

Centre for Labor Research and Action

Researching and Organizing Seasonal Migrant Workers

Annual Report

2020- 21



INTRODUCTION

With the pandemic continuing to grip the world, posing unprecedented and unforeseen challenges particularly for the migrant workers in the nation, Centre for Labor Research and Action (CLRA) continues to work to promote workers' rights in the vast informal sector economy of India. It seeks to (i) organize workers into trade unions that can take up the struggle for decent wages and improved work conditions (ii) undertake policy advocacy with the state so that workers receive their due entitlements. The year 2020 exposed the vastness of the migrant workforce that propels the engines of growth of the Indian economy. For the first time it revealed how the State has no estimate about the expanse of migration that the people undertake to secure their livelihood. The exodus of the migrants thus brought forth the faultlines in the understanding of the nation about its citizens who were stranded with an overnight imposed lockdown across the country. It pushed millions of workers in to a crisis. The worst affected

were the migrant workforce employed in the informal economy. Given that informal workers constituted up to 92 percent of the workforce in India in 2004-05 (NCEUS report 2004) making seasonal migration as the dominant mode of labor engagement in the informal sector in India. The crisis reiterated how workers, sometimes with their whole families, migrate from the relatively underdeveloped pockets to the developed areas for short term deployment, constituting what has been termed by Prof. Breman as ‘footloose labor’ (Bremen 1996). This workforce that has not been amenable to traditional organizing activity that focuses exclusively on work place. Employed in the work places that are dispersed, deployment of workers is on a seasonal basis and migrant workers are often dependent on the employers in many ways – debt, residence at the workplace, and lack of support at destination.

This report seeks to highlight the efforts and outcomes of the various collaborations that CLRA undertook with their funding partners in 2020-2021. The projects teams working across Gujarat have developed an alternative paradigm of organizing workers that has proved its effectiveness over the last decade. However, the lockdown produced conditions where the team oriented their strategy and efforts to ensure food security and safety to the workers. The team helped thousands of workers through food packets, rescue missions and assistance to reach home. This report thus discusses the main activities of the organization, the organizational experience so far, the challenges, and progress of various ongoing projects for the given year. The unprecedented crisis also produced conditions that required the team to put extraordinary efforts towards ensuring rights and entitlements of the migrant workers especially during Covid-19.

CLRA’s Framework of Work:

The organization and its members continue to work in the framework discussed below even in the midst of the pandemic:

Research: Field research and generating data on the condition of migrant workers is an integral component of CLRA’s work. A principal reason is that there is no existing information about the informal workers that are the main target group. The very concept of informality arises from absence of record keeping. The large masses of seasonal migrant and informal workers that CLRA works with are not recorded anywhere. Therefore, one of the first task that needs to be undertaken is to develop a data base of the target group of workers. Field research undertaken by CLRA comprises of (i) mapping and creating of data bases for different segments of workers (ii) in depth inquiry into working and living conditions (iii) value chain studies to understand the profile of the industry and different processes.

The Organizational Strategy

Migration Stream as the Unit of Intervention: Seasonal migration is marked by constant movement that presents challenges to any organizational initiative. At any destination in a particular industrial cluster, workers come from a various of locations. Similarly from any source cluster, workers may go to many dispersed destinations. The concept of migration stream makes it possible to bring focus to this bewildering jigsaw puzzle. Over a period of

time, the migration corridors get established. CLRA has focused on these migration streams as units of organizational activity like factory or shop floor in the formal sector.

Undertake organizational activity over the whole cycle from source to destination: The emergence of stable migration streams opens up the possibility of undertaking the organizational process in source areas. CLRA looks upon Labor Exchanges that would collectivize and institutionalize the supply of labor as the viable alternative to traditional trade unions in the formal sector. The project teams have tried this out successfully in some streams that offered favorable conditions. In other streams as well, it makes sense to continue organizational activity in source areas. It is not easy to engage with workers in the destination as both the work place and the living space may be controlled by the employer. It is also helpful in gaining confidence of workers.

Engaging the labor contractors: The deployment of migrant workers at work is mediated through a vast array of labor contractors, that recruit workers from their homes and transport them to work place providing the linkage between work place and remote source clusters. Even though traditionally, the middlemen are looked upon as exploiters who charge exorbitant commissions. However, CLRA has from the very beginning adopted a more nuanced stand. CLRA understands that the middlemen are not a homogenous category. The approach of the workers collective towards middlemen is dictated by their class and caste character. In majority of the instances, middlemen are former workers who have graduated to the status of middlemen. In fact, becoming a middleman is the only career advancement opportunity for majority of the workers in the informal sector. Therefore there exists a natural affinity between the workers and the middlemen. In most instances, the middlemen provide the leadership to the workers' movement. It also becomes necessary to engage with the middlemen for tactical reasons. They are the gate keepers. It is not possible to interact with workers in many instances before establishing an equation with the middlemen. The lesson from organizational experience of more than a decade has been that middlemen are bound to figure prominently in any workers movement.

