Unlocking the Urban:
Reimagining Migrant Lives in Cities Post-COVID 19

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Reimagining Migrant Lives in Cities
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Foreword

Migration is not a new phenomenon in India. People have moved across the length and breadth of the country for various reasons, including work. Today, India has a burgeoning urban population, which contributes to about 63% of India's GDP. A large section of this population includes migrants who for a desire for better livelihood leave their rural settlements and come to cities. However, with lack of requisite education, skills and training, they often end up in arduous employment accompanied with low wages, poor living conditions and lack of social protection. These disparities are quite visible when one sees around our cities, with thriving pockets and clusters of sub-standard living and prevalence of poor working conditions across sectors.

Small industrial establishments, factories, home-based employment, construction industry and domestic work are some of the sectors which provide much-needed employment to migrant workers from rural India. They work hard and contribute to the development of the city and the country's economy. Unfortunately, this section of the population is left on their own to struggle to meet their ends and lead a life deprived of dignity. We ought to do more for the betterment of this vulnerable section of the society.

For a country of India's size and population this unabated unequal growth within a city's periphery needs to be curbed. Opportunities of decent employment, proper social security, housing and living conditions should be addressed for all, including the migrants.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal No. 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 11 (make cities, human settlements, inclusive safe, resilient and sustainable). These goals re-instate the urgency on evolving policies, which lead to equitable growth and in turn are beneficial for one and all. Further, the Government of India adopted the Smart Cities Mission, which among other things aim at promoting sustainable and inclusive development. There is some progress but more needs to be done, with renewed vigour if we are to realise the objectives of SDG Goals No. 8 and 11 within the timeframe of 2030.The policymakers at all levels need to fast track programmes and policies, which address the special needs of the migrants, both at the point of origin and destination.

Aajeevika Bureau has been working closely with migrant communities, both at the source and destination, primarily in two Indian states – Gujarat and Rajasthan.
The FES India Office has supported Aajeevika Bureau in undertaking an in-depth field research on the condition of migrants' in two Indian cities – Surat and Ahmedabad. The research has come up with important policy recommendations to improve the working and living condition of migrants. The outcomes of this research may prove to be useful in ongoing and future policy discourses to make conditions for migrants – *Formal, Adequate and Consistent.*

Johann Ivanov and Anup Srivastava
February 2020
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, New Delhi

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

Manish Shukla

Towards Migrant Inclusive Cities

The poet Audre Lorde once said that there are no new ideas left to save us, but only new ways of making them felt. For researchers, there are two further tasks: to ask the questions at the right time when a window of opportunity exists for a set of new and old ears to listen; and then to offer us a framing on how to listen, how to understand what is at stake. For migration, the COVID 19 crisis is a window of opportunity. Long known structural exclusions have become newly, sharply visible. Yet the documentation of the effects of the pandemic on migrant workers is critical but not enough. What we need is new ways of feeling and understanding these societal cleavages, fulfilling both the poet's demand for empathy and the researcher's endeavor for rigour. This report is a pivotal contribution in this moment. It not only offers a rich archive from Ahmedabad and Surat of the status and conditions of migrant workers, it uses this archive to offer us both ways of understanding why these conditions have occurred, and how to move forward to both offer immediate relief as well as longer term recovery.

Migration is a diagnostic for the conditions of urbanization. It shows us not just what migrant workers go through in our cities, but what the city looks like when seen from their perspective. The report does this ably, asking a question: what would it mean to see public systems, housing, infrastructure and labour entitlements if we followed people and not just places? This is a critical departure. For long, the study of urban poverty has focused on either workplaces or informal residential settlements. The factory, worksite, market, or the "slum." Circular migration reminds us of the mobility of people within and across these categories. It challenges the design and delivery of public system that are spatially bound to city boundaries, to city residents, to neighbourhoods, to workplaces. In the authors' own words: "while semi-permanent migrants and settled urban poor have historically been able to make some demands from the state through various mechanisms, circular migrants can invoke neither their citizenship nor labour rights to access basic public provisioning from the state and industry respectively."

The report's strength is in looking at the social, spatial and infrastructural together, using the twin framings of political economy as well as citizenship rights, with a strong feminist analysis of gendered impacts. When they do this, they are able to draw connections between seemingly separate data points – the fact that 48% of construction workers in Ahmedabad spent half their income on food and oil is not disconnected from near universal open defecation and the absence of any form of tenure at all in unrecognised housing beyond the "slum." Often, studies on poverty are sectoral – they look at housing or food or sanitation. By following people, this study brings those together into a single frame, arguing that migration defines the system more than any other sectoral cleavages.

This has deep implications for practice – it calls for a focus outside existing systems to reach a known but unserved population; integrated, portable entitlements; flexible structures of delivery; housing models that take time into account as well as space; ideas of the universal and the public that assume rather than are undone by mobility. Here, too, the report is specific and rooted. It argues that "migrant hotspots" are known. This reminds us that even this mobile population has a geography that is known and that makes practice possible. It also reminds us that the system has persisted this far because it is in the interest of many for certain claims not to be recognized, certain dreams to remain deferred. A new system will require a new political economy, they argue, and be accompanied by a changed social contract. A post-COVID world worth fighting for holds both these scales: new systems, and new political and social values that they can embed in.

This report is then both an important archive as well as a framework for diagnosis, analysis and practice. I hope it gets the wide readership it deserves, and is met with both reflection as well as action in response.
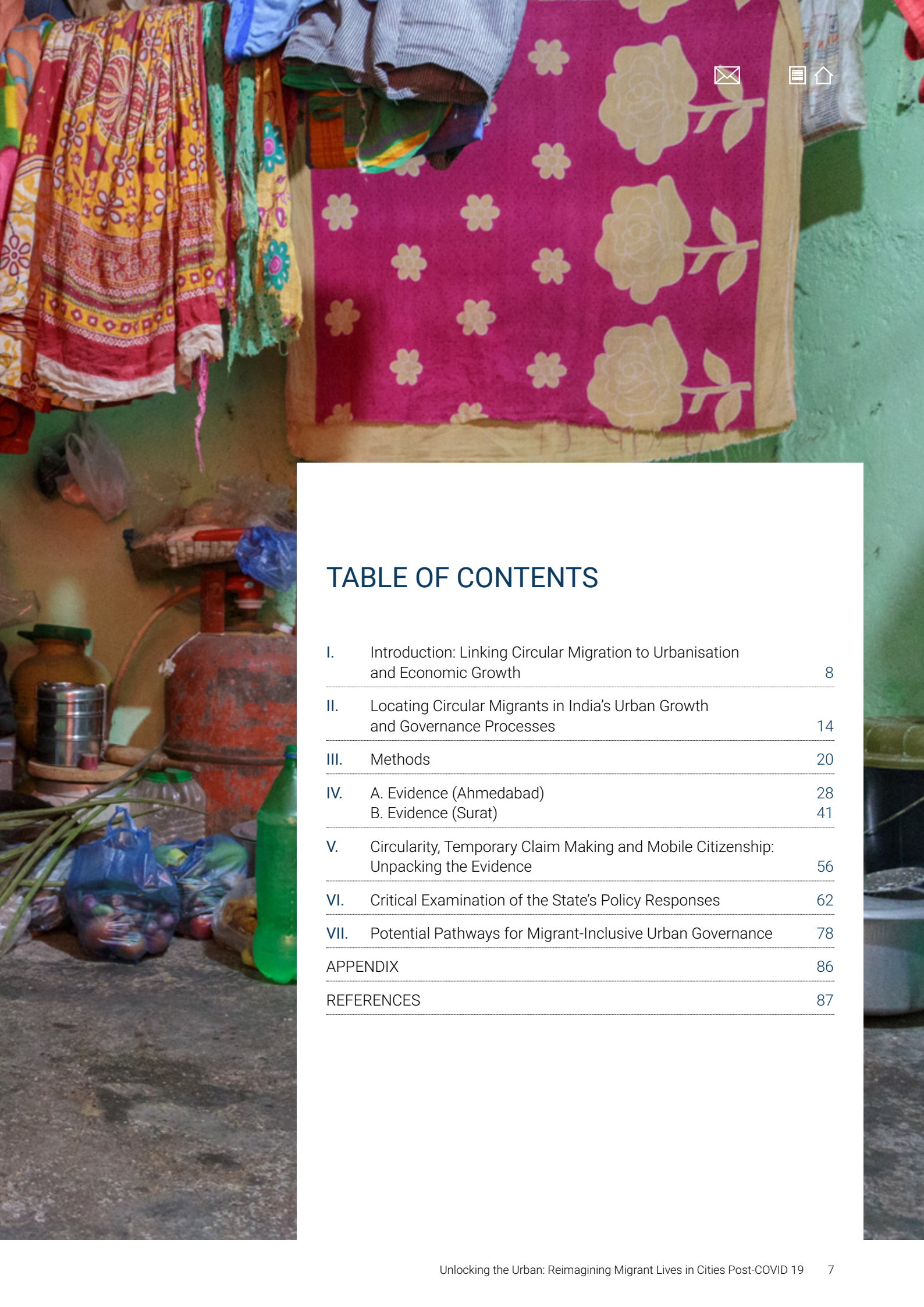
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Introduction:
Linking Circular
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The COVID 19 pandemic and resultant lockdown triggered vast movements of internal migrant workers, across the length and breadth of the country, desperate to leave the urban areas where they work to reach their home villages. Only a few were able to make it back, taking long and dangerous off-routes by foot, in order to evade authorities who viewed them, primarily, as potential 'carriers of infection'. Many more were detained at borders, where they faced police brutality and harassment, were doused in disinfectants, asked to produce "health certificates" which they had no means of acquiring, or forced into shelter homes en-route. However, a large majority of migrant workers remain stranded in cities and towns, where they have not been paid wages for previous work, forced to take unpaid leave, or removed from their jobs. In panic, they are calling numerous helplines, most of which remain unreachable, to ask for rations, wages or to let them return home.

Urbanisation in India has been termed a 'messy and hidden process', with urban governance institutions finding themselves unable to cope with the steady influx of rural populations to urban regions for work (Ellis and Roberts, 2015, p.2). Rapid urbanisation fuelled by large scale rural-urban migration was expected to alleviate the poverty of rural populations, who would reap the benefits of urban economic growth. However, on the contrary, urbanisation rates in India have fallen since the 1980s, with the overall urbanisation rate at 34 percent, much lower than the global average of 55 percent (World Bank, 2018). This has been attributed to the phenomenon of circular migration, which constitutes temporary and undocumented labour flows crisscrossing the length and breadth of the country. Labour remains in a constant flux, moving from rural to urban or rural to rural destinations. In the case of rural to urban migration, circular migrants move between different urban work destinations and their rural villages, without settling in the cities where they are employed (Tumbe, 2016). Circular migration involves a myriad of movements – short term or long term, short distance or long distance, by men, women and children, single or family-based. While workers remain at their work destinations between 3 to 11 months in a year, they always return to their source villages (Sharma et al., 2014). For the purpose of this study, the term "migrant" will denote rural to urban, circular migrants as per the above definition.

Movement from rural to urban areas for employment in high growth urban sectors has not led to an improvement in the work and living conditions of circular migrant populations. Rather, urban growth has been exclusionary and exploitative, leading to the reproduction of poverty and socio-economic inequalities at the work destinations (Breman, 2013; Mosse, 2007; Shah and Lerche, 2018). Urban employment generation is highly informal in nature, reflecting the national trend of 93 percent livelihoods being informal (NCEUS, 2007). Informal employment is synonymous with insecure and temporary work, involving low wages for long hours in hazardous and toxic environments. Circular migrants, who account for 100 million people, or 1 in 10 Indians (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009), form a substantial proportion of the informal workforce in urban regions, hired exclusively to fill the labour demand in the lowest, poorly remunerated segments of the labour market (Jain and Sharma, 2018).

The poor conditions of work experienced by circular migrants are aggravated by poor living conditions in urban areas. Due to the informal nature of their employment relationships and lack of access to trade unions or platforms for collective bargaining, they are unable to access legally mandated minimum wages, welfare benefits or employer provided facilities or services or afford formal rental accommodation. As temporary and mobile workers without official count or identity, they are easily excluded from urban governance facilities and schemes for basic public provisioning. Devoid of voting rights, social networks and excluded from the socio-cultural and administrative aspects of the city they are not able to demand access to basic facilities and services in the city (Bhagat, 2017). Circular migrants are, therefore, left without avenues for improving their work or living conditions.

While many slum settlements in the city might have been able to achieve some degree of recognition or legitimacy by urban local governance institutions, including the provision of

Image 1: Circular migrant workers perform some of the most hazardous jobs to subsidise the industrial growth of large urban centres like Ahmedabad and Surat. (left)Workers shovel coal into large boiler machines and carry heavy weights in factories.(right) Worker on beem pachchad (Picture credit: Anoop Sathyan (left), Manish Shukla (right))

basic facilities and services in many cases, the settlements of migrant workers are not only informal, but remain un-recognised and illegitimate. According to Desai and Sanghvi (2018), this is due to the lack of enumeration, politics around land utilisation and tenure security in the spaces where these settlements are located, as well as the circularity and multilocality of migrants' lives, which leaves them without voting rights or political voice in the city. They are often outside the purview of urban planning and schemes, criminalized and considered undesirable by the state and local populations, live in deplorable conditions, pushed to the margins of cities both spatially and in its imagination of itself (Sugathan and Jayaram, 2018).

So removed were migrant workers from the state and urban policy imagination, that the announcement of lockdown came without adequate warning, or any plan for reaching out them in India's urban areas, despite their presence in significant numbers. Even though multiple weeks have passed since the announcement of the nation-wide lockdown on 25th March 2020, followed by a slew of measures by state and central governments, migrant workers remain left out. State and city administrations have not been able to operationalize directives to ensure rations, shelter and wages to migrant workers.

The catastrophic results of the lockdown only exposed and aggravated glaring gaps in India's public provisioning and employment systems, which has, for decades, systematically excluded and extracted migrant workers to facilitate economic growth. Abandoned by the state and their employers, they have always relied on their meager wages to purchase basic sustenance from the market, or negotiate access on a daily basis, involving large monetary, physical or mental costs. Without wages, and a lockdown in place, migrant workers are left on the brink of starvation, facing physical and mental insecurity, and the brutality of the structural violence manufactured by our exclusionary urban spaces. These circumstances push them into higher risk of exposure to the virus – a lack of safe shelter or space to practice physical distancing, water and sanitation for maintaining basic hygiene or access to healthcare, or food and nutrition – defeating the very purpose of the lockdown for these groups of workers. Understanding the nature of labour migration into India's cities, and the causes and extent of exclusion that they face is not only necessary for tackling the immense challenges posed by the unanticipated pandemic, but also for moving towards migrant inclusive cities in its aftermath.

Gujarat Model of Development: The Case of Ahmedabad and Surat

The Gujarat Model of Development provides a prime example of urban growth accompanied by deepening socio-economic inequalities – lauded as a success story of neoliberal reforms and an example for the rest of the country. By the beginning of the millennium, Gujarat became "the second most industrialized, third most urbanized and fifth richest state," attracting the third highest share of domestic investments (Ghosh, 2012, p. 128). Morris (2014) illustrates that Gujarat's

growth is based on the comparative advantage that it holds due to the combined effects of low labour costs, repressed wages, large scale migrations and tax concessions to corporate investments for fuelling urban industries and infrastructural development. Compared to other states, it fares much lower on indicators of social and economic inclusion, with its priorities clearly stating that it aspires to become 'the fastest growing economy not just in India but also in the world' and 'the most attractive destination of corporate investments' with 'state of the art technologies' (Hirway, 2014).

This is evident in the large capital investments such as power supply, ports, jetties, roads, industrial estates and parks, as well as over 50 SEZs. At the same time, the low per capita social spending in Gujarat puts it in the bottom 20 category among states in India, given the allocation of greater proportion of resources to corporates in terms of concessions for land and water use as well as infrastructure development (Shah and Dhak, 2014). In addition to this, Mahadevia (2014) points to the displacement of the poor -- their relocation to the peripheries of cities, destruction of their livelihoods and the steady weakening of local city governments, with the state government dictating the allocation of resources for public provisioning. At the same time, large scale migration for informal employment has been recognised as the central feature of infrastructural development and industrial growth in Gujarat (Unni and Naik, 2014). While it has the highest growth rates in the country, it also has heightening rates of informal and casualised forms of employment, largely undertaken by migrants, and accompanied by low or marginal improvements in wage rates which are not consistent with increases in labour productivity (ibid).

Ahmedabad City

Ahmedabad city has been celebrated as the poster child of the Gujarat Model of Development. The city has a burgeoning industrial periphery, including chemical, pharmaceutical, agro-processing, textiles and garments factories of varying sizes, as well as incessant construction driven by real estate and infrastructure development, requiring a steady labour supply. According to Aajeevika Bureau's informal estimates, there are 1.3 million circular migrant workers in Ahmedabad city, forming the labour power that drives 5 major sectors – construction, manufacturing, hotels and restaurants, head loading and domestic work.

Interestingly, the creation of a casual and irregular workforce, largely comprised of circular migrants, has been part of the city's planned industrialisation, marked by a shift from import-substitute to export-oriented industrialisation. Known as the 'Manchester of the East', Ahmedabad's erstwhile textile mills employed a vast permanent and regular workforce. The decline of the textile mills in the 1970s and 1980s, making way for the city's participation in global value chains by producing cheap and low value-added products for export markets, further led to the increasing casualisation and informalisation of labour, and the denial of welfare provisioning to workers (Sato, 2017).

The demand for casual labour was met by circular migration into the city. Circular migrants in Ahmedabad largely come from the adjacent districts of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, mostly from tribal and lower caste households, who were severely affected by neoliberal restructuring and consequent rural immiseration since the 1990s at the rural source (Jaffrelot, 2015). Casual construction labour in Ahmedabad overwhelmingly comprises Bhil Adivasi migrants from these areas, comprising 80 percent of the total construction workforce, where they perform manual and unskilled jobs (Prayas, 2009, p.1).

In addition to this, migrant labour also comes from longer distances, mainly, from Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Odisha and Chhattisgarh, which experienced similar processes of dispossession and impoverishment. Workers from UP and Bihar largely come from OBC or General caste categories, migrating to be employed in skilled work in factories, in the construction sector or as headloaders. While many enter the city as unskilled workers, they often become semi-settled or permanent migrants over the course of years. However, Dalit or Adivasi labour, who are employed in the same sectors, might not be able to achieve this status or access better paying jobs. Presenting large volumes of data on labour processes from the major industries that employ circular migrants in Gujarat, Jain and Sharma (2018) show how employers use the desperation of Adivasi communities for maximum extraction, keeping them isolated in ghettoised segments of the labour market where laws (related to health, social security as well as regular

and fair employment) are suspended. Moreover, they enjoy near total impunity in doing so, from lax regulatory authorities that have been purposely weakened by a neo-liberal state. The consequence is that these workers are subject to a work regime that is erratic, casualised, offering stagnant wages and with no vertical mobility even across generations (Jain and Sharma, 2018).

Circular migrants remain a heterogeneous category in the city – varied in terms of caste, class, gender, source region and whether they are family or single male migrants, as well as in terms of work sectors. They are bound together by their presence in the lowest rungs of informal labour markets in Ahmedabad's construction, manufacturing and services sectors, and their inability to settle in or make claims on the city, occupying instead, informal and un-recognised spaces marked by poor access to basic facilities and services required for a minimum standard of life (Mehrotra and Jayaram, 2019). They live either in: (a) open spaces across the city (on pavements, near railway tracks, under flyovers or on private or public land); (b) informal rental accommodation provided by local landlords, which cater exclusively to these categories of workers; or (c) within their worksites based on arrangements with the labour contractor or employer (on construction sites, factory compounds, inside hotels or restaurants, in the markets where they serve as headloaders, or inside the homes of employers who engage them as domestic workers).

Image 2: (Clockwise from left) Headloading worker; Construction worker; Factory worker inside a textile unit; Factory workers in a dyeing unit (Picture credit: Anoop Sathyan and Jagjit Singh (top right))

Surat City

With its billion dollar strong diamond polishing, textile, ship building and petrochemical industries, Surat is touted as the world's fastest growing city in the 2019-35 period (Oxford Economics, 2018), and glowingly referred to as the "El Dorado" of Gujarat, the *lambi minar* (Saiyed and Mohanty, 2019). Strategically located along the west coast of India, between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, the mercantile city has historically served as a crucial trade link between Southeast Asia and West Asia (Subrahmanyam, 2000; Breman, 1993). The urban economy and the linkages of Surat with the sub-continental hinterland, that burgeoned in the 17th and 18th centuries, were formerly controlled by a coalition of Muslim, Hindu and Parsi commercial interests (Breman, 1993).

However, it was the 20th century that marked a significant shift from trading to manufacturing, rendering Surat as one of the major industrial bases in western India. The textile production industry, which grew from ongoing structural and technological changes in the artisan family-run handlooms in the 1950s, played a key role in this transition. Furthermore, the city experienced a major boom in the 1980s with the shutting down of the mills in erstwhile Bombay and Ahmedabad. This forced a large part of the industrial labour hailing from as far as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha, to northern Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, to move out of the formal sector and find a more precarious niche in the informal sector of the urban economy. Breman (1997) argues that the rise of Surat as a focal point of the informal sector activity is a direct consequence of the crisis in the formal sector economy. In fact, on account of the huge influx and availability of a cheap migrant workforce, Gujarat workers constituted only one-fifth of the total workforce in the textile industry (Barik, 1987, p.168).

Over the years, the city's population has grown from less than 0.5 million in 1971 to nearly 5 million inhabitants in 2011 (Census of India, 2011), of which 58 percent comprises intra and inter-state migrants (UNESCO, 2013, p.6); the highest proportion of migrants to locals in the country. In terms of its wage workforce, nearly 70 percent is constituted by its migrants (Tumbe, 2019). In terms of scale, the power loom and textile production industries continue to remain the largest recruiters of migrant labour in the city, and a significant contributor to Gujarat's economy. The industry has an estimated Rs. 50,000 crore annual industrial turnover, according to a July 2018 report by the Federation of Gujarat Weavers Association and its subsidiary the Pandesara Weavers Association. There is a long industry value chain that works up to this downstream segment of sari outlets, starting from yarn factories to power looms and dyeing and printing mills. The country's textile capital produces what is popularly called "art silk", accounting for around 40 per cent of the total synthetic fabric produced in the country (Jain and Sharma, 2018). This art silk is used to make Indian garments, mainly saris, which are sold in bulk to wholesalers across the country and overseas. The sale is made through the 120,000 sari outlets, which dominate Surat's famous textile markets, spread over an area of 5 sq. km (Aajeevika Bureau and Overseas Development Institute [ODI], 2007).

Image 3: The power loom sector is one of Surat's largest employers of migrant workers. (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

At present, the textile city is home to migrants from southern Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. However, in terms of history and numbers, Odia workers traveling mainly from the coastal Ganjam district, continue to play a crucial role. The city is home to nearly 800,000 Odia migrants, who mainly belong to the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Class (OBC) communities (Sahu and Das, 2010). They travel more than 1600 kms from their source districts to work at the lowest levels of the labour value chain in the power loom industry.

The migrant workers engaged in the loom industry, predominantly single males, today live and work in the city's textile corridor, clocking in 12 hours of work for 365 days of the year. A small number of workers have brought their families to the city and live mainly in informal settlements. The women and girls in the migrant households, apart from undertaking the unpaid labour in the household, also partake in the informal wage economy as home-based workers. They stick sequins to dress materials and cut extra threads, armed with very little bargaining power. An almost negligible number of the migrant women work in the factories (Subramanian, 2019).

While there are looms spread across the length and breadth of the city, and more recently, even beyond; historically, it is the northern region of the city that has remained the heart of the industry. Spanning the areas of Ved Road, Mina Nagar, Katargram and Vishram Nagar, the loom industry started spreading to other regions of Saayan, Nirman Industry and Gotalawadi. In the past decade, the industry has also spread to the outskirts, including the areas of Diamond Nagar and Anjani[1].

The workers here live in extremely gruelling and unhealthy conditions, mostly in crowded mess rooms and shared bachelor rooms located in the industrial area. The mess rooms are long rooms that span an area of around 500 to 800 square feet. Here, over 100 workers stay in rotation in the crowded rooms, amid power cuts, filth and noise. The loud decibel sound of the *khat-khat* machines in the power looms that continue round the clock aggravates the deplorable living conditions. The condition is only slightly "more liveable" in the bachelor rooms[2], where five workers share a single room. The rooms measure less than 100 square feet, and the toilet facilities are communal ∎

Those migrants who have moved to Surat with their families, live in informal settlements that are spread across the city. It is also this group which has been bearing the brunt of the state's rehabilitation and resettlement projects, wherein new infrastructure projects (for instance, Surat has the highest number of flyovers in the country) have regularly pushed them into resettlement colonies (under the provisions of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) located in the city's peripheries.

Research Objective and Questions

This study explores the experiences of exclusion faced by these groups of circular migrants employed in the informal labour markets of Ahmedabad and Surat in their interaction with the processes and mechanisms of the city's urban governance, by asking the following questions:

1. What is circular migrants' state of access to basic facilities and services in Ahmedabad and Surat, provided by the state, employer or market, including: housing, water, sanitation, food and healthcare?

2. In the absence of access to public provisioning, or employer provided welfare benefits, or adequate wages required to purchase a minimum level of consumption from the market, how do circular migrant workers negotiate access to basic facilities and services?

3. How do urban planning, and urban governance policies and schemes, respond to circular migrants in the city? What implications do these policies and schemes have on the lives of circular migrants?

The evidence generated through these research questions will be analysed using the conceptual frame laid out in the next section, in order to understand the relationship of circular migrants to their work destinations. Following this, current policies in the urban development sphere will be examined with a view to understand the extent to which they take cognizance of the needs of migrant workers in cities. Finally, potential pathways for improving their standard of living in the city will be explored.

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1   Information based on Aajeevika Bureau's work in Surat over the past 5 years

2   Member of the Pravasi Shramik Suraksha Manch, interview with the research team, August 2018

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Chapter II

Conceptual Framework:

Locating Circular Migrants in India's Urban Growth and Governance Processes

The post-liberalisation period in India, as in the rest of the Global South, has been marked by an urban-led, capitalist growth model, centred on large urban agglomerations that are designed to attract foreign technological and capital investments and geared towards production for competition in export markets (Hoelscher, 2016). A glaring result of such a shift, according to Banerjee-Guha (2009), is the extreme transformation of urban regions to reflect the priorities of the contemporary global capitalist order. This transformation is not restricted to a shift in economic policies, but has also resulted in the re-orientation of social spaces and relationships, as well as democratic and governance institutions (ibid). In a similar vein, Das (2015) argues that the liberalisation reforms and the transformation of urban regions is not simply economic in nature, but an explicit expression of the state's legacy of complicity with the interests of the elite classes and accumulative growth models, which in present times is driven by the hegemonic neoliberal narrative of global capitalism.

In this context, circular migration – particularly the movement of rural populations to urban areas for employment – poses fundamental questions on the nature of urban growth and transformation under the neo-liberal policy regime in India. This can be summarised as follows:

Urban Growth Based on the Dual Processes of Dispossession and Exploitation

Large urban agglomerations in the country have been modelled as economic powerhouses, characterised by manufacturing and services industries that participate and compete in global value chains, as well as a booming construction industry, which undertakes large scale infrastructural development to draw in foreign investments (Das, 2015; Samaddar, 2016). These industries not only exploit natural resources, but also labour, emerging as the largest employers in the country drawing on an unskilled, manual labour force for urban growth (ibid).

In order to ensure that labour remains cheap and flexible and to evade the costs of compliance to labour legislations, industry has relied on the creation of non-standard forms of work such as casual, daily wage or contract labour. Without classic employee-employer relationships, labourers are not able to demand legal protection or social security from their employers, leading to persistently low wages for long and unregulated work hours, as well as toxic work conditions (Sankaran, 2007). This tendency has been strengthened by the complicity of the state and the labour reforms agenda of successive governments through steady dilution of labour legislations, weakening of the state's regulatory function, and the disempowerment of trade unions which use collective bargaining to demand labour rights (Mitchell et al., 2014). The current government's move to undo the existing legislative framework for labour protection and replace it with four labour codes is a culmination of this labour reforms agenda, which legitimises unrestrained exploitation via cheapening and

flexibilisation of labour as a comparative advantage in global capitalist markets. As a result, urban areas are expected to contribute 75 percent of India's GDP by 2020 (Vaddiraju, 2016) and are growing 5 times faster than rural areas (Das, 2015).

