



## IMPROVING SOCIAL PROTECTION PORTABILITY FOR MIGRATION-AFFECTED CHILDREN

### Snapshot of recommendations

#### 1. Broad thrusts

- Strengthening portability related to schooling and continuation of education of migrant children.
- Improving urban social protection, especially the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and maternal health.
- Strengthening existing data collection systems to enable the real-time availability of disaggregated data on migration.

#### 2. Actionable recommendations

- Scaling the kinship care programme and direct benefit transfer (DBT) to caregivers of left-behind children of intra-state seasonal migrants.
- Re-invigorating the seasonal hostel scheme for intrastate migrant children.
- Scaling up the Digital Education Guarantee Card to ensure portability in school admission for migrant children.

- Setting up on-site alternative learning schools and the ICDS centres in remote areas, where migrants live on worksites.
- Ensuring language facilitation for the medium of instruction in schools for children of interstate circular migrants in Maharashtra.
- Providing childcare facilities at MGNREGA worksites and in tribal districts.
- Leveraging CSO-Labour Department relationships for engaging employers to increase worker registration.

#### 3. Future directions

- Setting up an employment platform to ease job availability for migrants coming to Maharashtra, with attention to formal and informal skill mapping.
- Including interstate migrants in the state health insurance scheme.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 national lockdown in March 2020, India saw the mass movement of an estimated 11.4 million migrants back to their home states. Many more remained stranded at worksites and destination cities, and experienced hunger, indebtedness and sickness. The vulnerability of migrants was substantially exacerbated by their inadequate incorporation in social protection mechanisms, which have consistently failed to recognise circular and seasonal mobility patterns, despite being aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the poor. In particular, portability mechanisms that allow migrants to access entitlements across locations have remained inadequate.

The incorporation is more unequally skewed against women and children of migrant households. Pre-existing normative notions reinforce the already underrepresented migration of women and children through the silos of trafficking, marriage and associational migration, thereby underestimating them as beneficiaries in the social welfare infrastructure. Moreover, women have not been adequately enumerated as workers.

With reference to UNICEF's social protection framework, which aims to be shock responsive, the study investigates migrant incorporation and portability of benefits for social protection schemes that impact children directly, related to nutrition, maternal and antenatal care, immunization, primary healthcare and education. It also investigates food security, employment guarantee and worker welfare schemes that help migrant households cope with shocks, especially in the context of COVID-19. Based on qualitative data collected from five states (Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh), the study documents challenges and good practices, and explores avenues to improve portability and access to social protection and welfare services for migrants, especially women and children.

This policy note focuses on initiatives and measures to improve portability and access to social protection and welfare for women and children affected by migration in the state of Maharashtra. The study considered all children (up to the age of 18) affected by the migration process, including independent child migrants, those who accompany their parents and those left behind after their parents migrate for work.

## Data and methodology

Of the 72 semi-structured key informant interviews conducted for the study – with state government officials, Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives and experts on migration – 14 were focused on Maharashtra. The note also relies on secondary material, including data from the Census and NSS, policy documents, research reports, CSO studies and media articles. Authors acknowledge the limitations of purposive sampling as well as the degree of generalizability of official interviews, as respondents spoke about specific schemes within their domains.

## Migration overview in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is primarily a destination state for interstate migrants from various parts of the country, with significant streams of short-term intrastate migration. Mumbai and other large cities of Maharashtra such as Pune, Thane, or Nagpur have longstanding migration networks with eastern and Bundelkhand regions of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. The Census 2011 data shows that about 19.64 million migrants moved into Maharashtra in 2001–10, of which 39.2 per cent were children. **Figure 1** shows that 60 per cent of the interstate child migration in Maharashtra is concentrated in Mumbai, Thane, and Pune. About 80 per cent of interstate child migration was from Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, and Rajasthan.

There were about 6.9 million child out-migrants from Maharashtra in 2001–10. However, most of this migration was directed towards the neighbouring states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and erstwhile Andhra Pradesh (**see Figure 2**).

