Impact of covid-19 on internal migration, labor markets and urbanization in New Delhi

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List of acronyms

Acronym	Abbreviation
NCT	National Capital Territory
INR	Indian National Rupee
F&B	Food & Beverages
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
USD	United States Dollar
LSE	London School of Economics & Political Science
DCVTS	Delhi Corona Virus Telephonic Survey
IMPRI	Impact & Policy Research Institute
BIS	Bureau of Indian Standards
PDS	Public Distribution System
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
PMKISAN	Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi
PMGKP	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package
DBT	Direct Benefit Transfer
CLIPS	COVID-19 Livelihood Phone Survey
BPL	Below Poverty Line
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
NSDM	National Skill Development Mission
NALSA	National Legal Services Authority
NSS	National Sample Survey
CSO	Civil Society Organization
NCR	National Capital Region
JJ Cluster	JhuggiJhopdi Cluster
PLFS	Periodic Labor Force Survey
CAGR	Compounded Annual Growth Rate
EGS	Employment Guarantee Scheme
NEFT	National Electronic Funds Transfer
OPD	Out Patient Department

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ABSTRACT

The evident influence of COVID-19 on global health and economic systems became strikingly apparent in the initial months of the lockdown that commenced in March 2020. Curfews, lockdowns, and subsequent restrictions disproportionately impacted migrants who faced challenges returning to the safety of their villages amidst the pandemic chaos and a lack of employment opportunities in the cities. In a migrant-centric economy like India, heavily reliant on both internal and international migrants, there was a significant disparity in the country's migration infrastructure. Delhi, India's national capital, hosts one of the largest migrant populations. This report seeks to comprehend the repercussions of COVID-19 on various aspects of migrant lives, encompassing health, employment, education for migrant children, and overall living standards. The report looks at two groups of migrants: those who remained in Delhi during the pandemic and those who returned from their villages after the lockdown measures eased. Additionally, the report delves into other research and studies conducted during and post-pandemic, providing additional support for the conclusions presented herein.

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Overall Scenario

India has one of the lowest internal migration rates in a sample of 80 countries[1].
Internal migration, the movement of people within a country, results in a more efficient allocation of human resources to sectors and regions where they are better utilized. In India, as in most countries, there are generally no restrictions on internal movement. The number of internal migrants in India was 450 million as per the most recent 2011 census. This is an increase of 45% over the 309 million recorded in 2001. This far exceeds the population growth rate of 18% from 2001 to 2011. Internal migrants as a percentage of the population increased from 30% in 2001 to 37% in 2011[2].

Despite the significant increase in internal migration recorded in 2011, the nature of movement has remained relatively unchanged since 2001. The bulk of the movement (62%) is within the same district. Another 26% is between districts within the same state. Only 12% of movement is inter-state. Inter-state migrants represented only 4% of the population in India in 2011, a rate almost unchanged since 2001.

Low rates of Internal Migration have been attributed to[3]:

- Non-portability of entitlements (such as the Public Distribution System)
- Preferential norms in educational institutions
- Domicile requirements for state government jobs

Patterns and types of migration differ from region to region and comprise rural-urban, rural-rural, intra district, inter-district, interstate; seasonal, short term, long term, circulatory; alone with family with peers/groups; independent through contractors/intermediaries- through peers; reasons of migration include for work- for education- due to marriage (women) etc.

The majority of Interstate migration in India is from North Eastern and Aspirational districts to urban and industrial centers of central and western India. The sectors of work include construction, manufacturing, textile, hospitality, household, etc.

Migrants are the backbone of economic development and contribute 10% to national GDP[4]. However they are bottom of the pyramid with their minimal access to social security, safe working conditions and decent work, housing and basic services, education for their children, access to public health services, decent and fair wages and employment, etc.

As migrants are an invisible, fragmented part of the workforce with weak agency and apathy of varied stakeholders; their access to government schemes and entitlements is limited.

[1] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2015.00025.x
[2] https://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove/internal-migration-india-grows-inter-state-movements-remain-low
[3] https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28904
[4] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000223702

Chronology of COVID-19 in India (till October 2021)

The lockdown was announced by the central government of India on 24th March with a mandatory curfew. This curfew lasted till 31st May 2020. After 31st May 2020, stringent rules were imposed which severely impacted mobility and congregation in public and enclosed spaces. Post Lockdown, the authority to devise the rules and guidelines for mitigating the spread of infection was federalised i.e. each state had different norms and guidelines. These rules gradually loosened in light of the reduction in infections during the latter part of 2020. However, this changed with the rise of infections and increasing fatalities during the second wave of COVID-19 caused by the Delta variant. The second wave started in India around March 2021. The City of Delhi was ravaged during the second wave (March – June 2021) with almost 19,000 deaths[5]. The second wave saw stringent norms and rules imposed on mobility and congregation. After the second wave subsided in June 2021, with a reduction in active cases and positivity rates, rules were loosened to provide relief to the economy which had almost come to a standstill during the second wave.

Overall Impact of Lockdown

A lockdown was announced by the central government of India on 24th March 2020 (followed by a 24-hour self-imposed curfew) to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

As part of the lockdown, which was initially meant to last for 21 days and was subsequently extended four times, up to 31st May 2020, interstate borders were sealed and transportation was suspended. Industries and other non-essential establishments were ordered to close down and people were advised to stay indoors wherever they were.

Millions of migrant workers and their families were impacted by the lockdown. Many of them were asked by their house owners to immediately vacate the rented premises or worksites where they lived. Many migrants realized that they could not survive the lockdown at the destination region, and many of them decided to return to their places of origin. Among them, there were also persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and families with infants.

The Central Government directed state governments to provide rations and shelter to migrants. CSOs contributed and supplemented the state government efforts in distributing essentials to migrants. State governments also announced cash doles, free transportation arrangements to return to places of origin, and scaled-up public health services.

Our field research establishes (in line with several other pieces of research) that the majority of migrants did not receive any aid as the states and local governments were unable to effectively reach the workers, who were scattered across worksites or in the city peripheries, historically excluded from provisioning systems.

[5] https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/pandemic-ebbed-in-june-but-deaths-remained-high/articleshow/84079891.cms

While the impact on the macro economy was staggering (as production came to a halt), the GDP of India shrank by 7.7%[6]. impact on the income of migrants was devastating with the majority (over 60% from our survey) reporting income drop to zero level for three or more months. At the same time costs of living rose due to the restricted availability of day-to-day items & rising fuel prices. Migrants reported spending up to INR 60 per liter of potable water in our FGDs. Over 70% of migrants reported not sending remittances during the pandemic period. Many returned to their places of origin and faced quarantine and thereafter struggled for jobs and livelihood. Those who did not return also faced difficulties of job loss, income drops, and struggles in finding new jobs/work. Some faced evictions from their places of stay. With restrictions on local transportation and the closure of most businesses/activities except essential ones; migrants faced difficulties in finding other avenues of work

Children of migrants were worst hit due to school closure and later on when digital media was utilised for education, due to non/restricted-availability of devices and internet connectivity. The majority of migrants reported mental health issues including worry, anxiety, depression, etc.

As per the study conducted during the pandemic by Caritas of 624 migrants across 10 major migration hubs, 93% of respondents did not receive benefits from MGNREGA and 95% lost all means of livelihood during lockdown[7]

COVID-19 exacerbated already existing inequalities and brought to the forefront the plights of the migrant population in stark manner.

New Policy Regime

In the immediate aftermath of the migrant exodus, the Central Government took several measures for the immediate relief of migrant workers and informal workers. These included free rations under the PDS Scheme, cash transfers under the PM-KISAN scheme, PMGKY scheme, Atmanirbhar Bharat Packages, and PM-CARES fund. The government of India also declared the One Nation One Ration Card Scheme as well as livelihood avenues from MGNREGA. In November 2020, MGNREGA witnessed an increase of 43% participation in the labour workforce as compared to the previous year[8]. In addition, to re-integrate the migrant workers into the economy as well as provide relief to industries, several initiatives such as Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan, MUDRA loans for MSMEs, moratorium on existing loans, Mobilisation of funds under Building and Other Construction Welfare Board for registered construction workers, various federal schemes at state levels for relief in ration/cash, etc, various skilling initiatives under DDU-GKY, SWADES etc. were taken up. The efficacy of these initiatives has yet to be measured and hence their impacts remain to be seen.

A report, jointly published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Aajeevika Bureau, and the Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID) in December 2020, urgently

[6]https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/impact-on-indian-economy-after-the-covid-19-second-wave/2275353/

[7]https://www.caritasindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/The-New-Exodus-The-Untold-Stories-of-Distressed-Migrants-during-Covid-19.pdf

[8]State of Working India, 2021, Azim Premji University

called for the Indian government to develop an inclusive policy framework to mitigate the vulnerabilities faced by internal migrants who enter informal arrangements to work due to the absence of reliable estimates on them.

NITI Aayog of India announced a draft policy on migrants for the first time. The draft policy is in line with the report of the working group set up by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.

<u>Salient aspects of the policy include:</u>

- Accepting migration as a developmental phenomenon adding in economic and social development
- Making Central Labour and Employment Ministry as nodal agency to facilitate the policy and achieve convergence
- Setting up interstate coordination and communication institutional mechanism including setting up migration wing under each labour department and origin and destinations states to work together
- Advocating the Rights Based Approach to tap migrants' potential rather than issue based handouts and cash transfers including strengthening migrants agency and voice
- Making central database of migrants
- Advocating amending the relevant Acts for better outreach to migrants
- Strengthening outreach of flagship programmes like MGNERGA, NRLM, NSDM to reach out to all migrants
- Setting up National Commission for Migrant labour
- Asking Panchayats to keep migration data, registers etc. setting up national migrant labour helpline and Migration centres in high migration zones
- Asking NSSO and Census of India and other bodies to develop and adhere to uniform definition of migrants
- Asking Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation to set up requisite housing infrastructure in cities including night shelters, short stay homes and seasonal homes including long term rental housing
- Setting up Grievance handling systems by NALSA and Labour Ministry etc.

After the policy is finalized, issues to be sorted out on the ground are numerous and complex, especially at implementation levels. These include:

i. Availability of updated data on migration and migrants,
ii. Ensuring universality and availability of all social safety net schemes to migrants,
iii. Coordination among a wide range of stakeholders including central governments and their Ministries, State Governments and their concerned departments, employers, migrants, and civil society actors
iv. Action on the ground of Local Urban Bodies to ensure equitable standards of housing and basic facilities to migrants
v. Provision of adequate infrastructure to implement policy and relevant programs
vi. Making migrants aware of all their entitlements and ensuring access

A glimpse of Delhi

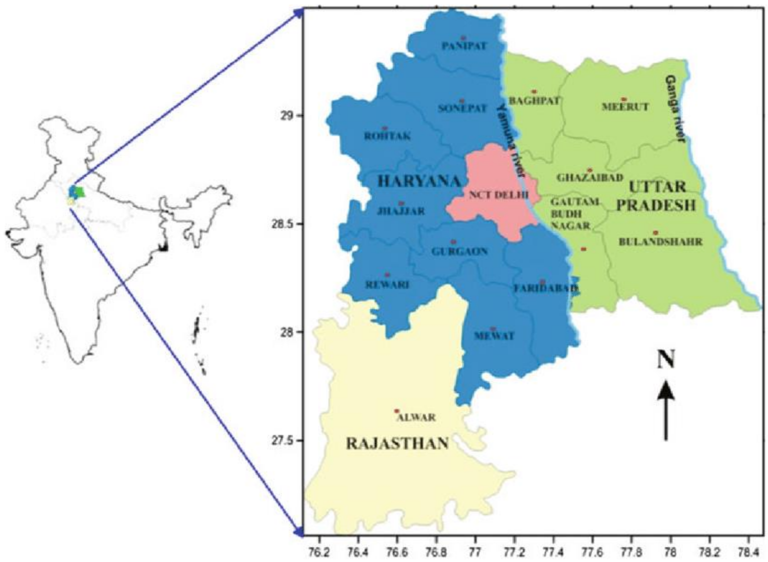

Figure 1 - Delhi NCT & NCR

The geographic focus of the research is solely on Delhi NCT and not NCR territory. The population of the NCT of Delhi has increased from 1.39 crore (13.9 million) in 2001 to 1.68 crore (16.8 million) in 2011. At the same time, the literacy rate of Delhi NCT has increased from 81.67% to 86.2% and the sex ratio has somewhat improved in the same period from 821 to 868. This skewed sex ratio is one of the proxy indicators which suggests a high influx of migrants. A similar sex ratio is also seen in other high migrant influx cities such as Surat city in Gujarat State. As of 2013, the IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) is 24 which is lower than the national average of 32.6[9].

As of 2014-15, the per capita income of the Delhi NCT is INR 2,40,849 per annum or INR 20,070 per month. This has increased from 2011-12 figures of INR 1,61,446 per annum or INR 13,453 per month.

As per the Census 2011, 89.5% of households in Delhi have toilet facilities, 81.3% of households have access to piped water supply while the remaining households procure water through tube wells, pumps, wells, water tankers, etc. As per the Delhi NCT Government, as of 2011, there was a housing shortage of 4.6% or 153,597 houses in Delhi NCT.

Delhi NCT, due to its burgeoning population is facing several challenges such as water security, housing, asymmetric/skewed regional development, and environmental/pollution concerns. Of these, water security and environmental concerns are major challenges. As seen from the Delhi NCT Planning Department report on Socio-Economics (2020-21), the most populous districts/zones of Delhi NCT have the most cash-strapped local authorities allocating resources a challenge[10].

[9] https://data.unicef.org/country/ind/

[10] NCT of Delhi Socio-Economic Profile Report, 2020-21

Migrants in Delhi

India does not have a single definition of migrants. As a result of this, there is a significant divergence in whatever meager data is available through the Census Bureau, which has its own definition of migrants, and NSSO which also has a different definition of a migrant worker. This divergence in meager data available makes it very difficult to devise an informed decision-support framework and truly informed policy for migrant workers.

Of the total population of 16.8 million, about 7.2 million are defined as migrants by Census 2011[11], which means 44.4% of the total population is migrant population. Of this 7.2 million migrant population, 2.22 million are intra-state migrants (i.e., born within the same state where they have migrated). This is to say that 30.83% of the migrants are intra-state migrants while the rest are inter-state migrants. Traditionally and as per the Census the states with the most contributing migrants to Delhi NCT consist of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal & Rajasthan.

There are specific sectors where the concentration of migrant workers is noticed particularly in Construction & Manufacturing. The construction sector also has a comparatively higher concentration of short-term migrants[12] (Working Group on Migration, 2017). Most of the migrants engaged in construction, manufacturing, and other traditional services work as unskilled or semi-skilled workers.

Unplanned Dwellings

Delhi has a huge number of unplanned dwellings. Delhi Government classifies these unplanned dwellings on following basis:

JhuggiBasti (JhuggiJhopdi)	Encroached on Public Land
Resettlement colonies	Incorporated within the expanded city with good shelter consolidation without adequate services
Notified Slum Areas (Katras)	Notified under Slum Areas
Urban Village	Notified under Municipal Corporation Act
Homeless and Pavement Dwellers	-

Most of the migrant population, especially our sample is found in these unplanned dwellings especially Notified Slums or JJ Clusters (JhuggiJhopdi).

