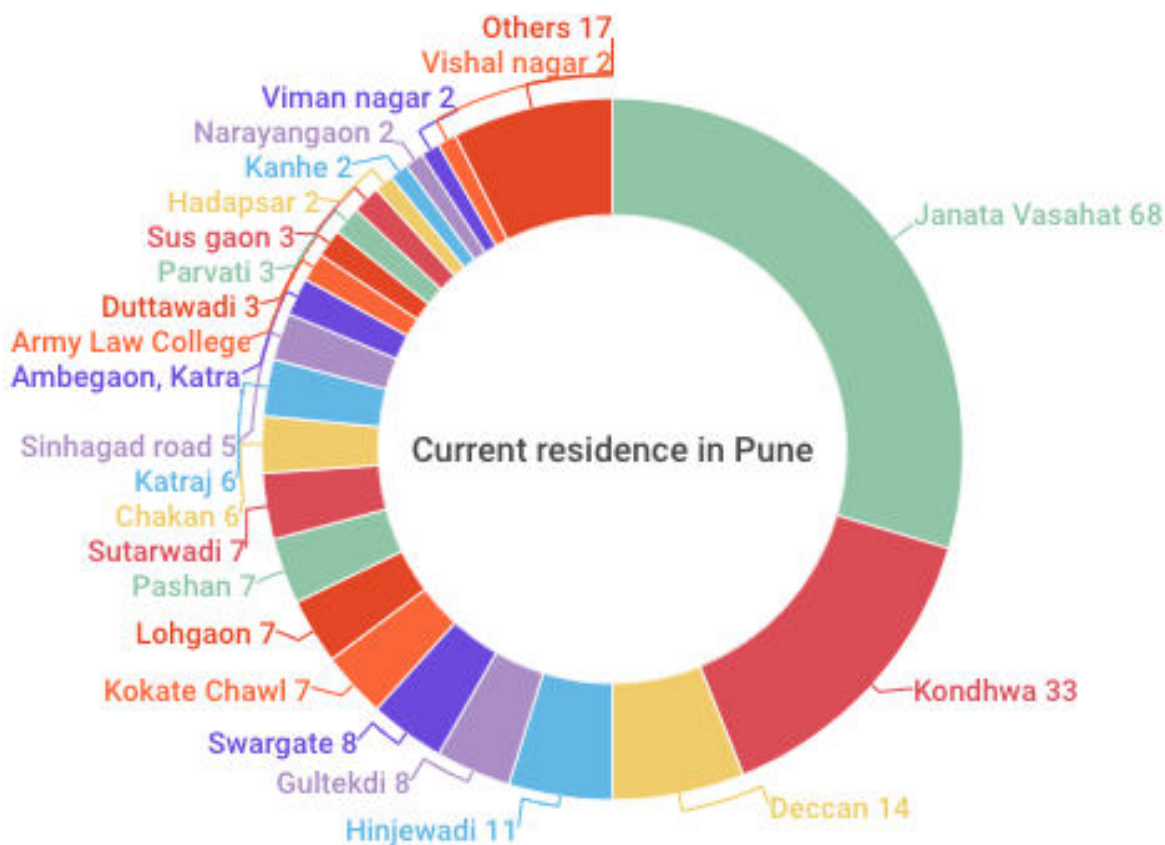
Analysis of duration of migration showed that **47% of the respondents migrated less than 5 years ago**, about 11.35% between 5-10 years, and **41% were long term migrants.**



Duration of Residence and Type of Accommodation:

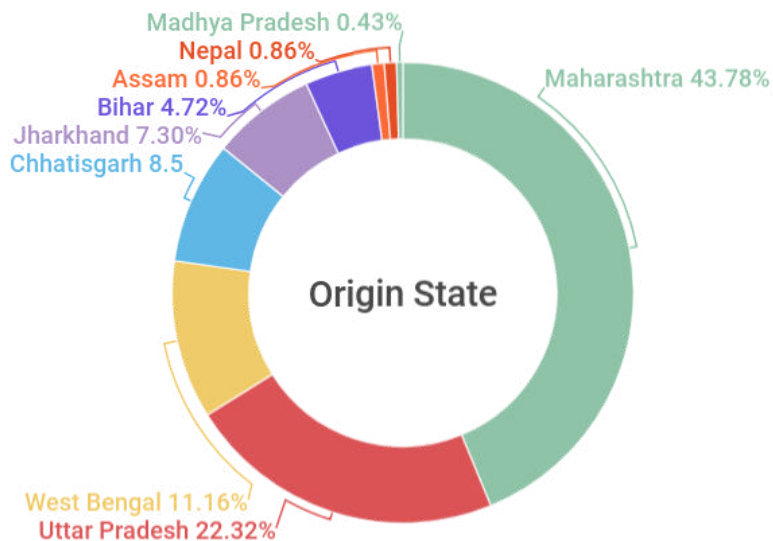
A clear correlation emerges between the duration of residence and type of accommodation. Short term migrants mostly live in a rented place or share with friends. Only 4.6% live in the self-owned house. About 60% of long term migrants (10 plus years) live in self/family owned housing. Surprisingly, 40% of the medium term migrants lived in the workplace.

PLACE OF CURRENT RESIDENCE IN PUNE

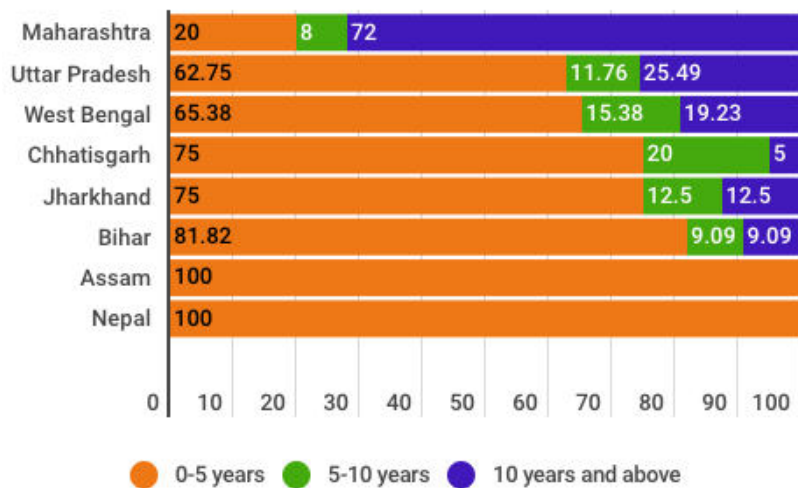


The survey respondents were from various parts of Pune city (comes under Haveli taluka), and a few from the outskirts of the city, and neighbouring Talukas (see the Map above). The top 10 localities from where the respondents came are Janta Vasahat, Kondhwa, Deccan, Hinjewadi, Gultekdi, Swargate, Lohegaon, Pashan and Sutarwadi.

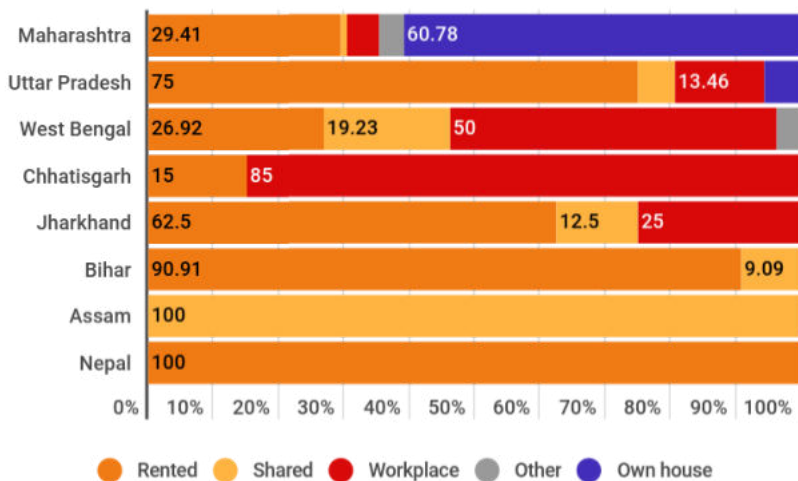
MIGRANT ORIGIN AND DURATION OF RESIDENCE



Majority of the migrants surveyed were from Maharashtra (43.8%), followed by Uttar Pradesh (22.3%), West Bengal (11.2%), Chhattisgarh (8.5%), Jharkhand (7.3%), and Bihar (4.72%).



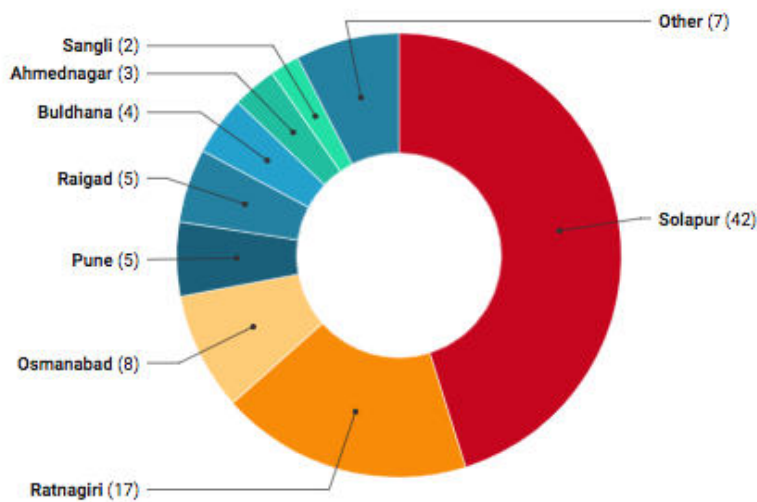
Maharashtra migrants are largely long term migrants (72%) and most of them (60.8%) own a house. Among the interstate migrants from UP, West Bengal, and Jharkhand between 10-25.5% have stayed for more than 10 years. More than 50% of all Interstate migrants are short term migrants who moved within the last 5 years.



Ownership of houses is very unlikely in Inter state migrants. Apart from UP (5.8%), none of the other state migrants own a house. Most of them live in self rented/shared accommodation, and some stay in the workplace (85% of Chhattisgarh and 50% of West Bengal residents).