Maharashtra also has well-established streams of intrastate seasonal migration. NSS 2007–08 data shows approximately 0.59 million short-term migrants moving within the state.<sup>2</sup> These streams are diverse, organized across particular industries of work, and have identifiable social footprints through tribes or castes practising specific kinds of migration over time. In addition to seasonal migration to Mumbai during the agricultural off-season, a notable stream of intrastate migration is from the drought-prone Marathwada region to districts such as Kolhapur, Satara, Solapur and Sangli, to work as seasonal migrants in the sugarcane industry. This involves family migration and child labour, which starts in the month of October and continues until March/April. Workers are hired by local

contractors (mukadam), who are connected to factories and paid according to the amount of sugarcane they cut every day. Other streams include migration for fisheries in the Konkan region and short-term migration in sand mines, stone quarries and limestone caverns of eastern Maharashtra. While these activities do not include direct participation by children, spouses usually work in the same establishment, leaving many children behind in the source regions of rural Maharashtra.

Specific tribes and denotified tribes such as Pardhis, Kanjarbhats, Makadwalas or Banjaras also move seasonally between the rural areas of inner Maharashtra and Mumbai. Since these nomadic movements involve entire families, children keep moving with parents over the seasonal cycle, staying in the city most of the time and going back to villages during the monsoons. Some of these children get involved in child labour in the cities. They are normally destitute in the city and different from other relatively well-off interstate migrants who have garnered stronger social capital in the city over time.

In Maharashtra, migration is linked with economic activities in diverse ways. During the early era of industrialization, the larger manufacturing clusters were centred around Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Pune and Aurangabad, and some around Nagpur. These were hubs for formal employment that attracted a large pool of skilled migrants from various parts of the country till the 1980s. However, starting from the early 1990s when India's economy opened up, competition between Maharashtra and Gujarat shot up, and a lot of industries either shifted to Gujarat or downscaled their operations to informally operate within the slums of the city. These were replaced by a new form of service economy around Mumbai from the mid-1990s. Over time, such progressive informalization of manufacturing has impacted migrants' economic opportunities and social well-being.

### Findings on access to social protection and welfare services for children and women

India's social protection and welfare landscape is complex and continually evolving. Some aspects, in principle, provide universal coverage, such as education and health. Others, such as the public distribution system (PDS; for food rations), while broad-based, have eligibility criteria, in this case income levels and residential location. Social protection and welfare are operationalised through a gamut of central and state schemes, missions and programmes.