In Delhi, as of 2015, there are a total of 685 JJ clusters with a population of 350,000 households or close to 1 million population living in these JJ clusters[13]. Similarly, there are a total of 6,343 notified slums in Delhi with approximately 1 million households or between 4-5 million population in these slums as of 2012[14]. About 90% of these slums and JJ clusters are

[11]Census 2011 Meta Data

[12] Report of the Working Group on Migration, 2017, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation

[13]https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=114374

[14]http://delhiplanning.nic.in/sites/default/files/69th%20urban%20slums.pdf

built on public lands. In regards to notified slums, 54.91% of the houses are permanent in nature, 29.47% are semi-permanent and 15.62% are temporary/unserviceable structures. The major source of drinking water for 86.5% of the slums is either tap or hand pump/water tankers. About 22% of these slums do not have any toilet facilities while only 30% of slums have toilets with flush/septic tanks. Underground sewerage exists in only 16.3% of slums, rest of the slums have open/covered drainages. As of 2015, in 31.45% of slums, urban authorities were collecting solid waste. Lastly, 9.3% of slums have issues with water logging during monsoon giving rise to sanitation and disease outbreak concerns post monsoon[15].

2. SAMPLING FRAME& DEMOGRAPHICS

a. Survey Sample

There is no common definition of migrants in India. Hence, for this research, we have defined migrants based on the following criterion:

i. Income – Not greater than INR 25,000 per month
ii. Level of Skill – Unskilled/Semi-Skilled
iii. Sectors – Hospitality, House worker, Construction, Manufacturing, Self-Employed
iv. Year of Arrival – Not before 2005
v. Type of Migration – Inter-state Migrants Only

We identified a sample of 1171 migrants based on the above parameters. The total sample size for the survey is 1175 of which 4 respondents did not give consent to be surveyed. The breakup of the sample is provided below based on the category of the migrant and by industry in which the migrant workers are engaged in.

Sample (According to Migrant Category)	
Consent not Given	4
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	858
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	305
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	8
Grand Total	**1175**

Table 1 - Sample according to Migrant Categories

In addition, the sample has been stratified on the basis of industries in which the migrants are engaged in.

[15]NCT of Delhi Socio-Economic Profile 2014-15

Migrant Category	Industry Category					
	Domestic Workers & Others	Construction	F&B	Industry	Self Employed	Grand Total
Consent not Given	4					4
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	230	152	133	175	168	858
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	67	76	53	61	48	305
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	1	2	5			8
Grand Total	302	230	191	236	216	1175

b. Demographics

i. Origin Location of Migrants

Origin State of Sample

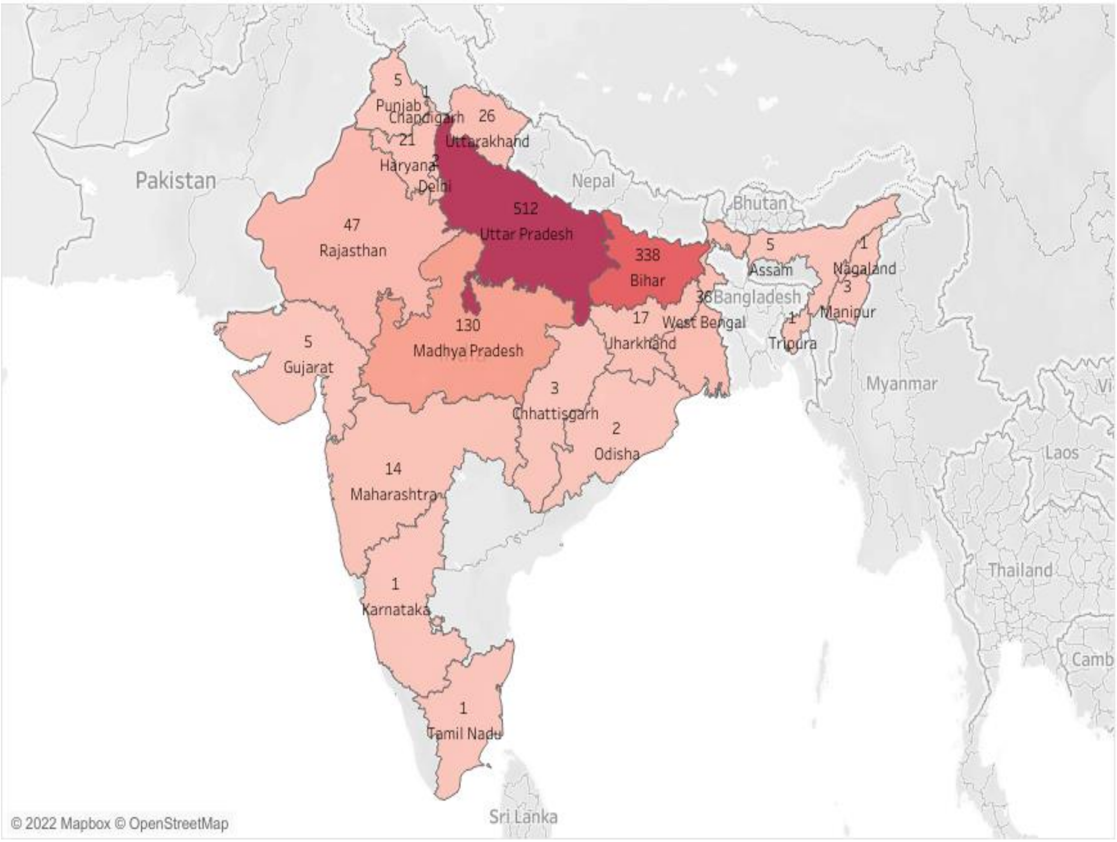

Figure 2 - Origin States of Migrant Respondents

Approximately 43% of the respondents come from Uttar Pradesh, 29% from Bihar, 11% from Madhya Pradesh, 4% from Rajasthan, 3% from West Bengal while other states include Uttarakhand, Haryana, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Gujarat, Odisha, Maharashtra etc. While migrants from all these states work across varied sectors, some peculiarities have been observed i.e., Slightly higher respondents from Bihar who work as self-employed, Large majority of respondents from Madhya Pradesh were found to be engaged in housework or other sectors such as security guard and casual worker. Similarly, respondents from Rajasthan engaged in Housework similar to Madhya Pradesh as well as in the construction sector.

Respondents from Uttar Pradesh are spread across all sectors but higher percentages of respondents are from housework/security guard or casual worker and Industry workers as compared to other sectors. Casual workers include workers who are employed daily and paid daily such as loader/puller (manual laborers), petty construction workers, etc.

Interestingly, the largest migrant pocket of our sample is Chhatarpur District located in Madhya Pradesh from where 6% of our respondents originate.

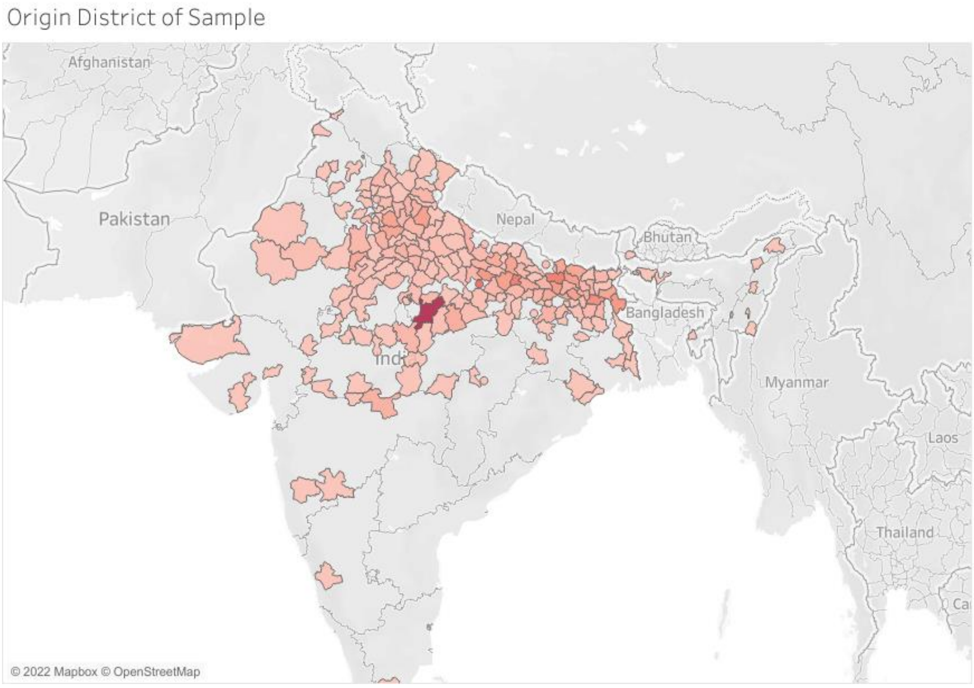

Figure 3 - Origin Districts of Migrant Respondents

This finding closely resembles the NSS 64th Round migration patterns at the state level.

ii. Age

The figure below shows the age cohort of the category 1 and 2 migrants. The average working age of the respondents is 32 years of age. Due to the sample of Category 3 being negligible, it has not been shown below.

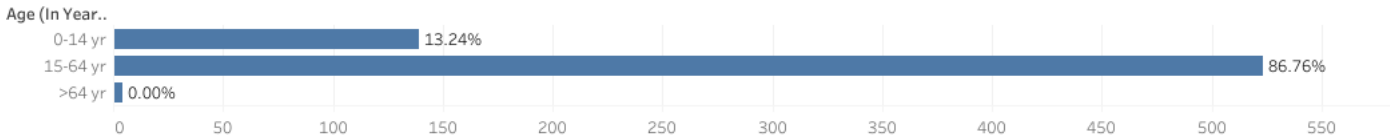

Figure 4 - Age Cohort of Category 1 Migrants

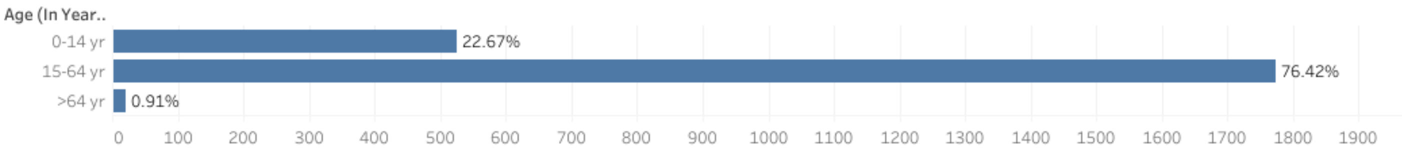

Figure 5 - Age Cohort of Category 2 Migrants

The figure below shows the average age across employment sectors of the respondents. A concerning trend here is the sheer number of unemployed youths which has also been brought to light during the FGDs.

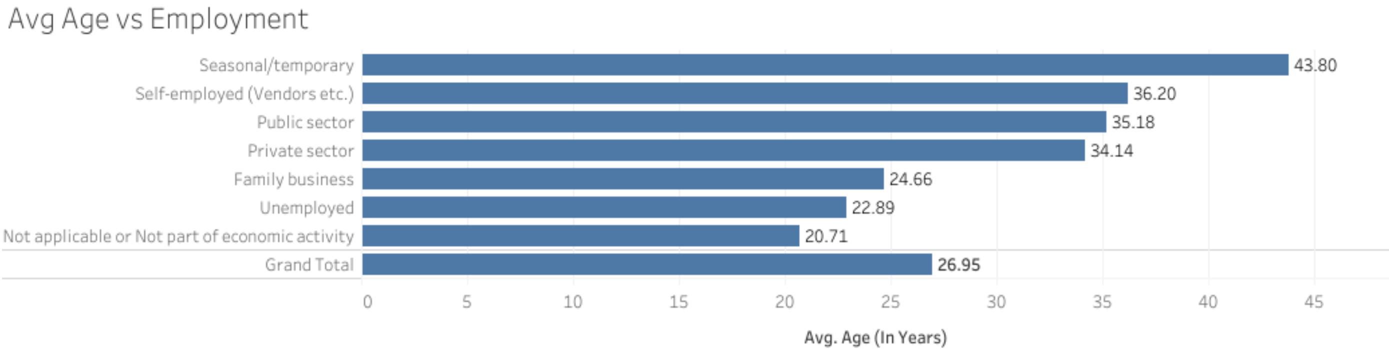

Figure 6 - Avg. Age across various types of Occupation

Of the total migrant workers interviewed along with their family members, almost 62% of the respondents at the time of interview were unemployed which is a large number and the average age of the unemployed was 23 years. Based on FGDs and interactions in the field one of the reasons is the unfulfilled aspirations of the youth and lack of any *meaningful* employment leading to a large number of unemployed youths. In addition, low education levels may also be one of the leading factors for the lack of *gainful* employment opportunities.

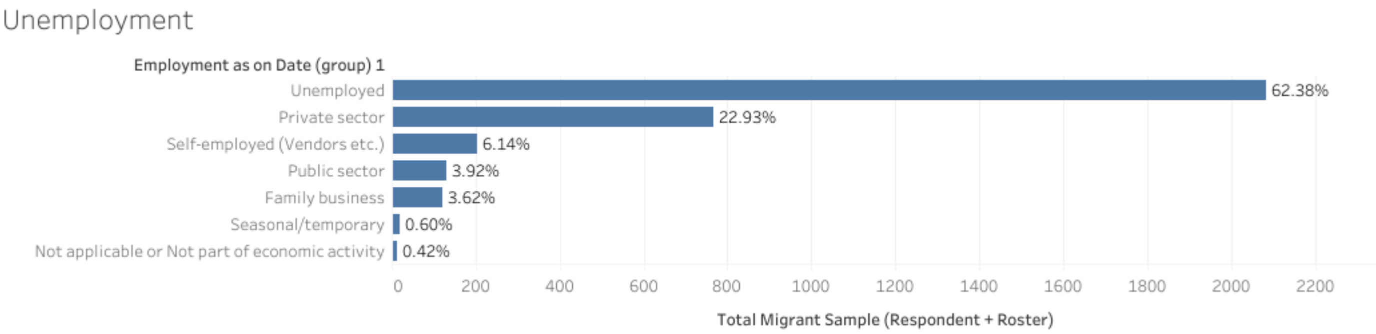

Figure 7 - Number of Respondents Employed and Unemployed

iii. Gender

Gender	% share	Total Number
Female	43.14	1,441
Male	56.77	1,896
Third gender	0.09	3
Grand Total	1	3,340

Table 2 – Gender Distribution of Sample

The break up in the Tabele 2 (above) is all inclusive gender break up which includes the **respondents as well as their family members** at the destination (Delhi).

iv. Education

	Total %			Total Number			Total %	Total Number
Education	Female	Male	Third gender	Female	Male	Third gender	Total	Total
Primary	10.99	13.92	0.03	367	465	1	24.94	833
Secondary School	9.04	15.78		302	527		24.82	829
Never went to school	13.08	10.81	0.03	437	361	1	23.92	799
Higher Secondary	4.58	8.17		153	273		12.75	426
Pre primary	4.01	5.60	0.03	134	187	1	9.64	322
Graduate	1.35	2.22		45	74		3.56	119
Post Graduate	0.09	0.27		3	9		0.36	12
Grand Total	43.14	56.77	0.09	1441.00	1896.00	3.00	100.00	3,340

Table 3 - Gender-wise Education break up

Table 3 above gives an overview of the Education of the sample as well as the distribution of the Gender in terms of education. As seen from the data, a significant portion of the sample i.e. 24% of the sample have never attended school while almost 50% of the sample has received basic education (primary and secondary education).

There is also a correlation between education and income levels in our case as can be seen from the scatter plot of Last Month's Avg. Income v/s Education levels of the respondents.