At the same time, neoliberal reforms have also unleashed a three decades long process of rural and agrarian distress (Prasad, 2016). This includes the withdrawal of state subsidies, credit and support prices for the agricultural sector leading to falling agricultural productivity and a loss of decent employment in rural areas (ibid). Poor rural populations have also faced dispossession and alienation from their land, water and forest resources and traditional livelihoods, for natural resource exploitation or non-food agricultural production by large corporations, in alliance with rural elites (Das, 2015). Breman (1993) through his extensive ethnographic work characterising the predominant forms of in-migration to Ahmedabad and Surat, sheds light on how the process of rural immiseration has led to the creation of large armies of footloose, wage dependent labour, who migrate to urban areas to performs jobs at the lowest end of labour value chains. The increasing rates of rural-urban migration for work, according to Kundu and Mohanan (2017), is largely circular, seasonal and short term in nature, which forms the very logic

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of the contemporary capitalist economy and bases itself on the 'adverse incorporation' of poor rural populations into casualised and exploitative employment relationships.

Srivastava (2012) argues that unlike permanent migrations, where individuals or families relocate permanently, seasonal and circular forms of movement are typically temporary, involving myriad types of movements – short-term, short-distance, long-term, long-distance and other combinations - towards fixed or shifting destinations of work. The common characteristics, across these categories is that the migrating workers remain wholly outside the systems and structures of the destination city, town or village. Isolated in poorly remunerated, insecure, irregular and often risky jobs with little to no vertical mobility, workers are unable to get even a 'toe-hold' in the city, necessitating a return to their villages (ibid, 11). Chandrasekhar and Ghosh (2014), Rodgers and Soundarajan (2016), Papola (2012) and Breman (2013) provide evidence of discrimination in access to higher wages or decent jobs, as being an entrenched feature in India's labour market, across social categories. Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and religious minorities are trapped in low wage livelihoods, with women and children within these social groups faring even worse. The NCEUS (2007) report highlighted that there is a strong overlap between these historically marginalised groups that are also trapped in the poorest economic quintiles of the country, and the phenomenon of seasonal and circular migration.

Circular migration forms the backbone of India's contemporary capitalist system based on the casualisation and informalisation of work, as hiring migrant workers is a central way for capital to accumulate profits (Mitra et al., 2017). Industry prefers circular migrants, as they have to neither pay them living wages, nor provide for standard costs of employees, such as health, nutrition, old-age, education and other basic human needs of the worker and the household, appropriating all of these as profits. They are able to cut costs which would have been higher in the case of hiring local labour who have better bargaining power, developed through participation in trade unions or other collective bargaining platforms, or by calling to account local governments that are less averse to taking responsibility to regulate their work and living conditions (Shah and Lerche, 2018). Rapid economic growth in some regions and sectors, therefore, depends on the dual processes of dispossession and exploitation of others, with circular migration playing a central role in these processes.

Urban Governance through the Mechanisms of Displacement and Exclusion

Uneven development and inequality do not prevail merely between rural and urban regions, but manifest within fast growing urban areas as well (Das, 2015). Persistent inequality has been a feature of urban growth since the colonial period, with socio-spatial inequalities being deepened and aggravated by the neoliberal reforms. This has been enabled by an altered form of urban governance, which has shifted from the welfare state model, and bases itself on the hegemonic narrative of global capitalism to create universalized global cities – that rapid economic growth is necessary and can only be achieved by infrastructural development and the entry of private capital (ibid). Urban governance, has therefore, been re-packaged as 'good governance' (Leitner et al. 2007, p.1), which involves governance reforms along with technical and market-oriented solutions to replace the managerial and bureaucratic model

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of urban governance that has been termed ill-equipped and inefficient for responding to the needs of fast growing cities (Chattopadhyay, 2017).

Good governance, according to Banerjee-Guha (2013) involves the intervention of the state, not for upholding citizenship rights, but for ensuring that the rule of market prevails through disciplining. She uses the term 'neoliberal urbanism' to refer to the infiltration of neoliberal ideology in urban policy making in India, noting that the 'material manifestation of neoliberal urbanism in contemporary Indian urban policy is resting on an aggressive strategy of politico-economic restructuring of space and regulation of basic services through upscale governance that itself has become an essential component of capitalist expansion' (ibid, p.96).

This manifests in the re-organisation of urban spaces and land use or acquisition laws for large scale infrastructural projects and the gentrification of the city to reflect the aspirations, aesthetic and interests of elite classes. This has led to standardised and universal formats of urban planning, which do not consider the needs or priorities of a substantial section of the urban population, for setting up fast corridors, SEZs or smart cities (ibid), side by side with the emergence of land mafias and builder lobbies. For securing private capital for these activities, concessions have to be made, one of which is the displacement of urban poor from urban spaces and resources, and the destruction of their living spaces and livelihoods, to be pushed to the peripheries of the city. This has been accompanied by the withdrawal of the state from public provisioning, leading to the steady privatization of basic facilities and services such as housing, water, sanitation, food, healthcare and education, the introduction of basic user fees and Private-Public-Partnership models (ibid).

Samaddar (2016) argues that there is a fundamental contradiction between the republican notion of a state that secures citizenship rights, and the neoliberal city which is governed by the logic of raising fiscal resources through private capital. This is evident in how urban governance has been overtaken by mega projects which subordinate democratically elected local bodies to private and autonomous institutions including parastatal agencies and Special Purpose Vehicles (Banerjee-Guha, 2013; Bhide, 2014; Chattopadhyay, 2017; Hoelscher, 2016; Kamath and Joseph, 2015). This has significant repercussions for the rights of urban poor, creating new forms of marginalisation. One, they face exclusion from state provided access to basic facilities and services in the city, which are guaranteed as a part of their socio-economic rights as citizens (Chattopadhyay, 2017). Two, they do not find space in the participatory processes that are laid down as an integral part of good governance. Vaddiraju (2016) argues that community participation in local urban governance as laid out by the 74th Constitutional Amendment has been largely ignored in practice, reduced only to voting and juridical litigation by urban poor populations. This incomplete form of decentralization coupled with institutional fragmentation, where powers of urban local bodies are shared with other state government agencies, quasi-private or quasi autonomous bodies, as well as non-state actors such as urban elite and business leaders constitutes the process laid down by the neoliberal urban governance agenda.

In such a context, the citizenship rights of urban poor populations has been re-invoked in literature, through the use of urban spaces as sites of contestation, resistance and struggle by urban poor populations, which are embedded within their everyday life and conducted at the micro-level, in order to subvert the processes unleashed by the neoliberal policy regime (Benjamin, 2008; Bhide, 2017; Chatterjee, 2008). These are largely conducted through electoral democracy which allows poor populations to engage in political negotiations with the state for the re-appropriation of resources to conduct their livelihoods and access basic services. A related process is the manner in which local populations engage in the politics of land rights through their informal settlements, claiming their right to space through vote bank politics (ibid).

Circular Migrants and Citizenship Rights

The conceptualisation of cities as sites of contestation, however, faces some limitations. Chatterjee (2008) points out that electoral mobilisation of the poor excludes those groups that are severely marginalised, such as tribal populations or lower caste groups who do not possess the requisite resources to participate in this mobilisation. While legally, citizenship rights in India are rooted in the practice of egalitarian principles between people, and the state and its people, the everyday practice of citizenship is mediated by multiple forms of inequality (Jain, 2018). Circular migrants often fall at the intersection of these inequalities, heavily dominated by historically marginalised communities – often landless, or with small subsistence-based landholdings, and from tribal or lower caste groups, and religious minorities facing historical marginalisation (Shah and Lerche, 2018; NCEUS, 2007).While local or permanent urban poor populations might face the same nature of marginalisation as circular migrants in the cities where they live, such as lack of access to public provisioning; land and tenure security, potential for negotiations through elected representatives and urban governance bodies, access to documentation and social networks in the city allow them pathways for legitimising their claims. Shah and Lerche (2018, p.19) highlight the 'internal alien-ness' experienced by circular migrants in their urban work destinations. This means that legitimising their presence in the city, in order to make claims becomes difficult for circular migrants.

As mobile and floating populations who are unable to settle in the cities where they work or participate in the local democratic processes of their villages in most cases, Jain (2018) argues that circular migrants are faced with two entrenched features of governance in India. One, the sedentary nature of institutional design that does not account for the movement of peoples across or even within state borders for work and livelihoods. Similarly, Roy (2008), writing about internal migrants in India, argues that they pose a question to the very notion of citizenship, that deeply rooted in the exercise

of categorizing and enumerating who can or cannot be included, resists the movement of people who challenge these fixed categories.

In addition to this, Jain (2018) argues that the ethnic nature of the country's policies severely limits the citizenship rights of migrant workers. Abbas (2015) argues that where states are organised by ethnicity and language, citizenship finds its basis in political communities with a shared history based on linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural commonalities. Therefore, the citizenship rights of internal migrants in their work destinations raises the same challenges as international migration (ibid). It follows that, circular migrants often face these barriers in the areas where they migrate – the everyday, informal process of exerting and claiming their citizenship rights, is widely different from the national level rules of citizenship, and as challenging as it is in the context of international migration.

These sedentary and ethnic biases manifest in several manners. Without identity documents which provide them proof of domicile or employment in the city, the presence of migrant workers remains unaccounted, un-enumerated and faced with deep seated suspicion and hostility from the state and local populations. They are also unable to access voting rights as their voter identity card is registered in their rural constituencies, which they do not wish to give up in order to vote in the city. This is because their homes, agricultural lands and often families remain in their villages. Desai and Sanghvi (2018), interestingly, argue that the translocal lives of circular migrants, which are characterised by multilocal livelihoods and households can also be conceived of as a strategy used by these groups to retain certain aspects of their lives in their villages, particularly their social and cultural lives, political participation and investments, while seeking employment in cities. This strategy is counter-intuitive to the sedentary bias in policies and ethnic nature of the federal structure. Without

basic civil and political rights related to citizenship in their urban work destinations, circular migrants cannot assert their socio-economic rights for accessing public provisioning and welfare benefits, or for claiming their right to the city through electoral mobilisation.

Relationship of Circular Migrants to the City

The relationship of circular migrants to the city is therefore located at the cusp of two inter-related themes: One, their adverse incorporation to the urban growth model where they provide cheap and flexible labour in highly extractive and exploitative work conditions. Two, their exclusion from urban governance facilities and services which relegates them to informal and insecure living conditions. This marginalisation of circular migrants is further aggravated by their inability to exercise or demand full and substantive citizenship rights from urban local bodies, or their workers' rights for employer provided welfare benefits, remaining a casualised, mobile, temporary and stigmatised population. This raises pertinent questions of how, with whom, and to what extent circular migrants are able to negotiate basic facilities and services for a minimum standard of living in the city, what are the economic, physical and mental costs of these negotiations, and how these interact with the caste, gender, region and language based heterogeneity within the category of circular migrants. It also becomes important to juxtapose the current policies and schemes at the local, state and national levels with these narratives from the ground in order to critically evaluate them. These questions form a significant knowledge gap in being able to conceive the potential pathways through which their living standards in the city might be improved. The evidence from the study will be analysed using this conceptual framework, in order to fill this knowledge gap ■

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Chapter III

Methods

Ahmedabad

The evidence for this study has been generated through a combination of methods involving primary and secondary investigations for answering the research questions laid out in section I. These methods are as follows:

Survey

A survey was conducted across 32 locations of Ahmedabad which have a high concentration of circular migrants. It involved 285 circular migrants employed across 5 work sectors where the majority of such workers are employed: Construction sector (80 workers); Manufacturing sector (72 workers), Hotel and Dhaba sector (47 workers), Headloaders (44 workers) and Domestic Workers (42 workers). The circular migrants in these work sectors live in either of the three typologies of living spaces in the city: (1) open spaces; (2) rented rooms; or (3) within the worksites where they are employed. The sample (distributed across work sector and living typology in the city) was selected based on Aajeevika Bureau's experience of working with these groups of circular

migrants since 2006 and the organisation's informal mapping of the proportions of circular migrants distributed across these work sectors and living typologies. The intersection of work sector and living typology has been selected for sampling, and consequently presentation of evidence and analysis, as these are the two defining factors for circular migrants' access to public or employer provided provisioning in the city (Refer Table 1), and their ability to make claims to their citizenship or labour rights, as explained in section II. The survey also threw up the living typology categorised as 'Other' during its implementation – which involves living spaces which do not fall neatly into the three categories, and largely constitutes those who have been able to access home-ownership in recognised slums or other relatively secure spaces.

These groups' experiences in the city are also mediated by social identity markers, such as caste, gender and whether they are single or family-based migrants. The sample also pays attention to these subgroups based on their representation in different work sectors and living typologies in Ahmedabad city.

Living typology	Construction	Domestic Work	Factory work	Headloading	Hotel/dhaba	Total
Other	0	0	15	3	0	18
Open Space	33	0	2	2	0	37
Rented room	22	35	46	24	24	151
Worksite	25	7	9	15	23	79
Total	80	42	72	44	47	285

Table 1: Sampling numbers for quantitative survey in Ahmedabad by occupational group and housing typology

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More than 50% of the sample constitutes workers from Scheduled Tribes, followed by Scheduled Castes, General category and Other Backward Classes. (Refer Table 2)

Of the total sample, 176 of the surveyed are family-based migrants. All women migrants surveyed fall in this category constituting 111 respondents (Refer Table 3), and the remaining 65 respondents are male family-based migrants. 109 single male migrants were also surveyed.

The largest group of workers surveyed were from Rajasthan, followed by Gujarat, UP, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

The survey focused on both the quantity and quality of access that these groups of circular migrants have with respect to 5 basic facilities and services in the city: housing, water,

sanitation, food and fuel, and healthcare. It also identified the source through which workers access these basic facilities and services. It also measures the access of children (who migrate with their families) to immunisation or childcare/schools in the city.

Focus Group Discussions

In addition to the survey, 24 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held involving over 100 circular migrant workers, representing different groups from these cross-cutting categories: (1) family-based migrants living on the worksite in construction and factory work with both men and women; (2) family-based migrants living in open spaces, constituting largely Adivasi construction workers with both men and women; (3) family-based migrants living in rented rooms

Housing Typology	General	OBC	SC	ST	Total
Other	8	4	3	3	18
Open Space	1	1	3	32	37
Rented Room	35	25	46	45	151
Worksite	12	5	15	47	79
Total	56	35	67	127	285

Table 2: A caste-wise and housing typology breakdown of the survey respondents

Sex	Own House	Open Space	Rented Room	Worksite	Total
Male	10	18	108	38	174
Female	8	19	43	41	111
Total	18	37	151	79	285

Table 3: A gender and housing typology breakdown of the survey respondents

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across construction, factories and domestic work; (4) single male migrants living at the worksite in headloading and hotels/dhabas; (5) single male migrants living in shared rented rooms with either individual or location-based rent payment across construction, hotels, headloading and factories.

The purpose of the FGDs was to both corroborate the data from the surveys, as well as have long in-depth conversations about the monetary, physical and mental costs that are borne by migrant workers in accessing basic facilities and services, while paying attention to the gender, caste, regional and language based differences in this process.

Interviews with Public Officials and Review of Policy Documents

The research also involved extensive review of policy documents, as well as interviews with officials from urban local bodies, parastatal agencies, state government programmes, and elected representatives at the local level in order to understand the bureaucratic and political processes through which policies are formulated and executed. These policies and interviews are analysed through the lens of the sedentary and ethnic biases when it comes to the state's approach towards mobile, circular migrant populations.

Challenges and Limitations

Access to domestic workers living on the worksite (who tend to be from more historically marginalised groups facing severe challenges in the city) proved challenging, leading to their under-representation in the overall sample (only 8 out of the total sample of domestic workers in the survey and with whom FGDs were not possible). The evidence emerging from the sample of domestic workers is skewed towards those from higher caste groups who have been able to access vertical mobility in the city.

Similarly, while we were able to conduct FGDs with headloaders at the markets where they work, the narratives are largely skewed towards the more settled migrants (who are also from higher caste groups) as those from ST and SC groups were hesitant to speak in the presence of the others. However, their information has been captured in the survey data.

There were also challenges in accessing hotel workers from unskilled categories – such as helpers, who are under-represented in the survey sample. However, this has been partially overcome by conducting 2 FGDs with this group of workers. The FGDs themselves were difficult to execute as landlords/employers were present for part of the time, and workers were hesitant to speak during their presence. Only FGDs with hotel workers where we were familiar with the employer were possible which were also hotels where conditions were marginally better.

Surat

In a bid to make the process of data collection more reflective of Aajeevika Bureau's Surat centre's own participatory nature of work, we began by facilitating informal discussions with the migrant workers across the various industrial areas for a preliminary understanding of what they imagined the urban state and governance to be. The research design was aimed at being both descriptive and exploratory. Over a span of one month in February 2019, we began to make note of their everyday vulnerabilities, exclusions and aspirations through casual conversations and semi-structured group discussions, as we combed the length and breadth of the city. Members of the Pravasi Shramik Suraksha Manch (PSSM), a loom and textile workers' collective supported by Aajeevika Bureau in Surat, were roped in for facilitating this exercise.

Considering the significance of the power loom industry in defining the city, the remarkably high presence of migrant labourers, and more importantly, Aajeevika's own rich networks and work here, we collectively decided to restrict the scope of the study to the migrant workers in the power loom industry of the city.

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As against the parallel enquiry being undertaken in Ahmedabad, this study was designed as a deep dive into the myriad complexities and structural hierarchies particular to the power loom industry, and the particular, everyday exclusions faced by its migrant labourers. The evidence for this study was thus, generated through a combination of primary and secondary methods that largely drew from this initial scoping exercise.

Survey

In Surat, purposive sampling was undertaken among workers in the power loom sector on the following parameters - type of work, living arrangements and source areas. As a participatory exercise, senior members of the PSSM were involved even in the process of formulating our research questions, designing the tools and shortlisting our sample. Data collection on access to basic services was done using a rapid assessment survey format. The surveys were conducted across 12 different locations in Ved Road and Amroli, which fall under the North Administrative Zone of Surat City. The two areas are characterised by very distinct features. Ved Road is identified as the central industrial corridor of Surat. At Ved Road, surveys were conducted amongst migrant workers living in Triveni Society, Mina Nagar, Tribhuvan Society, Vishram Nagar, Bahuchar Nagar, Tapi River Society and Rehmat Nagar. Amroli, on the other hand, is an area that houses a larger number of family migrants. Located almost on the city's periphery, the rentals are cheaper, and the government has also constructed its resettlement colony here under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Those families that resided in Surat before 2007 on lands that were later used to build city-level infrastructure projects, were shifted here in 2012-13. At present, majority of the power loom workers in the area are employed in Anjani Industrial area, which is a newly emerging industrial corridor in the city's outskirts. At Amroli, areas under the survey included Kosad Awas H3 and Kosad Awas H4 (which are in the resettlement colony), Gadha Nagar Char Rasta, Rang Nagar and Madhuvan Society.

Source States: Source region of the migrant workers was another important indicator for defining our sample. With the absence of official government estimates, we relied on the existing networks and experience of the field teams and the PSSM members. Through these conversations it was clear that the majority of workers engaged at the bottom of the pyramid in the looms were from Ganjam district in Odisha. In addition, there were workers from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

The study covered migrant workers from various states in the following proportion: 108 workers from Odisha (72%), 23 workers from Bihar (16%), 15 workers from Uttar Pradesh (10%), 2 workers from Madhya Pradesh and finally, 2 workers from Maharashtra. 63 per cent of the sample were specifically

from Ganjam district of Odisha. Workers from Bihar involved in the survey predominantly migrated from the districts of Gopalganj and Siwan.
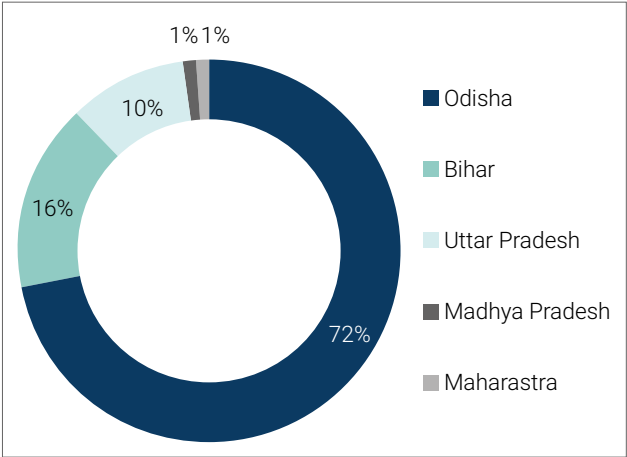

Figure 1: Source states of migrant workers surveyed in Surat

Housing Typology: The survey involved 150 migrant workers of which, 106 workers are single male migrants and 44 are workers are living in the city with their families. Single migrants stay as tenants in mess rooms and bachelor rooms, with mess rooms the second most popular option. In the case of family migrants, there were areas across the city, located near the industrial areas- where informal settlements have been built. These settlements comprised of mainly single rooms in semi-pucca structures and housed groups of families. In locations such as Kosad Awas, family migrants also rented fuller housing units. These families belonged to the same source district.

Accordingly, a representative sample was identified for the survey, which included 81 workers in bachelor/shared rooms (54 percent), 25 workers in mess rooms (16 percent) and 44 rented family rooms/ family migrant households (29 percent).

Housing Typologies	No. of Workers
Mess rooms	25
Shared rooms/Bachelor rooms	81
Rented family housing	44
Total	150

Table 4: Number of workers surveyed across housing typologies in Surat

Thus, the total number of workers staying in mess rooms (25 workers) and bachelor rooms (81 workers) adds up to the total number of single male migrants who participated in the survey (105 workers). Similarly, the 44 surveys in family housing denote the migrant families who were part of the survey sample. The table below shows a location-wise break-up of the various housing typologies of migrants who were part of the sample.

Locations		Family housing	Mess rooms	Bachelor rooms
Ved Road	Triveni Society	5	0	4
	Mina Nagar	2	10	14
	Tribhuvan Society	6	0	3
	Vishram Nagar	5	0	8
	Bahuchar Nagar	3	0	8
	Tapi River society	1	0	9
	Rehmat Nagar	2	11	13
Amroli	Kosad Awas H3	5	0	4
	Kosad Awas H4	6	0	3
	Gadha Nagar Amroli Chaar Rasta	2	0	7
	Rang Nagar	4	0	0
	Madhuvan Society Chharprabhata Road	3	4	8
Total		44	25	81

Table 5: Surat survey locations and number of survey respondents by housing typology (N = 150)

The table below shows occupational typology of the workers who participated in the survey. The idea was to focus on the power loom industry, which is mainly run by migrant labour. With the focus on power looms, it became central to cover the various levels in the hierarchy of the industry. A typology of different types of work in the power looms was established after speaking with owners and power loom workers. Majority of the sample (67 per cent), worked as *sancha* machine (power loom) *karigar* in the power looms, out of which 71 were single migrant workers and 30 were family migrants. The proportions across various occupational and demographic categories (such as single/family migrants) were decided based on our estimates of these proportions in the overall migrant workforce in Surat.
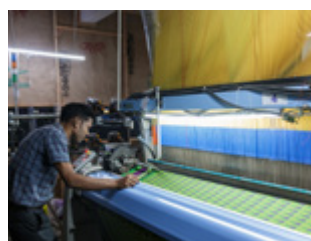

Image 4: (Clockwise from left)
Sancha machine karigar;
Worker on beem pachchad;
Winding worker;
Worker on high speed rapier;
Bobbin worker;
Warping worker
(Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

Type of work in the power looms	No. of workers
Sancha machine *karigar*	101
Bobbin worker	20
TFO *karigar*	15
Beem pachchad	4
General Master	4
Warping worker	2
Winding worker	2
Beggari cleaner	1
High speed rapier	1
Total	150

Table 6: Classification of survey respondents by type of work in the power looms

Caste Categories: The sample consists of 85 workers (56 percent) from Other Backward Class (OBC) community, 40 workers (26 percent) from general category, 10 workers (6 percent) from Scheduled Caste community and 15 workers (10 percent) from Scheduled Tribe community.

Focus Group Discussions

In order to weave together a more nuanced narrative, focus group discussions (FGDs) were undertaken with migrant workers to understand the challenges faced by them in accessing services and in their interactions with urban public systems. Both the surveys and FGDs were spread across 12 sites on Ved Road and Amroli, to include a mix of both industrial neighbourhoods and residential areas. We conducted FGDs after the surveys, which provided us the opportunity to expand the scope of our conversations, fill in the gaps in our survey-based understanding and nuance certain findings. We facilitated six FGDs covering the areas of Mina Nagar, Triveni Society, Trilok Nagar in Ved Road and, Rang Nagar and Kosad Awas H3 in Amroli. While the surveys were conducted mainly with the single male migrants and the male members in the family households, we made a conscious attempt to include the women workers' voices through the FGDs. The FGD groups were defined based on the need to ensure representation of workers living in the diverse housing typologies such as mess rooms, shared bachelor rooms, and family housing across both government housing and rented rooms.

Interviews with Public Officials and Experts

Detailed case studies of the ULBs - including the Surat Municipal Corporation, Kosad Urban Health Centre, Power loom Service Centre - its constituents, mandate, policy priorities, administrative mechanisms and fiscal powers were documented through interviews with experts and senior bureaucrats. In addition, we conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with key stakeholders from the various neighbourhoods, who held power and influence within the community on an everyday basis. The key stakeholders were chosen based on the recommendations provided by the members of PSSM and drawing from Aajeevika Bureau's own field experience. Conducting in-depth interviews with the SMC officials and community leaders provided us with a more nuanced and critical understanding of the historical and structural inequalities in the realm of urban governance and policy.

Secondary Literature

To substantiate as well as inform the ethnographic element of our enquiry, a parallel review of other secondary data was further done, including various government resolutions, policies, records and other studies ■

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Chapter IV

Evidence

A. Ahmedabad

Housing

This study classified housing typologies for migrant workers in Ahmedabad into the following categories: rented rooms, worksite housing, and settlements in various kinds of open spaces (on pavements, near railway tracks, under flyovers or on private or public land).[1] In the absence of the state's regulatory oversight and landlord/employer liability in the first two cases, and the omnipresent violence (or threat of violence) of state and local actors in the third, migrant workers depend on complex informal networks to access housing in the city. These networks of simultaneous patronage and exploitation largely consist of landlords, contractors and employers, and local power groups. Workers' relationships with these actors determine rent, payment for utilities, eviction, harassment, and the ability to negotiate living conditions (and work conditions for worksite living).

Rented rooms

The quality and price of a rented room preferred by or accessible to a migrant depends (among other factors) on the migrant's occupational group, income, and whether the migration is family-based or not. For families living in rented rooms surveyed in this study, the size of the family ranged from 3-5 individuals. These families had 1 or 2 earning members, with a diverse combination of occupations – men and women were either employed together in construction, factory or domestic work; men in construction, factory or headloading work with women in domestic work; or only men employed in factory or headloading work.

As for the housing infrastructure, the study revealed that Ahmedabad's informal rental market comprises a wide range of rooms, ranging in size from 8x8 to 20x20 square feet rooms and in nature from *kaccha* (no permanent roof or walls, often made of straw or tin sheets) to *pucca* (permanent concrete, brick or stone walls with RCC or tin roof). On average, the monthly rent for a 10x10 square feet pucca room is Rs. 3022, placing such rooms out of the reach of certain family-based migrants, including unskilled construction workers (especially *naka* workers who do not get work regularly), and unskilled factory and hotel workers. For unskilled Adivasi construction workers in particular, this is not an option: on average, they earn Rs. 7,000 per working member per month, which would leave little income to spend on rent while supporting a family in the city, and meagre savings to invest in their life in the village (which is the primary logic for opting out of such family-based rental accommodation, as discussed later). In fact, the study revealed that family migrants who could access such rental markets in places like Ghatlodiya and Anjali Vistar were usually General or OBC caste, skilled construction workers, domestic workers, and headloaders who have been living in

the city for an average of 11 years. In addition to their higher wages compared to unskilled workers, such workers reported using their strong social networks to invest in property in the peripheries of the city. The additional income from leasing out their own property was also a self-reported factor that enabled them to afford rented rooms for their families in the heart of Ahmedabad.