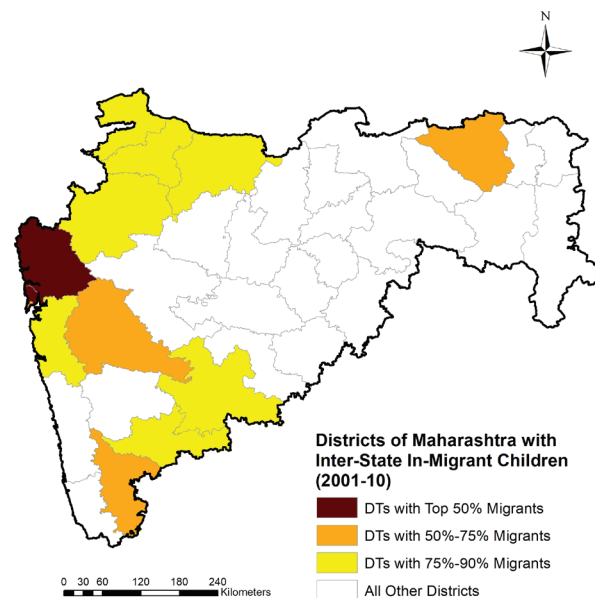


Figure 1. Districts in Maharashtra with interstate child migrants

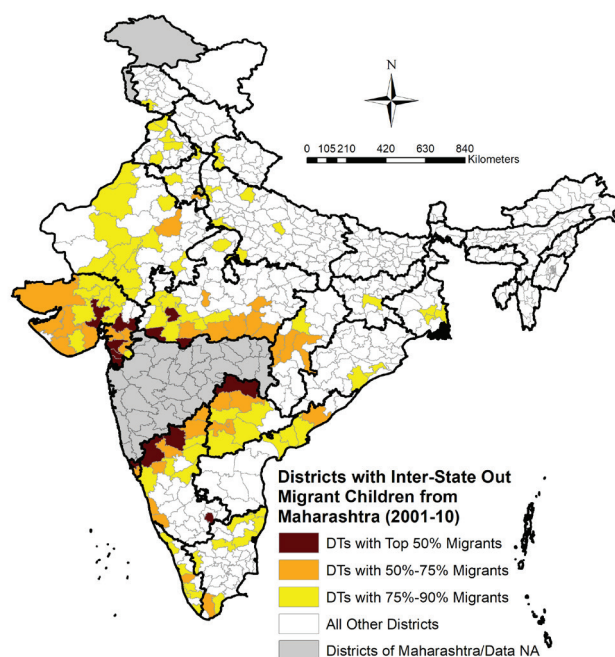


Figure 2. Districts in India with child migrants from Maharashtra

The share of Maharashtra's expenditure on broad social welfare programmes stands at 35 per cent of the budgeted expenditure of 2021-22 (169,556 Crores). This is a marginal hike from 34.6 per cent in the revised expenditure of 2020-21. While education and health constitute 57.2 per cent of the budgeted expenditure within social welfare in 2021-22, significant shares are also observed in the case of rural development

## Seasonal hostels

To cope with the paucity of schools and dropout issues, the seasonal hostel scheme for the children of circular migrants was introduced through the 'Mahatma Phule Shikshan Hami Yojna' in 2002. Under this scheme, sugar mills were tasked with providing temporary schools named 'Sakhar Shalas' for children of migrant sugarcane workers to receive basic education.<sup>5</sup> However, it could not gain momentum because it was under-financed and under-staffed. Overburdened with twin responsibilities of education and caretaking, and unable to address security issues of girl children, schools under-reported drop-outs due to migration, leading to an eventual loss of interest in the scheme. Further, there were challenges with the acceptance of migrant students in schools and the corresponding reluctance of parents to leave them behind.

The Government of Maharashtra has recently shown interest in re-starting hostels to address the vulnerabilities of migrant children, with a focus on intrastate seasonal migration for sugarcane cutting. In June 2021, it approved the 'Sant Bhagwan Baba Government Hostel Scheme' for 82 residential hostels to be set up in 41 talukas for children of sugarcane-cutting workers.<sup>6</sup>

(13.1 per cent), SC, ST, and Minorities development (12.4 per cent) and social welfare and nutrition (9.7 per cent).<sup>3</sup> However, the last of these witnessed a drop in its share in comparison to the previous year. The following sections provide snapshots of some of the core dimensions of social security with respect to migrants in Maharashtra.

### Education

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) provides free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six and fourteen years. The education of migrant children in Maharashtra has been a major area of concern and there are several initiatives and experiments by the government and the CSOs to address their specific needs, such as the transfer of migrant children across multiple locales, care and education of left-behind children, linguistic issues faced by the children of interstate migrants, and child labour.

### Education Guarantee Card

The 'Digital Education Guarantee Card' was developed by the Department of School Education, Government of Maharashtra, in collaboration with the TATA Trusts, to track out-of-school children from migrant families without permanent addresses. Started as a pilot project in 2015 in Pune, the chip-based card enables administrators to track children who continue migrating throughout the year, help them get enrolled in schools near their new address and continue their education from where they left off in the previous school. The state government estimated the tracking of about 40,000 children through the scheme by 2015.<sup>4</sup> Despite

its initial success, the scheme could not be scaled up due to the paucity of schools in the vicinity of the workplace of seasonal migrants, especially those working in sugarcane fields. However, it serves as a model for the regular enumeration of seasonal migrant children.