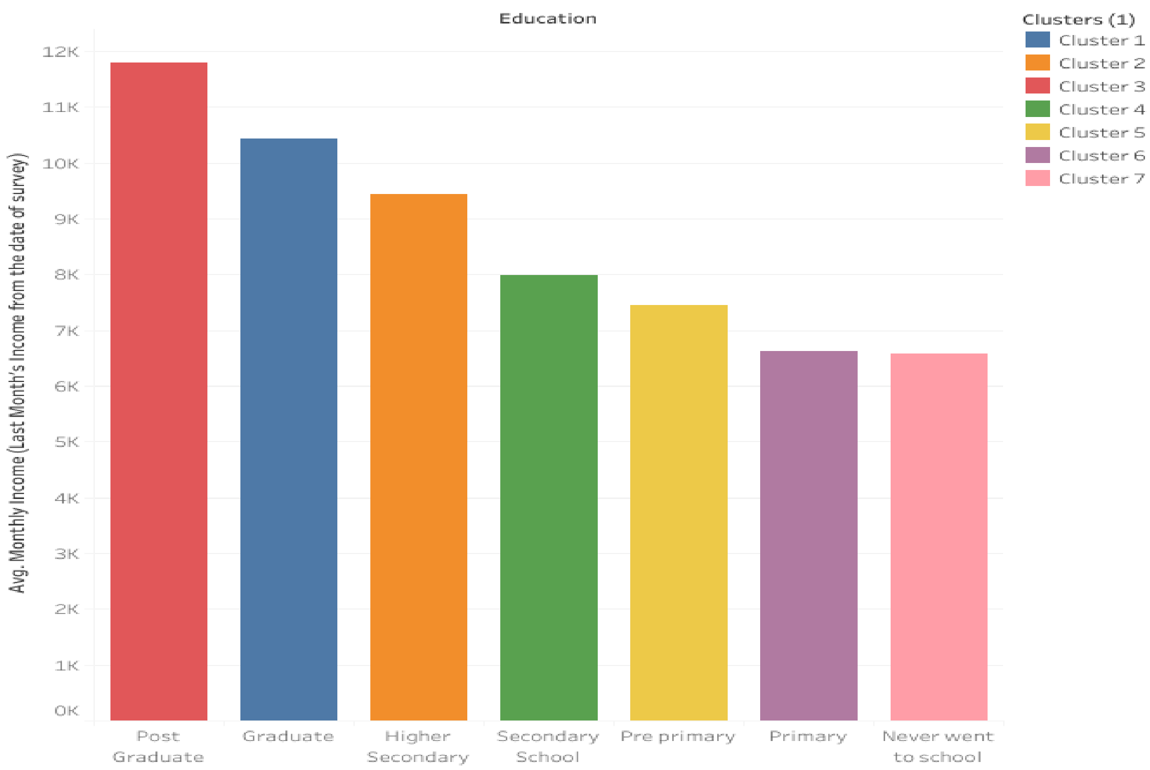

Figure 8 - Cluster Analysis of Education v/s Income Correlation

There is also a correlation between education and income levels in our case as can be seen from the scatter plot of Last Month's Avg. Income v/s Education levels of the respondents. As seen above, through cluster analysis, we see that there is a clear correlation between income levels and education levels. Higher the education more the income of the respondent

v. Year of Arrival of Respondents

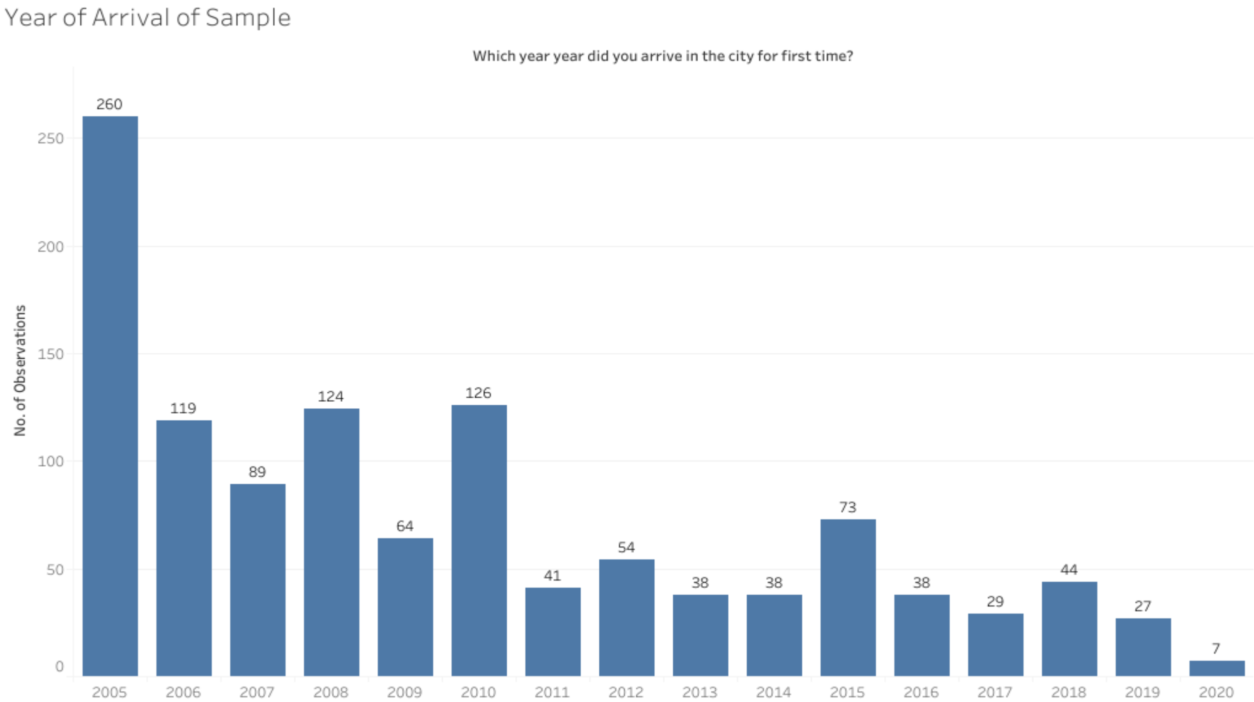

Figure 9 - Year of Arrival of Respondents into City

As seen from the above figure, most of the migrants from the sample have moved to Delhi since 2005 and before. The vast majority of the present-day migrants residing in semi-permanent/permanent shelters in slums (popularly referred to as *JuggiJhopdi*) have been residing in Delhi for the past 2-3 decades. The chart above shows that the migrant influx into Delhi for our sample has seen a steadily declining trend over the past decade. Based on the FGDs, the underlying reason could be a stagnation in labor-intensive employment opportunities in Delhi NCT as most of the labor-intensive activities such as construction, industry, etc. has moved out of Delhi and expanded towards NCR region such as Noida, Gurugram & Faridabad.

Of the 313 migrants in our sample who chose to go back to their hometowns during the pandemic, 91.7% of migrants chose to leave the city during the March-April months of the pandemic as seen clearly in Figure 10.

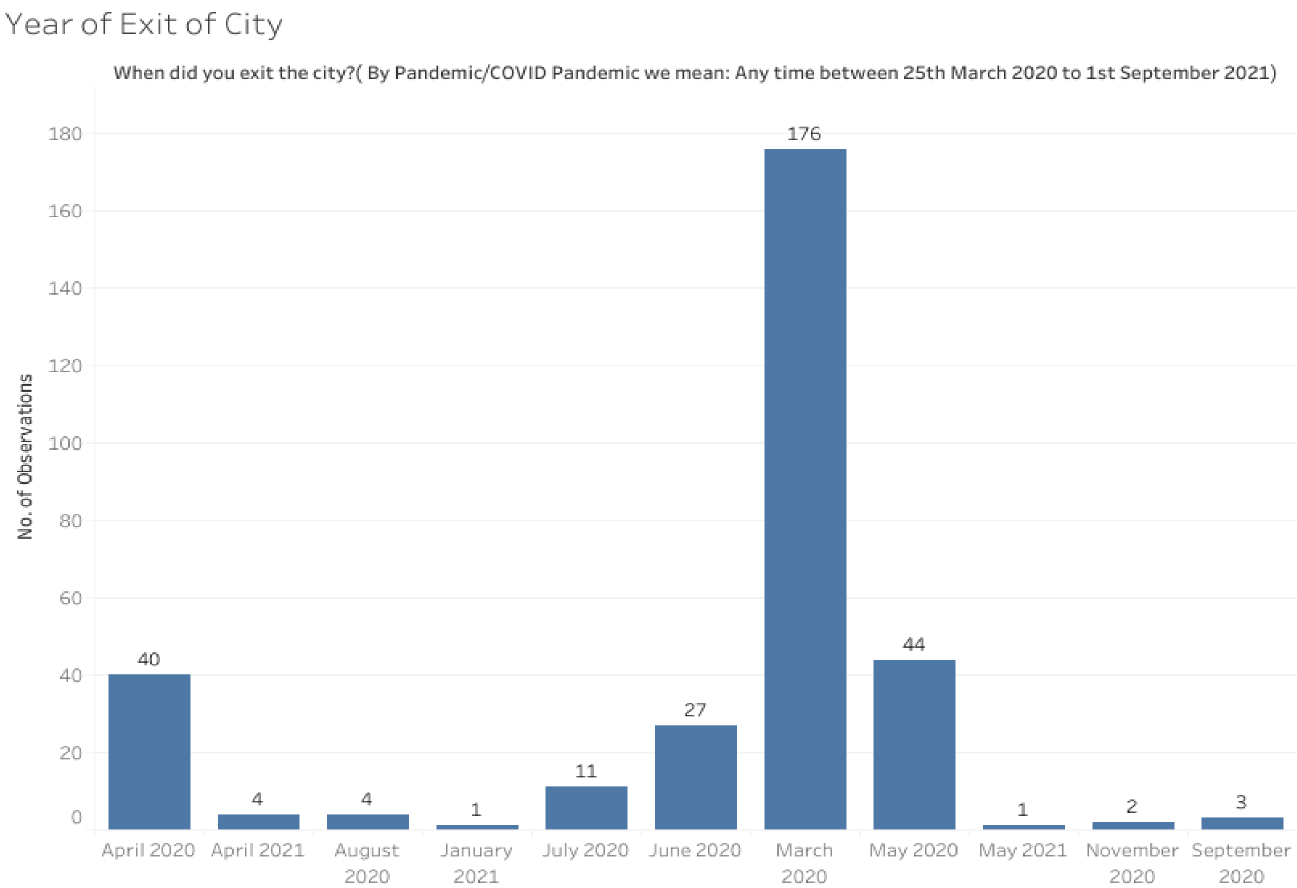

Figure10 - Month of Exit of Respondents from City during Pandemic Period

vi. Migrant Family at City

Did you migrate alone or with somebody?		Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown
Alone	% Total of Responses	33.049	14.176	0.427
	Total Responses	387	166	5
Along with Somebody	% of Total Responses	40.222	11.870	0.256
	Total Responses	471	139	3

Table 4 - Migrants coming to city Alone v/s Accompanying someone

As can be seen in Table 4 above, approx. 52.35% of the migrants chose to migrate with somebody when they first came to the city while 47.65% chose to migrate alone. The proportions within all the categories of migrant for both choice remains approximately the same.

As seen in the table below, most migrants came to the city with their spouses and unmarried children. Based on the data, the average number of household members at destination (city) is 3. Hence, we can speculate that an average migrant household should have 3 members consisting of a spouse and children (generally unmarried).

Family Composition of Migrants

		% Total Respondents	Total Responses
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Husband/Wife	77.49%	365.0
	Unmarried children	49.47%	233.0
	Father/Mother/Mother-in-law	15.07%	71.0
	Brother/Sister	11.46%	54.0
	Married children	2.76%	13.0
	Friend	1.06%	5.0
	Son-in-law/Daughter-in-law	0.85%	4.0
	Grandchild	0.64%	3.0
	Total	100.00%	471.0
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Husband/Wife	71.94%	100.0
	Unmarried children	43.88%	61.0
	Father/Mother/Mother-in-law	14.39%	20.0
	Brother/Sister	14.39%	20.0
	Married children	2.16%	3.0
	Friend	2.16%	3.0
	Son-in-law/Daughter-in-law	0.72%	1.0
	Total	100.00%	139.0
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Husband/Wife	66.67%	2.0
	Unmarried children	33.33%	1.0
	Brother/Sister	66.67%	2.0
	Married children	33.33%	1.0
	Total	100.00%	3.0
Grand Total		100.00%	613.0

Table 5 - Respondent Family Composition at Destination/City

vii. Migrant Family at their Hometown

Select Category	Avg. earning members at origin	Avg. members >22 yr of age	Avg. members studying at origin	Avg. no. of female members	Avg. total members at origin
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	0.389	1.386	0.522	1.107	2.221
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	0.561	1.816	0.925	1.574	3.223
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	0.375	2.250	0.500	1.875	3.500
Grand Total	0.434	1.504	0.627	1.234	2.491

Table 6 - Migrant Family Composition at the Origin/Hometown

The average size of the household at the origin is 2 members i.e. on average each migrant has a total of 2 persons residing in their hometown in addition to an average of 3 persons in the city. We can see that on average, at least 1 member of the household at the origin is above 22 years of age, and at least 1is a female member. 1 in 6 members i.e. 1 person in every 2 migrant households is engaged in income-generating activities while similar numbers are studying. A gross interpolation may lead to the observation that of 1171 migrants interviewed (i.e. 1171 households) only about 50% of these migrants have any source of income at their origin.

The table below shows the household income levels of the migrant families at the origin (hometown) for different categories of migrants. It can be seen that generally, the migrants who returned to their home town have (Category 2 mainly) a higher proportion of households with income (ranging from INR 5,000 – INR 15,000 per month) while Category 1 migrants (who did not leave the city during the pandemic) have a larger proportion of households having no income at origin.

Income Group		Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
>INR 15,000	*% of Category Response (Column)*	*5.36*	*10.16*	*12.5*	*6.66*
	Total Responses	**46**	**31**	**1**	**78**
Between INR 10,000-INR 15,000	*% Category Response (Column)*	*6.41*	*10.82*		*7.51*
	Total Responses	**55**	**33**		**88**
Between INR 5000-INR 10,000	*% Category Response (Column)*	*14.22*	*19.02*	*37.5*	*15.63*
	Total Responses	**122**	**58**	**3**	**183**
No income	*% Category Response (Column)*	*65.38*	*40.98*	*37.5*	*58.84*
	Total Responses	**561**	**125**	**3**	**689**
up to INR 5000	*% Category Response (Column)*	*8.62*	*19.02*	*12.5*	*11.36*
	Total Responses	**74**	**58**	**1**	**133**
Grand Total	*% Category Response (Column)*	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
	Total Responses	**858**	**305**	**8**	**1,171**

Table 7 - HH monthly Income at Origin of Respondents (Dependent's HH Income at Hometown)

3. FINDINGS

The section briefly presents the findings of the study in aspects such as the impact of COVID-19 on income, employment, housing, transport, health access, expense remittances, and disaster aid.

For the sake of simplicity, the findings are divided into 3 sections namely:

I. Income & Expenditure, Employment & Remittances
II. Health, Housing, Education & Transport
III. Disaster Aid/Relief

i. Income & Expenditure, Employment & Remittances

The pandemic had a large impact on the labor market as well as income levels. Sectors such as Construction and manufacturing were especially impacted. In addition, houseworkers (domestic workers) saw a significant drop in their income levels due to fear of the spread of infection. The FGDs yielded that there was a significant increase in the prices of consumer goods such as cooking oil, vegetables, etc. due to a rise in fuel prices and disruption in supply chains. This directly reduced consumption for the migrant workers. On average, in Delhi, prices increased by 6% for pulses, over 3.5% for edible oils, 15% for potatoes, and 28% for tomatoes in 28 days post-lockdown[16].