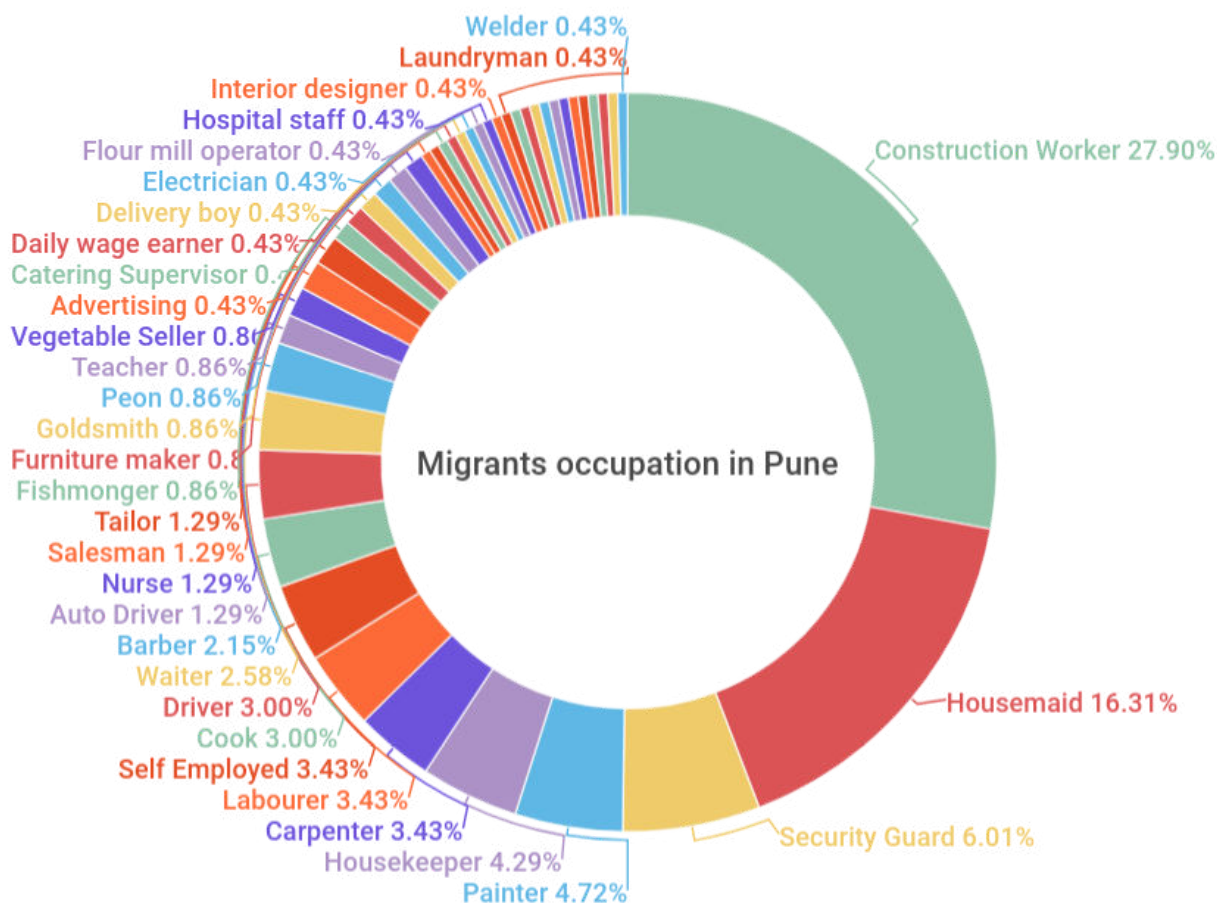


Migrant District of origin in Maharashtra



Within Maharashtra **Solapur, Ratnagiri, and Osmanabad** are the top three districts of origin for respondents.

OCCUPATION PROFILE



About 27% of our respondents were construction workers, while the majority of the women were housemaids (16%). Further, migrants also worked as security guards, painters, housekeepers, carpenters etc.

Splitting the migrant occupation by states shows an interesting pattern. Interstate migrants mainly work in the construction sector (46%), followed by security guard (6.92%), painter (5.38%) , and carpenter (6.15%) among others. None of the interstate migrants workers were housemaids. Whereas, migrants within Maharashtra primarily had their occupation as housemaid (37.25%), housekeeper, construction worker, driver, waiter, and labourer.



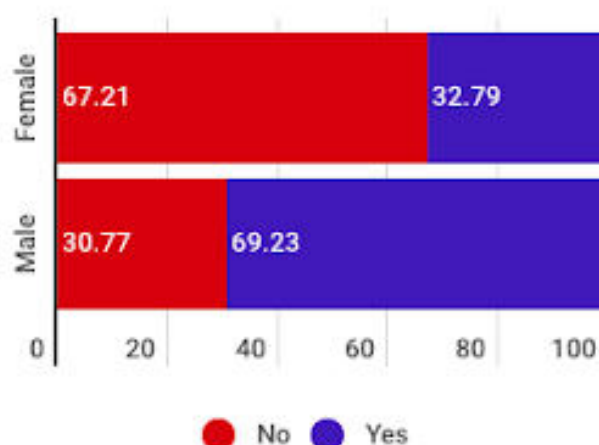
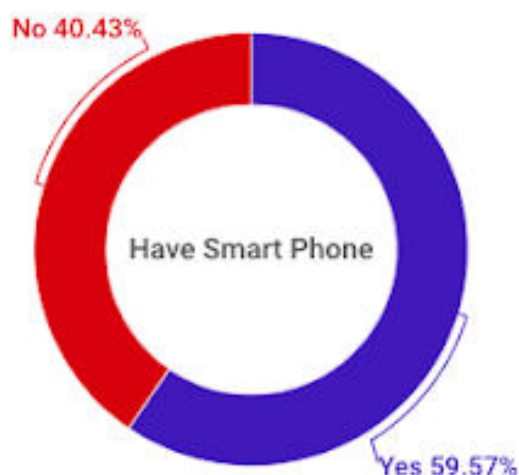
DOCUMENTS FOR AVAILING GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Many migrants do not possess necessary documents to avail government schemes and services such as :

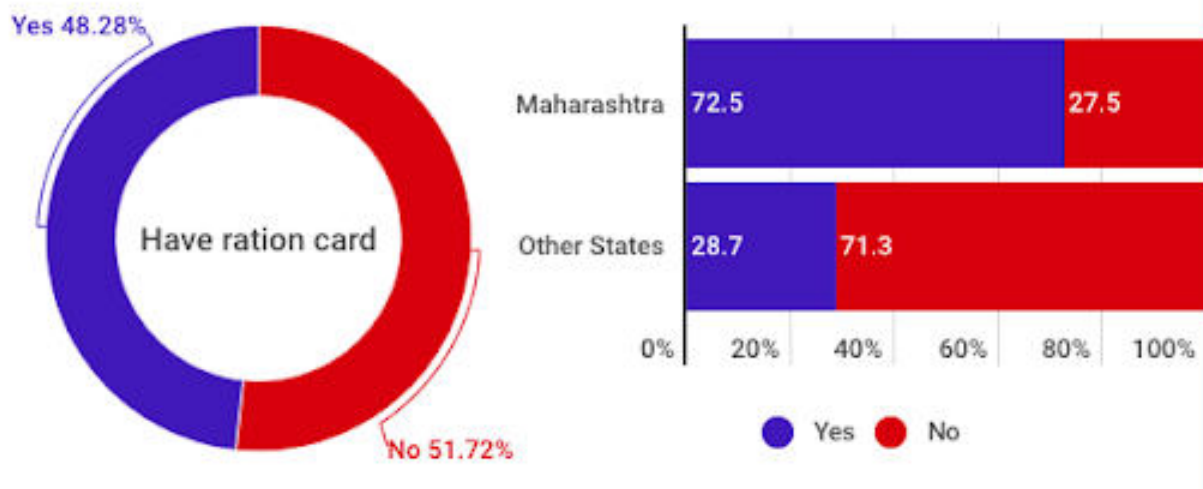
- Identity card and residential address proof in the place of current residence
- Ration card with their names and address in Pune
- PPF account for organized sector workers, and contractual labourers
- Bank accounts: Jan Dhan account, Government Transfer
- Smart phone for digital services



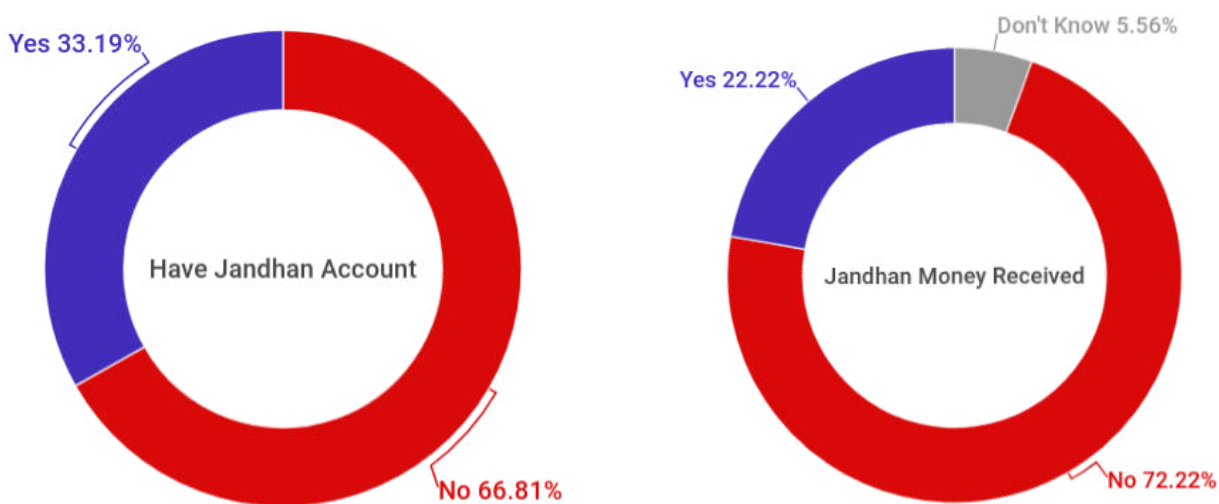
Aadhaar Card: Most respondents possessed an Aadhaar card as a form of identity (97.84%), although many expressed that the address in the Aadhaar card is from their home state and city. They found it difficult to update the Aadhaar card. The analysis did not result in major differences across intrastate and interstate migrants.



Smart Phone is essential for accessing news and other digital services. Only 60% of the respondents did possess Smart phone. Smartphone possession showed considerable variability by gender. About 67.2% of women did not own a smartphone, whereas the ratio is reversed for males, wherein 69% of males actually possessed smartphones.