Single male migrants, who cannot afford to spend on such rental accommodation, but wish to live in rented rooms, must find alternate ways to pay rent. In areas like Memnagar and Paldi, skilled hotel and construction workers pay an average of Rs. 1125 to share a *pucca* room with up to 4 other workers, although this can often work out to only 20-30 square feet per person in the room.

Unskilled workers, particularly Adivasis, who earn some of the lowest wages across sectors, opt to live in rented rooms as single male migrants – or family migrants migrating with only male family members – where rent is paid per person. In a rental complex in Raipur, for instance, each worker must pay Rs. 500 plus utilities to the landlord for a semi-*pucca* room; however, the landlord has placed no cap on the number of workers who can live in that space. The result is that up to 15 workers occupy a 10x10 square feet, windowless room, where they also store their water vessels, cooking utensils, and clothes. With less than 7 square feet per person, workers effectively pay for a space just to store their belongings, and are compelled to sleep outside or on slanted tin roofs instead.

Image 5: Rented rooms housing single male migrants, require them to cook in the dark, in rooms with no ventilation (Picture credit: Anoop Sathyan)

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1   18 survey respondents lived in spaces that did not fit into the categories fixed for the survey – these have been marked as "Other." These respondents are factory workers who have been living in the city for an average of 17 years (median: 19). They are upper caste, family migrants who have established a semi-permanent presence in the city – through home ownership and the creation of domicile documents (Ahmedabad-based Aadhar card, voter card, ration card, bank account, etc.) As such, their relationship with Ahmedabad is different from that of circular, seasonal migrants, who view the city as a temporary site where they must maximise savings for investment in the village.

While it is partly true that Adivasi workers are forced to live here because of their lower wages and uncertainty of work (they seek work daily from labour *nakas*), it is important to place their housing choice in the context of their relationship with Ahmedabad. Adivasis living in Raipur's informal rental market view the city purely as a site to maximise saving; they travel back to their villages every 3-5 months for a few weeks, using these savings to invest in their families, homes, and community practices, which are integral to their social standing in the village. One worker even claimed, "We only vote in panchayat [village] elections because our sarpanch [village chief] is the only one who will work for our development." Spaces like Raipur not only minimise their expenditure on rent, but also, with no cap on the number of residents permitted to live in the complex, allow workers from the same village to live together under the same roof and recreate their rural connections in the city.

Another large group of migrant workers lives in rental accommodation in the industrial peripheries of Ahmedabad city – in Narol and Vatva – where living areas are more spacious and rent is lower than or comparable to that in Raipur. In Janiyapir Tekro, SC and OBC single male migrants, mostly welding and chemical factory workers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, live in 8x8 square feet rooms, with every 2-3 rooms sharing a common verandah. This entire rental market is de-facto owned by a local *bharwad* (a historically nomadic cattle-rearing group), who charges workers Rs. 1000 for a room with a cap of 4 workers per room. Janiyapir is located near Vatva, in

the industrial periphery of the city, but has rural characteristics – with a horizontal spread of rooms, stray cattle, and mud and sand roads – while also serving as a dumping ground for the nearby hazardous industries that employ the workers who live there. Much like in Raipur, the workers who live here claim that the setup allows them to live together with members of their villages and even extended families for a lower price than more expensive rental markets in Ghatlodiya and Paldi. The social networks not only help them recreate their communities in the unfamiliar city, but also serve as a means to get jobs at one another's factories.

Each of the rental markets mentioned above is unregulated, and landlords are themselves marginal actors, often having no legal ownership of the rooms or the housing complex. There is no exchange of documentation or any paperwork required to access such housing. Rather, they are informally run and maintained. As a result, migrants' relationship and negotiating power with the landlord becomes one of the only ways by which living conditions and the quality of utilities (electricity, water, and sanitation) is determined. At the same time, the high demand among migrants to live in such rental accommodation – which exists in "high migration hotspots" in the city – weakens any bargaining power with the landlord, as reported by workers across all rental accommodations. As a result, workers have a complex relationship of simultaneous patronage and exploitation with their landlords.

Image 6: Rented rooms on industrial peripheries of Ahmedabad have rural characteristics, and serve as dumping grounds for industrial waste (Picture credit: Anoop Sathyan)

In Ghatlodiya, for instance, a family migrant reported that his landlord had provided him with a copy of his electricity bill (with an Ahmedabad-based address) to purchase a motorbike so he could travel to his worksite more easily. However, the same landlord arbitrarily hikes the room's rent, citing "increased electricity usage," although workers report that this is not the case. In Raipur, the landlord mediates between workers and the police at the police station after their premises are raided for alcohol. At the same time, much like the landlord in Ghatlodiya's rental complex, he increases charges for electricity consumption. Moreover, despite repeated requests from workers, he has not conducted maintenance work on their premises in 7 years, resulting in already semi-*pucca* structures further crumbling, exposed asbestos in the walls, and rusted tin roofs. For hotel workers in Paldi, if the landlord "gets to know that there are appliances like TVs in the room, he will charge more rent. We pay Rs. 300 per month for the TV," even though there is no electricity meter in this particular room. In Janiyapir, workers do not even raise the issue of a dysfunctional toilet with their landlord (who controls the entire rental market in Janiyapir), but rather defecate in the open instead. Not only would bringing this to his attention place them at risk of eviction from the only covered living space they have access to, but such an eviction would also isolate them from their community members – and their strongest social network – in the city. Workers' relationships with their landlords thus not only have implications for their living conditions and access to basic facilities, but might also impact their access to work and income in the city – which would undermine their primary goal in migrating to the city.

Worksite housing

In order to save on rent and get access to regular work, or because they move from one worksite to another with a specific contractor, many migrant workers also live on their worksites – on construction sites, in factories and hotels, around headloading markets or as domestic workers in homes. Our survey and FGDs revealed the following demographics among those living on their worksites:[2]

- **On construction sites:** largely SC and ST unskilled workers living with their families in labour colonies, in self-made or employer provided "rooms" on site or inside under-construction buildings. Workers living inside the under-construction buildings can live there as long as these spaces are not completely developed (walls plastered, painted, tiled, etc.) Once this happens, they either move to another unfinished space or to a labour colony.

- **In factories:** ST families operating dangerous boiler machines, sleep either in designated areas within the bounds of the establishment, in kaccha housing at the gate of the premises or sometimes on the factory floor between the machines they operate.

- **In restaurants, hotels, and dhabas:** single male workers of varying skill levels (kitchen helpers, cooks, waiters, cashiers, managers) and caste identities live in diverse kinds of arrangements depending on the size of the establishment. These might be large banquet halls used by the establishment during the day that workers themselves clear out at night to sleep on the floor, or shared rooms on site at larger hotels. In smaller dhabas, which might themselves be no larger than 25x20 square feet, workers sleep on the floor of the premises.

- **In headloading markets:** single male workers, of SC, ST and OBC caste categories, find space to live here depending on their relationship with the owners of the warehouses in the markets. Workers who have pehchaan [relationship and trust built from working for a long time] with their employers live inside the warehouses used to store goods that they load onto trucks every morning. Else, workers sleep under trees or on platforms in the marketplace.

- **Domestic workers:** only ST women domestic workers living onsite were surveyed. They live with their families in separate quarters next to or inside their employers' homes.[3]

One of the most defining features of migrant workers living onsite is that their contractor or employer is one of their strongest networks in the city. They are dependent on these actors for advance cash, health shocks and other emergencies. At a construction site in Nehru Nagar, for instance, women workers reported that for any health issue in their families, they would first contact their *seth* (employer) for assistance, even though he eventually charges them for any cost incurred in the treatment process. Contractors and employers are also responsible for workers' access to basic facilities such as water, sanitation, food and cooking fuel. On nearly all construction and factory sites, these actors determine how regularly toilets are maintained, the nature of water access (the number of pipes and taps), as well as how much firewood workers can collect for free from the site to cook their food. The simultaneous dependence on the contractor for work and wages, however, limits workers' negotiating power with regard to the quality and reliability of facilities accessed. In some cases, the social networks used for recruitment might curtail this further. At a dhaba in Anjali Vistar, for instance, workers, being related to their employer, cannot challenge their extended working hours or access to insufficient water, inadequate food and poor sanitation, as this might not only put them out of work, but also affect their relationships and social standing in the village.

While workers living on their worksites generally do not pay rent, they bear a range of other costs. First, construction workers living onsite are paid less than workers of similar skill levels seeking work from labour nakas. In addition, in the absence of state regulation and employer liability across all

Image 7: Migrant workers living on construction sites construct temporary "homes" inside under-construction buildings. While they do not pay rent, they face a number of other economic, physical and mental costs (Picture credit: Anoop Sathyan)

Open spaces

The vast majority of workers living on settlements in open spaces are Adivasi construction workers who have migrated to Ahmedabad with their families. All of the settlements surveyed – in Durganagar, Arjun Ashram, Vasna and Juhapura – are composed almost entirely of seasonal migrant workers who have built and rebuilt these informal settlements themselves, some of them over 2-3 decades. Living on these settlements involves sleeping and cooking in and around informally constructed shacks in some cases, and in others, involves sleeping in the open and tying up one's belongings into bundles before going to the *naka* to seek work everyday. On average, workers responded having lived in these open spaces for 9.5 years, with over 50 per cent of respondents reporting that they have lived there for over 10 years. Workers have chosen to organically develop their settlements in these locations to be located close to Ahmedabad's labour *nakas*. By doing so, they can not only access work more easily, but also do not have to spend on transport to *nakas* further away.

occupational groups, workers, particularly women, bear the physical and mental tolls of unpredictable access to basic facilities such as water, sanitation, food and fuel, as described later.[4] Along with these costs, workers living onsite can be called into work at any hour, often without pay. Women workers in a factory in Narol, for instance, reported 12-hour shifts on dangerous boiler machines as being normal, with no overtime payment for work done beyond these hours.

Much like they do with landlords in rented rooms, migrant workers must navigate complex relationships with their contractor/employer for access to basic facilities, with the additional dependence on them for access to work. It is worth reiterating that access to housing, water, sanitation, and food even on worksites is informal. There are no written contracts guaranteeing access to these facilities, or even to work.
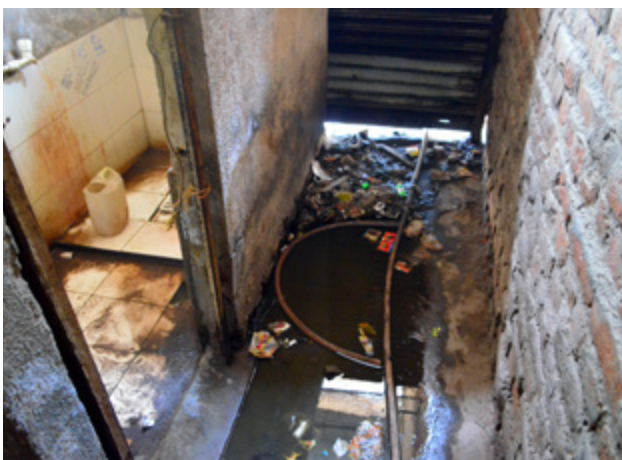
Much like Adivasi construction workers living in cramped rented rooms in Raipur, workers living in the open cannot afford the rental accommodation that skilled, upper caste workers and semi-settled migrants can. Moreover, and once again like Raipur's workers, they choose to live in the open to maintain community living and maximise savings from the city to be invested in the village. A construction worker at Arjun Ashram said, *"Gaon hi vatan hai* [The village is my home]," while explaining that he would never want to settle permanently in Ahmedabad city, and thus not spend up to 50 percent of his income on rent for his "temporary" stay.

Image 8: Dirty and dysfunctional toilets inside a textile factory in Narol, Ahmedabad (Picture credit: Jagjit Singh)

Workers living in settlements in various kinds of open spaces, in addition to having arbitrary access to water, sanitation and food, as described later, must also face a constant threat of eviction and harassment by the police, AMC, railway authorities, and local residents. 34 percent of workers surveyed in open spaces reported being evicted at least once since they began living in those spaces – which, given that half of those surveyed have lived in their respective spaces for over a decade, is likely an underestimation. This might also be because workers often move only a few hundred metres away from their pre-eviction site, not considering it an eviction at all. In Vasna, workers reported that residents of nearby buildings attempted to drive them away by not only clogging their water supply but also disallowing them to use the AMC-installed mobile toilet in their vicinity. In Durganagar, a woman construction worker claimed that just after beginning to live on the settlement, a local *rabari* [a historically marginalised, formerly nomadic cattle rearing group] began to fence the land, claiming it was his, and now, in order to live there, every family pays him Rs. 500 per month. Workers not only reported the harassment they faced from such groups, but also the uncertainty about when they might be evicted next.

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4.   While Adivasi domestic workers living onsite were surveyed, we were unable to access them in groups for qualitative discussions. The nature and costs of their access would be vastly different from those of women working on construction sites or in factories.

Every migrant worker surveyed relies on some informally arranged housing – either in rented rooms, on the worksite or in open spaces – with complex relationships with landlords, contractors and employers, as well as the state and local power groups. As far as access to state-provided housing is concerned, while 51 families (18 percent of the sample) reported applying for government housing, none of their applications were successful. While the small number of applicants can be partially explained by a lack of information about the schemes and access to the documentation required; as several workers noted, it is also important to note that some workers might self-select out of settling in the city because of their fear of stigmatisation as outsiders or the inability to achieve a social standing equal to that in the village. A factory worker in Narol claimed: "No one pays attention to us anywhere in the city." For Adivasi workers with strong community and village ties, as noted earlier, the city being a temporary space to maximise savings, is not a place they want to settle in (or one that they have self-selected out of because of the stigma and violence they experience from the state and "locals"), making permanent government housing incompatible with their logic.

As mentioned in each case, housing typologies and the informal networks that underpin them, form the basis for access to other basic facilities in the city, including sanitation, water, food and healthcare.

Sanitation

Migrant workers reported access to various kinds of sanitation facilities depending on their housing typology (among other factors). The categories are as follows:

Type of Sanitation Facility Accessed	Housing Typologies of Workers
Individual toilets	Rented rooms, worksite housing (domestic workers)
Shared toilets	Rented rooms, worksite housing
Pay and Use toilets	Worksite housing, settlements in open spaces,
Open defecation	Worksite housing, settlements in open spaces,
Mobile toilets	Settlements in open spaces

Table 7: Sanitation facilities used by migrant workers, broken down by housing typology

Of these, mobile and pay and use toilets are installed by the state for public use, individual toilets are found in rented rooms – they are separate structures located adjacent to a room – while shared toilets are found either in rented rooms or on worksites such as restaurants and relatively large construction sites and factories. Individual bathrooms might exist in the same structures as individual toilets, or might be unenclosed bathing spaces linked to drainage in the corner of rented rooms. Often, these exist despite the rented room complex having shared toilets. While we present a housing typology breakdown of workers' access to sanitation facilities, their experiences – of cost, quality and reliability of access – vary widely even within each typology by gender, caste, and the informal network mediating access.

In all the rented rooms surveyed, landlords determine the nature of sanitation facilities available to migrant workers and their families. In areas like Ghatlodiya, where relatively

Image 9: Open settlements, such as this one in Vasna, have existed in the city for years, even decades. Families in such spaces, despite living under constant threat of eviction, report that living here is consistent with their relationship with the city: they want to minimise expenditure (including on rent) and find spaces where they can live together with their communities. (Picture credit: Tathya Macwan)

settled family migrants rent their own rooms, 4-5 rooms (15-20 individuals) share a single toilet. As mentioned earlier, the corner of each room is provided with an unenclosed bathing space linked to drainage. In this particular rental complex, women (who do not perform waged work in the city) were compelled to take responsibility for the maintenance of the toilets, rather than this being provided for by the landlord. Hotel workers living in rented rooms in Anjali Vistar commented on a similar responsibility for the maintenance of the facility, saying, "Sharing a toilet with 15-20 is a problem, but what can we do? We have kept someone to clean the toilets and pay them Rs. 300-400 per month, so that is Rs. 50-60 per room." While rented rooms in such areas have the bare minimum sanitation infrastructure, including closed doors and water available during certain hours, others might lack even this. In Janiyapir Tekro, migrant workers live in semi-urban conditions adjacent to an industrial dumping area. Here, 15 rooms, each with 3-4 workers, are required to share a single toilet that, according to workers, has not been operational for years. As a result, they defecate and bathe in the open, in an area where chemicals, water and garbage accumulate from the nearby industries. As mentioned earlier, workers cannot negotiate for better sanitation conditions because their landlord, a powerful local leader, can easily replace them with other migrant workers looking for rental accommodation.

The nature of sanitation facilities on worksites is also arbitrary, varying greatly by occupational group as well as the workers' relationship with the contractor or employer responsible for access. For headloading workers at the state-regulated Ahmedabad's Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) market in Guptanagar, access to the pay and use facility provided by the state is unreliable. The caretaker, a representative of the company that the government has contracted to run this facility, often locks the toilets before 6pm, forcing workers to defecate in the open or rely on the generosity of the market's warehouse owners, who, depending on their relationship with the particular worker, might let them access toilets in their "offices" located above the warehouses.

Hotel workers living onsite use shared toilets, although the ratio of workers to toilets might vary greatly by the size of the establishment. At a small *dhaba* in Anjali Vistar, 8 workers and

their owner share a single 5x5 square feet toilet-cum-bathroom that they must also maintain themselves. They also use the same water for bathing, washing clothes, and cleaning the toilets, as described later in the section on access to water.

At a large construction site in Nehru Nagar – promoted as a "model" worksite by the builder – men and women reported having access to separate toilets and bathing facilities, with outside workers brought in daily to clean these facilities. At another site in Gota, however, women workers reported not being able to easily access the gender-neutral toilets onsite during the day. Women are compelled to use these facilities at 5 am, 3 hours before the men onsite wake up, and since over 50 women use the toilet at this time, they often have to wait up to an hour to access the facility. If they are late even by 2 hours, they say, "…we will not have enough time to make food for our families. And if we arrive late to work, the *seth* will say, 'Take the day off, I do not need you to work today.' And he will not pay us our daily wage." Moreover, by 9 am every day, each of the 6 toilets onsite is clogged, making them unusable. Since their onsite labour colonies are located far away from the sanitation facilities, they expressed concern over being able to access these at night: "Where will we leave our children alone [in the labour colony] at night? They fall asleep as soon as we are done with work in the evening. And how can we come here alone in the dark?"

Type of Sanitation Facility Accessed	Construction work	Factory work	Domestic work
Individual toilet	-	-	100%
Shared toilet	32%	-	-
Open defecation	68%	100%	-

Table 8: Types of sanitation facilities accessed by women workers of various occupational groups living onsite

Much like in Nehru Nagar and Gota, female Adivasi factory workers in Narol also pointed out that they wake up at 5am to access toilets in the factory compound, some of which do not have functional doors. The toilet inside the factory building is "… reserved for managers and supervisors," so they cannot use it even if it is unoccupied at that hour. On some occasions,

Image 10: Construction workers living on-site in Ahmedabad face a lack of basic facilities, living in temporary constructed shacks, with no space to leave their children during work hours (Picture credit: Jagjit Singh)

defecating in the open – up to 2 kilometers away – provides more privacy than that provided by the facility set up onsite by the employer. Moreover, commenting on the quality of worksite sanitation, they said, "Do you really think our toilets are clean? If they get dirty, we end up having to clean them. Who will give us clean toilets?"

Migrant families living in settlements in various kinds of open spaces must negotiate with a larger set of actors to access sanitation facilities in the city. In Vasna, Arjun Ashram and Durganagar, Adivasi families living in the open cannot use the mobile toilets in the vicinity of homes, that were installed there by the AMC at the intervention of Aajeevika Bureau. In the first case, local residents living in societies and bungalows nearby "would not let [them] keep these here," and in the latter two cases, workers reported that no one cleans or maintains the toilet, making them unusable shortly after they first arrived. As a result, workers are forced to defecate in the open, often up to 2 kilometers away from their settlements. Much like women living on worksites, they must wake up at 5 am to safely defecate in the open, as well as to make it back to collect water from nearby societies in time before heading to the labour *nakas* for work. In fact, women workers in Arjun Ashram reported that if they defecate by the railway tracks after daylight, the security guards pelt them with stones. As a result, families are often compelled to spend Rs. 15 per person per day to defecate and bathe at pay and use toilets – which, workers reported, can cost up to Rs. 300 per month (or a single day's wages) if they use this facility even thrice a week.

Water

Housing Typology of Workers	Type of Water Access
Rented rooms	Landlord provides, public stand post
Worksite housing	Employer provides, public stand post
Open spaces	Private buildings, water tanker, public stand post

Table 9: Source of water access for migrant workers, according to housing typology

Only 9% of respondents reported that they access water (for household use and drinking) directly from the city's "public stand posts" – pipes or taps installed by the AMC. For most workers, access to water is mediated by relatively powerful local intermediaries such as landlords, contractors, or residents and security guards at nearby housing societies. This situates the adequacy of water supply – in terms of quantity, quality and frequency of access – within informal networks of simultaneous patronage and exploitation. Moreover, dependence on powerful actors reduces workers' ability to negotiate an improvement on these parameters and results in having to bear daily mental and physical costs to access water.

In rented rooms in Raipur and Ghatlodiya, workers use landlord-installed taps to access the AMC's water supply, using the same water for drinking and household use. In each case, 10-20 workers from 1-6 rooms share a single tap or pipe. While workers do not have to fetch water from a distance, this supply is only available for two hours in the morning (6-8 am) and one hour in the evening (5-6 pm), the latter coinciding with work hours for every occupational group surveyed. In Janiyapir, another informal rental market, workers reported that even these hours can vary, resulting in running water only being available during 6:30 - 7:30 am on certain days. While supply is arbitrary and does not become more consistent or adequate with time, monthly rent, which includes water, steadily increases. The demand for affordable rental housing among migrant workers across the city, regardless of the living standards, is sufficient to weaken workers' negotiating power with the landlord. When asked about whether they have ever challenged their landlord's rent hike in the context of unimproved or even deteriorating living conditions, they only replied, *"Kya karein? Dena padta hai* [What can we do? We have to pay the rent.]"

For workers living on the worksite, water supply varies by occupational category.[5] Headloaders living in Ahmedabad's Agricultural Produce and Market Committee (APMC) market in Guptanagar, rely on the benevolence of employers or use their position as "old, trustworthy employees," for access to water. Workers who have been working at particular shops in the market for long periods of time can access the shop's "office" in the market to drink water. Head-loaders working in Aslali's Bajrang Estate also reported a similar negotiating power with owners with whom they have *pehchaan* [strong relationship and trust]. In the absence of this relationship with the shop owner, however, APMC's workers rely on daily purchases from the market's canteen, which can cost up to Rs. 20 per litre of water. In all other onsite living cases – construction, factory and hotel industries – workers reported "free" access to water for drinking and household use, but the cost of access took different forms.

At construction sites in Nehru Nagar and Gota and a factory in Narol, workers reported "24 hours, free access" to water, because they use the same pipes or taps originally installed for the construction and manufacturing processes. In other words, no separate provisions for water have been made, but rather, workers' domestic and personal consumption is a by-product of the needs of the manufacturing and construction process. It is also worth mentioning that despite living among hazardous chemicals and materials onsite, not a single worker living on construction and factory sites reported treating their drinking water.

While workers living onsite at restaurants and hotels reported, on average, the highest daily water consumption (79 litres), access to employer provided water can vary depending on the size of the establishment. Workers at larger restaurants

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and hotels reported more frequent and adequate water, but those at dhabas (small, often informally set up restaurants) have much less consistent and sufficient water to use. At a dhaba in Anjali Vistar, for instance, workers living onsite must fill enough water during a two-hour window (6 to 8 am) not only for their own usage (drinking, bathing, washing clothes), but also to wash the restaurant's dishes. On average, the staff consumes only 37 litres of water per capita per day. Broadly, access to water on worksites, rather than being consistent, free and guaranteed by the state and employer, varies widely based on the informal networks workers have, their negotiating power, the size of the establishment and the willingness of the employer and contractor to invest in safe, sanitary and adequate supply.
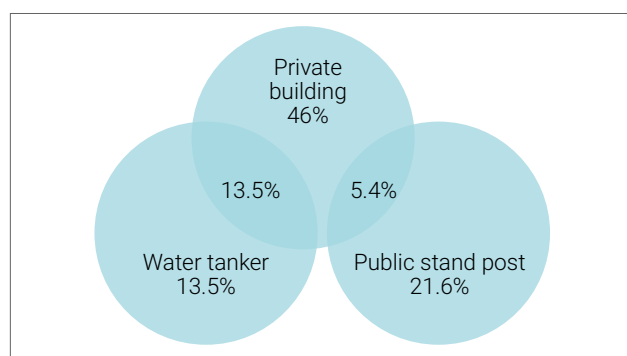

Figure 2: Breakdown of water access facilities for migrant families living in open spaces. Due to the arbitrary and highly informal nature of access, this was the only surveyed group to report having to make attempts at multiple sources to secure the daily bare minimum required for their families.

Of all the occupational groups and housing types surveyed, however, migrant workers living in settlements in the open have perhaps the most arbitrary access to water in the city.

Largely construction workers who get work from nakas, they travel to buildings and railway quarters nearby, developing relationships with security guards or residents to access water taps or pipes at these structures. Women living by the road in Vasna said, "If we go to the [nearby] building, then they don't let us fill it every time – sometimes they tell us to go away. They just stop the tap to prevent us [from filling up water]. Then we have to go to another society and see if they let us fill water there." If they cannot fill adequate water, they negotiate with the contractor or employer at their construction site for the day, and wash their clothes and bathe on site after work. It is worth recalling that the residences and societies nearby consist of the same people who have earlier tried to evict these migrant workers from their neighbourhoods, as a group of women in Vasna reported: "Yes, we feel scared about being evicted… that bunglawala [bungalow owner] threatened to evict us. He said the municipality [AMC] will throw us out. We don't know whose land this is, how can we tell?"

Women at Arjun Ashram articulated a similar distrust of residential societies, further claiming that since they must reach the naka early to secure work for that day, they cannot wait for the society residents to wake up before they can approach them for access. Instead, they have developed a relationship with the security guard at the railway residential quarters, and travel back and forth 8 times between 5 and 7 am, carrying back a 15 litre container each time. Every month, each family pays the guard Rs. 200 to ensure continued access for their families.

It is important to note that across these cases, where workers migrate to the city as families, women workers are largely responsible for the daily collection and storage of water. This is not to say that men and children are not involved in

Image 11: For Adivasi families living in the open, each day entails a hunt for water, beginning at 5 am, from nearby residential societies. To secure access, they must maintain a relationship with security guards outside these buildings as well as the residents themselves. (Picture credit: Jagjit Singh)

this process, but rather that women's narratives revealed that the primary expectation is for them to collect water for the family. Women in settlements and open spaces reported needing to wake up as early as 4 am every day to access water (and sanitation as well as to cook food for their families). As a result, they not only end up working for up to 17 hours in a day (Jayaram, Jain and Sugathan, 2019), but also form the crucial interface between the migrant household and the informal agent mediating access to water.

Housing typology	Average daily water consumption (per capita, in litres)
Other	115
Rented room	85
Worksite housing	50
Open space: Settlement on public space/road	60
Open space: Settlement on government/private land	39

Table 10: Average self-reported daily water consumption per person by housing typology

Despite the mental and physical tolls of accessing water in Ahmedabad on a daily basis, for seasonal migrant workers, particularly those living on worksites or in open spaces, water consumption is mediated by the amount they are able to access from a meager and unpredictable daily supply, and not by the amount needed. As a result, daily water consumption is inadequate by two standards (see table above). The World Health Organisation uses a 100-litre per person per day standard to identify "water deficient households," classifying 50 litres per person per day as "intermediate access," while the National Commission on Urbanisation recommended, that a minimum of 90-100 litres be "ensured to all citizens… for a hygienic existence." (quoted in Shaban, 2008) Factoring out water usage for flushing using the Central Ground Water Authority's calculations, the NCU minimum would still be 63-70 litres per person per day.