### Food security

The food security architecture in Maharashtra is multi-layered, based on income stratifications and occupational categories. The state had elements of the targeted PDS before the National Food Security Act (NFSA) came into force in 2013, some of which are still in operation. Since May 1999, ration cards were divided into three categories: yellow cards for families with income up to ₹15,000, no four-wheelers, taxpayers or professional workers in the family, and less than two acres of land; saffron cards for families with income between ₹15,000 and ₹1,00,000, no four-wheelers and less than four acres of irrigated land; white cards for families with an income of more than ₹1,00,000, a four-wheeler, and/or over four acres of land. Temporary yellow ration cards were issued periodically by the state government to various vulnerable groups, including workers of closed mills (2003), beedi workers, Pardhi and Kolhati communities (2008), and abandoned women (2011).<sup>7</sup>

Since the NFSA was enacted in 2013, the erstwhile tricolour ration card holders have been redistributed into NFSA categories of Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Households (PHH). While yellow card holders are divided across AAY and PHH categories, families with saffron cards earning less than ₹59,000 in urban areas or

## Kinship care model for left-behind children

The development of a kinship care model for left-behind children of seasonal migrants was occasioned by migrants unwilling to leave children in boarding schools, which called for alternative community-based arrangements. In the Jalna district of Maharashtra, this programme was started by a CSO in 2016, facilitated by UNICEF, for children of sugarcane migrant workers, aged 6–14 years who used to migrate with their families for sugarcane cutting, leading to a break in education. The model involves persuading parents to leave their children behind with caregivers, usually grandparents or other close relatives, supported by a network of CSO volunteers. Under this model, Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) were trained at the district level and encouraged to ensure at least one village volunteer in each village, covering around 1,700 Anganwadis. The success of the scheme was indicated by CSOs reporting that in 2019, around 4,000–5,000 children across the Jalna district stayed back, while their families migrated. The collectives of young village volunteers were reported to have worked very well during the COVID-19 pandemic as they also helped prevent incidents of child marriage.

The Government of Maharashtra initiated a financial incentive scheme to support the schools in facilitating care for the left-behind children, where ₹8,000 was provided to the school management committee (SMC) for taking care of each child who stayed back in the village with their caregivers. The SMCs were entitled to provide food and basic supplies to the left-behind children using this money. However, significant discontent was observed among the parents of other children regarding this, and the scheme was discontinued after some time. Nevertheless, it remains a novel use of cash transfer to enable community-based caregiving for left-behind migrant children. After-school psychosocial support to left-behind children has also been provided by local volunteers, who were engaged by Gram Panchayats.

Linguistic barriers faced by the children of interstate migrants is another major issue related to education. There is a big urban-rural divide in terms of facilitation of language: in the schools of large cities such as Mumbai and Pune, there are about eight languages that can be used as the medium of instruction. However, it is only Marathi for the schools outside larger cities and in the rural areas, which impedes the continuation of education. Overall, the provisions of the RTE, along with the guidelines issued under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), have sufficient scope to integrate migrant children into mainstream education. Maharashtra's experiment with some of these methods such as education guarantee cards and temporary hostels are useful models, albeit not entirely successful for various reasons.

44,000 in rural areas can access PHH benefits. In the case of Mumbai, AAY cards were also extended to homeless persons. While the erstwhile white card holders and non-PHH saffron card holders are excluded from the NFSA, the state government has extended the PDS to them. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the state government allowed migrant workers to use ration cards from their home states and non-ration card holders to procure meals from shelter homes and Shiv Bhojan Thali Centres, which were operational till June 2021. It also allocated subsidized rations during the lockdown period for the 3.08 crore saffron card holders not covered under the NFSA.<sup>8</sup>

As of April 2021, the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme was being availed in Maharashtra by interstate beneficiaries from 12 states, with most of the transactions

done by migrants from UP.<sup>9</sup> The state has completed identification of all intended beneficiaries under the NFSA and supplied electronic point of sale devices to 98 per cent of fair price shops, a prerequisite for the ONORC.

### Health and early childhood nutrition

The welfare architecture of pregnant mothers and children is mainly taken care of by the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, and the National Nutrition Mission, also known as Poshan Abhiyan. In Maharashtra, some differentiations exist across the rural and urban delivery of the ICDS. A larger state focus on rural poverty and welfare has facilitated a relatively well-organized structure of rural ICDS delivery through the collaboration between AWWs, Gram Panchayats (GPs), and block and district administration in the villages.