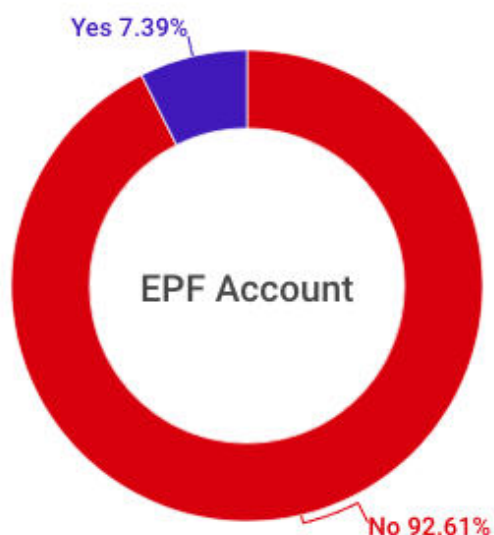
Ration Card: Possession of ration cards varied from state to state. Half of our total respondents (51%) did not have a ration card. It was found that 1/4th (~27.5%) of migrants within Maharashtra also did not have ration cards with the rate being almost thrice to 3/4th of migrants belonging to other states. The analysis also showed that for none of the migrants from Nepal, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh had ration cards.



Jan Dhan account: Jan Dhan accounts are a part of the NDA government's JAM trinity. The government announced as a part of PMGKY, a transfer of Rs. 500 to every Jan Dhan account holder. About 67% (2/3rd) of the respondents did not have a Jan Dhan account. Even among those who had Jan Dhan accounts, 72% of them reported that they did not receive the government transfer, providing further evidence of the poor reach of Government cash transfer. It is worth noting that the 500 rupee transfer is equivalent to only 1-2 days of the daily wage of these labourers, and is grossly inadequate to meet the expenditures during the long duration of joblessness.

EPF account

The Employee Provident Act states that for salaried employees earning less than 15,000 per month in organizations that employ more than 20 people have to mandatorily open EPF account (EPFO, n.d.)). Those employing less than 20 people, can enroll employees voluntarily. EPF is crucial for social security in times of old age or sickness. Government had allowed withdrawal from EPF accounts for those affected by lockdown, upto three months of their salary or wages or 75% of the balance standing in their account, whichever is less (Clear Tax, 2021).



Our respondents belonged to the categories of unorganized sector employees, contractual labourers, or were self-employed, barring few professions like security guards and nurses. About 92.6% of them did not possess an EPF account, hence could not benefit from the government announcement.



illustration by Spoorthy Murali

MIGRANT DISTRESS

The design of this study included quantitative and qualitative survey questions focusing on various distress indicators. The quantitative analysis uncovered the different aspects of the impact of lockdown on livelihood and resources available to the migrants to understand policy implementation and the gaps therein, whereas the qualitative investigation allowed an understanding of their perception of the lockdown and factors contributing to physical, economic and psychological distress.

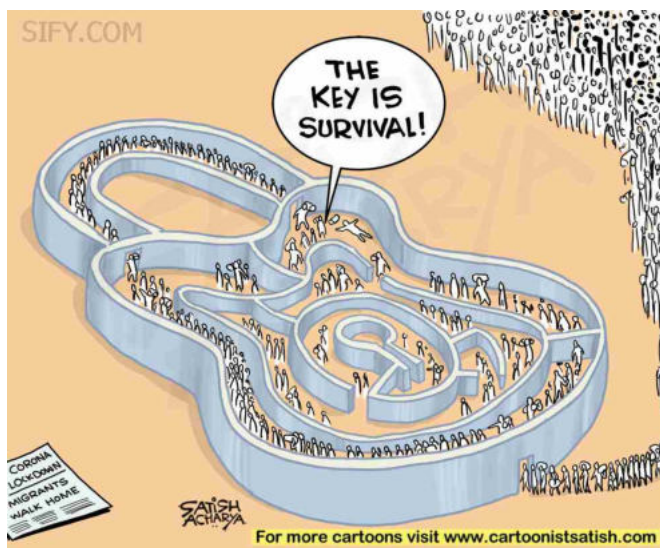
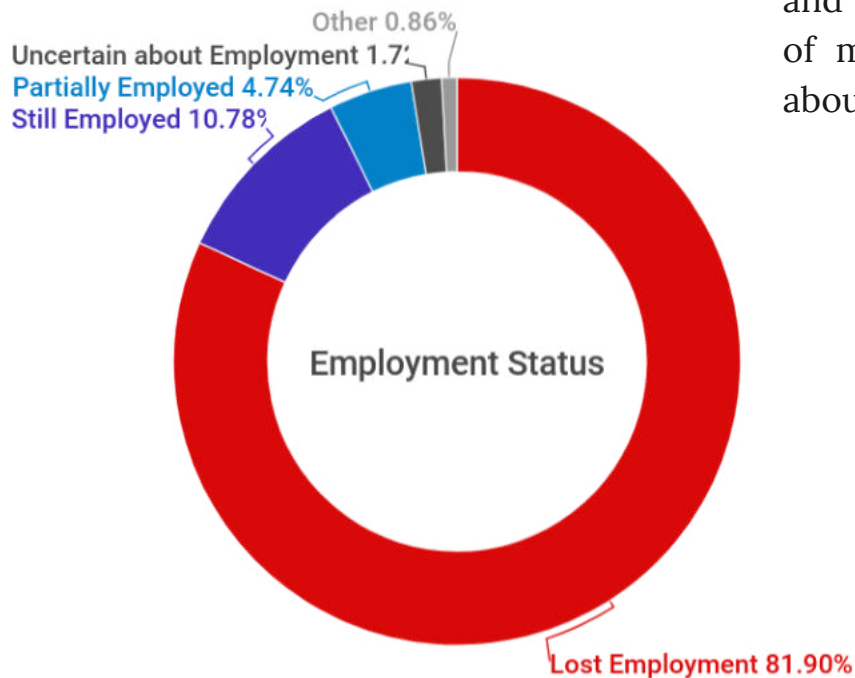


Image sources : (a) Courtesy Satish Acharya @satishacharya (b) By the authors

Quantitative analysis was conducted based on descriptive statistical methods; while qualitative responses were analysed using applied thematic analysis. This method allowed word-based analysis signifying the most frequently used words to describe specific experiences related to lockdown. As most of the interviews were conducted over phone, the responses were short and to the point which led to focusing on word analysis rather than text analysis. The raw responses were cleaned and arranged in a way that they can be used for data analysis. In the next step, the phrases were extracted from the dialogues and converted into shorter phrases to measure the frequency. Most frequent phrases were further analysed in the context of the question framed. At a later stage word clouds were created to get an overview of what was most important to the migrants in the experiences they narrated. Word frequencies seem to match the word clouds to a large extent reconfirming the importance of specific words that migrants associated with the question asked. The qualitative word frequency analysis is seen as supportive of the quantitative results as it further affirms the negative impact of lockdown on migrants' lives.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



82% of migrants lost their jobs leading to feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety about. Out of these **22%** of migrants were seriously worried about their livelihood.

“I am anxious because my work has been stopped and the contractor is not paying me salary.”

(Male, 40, Jharkhand, Construction worker)

The lockdown most severely impacted the employment of migrants. Almost 82% of migrants lost their jobs. The qualitative analysis further confirms this fact and sheds light on the other aspects of lockdown leading to feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety they experienced when they came to know about the extension of the lockdown. While describing their anxiety (see Table describing anxiety), about 22% of migrants were seriously worried about their livelihood. The quote below affirms this anxiety:

“Sometimes I feel it (Lockdown) is good for everyone's safety and sometimes I feel bad because we lost our job.”

(Male, 20, Uttar Pradesh, Construction worker)



India Unemployment Rate Spiked To 23% Post Lockdown- CMIE Report
Image source: BloombergQuint, Apr 7, 2020 Copyright © BloombergQuint

The second major concern for migrants after food aid was expected to be loss of livelihood. Joblessness resulting in financial insecurity was their main challenge. In this light, they were encouraged to verbalize their expectations from their respective employers. About 25% of migrant workers expected financial assistance from the employer. Interestingly, 16% did not receive any assistance from the employer. A small percentage of them (3%) mentioned that employers provided assistance but that was not sufficient. The quotes from the migrants reiterate their concerns related to unemployment:

“I am anxious because I am the only earner in the family.”
(Male, 26, Bihar, Painter)

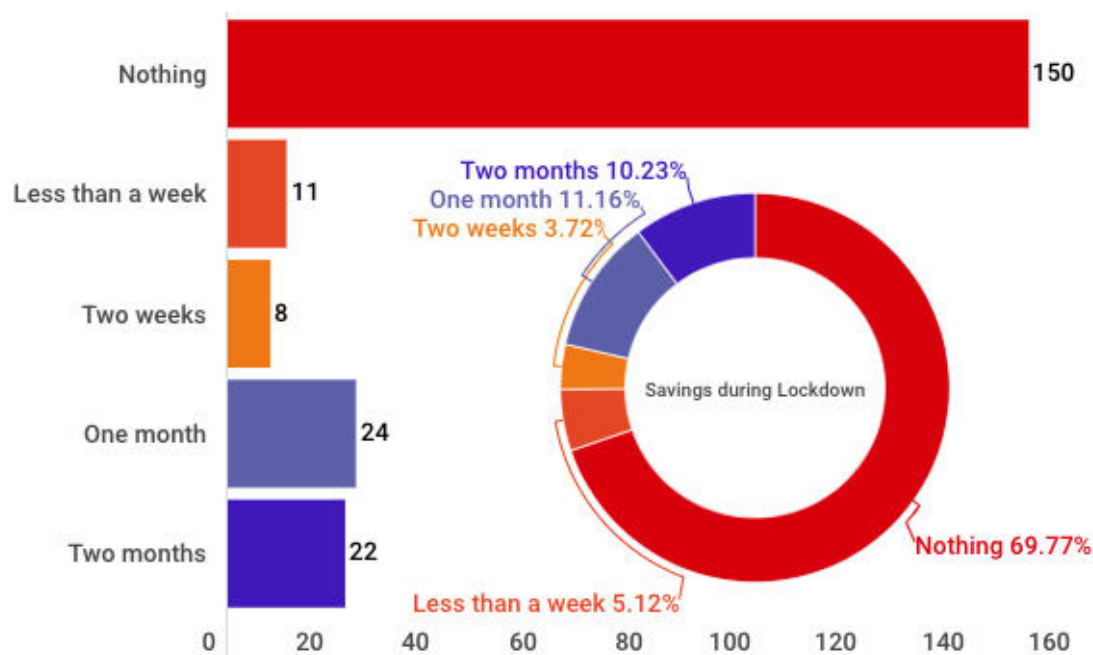
“I am thinking, how to survive with 7 members? I am the only earner and 500 rs per month in the Jandhan account is not enough.”
(Female, 30, Maharashtra, Housemaid)

SAVINGS DURING LOCKDOWN

70% of migrants did not have any savings during the lockdown. Only about 10% of the migrants said they had enough savings for 2 months.