In addition, over 70% of workers either do not treat the water they drink or use a simple cloth filter to remove large stones or sand, making them susceptible to water-borne illnesses.

Food and Cooking Fuel

Across occupational categories, none of the workers reported having access to subsidised food grains or other essentials under the Public Distribution System in the city. They relied solely on purchasing rations from the market, through retailers or shopkeepers in their neighbourhoods. An exception to this is hotel workers, the majority of whom receive their meals at the worksites, through their employers or contractors.

Occupation	Proportion of Income Spent on Food and Cooking Fuel	
	Rented Room	Worksite Housing
Construction work	48	46
Domestic work	42	43
Factory work	43	29
Headloading	44	32
Hotel/Dhaba work	17	4

Table 11: Percentage of income spent on food and fuel for migrant workers living in rented rooms and on worksites, broken down by occupational group

Expenditure on food in the city is therefore startlingly high across different groups of migrant workers. It is highest for those living in open spaces – constituting family based tribal construction workers – who spend, on average, 53 percent of their monthly income on food consumption. They access food grains through local shopkeepers, spending an average of Rs. 2000 per week on basic essentials such as wheat, oil, spices and vegetables. While the high proportion of costs on food is also related to their lower incomes compared to skilled workers and other caste and occupational groups, another factor is their inability to purchase ration in larger quantities even to last them for a week or to bring essential food grains from the village. Instead, they rely on buying daily packets of ration because they do not have any means for storing their grains in their open living spaces, with many groups reporting that it gets ruined, misplaced or eaten by stray animals in their absence.

The expenditure on food as a proportion of income, procured in similar ways, is also high in the case of migrant workers living in rented rooms.[6] For ST, SC and some OBC construction as well as factory workers, it constitutes 49 per cent of their monthly income. These groups of workers also often rely on the same shopkeeper for purchasing their rations as the shopkeeper allows to purchase ration on credit and helps them in other matters, such as negotiating with the police and charging their mobile phones. Factory workers living in rented rooms in Janiyapir, interestingly, reported that they purchase their rations from the shop set up by their landlord to ensure that their relationship with him is not tarnished.

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6   Workers living in rented rooms did report bringing grains from their villages to consume in the city and also have storage space that those living in the open do not. As a result, they do not rely on daily purchases of grain, oil and spices, which helps to drive down the cost of food consumption. Yet the proportion of income spent on food is similar to that of open space dwellers – this might be explained by two factors. First, unskilled Adivasi construction workers living in rented rooms have similar wages as those living in the open, making the base for calculating the proportion of food expenditure similar for these groups (though this might not apply to factory workers). Second, the study did not investigate the adequacy of food purchased by any of these groups, so it is possible that workers with greater purchasing power are simply consuming and spending more on grains, vegetables, spices and oil.

Expenditure on Food and Rent as a Proportion of Income for Circular Migrants Living in Rented Rooms in Ahmedabad

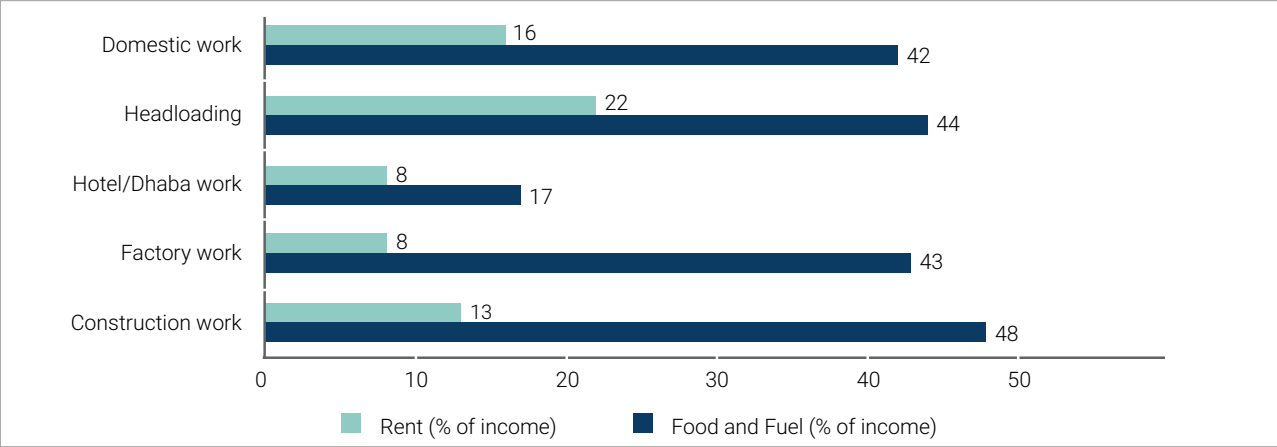|	Rent (% of income)	Food and Fuel (% of income)
Domestic work	16	42
Headloading	22	44
Hotel/Dhaba work	8	17
Factory work	8	43
Construction work	13	48

Figure 3: Food and rent expenditure for migrant families living in rented rooms in Ahmedabad. Food expenses are 2-6 times higher than the rent for those accessing informal rental markets.

In the case of OBC and General caste headloaders and domestic workers living in rented rooms, expenditure on food as a proportion of their waged income is also significantly high, averaging 42-51 per cent, despite their higher incomes. However, this does not take into account their additional sources of income in the city. As mentioned earlier, these groups can afford spending large proportions of their income on food because of their other investments in the city, including in property, through which they receive additional income. This situation contrasts with headloaders living on their worksites, within the markets where they work, who come from tribal and lower caste groups. They continue to spend a substantial proportion of their wages, 32 percent, on food, without additional sources of income.

Construction workers living onsite – largely ST and SC families – spend an average of 46 per cent of their incomes on food and fuel. Their wages are already lower than *naka* construction workers to begin with, and they are forced to rely on the same informal, expensive markets accessed by both open space and rental room dwellers. Adivasi families living in factories, and largely working in the most hazardous conditions (such as operating boiler machines), spend 29 per cent of their incomes on food and fuel, on average – a lower proportion than headloaders, construction workers and domestic workers living onsite. A potential reason for this anomaly is that both men and women chew tobacco during the day to sustain themselves for continuous 12-16 hour shifts on the boiler. The working conditions that have compelled them to rely on tobacco, which is known to suppress hunger, are thus perhaps linked to a smaller quantity of food consumption, and therefore less expenditure every day. (Food expenditure for this study does not include spending on tobacco, and this number was not captured during the survey.)

Image 12: Food and fuel constitutes the largest expense for migrant workers in the city. In open spaces and on worksites, workers who cannot use firewood, cook with discarded plastic and wood, which has severe health implications. (Picture credit: Tathya Macwan)

Hotel workers living onsite reported spending only 4 per cent of their monthly income on food, allowing them to save a much higher proportion of their wages. However, the arrangement with their contractors or employer for "free" meals is complex. Workers reported that the cost of employer provided meals are factored into their monthly wages, and can be up to Rs. 3000 per month. The quality of this access is also extremely arbitrary and unregulated, depending upon the benevolence of the contractor or employer, and does not follow any health and nutrition standards. Hotel workers in a small restaurant in Anjali Vistar reported that they often eat leftovers from the meals cooked for customers, which might often be inadequate to feed everyone. A group of hotel workers in Vasna reported that while they have a separate cook for preparing their meals, the employer chooses not to invest in adequate or nutritious food, which would cost him more, leaving them with poor diets.

Migrant workers surveyed reported using a wide variety of fuel. In the case of migrants living in open spaces, there is no option of accessing kerosene fuel or gas cylinders. These Adivasi families are forced to collect materials that can be used to fire the stove – including garbage, pieces of plastic or cardboard, or wood shavings from their construction sites. The burden of collecting fuel falls disproportionately on women, who often do this during their walk back from their worksites to their living spaces, investing additional hours of their day in fuel collection. In addition to this, women report that poor quality materials often prolong the hours invested in cooking, while also releasing smoke from plastics that affects them to a larger extent than firewood or other cooking fuels. If they are not able to procure materials, they are forced to purchase firewood from the market, often costing them on average Rs. 100 per day.

In rented rooms, migrant workers largely rely on kerosene, firewood or gas cylinders that they procure from the black market. They often cook inside their small and cramped rooms with little ventilation, generating a large amount of smoke. Construction workers who live on the worksite reported that their contractors provide them with firewood for cooking. However, this access is not guaranteed, but rather provided arbitrarily by some contractors with whom workers have been able to develop strong relationships. For instance, within the same construction site in Rajiv Nagar, different labour contractors behaved differently – one provided free firewood to workers, while the other did not. Fuel access, therefore, much like water, sanitation and housing, is mediated by informal, unregulated relationships with actors who might also exploit migrant workers while providing them these facilities.

Healthcare

Migrant workers perform dangerous work to subsidise Ahmedabad's growth – working in hazardous conditions, consuming less than adequate food, with arbitrary access to sanitation and clean drinking water. In addition, in the absence of any state and employer liability, worksite accidents are common across the construction, factory and headloading sectors. In fact, according to an International Labour

Organisation report (2003), on average 38 people die in the Indian construction sector every day. Our study revealed a wide range of illnesses and accidents among all worker groups, including fevers and common colds, severe illnesses such as tuberculosis, dengue, malaria, jaundice, typhoid, respiratory and skin diseases, as well as accidents from falls at the worksite, and burns and cuts from old or faulty machines.

Illness	% of respondents self-reporting each illness in 2018
Malaria	17.5
Typhoid	11.6
Skin disease	8.1
Respiratory disease	6.7
Jaundice	6.0
Worksite accident (cuts, burns, fractures, electric shock)	5.3
Gynaecological ailment	14.4 (N=111)
Dengue	3.2
Tuberculosis	1.4

Table 12: Percentage of respondents self-reporting occurrence of each illness/accident in 2018 (N=285)

Despite these conditions, few workers reported that they prefer to access free or subsidised public healthcare systems in the city, especially those run by urban local bodies. Only 2 of 285 survey respondents, across all work sectors and housing typologies, reported that they prefer to access Urban Health Centres (UHCs) – small clinics run by the AMC in each of the city's wards, providing free primary healthcare and linkages to public health schemes. Of these, only one worker actually accessed a UHC in the last year. Only 14.7% reported preferring to visit public hospitals, as their avenue for treatment. By contrast, 84.6% of workers interviewed – 241 respondents – included private clinics and private hospitals in the city in their self-reported lists of preferred treatment avenues.

Type of Healthcare Facility	% of respondents including each in their list of preferred treatment avenues
Private clinic	74.4
Public hospital	14.7
Private hospital	14.4
Treatment in Village	5.0
Urban Health Centre	0.7

Table 13: Percentage of respondents reporting preference for each type of health facility (N=285)

Narratives from workers across occupational and housing categories corroborate these numbers. While some cases can be explained logistically – UHCs remain open only between 9am and 6pm, making them inaccessible to workers – other arguments underline the complex bureaucracy and

stigmatisation at public healthcare providers, especially for non-Gujarati speaking migrants. While workers acknowledged the expenses of private treatment, the relatively streamlined process compensated for the cost. At a rented room in Raipur, Adivasi construction workers said of private clinics, "[Doctors] see us immediately when we go there. They ask for the problem and then give us the medicine. In the public hospital, they tell you to go here and there for documentation and it takes a long time. They don't pay much attention to workers, so 2-3 hours go by that way." Workers at a construction site in Gota were not aware of where their ward's UHC was located, adding that any access to healthcare was mediated by their seth (labour contractor), and that "… if he doesn't help, we go back to the village. We don't know anyone in the city." They added that without someone to facilitate this connection, public hospital staff would (illegally) insist on formal Ahmedabad-based identification (ration card, Aadhar card, etc with an address in the city) to receive treatment, which seasonal migrants do not have. Adivasi workers at a settlement in Durganagar also articulated the need for an informal connection – "We don't go to government hospitals or clinics. We don't have *pehchaan* ('connection') there" – adding that, "… we feel scared. *Maar dale vahan toh kya karein* [What if they kill us?]"

Given this lack of information about the locations of public health facilities and logistics of navigating their bureaucracies, and the need for informal networks to avoid stigmatisation from providers, it is worth understanding the profiles of the 40 workers who did report public healthcare as their preferred treatment avenue. All but 1 had been working in Ahmedabad for over 3 years, and 60% have worked in the city for 10 years or longer. 48% belong to the General (or "forward") caste category (despite General caste workers comprising only 20% of the survey sample), while only 20% are Adivasi workers (despite comprising 46% of the sample). While these demographic and migration profiles might not be causally linked to healthcare access in Ahmedabad, they corroborate the narratives emerging from group discussions and interviews, and suggest that workers already marginalised by their caste and/or lack of informal networks in the city, might self-select out of accessing public healthcare.

The barriers to accessing subsidised or free healthcare in Ahmedabad – coupled with unenforced employer liability to maintain safe working and decent living conditions or compensate for worksite accidents – have serious financial implications for seasonal migrants. Workers reported spending anywhere between Rs.100 and Rs. 3,00,000 during their most recent visits to private healthcare providers, excluding the cost of forfeited wages during the accident or illness. One construction worker living in a settlement in Arjun Ashram reported paying Rs. 1,50,000 for a surgery at a private hospital, which is 265% of the combined monthly earnings of his 7 family members working in Ahmedabad. Unable to stake claims to public health, migrant workers thus rely on expensive private providers, often only being able to reach these by means of powerful intermediaries (contractors, employers, etc.) who might already be exploiting them.

By not acknowledging, let alone rectifying migrants' inability to access public healthcare, the state perpetuates the denial of their citizenship and claims to the very city whose growth they subsidise. The result is an exclusionary system in which migrants become paying consumers of facilities that should be guaranteed and subsidised, which is symptomatic of a broader sedentary bias in urban governance policymaking as well as local implementing agencies.

Anoop Sathyan

B. Surat

Housing

Following an initial scoping exercise undertaken at various sites across Surat city, three distinct housing typologies for power loom workers were identified for the purpose of the study: (a.) mess rooms, (b.) rented shared/ bachelor rooms, (c.) rented family rooms/houses in informal settlements and resettlement projects. A negligible number of migrant power loom workers own a house in the city. On the streets, inside the looms and at communal spaces, the migrant workers are 'visible' by their sheer scale and lineage. However, owing to the complete abdication of responsibility on the part of the state and the industry, little has changed over time. Rickety, old loom buildings have been turned into living spaces; live electric wires are strewn on the floor, hundreds of workers are huddled up in hallways with no fire exits. With relative homogeneity among the workforce and the intergenerational aspect therein, especially for the Odia workers hailing from Ganjam district, access to a living space is almost fully dependent on existing social networks. These networks, as seen in the case of Ahmedabad, are markers of simultaneous patronage and gross exploitation. In most cases, the landlords, mess room managers and relatives, who work as "informal brokers" in Surat, also hail from the same source region. This ensures that the exploitative relationship in the city gets reproduced even in the home state. In addition, the workers also engage with local power groups, which would include a local politician, community leader or an older power loom worker. These relationships determine their access to a mess room or rental room/house, rent amount, payment for utilities, social support and bargaining power.

Rented Shared/Bachelor Rooms

Located in and around the periphery of the industrial corridor, the rented rooms, colloquially referred to as bachelor rooms, are single rooms that house groups of single male migrant workers, from as many as two to 10 workers. A typical rented room, as seen in the case of Ved Road, spans an area of 70 to 100 square feet. Within this space, there is also an open washing area (referred to as a *mori*)*,* which is used for bathing, washing clothes and utensils. A common toilet facility is provided for a group of such rooms, which often means that as many as 50 workers use one toilet. In most cases, the properties are owned by locals from the city, however, they are managed or brokered by migrants, in some cases, former loom workers themselves. While the room rentals are fixed, ranging from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 4,000 for the entire room, individual rent depends on the number of workers sharing the space. An initial deposit of Rs. 5,000 must be paid per room. Requirement to pay the deposit makes shared rooms unaffordable for many workers and thus they prefer mess rooms over shared rooms. As per the survey, workers living in the shared rooms stated that their monthly expenditure on rent varied from Rs. 300 (shared by a group of ten) to Rs. 2,700 (shared by two persons). Workers in the shared rooms often cook food themselves or eat from messes, canteens or hotels. The survey results showed that on average, a migrant worker staying in a shared room bears an expenditure of Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000 per month on food. Few workers who eat outside regularly, reported their monthly expense on food added up to Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3500.

Image 13: Samir stays in a rented room at Ved road near his workplace and shares his room with four others from his village in Odisha (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

Apart from the shared rooms in the industrial neighbourhoods of Mina Nagar, Bachuchar Nagar, Vishram Nagar, Rehmat Nagar, Triveni and Tribhuvan Society in Ved Road, groups of workers also lived on rent in the resettlement colonies of Amroli. Since these rental arrangements were informally defined, without any paperwork involved, it was difficult to gauge the scale of such shared rooms in this area. The shared rooms had also been leased out to migrant workers engaged in other occupations such as driving, diamond polishing, packing, etc. The survey recorded the experiences of 18 workers living in the resettlement colonies on rent. In their case, the original allottees of the rooms had leased out their rooms that had en-suite toilet facilities. The average rent paid by the workers in this case was Rs 3500 to Rs.5000. The workers residing in these rooms worked in the power looms in Anjani Industrial area, which is located approximately six kilometres away. They used bicycles to cover the distance.

Mess Rooms

Apart from the shared rooms, the second familiar living option available for single male migrants in Surat are the mess rooms. Most often located well within the industrial corridor – as close as 10 feet away from the power loom – these mess rooms include long hallways spanning an area of 500 to 1000 square metres. Nearly 100 workers live in these rooms across two shifts (from 7am to 7pm and 7pm to 7am). It is the size of the room, number of residents and the meal package, which sets them apart from the other shared/bachelor rooms. The mess rooms come with a package of two meals every day.

The experiences of 25 mess room residents living in the various neighbourhoods of Ved Road and Amroli were documented, as part of the survey. One in-depth focus group discussion and several casual conversations were facilitated with the group. In addition, the co-owner of Bhagwan Bhai Mess, Shiva, was interviewed to understand the political economy of this living arrangement.

In the case of Ved Road and Mina Nagar, older power loom spaces have been converted into the mess rooms. This has meant that most rooms have no windows for ventilation, have rickety and dirty pathways and stairways. Every worker gets assigned a space of around 3 feet by 6 feet to sleep on. Here, every mess room is assigned a manager, usually a former migrant loom worker himself. He is responsible for selecting the residents, collecting the rent, cooking and maintaining order in the rooms. The mess manager pays a fixed amount to the property owner, which would range from Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 30,000. There is no cap on the number of workers he can house in the mess room. Which is why, most rooms are packed beyond capacity. There are no official documents sought in the process.

Single migrants staying in the mess rooms pay between Rs. 400 - 600 as room rent and Rs. 1,800 - Rs. 2,200 for food served at the same facility. Electricity charges are also included in the mess room rent. On average, 50-60 workers stay in a poorly ventilated mess room of size 400-600 square feet. Workers keep their belongings lined up towards the wall and dry their clothes on lines tied across the room. Mess

Image 14: Images from mess rooms in Ved Road. Clockwise from top-left: drinking water barrels and kitchen; workers sleeping after a 12 hour work shift; workers dry their clothes in lines tied across the hall which is, the bedroom, prayer room, wardrobe and kitchen; shared toilets (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

Image 15: Washing and bathing facilities provided at mess rooms are towards the end of the mess hall and very often, next to the cooking area. (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

rooms provide cooked food to the tenants and the food is often prepared by the mess owner, manager or a helper in the kitchen, which is set up at one end of the room. The mess rooms usually have two toilets and are often next to the kitchen and storage area for food supplies. In a few mess rooms, the kitchen and dining area is constructed as a separate room and the area where workers sleep, will have toilets and bathing areas attached to it. When the temperature shoots up during summers, life in the mess room becomes miserable.

Referring to the everyday challenges, Hadu Behera, a resident of Mahavir Mess on Ved Road said, "During summer, the temperatures reach 40 degrees Celsius...Some of the halls are dark, there is no ventilation, and there are just so many of us... even after a long, difficult day at the loom, it is not possible for us to rest comfortably." Behera has been living in the mess rooms since 1983. "I have little choice to move out because this is all that I can afford." Another resident, Prakash Pradhan also said that even as the rents were rising, the salaries were not. "I have been working in Surat over the past 12 years. Back then, the rent was Rs. 600. I now pay Rs. 2,300 per month. But even if I complain, the manager would ask me to move out and find another space. I will not be able to afford that decision, which is why none of us raise questions."

A crucial driver for identifying a mess room is the migrant worker's existing social networks. Even the mess managers said that they take in new tenants only based on the recommendation of the existing tenants. At Bhagwan Bhai Mess, for instance, workers without prior reference are strictly prohibited. Thus, in case of a drunken brawl or an argument with the mess manager, finding an alternative living space was a challenge.

Despite the guarantee in the form of the social networks, a spot in the mess rooms isn't always assured. Shiv Sahu, for instance, has been staying in a mess room since 2017. He said, "Actually, any male migrant's place of stay in the city is as transitory as his work: just like how there is no guarantee that our jobs would remain once we return from our villages, similar is the situation with the rooms. There is every possibility that our place would have been allotted to someone else by the time we return. It gets very difficult."

The preference for mess rooms amongst single male migrants has been witnessing an intergenerational shift. While older workers still prefer to stay in mess rooms, younger migrants prefer rented rooms for the benefits of privacy and cleanliness. Another visible trend is that of former family migrants moving back to mess rooms or rented rooms, as families have gone back to the village for the higher education of their children.

Rented Family Rooms

While single male migrants form the more prominent workforce in the power loom industry, some of the workers have also managed to bring their families to the city. This group usually includes those migrants who have lived and worked in Surat for at least ten years. In this case, while the male worker is employed in the looms, his wife undertakes unpaid work including cooking, cleaning and childcare, in addition to home-based work in the industry. This would include sticking sequins on clothes or cutting threads from fabric (*dhaaga-cutting*). The job is considered menial, which is why it is very poorly compensated, much below the minimum wages.

Image 16: Rented family rooms doubles up as working spaces for women workers during the day time (Picture Credit: Manish Shukla)

The 44 family migrants captured in the study reside in rented rooms owned by private individuals across different locations in Amroli and Ved Road. In Amroli, the migrant families were found to be staying in rented houses in the resettlement colony buildings of Kosad H3 and Kosad H4, rented out to them by the beneficiaries of the scheme. Families pay a rent of Rs. 1800 to Rs. 3800 for rooms of size between 80 square feet to 200 square feet. In Amroli the size of the rooms/houses vary between 120 square feet and 450 square feet, for which families pay a rent amount of Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3500.

Unlike the arrangement in Kosad, Amroli, at Ved Road, the family migrants live in individual rooms that are part of informal settlements. They share common facilities such as the toilets with other tenants in the building. These clusters of rented rooms in the settlements are demarcated along the lines of the source districts. The common space outside their rooms is also used by the home-based workers to complete their thread-cutting and sticking works. In some cases, existing buildings that were used as shared bachelor rooms are now being rented out to families.

Manju hails from Patna, Bihar and grew up in Delhi as her parents worked there. She has been staying in a rented room in Mina Nagar, Ved Road since the last two years with her husband and children. She said, "The rooms occupied by families in this building are the same as the ones rented to single male migrants. We pay a rent of Rs. 2,500. We can't afford anything more. There are apartments in the neighbouring lanes. Those are bigger and better, but the rent alone is around 5,000 rupees. We will never be able to afford that."

Some of the migrant families have also made the move from the resettlement Kosad Awas homes to living on rent in the industrial corridor because of the additional cost and time of travel between home and work. For instance, Madhuri Nayak, a migrant worker from Ganjam District, recently moved into Manju's building on Ved Road from her rented house in Kosad Awas. "My husband's workplace was very far away from our house in Kosad Awas that is located at the very end of the city, which is why we decided to move here and live on rent," said Madhuri.

Family migrants get in touch with their friends working in the same factory, living in the same building or through people from the same village. Again, social networks become the only way of finding a living place. There is no written agreement to back this transaction, and it is a relationship based completely on trust. As a result, there is no security of tenure, and the power equation is lopsided. Bhima and her family migrated to the city 12 years ago and are staying in a rented room in Mina Nagar. She said, "Staying in a rented room becomes easier if you have an approachable building owner. Our building owner allowed us to stay despite defaulting on the rent last month, when my husband couldn't find work. In a few buildings, we have heard that if the tenants fail to pay the rent, they are asked to vacate with immediate effect." In this case, the worker might end up losing the entire deposit amount.
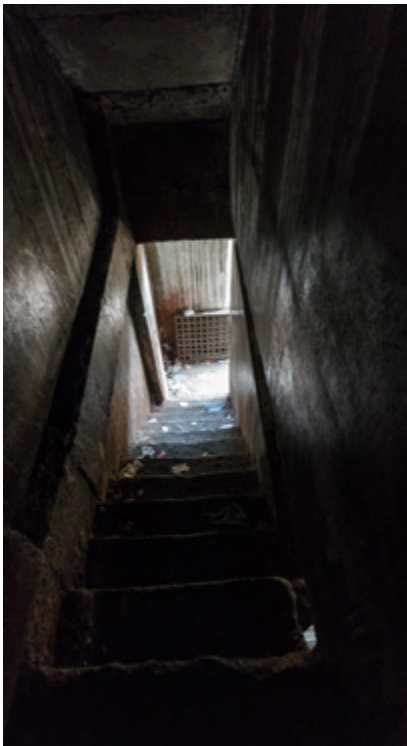
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Image 17: Stairways of the buildings with rented rooms or mess rooms are narrow, dark and totally ill-equipped in case of a fire emergency. (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

Spanning across different housing typologies accessed by migrant workers, lack of fire exits, fire safety and narrow dingy stairways remains common. These buildings are occupied by workers all through the day (as it is rented in two shifts), as well as women working from home and their children. Fire safety is completely absent and the amount of disregard given to safety measures is shocking, given the rates of fire accidents reported in Surat city. Close proximity of migrants' residential pockets to factories reinforce the need for fire safety.

Mobility across Housing Typologies

About 10 percent of workers remarked that they have moved between rented spaces more than 10 times in all these years in Surat. A total of 23 workers from the sample reported that they have faced cases of evictions in the city, and 20 workers out of the 23 stated that they had been evicted by mess owners or managers, which reveals the higher level of tenure insecurity in the mess rooms.

About one-third of the sample stated that they have moved between housing for better facilities and conveniences. Major patterns in this mobility were found to be between rented bachelor/ shared rooms to family rooms, in cases where the family from the village joined the worker.

Urban Mobility

Data evidence from the various sites in Ved Road indicate that the average distance between a migrant worker's room and his workplace is between 200 meters and three kilometres. These numbers reinforce the issue of closely located residential spaces and the extremely loud power looms.

Workers either walk to the factories or use bicycles. There is an entire second-hand market for bicycles used by migrant workers. These cycles are mostly rusted, and a worker pays an amount of Rs. 500- Rs. 800 to purchase one. The maintenance charges for these bicycles are also quite high for the price of the bicycle. A migrant worker, on average, spends Rs. 10 per week, that adds up to Rs. 40 - Rs. 50 on bicycle maintenance every month. The workers also indicated that on account of the dilapidated condition of the bicycles and the potholed and narrow by-lanes leading to the factories, the maintenance costs of the bicycles shoot up.

Kailash Gouda, a resident of a shared room in Ved Road said, that he travels for over two kilometres every day from his room to the power loom in Mina Nagar. He said, "If you think the main roads are bad, you must see the roads leading to the factories. During the rainy season, it is almost impossible to make it to the factory entrance. The roads are full of overflowing sewage. I am forced to undertake many repairs on my bicycle." Whereas, in Amroli, the residential pockets of migrant workers are located 4 to 9 kilometers further away from the power loom area than in Anjani and Saayan. Apart from cycling to work, workers also use shared auto rickshaws and buses. A few of them own mopeds. Workers living in Amroli, therefore, incur higher expenses travelling to their places of work.