This drop in consumption was also reported during FGDs by the self-employed/micro-business owners amongst migrant workers. In addition, while the survey does not explore the issue of financial inclusion and financial security, we speculate that a large portion of migrant workers may have fallen into indebtedness as this has been reported by many FGD

[16]https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3599102

participants as well. According to the DCVTS Round 4 survey done in Delhi NCR (sample of 3400), 44% of respondents reported borrowing money for immediate needs during the pandemic[17]

INCOME

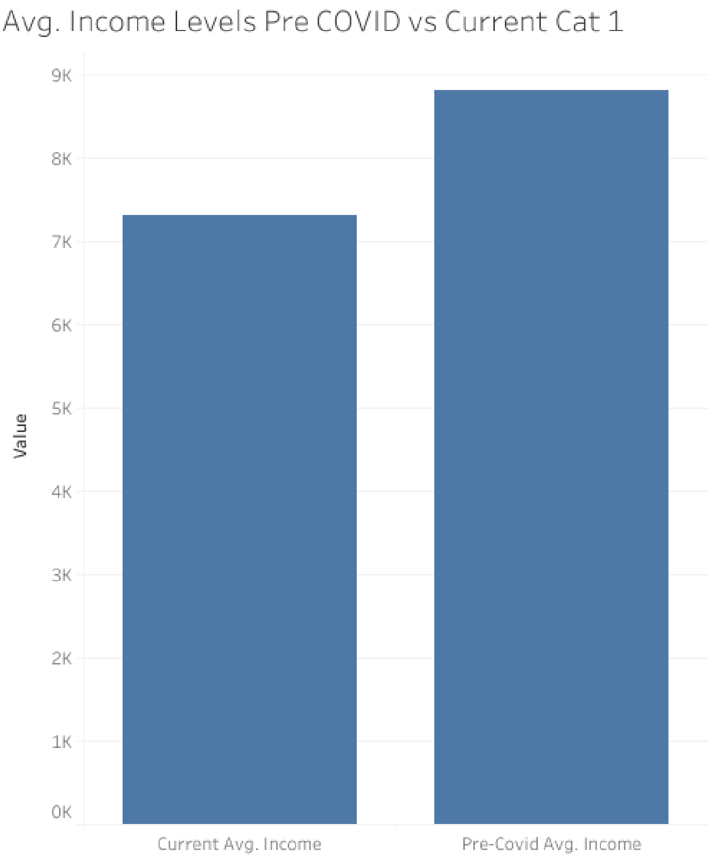

Figure 11 - Average Income Pre-COVID v/s Current Income for Category 1 migrants

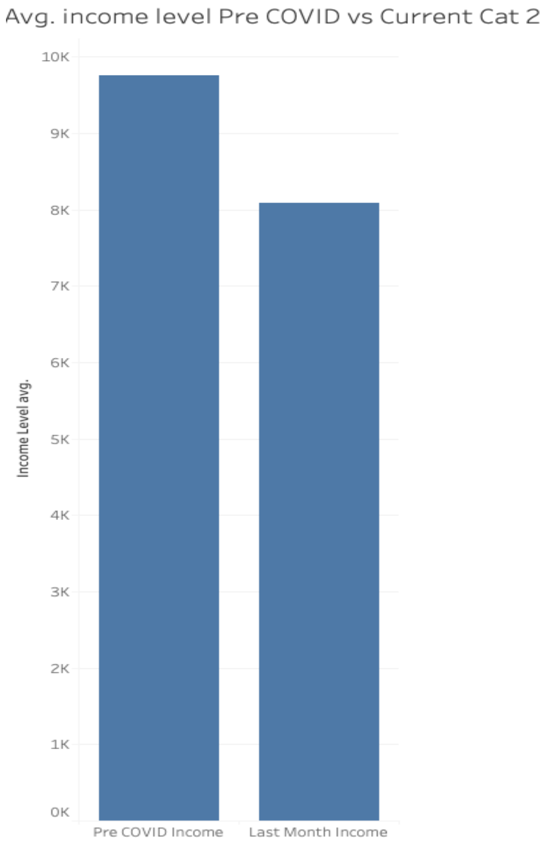

Figure 12- Average Income Pre-COVID v/s Current Income for Category 2 migrants

There is a drop in the income level of the respondent of about 20% from an average income of INR 10,000 to about INR 8,000 for Category 1 and 2 migrants between Pre-COVID and Current Incomes.

CLIPS Round 2 survey from Azim Premji University reported a loss of 10% income post-COVID 2nd Wave as compared to pre-COVID incomes[18].

A telephonic survey of over 3000 migrants done by CSO Jan Sahas reported that 55% of laborers were being paid less than the minimum wage, 39% were being paid barely minimum wage and only 4% reported being paid somewhat above the minimum wage. In addition, the

[17] https://www.ncaer.org/image/userfiles/file/DCVTS4/DCVTS4_Presentation.pdf
[18] https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/e070d564-8cf1-43c9-a074-d269f5742af1/page/ySU8B?s=iqraNm34ZwU

survey reported that respondents had lost between 1-3 weeks of employment per month during the pandemic following the lockdown and second wave.[19]

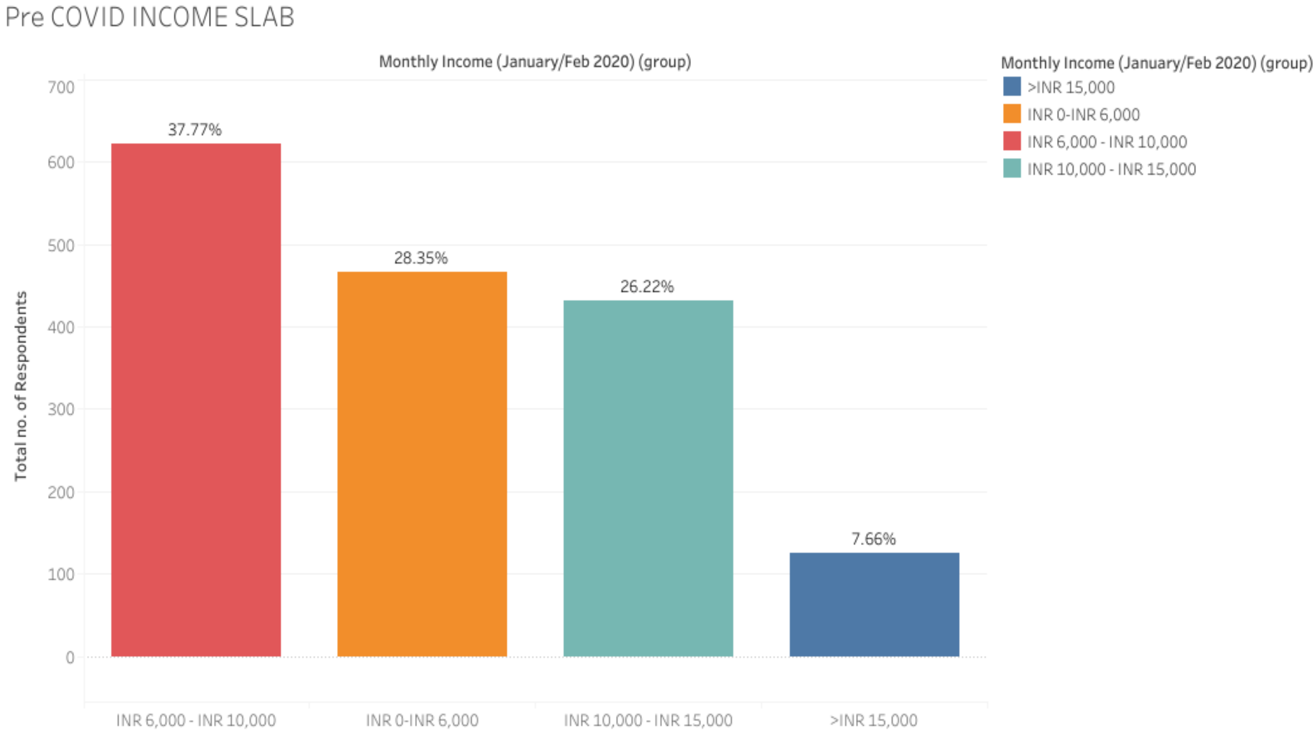

Figure 13 - Pre COVID-Income levels (Income Slabs)

An average household income of a migrant household based on the above chart of average income can be extrapolated to be between INR 15,000-INR 20,000 considering 2 working members of a migrant household.

[19] https://9f10ca96-9d6f-4573-8373-ed4c52ef9c6a.filesusr.com/ugd/d70f23_f18accd3b4404f789889b53fa27d99c8.pdf

CURRENT INCOME SLAB

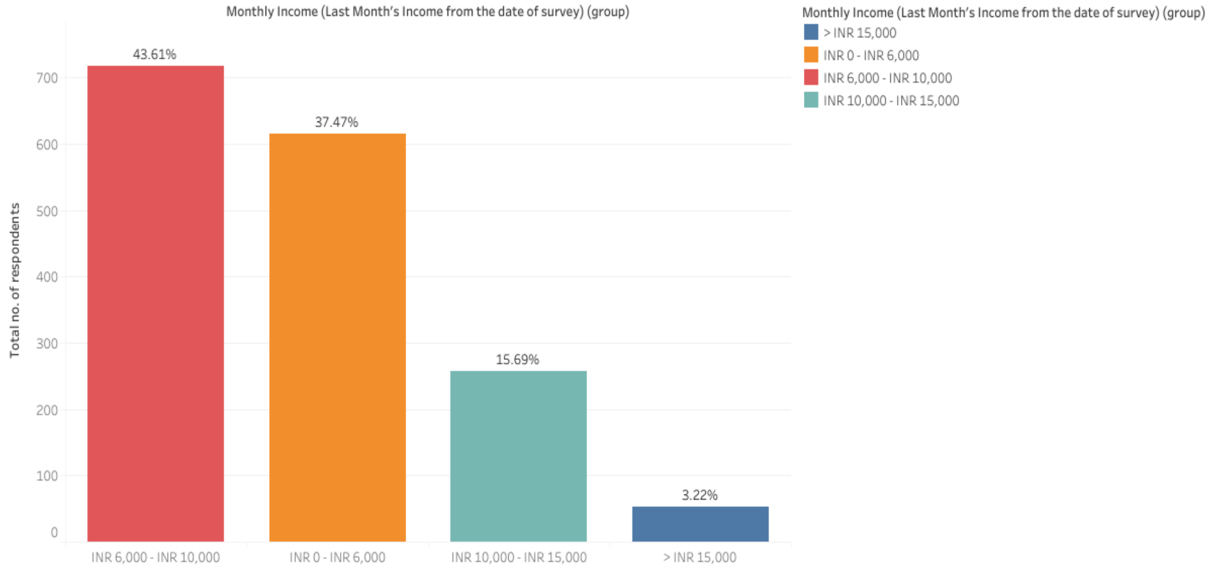

Figure 14 - Current Income (Income Slab)

The above break-up of the pre-COVID and Current Income levels in different slabs gives a better idea of how the income has been impacted. While the number of the earning members remains the same for all migrant households, there is a clear trend in demotion of the income especially for those used to earn greater than INR 10,000.

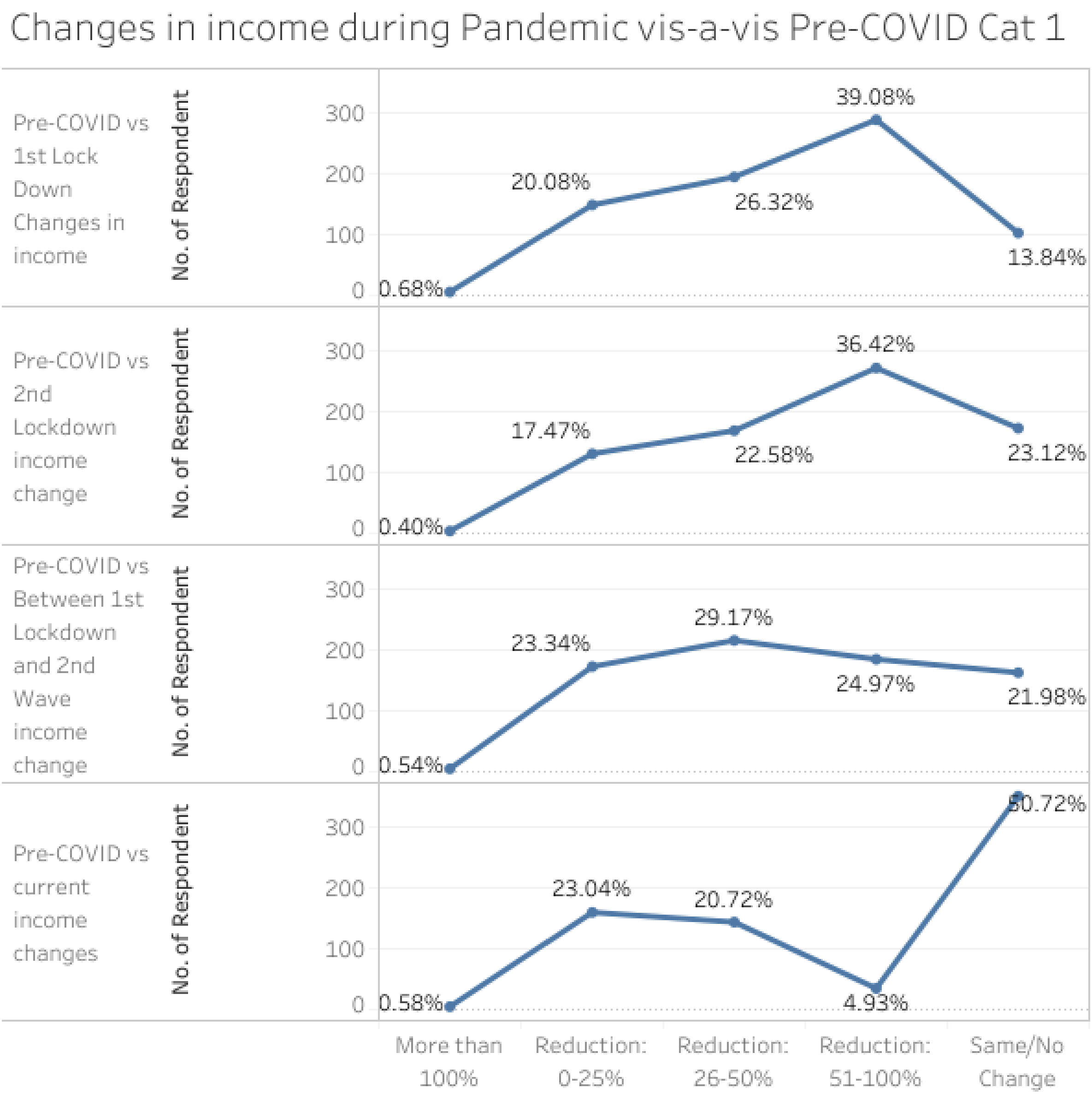

Figure 15 - Temporal Changes in income during Pandemic vis-a-vis Pre COVID-Levels for Category 1 Migrants

As seen in Figure 15 above, for Category 1 migrants, income reduction plateaued during the time of the survey where 50% of migrants reported that their income levels had been restored to Pre COVID levels. However, on the flip side, 46% of respondents at the time of the survey still reported a reduction in income levels up to 50%. It should be noted that though income levels have been restored to pre-COVID levels, employment opportunities have not yet been restored to pre-COVID levels (thus leading to lower overall income as the number of earning days has been reduced for many migrant workers). Similar trends are observed in the case of category 2 migrants.