“We are daily-wage earners, we have no savings. My daughter-in-law is a house-maid but due to lockdown she also has no income. We are worried how to cope!”

(Male, 43, Maharashtra, Bricklayer)



The income-related instability of migrants was evident from their low savings. Due to meagre earnings, they hardly had any savings and loss of income further escalated financial insecurity. The migrants explicitly mentioned their struggle to make both ends meet.

“I am anxious because all my savings are over, how should I feed my children?”
(Female, 28, Maharashtra, Driver)

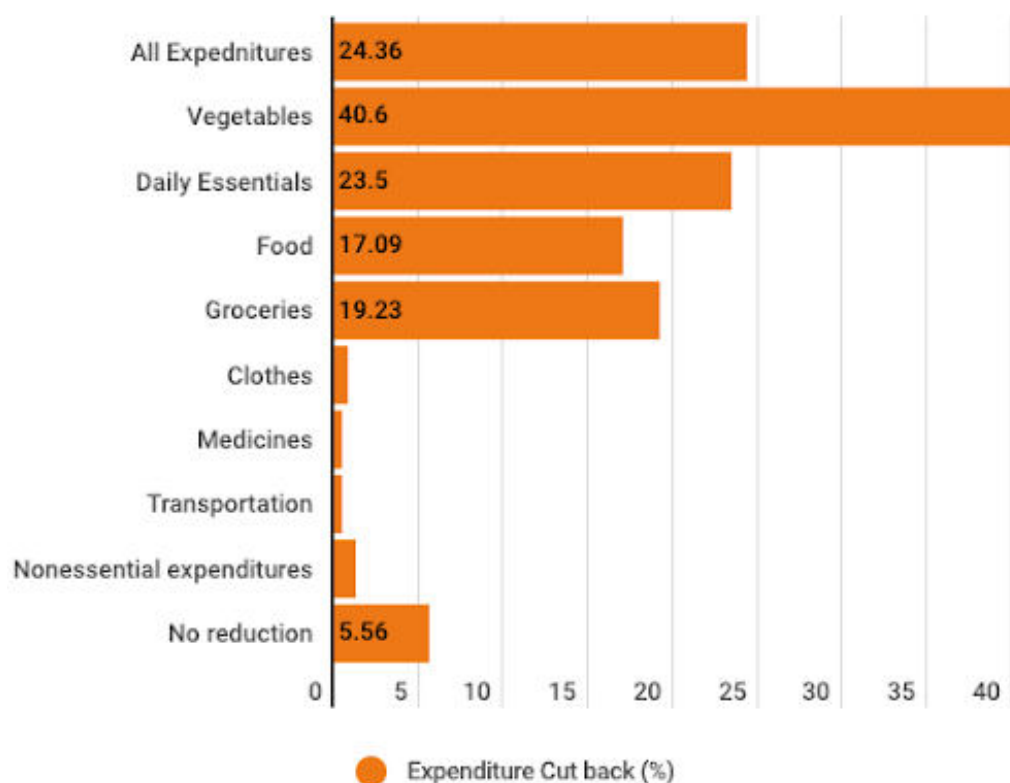
“I was stressed as I did not have money and when I asked my employer for money he refused.”
(Male, 34, Uttar Pradesh, Construction worker)

EXPENDITURE CUTBACK

About **25%** of the migrants cut back on all expenditures, more than **40%** cut down on vegetable consumption. **17%** cutdown general food consumption including cooked outside food from restaurants or mess.

“I am anxious about my family, how will I shop for groceries?”
(Male, 30, Maharashtra, Painter)

The lockdown and its extensions lasted for 68 days. Unlock phase was slow, gradual, and most migrants who had lost their jobs, did not get jobs immediately. This forced them to cut down on daily expenditures. About 25% of the respondents expressed that they cut back on all expenditures, and more than 40% said they cut down on vegetable consumption. A quarter of them cut down daily essentials like milk and other supplies. 17% cutdown general food consumption including cooked outside food from restaurants or mess. Some migrants also expressed cutting down on clothing, medicine, and transportation. Put together, **a major lesson from the qualitative interviews was 87.18% (204 out of 234) expressed cutting down on food expenditures, resulting in a serious threat to their food security.**



FOOD SECURITY

Only **33.5%** of migrants received food from various sources namely government, municipal corporation, private parties, NGOs and rarely from employers. Migrants reported sporadicity in receiving food aid.

“My family is facing trouble. I feel I am dying without food. I spent some days without having food. Sometimes I ate once a day, and sometimes only at night”.

(Male, 34, Uttar Pradesh, Construction worker)



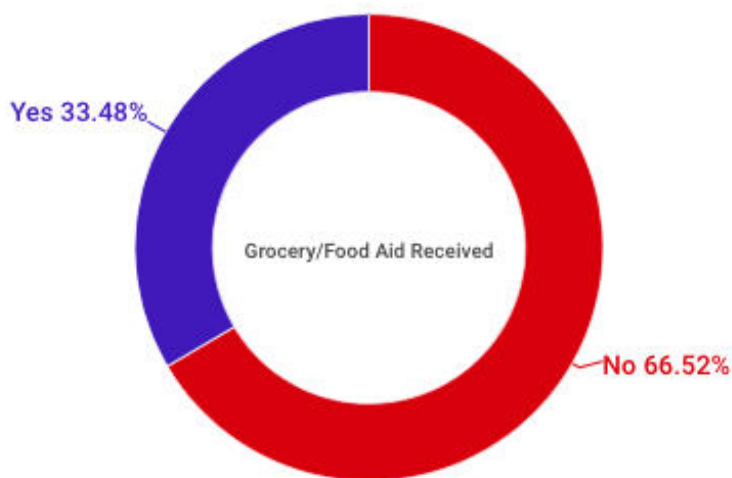
Food distribution by local agencies at Someshwarwadi, Pune (PC: Ramji Maharaj)

The impact of lockdown on the availability of food was the most severe. The migrants experienced a lot of hurdles including not receiving groceries and food packages on time as the government or private agencies were not able to reach many areas in Pune to provide food aid. The ration stores were not equipped to handle the crisis as they did not have enough resources to provide groceries to the migrants. Additionally, there were issues with ration cards which further intensified the problem.

The results showed that **altogether two-thirds of the respondents (66.5%) did not receive any kind of food aid during the lockdown period.** Even those who received some sort of food aid, reported that aid was sporadic, not provided in sufficient quantity and not enough to ensure food and nutrition security on a daily basis. Such deficiency in food provision mostly impacted the pregnant women, lactating mothers, children, and elderly.



illustration by Spoorthy Murali



The analysis also shows a slightly better picture as well. 33.5% of migrants did receive food from various sources namely government, municipal corporation, private parties, NGOs, and rarely employers. The following table (next page) gives a split of the source of food, type, frequency of aid, and respondents statistics. About 24 migrants received aid from government sources (including PMC). The table also shows the intermittency of the aid received.

Migrants mention their experiences of food insecurity as follows:

“Government should give some money and ration and give some relaxation in installments. I am paying installments for loans, instead of spending money to feed my family.”
(Male, 26, Maharashtra, Housekeeping)

“I am very anxious as I have no money, no job. What should I feed my children?”
(Female, 30, Maharashtra, Nurse)

Table 2: Frequency & type of food aid received from various sources

Provider	Type	Days	Respondents
Corporation & Private Parties	Ration	thrice	1
Corporation	Ration	once	2
Employer	Ration	once	1
Government	Ration	once	10
Government	Ration	twice	6
Government	Ration	thrice	2
Government	Food	4 times	1
Government	Food	8 times	1
Government	Food	daily	1
Private	Ration	twice	2
Private	Food	30 days	1
Private	Ration	once	1
Ration	Food	once	1
Ration shop	Ration	once	2
Ration shop	Ration	twice	1
Source Unknown	Ration	once	13
Source Unknown	Ration	twice	4
Source Unknown	Food	30 days	3
Source Unknown	Food	4 times	3
Source Unknown	Food	daily	2
Source Unknown	Ration	thrice	2
Source Unknown	Food	20 days	1
Source Unknown	Food	45 days	1
Source Unknown	Food	5 times	1
Source Unknown	Food	once	1
Source Unknown	Food	twice	1

RATION CARD HURDLES

About half of our respondents (51%) did not have a ration card. Those who had ration hurdles in accessing rations such as- no stamp on card, ration not enough, irregular availability, and multiple visits needed to get ration

“I did not get a ration because there was no stamp on the ration card and the ration shop owner said that the card was from another city so we can't give you a ration.”