## Mobile creches in urban Maharashtra

In the absence of state-backed systematic efforts for childcare in migrant-intensive sectors such as construction in urban areas, a CSO introduced the mobile creche initiative at worksites for the children of construction workers in urban areas of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Thane and Pune.

However, the ICDS centres in urban areas are overseen directly by the state ICDS commissionerate, where the monitoring structure is weak, especially in the absence of any involvement of the municipal executive. This leads to poor coordination, lack of accountability and infrastructural issues in the ICDS in urban areas, even in large municipal corporations such as Mumbai. Despite efforts by the ICDS, such as the Poshan Abhiyan, to promote a multi-stakeholder approach, institutional responses tend to be fragmented: while the nutrition of children and mothers is looked after by the ICDS Commissionerate, the Public Health Department looks after antenatal care. Initiatives such as co-locating ICDS centres with schools and urban primary health centres may create some convergence across departments. Urban areas also have a dearth of ICDS centres compared to the population that needs to be served: in slum areas of Mumbai, it is often one Anganwadi for 2,000-2,500 beneficiaries, compared to the ICDS norm of one per 800 beneficiaries.

The existing ICDS infrastructure and staff also support the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) for first-time pregnant and lactating mothers, which is an Aadhaar-based subsidy scheme, functioning through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) model. A key criticism of the PMMVY is related to the cash incentives being applicable only to the first living child of the pregnant women and lactating mothers, which creates impediments to migrant women who miss the benefits while moving during the first pregnancy.

In the rural and peri-urban areas of Maharashtra, seasonal migrant women and children face difficulties accessing the ICDS due to the remote locations of workplaces, often away from Anganwadis. This is exacerbated by the long daytime work schedule of migrant women, which does not allow them to pick up the children from the ICDS centres, since they are only operational in the daytime. Consequently, many migrant women do not enrol their children in these facilities. Moreover, there is a dearth of creche and childcare centres at MGNREGA worksites, especially in tribal villages. Migrant women and children also face portability issues when they move to new areas, making it difficult for them to access

services and other benefits such as take-home rations at a new Anganwadi, which may not have information to make provisions for them. CSOs highlighted the need of creating a real-time database for groundworkers to improve services at the centres, which can help them track mother and child health and improve the ICDS governance. The launch of the Common Application Software (CAS) scheme in 2017 was expected to resolve this problem with a national-level database, but it was reported that at present, it was not very helpful in terms of tracking mother and child health. CSOs have demonstrated that enhancing the digital literacy of AWWs could help in this regard. CSO efforts have also been useful in connecting migrants to Anganwadis, e.g., by identifying and linking construction workers to AWWs.

To address some of the issues faced by migrant women during pregnancy, the state ICDS has been using a Mother and Child Protection (MCP) Card as a record and counselling device to ensure the tracking of mother and child's health, nutrition and overall development. The MCP Card has been standardized with support from the Central government to ensure its usage across states. The format of the card is such that frontline workers from other states can track the immunization and doses, and maintain the card without facing any language barrier.<sup>10</sup>

Additional issues related to the ICDS, as identified by respondents, include the meagre salary of AWWs and the limited working hours of AWCs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, AWCs were not functional since March 2020, and AWWs had been deployed for COVID-related duties. This effective shutdown of the ICDS has meant that there has been no tracking of children over the past year. These problems are also related to the minimal interface of the child welfare services with the line Department of Health, impacting migrant welfare over the entire lifecycle.

On financial support for health, the Government of Maharashtra has dovetailed an existing health insurance scheme, the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana (MJPJAY) with the Central scheme Pradhan Mantri Jana Arogya Yojana (PMJAY). The benefits and access points of both schemes are common; the MJPJAY features

some additional categories of beneficiaries identified by the Maharashtra government, which pays the premium amount for them, including all AAY and PHH ration card holders, children, women and senior citizens living in government shelters, approved journalists and their family members, and registered construction workers and their families. This is analogous to the state's extension of the PDS beyond NFSA beneficiaries. While the coverage of PMJAY is accessible to any registered beneficiary from any part of the country in the hospitals of Maharashtra, MJPJAY is available to beneficiaries holding a ration card issued in the state of Maharashtra. MJPJAY thus provides additional portable health insurance coverage to intrastate migrants. However, issues were reported regarding the limited empanelment of hospitals under the MJPJAY.