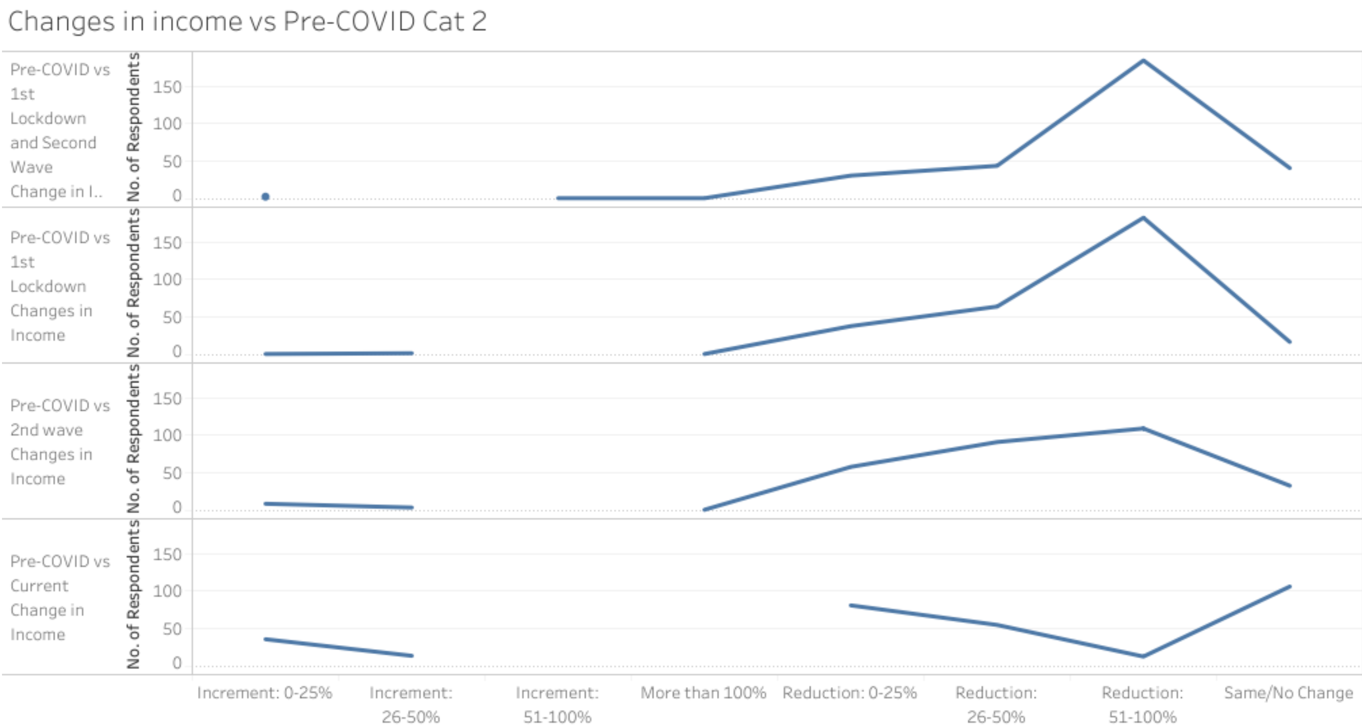

Figure 16 - Temporal changes in income during pandemic vis-a-vis Pre-COVID for Category 2 migrants

EXPENDITURE

On average, based on the FGDs, it has been observed that the average expenditure of a migrant household consisting of 5 persons at the destination (city) is around INR 12,000 - 15,000 which includes the cost of electricity, drinking water, community maintenance, food expenses, and rental costs. Of this food expenses are the major expense followed by rental/housing.

	Avg. Food Expenditure in %	Avg. Non-Food Expenditure in %
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	40.73	27.46
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	37.54	23.87
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	41.88	22.50
Grand Total	**39.91**	**26.49**

Table 8 - Average Food & Non-Food Expenditure

Average food expenditure for migrant household has been reported to be approx. 40% while non-food expenditure consists of 26.5%. This non-food expenditure consists of all the remaining major expenses which include housing/rental & energy costs. However, does not include other expenses such as schooling costs, housing upkeep, clothing, debt servicing, etc.

In total, the major expenses of a migrant household in the city including food, housing, water, sanitation, and energy constitute a total of approx. 75% of their total income leaving them with 25% of the remaining surplus. It should be noted that these expenses do not include miscellaneous expenses such as clothing, leisure, travel, out-of-pocket expenses for health care, schooling expenses, debt/interest payments, etc.

We speculate that on average including all the expenses, an average migrant household is left with no more than 10% of their income as surplus which either the migrants utilize as a saving or remittance. This has also been pointed out during heuristic observations in the field as well as FGDs.

EMPLOYMENT

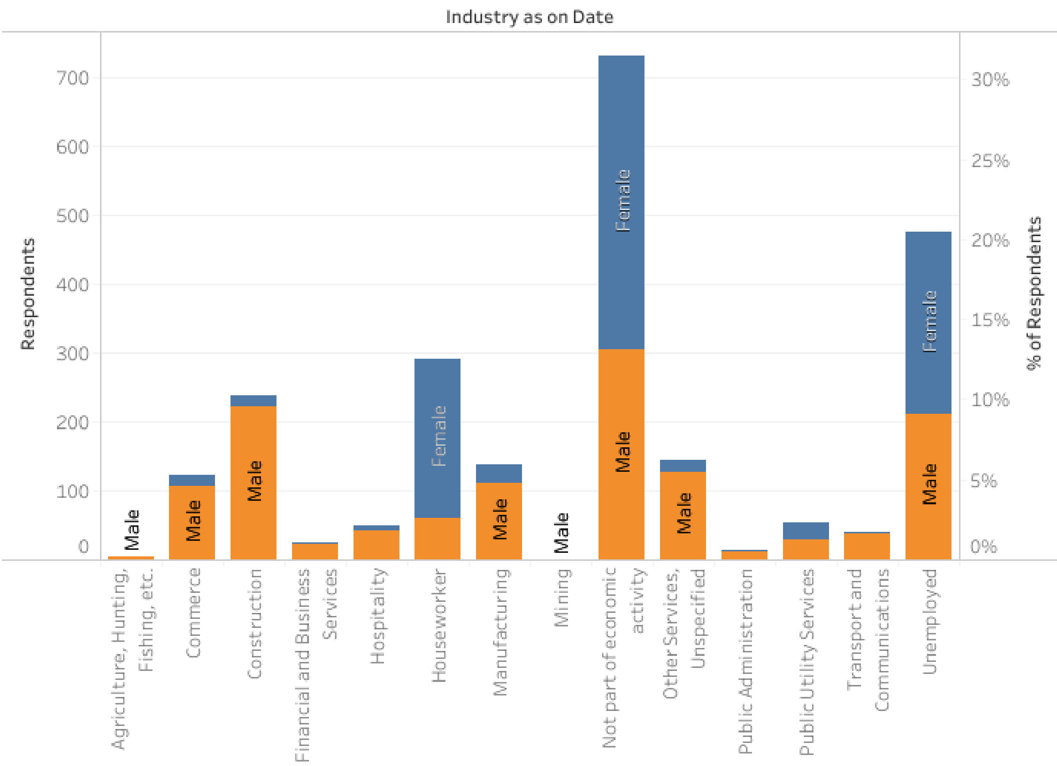

Figure 17 - Gender wise employment across Industry

As seen in the above figure, female members of migrant households are either largely unemployed or are either too young/old to engage in any form of income-generation activity. The unemployed male and female migrant household members are mostly young people between the ages of 20-22 years. Apart from this, it is seen that female migrant workers dominate the domestic worker sector.

According to PLFS 17-18, approximately 73% of migrant women in Delhi work as informal workers. Mostly in the sectors of Domestic workers and home-based work, a small percentage are self-employed or work in construction but mostly as support workers. It should be no surprise that the pandemic has increased gender inequality further as female migrant workers most probably had to work more unpaid hours with their primary responsibility as being the primary caregivers of the family. According to a survey conducted by the Institute of Social Studies Trust, 66% of migrant women indicated an increase in unpaid work while 36% reported an increased burden of child and elderly care during the pandemic period.[20]

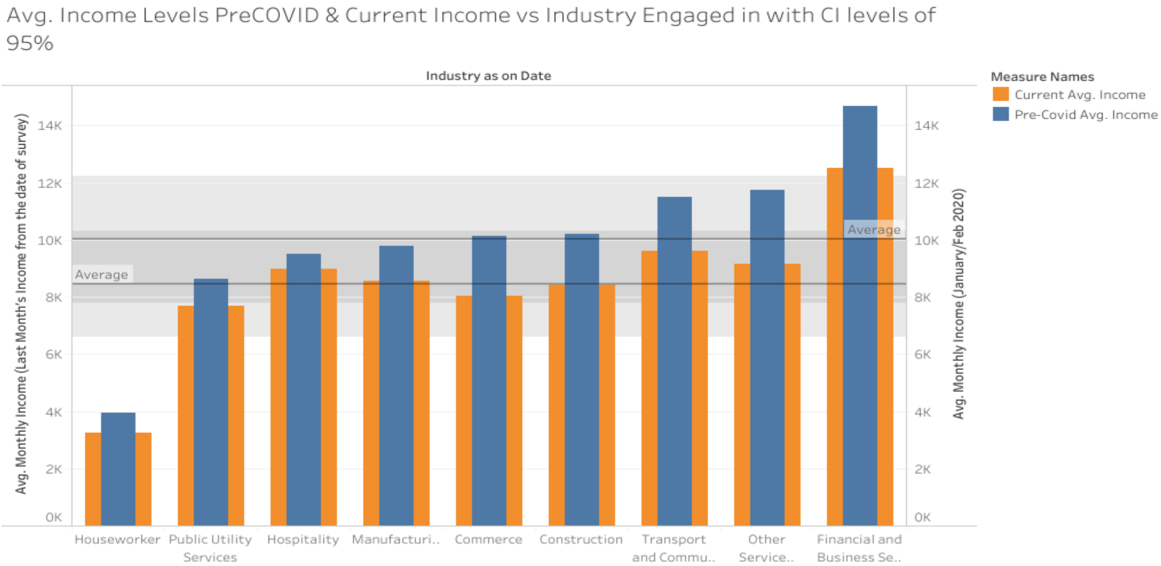

Figure 18 - Industry wise income levels Pre-Covid/Current

COVID-19 impacted all sectors, such as daily wage industry workers, construction workers, and domestic workers seeing a slightly higher percentage of income drop as compared to other sectors. The lowest income drop has been observed in the hospitality sector. The main reason could be the rise of the food delivery services which may have seen an influx of young migrant workers. The pandemic has hastened the growth of food delivery and logistics/transportation markets. India's food delivery market is expected to grow annually (CAGR) by 30%.[21]

Select Category	How long were you unemployed/had no source of income during the pandemic? By Pandemic/COVID Pandemic we mean: Any time between 2	% Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	>3 months	64.92%	557
	1-3 months	22.26%	191
	Less than 1 month	9.67%	83
	Was never unemployed/always had source of income on monthly basis	3.15%	27
	Total	**100.00%**	**858**
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	>3 months	73.77%	225
	1-3 months	19.67%	60
	Less than 1 month	3.28%	10
	Was never unemployed/always had source of income on monthly basis	3.28%	10
	Total	**100.00%**	**305**
	>3 months	50.00%	4

[20]https://thewire.in/women/women-informal-workers-lockdown

[21]https://glginsights.com/articles/the-strong-growth-of-indias-food-delivery-sector-will-likely-continue/

Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	1-3 months	12.50%	1
	Less than 1 month	25.00%	2
	Was never unemployed/always had source of income on monthly basis	12.50%	1
	Total	**100.00%**	**8**
Grand Total		**100.00%**	**1,171**

Table 9 - Duration of Unemployment

The above table shows the duration of unemployment for the different categories of the migrant workers across the pandemic period starting from lockdown in March of 2020 till the survey period i.e., October-November 2021. Of the 858 category 1 migrants, 64.29% (557) reported being unemployed for a duration greater than 3 months i.e. 64.29% of the migrants were unemployed for more than 3 months over 20 months. Similarly, approx. 74% (225) Category 2 migrants reported being unemployed for more than 3 months. This slightly higher percentage as compared to Category 1 may be due to quarantine times, transit times, resettlement time required in the city on return, etc.

Another survey done by Azim Premji University for Delhi (for casual and self-employed non-agri workers) stated that 73% of respondents had lost their employment between April and May, while 63% reported a fall in average income earnings[22].

The table below shows the major reasons for these long stretches of unemployment experienced by the migrants during the pandemic. An overwhelming reason has been the closing of businesses due to COVID lockdown restrictions followed by the closing of businesses due to other reasons and migrants not being able to find suitable employment. The FGDs have yielded a consensus that there has been a significant decline in employment opportunities especially for unskilled workers.

[22] https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/State-Pamphlet-Delhi-Urban-English-final.pdf

Reasons for Unemployment

Select Category	Pivot Field Values (group) 1	% Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Business closed due to COVID legal restrictions	98.07%	815
	Business closed due to other reasons	22.62%	188
	Cannot find a job	20.82%	173
	Do not want exposure to virus	11.67%	97
	Exposed to someone who was sick and forced ..	0.60%	5
	Household member was sick	0.84%	7
	Laid off while business continued	11.19%	93
	Not able to farm due to lack of inputs	1.44%	12
	Not able to go to work due to mobility restrict..	6.14%	51
	Seasonal worker	0.60%	5
	Sick	0.96%	8
	Was planning to quit	0.84%	7
	Was planning to retire	0.36%	3
	Total	**100.00%**	**831**
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Business closed due to COVID legal restrictions	96.61%	285
	Business closed due to other reasons	15.25%	45
	Cannot find a job	29.15%	86
	Do not want exposure to virus	19.66%	58
	Exposed to someone who was sick and forced ..	0.34%	1
	Household member was sick	1.69%	5
	Laid off while business continued	20.68%	61
	Not able to farm due to lack of inputs	0.34%	1
	Not able to go to work due to mobility restrict..	2.37%	7
	Seasonal worker	1.36%	4
	Sick	1.02%	3
	Total	**100.00%**	**295**
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Business closed due to COVID legal restrictions	100.00%	7
	Exposed to someone who was sick and forced ..	14.29%	1
	Not able to go to work due to mobility restrict..	28.57%	2
	Total	**100.00%**	**7**
Grand Total		**100.00%**	**1,133**

Table 10 - Reasons for Unemployment

During the unemployment period in the city especially for Category 1 migrants, 64% of migrants reported '*doing nothing'* followed by 47.3% reporting '*searching for a job'* & 22.4%r reporting '*exploring new opportunities/self-employment.* The vast majority of the migrant workers had no income during the lockdown and the second wave of the pandemic. Based on the above findings, we can speculate that with no meager incomes, and rising costs due to inflation, migrants were faced with several challenges such as food and water security. Government relief aid as well as civil society aid such as free food packets, subsidized/free electricity, free water tankers, etc. were extremely crucial during the initial phases of the pandemic. The analysis from FGDs also yields that issues of indebtedness and selling of valuable assets to tide over the monetary crisis may have been exacerbated; however, this component of financial inclusion has not been covered in the survey.