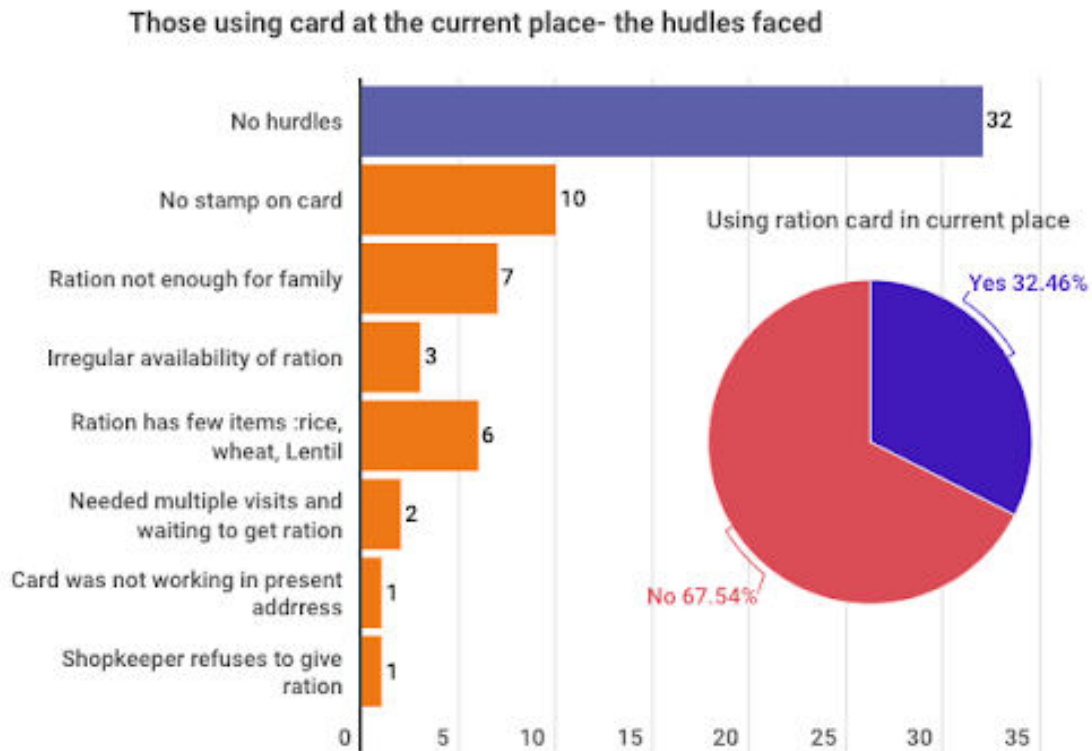
(Male, 20, Bihar, Auto driver)



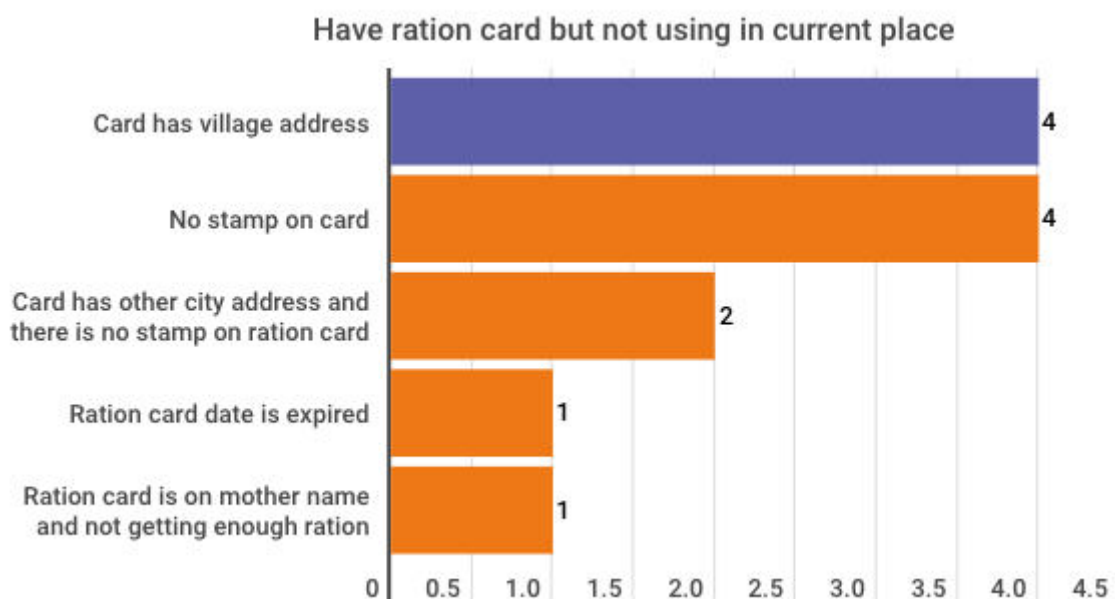
Representative image of ration shop : Indranil Bhoumik/Mint
<https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/F4TQhIViQ9gfs4lOClaimN/Automating-the-ration-shops.html>

As noted in the earlier section, other nationwide surveys indicated inadequate government response to address the food security issue during the lockdown. SWAN report-1 noted that in the first 21 days, “96% of the migrants had not received rations from the government and 70% had not received any cooked food” (SWAN Team, 2020, May). Most of the distress calls SWAN received were regarding migrants’ need for rations. 67% (154) of our respondents did not have or use the ration cards in the current place of residence. The common feeling among the workers was that they earn bread by working, and they have never extended arms seeking food. The crisis had made them helpless, vulnerable, and they experienced a loss of dignity (D’Rozario et al. 2020, May 8).

When asked about the hurdles faced in accessing the ration card, the varied responses our survey noted were: no stamp on ration card, irregular availability of ration/ration is not enough for the family, multiple visits to get ration and available rations of only cereals and lentils and non-working of ration card in present address among others.



Hurdles faced by those who had ration cards, but were unable to use it in the current place are: card has village address, no stamp on ration card, ration card date has expired, and ration card is in family member (like mother's) name on it.



Below are some of concerns expressed by the migrants:

We don't expect much. Just give us work, some rations and money to survive”.
(Female, 35, Maharashtra, Nurse)

I did not get a ration even after standing for 4 hours in the queue.”
(Female, 32, Uttar Pradesh, Construction worker)

“I don't get a ration here. The ration card is on my mother's name. She gets a ration in my hometown. It is not enough for 4 people.”
(Male, 50, Maharashtra, Fishmonger)

“I could not buy food items for children. Whatever we got on the ration card we had to survive on that. We got only rice and tur dal. Every day we are only eating dal-rice as I can't buy vegetables.”
(Female, 43, Bihar, Housemaid)

The problem of hunger and nutrition in India persisted even after the lockdown phase ended, as many could not get back to work. **Hunger Watch report by Right to Food campaign in 11 states, including Maharashtra, noted that about 77 per cent of the PVTG (particularly vulnerable tribal groups) families decreased their quantity of food consumption in September-October as compared to the pre-lockdown period.** The reduction was highest for green vegetables (73%), followed by lentils (64%), and cereals- rice/wheat (53%) (The Wire, 2020b). The group has demanded a universal public distribution system that supplies every household with at least 10 kg grain, 1.5 kg pulses and 800-gram cooking oil till June 2021.



Image source: by Author

MONEY REMITTANCE

Before lockdown **47.8%** of migrants were remitting money to their families, during lockdown only **6.4%** could remit money.

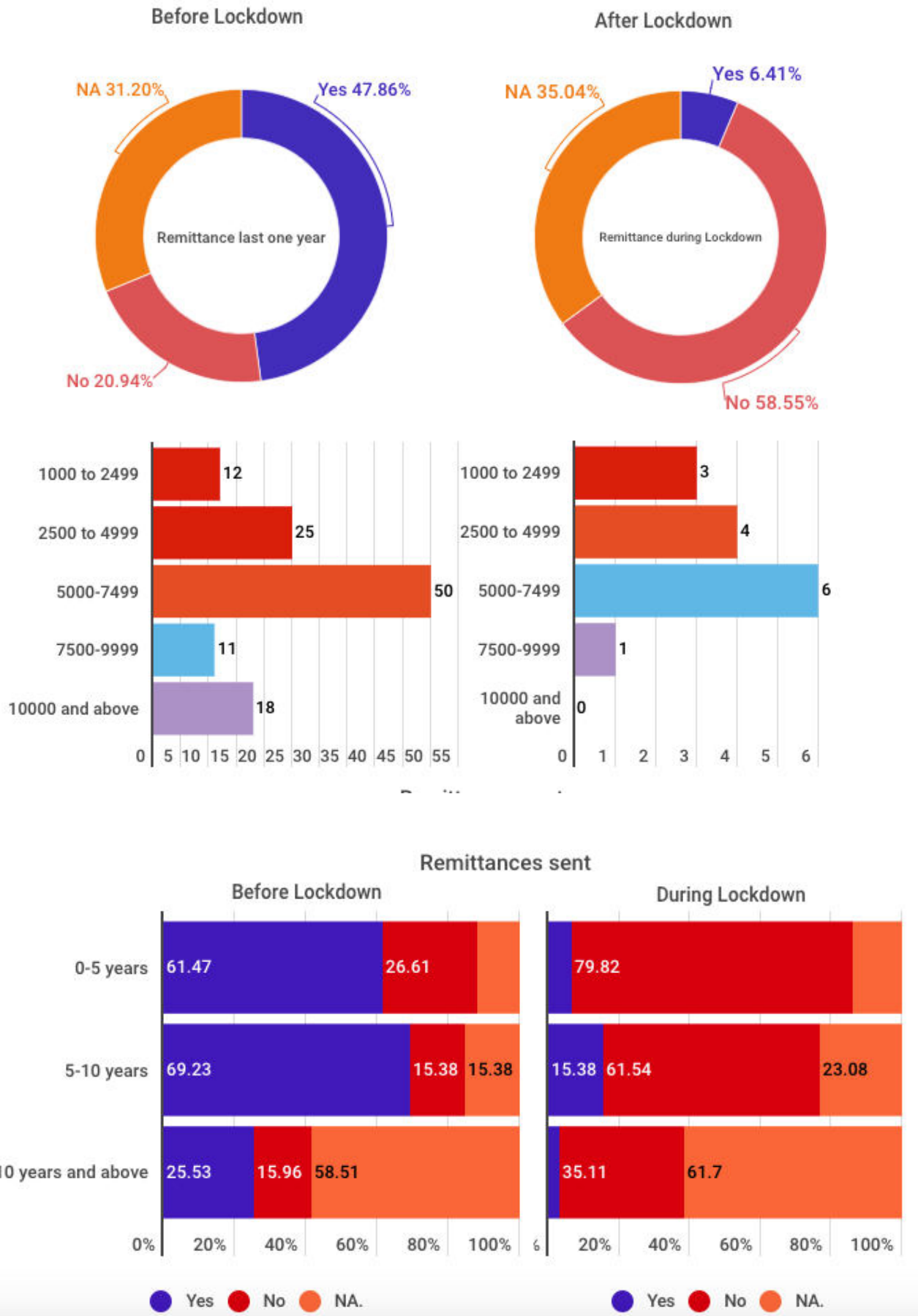
“Anxiety is due to job loss, I don't have enough money to survive here and also I have a big family in Bihar. How will I send them money?”