In the absence of an effective, formal system addressing the housing requirements of migrant workers, they are either pushed to the peripheries of the city, away from workplace or are invariably trapped in industrial areas like Ved Road, where the noise from power looms rings loud in their ears even when

Image 18: The rusty bicycles lined together form a portrait of every migrant worker inhabited location of Surat. (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

they are not at the workplace. The high commuting charges incurred by workers demonstrate the need for urban policies that are able to sensibly link the needs for mobility of workers effectively with housing and other infrastructure (such as roads). State bodies and industry are reluctant to talk about how these toxic housing facilities have severe consequences for migrant workers in power looms.

Sanitation

Survey findings from various locations across Ved Road and Amroli revealed that all the migrant workers had access to sanitation facilities, both toilets and bathrooms. Sanitation facility available in the different housing typologies can be categorised into shared and private. About 83 percent of the surveyed group has access to shared toilets, which are inside or attached to their living spaces. 33 percent of the group used shared bathrooms and 46 percent had access to *kaccha* bathrooms. These *kachha* bathrooms in case of mess rooms are shared and in family rooms are en-suite. Almost 20 percent of the group surveyed used private bathrooms. In mess rooms, the workers share both bath and toilet facilities, whereas in case of family rooms and bachelor rooms it could either be shared or en-suite. The data evidence also showed that survey participants from Kosad H3 and H4, had access to private bathrooms and toilets.

While buildings occupied by single migrants have some arrangement for cleaning the toilets by the building owner, in the rooms rented to family migrant workers, toilets are cleaned by the tenants themselves. When we discussed the cleaning of toilets in the buildings, Kajal Dakua who stays in a rented room with her husband and two children in Mina Nagar, commented, "The landlord knows that if there is a family on every floor, the women will keep the toilets and verandah clean. If I don't clean the toilet, my children will fall sick." Migrant workers living in Kosad Awas stated that they have access to private toilets and bathrooms inside the houses. In buildings owned by a single landlord and comprising entirely of rented rooms, toilets are shared between all tenants on a floor. In certain buildings, it is shared between families and single migrants, both of who rent rooms on a single floor. A partially covered corner of the room, connected to drainage, is often used for bathing, washing clothes and utensils. Workers living in mess rooms reported that at times the drains would get clogged, causing the water to overflow from these bathing/washing areas. Since these drains, or *moris,* were located inside the room premises, a strong stench emanated in the room, and the floors remained greasy.

Sewage Facilities

The survey showed that 93 per cent of the respondents reported there is a closed drainage system in their locality. However, workers dwelling across multiple locations in Ved Road and Amroli raised their issues with the sewage lines in the FGDs. According to them, sewage lines filled up and authorities cared little to undertake maintenance repairs. The workers were also concerned about the gutter lines contaminating the drinking water supply.

Image 19: All tenants on a floor share the same toilets and bathing areas. (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

Pappubhai, a resident as well as a *pramukh* of Kosad H3 Amroli, when asked about the conditions of facilities provided, said: "It must be marked nil against all the facilities here. They haven't invested a single rupee into the project after initiation. The gutter line overflows all the time. The toilet pipelines are leaking and deteriorating. We are forced to do all the maintenance work at our own expense. We complained at the commissioner's office multiple times. But nobody ever responded." Truptiben Kalathiya, Executive Engineer, Slum Upgradation Department of SMC, reacted, "The Slum Upgradation Department forms societies, appoints *pramukhs* and *uppramukhs,* they are in charge of the maintenance of these housing societies."[7]

Women migrant workers from Raigad district of Maharashtra who engage in *dhaaga*-cutting work said, "We have been living here for the last few many years. All these years, we have had issues with water supply and gutter line. Few days back the water was contaminated; it was water from the gutter, we couldn't even use it in the toilets." Dipti Biswal and her family have rented a room in Mina Nagar and opined that, "I feel people don't bother until the issue reaches their doorstep. For instance, when the gutter fills up, it troubles everyone. But only few care about getting it fixed. The landlord often pays out of his pocket for the maintenance. They call a *bhangi* [colloquial term used to refer to someone from the SC or Dalit community, engaged in sanitation work; has derogatory connotations], pay some 20 or 50 rupees and some alcohol to drink. If the owner knows, he might call the SMC people too."

"We are not sure if it is the sewage line. When it rains, the roads get waterlogged and it creates a lot of trouble; it is barely possible to use the road", remarked Savita and her friends from Puri district of Odisha.

Garbage Collection

The survey findings and FGD observations show that migrant workers living in different locations across Ved Road and Amroli, appreciate the system of garbage collection. SMC has implemented door-to-door garbage collection in which vehicles collect waste regularly and, in few locations, twice a day. Many migrant workers felt that garbage piling up on the roads and streets even after prompt collection by SMC is indeed a consequence of public's irresponsibility. Family migrants living in Kosad Awas H3 feel that hygiene of the roads is not maintained because people still dispose garbage at the spots where earlier garbage bins were placed. Some have not yet gotten used to the SMC vehicle garbage collection system, which is a door to door collection system undertaken by an SMC truck. The group also said that the system of vehicle collecting garbage is better than garbage bins kept at different spots and garbage piling up for days.

Representatives of governing bodies have pre-conceptions about the migrant community and blame them for poor sanitation. The official-in-charge of Swachch Bharat Mission in the SMC, Dr. Swapnil Patel remarked on migrants and their attitude towards hygiene and cleanliness, that, "they do not treat Surat as their own city. Many of them do not get covered during the IEC [Information, Education and Communication] campaigns on cleanliness that are conducted by the SMC, due to their mobility"[8]. Deputy Inspector at Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health, Mr. U.J. Raval, expressed a similar opinion when asked about the garbage collection in areas where migrant workers reside, "migrants live in congested areas, they do not maintain cleanliness"[9].

Many locations inhabited by the migrant community fall between the cracks when it comes to garbage collection, water supply or road maintenance. For instance, corporator of Ved Road, Anilbhai commented, "What can SMC do? Ved Road is an industrial area. It falls under a different set of rules and policies."[10]

Image 20: Despite the much-proclaimed doorstep garbage collection under the Swachh Bharat Mission, streets and roads near the power looms and residential area are filled with foul-smelling garbage heaps. (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

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7   Executive Engineer, Slum Upgradation Department of SMC, interview with research team, Surat, August 2019

8   Medical Officer (in charge of Swachch Bharat Mission), SMC, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

9   Deputy Inspector, Department of Industrial Health and Safety, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

10   Corporator, Ved Road, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

Water

The sources of water available to migrant workers' households in the city of Surat included borewells, SMC provided piped water, government tankers and other provisions provided by the landlord. Drinking water was sourced from SMC provided piped water and borewells.

The FGD participants from Ved Road and Amroli locations stated that the SMC-provided water reached the doorstep of buildings and was either stored in an underground tank or pumped up and stored in an overhead tank of the building. Electricity charges incurred from using the pump are paid by the residents themselves. In certain locations, the building owner provided water from the borewell drilled at his/her expense. About 48 percent of the surveyed group stated that they use the same source of water for drinking and household chores; and in most cases the water used for drinking is not purified, treated or filtered. 79 percent of the surveyed group stated that they use SMC provided water for drinking. Water supplied by SMC, which is a major source of drinking water, is referred to as *mitha pani* (sweet water) and water from bore well is referred to as *khara pani* (hard water). Data also showed that 76 per cent of the migrant workers do not use any method of purification for drinking water. Drinking water provided in mess rooms are collected from taps and stored in big barrels, from which it is directly consumed by the workers.

In Kosad Awas, water provided by SMC is supplied twice a day, between 6:30 am to 9:30 am and 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. While the same timings are applicable to Ved Road locations, the supply is often interrupted and limited to 30 minutes. FGDs revealed that the tenants in Kosad Awas used water stored in the underground tank and overhead water tank for domestic purposes. This water is directly collected from the tap (supplied by SMC) and is also used for drinking. However,

FGD participants from Rang Nagar, Amroli said that there are no provisions of water provided by SMC in their area. They use water for all purposes from the borewell, drilled by the landlord or the house owner.

The SMC water which reaches the buildings must be pumped up to the overhead tank to ensure enough pressure. Women workers who participated in the FGDs across multiple locations complained about having to pay heavy electricity charges due to this. Sangeeta and women in her neighbourhood of Triveni society said, "We have had problems with water supply all-round the year; it is never persistent. It used to be better earlier. We tried complaining to the municipal corporation office. But, at the end of the day nobody listens to us."

Electricity

Data captured in the FGDs and surveys showed that all workers had access to electricity. They said that the electricity supply in their rooms rarely failed. The electricity bills were either included in the rent or had to be separately paid to the landlord. While most of the locations covered under the study had electricity connection provided by the private company, Torrent Power; Kosad in Amroli had electricity services provided by Dakshin Gujarat Vij Company Limited. However, in the case of the mess rooms, migrant workers complained about the lack of ventilation in the rooms because of the absence of windows, the crowd, and the availability of fewer fans. Since the electricity bills were borne by the mess manager (who had to pay the money to the property owner), there were compromises made in the utilities provided. In the winter months, the workers also said that the absence of water heaters made it difficult for them to bathe.

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Mode of electricity expense calculation	Mess rooms	Shared rooms/Bachelor rooms		Family housing	
	Number of workers	Number of workers	Range of monthly expense on electricity	Number of households	Range of monthly expense on electricity
Direct bill payment	-	8	Rs. 100 – Rs. 300	8	Rs. 400 –Rs. 1200
Fixed by property owner	-	13	Rs. 100 – Rs. 200	1	Rs. 400
Included in room rent	25	56	-	20	-
Meter plus ad-hoc to owner	-	1	Rs.70	4	Rs. 300 – Rs. 550
Paid additional to rent	-	2	Rs. 200 – Rs. 250	11	Rs. 300 – Rs.1000
Own meter	-	1	Rs. 120	-	-
Total	25	81		44	

Table 14: Monthly expenses on electricity for migrant workers across housing typologies

As illustrated in the table above, in mess rooms, electricity expenses are included in the rent and the same method is followed in nearly half of the rented family rooms as well. In total, 67 percent of the sample pay their electricity expense as part of the rent.

Cooking Fuel

The study revealed that migrants under all the housing typologies had access to LPG cylinders, including the mess rooms. However, given the sheer number of residents in the rooms and the number of meals to be prepared, the mess managers/cooks also had illegal gas connections running inside the premises. These gas cylinders are bought on the black market. The stoves with boiling food are placed in stairway areas, corridors and rooms, blocking exits in case of a fire. In the case of rented rooms, on account of the absence of any rental agreement or local documentation, majority of the groups captured under the study procured the cylinders from the black market. They paid as much as Rs. 950 - Rs.1200 per cylinder. The survey found that a family with 4-5 members used one cylinder for a period of one month.

Healthcare

Both survey data and FGDs paints a revealing picture of the manner in which healthcare for migrant workers is synonymous with private healthcare. An appalling 92 percent of the surveyed group reported that they use privately run facilities for healthcare – private hospitals, private clinics, Bengali doctors (locally used term for a quack), or directly approach chemists' shops. Again, when asked about their most recent treatment avenue, 64 percent reported that they had accessed private hospitals, Bengali doctors or medical store chemists.

Workers who participated in the FGD reported that they lose at least one day's work every month due to fever, cold or body ache. A total of 18 workers out of 150 self-reported accidents at the workplace in the last one year. It included cases of cuts and injuries, broken arms and legs while operating

the machines. 125 workers who participated in the survey self-reported that there have been no accidents in the last one year. This could be an under-estimation as the Pravasi Shramik Suraksha Manch receives and helps settle many cases of accidents at power looms, ~ 10 cases a month that also result in death in many cases. This could also point to the lack of awareness among workers with regard to the risks and hazards in the work environments they operate in).

Single migrants from Odisha's Ganjam district, sharing a room in Ved Road says "If there is some serious illness, we go back to the village. It gets very expensive in the city, neither do we know anyone in the hospitals here. Something which would cost around 1200 rupees here, will only cost us 500 rupees in the village. Also, we feel a lot better just as we reach home. Feels better the very minute one breathes in the village air."

Lalita who lives in Kosad Awas says, "I know that there could be multiple schemes and policies through which one can get cheap treatment at government hospitals. But I have no means to access them or get information about them. Even if somebody knows how to avail them, why would they pass on the information to us?" Her friend Geeta, also feels the same and added, "I am not sure of where the public hospital is. Also, there is always a queue. Sometimes the medicine they provide doesn't even work. In most cases, private clinics are better." Rahul and his friends from Odisha, who work in the power looms, when asked about healthcare facilities, said, "Most of us don't even know where the nearest government hospital is. Very often, the timing doesn't work for us. So, we end up going to the chemist or private clinic."

In the survey, when asked about awareness about the government provided health schemes such as Biju Swasthya scheme and Ayushmaan Bharat, 31 percent reported that they are aware of the schemes. Migrant workers from Ganjam sharing a room in Ved Road said, "Our families back in the village are linked to these schemes. Neither have we tried, nor do we know about how to avail them here in Surat."

Children of Migrant Workers

Education

The study attempted to capture the details of the children of migrant workers who live in the city. A total of 71 children (below 18 years of age) were recorded in the survey, of which 40 children were of school-going age (6-14 years). 30 percent of these children did not attend any kind of school. Also, 7 out of 71 children captured through the survey are working in trades such as stone sticking, *bhim pachhad* and roll polish.

FGDs with family migrants brought out concerns regarding the lack of government schools in the near vicinity. Migrant women workers living in Rang Nagar said that lack of documents act as the major hindrance in admitting children to government schools. Kasturi Behera, a migrant from Odisha, struggled to get her children admitted to a school in Surat. She arrived in the textile capital a few months ago. "The school authorities refused to admit my children to a Gujarati medium school as we are from Odisha. They told us that the children wouldn't be able to follow the medium of instruction. Now, we are sending them to a private school. We are struggling to pay the fees," said Behera. Women migrants from Maharashtra, who engaged in *dhaaga*-cutting work in Ved Road shared their experiences with children's education, and stated that they ended up sending their children to private schools as there aren't any Marathi government schools nearby. In several cases, we also observed that the school-going children were assisting their mother in completing the *dhaaga*-cutting work in the household.

In addition, the state-run Odiya medium schools have classes only up until Class 8 (as mandated by the Right to Education Act). This leaves the students with three options: (a.) to continue studying in a private school in Surat, (b.) to return to Odisha to complete their education, (c.) to drop out and join the labour force. Considering the economics involved, several girl students dropped out after completing their Class 8 and joined their mothers in undertaking unpaid and home-based work.

Anganwadis

The survey investigated if anganwadis are being accessed by migrant workers. It showed that 15 percent of children of family migrant workers who participated in the survey, have either attended or have availed services from the Anganwadis at some point. Women migrant workers said that Anganwadis never ask for any documents or proof like government schools, and therefore, availing services from Anganwadis has not been a problem. Although, women workers also reported that their children do not regularly attend the Anganwadis. Families in Kosad Awas and Triveni Society mentioned that Anganwadi workers also come to pick up their children in the morning.

Immunisation

The survey revealed that 14 percent of migrant children were not immunised at all. Interestingly, 24 percent of the surveyed group mentioned immunisation as the nature of public healthcare they have accessed in Surat. Women migrant workers from Triveni society and Kosad Awas H3 also commented that vaccination and polio drops drives are undertaken quite regularly. But ASHA workers' services are not commonly available in the area. Dr. Bhavesh, Medical Officer, Urban Health Centre added to this observation. He said, "ASHA workers are reluctant to go visit areas occupied by migrant workers, especially if majorly inhabited by single male migrants. This leads to the exclusion of family migrants and their children in these areas. Similarly, ANMs [Auxiliary Nurse Midwife] are only mandated to visit those areas where mainly families live; so, they also do not visit areas majorly occupied by just single male migrants. Again, migrant families in these areas are unable to access the services."[11]

Image 21: Invisible hands in the home-based textile industry. (Photo credit: Manish Shukla)

11   Medical Officer, Urban Health Centre, Katargam Zone, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, August 2019

Income and Remittance

Average Monthly Income	Number of Workers
Rs. 7,000 – Rs. 9,000	2
Rs. 9,000 – Rs.11,000	12
Rs. 11,000 – Rs. 13,000	26
Rs. 13,000 – Rs. 15,000	17
Rs. 15,000 – Rs. 17,000	55
Rs. 17,000 – Rs. 19,000	25
Rs. 19,000 – Rs. 21,000	10
Rs. 21,000 – Rs. 23,000	2
Rs. 23,000 – Rs. 25,000	1
Total	150

Table 15: Income brackets of migrant workers in power looms

A significant proportion of the survey participants, 36 percent were in the income bracket of Rs. 15,000 – Rs. 17,000 per month. While the family migrants do not regularly send money back to the village, single migrants working in power looms, who were captured in the survey, remitted 40 to 60 percent of their average monthly income. The survey also found that the frequency of visits back to the source villages were dependent on the distance and the income of the worker. Thus, workers from neighbouring states visited their villages twice or thrice every year. In the case of long-distance migrants, hailing from the state of Odisha, the workers visited their homes once every year or every alternate year. The remittance amount sent back home ranged from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 11,000 per month.

Single male migrants relied on two principal methods of remitting money back to the village. While a small group used formal banking systems, a more significant number of workers reached out to informal networks, such as local shopkeepers to send money home using online banking facilities. The shopkeepers in the locality of migrant workers' rooms charged them Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 for every 1,000 rupees transferred. Working hours and the lack of information about banking facilities compel the workers to resort to informal arrangements for remittances.

In the case of family migrants, the women workers' income, although undervalued, was used to run the house. There were cases where the women home-based workers worked for their husband's employer. Thus, they did not always access their incomes directly. Their monthly incomes ranged from Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 3,000 despite clocking in nearly six hours of wage work. The fact that it was undertaken in the 'home' also meant that they were not entitled to any benefits, from schemes where their identity as a worker needs to be established. In order to keep up with the daily work deadlines along with hours of unpaid work in the household, the women workers also sought the help of their children.

Image 22: Home-based women workers engage in dhaaga-cutting and stone sticking work when their husbands are at work in the power looms. (Picture credit: Manish Shukla)

Government Interface

Data shows that 98 percent of migrant workers surveyed have never had any interaction with politicians in Surat. The interaction remains negligible in the case of both family and single migrant workers. Not a single survey participant reported ever visiting a political party office, the power loom service centre (a central government body set up with the mandate to provide services, such as insurance to power loom workers), labour department, SMC urban community development office or SMC headquarters. A minuscule section of the sample (2-3 workers) reported that they have visited the SMC ward office, SMC zone office or SMC Nagarik Suvidha Kendra. It was also observed that 17 workers have accessed post offices in the city to send money to the villages.

When asked about any interaction with government bodies or political parties in the city, Manoj an Odiya migrant said, "We don't know anyone here, neither do they know us. We get back from work, have our meals, sleep and wake up to repeat the same the next day". Family migrant workers who participated in the FGDs said, "We have never been personally approached for votes. We do not have Voters' IDs. But have come across pamphlets or notices circulated during elections."

The survey also enquired about any emergencies the migrant workers have faced in the city. 42 percent reported that the floods (2006) and the earthquake (2001) had affected them and had led to health issues as well as loss of documents. Half of these affected workers stated that they had received food packets during this emergency. While 20 percent of the surveyed group claimed that they never received any assistance (material or financial) from the government, few workers stated that they had received financial support of Rs. 1,500.

Encounters with Police

Family migrants and single migrants who participated in the FGDs said that they have never had any experience of dealing with the police or having been mistreated by the police. The survey recorded 8 workers who had been to the police station to report cases of accident at workplace, salary dispute, stolen goods or having been caught in cases like street fight or drinking alcohol. Many workers reported that they have seen the police vehicle occasionally patrolling the areas where alcohol is known to be sold.

However, Ayodhya Prasad[12], a community leader disagreed. He migrated from Banaras 25 years ago as a worker. Currently, he owns a general provision store in Ved Road. "All the *hindiwallas* (Hindi speaking communities) are considered donkeys! Even police officials think so. They make the lives of the migrant workers difficult in the city. End of the month they file any case against the migrants to meet their targets." Umeshbhai, the Station Writer (officer in charge of recording case details and handing over to senior officers for redress) at Katargam Police Station in response to a question about the view of the police regarding migrants said, "They are mind-dead and enter into fights with each other over trivial issues. They are under the influence of substance abuse, they earn a lot of money and are not with their families, so they think they can do anything and get away with anything. The migrant workers are very mobile and therefore it is hard to keep track of their movement or activities."[13]

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12   Community leader and head of Uttar Bharatiya Udan Samiti, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

13   Umeshbhai, Station Writer, Katargam Police Station, Surat, interview with research team, October 2019

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Challenges in Procuring City-based Documents

Out of the total survey participants, 23 percent of the migrant workers held Voters' ID and 31 percent held Aadhar cards from Surat. The survey also revealed that no migrant worker had procured any kind of written rent agreement in Surat. In the case of bank documents, 11 percent of the family migrant group and 10 percent of the single migrant workers reported that they hold bank accounts and related bank documents in Surat. Put together, only 21 percent of the group captured in the survey holds bank documents in the city. No migrant worker in the surveyed group reported to be holding a ration card in Surat. A major challenge faced by the migrant community in procuring city documents is that they do not hold any documents (rent agreement, electricity bill) to provide proof of address.

FGD participants commented that getting the Aadhar card at their Surat address is way easier than getting registered for ration card or Voters' ID. Family migrants feel that they are most affected and have lost out on the benefits available in their villages as well as the city. They also stated that holding a Voters' ID with a Surat address did not help much with procuring a ration card.

Ayodhya Prasad, a community leader working with migrant workers, said, "Migrant workers remain the most invisible to authority when it comes to making documents. If they are unable to make the required documents, none of the much-proclaimed schemes will ever benefit them. Nobody has documents in the city, nor voting rights. They have no power.[14]" Anilbhai who is the Municipal Corporator of Ved

Road said, "Barely 30 percent of the group have any form of documentation. You can make your Aadhar card in the city, but it is not possible to make ration cards. Migrants do approach me for ration cards, but it is usually challenging because the landlord doesn't provide any proof of residence in the first place. They are all mostly informal, oral arrangements."[15]

Few migrant workers had a different opinion about holding documents in the city. Chitra, who migrated with her family, and lives in Amroli said, "If I make a ration card here, then the one back in the village will get cancelled. End of the day, the one in the village is more important, right? If something goes wrong, I will obviously go back to the village. The card is more practical in village. Also, people will help each other in the village. Nobody helps us here." Thirty-two-year-old Pavitra Behra is a home-based worker and echoed Chitra's claim. She said, "If the ration card is from the village, it is of no use here. And if it is made in the city, it is not valid in the village. We are in Surat to work and earn some money; here in the city today, somewhere else tomorrow. The card is neither flexible nor mobile like our lives."

Even the conversations emerging out of the FGDs demonstrated that the migrant workers had distinct views about procuring ration cards or bank documents in the city. While few are eager to get the documents made; to many workers, the city is all about the present and the earnings it offers. There is longing in their words for returning to and settling in their villages. To them, the future is about going back to the comfort of their village and therefore, it makes more sense to not let go of their 'source' documents. Therefore, a major challenge with respect to procuring documents in Surat is that it will require giving up village documents.

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14   Community leader and head of Uttar Bharatiya Udan Samiti, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

15   Corporator, Ved Road, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

A Journey towards Permanent Residence in the City

In order to obtain a deeper understanding of the lives of the migrant workers in the city, we also conducted surveys with 10 families who at a point of time were circular migrants. They had all once come to the city as single male migrants to work in the power loom industry, and later managed to bring their families and establish a permanent home here. In addition to the 10 surveyed families, we also undertook two FGDs with settled groups in Ved Road and Kosad H3. Narratives revealed that a majority of the settled migrants had switched jobs. They were currently managing their own *kirana* shops, working in the diamond polishing and transport industries. The women, however, continued to work as home-based workers in the textile industry.

Evidence based on the survey showed that 7 male workers amongst the 10 have been in Surat for more than 26 years. The same 7 families claimed that they held the Voters' ID, Aadhar card and bank documents in Surat. While all 10 families procured Aadhar cards in the city, only two families had a ration card in the city.

All these families reported that they currently own a house in the city (Families in Kosad Awas are still paying their monthly instalment of Rs. 400). The fact that these families own houses in Kosad Awas H3 and H4, under the provisions of PMAY reveals that some families have been able to engage in a relatively more successful claim making process. They migrated from Maharashtra (4 families), Odisha (2 families), Uttar Pradesh (3 families) and Madhya Pradesh (1 family). Four out of the 10 families belonged to the ST community, 3 families were from General category, 2 each from the SC community and the OBC group.

When we asked about what it feels like to own a house in the city, the families shared that they are all still paying a monthly instalment of Rs. 400 since 2011. They do not yet have ownership documents of the house. Laxmiben lived in Dharti Nagar before moving to Kosad and is now working at the anganwadi in the locality. She is fluent in Gujarati and said, "Now speaking Gujarati has become a habit, it doesn't feel strange anymore." However, other women in the group refused to agree with her and felt that speaking in their mother tongue, Odiya is better.

Women who participated in the FGD said that, despite paying the instalments and having both Aadhar and Voters' ID, they are not able to procure ration cards. "Whenever we go to the offices, they ask for some document or the other to prove ownership; receipt of the instalment is not always accepted. Maybe we will have to wait until we complete the instalments."

While sanitation, healthcare, sewage, drinking water and garbage collection facilities available to the settled group remains similar to that available to the family migrant community (given the fact that the locations of rented living spaces of family migrants are not very different), FGDs conducted with the settled family groups, revealed that they are more articulate about how access to basic facilities such as water supply, sewage and road maintenance should improve. Women opined that there is a need to improve access to different mediums of government schools. They said they were forced to send their kids to private schools and Gujarati schools, due to the absence of Marathi and Odiya government schools in the near vicinity. The groups were also better informed about the local representatives of their locality ∎

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Chapter V

Circularity, Temporary Claim Making and Mobile Citizenship: Unpacking the Evidence

The Problematic Posed by the Evidence: The Current Status of Circular Migrant Workers in the City

Broadly, across housing typologies and occupational categories, circular migrant workers fall through the cracks of employer and state subsidised provisioning and welfare. Employers and contractors, while legally mandated to provide adequate facilities to migrants working and/or living on the worksite, relinquish these requirements because of a lack of state regulation. Further, as argued in section II, the neoliberal city has been deliberately designed (through various kinds of incentives to industry, weakening of labour regulations, etc) to enable them to relinquish their responsibilities towards labour. Migrant workers and their families are not able to interface directly with the state to access basic facilities, either because of a lack of information, or because such facilities are not designed with migrant workers in mind (urban health centre timings, government housing, etc.), and very often because they self-select out of interfacing with the state at their destinations due to fear of harassment. While semi-permanent migrants and settled urban poor have historically been able to make some demands from the state through various mechanisms, as mentioned in section II, circular migrants can invoke neither their citizenship nor labour rights to access basic public provisioning from the state and industry respectively.

With the state and employers failing to guarantee their basic needs, circular migrant workers rely on a complex set of informal networks to ensure access to housing, water, sanitation, food, and healthcare. The actors comprising these networks might themselves be marginal and constitute "urban poor" groups, as described in the sections above. They include landlords in unregulated housing markets, local shopkeepers, residents and security guards in local housing societies, petty contractors, caretakers of public toilets, etc. Most of these actors are location specific and operate either by choice or chance in "high migration hotspots" – landlords control rental markets in particular areas, security guards in residential buildings interface with migrant workers living in the neighbourhood, among other examples. Many of these actors also *use* the circular migrants' informality to further their own livelihoods – landlords in slum settlements who rent out rooms to migrants often compel migrants to buy groceries from shops run by them, almost always at a premium. Each such location thus constitutes a larger informal economy rooted in unregulated relationships of simultaneous patronage and exploitation between workers and local actors.