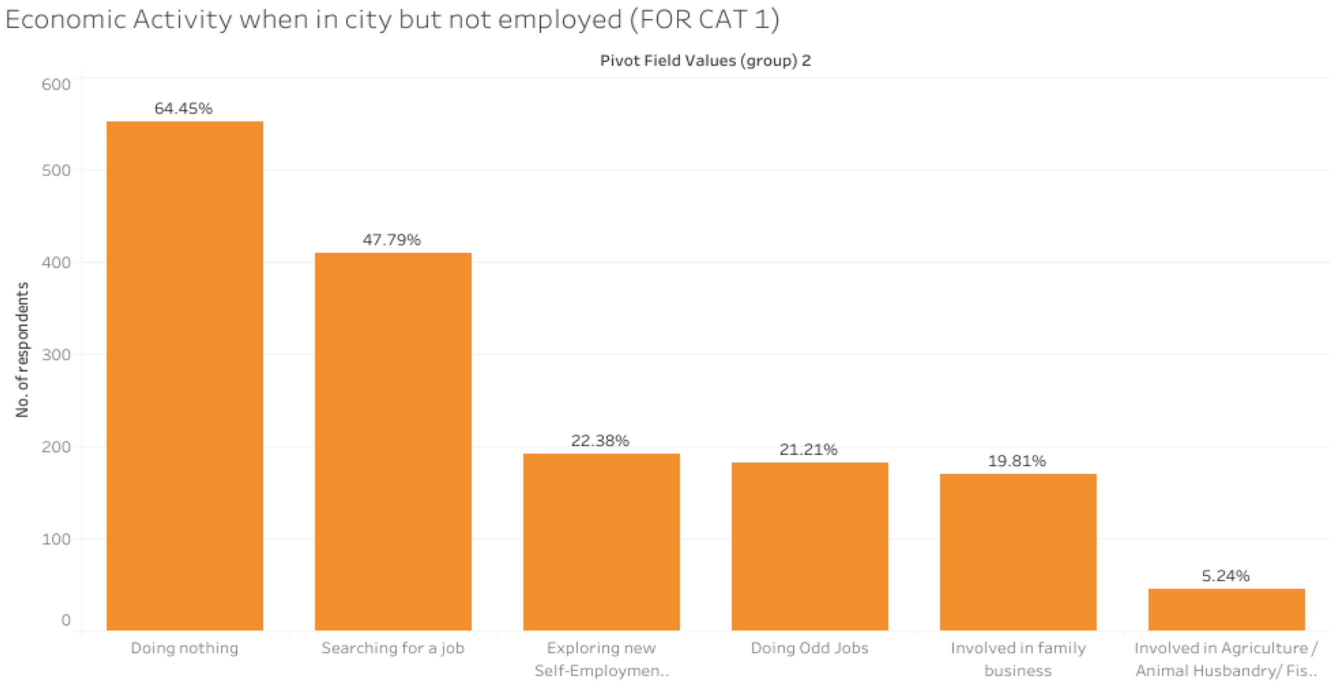

Figure 19 - Economic Activity when in the city but not employed

The FGDs also yielded consensus on Government assurance for employment. A similar finding is also observed in the CLIPS round 2 surveys where 51% of respondents of the 2778 sample reported being willing to work under Urban EGS, and an overwhelming 98% wished for more days under MGNREGA[23].

Motivation for returning to city (FOR CAT 2 & 3)

		% Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Access to better education for children	18.39%	55.0
	Access to better health care	21.07%	63.0
	Better livelihood opportunities	80.60%	241.0
	Future prospects (Hope to settle in the city in the long ..	22.07%	66.0
	Lack of livelihood opportunities back in hometown	51.17%	153.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**299.0**
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Access to better education for children	28.57%	2.0
	Access to better health care	28.57%	2.0
	Better livelihood opportunities	71.43%	5.0
	Future prospects (Hope to settle in the city in the long ..	42.86%	3.0
	Lack of livelihood opportunities back in hometown	42.86%	3.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**7.0**
Grand Total		**100.00%**	**306.0**

Table 11 - Motivations for returning to city after leaving

As seen from above, for the Category 2 and 3 migrants (migrants who exited the city during the pandemic), the main motivations for returning to the city are mainly livelihood opportunities. Other motivations include better infrastructure and public facilities and becoming permanent residents of the city.

[23] https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/e070d564-8cf1-43c9-a074-d269f5742af1/page/ySU8B?s=iqraNm34ZwU

Economic Activity when NOT in city (FOR CAT 2 & 3)

		% of the Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Doing nothing	51.15%	156.0
	Doing Odd Jobs	24.26%	74.0
	Exploring new Self-Employment opportunities	18.69%	57.0
	Involved in Agriculture / Animal Husbandry/ Fishery	9.51%	29.0
	Involved in family business	22.95%	70.0
	Searching for a job	49.84%	152.0
	self	0.33%	1.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**305.0**
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Doing nothing	62.50%	5.0
	Doing Odd Jobs	12.50%	1.0
	Exploring new Self-Employment opportunities	25.00%	2.0
	Involved in Agriculture / Animal Husbandry/ Fishery	12.50%	1.0
	Searching for a job	50.00%	4.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**8.0**
Grand Total		**100.00%**	**313.0**

Table 12 - Economic Activity when in Hometown

Majority of the migrants who exited the city and went back to their hometowns reported 'doing nothing' or 'searching for a job' or 'doing odd jobs'. These responses indicate that the situation in the rural areas might have been worse in terms of livelihood/income opportunities as compared to cities.

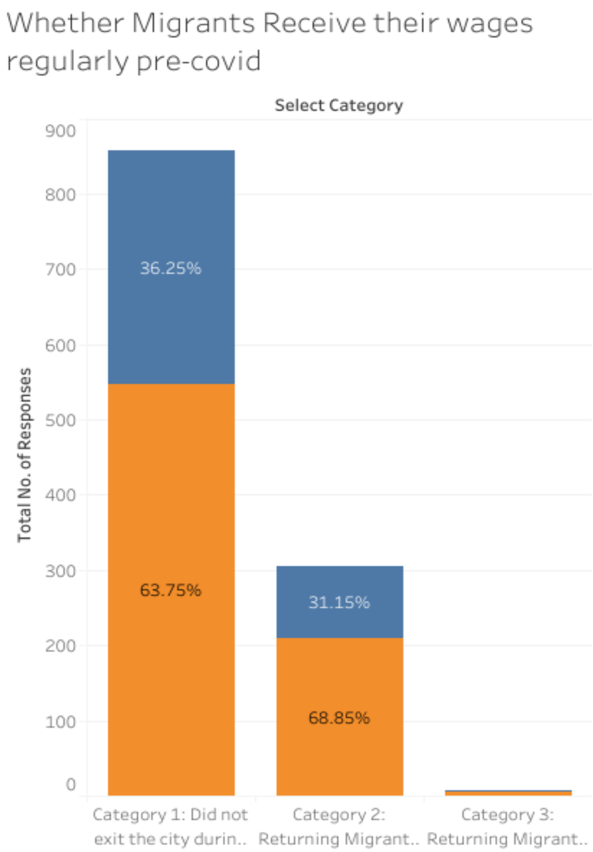

Figure 20 - Regularity in wages pre-COVID

The chart in figure 20 shows the regularity of wages Pre-COVID of the different categories of migrants. 36% and 31% of category 1 and 2 migrants reported not being paid wages regularly (as agreed upon by their employers). This shows the vulnerability of migrants in terms of liquid assets.

REMITTANCES

Based on the FGDs, it is apparent that remittances and savings have been severely impacted by the pandemic. With the loss of employment opportunities, and shrinking of savings due to rising inflation the migrants have reported a significant reduction in remittances.

Remittances sent back since start of pandemic

	Select Category	
	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town
No	81.24%	67.54%
Yes	18.76%	32.46%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%

Table 13 - % of Migrants sending remittances back since the start of the pandemic

As seen above, 81.24% of Category 1 migrants and 67.5% of Category 2 migrants reported not sending remittances during the pandemic period.

Periodicity of Remittances

Select Category	Fortnightly	Irregular/ When Needed	Monthly	Quarterly	Weekly	When I go back	Grand Total
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	0.23%	50.82%	42.66%	1.17%	0.58%	4.55%	100.00%
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	0.66%	34.75%	60.33%	1.97%	0.66%	1.64%	100.00%
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown		37.50%	62.50%				100.00%
Grand Total	0.34%	46.54%	47.40%	1.37%	0.60%	3.76%	100.00%

Table 14 - Periodicity of Remittances Pre COVID

The table above shows the remittance periodicity (in general) for the migrant workers. 46.56% of migrants reported that they sent remittances as and when needed back home while 47.4% reported sending the remittances monthly. This has been severely impacted by to pandemic.

The table below shows the modality of the remittances. As seen, generally migrants prefer sending the remittances through Banks (NEFT transfers or cheque deposits) followed by Phone Banking (E-wallets/Paytm/Gpay, etc.)

Modality of Remittances

Pivot Field Values (group) 5	Select Category Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown
Banks	45.23% 360	58.95% 168	62.50% 5
Phone Banking	28.39% 226	50.18% 143	37.50% 3
Others (No relatives/Do not send etc.)	31.03% 247	15.09% 43	12.50% 1
Personally (Physically)	11.56% 92	11.23% 32	12.50% 1
Through friends	6.03% 48	11.58% 33	
Informal Channels	3.89% 31	3.51% 10	
By mail order/money order	1.76% 14	2.46% 7	
Grand Total	100.00% 796	100.00% 285	100.00% 8

Table 15 - Types of Remittance Channels

Overall, 88.4% of the migrants reported no disruption in these remittance modalities while 11.6% reported some form of disruption in the modalities of remittances. The type of disruptions channels of sending the remittances have been elaborated below:

Disruption in Remittance Channels

	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Grand Total
Some bank services were not operational during	62.07%	48.98%	57.35%
Could not go to bank for some reasons	44.83%	38.78%	42.65%
Did not have anyone to send the money back to th..	31.03%	34.69%	32.35%
Did not have Phone wallet/Phone banking literacy	6.90%	16.33%	10.29%
Others (Internet/Mobility Restrictions etc)	2.30%		1.47%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 16 - Types of Disruption in Remittance Channels

Of the migrants who reported sending remittances during the pandemic period, *disruptions in some of the banking services, not being able to go to banks due to mobility restrictions and no way of sending the money physically* have been cited as major sources of disruption in remittance channels as seen from the above table.

ii. Housing, Health, Education & Transport

This section discusses the impact of the pandemic on public utilities and access.

HOUSING:

Sanitation Facilities at Housing (Pre-COVID)

	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-H..	Grand Total
Water Tanker (Or Jal Board Piped Connection)	77.39% 664	82.62% 252	100.00% 8	78.91% 924
IHH/Community Toilets	79.02% 678	74.10% 226	87.50% 7	77.80% 911
Solid waste Pickup facility	56.18% 482	38.36% 117	50.00% 4	51.49% 603
Sewage system	26.57% 228	20.98% 64	12.50% 1	25.02% 293
Running water	22.49% 193	31.15% 95	50.00% 4	24.94% 292
Drinking water (RO system/filter water etc.)	26.22% 225	21.64% 66	12.50% 1	24.94% 292
Grand Total	100.00% 858	100.00% 305	100.00% 8	100.00% 1,171

Table 17 - Sanitation Facilities at migrant housing (Pre-COVID)

The above table is a break-up of the sanitation facilities available in the housing of migrant workers. While there are some differences in responses of the different categories of migrants, overall trend remains the same. As observed from above table, running water, potable water and sewage systems remain as a major issue in migrant housing. Water security has become one of the major challenges of the Delhi City as of late and numerous articles and research paper attest to the fact. The water supply for the large part is provided through Water Tankers provided by Government or arranged privately by slums themselves. Delhi Government, in the past decade has managed to link up underground water supply systems with pockets of Slums/JJ clusters. However, seen from the table above, only 25% of the migrants have respondent that they have access to running water.

Sanitation Facilities at Housing (On Return back to city)

	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
Water Tanker (Or Jal Board Piped Connection)	85.25% 260	100.00% 8	85.62% 268
Integrated household toilet/Community Toilet	75.08% 229	87.50% 7	75.40% 236
Solid waste Pickup facility	41.31% 126	37.50% 3	41.21% 129
Drinking water (RO/filtered water etc)	22.95% 70	37.50% 3	23.32% 73
Sewage system	20.98% 64	25.00% 2	21.09% 66
Grand Total	100.00% 305	100.00% 8	100.00% 313

Table 18 - Sanitation Facilities at Migrant House (on Return)

The above table is a break-up of the sanitation facilities of the returning migrants during the pandemic. Overall, the divergence in the responses pre-COVID and during the pandemic in terms of Sanitation Facilities for housing remains the same for the Category 2 and 3 migrants i.e. These migrants on returning to the city had basically same level of access to sanitation facilities as before the pandemic.

Housing Type at the start of Pandemic

		% Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	With Family members/Relatives	66.55%	571
	Alone	28.21%	242
	Sharing House	4.66%	40
	Shelter Home	0.58%	5
	Total	**100.00%**	**858**
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	With Family members/Relatives	62.95%	192
	Alone	24.59%	75
	Sharing House	11.80%	36
	Shelter Home	0.66%	2
	Total	**100.00%**	**305**
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	With Family members/Relatives	37.50%	3
	Alone	50.00%	4
	Shelter Home	12.50%	1
	Total	**100.00%**	**8**
Grand Total		**100.00%**	**1,171**

Table 19 - Type of Housing of Migrant Workers in the City

As seen above, there is a slight difference in responses of Category 2 and 3 migrants as compared to Category 1 migrants. It is seen that migrants who went back to their hometowns during the pandemic have a higher percentage of those who live alone in the city or share the housing/rooms with someone else while a larger percentage of category 1 migrants reside with their family members or relatives in the city. This would make category 2 and 3 migrants more mobile and with no permanent/rental housing in the city.

Based on the FGDs responses, it has been observed that the majority of the migrants who chose to go back to their hometown during the pandemic were residing in the city in a rental housing or shelter homes while those who have some form of permanent or semi-permanent housing choose to stay.

Challenges in housing access on return to hometown

	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
Needed quarantine	47.21% 144	50.00% 4	**47.28%** **148**
No difficulties	29.84% 91	50.00% 4	**30.35%** **95**
No self-owned place at the hometown	3.93% 12		**3.83%** **12**
Not allowed to enter into the village/home town	44.92% 137	12.50% 1	**44.09%** **138**
Grand Total	**100.00%** **305**	**100.00%** **8**	**100.00%** **313**

Table 20 - Challenges in Housing Access on return to Hometown

The above table shows the types of challenges that the migrants faced when they exited the city during the pandemic and returned to their hometowns (i.e. category 2 and 3 migrants).

Two major challenges reported by the migrants were quarantine measures implemented by the villages and not being able to enter the village/hometown on returning, which is concerning.

Whether the migrants have returned to previouse housing in city

	Yes	No	Grand Total
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	74.75% 228	25.25% 77	100.00% 305
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	37.50% 3	62.50% 5	100.00% 8
Grand Total	73.80% 231	26.20% 82	100.00% 313

Table 21 - % of Migrants returning to previous housing in the city (on Return)

73.8% of migrants reported that they returned to the same residence/housing on returning to the city while only 26.2% reported changing their place of residence/housing on return. The chart below shows the reasons for not returning to the previous place of residence in the city by migrants.

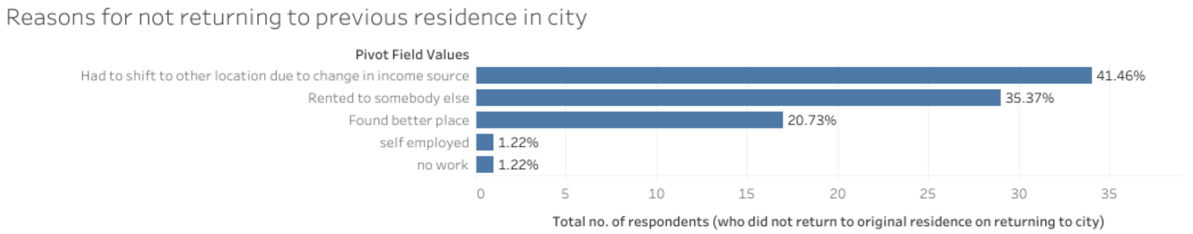

Figure 21 - Reasons for not returning to previous residence in the city

The major reasons reported have been *change in the place of employment (41.46%), followed by the place being already rented to someone else (35.37%), able to find a better place (20.73%).*

EDUCATION:

Of the total sample size of 1171, 397 respondents had school-going children at the time of the survey as seen from the table below.