Respondents also reported a lack of information and awareness among the migrant population on financial incentives related to health, which results in poor access to initiatives such as the Poor Box Charity Fund and Indigent Patients' Funds, which are available at the Trust Hospitals.<sup>11</sup> This lack of awareness is bridged mostly due to the intervention of CSOs.

### **Livelihood and labour welfare**

The social protection mechanisms related to livelihood are primarily executed through two programmes in Maharashtra: the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). The MGNREGS worked as a mainstay for the intrastate seasonal migrants in rural areas of inland Maharashtra during the lockdown period; 3.82 lakh workers (out of the 6.01 lakh workers in the state) were found to be registered for the scheme in the distressed regions of Vidarbha, as of May 2020. Select CSO stakeholders offer initiatives such as training for the village sarpanches for local-level planning for job generation. There are demands for such initiatives in the tribal belts of the state, where jobs are scarce. CSOs have also strongly advocated for an urban employment scheme in Maharashtra for the interstate migrants in the large cities of the state.

The Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM), which was created under the aegis of the NRLM, is executed by Umed, an independent organization. Umed has multi-thematic interventions to combat livelihood issues of migrants and executes the programme under five thematic areas: social mobilization, capacity building, livelihood generation, skill

development and convergence of livelihood with social welfare. The primary initiatives under the MSRLM have been to promote the involvement of women in SHGs and skill training. However, the Mission lacks any prominent initiative regarding job placement or skill building for male migrant workers or interstate migrants.

In terms of labour welfare, registered Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW), who form a significant part of the migrant workforce, are eligible for social protection through an umbrella of schemes, ranging from emergency cash benefits to inclusion in the MJPJAY. The Government of Maharashtra announced a cash assistance of 2,000 for registered workers during the onset of the national lockdown in April 2020.<sup>12</sup> As of July 2020, there were 13.2 lakh construction workers registered with the state of Maharashtra, of which 8.22 lakh (61.8 per cent) were eligible for the emergency cash benefits. The state government also spearheaded an evacuation plan for 1.31 lakh intrastate migrants trapped in sugar mills due to the lockdown, where sugar-mill owners were asked to ensure health check-ups, transport, and travel permissions for these workers.<sup>13</sup>

### **Analysis**

While Maharashtra experiences significant flows of both interstate and intrastate migrants, the policy ecosystem favours the initiatives aimed at incorporating intrastate migrants while efforts for interstate migrants remain scarce; circular and seasonal migrants face barriers of eligibility and ability to furnish documents to avail of schemes. Further, many promising initiatives are implemented in a piecemeal fashion in special locations, but they are not equitably scaled state-wide. The situation is also compounded by stark differences in urban and rural management systems.

Maharashtra has made commendable efforts over time to address identity and occupational vulnerabilities with intrastate portability of benefits. For instance, the state's approach to food security has continually evolved to extend PDS benefits beyond the NFSA to other vulnerable groups. During COVID-19, short-term initiatives were made to include both interstate and intrastate migrants, by extending meal availability to non-ration card holders. However, scheme delivery remains fraught and limited in urban areas, where the approach between state departments is fragmented and social protection functions are not fully devolved to municipal bodies. This is seen clearly in the context of healthcare, where the state's

focus on rural welfare has established a relatively well-functioning ICDS system; this is more effective, partly because public officials and frontline workers at zila parishads, panchayat samitis and GPs are accountable for healthcare delivery. In contrast, accountability wavers in urban areas due to limited state capacity that cannot tackle the increasing scale of urbanization. This results in limited access to ICDS services for migrant women and children, who face issues in enumeration and interrupted delivery of pregnancy and early childhood care. The lack of ground-up accountability for social protection and welfare services in urban areas creates a systemic disincentive in the institutional delivery for these programmes.