(Male, 26, Bihar, Painter)

The bulk of the Indian migration, termed as ‘The Great Migration wave’, is semi-permanent, male-dominated, and remittance-yielding (Tumbe, 2018). Remittances are the lifeline for the families of semi-permanent circular migrants. Semi-permanent migrants spend “a greater part of the year away from their homes and who do not permanently settle in their destinations”. Many of them return after working outside for a few years or decades (Tumbe, 2018).

Prior to the lockdown, 47.8% of the respondents were remitting money to their families. About half of the remittances were in the range of Rs. 5000-7500 per month (48%), including few (18) who were sending Rs. 10,000 and above. During the lockdown period, only 6.4% (14) of the migrants sent money back home. Only 7 of them sent money above 5000 rupees. Many of the respondents hesitantly had to borrow money from their homes to survive. When the respondents data was split by the duration of migration, it can be found that prior to lockdown 60-70% of short term migrants (migrated less than 10 years) used to send money back home. The percentage drops to 25.5% for longterm (more than 10 years) migrants. During the lockdown, only 6.4% of the respondents sent money back home (who moved less than 5 years back), the number is slightly higher at 15.38% for those with duration of migration between 5-10 years.

The distress indicator of money remittance received enough attention during the analysis. While the money remittance was gravely affected by the loss of earnings and due to job loss; indeed, some short term migrants did attempt to send the money back home. Due to the lack of savings, their experiences with money remittance were far less than positive.

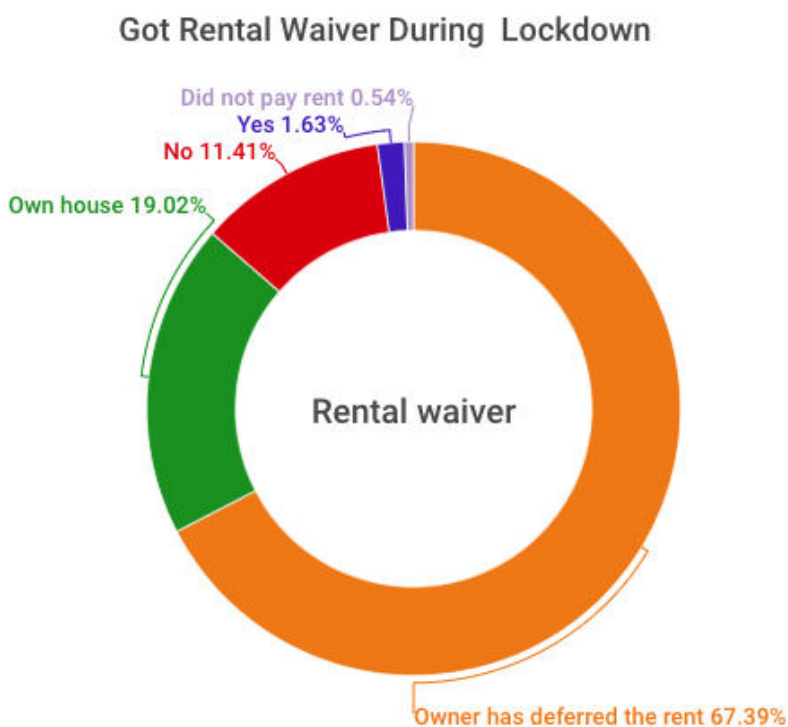


RENTAL WAIVER

Only **1.63%** of the landlords had actually waived the rent, **11.4%** could not pay rent when demanded, **67.4%** landlords had deferred the payment of rent.

“The owner has not taken the rent yet. But I need to paid at a later stage”

(Male, 21, Maharashtra Barber)



For many migrants a major cause of distress was reported as struggle with payment of rent after their job loss. The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order on March 29 2020, mentioning that the landlords should not demand rent for a period of one month from workers and migrants living in rented accommodation (Ministry of Home Affairs - India, 2020).

The qualitative interviews conducted for this study in May and June revealed that only 1.63% of the landlords had actually waived the rent. Many of them (67.4%) had deferred the payment of rent. About 12% migrants could not pay the rent at all as they did not have savings. The ones who did not have money to pay the rent expressed their worry and mentioned their expectation that the rent be waived off.

“The owner should try to waive off the rent and instalment for the next 2 to 3 months.”
(Male, 19, Maharashtra, Laundry work)

“I am anxious because I am running short of money, I have to pay the rent, salary to workers.”
(Male, 45, Maharashtra, Vegetable seller)

Psychological distress indicators

The lockdown took a heavy toll on the psychological state of the migrants. These times of crisis brought along heightened arousal of various emotions, feelings and this affected their daily lives to a large extent. Grappling with such a crisis could have a long term effect on migrants' mental state. There is a clear lack of recognition of psychological distress experienced by migrant workers both by the government and private parties as the government announcements had no component to address mental health issues during the COVID-19 timeframe. Consequently, poor migrants had no awareness of which agencies to reach out to to address the mental health needs. Some efforts were made by the Maharashtra Government to address the mental health concerns raised by the migrants (The New Indian Express, 24 April 2020). The media reports around 47,000 migrants benefitted from the psychological services provided by Maharashtra Health Department (Punekarnews, 24 April). This effort is worth acknowledging but the question is are these efforts enough as this shows a weak outreach considering there were 5.5 lakh migrants labourers residing in 944 relief camps (Hindustan Times, 25 April, 2020). Only a district level team of 30 counsellors, 28 psychiatrists and 36 psychiatric nurses were deployed on the mission of relieving the psychological distress experienced by migrants.

To understand the impact of lockdown on the lives of migrants, specific psychological indicators were chosen. Four psychological indicators namely perception of lockdown, anxiety, stress and worthlessness were considered. Applied thematic analysis focusing on 'word analysis' was seen as most useful for interpreting the qualitative responses. The most frequently occurring phrases were deduced from the qualitative responses and transferred into shorter phrases to measure the frequency. A frequency table of most frequently used words was created for every question to understand the impact of lockdown. To better understand the word spread word clouds were created which are presented in the following section. The word frequency tables and work clouds together shed light on the migrants' psychological state during the lockdown.

PERCEPTION OF LOCKDOWN

For an enhanced understanding of the perception of lockdown, the migrants were asked to describe their feelings when they became aware of the extension of lockdown.

"We are terribly frightened. We had nothing to survive on. Whatever savings we had till now we spent those and now we have to pay 35000 school fees for our child."

(Female, 33, Maharashtra, Housemaid)



A small but significant amount of migrants (15%) accepted the extension as they received support from local authorities. But a substantial amount (36%) expressed a feeling of insecurity and another fraction (35%) expressed feelings of fear and anxiety when they came to know that the lockdown has been extended. Some migrants (7%) did experience a feeling of frustration. Though a small percentage, a few migrants did experience negative feelings such as pessimism and helplessness. Consider for example this statement expressed by a migrant:

"We never thought that lockdown would be extended for this long."

(Female, 40, Maharashtra, Housemaid)

Table 3. Word frequency: perception of lockdown

SL NO	UNFILTERED WORD COUNT	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
1	insecurity	85	36.32
2	fear and anxiety	82	35.04
3	worried about livelihood	50	21.36
4	acceptance due to support received	37	15.81
5	frustration	17	7.26
6	optimism	4	1.73
7	expectations	4	1.73
8	pessimism	2	0.85
9	helpless	2	0.85

When migrants were asked about the correctness of the decision of lockdown most of them opined positively about it.

Table 4. Word frequency: correctness of the decision of lockdown

SL NO	UNFILTERED WORD COUNT	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
1	yes	183	78.20
2	not sure	62	26.49
3	no	19	8.11

Along with knowing the initial perception of migrants towards lockdown, it was crucial to see if this perception changed in the following lockdowns. They were asked to express their opinions about the extension of lockdown. 78% migrants thought that the lockdown was a correct decision, this percentage is slightly lower than before. As compared to earlier perception, more migrants (26%) were not sure about this decision and 8% thought the extension was not a right decision. The slight changes in the percentages can be understood as the perception became less positive as compared to the initial perception as the migrants thought that the lockdown was not there to stay for long, thus raising concerns about their livelihood.

“We feel worried about children's education, our food mess has stopped working and we don't have money to buy food.”
(Male, 45, Uttar Pradesh, Painter)

Table 5. Word frequency: Anxiety description

ANXIETY DESCRIPTION			
SL NO	Unfiltered word count	Occurrences	Percentage
1	Felt anxious	174	74.35
2	job loss	93	39.74
3	income	68	29.05
4	food	34	14.52
5	family	31	13.24
6	future	10	4.27
7	home	10	4.27
8	children	9	3.84
9	instalments	9	3.84
10	health	7	2.99
11	education	6	2.56
12	rent	6	2.56
13	expenditure	6	2.56
14	transportation	4	1.70
15	borrowed money	4	1.70
16	COVID	4	1.70

The assumption that migrants would experience anxiety was supported as 74% of migrants were anxious about the lockdown and how it was affecting their daily lives. When further probed, they revealed various causes of anxiety. Among the factors, Job loss is the highest at 39%, anxiety about financial stability and income, anxiety about availability of food was mentioned by 14%. Around 13% migrants whose families were back in their hometowns were anxious about their well-being.

The other smaller percentages show some more causes for the feeling of anxiety they experienced - the causes being anxiety about the future, about well-being and education of children, payment of instalments, borrowing money, their own health, house rent, and transportation. Surprisingly, they were not anxious about the COVID infection. Only 1.7% mentioned were worried about catching an infection. For them, the availability of food, the possibility of income generation seemed to have a higher priority than protecting themselves from the unknown disease.