Whether respondents have any school going children during pandemic

	Select Category			
	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
No	67.48% 579	61.31% 187	100.00% 8	66.10% 774
Yes	32.52% 279	38.69% 118		33.90% 397
Grand Total	100.00% 858	100.00% 305	100.00% 8	100.00% 1,171

Table 22 - Number of respondents who have school going children during pandemic

Of these 397 respondents, 52% respondents have school-going children at their destination i.e. Delhi city, while, 43.83% respondents have school-going children at their place of origin i.e. hometown followed by 3.53% at other places besides their hometown or destination while 0.5% have children studying at both places i.e. hometown and destination.

Location of Education for School going children during pandemic

Select Category	Any other place	At Destination	At Origin	Both (at origin & destination)	Grand Total
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	2.15% 6	60.57% 169	36.56% 102	0.72% 2	100.00% 279
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	6.78% 8	32.20% 38	61.02% 72		100.00% 118
Grand Total	3.53% 14	52.14% 207	43.83% 174	0.50% 2	100.00% 397

Table 23 - Location of Education for school going children during pandemic

It can be seen from above that fewer migrants who returned to their hometowns have children studying at their destination i.e., the City of Delhi.

Whether children faced obstacles in studies during pandemic

	No	Yes	Grand Total
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	30.58% 85	69.42% 193	100.00% 278
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	28.81% 34	71.19% 84	100.00% 118
Grand Total	30.05% 119	69.95% 277	100.00% 396

Table 24 - % of parents reporting children facing obstacles during children's education during COVID

In terms of obstacles faced in schooling/education by children during the pandemic, 70% of respondents reported facing some form of obstacle while 30% reported that they faced no obstacles in children's education during the pandemic.

In terms of the type of obstacles faced by the parents during parents for children's education, the three major obstacles reported were:

- Access to mobile/smart digital devices for online classes
- Internet – No internet access leading to high absenteeism in online classes
- Financial constraints – In terms of purchasing smart digital devices and data packages for internet
- Lack of Parent Awareness regarding online classes – Parents, due to low digital literacy are simply not aware of the curricula, sharing of assignments, online assignment scores etc.

Overall, based on the above the key obstacles can be summarized as a lack of digital literacy amongst parents and financial constraints placed on them due to the pandemic and lowered incomes.

Challenges to Child Education during Pandemic

		% Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Access to a mobile	70.98%	137.0
	No internet	58.03%	112.0
	Financial constraints	60.10%	116.0
	Lack of Parent Awareness regsarding classes	19.17%	37.0
	Poor digital literacy	13.99%	27.0
	No online school	10.36%	20.0
	Education Material	13.47%	26.0
	Low motivation	4.66%	9.0
	Access to a quiet place	0.52%	1.0
	Language/Culture barriers	0.52%	1.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**193.0**
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Access to a mobile	64.29%	54.0
	No internet	58.33%	49.0
	Financial constraints	46.43%	39.0
	Lack of Parent Awareness regsarding classes	20.24%	17.0
	Poor digital literacy	13.10%	11.0
	No online school	17.86%	15.0
	Education Material	9.52%	8.0
	Low motivation	9.52%	8.0
	Access to a quiet place	2.38%	2.0
	Language/Culture barriers	2.38%	2.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**84.0**
Grand Total		**100.00%**	**277.0**

Table 25 - Types of challenges faced during the pandemic about children's education

As a consequence of these obstacles, there have been cases where children have dropped out of education or opted out of online classes as seen from the table below:

Whether children dropped out of school during pandemic

Have any of..	Select Category	% Total Responses	Total Responses
No	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	67.63%	163.0
	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	32.37%	78.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**241.0**
Yes	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	74.36%	116.0
	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	25.64%	40.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**156.0**
Grand Total		**100.00%**	**397.0**

Table 26 - % children temporarily dropping out of school during pandemic

On average, 40% respondents (156) reported that their children had temporarily dropped out of education. This is concerning as whether these children who have dropped out will re-enter education remains a question.

TRANSPORT:

Mode of transport when leaving the city

	Select Category		
	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
Private transport (bus)	21.97% 67	50.00% 4	22.68% 71
Government-run transport (train)	36.72% 112	12.50% 1	36.10% 113
Government-run transport (bus)	22.62% 69	37.50% 3	23.00% 72
Truck/Lorry	5.57% 17		5.43% 17
On Foot/Thela	5.25% 16		5.11% 16
Private transport (car)	4.92% 15		4.79% 15
Own	2.95% 9		2.88% 9
Grand Total	100.00% 305	100.00% 8	100.00% 313

Table 27 - Mode of transport when leaving the city

During the lockdown, there were severe restrictions on mobility. In addition, post-lockdown, many restrictions in terms of congregation and mobility were implemented. In this section, particularly, we explore what modalities the migrants utilized for leaving the city during the pandemic and the costs associated as well as modalities for the returning migrants.

Of the 313 respondents opting to leave the city, 36.1% reported utilizing government-run Trains as their preferred mode of transport for leaving the city, followed by 23% opting for Public Buses and 22.68% opting for private buses. 5% of the respondents reported leaving the city on foot. The respondents who returned to their hometown on foot had to travel between 100km – 1360 km (lowest and max. distance traveled by the sample who returned on foot) along with their families.

Total cost of returning to Home town

	>INR 5,000	INR 0-1,000	INR 1,000 - INR 5,000	Grand Total
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	2.95% 9	35.08% 107	61.97% 189	100.00% 305
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	12.50% 1	62.50% 5	25.00% 2	100.00% 8
Grand Total	3.19% 10	35.78% 112	61.02% 191	100.00% 313

Table 28 - Total Costs of returning to Hometown

The table above shows the cost of returning to their hometown for the migrants. 61% of the migrants on average reported having spent anywhere between INR 1,000 and 5,000 for returning to their hometown. This figure is for the entire migrant household and not per person.

Almost 50% of the migrants opted for Government Trains as a mode of transport for returning to the city, followed by Private and Public buses. These preferences are similar too when of those leaving the city.

Mode of transport when returning to city

	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
Government-run transport (train)	51.15% 156	37.50% 3	50.80% 159
Private transport (bus)	22.95% 70	37.50% 3	23.32% 73
Government-run transport (bus)	20.98% 64	25.00% 2	21.09% 66
On foot/Thela	2.95% 9		2.88% 9
Private transport (car)	1.97% 6		1.92% 6
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 29 - Mode of Transport when returning to city

Whether migrants returned to city alone or with family

	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-H..	Grand Total
Alone	56.72% 173	75.00% 6	57.19% 179
With familiy	43.28% 132	25.00% 2	42.81% 134
Grand Total	100.00% 305	100.00% 8	100.00% 313

Table 30 - Returning Migrants - Alone v/s With Somebody

The table above gives a breakdown of the percentage of migrants who returned alone or with family during the pandemic. It should be noted that all the migrants who exited the city during the pandemic went back with their families. Of these, only 42.8% reported coming back with their family while 57% reported coming back alone. Based on the FGDs, the main reasons for coming back alone to the city are primarily to search for employment opportunities first before recalling the family members back to the city as well as a level of uncertainty and fear in regards to a second lockdown.

HEALTH:

This section discusses the impact of the pandemic on access to public health, obstacles faced in accessing public and private health care, COVID-19 infection amongst migrant workers, the psychological impact of COVID-19, and vaccine hesitancy.

COVID Infection - Yes/No

	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
No	98.95% 849	98.36% 300	100.00% 8	98.80% 1,157
Yes	1.05% 9	1.64% 5		1.20% 14
Grand Total	100.00% 858	100.00% 305	100.00% 8	100.00% 1,171

Table 31 - % Migrants contracting COVID-19 Infection during the pandemic

As seen from the breakdown above, 1.2% (14) respondents were infected with COVID-19 during the pandemic period. The proportion of Category 2 migrants is higher as compared to Category 1 migrants. It should be noted that COVID infection to some degree has been stigmatized especially during the pandemic peak period and hence these responses may be biased. On average, the infected respondents spent INR 8,500 in terms of out-of-pocket expenses to recover from the infection.

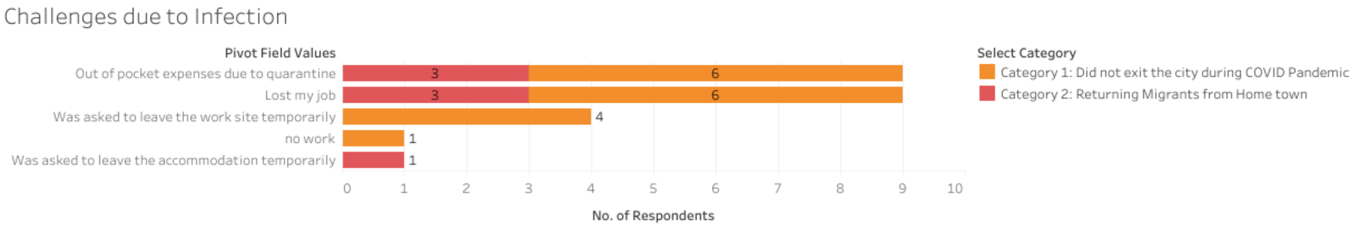

Figure 22 - Challenges due to contracting COVID

As seen above, the major challenges faced by migrants infected with COVID were mainly Out-of-Pocket Expenses, Loss of Job, and quarantines, all of which resulted in the loss of income in one way or another. It should be noted that uptake of health insurance amongst the migrant workers is very low with only 2% of the sample size (24) having any form of health cover. In addition, the Government flagship scheme of Ayushmann Bharat (Universal health coverage scheme for the poor) is not operational in Delhi. In addition, it was observed that there were no changes in the status of health insurance uptake amongst migrant workers during the pandemic i.e. despite the pandemic, no migrant workers acquired health insurance.

In terms of vaccination, 57% (667) of the total sample had acquired 1st dose of which 69.42% consisted of category 1 migrants, 30.13% consisted of category 2 migrants, and 0.45% consisted of category 3 migrants. Similarly, 30.57% (358) had acquired both doses of which 80.73% consisted of category 1 migrants, 18.16% consisted of category 2 migrants, and 1.12% consisted of category 3 migrants. Of the total sample, 12.5% did not get any vaccination doses of which 72.6% consisted of category 1 migrants, 26.71% consisted of category 2 migrants, and 0.68% consisted of category 3 migrants.

Status of Vaccination

	Select Category			
	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pa..	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through no..	Grand Total
1 Dose	69.42% 463	30.13% 201	0.45% 3	100.00% 667
Both Doses	80.73% 289	18.16% 65	1.12% 4	100.00% 358
No Dose	72.60% 106	26.71% 39	0.68% 1	100.00% 146
Grand Total	73.27% 858	26.05% 305	0.68% 8	100.00% 1,171

Table 32 - Status of Vaccination amongst Respondents

Of the respondents, who did not opt to take the vaccine, the survey asked the reasons thereof. It was found that complacency (Vaccine Hesitancy), misconception (Vaccine Hesitancy), non-belief in the vaccine (Vaccine Denial), and finally Adverse Effects Following Immunization (Vaccine Hesitancy) are the major reasons for not taking the vaccine. Of these, 3 are signs of vaccine hesitancy while non-belief/noninterest in vaccination is a sign of vaccine denial i.e., under no circumstances are these respondents willing to take the vaccine. This vaccine denial stands at 20% of the total sample which did not opt for vaccination.

Preference on Healthcare during last health episode

		% of Total Distinct count of # along Table (Down)	Total Responses
Private	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	19.81%	232
	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	7.43%	87
	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	0.17%	2
	Total	27.41%	321
Public	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	53.46%	626
	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	18.62%	218
	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	0.51%	6
	Total	72.59%	850
Grand Total		100.00%	1,171

Table 33 - Preference of Public v/s Private Healthcare

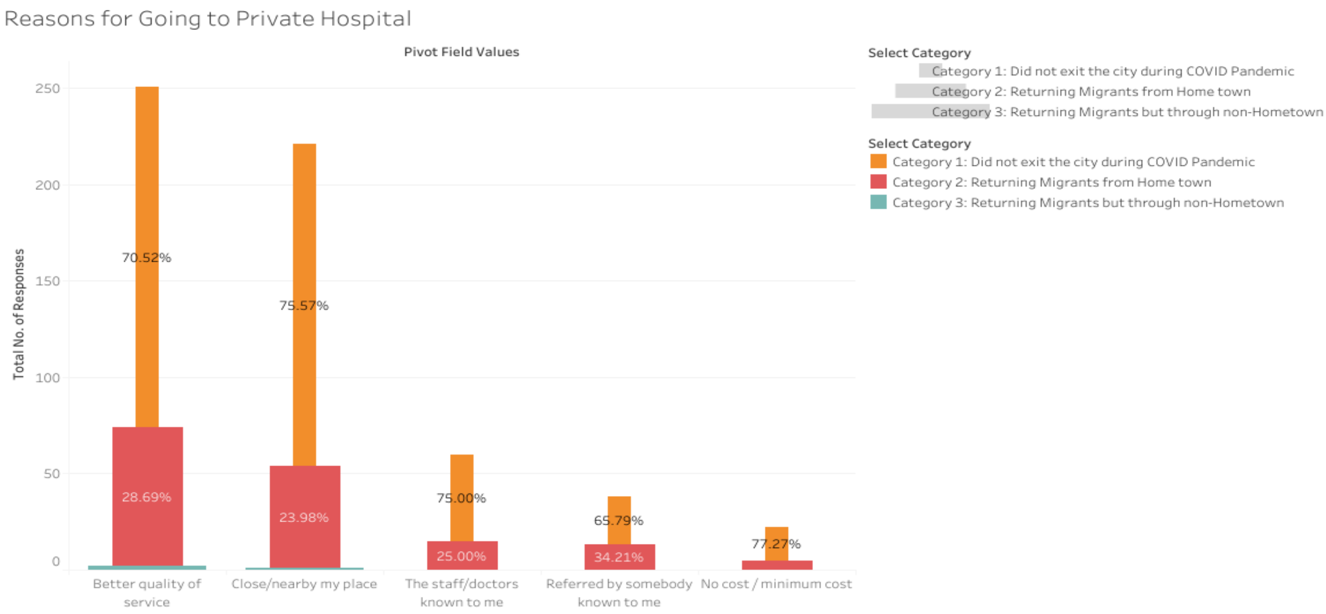

Figure 23 - Reasons for preferring Private Health care

The above table shows that there is a clear preference for public health facilities with 72.59% opting to go for public health care while only 27.41% opting to go for private health care.

Of the respondents preferring private health care, we asked the reasons for opting for private healthcare. The main reasons across all the categories of migrants are *better quality of service and close/nearby places.*

Similarly, of the respondents preferring public health care, we asked the reasons for opting for public healthcare. The main reasons across all categories of migrants are *better quality of service, no cost/minimum cost, and close/nearby places.*

The main determining reason for both preferences is more or less similar with one distinguishing aspect i.e., the reason for preferring public hospitals is cost.