In addition to the issue of differences in rural and urban governance, the scaling up of good practices has been limited in Maharashtra. CSO initiatives and state-CSO collaborations are inadequately institutionalized and/or supported, despite the state's longstanding tradition of CSO–government collaborations on migration. Prominent good practices such as seasonal hostels and kinship care systems for left-behind children of migrants have fallen by the wayside due to inadequate commitment to rectify problems. Despite the education guarantee card, seasonal migrant children were unable to continue education due to the paucity of educational infrastructure near worksites.

Initiatives by CSOs have been recognized as a vital bridge to create awareness and ensure the effective delivery of services to vulnerable migrant communities, especially in informal settlements and worksites where state delivery mechanisms remain limited. However, circular and short-term migrants fall through the cracks due to poor enumeration and uneven data availability and utilization. For instance, poor enumeration limits initiative potential, e.g., the education guarantee card, by excluding circular migrants from accessing schools. In many instances, child labour remains unaddressed, thereby reinforcing their invisibility in the system while limiting redress. In the case of migrant women, barriers to access services are higher due to limited documentation, especially in informal settlements. The utilization and delivery of BOCW welfare benefits is also restrained for migrant workers due to limited registration by contractors and employers. Better enumeration of migrants across both rural and urban spaces can contribute to scaling good practices as well as promoting effective migrant incorporation.

## Policy recommendations

### Food security

- The state government should ensure intrastate portability for non-NFSA PDS beneficiaries on the lines of ONORC.
- Migrants living in homeless shelters, especially women and children, should be facilitated in accessing the PDS. The shelters for these homeless migrants, which have become non-operational of late, can serve as distribution points to provide ration for people who are not covered under food security schemes.
- The state government can collaborate with CSOs to increase awareness among vulnerable segments and help them obtain ration cards.

### Education

- The state government should consider scaling up the Digital Education Guarantee Card initiative for all intrastate and interstate child migrants. Bilateral arrangements with governments of source states may also be explored.
- The state can collaborate with CSOs and employers to set up systems for on-site schools in areas where migrants live on worksites, especially in peri-urban or rural locations far from regular schools.
- Language facilitation in coordination with source states may be considered for interstate migrant children to continue education in their mother tongues.
- The state government has taken a positive step to re-invigorate the seasonal hostel programme for children of migrant sugarcane cutters. This must be extended to all intrastate migrants.
- The state must consider extending enrolment in hostels (and RTE support) up to the age of 18, to encourage children of migrants to complete their education.

### Health and early childhood nutrition

- The state government must ensure that health check-ups for pregnant and lactating mothers and young children, as well as access to day-care facilities, extends to construction and industrial sites that are remotely located, as well as at the MGNREGA worksites.



- The Mother and Child Protection Card, backed by online databases and smart cards, must be expanded to allow migrant women to access benefits under the PMMVY and the ICDS.
- Co-location of Anganwadis and primary health centres to dovetail the operations of Women and Child Development (WCD) and health departments is an important step.
- The state must focus on strengthening the urban ICDS with additional funding and trained human resources, with municipal bodies overseeing the process.
- The state must also promote kinship care models for supporting left-behind children. Building awareness among parents is essential in this regard.
- The state can collaborate with CSOs and invest in enhancing digital literacy of frontline workers to better track pregnant women and young children in seasonal migrant households.

#### Labour and livelihoods

- The state government must lower barriers for BOCW registration and involve employers and contractors in enhancing registration among migrant workers. Benefits under the BOCW must be portable and fully accessible to migrants.
- The state may also consider starting an urban employment support programme that leverages the strength of CSOs in the state's most urbanized areas.

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## Endnotes

1. Migrant children' or 'child migrants' includes all individuals aged 0–19 years whose last place of residence in the Census differs from the present.
2. NSSO data by virtue of its definitional limitations significantly under-enumerates short-term migration.
3. Calculated from [Maharashtra Budget Analysis](#) by PRS Legislative Research. This estimate includes education, sports and culture, health and family welfare, rural development, SC, ST & Minorities welfare, social welfare and nutrition, and urban development including urban water supply and sanitation.
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9. Data from the [ONORC portal](#).
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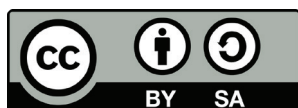
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