The following quotes from the migrants elucidate the causes for anxiety they experienced:

*"I am anxious about my job due to the sudden lockdown."
(Male, 22, Maharashtra, Housekeeping)*

*"I am anxious about my job, no ration, no money, education expenses for children. How will we cope up with that?"
(Female, 36, Maharashtra, Housemaid)*

"I am anxious because my wife is pregnant. How do I take her to regular check up"?(Male, 22, Chhattisgarh, Construction worker)

*"I am anxious because I have to pay monthly installments and bills."
(Male, 25, Maharashtra, Driver)*

*"I am anxious because of no salary and unavailability of bus & train."
(Male, 21, Jharkhand, Advertising-Hoardings)*

Table 6. Word frequency: stress description

FEELING OF STRESS			
SL NO	Unfiltered word count	Occurrences	Percentage
1	sleep disturbance	97	41.45
2	change in appetite	16	6.83
3	overthinking	13	5.55
4	overall stress	12	5.12
5	worry	10	4.27
6	unavailability of resources	9	3.84
7	finances	8	3.41
8	uncertainty	7	2.99
10	family/home	5	2.13
11	job	3	1.28

Various narrations of the respondents showed that they experienced stress and the following statements support the conclusion:

“Sometimes I could not sleep at night. Now also I think when will everything come back to normal?”
(Female, 58, Maharashtra, Driver)

“I can't fall asleep at night. I often have to sleep empty stomach.”
(Male, 25, Maharashtra, Hotel waiter)

“I couldn't sleep well because I woke up often at midnight and started thinking of my job, and family.”
(Male, 32, Bihar, Painter)

WORTHLESSNESS

Feeling worthy is central to the adult self-concept. Many a times this feeling has its roots in job security, security related to family and children and the feeling of being valued by one's social circle.

44% of migrants never experienced the feeling of worthlessness, 23% mentioned feeling worthless, 19% experienced the feeling of worthlessness sometimes and 10% migrants rarely experienced not being valued.

Table 7. Work frequency: feeling of worthlessness

FEELING OF WORTHLESSNESS			
SL NO	Unfiltered word count	Occurrences	Percentage
1	never	105	44.8718
2	always	55	23.5043
3	sometimes	46	19.6581
4	rarely	24	10.2564

In stressful situations there is a high impact on livelihoods, loss of income and lack of other financial support. This may lead to feelings of worthlessness or being undervalued. Surprisingly, 44% of migrants never experienced the feeling of worthlessness. One plausible reason is that these migrants did not attach their self-worth with experiencing hardships related to the lockdown. Also, almost 50% sample was resident migrants implying that they were living with their families and had support from their immediate and extended families which adds to feelings of security. This social capital served as a strong support, leaving very few migrants to feel worthless about themselves in spite of income loss and other losses. Self worth entails self-love, self-understanding and self-acceptance which is a highly subjective construct. For the ones who did not feel worthless, external environments may not have a large effect on the self. The migrants largely come from poor and modest families, struggles are not new to them so this may lead to a higher self-acceptance and acceptance of the situation they were in. Furthermore, 23% did experience that no one values them, 19% experienced the feeling of worthlessness sometimes and 10% migrants rarely experienced not being valued.

KEY FINDINGS

Migrants form the backbone of urban workforce and had largely remained hidden from public and political attention. During the COVID crisis, they became visible in the media and entered the public and political discourse. The media attention was largely focused on short term circular migrants who tried to return back home and had stronger social and financial ties with their hometown/village. The struggles faced by the migrants who stayed behind were largely neglected in the public narrative. The current report highlighted the distress and burden shared by both short and long term migrants who stayed or were left behind in Pune city, and the challenges they faced in getting access to government support.

01

IDENTITY & RESIDENCE

Issues with valid local residential proof

02

FOOD SECURITY

87% had to cut down on food expenses; 67% say no food aid received

03

HOUSING

Cramped housing; social distancing impossible

04

SOCIAL SECURITY

92% had no EPF account

05

JAN DHAN ACCOUNTS

Rs. 500 inadequate, 67% had no Jan Dhan account

06

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

High levels of anxiety, stress, along with feeling of worthlessness

1. Identity and Residence: Although 98% of our respondents did possess Aadhaar cards, most of them did not have a valid local residential proof. Pune has about roughly equal proportions of short term and long term migrants. Among the inter-state migrants 60% are short term migrants (Census 2011). Many short term migrants and especially inter-state migrants did not have a local residence proof. Furthermore, the inter-state migrants faced a challenge of updation of the Aadhaar card. The survey also pointed out that the majority of the inter-state migrants lived in a rented accommodation or lived at their workplaces. Low cost rented accommodations and chawls do not provide them with valid rental agreements, making address updation even more challenging.



illustration by Spoorthy Murali

2. Food security: The greatest distress migrants faced during the lockdown was food insecurity. The current survey showed that almost 70% of the migrants had hardly any savings left causing a serious threat to food security. While 87% verbalized cutting down on food expenditures, 67% did not receive any food aid. The primary survey has revealed that much of the migrant population in Pune was left out of the PDS system. About 67% of the respondents did not have or were not able to use ration cards in the current place of residence. The main reasons that came up in the analysis were: cards having village address, no stamp on ration cards, ration card date has expired, and ration card has a family member's (like mother's) name on it.

Even those who were using ration cards in their current place narrated different stories of difficulty in accessing rations. The ones who received food aid, clearly mentioned it to be sporadic and insufficient. Later media reports showed that the food insecurity during the lockdown led to a 'Pandemic of Hunger' and malnutrition consequently leading to a rapid rise in the moderate and severely acute malnourished children (Kulkarni, 2020 October). The lack of food security for migrants is a result of a combination of governance issues including the *de facto* exclusion under flagship schemes such as the Food Security Act and delayed implementation of crucial inclusive policies such as the "One Nation One Ration Card".

3. **Housing:** The report revealed that only 28% of respondents owned a house, most of whom were long term intra-state migrants from Maharashtra (and can be treated as local residents). A typical accommodation of a migrant poor is a small one- room- house with kitchen and bathroom partitioned and an outside community toilet. The housing colonies/chawls are cramped with little or no separation between houses. Implementing social distancing in such a setting is next to impossible. The report further revealed that most migrants did not have proper documentation of the rented house they were living in. Also, most owners did not provide rental waiver to the migrants, only deferred rental payment; which became another hurdle for migrants to be crossed.

4. **Social security:** The PMGKY announcement mentioned depositing 24% of labourers' monthly wages into their respective PF accounts for next three months (Ministry of Finance - India, 2020 March). Contrary to this, the report noted that 92.6% of the labourers did not have any EPF account, as they were working in unorganized sector or as contractual labourers. It should be noted that the EPF contribution amounts to maximum 12% of the basic wages and daily allowances (Celartax, 2021).

5. **Jan Dhan account transfer:** Cash transfer of Rs. 500 under PMGKY through Jan Dhan accounts also missed the target as 2/3rd of the respondents in the current study did not have a Jan Dhan account. Even for those (22%) who received the Jan Dhan money, the amount was grossly inadequate (amounting barely 1-2 days of daily wage), and the transaction cost of withdrawing (visit to specific bank, most of which were closed during lockdown) outweighed any paltry benefit.

6. **Psychological Distress:** Psychological distress was analysed by understanding migrants' perception of lockdown, anxiety and stress levels and feeling of worthlessness. Results showed they experienced heightened levels of anxiety, fear, and stress due to job loss, insecurity of income, unavailability of food and worry about families back home. Only 23.5% migrant workers felt worthless throughout lockdown and 19% sometimes felt worthless. It may be cautiously inferred that the migrants may not have closely associated their self-worth with losses they incurred due to the lockdown. Familial support, sharing saved money, if they had, sharing groceries and other resources with relatives and other extended families was a possibility for them. Many surveys have indicated similar psychological distress during the COVID-19 times. These surveys noted an increase in anxiety, depression (Rajkumar, 2020, Banal et al.), suicide rate (Nelson, 2020) and other mental health issues (Bhardwaj, 2012) as a result of the lockdown.

AVERTING A FUTURE MIGRANT CRISIS: SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognition of migrants as *de jure* residents of the city

The Constitution of India under Article 19(1)(d) mentions a fundamental right to "move freely throughout the territory of India". Despite this, migrants and their families face an identity crisis in the place they live in and work. They are treated as outsiders by the locals, and pose barriers to social, cultural, and political assimilation. Migrants are largely excluded from the electoral lists in the city they live, a violation of their fundamental freedom to vote under Article 19(1)(a) (Goyal & Kothawade, 2020). Their lack of political voice largely explains the reason for their absence in political discourse.

The migrant crisis showed a complete lack of data on migrant (especially Inter-state migrants) presence in state government records. It is recommended that the local and state governments recognize the migrants as *de jure* residents, as they are the primary source of service delivery. Also recommended is the formal recognition of their presence through migrant portals and offering valid residence proofs to avail government services on par with the locals.

The Central Government announced the launch of an online portal for migrant registration, which by far is not operational (Jha, 2020 April). The authors speculate that such a centralized online portal is unlikely to solve the problem as migrants face basic barriers of digital literacy and language.

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 was enacted to prevent the exploitation of inter-state migrant workmen by contractors. The excessive compliance requirement has dissuaded employers from reporting the migrant workforce and no state has implemented it in letter and spirit (Krishnan, Burman, & Rai, 2020). The Act has to be amended to incentivize registration, ease and normalize the compliance by employers.



Addressing Food Security

The National Food Security Act (NFSA) legally entitled 50% of the urban population to receive subsidized food grains under the Public Distribution System (PDS). In the 2020-21 budget, Rs. 1.22 lakh crore was allocated to the Department of Food & Public Distribution for the food subsidy (PRS India, 2020, February). The relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) (Ministry of Finance- India, 2020) announced a few days after the lockdown had little to offer to migrants .

The increased allocation of food grains to 80 crore individuals involved those beneficiaries listed in the NFSA-PDS system which largely excluded migrants. None of the survey respondents (even those who had a valid ration card in Pune) mentioned receipt of additional food grains during the lockdown.

There are multiple reasons impacting food security for both migrants and non-migrants such as exclusion due to ration card database integration and authentication, issues in the digitization of ration cards, and also non-availability of ration in the shop (Khera, 2017; Drèze et. al, 2017).

A major barrier for migrants in getting access to PDS is the burden of domicile proof. The government had announced the implementation of “One Nation One Ration Card” from June 1, 2019 which would allow beneficiaries registered in one state to avail rations from another state (ET Government, 2019, August). A major hurdle in this regard is the lack of good data on the mobility of poor households migrating to work and locating intra- and inter-state destinations and sectors employing the workers. Capturing information and migration patterns for seasonal and circular migration is particularly challenging (Daniel, 2019).

Many activists and researchers have been advocating the **universalization of PDS to overcome issues of targeting**. Excess storage in FCI godowns address the supply side, and self-exclusion by higher-income non-poor largely address the demand-side issues of universalization of PDS.



Representational Image:

<http://sunntosahi.com/the-ration-shop/>

Urban Housing for the Migrants

Little seems to have been done to address the housing problem especially in Pune. The Pune Municipal Corporation lists only Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) as the housing scheme for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). PMC or the state government specifically do not have any other major scheme to address this issue. The government low income housing is rarely to be seen in Pune, and in this survey none of the inter state migrant respondents lived in any government housing. Oral interviews suggested that only “influential poor” with connections are able to avail benefits from the housing schemes.

