

A REFUGEE CRISIS: THAT INDIA WAS NEVER PREPARED FOR!

(Internal and external migrants, together, pose a refugee crisis)

MIGRANTS: We see them everywhere. Yet, we never imagined migrant workers as a group big enough to be taken seriously.

That's right. We have underestimated the role migrants played in the Indian economy. We have failed to recognise their contribution. We knew they existed but never acknowledged their quantum.

The Covid-19 crisis has forced India to finally acknowledge the migrant. For decades, millions of workers have moved from state to state and some to shores abroad, looking for opportunities and livelihoods. The international scope of this pandemic has ensured that no section of people is left unaffected. The scale of the issue may vary from state to state or city to city, but none is left unscathed.

My estimate is that close to 500 million Indians are today internal migrants—either living in a place they were not born in or did not live in six months ago. Of these, the ones mainly affected by this lockdown are the worker migrants. These would be at least 30% of the total migrant population.

We have no studies on this segment. They weren't covered in policy circles.

We talk only about smart cities...now we realise that cities need migrants.

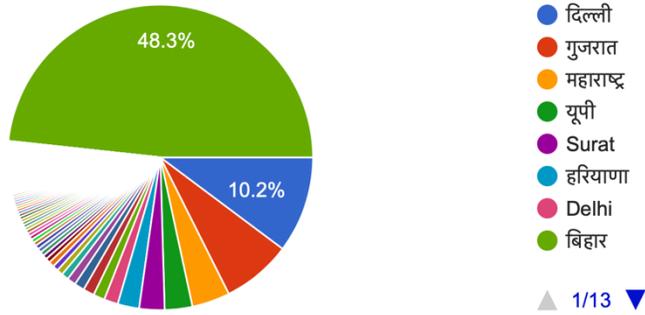
The plight of migrants leaving the cities has been visible on streets all over India. Now, a new base line study has looked what is happening to poor, non-migrant urban workers. Where they are stranded in India and Who has supported them in crisis. Through the study and tracking by "Association For Community Research and Action" with the support of "Digital Empowerment Foundation" reached about 1,79,000 Migrant individuals stranded across India during lockdown crisis to support and facilitate them through information services.

The study, conducted over seven weeks of the lockdown, found that intra-city movement, mapped using WhatsApp and Phone calls, immediately after the first lockdown was announced on March 24. It arrived at three broad conclusions. First, the lockdown resulted in significant economic costs and restlessness. Second, the lockdown resulted in "widespread non-compliance meets". Third, the economic impacts of the lockdown were somewhat mitigated by local NGO supports.

The first phase of study and tracking; these are the following observations;

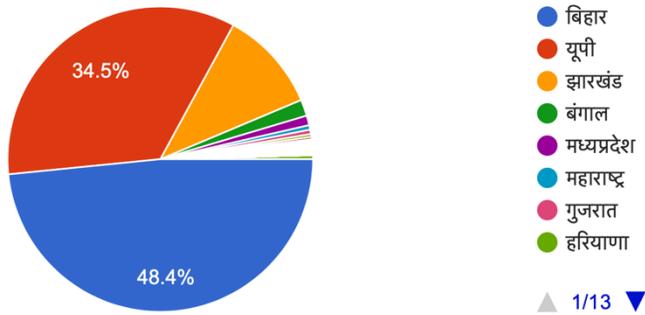
आप किस राज्य में फँसे हैं ?

178,759 responses



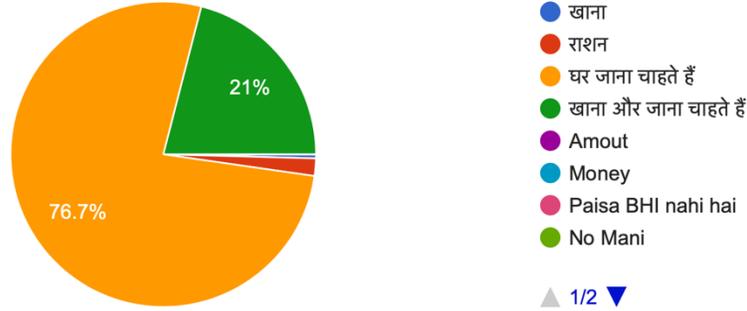
आपका घर किस राज्य में है?

62,187 responses



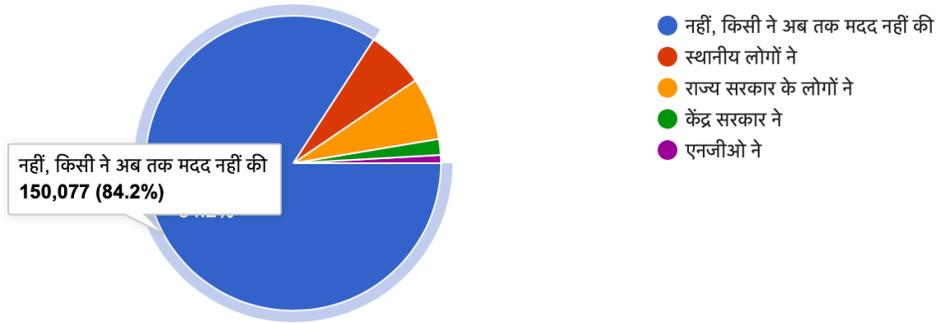
अभी आपको किस प्रकार की मदद चाहिए ?

178,781 responses



क्या आपको अब तक किसी प्रकार की मदद मिली है? अगर हाँ तो किसने मदद की..

178,322 responses



In the PHASE II OF THE STUDY AND TRACKING, we propose the following observations;

- **MIGRANTS SUFFERING DURING LOCKDOWN**

- Their Observation about the society
- Their Observation about the Government System
- Their Opinion about their own future
- What went wrong?

- **MIGRANTS SKILL AND LIVELIHOOD MAPPING**

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