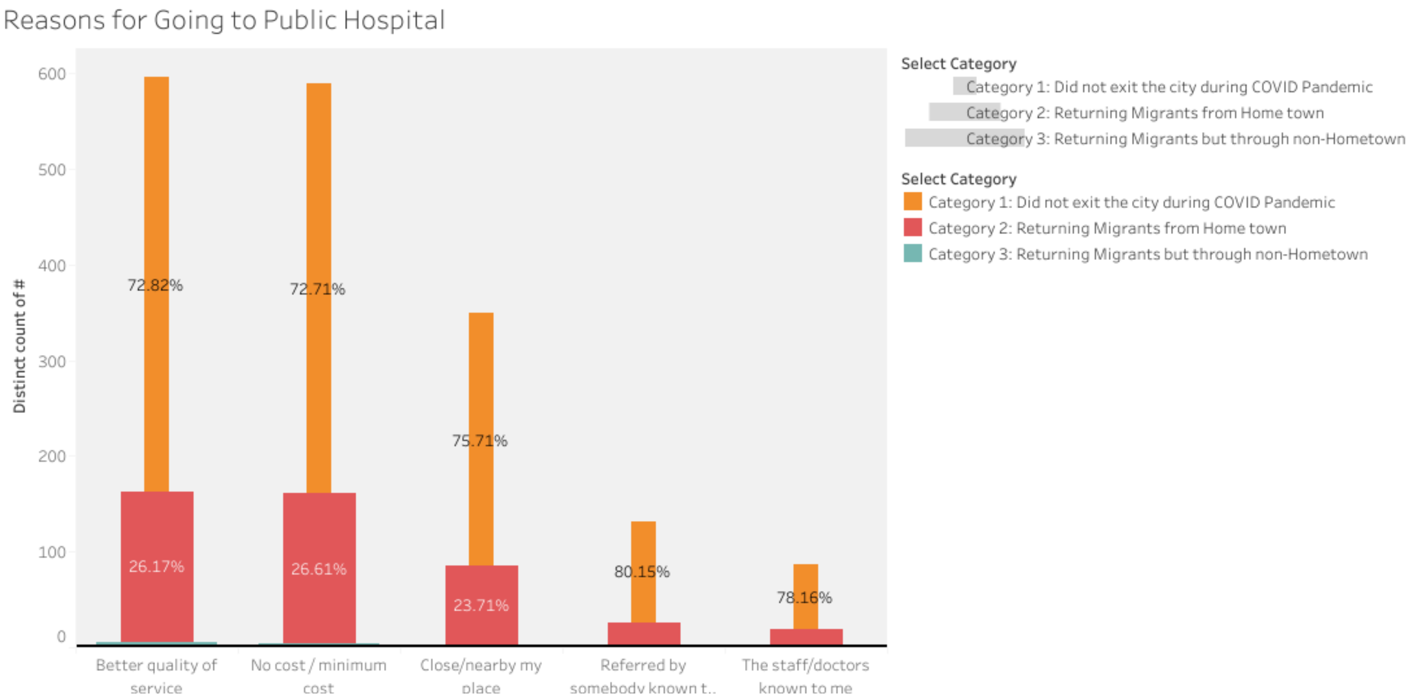

Figure 24 - Reasons for preferring Public Health care

Whether Migrants Faced Any Challenges when accessing Public Health care facilities

	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
No	74.77% 578	24.58% 190	0.65% 5	100.00% 773
Yes	62.34% 48	36.36% 28	1.30% 1	100.00% 77
Grand Total	73.65% 626	25.65% 218	0.71% 6	100.00% 850

Table 34 - % Respondents facing challenges in accessing Public Health care facilities in the city

As was observed during the pandemic that public facilities had been severely overstrained and lacked resources. In light of this, the survey asked the respondents whether they faced any challenges in accessing public health. Of the respondents who preferred public health facilities or had accessed public health facilities in recent memory, 9% (77) faced challenges in accessing public health facilities. In addition, it is clear from the table above that a higher proportion of category 2 migrants (12.8% facing challenges) and category 3 (17%) migrants faced challenges in accessing public health facilities as opposed to category 1 migrants (7.7% facing challenges).

The major challenges reported by the respondents in accessing public healthcare facilities are as follows:

- *Too Time-consuming*
- *Too crowded*
- *Fear of contracting COVID-19*
- *Health service opening hours not suitable (i.e.OPD hours/doctor visiting/appointment times are not suitable)*

Major Challenges faced by Migrants in accessing public health care

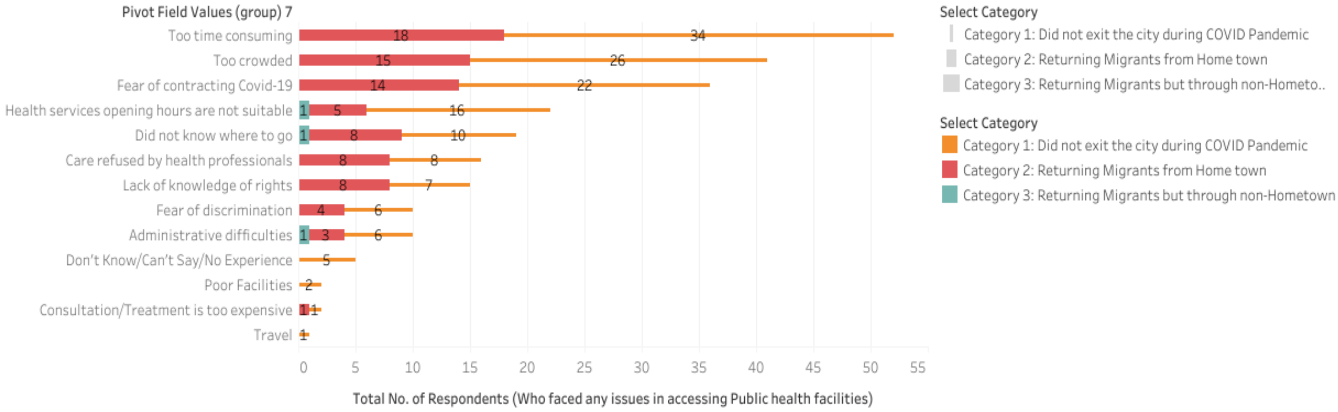

Figure 25 - Major Challenges faced by migrants in accessing Public Health care facilities in the city

Some of these challenges are challenges of convenience while fear of contracting COVID-19 may be considered as a circumstantial challenge.

The survey also briefly explored the impact of the pandemic on mental health. It was observed that almost the entirety of the sample experienced some form of mental health symptoms. *Worry, Anxiety, Irritability, and Anger* were major symptoms reported by respondents. However, the degree of such symptoms remains debatable. The same is tabulated in the table below.

Psychological State due to COVID

		% Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Worry	80.42%	690
	Anxiety	44.29%	380
	Irritable	36.95%	317
	Anger	36.13%	310
	Depression	35.90%	308
	Hopelessness	27.97%	240
	Loneliness	22.61%	194
	Sleep problems/disturbances	4.66%	40
	Alcohol	0.82%	7
	No such symptoms experienced	1.40%	12
	Drugs	0.47%	4
	Total	**100.00%**	**858**
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Worry	65.57%	200
	Anxiety	29.51%	90
	Irritable	50.82%	155
	Anger	40.33%	123
	Depression	33.11%	101
	Hopelessness	26.56%	81
	Loneliness	16.39%	50
	Sleep problems/disturbances	9.84%	30
	Alcohol	4.26%	13
	Total	**100.00%**	**305**
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Worry	75.00%	6
	Anxiety	75.00%	6
	Irritable	25.00%	2
	Anger	37.50%	3
	Depression	50.00%	4
	Hopelessness	50.00%	4
	Loneliness	25.00%	2
	Total	**100.00%**	**8**
Grand Total		100.00%	1,171

Table 35 - Mental well-being during the pandemic

A study carried out in 10 industrial zones in Delhi reported that the majority of the workers living in these industrial areas reported to have Financial Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Loss of Sleep as major symptoms during the pandemic[24].

[24] https://www.ideasforindia.in/topics/poverty-inequality/how-has-the-covid-19-crisis-affected-the-urban-poor-findings-from-a-phone-survey-iii.htm

iii. Disaster Aid/Relief

Central/State Governments and local authorities had announced several relief packages to aid migrants and BPL families during the pandemic, especially, during lockdown. In addition, Civil Society across India also provided relief in different forms. In this section, we briefly explore the type of benefits received by the migrant workers as well as summarily explore whether migrants would be willing to enroll in a new migrant insurance scheme should the Government choose to implement one.

At Destination - Aid Received

	Select Category			
	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
No	65.15% 559	60.98% 186	62.50% 5	**64.05%** **750**
Yes	34.85% 299	39.02% 119	37.50% 3	**35.95%** **421**
Grand Total	100.00% 858	100.00% 305	100.00% 8	100.00% 1,171

Table 36- % Migrants receiving any form of Disaster Aid

As seen above, 64% of the respondents reported not being beneficiaries of any form of aid, and 36% reported receiving some form of aid. This is similar to findings of the CLIPS survey of Azim Premji University, where out of the sample of 226 respondents, 70% of migrant households reported not being able to avail ration during the pandemic period[25].

The migrants received many different types of aid from the Government and other stakeholders ranging from food packets, food rations, Cash Transfers, PMGKP scheme benefits, free quarantine facilities, payment relief for public services which include free cooking gas, free bus tickets/subsidized bus transport, free/subsidized electricity, free housing or other in-kind transfers. As seen from the table below, most of the migrants in the sample reported having received food rations/packets as aid (approx. 96.7%). However, a fairly smaller percentage of migrants reported having received cash transfers or any other kind of aid which is rather concerning.

The break-up of the aid received by the migrant workers and the type of aid received has been presented below.

[25] https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/State-Pamphlet-Delhi-Urban-English-final.pdf

At Destination - Type of Aid Receiveed

Select Cate..	Pivot Field Values	% Total Responses	Total Responses
Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Free Food packets/food materials	96.99%	290.0
	Cash Transfers	16.72%	50.0
	PMKGY	13.71%	41.0
	Free Quarantine	12.71%	38.0
	Payment relief for public services	2.68%	8.0
	Free Housing	1.34%	4.0
	Other in-kind transfers	1.67%	5.0
	No help	0.33%	1.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**299.0**
Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Free Food packets/food materials	93.28%	111.0
	Cash Transfers	24.37%	29.0
	PMKGY	19.33%	23.0
	Free Quarantine	15.13%	18.0
	Payment relief for public services	3.36%	4.0
	Free Housing	4.20%	5.0
	Other in-kind transfers	1.68%	2.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**119.0**
Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Free Food packets/food materials	100.00%	3.0
	Cash Transfers	33.33%	1.0
	Payment relief for public services	33.33%	1.0
	Free Housing	33.33%	1.0
	Total	**100.00%**	**3.0**
Grand Total		100.00%	421.0

Table 37 - Type of Aid received by Respondents

In addition to aid received as mentioned at the start of this section, the survey also explored the willingness of the migrant respondents to enroll in a hypothetical migrant insurance scheme which could guarantee some form of safety net in terms of unemployment benefits in case of a natural disaster.

Willingness to enroll in migrant insurance scheme

	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
No	43.01% 369	35.41% 108	37.50% 3	**40.99%** **480**
Not sure	26.92% 231	40.00% 122	25.00% 2	**30.32%** **355**
Yes	30.07% 258	24.59% 75	37.50% 3	**28.69%** **336**
Grand Total	**100.00%** **858**	**100.00%** **305**	**100.00%** **8**	**100.00%** **1,171**

Table 38 - Willingness to enroll in 'hypothetical' migrant benefit scheme

Willingness to pay for migrant insurance

	Category 1: Did not exit the city during COVID Pandemic	Category 2: Returning Migrants from Home town	Category 3: Returning Migrants but through non-Hometown	Grand Total
No	11.63% 30	6.67% 5		10.42% 35
Yes	88.37% 228	93.33% 70	100.00% 3	89.58% 301
Grand Total	100.00% 258	100.00% 75	100.00% 3	100.00% 336

Table 39 - Willingness to pay a nominal premium for supposed migrant insurance scheme

Of the total sample of 1171, 41% of migrants were not willing to enroll in such a (hypothetical) scheme, 30.32% were not sure while 26.89% were willing to enroll in such a migrant insurance scheme.

Of the persons who were willing to enroll in such a scheme, the survey explored whether they would be willing to pay a nominal amount as a premium (as with any insurance scheme). 89.58% of respondents were willing to pay the premium while 10.42% were not. Based on this, we can estimate that on average around 20-25% of the migrants in the total sample would be willing to enroll and pay some premium for insurance (specifically employment insurance).

4. RESEARCH TOOLS & METHODOLOGY

The assignment followed a mixed methodology approach of Quantitative Data Collection and Qualitative Data Collection.

Sr. No.	Respondent	Information	Tool	Sample
1	Migrant Workers	Socio-Economics Temporal Summary information regarding the impact of COVID on Income, Employment, Health Access, Housing, Transport, Disaster Aid/Relief and Remittances.	Personal Interviews (CAPI based)	1171
2	Migrant Women & Men	Impact of COVID in day-to-day life and their community in general across aspects such as safety, food, water, expenses, income, livelihood opportunities, migration patterns, etc.	FGDs	5

The aspects of the data quality monitoring involved data verification of 10% in the field, 25% of respondents being tele-called for verification, and 50% data scrutiny at the back end.

5. CONCLUSION

The research depicts the catastrophic impact of COVID-19 on employment, income, education of children of migrants, and migrants' health, during and immediate aftermath of the first lockdown in Delhi. The study findings are consistent with several other studies carried out during COVID-19 times.

The study findings also depict a different picture from newspapers reporting on several aspects and conclude that:

1) Minuscule percentages of migrants were infected by COVID-19 infection (less than 2%).
2) Almost half of the migrants did not return to their place of origin (73.27%).
3) Only a very small percentage of migrants returned home on foot while the majority managed return travel by public or private transport.

However, as the sample size is small the above conclusion requires larger studies to validate. We speculate that the harshest impact of this pandemic and subsequent exodus was on circular migrants rather than semi-permanent migrants.

As of 2020, according to the Centre for Development Studies, India has an estimated 600 million migrants[26]. In other words, roughly half of India is living in a place where they weren't born.

The bulk of the movement (62%) is within the same district. Another 26% is between districts within the same state. Only 12% of movement is inter-state (Census 2011 data). Interstate migrants represented only 4% of the population in India in 2011, a rate almost unchanged since 2001. According to a research paper, India has the lowest rate of internal migration in a sample of 80 countries[27].

All the research emphasizes:

1) lack of basic facilities and minimum living standards
2) insecurity of job tenures
3) lesser rise in remuneration as compared to the cost of inflation,
4) probabilities of exploitation due to contract labor arrangements,
5) workplace safety,
6) difficulties in accessing schools for children's education,
7) non-compliance of minimum wage Act,
8) weak agency and collectivization of migrants and lack of awareness of entitlements
9) challenges of communication and coordination among all concerned stakeholders for migrants' welfare, etc.

[26]https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41027-020-00293-8
[27]https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/psp.2036

As the bulk of migrants are in informal sectors and due to the involvement and role of many and varied stakeholders, identifying migrants and ensuring accessibility of all entitlements become a much larger challenge. The findings of this research re-emphasize the current fragile social safety net for migrants, the multiplier and devastating impact of any natural calamity, and reiterate the need for comprehensive policy and the convergent role of all stakeholders in implementing the same.

Finally, one of the core issues realized during this study has been the lack of a fully functional definition of migrants. There is an overwhelming consensus across all studies that circular/seasonal migrants have been the worst affected during the pandemic which are also technically migrants, but a more specific sub-category as such. When we compare the fragmented migrant statistics from the Census and NSS which uses a different set of definitions altogether from each other, study the CSO statistics which also has a more ad-hoc definition of migrant workers, with each having its own, similar to this research, it becomes very difficult to compare, map or overlap various studies to reach any fruitful or valid conclusions as the foundational definition of the target audience being studied is different for each stakeholder. Any major change in migrant policy must start by defining a more detailed