Given the cost and complexity of building houses and providing ownership records, Housing for all by 2022 seems like a distant dream.



MOST INTERSTATE MIGRANTS LIVE IN SELF RENTED/SHARED ACCOMMODATION OR IN THE WORKPLACE.

THEY ARE LEAST LIKELY TO BE INCLUDED IN ANY GOVERNMENT HOUSING SCHEMES

Many past schemes on Urban housing have largely failed. Utilizing the existing vacant housing units owned by the government or private sector would be a viable option. The Union Government's approval of **affordable rental housing complexes (ARHCs)**, where government vacant houses will be rented at rates Rs. 1000-3000 for migrant workers is a welcome move (Gupta M.D., 2020, July). But, a major lacuna is the dependence on UPA-era buildings, which are limited in supply. Private sector participation in affordable rental housing is crucial to make significant difference.

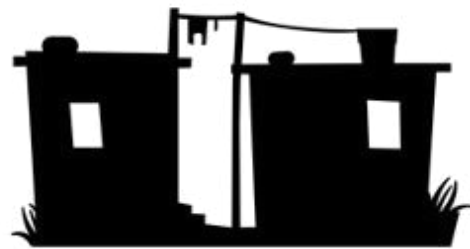


Illustration: slums by Vicente Arenas from the Noun Project

Social Security & Safety net for the poor

Our survey further affirmed the vulnerability of unorganised workers in India. 92% did not have a provident fund account. Employee support during the crisis was minimal, and the workers had little or no saving to support themselves. During the lockdown period, PMGKY allowed the withdrawal of 75% of EPF funds or 3 months of salary, whichever is lower. The coverage of EPF spans to 4.8 crore organized sector workers. Another pressing issue is the withdrawal under the PF scheme; which poses considerable bureaucratic hurdles including time-consuming excessive paperwork. Given the limited operation of Banks during the lockdown, this was hardly an option for income security even for the migrants who had EPF accounts.

Many European countries have provided strong social safety for loss of employment through unemployment benefits, which cover basic living costs. Almost all the developed countries in the world such as USA, UK, and EU have a strong Universal Social Security Program (Dethier, 2007, pp. 1–3). Such safety nets are largely absent in India. It is important that India recognizes that providing a safety net during the sudden loss of employment as a core element of building a welfare state.

The National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) in 2007, had proposed making the social security system a legal entitlement for the unorganized sector with a simple system of registration based on self-certification and the issuance of social security cards. The recommendations of NCEUS was not represented in the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act-2008 (SWAN Team, 2020 June). The recent draft Code on Social Security (Central) Rules, 2020 has been pending in Parliament.

We believe that the country has the fiscal and state capacity to create a Universal Social Security System, and must be done with a sense of urgency.



Migrant refugee part of the icon by
Gan Khoon Lay from the Noun Project

Direct Cash Transfer during crisis

The US and many European countries provided huge financial relief packages to individuals, families, and small businesses during the COVID crisis. For example, the US Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per child under 17 years old or up to \$3,400 for a family of four in 2020 (US DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, 2021), sufficient to ensure basic living for at least a month.

In comparison, the government's Jan Dhan transfer at a paltry, one-time 500 rupees per person accounted for a day or two of the minimum wage. In future crises involving migrants and other vulnerable populations, the government must provide higher relief funds to meet basic nutritional requirements, taking into account the prevalent inflation and transaction costs for victims in withdrawing the allocated funds. Such efforts must proceed in tandem with a push (in mission mode, if necessary) to ensure greater penetration of Jan Dhan accounts amongst vulnerable populations such as migrants to enable seamless transfer of state relief funds.



NGOs and Volunteer groups as last-mile implementers

The SWAN reports mentioned in the earlier chapter have highlighted how Karnataka fared better on migrant relief efforts due to better partnerships between local administration and civil society organisations. Evidently, Maharashtra did not seem to have such partnerships at a sufficient scale. Maharashtra fared poorly in terms of the government response in providing ration and food. As per a report filed by Center, during the first lockdown phase NGOs across the country had served 30.11 lakh meals; Rotary Club had served 60 lakh meals in Mumbai alone in April (Gupta, 2020). Our respondents also reported that NGO and volunteer groups reach to be higher than the government during the lockdown.



State-NGO-Civil Society coordination is crucial in the success of migrant relief efforts at scale and on time. The state's relief efforts during the months after the lockdown were compromised by familiar problems related to last-mile implementation including non-possession of key enabling documents such as ration cards. This void in the state's delivery of relief was filled by many NGOs, private parties and civil societies during the crisis through overwhelming relief efforts. Considering their limited outreach and regularity, future relief efforts should certainly aim for an efficacious alignment of the state's informational and organizational capabilities with the ground-level knowledge of the NGO's, providing them the resources to deliver relief at scale. NGO's are also crucial first responders in cities during crises, with the capacity to often outdo the state in terms of mobilizing aid and last-mile delivery. It is prudent for the state to view NGO's as force-multipliers of state capability or as 'last-mile implementers' to overcome the last-mile gap.

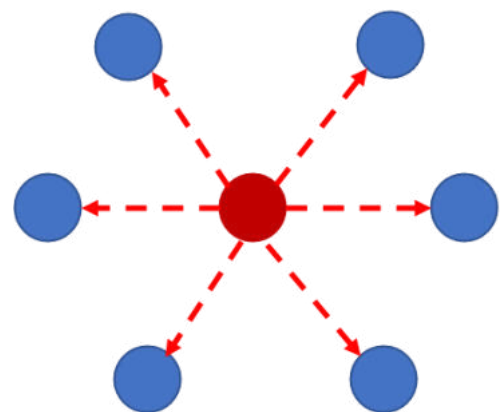
Devolve functions and empower local governments:

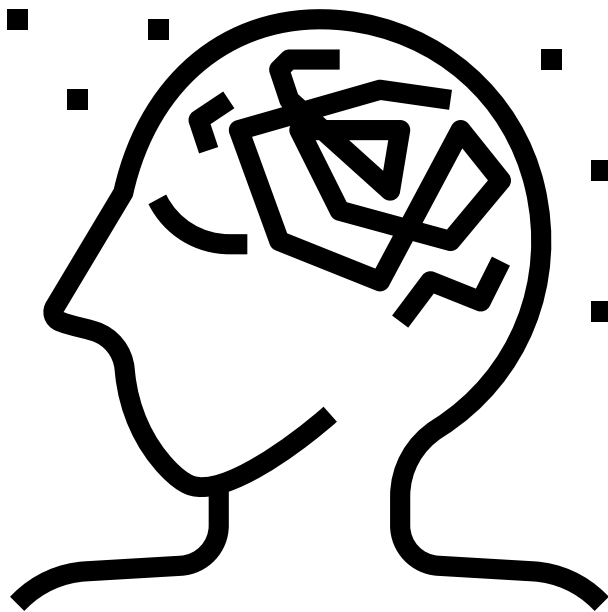
Migrant crisis could have been largely averted and COVID-19 Pandemic would have been better managed, if people on the ground had been consulted, and local governments have been given the power and resources to manage the crisis (Sirohi, 2020). Kerala government had announced its Rs 20,000-crore relief package prior to Central announcement that "included a free public distribution system, a kit with essentials for everyone, 2,300 community kitchens, regular Anganwadi ration delivery, and cash transfers" (Sirohi, 2020).

Kerala's relief effort through community kitchens, helplines, home delivery of rations to the quarantined, all spearheaded by local self-governments has been cited as best practice in COVID-19 crisis management (Vijayanand, 2020).

A central lesson to be learnt is that draconian central policies such as Demonetization and National Lockdown have drastic socio-economic and human costs, which the state can't be mitigate even in the long term.

Incremental policies designed and executed by the local and state governments respect federalism, and likely to be more effective.



PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS**74% FELT HIGHLY ANXIOUS,****40% WERE ANXIOUS ABOUT JOBLESS****PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST-AID AS SHORT TERM RELIEF****42% HAD SLEEP DISTURBANCE,****24% FELT WORTHLESS**

Considering the mass psychological distress, mental health facilities could not reach a large migrant population, depriving them of the basic psychological first aid. Unfortunately, only the relief camps were targeted leaving out the migrant pockets across urban areas in Maharashtra.

A psychological first-aid (PFA) facility could be created that focuses on reducing the initial distress caused by such an unprecedented event that fosters short-term coping. There are well formulated guidelines prescribed by the WHO for implementing PFA across populations. PFA should be implemented not only in relief camps, like the inadequate efforts taken by the Maharashtra government, but be implemented across diversely spread migrant pockets. The focus of the government has predominantly been on the migrants who were on the move, they were availed basic aid and support. A joint and a holistic effort by the government, NGOs, and psychological associations can certainly make PFA reachable to the needy.

MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE - AS LONG TERM RELIEF

29% WERE ANXIOUS ABOUT FOOD



The Maharashtra state government has successfully built a network of ASHA workers and school teachers to manage COVID-19 but nothing even close to this was planned for migrant workers who are the backbone of industrial development. The mental health of migrants seems to hardly be a priority for the state. It is high time that their mental health should be a priority as it may impact their work performance. It is being suggested that the local social workers under the supervision of psychologists and psychiatrists could conduct a door-to-door psychological health survey and provide on the spot counselling as PFA. The local hospitals, Anganwadi centers and primary schools in the future could have a dedicated counselling room for the needy, where they can come and avail counselling services.

TELE COUNSELLING / HELPLINE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS - AS LONG TERM RELIEF

TYPES OF STRESS MENTIONED: CHANGE IN APPETITE, OVERTHINKING, WORRY, UNAVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

Considering the constraints brought along by the lockdown, use of mobile phones and telephones was on rise. Most surveys, interviews during this time were conducted via mobile phones. Telecounselling can be a viable option now for migrant workers as well. Psychological associations, psychologists and social workers can provide tele counselling services by liaising with NGOs and other social organizations that work for the rights and betterment of migrant workers. The Government of Maharashtra has established quite a few helplines especially for women and children. A specific state-level helpline for migrants that diverts them to tele counselling could be an effective solution. This way migrants issues will get more representation in the government's eye leading to better handling of such crises in the future.

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