The informal nature of these networks, coupled with the larger political economy they are embedded in, has two consequences. First, the demand for most services, especially housing, is so high that migrants give up any negotiating power with their relatively stronger mediators. For instance, migrant workers are unable to negotiate for any kind of written rent agreement or electricity receipts, despite renting rooms from the same landlord for years; even though this has severe consequences on their ability to access basic public services in the city. Several narratives above demonstrated how workers refrain from raising questions about absent and insufficient provisioning, as this might mean forfeiting access to housing or work, and severely weaken the possibility of using that network in the future. As a result, securing and maintaining access often depends on an unquestioning behaviour – whether this is performed out of resourcefulness or internalised is another matter altogether. Broadly, however, this means that facilities remain inadequate over long periods of time and do not meet basic standards of quality and consistency.

Rather, access to facilities is arbitrary, which in itself takes different forms. Access might need to be sought from different sources each day: women living in the open depend on a combination of private buildings, water tankers and public stand posts every day for water, while women on worksites are compelled to defecate in the open if their sanitation facilities are clogged and unusable after 9am. The cost of access can change based on no prior information or logic, including through abrupt and non-negotiable rent hikes and additional charges for electricity consumption. Several narratives from power loom workers in Surat who attempt to rent a space in mess rooms corroborate this arbitrariness. In some cases, certain rules might apply to one group but not to another based on demographic profile and circumstances: in Durganagar in Ahmedabad, a local *rabari* illegally charges Rs. 500 per month from each family in a group of Waghri-speaking Adivasis who arrived there a month before our interview; however, he does not demand a payment from the Gujarati-speaking Adivasi families who have been living on the same settlement for over 20 years. Some amount of arbitrariness comes from the strength of the informal relationship between circular migrants and their networks, as seen in cases when contractors might more readily connect workers with healthcare if they have *pehchaan* or a strong relationship of trust with them, while other contractors might not do this for relatively newer recruits, regardless of the severity of the illness. As such, the arbitrariness of access to basic facilities is determined by the nature of the informal network, local politics and power, and the political and economic structures that they are symptoms of.

In addition to being inadequate and arbitrary, access also comes with high physical, mental and economic costs. As described in the narratives from Ahmedabad above, these costs disproportionately affect SC and ST communities, who already work in the most precarious conditions and face limited upward social and economic mobility. This contrasts with upper caste groups, as demonstrated by the narratives of the surveyed OBC and General caste headloaders and domestic workers. Their relatively stronger social networks and upward mobility has enabled them to invest in additional income sources and achieve relatively consistent access to basic services.

Significantly, this is in contrast with the experiences of power loom workers in Surat, who despite earning a higher disposable income and hailing from OBC communities are still trapped in deplorable living conditions, with highly sub-optimal access to facilities such as dignified housing or sanitation. Robust social networks that have been formed due to the distinct historicity and scale of this migration stream both aids the process of migration and consequently, access to various services in the destination; as well as works to reproduce existing source based caste hierarchies in cities. For instance, migrant labour scouting, selection, recruitment and absorption into the power loom and textile markets of Surat is a multi-staged process that begins amid chronic poverty and distress in the source villages. At the destination, it is these networks which often enable the workers to find work in the looms and a room to live in. However, in certain cases, room managers hailing from the same caste or region, lay out clear demarcations on who can find a place to live. Thus existing ethnic identities, mediated by social networks have a significant bearing on the experiences of migrants at the destination.

Exploring the gender dimension of the costs of access, it is clear that these costs are also largely borne by women, who work longer and harder to sustain their households and subsidise the economy through the unpaid, care work that they perform to make up for the lack of state or employer provided facilities or living wages (Jayaram, Jain and Sugathan, 2019). While in Ahmedabad, most women surveyed were engaged in precarious work in the construction sector; in Surat, a large number of migrant women are engaged in home-based work as part of the textile industry, which is another prominent example of how fragmented, invisible work massively subsidises capital. Rented family rooms double up as working spaces, with women bearing costs associated with electricity charges, rent and safety of raw materials, besides unpaid domestic labour within the household, sometimes also extending to care work for their neighbourhood (as evidenced by the narratives of women who undertake the cleaning of communal toilets in the floors where they live). Thus, the costs of access and survival in the city are heavily shaped by specific identities such as caste and gender, with the vulnerabilities faced by marginalised groups being reproduced even on these fronts.

The current dual paradigm of capitalist growth and neoliberal urbanism, whereby circular migrant workers cannot access subsidised goods and services, but rather are compelled to purchase the bare minimum to sustain themselves and their families, suggests that in the context of the city, they are consumers rather than citizens. Rather than making demands of the state and the employer through legal recourse or mobilisations, everyday access to housing, water, food, sanitation and healthcare is largely transactional, where costs are measured and paid in the various ways described in their narratives. Even in cases where the migrant identities (such as in the case of Odiya workers in Surat) have formed the basis of political mobilisation leading to their recognition as a political constituency – at times of elections and protests (both at source and destination) – their demands and vulnerabilities as labouring lives have remained invisible, both in the context of political decision-making as well as in their daily struggles to access public services (Breman, 1993).

Image 23: The costs of arbitrary access to public provisioning are disproportionately borne by women, who, in addition to performing hazardous jobs at construction and factory sites, must also perform care work for their families (Photo credit: Jagjit Singzh)

Image 24: Home-based women workers subsidies capital in the textile industry of Surat. (Picture Credit: Manish Shukla)

Moreover, this paradigm has consequences for the children of migrant workers. Circular migrant families must spend exorbitant amounts on basic facilities, even when they save on rent by living onsite or in the open, leaving little to invest in their children. In the case of family migrants, children often accompany their parents, both to the city and every day to the worksite; in some cases they work alongside their mothers who are engaged in home-based work. As a result, they are unable to consistently attend schools and *anganwadis* either in their villages or in the city. According to Aajeevika Bureau (2014), some children migrate as early as 14-15 years old, as their parents are unable to work after 35-40 years due to poor work and living conditions having taken a toll on their health. Narratives from Surat demonstrate how the absence of public education beyond Grade 8 through Odiya medium schools in Surat has precipitated the premature entry of these adolescent children into the informal labour force.

Neither the state nor the employer has any direct provisioning for childcare or primary education that accounts for circular migration. The long-term consequence of these systems is that migrant children end up in the same hazardous, low paying industries, providing another generation of cheap and flexible labour to industry in similar conditions as their parents, who can no longer keep up with industry's productivity demands or migrate due to deteriorating health. Taken together, the current lack of state and employer provisioning, in addition to bringing exorbitant costs to migrant households and workers' bodies, results in intergenerational transfer of poverty within these families.

Why it Matters that these are Migrant Workers

The problematic set up by the evidence indicates the prevalence informal networks in the absence of state and employer subsidy and provisioning, the emergence of workers as consumers of arbitrarily available provisioning rather than as citizens with rights to this access, and an intergenerational transfer of poverty. In this context, it is important to highlight specifically that these are *migrant* households, facing particular vulnerabilities because of this status. This is not to measure their exclusion against that of "local" urban poor populations, but rather to emphasise that their exclusion is informed by, among other identifiers, their status as having migrated to Ahmedabad or Surat from outside the state (and in some cases, from within the state but outside the city).

This is highlighted in Section VI, which broadly makes the argument that the state – both the formal state (through the design of domicile-based policies and programs for the poor) as well as the informal state (through the police, municipal corporations, and other officials' imaginations of and attitudes towards migrants) – does not always view circular migrants as legitimate actors who can make claims to public provisioning in the city. In the case of the former, the section highlights the "sedentary bias" in policymaking, which necessitates city-level domicility to access citizenship rights and benefits. In the case of the latter, it underlines the deep stigma and hostility from the state's actors on the ground towards migrant workers, whom they view as "outsiders" to the city because of their ethnic,

regional, linguistic, caste, and class identities. Both these not only delegitimise migrant workers' claims, but also criminalise the informal processes by which they currently access basic provisioning.

Conceptualising Circular Migrants' Relationship to the City and Claims to Public Provisioning

If current models of citizenship based on permanent residence and domicility, and belonging based on ethnic and linguistic identity, exclude circular migrants, how can we imagine their relationship with the city and their claim making processes to access basic facilities?

First, it is important to recall migrant families' own language during interviews to describe their relationship with the city. A large number of migrants, particularly Adivasis, described the city as a site to maximise savings to be invested in the village. These investments might be in infrastructure such as housing and agriculture, in their families, in community events, or in historical socio-cultural practices, participation in which is linked to their social standing in the village. Moreover, narratives during interviews and group discussions suggested that circular migrants, especially SC and ST workers, have faced pervasive stigma from the state as outsiders to the city, and recognise that in the current labour market in a hostile city, their upward economic and social mobility is limited compared to that in the village. In addition, circular migrants have greater mobilisation and negotiating power with their *panchayats*, allowing them to demand improved conditions in the village. Broadly, circular migrants' relationship with the city is determined by a combination of their deep links to village life as well as a self-selection out of settling in the city permanently by anticipating the violent lived experiences that this would entail. As a result, circular migrants, particularly SC and ST communities, are unlikely to make *permanent* claims to the city.

It is this logic that underpins migrant workers' access to basic facilities (driven by absent state and employer subsidy or direct provisioning), as seen in the evidence presented. Adivasi families live in the open to save on rent and to recreate their rural community setup. When the only sanitation facility available in certain areas is a pay and use toilet that costs up to Rs. 300 per month, migrant workers defecate in the open, even at the risk of being pelted with stones or harassed by authorities. SC migrant workers continue to live near the dumping grounds of large chemical industries to remain attached to their social networks, which help them get jobs more easily in an unfamiliar city. Rather than recognising these as legitimate coping strategies and resourcefulness in the face of structural violence, the state criminalises such informality through its rhetoric and actions, including the desire to create "open defecation-free zones" and by launching beautification projects, among others.

To move forward, policy must recognise that these strategies are informed by migrants' own logics, processes and relationships that they have developed in the city. A citizenship consistent with their temporary and dynamic presence in the city is *mobile citizenship*. Permanent residence or domicility cannot be the basis for any policy aimed at solving the issue of access to basic facilities for circular migrants, and implementing agencies must be sensitised to the linguistic, ethnic and regional diversity of these groups. Their claims over housing, water, sanitation, food, and health (and thereby to their citizenship) must be rooted in their participation in and subsidising of the city's industry, rather than in the current citizenship paradigm of "voting" or "taxpaying residency." In other words, the geographical locus of citizenship cannot be limited to the areas where one makes permanent claims. Moreover, the state must recognise that circular migrants constitute a heterogeneous group, and that singular, "city-wide" policies risk homogenising them and simplifying the diverse mechanisms by which they access provisioning.

The emphasis on mobile citizenship rooted in circular migrants' temporary claim making processes does not seek to foreclose their abilities or ignore their aspirations to make semi-permanent or permanent claims to the city and its public provisioning. Rather, we argue that the current conceptualisation of domicile-based urban citizenship must be rethought to accommodate the multilocality and flexible mobility between the village and the city that is central to circular migrants' logics of survival. In other words, just as permanent claims to housing, water, sanitation, etc. in the city are seen as legitimate; temporary claims to provisioning must also be recognised as consistent with urban citizenship. As such, this framework both legitimises the logics of circular migrants who retain deep links to their villages, as well as accommodates those who wish to invest in semi-permanent or permanent ties to the city.

The next section further unpacks these questions of mobile citizenship and temporary claim making, and argues that rather than being inclusive of circular migrants, the state is moving in the opposite direction: through non-participatory urban governance, persistent sedentary biases in policy, and the shift of power from local to regional and national governing bodies ∎

Chapter VI

Critical Examination of the State's Policy Responses

Development policies in India, while being critiqued as failing to provide socio-economic rights to a large section of urban poor, have specific impacts on communities of labour migrants. Migrant communities and their unique needs seldom find a place in the imagination of the neoliberal city, founded on the principles of market-led growth and capitalistic extraction. Their struggles to legitimise their presence in cities are exacerbated by the systematic biases (based on ethnic federalism and sedentary policies) in policy design and programme implementation on the ground.

Through this section, we attempt to analyse prominent national and state (Gujarat) level policies that are likely to have a bearing on the work and lives of migrant workers in cities. These include programmes such as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) that set the national policy direction on urban development, besides state policies on the same, such as the Mukhya Mantri GRUH Yojana (MMGY), Gujarat Slum Rehabilitation Policy and the Gujarat Affordable Housing Policy. Additionally, key policies in other important domains such as National Health Mission (NHM), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the Integrated Women and Child Development Scheme (ICDS) have also been also analysed to evaluate policy positions on health, sanitation, food security and early childhood development. Lastly, other relevant Acts pertaining to industrial development and labour, such as the Gujarat Industrial Development Act (1962), Factories Act (1948) and the Shops and Establishments Act (2019), were examined to understand the provisions they entail with respect to dignified accommodation and basic facilities for the workforce, a large majority of whom are migrants.

The primary purpose of this exercise was to locate the experiences of the migrant worker within these policies to examine the extent to which their needs have been recognised and provided for. These have been juxtaposed with evidence from interviews with various urban government functionaries in Ahmedabad and Surat, including at the AMC, SMC, AUDA; several officials in the Health and ICDS departments, as well as Corporators (AMC and SMC) and Deputy Mayor (AMC) to explore their imagination with respect to the presence of circular migrants in cities and to analyse experiences of the implementation of the above policies in relation to the migrants' multi-dimensional needs and livelihood strategies.

Politics around Enumeration Constrains Provisioning and Eligibility

The Census forms the basis for many significant decisions related to provisioning of basic urban services. Several "supply" side decisions such as budgeting and staffing across various government departments at the city level are made on the basis of Census data relating to population projections and densities in different zones. However, it has been a long-standing critique that migrants and their settlements are systematically left out of all national level enumeration processes (Srivastava, 2012), including the Census and the NSSO. Due to definitional issues related to their last place of residence, the current format of the Census is ill-equipped to enumerate migrant communities, particularly those that are seasonal in nature. Besides, the Census being a stock exercise, is unable to account for the dynamic migration flows that we see today in India's informal workforce, a transient population that experiences persistent instability in their work and living

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arrangements. They experience these shocks in short time-frames, which renders a decennial exercise like the Census completely inadequate – even their presence in the cities is not accounted for, let alone the volatility they face during their daily existence. Even at the city level, migrant settlements are at the receiving end of discriminatory politics due to which a large majority of them are unrecognised in city-based enumeration exercises, which again deprives them of access to services by a huge margin (Desai, 2017).

Our interviews with health officials at the AMC[1] suggested that apart from the Census, there are no surveys or enumeration efforts that take place on a periodic basis, which means that decision-making on the deployment of fiscal and human resources in this important domain does not speak to the changing needs of the city demographic[2]. This critique also applies to policies in other domains, such as urban infrastructure development. For instance, the policy document for AMRUT (AMRUT Mission Statement and Guidelines, 2015) recommends that decisions related to the establishment of water and sewerage lines throughout the city, the key thrust of this policy, be based on Census data, which would mean that areas with larger concentration of migrants – who are generally left out of the enumeration process – would not get adequately serviced through this scheme.

On the "demand" side, however, some of the more recent urban development programmes are aiming to make a departure from this practice of drawing from the Census to determine eligibility. For instance, the policy documents of the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY) stipulate that they draw from the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) to ascertain eligibility and access (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Urban Livelihoods Mission, 2015; www.pmjay.gov.in).

Significantly, the SECC makes an attempt to cover a range of occupations in the informal sector that a large majority of the circular migrant workforce are employed in. NULM also seems to be using a broad-based definition to enumerate the homeless population – to include anyone who is living on pavements, under bridges and on construction sites – a clause that seems at least partially inclusive of the different living arrangements adopted by migrant communities. Though the solution in the policies to address homelessness is to simply move them to a homeless shelter, nonetheless the recognition of various forms of housing typologies that informal migrants take up in cities is a useful first step. However, data quality and reliability of the SECC has come under the scanner in a major way (Mohan, 2015) and other details such as the successive rounds and frequency are presently unclear.

Thus, overall, it appears the politics around enumeration and recognition has severe implications on the outreach and availability of public services in migrant-dense clusters, with their needs getting systematically excluded from the decision-making frameworks of urban governance.

Anoop Sathyan

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1   Medical Officer, AMC, interview with the research team, Ahmedabad, September 2018

2   Community Health Superintendent, Chandlodia, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2018

Sedentary Bias in Urban Policy Design and Implementation

Most urban development programmes are plagued with a strong "sedentary bias" – where every individual has to prove their domicile status in the city to be eligible for a wide range of urban public services and entitlements. In a scenario where permanence of residence becomes a primary determinant of access, migrant communities get excluded from the very scope of such services. This has long-standing implications on their access to entitlements such as housing, food security, nutrition, healthcare, education and early childcare, most of which do not offer portability.

Our review of government policies and interviews with government functionaries suggests that these issues persist at the levels of both policy design as well as implementation. This bias is especially pronounced in urban housing schemes that focus on In-situ Slum Redevelopment, where migrant settlements would not be chosen for slum redevelopment because they are not recognised settlements. But even where migrants are living in recognised settlements, residents of the settlement need to produce proof of having resided in that settlement (formal or informal), before a specific cut-off date (1-12-2010, as per the Gujarat Slum Rehabilitation Policy, 2013). This becomes very challenging for migrants, thus constraining their ability to access state sponsored housing programmes in cities.[3] In most cases, migrants are easily excluded from such programmes because they are tenants and not owners, due to which they fall outside the very definitional purview of beneficiaries for such schemes.[4]

This discrimination also extends to various other basic amenities such as individual water connections and a subsidy for individual toilet construction, which are based on (informal) house ownership and proof of domicile in the city and in the settlement itself. Ironically, even temporary facilities such as water tankers are only available to those who already have water connections – as they are imagined as a solution to address temporary water scarcity or other technical issues.[5] Thus, these schemes invariably end up discriminating against the newer settlers to the city, who tend to be more mobile and consequently more vulnerable, and in dire need of reliable housing options and access to other basic amenities.

Sedentary bias also extends to measures for affirmative action that are stipulated within the housing schemes. For schemes other than In-Situ Slum Redevelopment within PMAY (a national programme), it is possible for citizens from other states to apply, however they face an additional layer of discrimination, which is that the reservation for SC and ST communities within the programme is based on a caste list declared by the state of Gujarat. As a result, inter-state migrants, though overwhelmingly from SC and ST communities are sometimes not able to avail of this reservation quota, since they may not be classified as "eligible for reservation" within the Gujarat state-specific list.[6]

This is unfortunately true, even for a relatively progressive policy document like the NULM, where except for access to homeless shelters, domicile within the state needs to be proved to avail welfare benefits.[7] For accessing skill trainings under NULM, not only is it necessary to prove state domicile, proof of residing in an urban area within the state is mandatory for eligibility.

In some domains, such as primary health and early childcare, differential levels of access are granted based on the domicile status. For instance, access to primary healthcare facilities offered by Urban Health Centres and Community Health Centres are free for all citizens but access to welfare schemes implemented by these centres can only be accessed by those who have at least one domicile document proving their permanent residential status in Ahmedabad.[8] The domicile condition applies even to subsidised tertiary care in specialised government medical institutes, such as the Surat Municipal Institute of Medical Education and Research (SMIMER)[9]. Anyone who wishes to avail free tertiary care treatment at SMIMER needs to have spent 5 years in Gujarat – this has to be proved through a ration card or a certificate from the Mamlatdar, which is usually based on a rent agreement or an electricity bill, documents which most migrants do not have access to.

Similarly, while every woman (and her child) are entitled to the Mamta card (used to track linkage with maternal and child health services) and the immunisation services that are guaranteed with it, many linked entitlements such as conditional cash transfers through the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana are granted only to those women with district domicile, who can produce documents such as Aadhar card, Ration card and bank account details to prove this.[10] Another example is that of the take-home ration programme run by Anganwadis to combat malnutrition among adolescent girls, in which benefits can only be accessed by those with domicile certificates.[11] This pattern is repeated across a whole host of welfare schemes, cash transfers and incentives for mothers and young children, thus posing serious implications for the intergenerational transfer of poverty, malnutrition and ill-health.

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3   Additional City Engineer and Head of Housing Project, the agency that implements the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna within the AMC, interview with the research team, Ahmedabad, August 2018

4   Ibid.

5   Additional City Engineer, South West Zone, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2018

6   Ibid.

7   Community Organizer, Urban Community Development Department, AMC, interview with the research team, Ahmedabad, September 2018

8   Community Health Superintendent, Chandlodia, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2018

9   Medical Officer, Katargam Zone, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, August 2019

10   Project Officer, ICDS Ahmedabad, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, September 2018

11   Ibid.

On similar lines, provisions in the National Food Security Act (The National Food Security Act, 2013) also stipulate that eligibility for PDS entitlements needs to be decided on the basis of inclusion in Antyodaya Anna Yojana. In urban areas, the identification of beneficiaries for this scheme is supposed to be drawn by the Chief Executive of Urban Local Bodies, and involves the furnishing of domicile documents, a process that completely curtails migrants' access to food-related entitlements.

Therefore, migrants, especially the ones that are more seasonal and struggling to gain a toehold in the city are systematically at the receiving end of a biased policy design that has completely failed to account for the mobility that is a persistent feature of India's informal workforce today, thus leaving millions of Indian citizens out of the fold of critical public services.

Priced out by Income Criteria

Over and above the 'sedentary bias', the high levels of income criteria set by the national level programmes are increasingly excluding the most marginalised among the urban poor, not to mention the vulnerable migrant workers, who are barely able to make ends meet with the sub-optimal incomes they earn from their informal, precarious work arrangements. For instance, under the Affordable Housing Scheme of PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Scheme Guidelines, 2016), the beneficiary has to bear 50 per cent of the costs to secure ownership of the housing units, which translates to almost Rs. 3,00,000/- for even the cheapest housing units, which cost around Rs. 6,00,000.[12] This applies to the Credit Linked

Subsidy Scheme (of the PMAY) as well, where the high cap of beneficiary contribution eventually ends up completely excluding vulnerable migrant communities.[13]

While the annual income ceiling for determining eligibility for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) as part of the MMGY has been set at Rs. 1,00,000 in the policy documents (Gujarat Affordable Housing Policy, 2014), confusion abounds on the ground as applicants have accessed forms that state the income ceiling as Rs. 3,00,000 (see Image 25). Given that the contribution capacity for a household earning Rs.1,00,000 is vastly lower than that of a household earning Rs. 3,00,000, a high proportion of mandated beneficiary contribution (50 per cent) ends up having a huge exclusionary effect on poor migrant households in terms of access to housing programmes in cities.

Static Planning versus Dynamic Urban Growth and Labour Flows

The process of urban planning is carried out through a structured process known as the Town Planning Scheme (TPS) – this works in conjunction with the Development Plans (DPs), which are long-term, decennial plans that identify growth areas and plan city-level infrastructure (Mahadevia et al., 2018). Prepared by the Urban Development Authorities (such as the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority, AUDA and the Surat Urban Development Authority, SUDA) and formulated for a ten-year period, these are by nature, static and fail to factor in or provide for the large magnitude of change that cities such as Ahmedabad and Surat are likely to undergo in ten years. For instance, the last version of the Ahmedabad Development

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યોજનાની વિગતો તથા શરતો

(૧) અરજદારે અરજી ફોર્મ સાથે ડીપોઝીટની રકમ રૂ.૭,૫૦૦/- (રૂપીયા સાત હજાર પાંચસો પૂરા) ભરવાના રહેશે.

(૨) મકાનની કુલ કિંમતના ઓછામાં ઓછા ૨૦% રકમ (અરજી સાથે ભરપાઈ કરેલ ડીપોઝીટ બાદ કરતાં બાકીની રકમ "ડ્રો"માં સફળ થયા બાદ અમ.મ્યુનિ.કોર્પોરેશન જણાવે ત્યારે અરજદારે ત્રણ માસમાં અચૂકપણે ભરવાની રહેશે. ત્યારબાદ બાકી રહેતી ૮૦% રકમમાં એક સરખા દસ(૧૦)હપ્તા(અંદાજે એક વર્ષમાં તમામ ૮૦% રકમ જમા થાય તે રીતે) સમયાંતરે અમ.મ્યુનિ.કોર્પોરેશનમાં જમા કરાવવાના રહેશે. તે ઉપરાંત છેલ્લા હપ્તા સાથે મેન્ટેનન્સ ડીપોઝીટ તથા અન્ય ચાર્જીસ પણ ભરપાઈ કરવાના રહેશે.

(૩) આવાસ યોજનાનું બાંધકામ પૂર્ણ થયા બાદ મકાનની નક્કી થયેલ પૂરેપૂરી કિંમત ભરપાઈ કરવાની રહેશે. ત્યારબાદ જ દસ્તાવેજી પ્રક્રિયા પૂર્ણ થયેથી અરજદારને તેમને ફાળવવામાં આવેલ મકાનનો કબજો સોંપવામાં આવશે.

(૪) કુટુંબના તમામ સભ્યોની મળીને કુટુંબની કુલ વાર્ષિક આવક રૂ.૩,૦૦,૦૦૦/-થી વધુ હોવી જોઈએ નહિ. આ યોજના માટે જયાં જયાં કુટુંબનો ઉલ્લેખ કરાયેલ છે ત્યાં કુટુંબ એટલે પોતે,પોતાની પત્ની/પતિ,પોતાનાં સગીર બાળકો તથા પોતાનાં આશ્રિત.

(૫) અરજી પત્રક ઉપર ફોટો સ્ટેપલ કરવો નહી. ફોટો માત્ર ગુંદર કે તેવા એડહેસીવ મટીરીયલથી વ્યવસ્થિત રીતે ચોંટાડેલ હોવો જોઈએ.

(૬) વિનિયમો મુજબ આરક્ષિત કેટેગરી માટે મકાનો ફાળવવા નીચે મુજબ આરક્ષણ ફાળવવામાં આવેલ છે. કેટેગરી અંગેનું પ્રમાણપત્ર અમ. મ્યુનિ. કોર્પોરેશનમાં મંગાવે ત્યારે મૂળ સ્વરૂપે (અસલ) રજૂ કરવાનું રહેશે.

Image 25: Brochure of the housing scheme for Economically Weaker Sections under the Mukhya Mantri Gruh Yojana – section listing details and conditions mandates an annual household income not exceeding Rs.3,00,000/- downloaded from www.ahmedabadcity.gov.in in 2018

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12   Additional City Engineer and Head of Housing Project, the agency that implements the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna within the AMC, interview with the research team, Ahmedabad, August 2018

13   Ibid.

Plan was formulated in 2002 and the next plan is slated for 2021 (AUDA, 2014), leaving a gap of almost 20 years in the development planning of one of the most rapidly growing cities in the country and in the world.

This also means that there is absolutely no feedback mechanism within the planning process to take into account migration flows into the city and the spatial distribution of various migrant settlements throughout the urban canvas. Even the population projections that the plans are based on, do not contain estimates of in-migration, despite Ahmedabad and Surat being two of the biggest economic centres and labour market destinations in the country.

Adhvaryu (2011) notes that, "Both commercial and industrial areas in the Ahmedabad Urban Complex (AUC), which house most of the jobs, have no reference to any trends in the patterns of change in the various industry sectors. None of the DP reports mention which industry sectors are growing or declining." He further states, "Macro level plans that contain estimations of population and its distribution do not contain any reference to the number of jobs and location of employment. Clearly, the distribution of population within a city is largely dependent on the growth and distribution of jobs in the future. As such, development within city-regions does not necessarily follow trends, as trends could radically change on account of external stimuli like state/regional economic policy. Thus, spatial planning based on population projections and average population densities in specific zones is seriously questionable."[14]

There is also very little imagination or autonomy at the city level to account for sudden changes or influx owing to state and market processes. The technical expertise that the city plans are drawn from remains largely restricted to the land-use planning and engineering domains, with little or no discussion of wider economic phenomena such as employment, informality and labour migration that underpin the process of infrastructural and industrial growth. AUDA officials admitted that housing facilities for workers do not really feature in their imagination while they undertake development of the urban peripheries.[15] It is ironic that while a large majority of the actual implementation of these plans are carried out by the labour force that is predominantly migrant, the needs of this community do not get reflected in them. These processes thus remain distant from the lived experiences of marginalised communities and their needs, actively excluding large numbers of people, places, activities and practices that are an integral part of the city (Kamath and Joseph, 2015).

Limited Autonomy and Budgetary Powers for Urban Local Bodies

The urbanisation process in India has been governed by the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, that envisaged decentralisation of power to the Urban Local Bodies with a view to enable them to function as effective democratic units of self-government. Through this Amendment, the urban municipal institutions of self-government have been endowed with the authority to formulate and implement schemes on a variety of subjects ranging from economic development to social justice, facilitated by direct election to municipal bodies and power to raise their own revenue, subject to the stipulations of the State Finance Commission.

However, a wide range of studies on this subject suggest that the provisions of this Act have largely been ignored in practice (Vaddiraju, 2016). Mahadevia et al. (2018) point out, "The

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14   Ibid.

15   Deputy Town Planner, AUDA, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2019
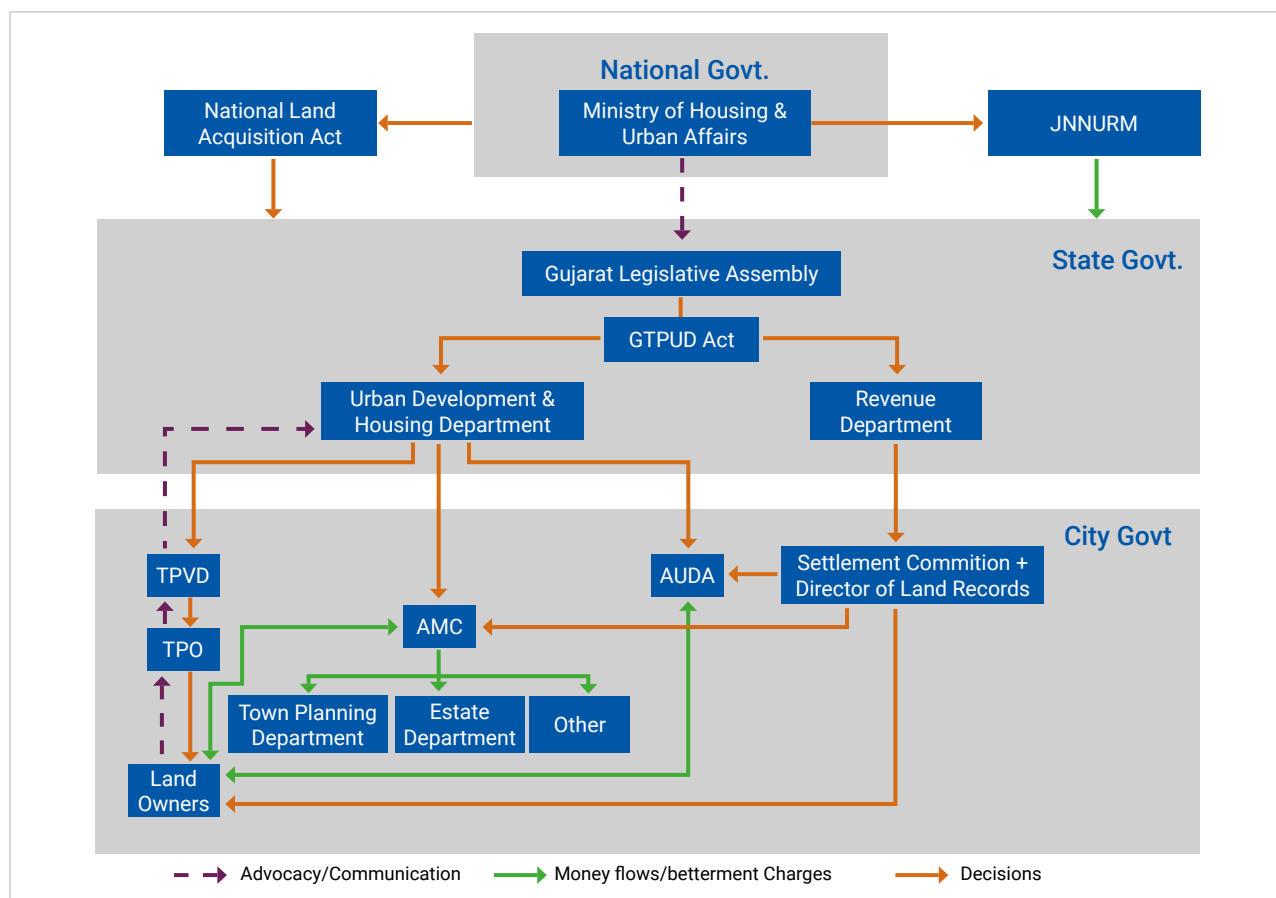
Figure 4: Bureaucratic hierarchy and relationship between city, state governments and parastatal agencies in the context of the Town Planning Scheme

urban development paradigm in Gujarat's urban areas has been capital intensive, with the local city governments having lesser and lesser stakes – and control (through investments in infrastructure) coming in the hands of the state government." This departure from decentralisation, as envisaged in the 74th Amendment, towards more concentration of power with the state government has severely limited the processes of urban planning, participation and citizenship in the major cities of Gujarat.

The policy documents for some of the national urban development programmes – for instance, AMRUT (AMRUT Mission Statement and Guidelines, 2015) speak of 'co-operative federalism' and devolution of powers to the state. However, further devolution of powers to the city governments has not been envisaged in the policy design. Support for many important functions such as project design, development, implementation and management are outsourced to external agencies (such as management consulting firms) with stipulations on conducting citizen consultations, but it is unclear whether marginalised groups such as labour migrants find a voice in such consultative processes.

Further, our interviews with a wide range of urban government functionaries suggested that decision-making largely takes place in Gandhinagar, as also indicated in the figure below (reproduced from Mahadevia et al. (2018)). Powers for policy

making pertaining to AUDA and SUDA, the parastatal bodies in charge of implementing the TPS, are vested with the Urban Development and Housing Department at the state level in Gandhinagar, while their own role is confined mostly to implementation. They are technical entities not directly answerable to the electorate or even the elected wings of the city Municipal Corporations. Control by the state department is also exerted on the Municipal Commissioners of the AMC and SMC, thus devolving very little autonomy to the city governments (Mahadevia, 2014).

Most prominent among these were decisions involved in urban housing programmes (such as PMAY), in which critical details such as documentary requirements for filing applications as well as cut-off dates at which residency at a proposed site for in-situ redevelopment need to be established, are stipulated by the state government. As noted in previous sections, these decisions directly translate into exclusion of the newer settlers in the city, who are often from severely vulnerable categories of the migrant workforce, and are unable to furnish any documents that 'legitimise' their presence in the cities.

We encountered one interesting example in the case of the SMC where the Deputy Municipal Commissioner claimed that a high-power committee was constituted and empowered to offer flexibility regarding the kind of documents that could be admissible as part of the application for PMAY. For instance,

documents such as birth certificate and school certificate of children from a household could be admitted as proof of residence. We could not, however, independently verify this information in the course of our FGDs with residents in this housing project.[16]

The absence of meaningful decision-making powers at the city level is further reinforced by the lack of budgetary powers. For instance, our interviews with functionaries at Surat Municipal Corporation revealed that projects greater than Rs. 15,00,000 required approval from a Standing Committee at the city level and additional approvals from the state level.[17] In important national programmes such as the PMAY, NULM and ICDS, most funds are channelled from the centre to the states, with fiscal powers concentrated at the state level (PMAY Guidelines, 2016; NULM, 2015; ICDS Mission, 2013).

However, in the urban health and sanitation programmes, such as the National Health Mission and the Swachh Bharat Mission (National Health Mission, 2013; Guidelines for Swachh Bharat Mission, 2014), the institutional mechanisms as stipulated in the policy documents appeared relatively more decentralised, acknowledging the diversity of available facilities across different cities and allowing for flexible city specific models, led by ULBs. These programmes also appeared to be more empowered to receive funds directly from the central government. For instance, ASHA workers have the power to enumerate new settlements, based on a household survey of the area they serve, which can then be approved by the Medical Officer at the Urban Health Centre. Thus, the list always remains a work-in-progress, with the potential for new areas to be added on to it. Once a settlement becomes a part of the official list, it becomes the responsibility of the UHC to constantly provide health services to this area.[18]

Overall, however, it appears that the potential for city level planning processes has been systematically killed by centralised control at the state level. This lacuna is also used by the city level authorities to evade responsibilities regarding marginalised groups that require special attention and engagement. Various officials we spoke to suggested that special provisions to accommodate the needs of migrant workers in the urban planning process need to be designed at the state level.[19]

Thus, in the urban planning domain, the city governments act as mere implementing agencies, stripped of powers to undertake the planning process in a truly participatory manner (as envisaged in the 74th Amendment), devoid of institutional mechanisms to account for the needs and aspirations of a wide range of urban inhabitants who build the city.

Differentiated Politics around Informality in Cities

Eligibility and coverage under prominent urban housing programmes are determined by complex processes and parameters, which are based on a 'differentiated politics around informality' (Desai, 2017). First and foremost, eligibility is determined through slum surveys or slum enumeration. As noted in previous sections, a large majority of informal migrant settlements – such as those in open spaces, within worksites or in urban villages in city peripheries – are seldom enumerated as part of such a "recognised" slum list due to which they get easily pushed out of the purview of slum-based development programmes. For instance, the key objective under AMRUT (AMRUT Mission Statement and Guidelines, 2015) is to ensure that all urban households have access to a tap with assured supply of water and sewerage connections. However, it remains unclear whether migrant settlements that are not part of a "recognised" slum list will be eligible for coverage under such an important scheme (Desai, 2017).

Secondly, land ownership has been another critical factor that determines whether a settlement is eligible to be covered

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16   Deputy Municipal Commissioner, SMC, interview with research team, August 2019

17   Medical Officer in charge of Swachh Bharat Mission, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, September 2019

18   Community Health Superintendent, Chandlodia, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2018

19   Deputy Municipal Commissioner, SMC; Deputy Superintendent, AMRUT JNNURM and Deputy Town Planner, AUDA, interviews with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2019

under slum-based development programmes. For instance, the In-Situ Slum Redevelopment under PMAY is being largely implemented in "recognised" slums on municipal lands, despite previous examples of innovative programmes such as the Slum Networking Programme (SNP). The SNP was an in-situ slum upgrading scheme of the AMC that existed in the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, and extended a package of subsidised basic services and a 10-year no-eviction guarantee to households; it was implemented in "recognised" slums on both municipal and private lands (Dutta, 2000). Many migrant settlements covered under our study in Ahmedabad were either on private or railway lands, not only are they not part of the "recognised" slum list, but many or all of them have also faced exclusions due to the specific landownership requirements in slum-based development programmes implemented in Ahmedabad. For instance, AMC does not have the jurisdiction to extend In-Situ Slum Redevelopment Programmes to railway land, since Indian Railways has not consented to this idea, due to which it has not been possible to implement this programme in any of the slums on railway lands across the country, regardless of whether they are migrant or not (Desai, 2017). Moreover, where migrants do live in "recognised" slums, they are generally tenants who are not considered eligible for the benefits of slum-based development programmes like In-Situ Slum Redevelopment. Thirdly, as noted in the previous discussion on sedentary bias in such schemes, imperatives to furnish domicile documents as per cut-off dates as stipulated by specific housing programmes adversely impact circular migrants, further removing them from the scope of important housing related entitlements. Finally, politics at the local level also plays a significant role in determining which settlements get included in housing programmes – migrants, who do not form a political

constituency end up being completely unrepresented in such decision-making processes.

These impediments are clearly demonstrated in the issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOC) by the Estate Department of the AMC, a provision through which many slum-dwelling communities in Ahmedabad have been able to access basic urban infrastructure such as individual connections to the water and sewage lines. However, several migrant settlements are effectively excluded even from the purview of this helpful provision, due to factors such as 'non-recognition', land ownership issues, absence of domicile documents and lack of political will and representation.[20]

An examination of other verticals of the PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Scheme Guidelines, 2016) reveals that even in the case of components such as the Beneficiary-Led Construction or Enhancement (BLCE) Scheme, land titles to prove ownership are mandatory – this is a very difficult proposition for circular migrants. In many cases, they are tenants and not owners, due to which they become ineligible for verticals such as the BLCE. Interestingly, AMC officials admitted that no work has been undertaken in Ahmedabad under this vertical as proposed beneficiaries find it very challenging to produce such documents. It is worth noting that there are instances from other states such as Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh where the requirement for land titles has been waived off by the state governments. However, Gujarat is yet to relax these requirements, a step that severely restricts possibilities for many migrant communities in staking a claim to dignified accommodation in cities.

PMAY also actively discriminates against migrant workers in other ways. For instance, a clause in the policy document states that, "While validating the demand survey (undertaken

20   A functionary of the Mahila Housing Trust, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, October 2018

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to assess demand for housing), States/Cities should consider possible temporary migration from rural areas to the city just to take advantage of housing scheme and exclude such migrants from list of beneficiaries" (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Scheme Guidelines, 2016). While agrarian distress and livelihood challenges are widely known to be the drivers of rural to urban migration, the logic behind the assumption that rural Indians migrate to urban areas to participate in an uncertain lottery process appears highly far-fetched.

Overall, in the context of the urban public housing schemes in the country, the push for ownership-based models in urban housing is quite antithetical to the needs of a migrant workforce whose livelihoods fundamentally thrive on mobility. Rent-based public housing models, which have a higher likelihood of addressing the housing needs of such a transient population, are conspicuous by their absence. Even within the ownership-based model, the focus has been to create additional housing stock for the EWS category with a focus on the use of this stock for the rehabilitation of Project Affected Families. Even this approach has been problematic with many informal workers, including migrants being pushed to the peripheries, away from their social networks and sources of livelihood.

Refreshingly, however, more recent policies such as Swachh Bharat Mission attempt a more balanced approach – the policy guidelines clearly specify that tenure security should not form the basis for provision of toilets (Guidelines for Swachh Bharat Mission, 2014). It also adopts a more inclusive strategy by taking into account notified and de-notified slums and colonies as part of its coverage area. While this approach

is promising, many migrant settlement typologies such as those on road pavements, or under flyovers still fall outside its purview. Further, while there is an emphasis on public and community toilets, provisions for mobile toilets, which are likely to most effectively address the sanitation needs of migrants in open settlements, are absent. Even with respect to public toilets, their availability in adequate numbers in migrant-dense clusters and their affordability (since they are based on the pay-and-use model) remain open questions that create high barriers to access (Desai, 2019). Our interviews with functionaries in Solid Waste Management suggested that supervision of Pay and Use Toilets is largely restricted to monitoring the upkeep of their infrastructure, and not on their accessibility to the public including their functioning and the fee charged from the users.[21]

The primacy given to "recognised slums" also means that many migrant settlements, such as those within worksites in industrial areas are deprioritized in terms of provision of critical services such as Solid Waste Management, eventually turning them into degenerated peripheries that are highly insanitary.[22]

This linear, slum-based urban development approach also extends to the health domain where migrant workers are seen as an impediment to the smooth implementation of public health programmes. ANMs are mandated to visit only those 'recognised slum' areas where families live, so large unrecognised, informal settlements housing single male migrants, which may also be interspersed with migrant families, as well as settlements on pavements and under flyovers which are not recognised as "slums" end up being deprived of critical reproductive and early childcare services.[23]

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21   Assistant Director, Solid Waste Management, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, September 2019

22   Ward Sanitary Inspector, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

23   Medical Officer, Katargam Zone, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, August 2019

Dichotomy between Urban Governance and Labour Governance

A review of various urban development programmes and policies (including Town Planning Schemes) read in conjunction with labour regulations across different work sectors reveals that the domains of urban governance and labour governance (especially related to industrial areas) are dichotomous to a large extent. This results in a scenario where welfare provisions, especially those related to housing and other basic amenities for the migrant workforce, slip through the cracks.

For instance, in the context of industrial areas, the 74th Constitutional Amendment contains a provision under which the state may not constitute a municipality in places specified as an industrial township (Sivaramakrishnan, 2013). Many

is reimbursed so as to facilitate the creation of their own infrastructure, including roads, light etc. The AMC is not mandated to provide direct services to these areas.[24] It appears then that the sole responsibility of the Municipal Corporations towards these areas is to provide a grant to the industry owners for the cleaning and maintenance of the roads and gutter lines. Interviews on the same lines with officials at the SMC revealed that the receipt of this grant is dependent on the Ward Sanitary Inspector who evaluates the standards of sanitation and hygiene in industrial clusters and issues a certificate to this effect.[25] However, discussions on this issue with representatives from the industry revealed that most often, the processing of these grants are hugely delayed owing to bureaucratic processes, and the responsibility for the maintenance of the areas falls squarely on the respective industrial clusters.[26] Very often, these units are marginal players themselves, who struggle to undertake these functions on a regular basis.

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states have used this clause to declare SEZs as industrial townships and remove them from the purview of the municipal domain. Similarly, the Gujarat Industrial Development Act stipulates that the responsibility for acquisition of land areas and development of basic infrastructure, such as roads, water lines and drainage/sewerage for the establishment of Industrial Estates rests on authorities such as the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC), again pushing these areas beyond the direct ambit of urban governance institutions. Our interviews with AMC officials revealed that 75% of the property tax paid by industries within GIDC

Industry representatives from smaller industrial clusters (such as Ved Road in Surat) claimed that all basic infrastructure for the area such as RCC roads, drainage and sewerage were built by the loom owners, according to their capacity at different points in time. On account of their registration under the Shops and Establishments Act, property taxes as well as user charges for drinking water and sewerage are collected by the SMC, but no commensurate services are provided in return. While the services of daily garbage collection and disposal are made available to the area, they refrain from picking up the industrial (non-hazardous) waste generated by these units.[27] According to them, industrial areas are treated with

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24   Assistant Director, Solid Waste Management, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, September, 2019

25   Ward Sanitary Inspector, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, October 2019

26   President, Ved Road Power looms Association, interview with the research team, October 2019

27   Ibid.

apathy and negligence, as the SMC's attention and efforts are predominantly directed towards residential areas.[28] This was indirectly corroborated by the corporator of Ved Road who said that the SMC does not have a big role to play in the industrial areas because these are governed by a different set of rules.[29] In the recent years, more and more units have been established in the peripheries of Surat, where they are being registered with Gram Panchayats, totally outside the purview of taxation or urban public services and further weakening accountability.[30]

While the exact nature and extent of this dichotomy are not clear, it does throw up significant questions on the governance relationships between various actors in this ecosystem. A lack of clarity on the roles to be performed by different actors with respect to the setting up, maintenance and monitoring of civic amenities in these areas has severe implications on the basic living standards that migrant workers are able to access at their worksites, which also double up as living areas in a number of cases. This has led to a scenario where several industrial clusters operating in the periphery of aspiring world-class cities such as Surat are mired in grime and toxicity.

Another instance of the diminishing scope of urban public services was seen in the case of second-generation migrants in Surat who had secured housing units in PMAY projects. Such housing programmes for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of society are also treated at par with private housing societies and are largely not serviced by the SMC. PMAY mandates compulsory formation of housing committees in these project units, which are tasked with the cleaning and maintenance arrangements.[31] Applying the same maintenance model as that of more upper income housing societies also seems very dysfunctional as most of these project areas seem to have very poor hygiene conditions.

From the point of view of labour governance, both the Factories Act and the Shops and Establishments Act, laws under which a large majority of the industrial units in Gujarat are registered, do not have any special provisions for the housing needs of migrant workers. Several small as well as mid-sized hotels and restaurants, which constitute another large sector employing migrant workers, are also registered under the Shops and Establishments Act. These Acts only stipulate standards for working conditions and completely gloss over the fact that a large majority of the workforce today are migrants, who are provided sub-human facilities for accommodation in these very areas, and in many cases, within these very units.

The Building and Other Construction Workers (BoCW) Act and the Inter-State Migrant Workers (ISMW) Act are the only two laws that stipulate housing provisions that could potentially benefit the labour migrant workforce. The BoCW Act delegates the provision for housing of workers to the employer or contractor, including directions on arranging separate spaces for cooking, bathing and washing. However, the enforcement of these rules by a weakened Labour Department remains highly questionable. ISMW Act (1979), the single piece of legislation that governs the recruitment and employment of inter-state migrant workers, is largely obsolete in today's economic scenario and remains un-implementable without an administrative machinery in place.

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28   Ibid.

29   Corporator, Ved Road, interview with the research team, Surat, October 2019

30   Ibid.

31   Executive Engineer, Slum Upgradation Department, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, August 2019

In the current context where labour migrants constitute the preferred form of workforce across a range of manufacturing and service sectors in growing urban labour markets, the glaring absence of enforceable policy provisions that can ensure dignified housing and other basic amenities for workers feels anachronistic. The consequences of a myopic policy design results in a scenario where there is no real accountability, either in the domain of urban governance or in the realm of labour welfare and regulations.

Passing the Buck in Provision of Services

The fact that informal labour migrants fall outside the scope of the urban governance regime lends a convenient basis to the city functionaries to engage in a game of policy evasion. The responsibility for imagination and implementation of welfare schemes for workers are passed on to the Labour Department as well as to the industries who employ migrant workforce, while the city government largely washes its hands off any role in their welfare and service provisioning.[32]

Their high degree of mobility and a lack of state capacity are stated as major reasons for not making any serious attempts in this direction. Industry owners are cited as the only entities benefitting from the labour of the workers, thus exposing a serious lack of recognition of the role of migrant workers in building the engines of growth that our cities are today.

Limited Recognition of their Presence in Cities and Unique Needs

Despite the enormous contribution made by the migrants in building our cities, there is scant recognition of their presence or acknowledgement of their unique needs. Our interviews with a wide cross section of officials from various urban governance institutions revealed that their imagination of the constituency remains restricted to the 'tax-paying citizens', reflecting a heavily prejudiced mindset that refuses to view workers as legitimate citizens of the city.

Even within the policy statements of different urban development programmes, the urban poor is viewed as a broad category, with no nuanced recognition of the various heterogeneous categories that are nested within this. For instance, AMRUT makes no mention at all about the need to reach out to migrant settlements with water and sewerage connections. PMAY only mentions migrants from the point of view of excluding them from housing programmes. Within NULM, there is a mention of migrant workers in the context of skill training as a livelihood building strategy, they are also a target constituency for the night shelters constructed under NULM; however, there is no mention of granting them access to a wide range of rights and entitlements that are part of the programme. Health and early childcare programmes such as ICDS and NHM do not have specific exclusionary provisions, but there is also no imagination of service provisioning for a mobile population.

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32   Deputy Superintendent, AMRUT JNNURM, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad October 2019, Assistant Director, Solid Waste Management, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2019 and Corporator, Paldi, interview with research team, October 2019

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A lack of recognition of their unique needs also extends to the domain of service delivery. For instance, the timings for health outreach and clinical services are from 9 am to 5 pm. However, these are quite unsuitable for informal migrant workers, who will necessarily have to sacrifice their daily wages to be able to access these services.

Overall, the complex web of informality, mobility and seasonality that are characteristic of the lives of this 'un-sedentary' population are unaccounted for, not to mention the various caste, class, linguistic, regional as well as gender-specific challenges that various groups within this population encounter, as they struggle to build their lives in the city.

No Means to Assert Political Agency

In the absence of voting rights in cities, migrants are stripped of any opportunity to assert their political agency, make demands for migrant-inclusive reforms or stake claims to public entitlements. For instance, as per existing policies, no documentation is required to apply for the public stand post for water, as it is a public facility that should be available to anyone. However, these applications are usually routed through the ward councillor/corporator or an official, none of whom is in any way accountable to the migrant community.[33] Similarly, a local councillor/corporator also has the power to request for a new Anganwadi in their area, but s/he has no political incentive to activate such a provision near a migrant settlement.[34]

Further, the institutional mechanisms for approval of all major public infrastructure projects involve a Standing Committee, which is constituted by the Mayor, Chairman and Councillors.[35]

Again, lack of political representation means that migrants are systematically pushed out of all such major decision-making processes which have a great bearing on their daily lives in the cities.

The lack of a political voice also constrains their ability to undertake any meaningful engagement with the implementation of the TP process. While the formal planning and TP implementation processes do not have any imagination of informality and consider informal inhabitation of land under a TP scheme (by the urban poor) as simply illegal, there have been cases where urban poor voters have successfully contested the implementation of TP plans, and pressurised the AMC to modify/selectively implement the TP in a way that their houses/shops are not demolished (Desai et.al., 2018). However, in the absence of voting rights, and consequently any meaningful political agency, migrants remain at a great distance from such critical processes.

Existing Solutions offer Limited Utility

A corollary to the "sedentary bias" in policies is that the imagination of most urban development programmes and city government functionaries regarding a workable solution for the housing needs of the migrant workforce is largely restricted to homeless shelters. Initially envisaged as night shelters meant to be used by the urban homeless population, the current design of these shelters does not speak to the needs of migrant workers and their families. Experiences from the ground suggest that only about half of these shelters are functional and many of them are in poor condition.

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33   Additional City Engineer, South West Zone, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2018

34   Medical Officer, Katargam Zone, SMC, interview with research team, Surat, August 2019

35   Assistant Director, Solid Waste Management, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2019

An overwhelming number of migrant families prefer to live in the open than move into these shelters, as they are not family friendly with gender segregated spaces and lack of dignified cooking facilities.[36]

In the course of our interviews, an NULM functionary conceded that the focus of these shelters was not the labour migrants, or even the working poor, but the homeless population such as the elderly, single women, mentally ill, or physically handicapped people who do not have immediate family or social support in the cities.[37] He also spoke of multiple unsuccessful drives conducted by NULM, Ahmedabad to convince migrant families living in the open to move to the shelters, after which they have now taken initiatives to turn these into more family friendly spaces. Still, the capacity of these shelters in cities pales significantly in comparison to the massive housing needs of the migrant workforce.[38] There are many helpful provisions under the Shelter for Urban Homeless programme that opens up possibilities for imaginative housing solutions for labour migrants, but their implementation, including allocation of land and financial resources for construction of new shelters, has been a significant bottleneck.

The only helpful provision that featured in our review of relevant programmes was a clause in the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, which stipulated that the Cess collected by States/UTs on construction projects and transferred to the Construction Welfare Fund could be deployed for creating rental housing stock for workers. However, given the enormous under-utilisation of the Construction Welfare Board Funds across different states in India, the implementation of this clause remains woefully inadequate.

Incentives Misaligned with the Mobility of Migrant Communities

Several policies incentivise retention of beneficiaries in government programmes to ensure sustained delivery of services to the target population. For instance, the ANMs and ASHA workers who are part of the AMC receive incentives to vaccinate the same pregnant woman or child on a continuous basis.[39] While the intent is to ensure quality and continuity of service delivery, these incentives are actually misaligned with the mobile, transient nature of the work and lives of migrant communities. Similarly, ASHA workers are empowered to add on new (potentially migrant) settlements to their existing list of service areas, based on periodic surveys. However, since an ASHA worker has to serve a population of 2000 people, enumerating a migrant settlement as part of her official list would directly translate into additional workload for her – this often restrains them from conducting surveys of migrant households, keeping migrants systematically out of the purview of critical public services.[40]

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36   Additional City Engineer and Head of Housing Project, the agency that implements the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna within the AMC, September 2018

37   Community Organiser, Urban Community Development Department, AMC interview with the research team, Ahmedabad, September 2018

38   Deputy Town Planner, AUDA, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, August 2019

39   Medical Officer, AMC, interview with research team, Ahmedabad, September 2018

40   ASHA worker affiliated to Chandlodia Urban Health Centre, interview with research team, September 2018

Being in a constant state of drift, it is often impossible for migrants to access entitlements or services from the same point or agent on a continuous basis. In a scenario where most entitlements are not portable, even a one-time access or entitlement linkage holds great significance to these communities. However, skewed incentives to the frontline staff who play a crucial role in service delivery often constrain migrants' access to services in major ways. It is ironic that challenges to monitoring impact actually deter the implementation of potentially impactful interventions.

Experiences of Evictions within a Gentrified City

Eviction drives are a major part of the lived experiences of migrant communities in open space settlements such as on pavements, railway or municipal lands and under flyovers. Migrant settlements are seen as encroaching on the municipal land and are seldom served notices prior to eviction, unless the settlements are very old. Their belongings are confiscated and can be reclaimed only on payment of a penalty at the zonal office. These practices can also be quite ad-hoc as the land pool of the Municipal Corporation keeps expanding with every new TPS, and the land on which an informal settlement has been in existence for years can suddenly be claimed by the Municipal Corporation.[41]

While migrant communities have been systematically subjected to eviction drives since several years, India's current obsession with modern, glamorous, world class "Smart Cities" – a discourse that is inherently antithetical to informal settlements – has been the most recent phenomenon that has paved way for large scale evictions. Evictions, seizing of assets and displacement for city beautification and infrastructural projects are nothing but the ripple effects of the gentrification engendered by these aspirations.

Ethnic, Caste and Class Based Stigmatisation

Over and above the systematic bias against labour migrants in the realm of policy design, they are also the victims of stigmatisation based on ethnicity, caste and class. Responses from representatives and city functionaries interviewed during this study ranged from ignorance to apathy to active hostility. For instance, a widely held view among the health functionaries was that migrants are a big impediment to the smooth implementation of public health programmes and pose a threat to gains in health outreach, awareness and disease control. "They do not treat Surat as their own city," "They make the city dirty," "They live in congested areas and do not maintain cleanliness," were some of the common refrains heard from officials. Officials viewed open defecation as a nuisance for local city dwellers, reflecting the state mentality of vigilante action against migrants, while not providing them with appropriate sanitation solutions. Police functionaries referred to them as "mind-dead," "criminal," and "always under the influence of substance abuse," citing them as an active security threat. The Deputy Mayor of AMC questioned the very logic behind the thought that AMC needs to provide them with public services and entitlements. The pervasiveness of this attitude across various domains and levels in the official hierarchy also percolates down to the frontline staff, severely affecting migrants' access to and interface with various critical services.

To sum up, vulnerable labour migrant communities remain at the periphery of a policy and implementation ecosystem that does not imagine these workers to be a legitimate presence in the cities, or as a citizenry in need of critical public services. Their needs and issues are unaccounted for and excluded in an effort to deny them an engagement with claim making processes of any kind. This, combined with the extractive stance of the state-industry nexus that has engineered a proliferation of capital intensive, market-based urban growth models, has resulted in an absolute neglect of the informal processes and livelihood strategies that drive the work and lives of migrant workers in the city ∎

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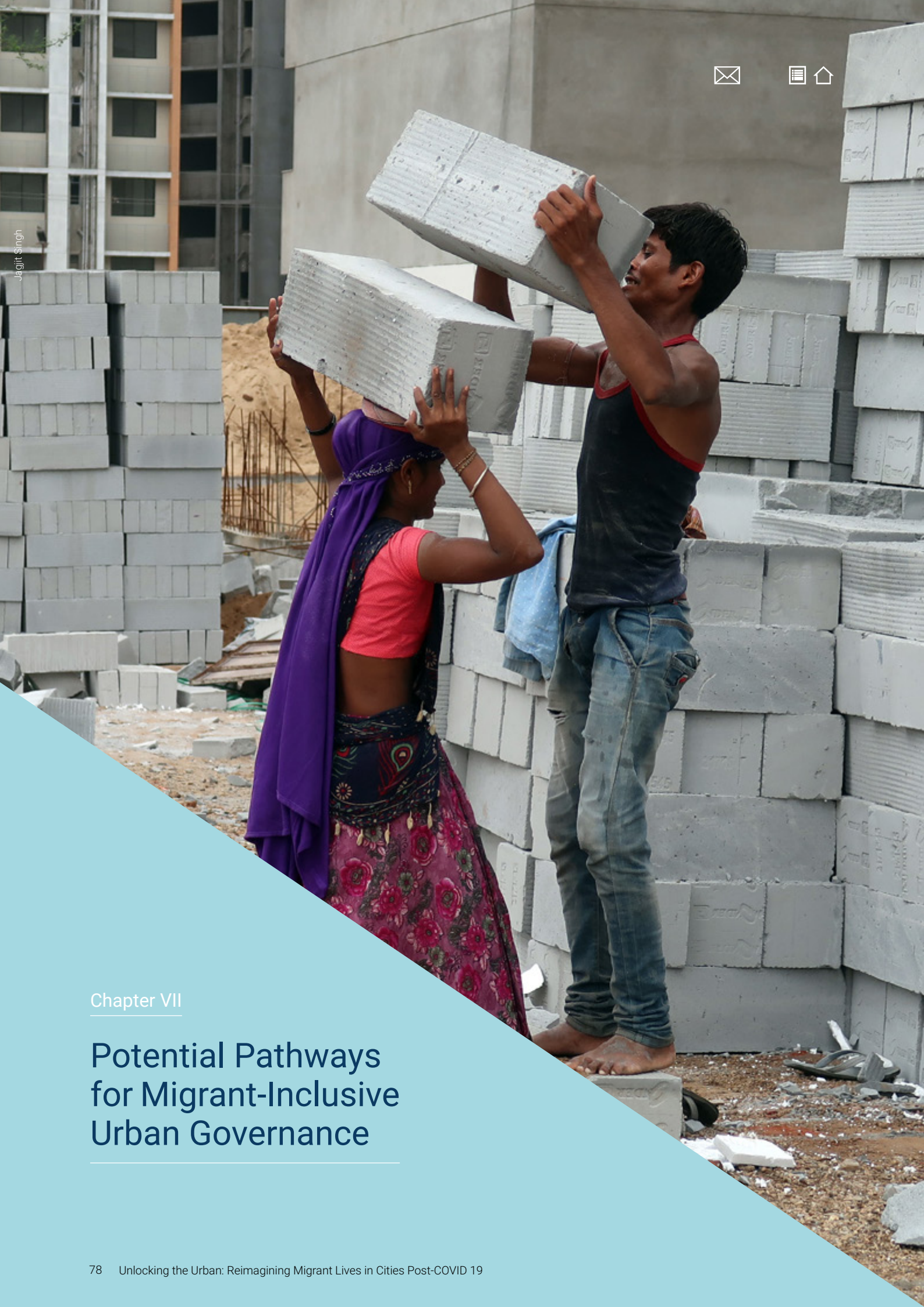
Chapter VII

Potential Pathways for Migrant-Inclusive Urban Governance

At the time of publication of this report, the COVID 19 lockdown has been extended for another 18 days. Adequate systems have still not been put in place for reaching out to migrant workers, who, in addition to uncertainty and fear, have gone without basic provisioning for weeks, fuelling unrest across cities. Immediate measures taken during this phase to integrate migrant workers into formal provisioning and employment systems can prove effective in moving towards migrant-inclusive cities in the post-pandemic phase.

Recognising the fact that migrant workers comprise various heterogeneous groups, cutting across a range of occupations, living arrangements, ethnicities, castes, gender, languages, with varied household compositions and migration patterns and cycles, there remain important, universal principles that can inform the design and implementation of urban policies and schemes such that they are able to address the needs of migrant communities.

Provisioning must be Legally Mandated

Any solution for the provision of basic facilities and services to migrants needs to be legally mandated. Enabling migrant workers to claim access to basic services as a matter of entitlement will go a long way in empowering them and avoiding undue dependence on the benevolence of employers or local informal providers, thereby reducing the possibility of extractive practices that such arrangements often result in. Designing mechanisms to ensure access to reliable, reasonably priced, high quality public services will also help in reducing the arbitrariness that is otherwise associated with access, and consequently, bring down the large mental and physical tolls that accompany such efforts.

Provisioning/Subsidising Minimum Consumption by State or Employer

A common feature observed across all vulnerable migrant groups is that they are unable to purchase minimum consumption for a dignified life in the city, as they earn sub-optimal wages and are restricted to the lowest rungs of the urban labour markets. In order to ensure a minimum standard of living for these communities, basic facilities and services have to be directly provided by the state or employer, or in cases where it is purchased from the market, it has to be subsidised by the state or the employer. The manner in which different groups of circular migrants may be subsidised, and whether it will take the form of direct or indirect provisioning will depend on the nature of their employment, circularity and mobility and resultant specific needs of these groups. However, state or employer liability, responsibility and accountability must be clearly fixed based on the differentiated needs of these groups.

Foster Livelihoods and Social Networks

Circular migrants depend heavily on others from their communities to be able to find work, navigate the city, its spaces and institutions, as well as for emergency support. Furthermore, many who work as construction workers live near labour nakas where they can find work or access contractors with whom they have some degree of familiarity or have established long-term relationships. In addition, they develop networks with housing societies, shopkeepers and other stakeholders near their living settlements whom they depend on for various needs. Access to provisioning necessarily needs to account for the endurance and fostering of social networks in which migrant lives are embedded, so that they can continue to draw from their immediate and extended communities to sustain themselves in an alien and hostile city and advance their livelihoods.

Other major stakeholders in ensuring social support networks for migrant workers in the city are workers' own unions or collectives, and NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) that might be working directly with these communities. The role of both workers' unions and NGOs/CBOs in responding to the needs of these communities or creating platforms for collective support and bargaining can be factored into policy design.

Focusing on the Gender-specific Needs of Migrant Women

Any solution aimed at provisioning for circular migrants must attempt to reduce the work burden of migrant women who otherwise have to expend strenuous labour in the social reproduction of the migrant households in frugal and impoverished conditions. Food, fuel, health and sanitation provisioning must necessarily be gender-friendly, with a view to address the lack of safety, as well as physical, mental and sexual harassment faced by women due to an absence of basic facilities. Gender-sensitive urban planning and policy design with a focus on the historic marginalisation and frequent mobility of these communities, which currently disproportionately burden women, is an important response.

Learning from Informality

Circular migrants living in different spaces in the city have demonstrated ingenuity and creativity in using these spaces to fulfil their different individual and community functions, carving out spaces, structures and relationships in the city which help them meet their unique needs and are embedded in their own logics. Urban policies and plans have the tendency to view informality as a problem or criminalise it, rather than a solution that develops organically to address the challenges posed by circular migration. The state needs to take cognizance of, and learn from these informal systems and processes while developing policies and plans that are inclusive of circular migrants.

Public Provisioning for Multi-local and Mobile Communities

The provision of basic facilities and services must be delinked from permanent domicile status or tenure security in the spaces that are occupied by circular migrants. While on the one hand, building documentation or assets in the city is a long-term strategy that groups of migrant workers might undertake in the city to become semi-settled or permanent residents, many groups pursue multilocal and mobile lives, without settling down in single place or self-select out of the complex and time consuming process of permanently relocating in the city, choosing instead to invest in social and cultural lives in the village. Regardless of their diverse trajectories in the city, circular migrants contribute to the cities' economies through their labour power, even where they might not be able to assume the status of 'vote-bank' or 'tax-paying' citizens. A recognition of the relationship of circular migrants to cities' economic growth can form the basis of advocacy for extending facilities and services to spaces they occupy in the city. Policy and planning, therefore, can be based on access to basic facilities and services in existing informal settlements of circular migrants – and should be able to accommodate their circular and seasonal mobility patterns across cities and their villages, which should be recognised as a key livelihood strategy for these groups.

Responding to Heterogeneity of Circular Migrants

While there are common factors to be kept in mind while designing and implementing policies for circular migrants, it is also necessary for policies and schemes to be able to take into account the heterogeneity of this vast category of migrants. Such heterogeneity – based on the nature of their employment, and consequently the nature of their living spaces and conditions in the city, which are further mediated by their social identity such as caste, region, language and gender – leads to differential needs and preferences of each of these groups in the cities they migrate to.

Rather than attempt to aggregate the experiences of these varied groups of migrants under the undifferentiated category of 'circular migrants' or the broad-stroke imagination of 'urban poor', an important exercise while designing and implementing policies and schemes is to disaggregate these different groups, based on their unique needs and preferences in the cities, which are determined by the nature of their employment and their living spaces. Following this, the responsibilities of the state and employers in subsidising the consumption of these different groups can be fixed and appropriate accountability mechanisms can be set up. Such an exercise will have two positive effects. First, it can prove an important step for overcoming the dichotomy between urban governance and labour governance, by clearly delineating the responsibility of the state and employers towards realising both the citizenship and labour rights of circular migrants. Second, it will allow responses that are built on the basis of the organic manner in which circular migrants have organised their lives in the city, and result in solutions that are embedded in the logic of their work and living arrangements.

The responsibilities and accountability mechanisms for the state and employers at the city level can be conceived of through the following format:

Recognition and Legitimisation of Informal Migrant Settlements

◆ **Identification and mapping of migrant hotspots:** This will be an important first step that will help urban local bodies to take cognizance of the presence of migrant

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workers in cities and map out migrant-dense areas. A broad mapping of the occupational and living typologies of migrant workers in various parts of the city will help form an important basis for undertaking a more detailed enumeration and design of programmes going forward.

♦ **Enumeration of migrant settlements:** Enumeration and documentation of migrant informal settlements in the city with the view to facilitating access to basic facilities and services – either through direct provisioning or by performing a regulatory function – needs to be undertaken by the local authorities. Recognition from ULBs is an important step towards the legitimisation of these settlements. Such recognition needs to be de-linked from tenure security or the imagination of permanent presence in the cities. It is envisaged that such a step will help bring down unnecessary or frequent evictions and harassment faced by migrant communities living in the open. Under such conditions, these communities will be able live without incessant fear and stress of a hostile state and society, and cumulatively build their claims for a minimum standard of living in the spaces that they occupy.

♦ If at all eviction is carried out for developmental work (on public or private land), due procedures for eviction should be followed along with adequate state rehabilitation packages or rehabilitation which takes into account their specific needs. In the interim, the state should be able to provide facilities which are suited to the needs of these groups as temporary relief.

♦ It is also important for local authorities to enumerate and document other informal migrant settlements such as rental spaces that cater to different groups of circular migrants, as well as worksite housing of migrant workers, both in terms of bringing them under the purview of authorities and being able to regulate living conditions.

♦ Such exercises must be conducted by local authorities in coordination with the labour or factories and boiler departments, as the legal mandate for ensuring that the well-being of migrant workers is spread across both urban governance agencies as well as labour regulatory and justice delivery institutions.

Provisioning by Employer

Employers of migrant workers range from big capitalists to medium, small or marginal producers – a heterogeneity that is not taken into account during the imagination of most labour welfare policies and schemes. Rather, legislation loosely mentions employer liability for welfare provisioning across different laws such as the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act, Contract Labour Act and Inter-state Migrant Workmen's Act. A first step is to differentiate between various categories of employers and lay out their responsibilities based on the size of the establishment across different sectors employing migrant workers.

♦ **Appropriate legislation to fix employer responsibility:** Large employers in construction, manufacturing and hotels and restaurants should be held accountable for provision of housing, water, sanitation, and childcare facilities to circular migrants that are directly employed by them, or ensure this provision through labour contractors. This will require the state to create appropriate legislations fixing this accountability, and also prescribe standards to guide regulation, as well as the human and financial resources to be allocated by employers for these functions.

♦ **Regular monitoring of employer provided facilities:** This will have to be followed by regular monitoring of employer provided facilities in order to ensure that specified standards and evaluation criteria are being met. Such monitoring should be carried out by labour departments, along with police, civil society representatives and workers' representatives to ensure authenticity of monitoring and accountability and to reduce corruption in labour inspections. Furthermore, such worker and civil society led monitoring will ensure that dependency on the employer or contractor does not lead to poor work conditions such as unpaid overtime or surveillance of workers. Another important aspect for ensuring regular monitoring by the state is the adequate resourcing, both in terms of staff and budgets, of the labour department.

Anoop Sathyan

Direct Provisioning by the State

Circular migrants often constitute those living in open spaces in the city. These are often family based, tribal migrants engaged in the construction sector. Due to their highly transient presence in the city, inability to afford rental accommodation and lack of a single employer or contractor to provide benefits (as they access work through labour nakas on a daily wage basis or contract work for short durations), they require the direct provisioning of basic facilities from the state.

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- **Public provisioning an integral part of housing solutions:** Public provisioning for the more seasonal, footloose migrant communities needs to be integrated into the imagination for housing solutions for these communities. Our findings suggest that housing solutions need not necessarily entail brick-and-mortar structures which circular migrants often cannot afford or meet the requirements for. However, their access to dignified living can be greatly enhanced by direct provisioning of basic services such as water, sanitation and childcare. Public provisioning such as water tankers, accessible sanitation structures and subsidised fuel in the living spaces of these communities should be provided by local authorities and based on a city wide mapping of migrants' open living spaces. This not only allows for meeting the basic needs of the community, but also reduces the work burden of migrant women who otherwise have to expend strenuous labour in fetching water and fuel for the family, cooking and cleaning in frugal conditions, and accessing sanitation in unsafe and risky conditions.

- **Housing options set up by the state:** Other housing options for circular migrant groups across living typologies should be set up by the state based on a mapping of their demand. Groups living in the open, face evictions, are affected by changes in weather or harassment from the public. Those living in informal rental accommodation are also harassed by landlords, have poor quality rooms, face evictions and rental hikes, and they generally do not have the capacities to access better housing elsewhere. Circular migrants living on worksites often face toxic and hazardous work and living conditions with an urgent need to be rehabilitated.

In each of these cases, the setting up of migrant hostels which are sensitive to the needs of, and accessible to migrant communities in migrant hotspots – such as industrial clusters outside the city, as well as within the city near worksites – would be very helpful. Following a city-wide mapping exercise, such hostels can be set up through the provisions delineated under the Shelter for Urban Homeless scheme. This housing can take the form of state-owned and community run and managed migrant hostels for families, women and girls, single male migrants, or incentivising and subsidising the provision of rental accommodation for migrant workers. Such hostels should not involve employers in its management and administration, and should subsidise the worker, rather than the employer. The design and coverage of these hostels should be decided upon through a participatory mapping of the work locations as well as specific needs of migrant communities.

- **Migrant-inclusive public healthcare:** Access to healthcare services in the city needs to be made more migrant-inclusive at multiple levels:

  - Public health messages, including those related to the delivery of services at public hospitals and UHCs needs to be multi-language enabled. Written and verbal communication in languages spoken by the majority of migrant groups should be made mandatory, so as to enhance awareness and ensure smooth access for migrants. Language-enabled help desks at city-level public hospitals will also go a long way in helping migrants access healthcare in a dignified manner.

  - Timings for public health centres in migrant-dense clusters must be extended, especially in the evenings in order to ensure that migrants do not have to forsake a day's wage to access these facilities.

  - It is important that ASHA workers make regular visits and provide required reproductive healthcare support and vaccinations to women workers and nutritional

care to children, especially those residing in informal, 'unrecognised' settlements as well as at worksites.

- The incentive structure for ASHA workers and ANMs must be re-aligned so that they are encouraged to enlist migrant settlements in the ambit of their services.

- Health camps conducted by urban authorities should be extended to migrant settlements as well.

- To reduce the work burden faced by women workers, which impacts their ability to cater to the nutritional and emotional needs of their children, employers should ensure childcare facilities in worksites with more than 50 workers as per current laws. In case the employer is a marginal producer, and cannot afford to invest in childcare facilities, the state should provide common childcare facilities for different clusters where circular migrant communities work, for children up to the age of 6 years.

- Due to immense economic pressure to earn, women workers are forced to work even immediately before and after child-birth. There are numerous instances of miscarriage due to work intensity and many times, delivery happens at the site leading to death of infants and extreme cases of bleeding. To improve this scenario, the state can provide maternity benefits to informal women workers as granted to formal sector employees since the introduction of the Maternity Benefit Amendment Act of 2017 (26 weeks of paid maternity leave).

- Overall, entitlements and services in the domain of public health, including conditional cash transfers and other non-cash benefits, covered under a host of health and early childcare schemes should be completely delinked from domicility.

- **Public sanitation facilities in migrant-dense clusters:** There must be increased provisioning for public sanitation services in migrant-dense clusters. These must be free, open round the clock and have a gender-friendly design and installation so that women workers can safely access them. Further, provisioning for mobile toilets for informal, hitherto unrecognised migrant settlements should be undertaken on a priority basis under SBM, so as to ensure that labour migrants and their families, including women and children have dignified access to proper sanitation facilities.

- **Gender-specific services:** To ensure that worksites, such as factories and construction sites, are women-friendly and free from any forms of physical or sexual harassment, the Labour Department should ensure that employers set up an Internal Complaints Committee with civil powers of enquiry and conciliation at worksites that have more than 10 workers as stipulated in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2013. Women construction

workers living in open spaces constantly face issues over their physical security. Even when they are ill, they cannot stay back in their settlements without men being around as these spaces are unsafe. This forces them to work despite suffering from major health issues. To address this issue, urban local authorities must set up Women Resource Centres near these informal settlements where women workers can spend time when they are not working, and seek counselling and support for reporting cases of domestic violence or sexual harassment.

- **Sensitisation of state officials to facilitate greater access and integration:** Sensitisation training of frontline workers, including police, as well as local and state level officials for responding to and supporting the needs of migrant communities are critical for the implementation of urban schemes and policies. Migrant workers should be able to approach urban local bodies without fear of harassment or stigma, and the state must invest in simplifying and explaining bureaucratic procedures to them as per their needs. In addition, it is essential that frontline officials undergo caste and gender trainings to check their hostility towards migrant populations.

Market-based Solutions

A large number of circular migrants rely on private landlords for accessing informal rental accommodation in the cities, on the basis of their personal relationships of patronage, especially in cases where neither the state nor employer are able to provide them with housing. In such a context, the government needs to come up with both "supply" side and "demand" side regulations to facilitate quality control and create access to more dignified rental accommodation throughout the city.

- **Improving access to formal rental accommodation:** The state must subsidise migrant workers' access to dignified rental accommodation in the city through rental vouchers. In addition, local urban populations must be sensitised and incentivised to overcome their stigma and hostility towards migrant workers. Both these steps will allow greater access to more formal rental accommodation in various parts of the city.

- **Recognition and regulation of informal rental accommodation:** It is necessary to be able to regulate existing settlements that largely cater to migrant workers, which might be illegitimately provided, and bring them under the regulatory framework, so that they do not continue to exploit migrant populations. This can be made possible by permitting migrant workers to use rental subsidy vouchers to access informal rental accommodation, while also incentivising informal landlords to provide written contracts and basic quality control such as ensuring minimum space per occupant and the provision of basic facilities, specifying caps on rent, and regulating rent hikes.

Reforming Policy Positions at the Federal and State Levels

While many steps towards enabling greater access to migrants can be taken at the city level, these have to be complemented by reforms in policy positions at the federal and state levels. Some of these have been outlined below:

- **Inclusion of circular migrants in urban local planning and governance:** The implementation of the 74th Amendment Act has to be cognizant of the presence of circular migrants in urban areas, and systems for their participation in neighborhood democratic processes, conceptualisation, design and implementation of schemes and policies, have to be put in place, such that they are representative of the needs and concerns of circular migrants, even if they do not constitute an electoral population in urban areas. This can only be achieved along with the revival of participatory and representative processes in urban local governance, which has been largely thwarted due to elite capture of these processes.

- **Dynamic Urban Planning:** Urban planning processes in the country should be more dynamic, taking into account employment projections, including those related to informal employment, based on infrastructural and industrial development, location of jobs and most importantly, magnitude of in-migration. Feedback loops should be built into the plans so that emergence of migrant hotspots in various industrial and service sectors can be dynamically factored in, in such a way that this data can form the basis for important decisions related to public provisioning across various domains.

- **Ensuring Portability through a Universal Social Rights Approach:** In order to address the sedentary bias in urban policies, there is an urgent need to adopt a Universal Social Rights approach in which access to entitlements is delinked from domicile status. A recognition of this principle will be imperative in ensuring that critical public services such as food, health and education remain portable and accessible to mobile populations such as labour migrants, a community whose current magnitude is estimated to be upwards of 139 million people. "One Nation One Ration Card", a programme that is being currently piloted, is a promising first step, but more needs to be done in terms of factoring in prominent migration corridors and direction/magnitude of migration flows into the design of this scheme, so that labour migrants at the bottom end are able to gain substantially from this.

Building the Political Agency of Migrants in the City

Occupation or industry-based trade unions and workers' platforms are restricted largely to the organised or regular workforce, while newer forms of organising among informal workers remain restricted to the neighbourhood level, and largely to self-employed groups such as street vendors and home-based workers. Wage dependent, casual, migrant workers are often in fragmented workplaces with adverse terms of employment, or in criminalised and isolated living spaces where building collective bargaining platforms for political agency are difficult. Fostering spaces for building the collective voice and agency of migrant workers will require, on the one hand, for existing workers' platforms to take cognizance of the unique issues and needs of migrant workers. At the same time, there is a need to invest in building platforms of migrant workers which move beyond demanding mere bureaucratic fixes for access to basic consumption, to a political expression of migrants' interests as rights, that eventually re-conceptualises citizenship at the city level. This can be based on a recognition of their enormous contributions to building urban India, which subsidises both the state and the industry, and should be compensated through enabling them to claim their unrestrained right to exercising citizenship in all walks of public life.

To sum up, urban planning and policy needs to recognise migrants as a legitimate constituency within the larger category of urban citizens, with equal entitlement to public provisioning and services. State policies must be able to set aside their blind spots in recognising this population as equal citizens and must respond urgently to removing the stringent barriers that characterise their access to various entitlements in the city. Along with this, a radical re-envisioning of citizenship requires policy conversations on universal access to social rights, such that everybody occupying a space has the right to basic consumption, regardless of their documentation or domicility. At the same time, these conversations must also understand, recognise and reconcile the heterogeneity among the survival logics of various groups of urban populations ∎

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Appendix

Details of Interviews

Interview Number	Date	Position/Title
1	August 2018	Community Health Superintendent, Chandlodia, AMC
2	August 2018	Additional City Engineer, South West Zone, AMC
3	August 2018	Additional City Engineer and Head of Housing Project, the agency that implements the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna within the AMC
4	August 2018	Additional City Engineer and Head of Housing Project, the agency that implements the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna within the AMC
5	September 2018	Medical Officer, AMC
6	September 2018	Community Organizer, Urban Community Development Department, AMC
7	September 2018	ASHA worker affiliated to Chandlodia Urban Health Centre
8	September 2018	Project Officer, ICDS Ahmedabad
9	October 2018	Programme manager, Mahila Housing Trust
10	September 2018	Deputy Estate Officer, AMC
11	August 2019	Medical Officer,UHC, Katargam Zone, SMC
12	August 2019	Medical Counselor, Urban Health Centre and Medical Officer, Katargam Zone
13	August 2019	Deputy Town Planner, AUDA,
14	August 2019	Deputy Municipal Commissioner, SMC
15	August 2019	Deputy Superintendent, AMRUT JNNURM, Ahmedabad
16	August 2019	Executive Engineer, Slum Upgradation Department, Surat
17	August 2019	Assistant Director, Solid Waste Management, AMC
18	September 2019	Assistant Director, Solid Waste Management, AMC
19	October 2019	Medical Officer (in charge of Swachh Bharat Mission), SMC
20	October 2019	Ward Sanitary Inspector, SMC
21	October 2019	President, Ved Road Power looms Association, Surat
22	October 2019	Corporator, Ved Road, Surat
23	October 2019	Corporator, Paldi, Ahmedabad
24	October 2019	Deputy Superintendent, AMRUT JNNURM, AMC
25	October 2019	Deputy Inspector, Department of Industrial Health and Safety, Surat
26	October 2019	President, Uttar Bharatiya Udan Samiti, Surat
27	October 2019	Writer, Katargam Police Station, Surat

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Aajeevika Bureau, established in 2005,
is a non-profit organisation, which provides
specialised services to migrant and informal
workers including legal awareness and aid,
healthcare, financial services and skills training.
It conducts research, teaching and training and
policy advocacy at local, regional and national
levels through the Centre for Migration and
Labour Solutions (CMLS). For sustainable
change in employment and public provisioning
systems, Aajeevika Bureau also undertakes
grassroots mobilisation of worker communities
in both rural source and urban destination
areas. Through its operations across western
India, in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra,
it focuses on ensuring that migrant
and informal workers can -
live and work with dignity, everywhere!