Tackling bondage and trafficking – focus on human rights: Issues of workers in the informal sector are qualitatively different from those in the formal sector. The laws that regulate workers in the formal sector – Industrial Disputes Act and Industrial Employment Standing Order Act - are not applicable to informal workers. While there does exist minimal labor legislation for the informal sector – MW Act, Payment of Wages Act, WC Act – the enforcement is nonexistent. The issues that affect the migrant workers are bondage, trafficking, sexual harassment at work place, and non-payment of wages. These often fall in the realm of human rights. In fact one of the most powerful legislation for workers is the Bonded Labor Act. National Human Rights Commission has played a pioneering role in highlighting bondage in brick kilns.

Public Service Linkage: The migrant workers lose out on the public services like education, health, and ICDS in destination areas. As there are no effective statutory procedures to register migrating workers at source or at destination, and the entitlements of source are not portable, most migrating families already among the more vulnerable, lose out on several entitlements

both at source and at destination. Most significant of these relate to women and children. School age children migrating for 6-8 months and those not able to stay back inevitably drop-out and become child and adolescent labour. Little children, pregnant and lactating mothers as well as adolescent girls lose out on nutritional supplements, and sustained reproductive and child health coverage. The Government health facilities seem alien and migrant workers at the destination as most facilities do not do effective outreach, and workers seek private professional as well as non-professional health care.

CLRA's approach has been to fill critical gaps, mainly related to lack of data on the extent and the work conditions of migrant workers; lack of specific orders by the Governments to the lower functionaries and lack of even an implementation policy, plan, procedures and mechanisms and most of all no proper monitoring of services even when they are provided. Also the implementation is haphazard as attempts to institutionalize services at least in Gujarat, have not been effective and is very personnel specific. Unfortunately, Government's own successful attempts earlier say with sugarcane workers in South Gujarat or the alternate schools on brick-kilns in Bhilwara, Rajasthan fails to become institutionalized, as there is either lackadaisical attitude or when concerned officials change.

Outreach by CLRA during the Lockdown imposed due to Covid 19

Covid-19 induced lock downs – starting in March 2020– greatly impacted activities and efforts of the teams across projects and locations significantly. The project activities that required physical contact with workers like capacity building trainings and workshops came to a complete halt. However simultaneously another set of activities emerged that could be classified as emergency relief activities.



The lockdowns had a disastrous impact on the target group of workers. The organization targets three sets of migrant workers – tribal construction workers in Surat and Ahmedabad,

Brick Kiln workers in Gujarat and Rajasthan, sugarcane harvesting workers in South Gujarat and industrial workers around Kadi township in North Gujarat. Migrant workers who formed the entirety of the work force in the first three sets and a significant component in the fourth set were the worst impacted. The workers lost their livelihood as the economic activities ground to a screeching halt. Immediate issue of survival came up. While the Government started distributing free rations after some time under the economic package, the migrants did not have ration cards and thus could not directly access such benefit. Later the Government came up with packages for non-ration card holders also. But this was almost more than a month after the lock down.

As documented by CLRA in previous studies, it has often been found that the migrant workers live at the destination in inadequate and undignified conditions. Covid -19 protocols required physical distancing that is not possible in such accommodation. Immediately after the lock down there was a rush amongst the workers to go home.

In the midst of the lockdown and heavy restrictions on mobility, the project teams were able to continue the field presence. The project staff obtained Municipal curfew passes in Ahmedabad, Surat, Kadi, Dang, Ajmer and Bhilwada city. The emergency relief work that came up immediately after lock down comprised of following main components

Food support: The Helpline and mobile numbers of the staff started receiving calls from migrant workers in distress who had run out of food. Project staff linked these distress calls with Government Helpline Numbers, calling Government officials. Project staff also assisted with direct ration support in Ahmedabad, Dahod, Surat and Kadi.



Travel assistance: The migrant workers wanted to rush home. However, no public transport was operational. Workers got stuck at their work place and on the way to their homes. There was a flurry of distress calls with workers stuck mid-way seeking support for onward travel. The team undertook a massive campaign that involved reaching out 32000 workers from Jharkhand. The team was able to demand four labour special trains – two to Jharkhand, one to Bengal, and one to Orissa. Additionally, the teams also organized buses that helped workers to reach home from Gujarat.



Non payment of wages: There were also complaints from workers that they have not been paid their wages for the month of March. In such cases the legal team members and other team members intervened and ensured that the workers not only received their pending wages, but also fare to reach home.

Appraisal of impact of Covid 19: Project teams across Ahmedabad, Surat and Kadi participated in a quick appraisal of impact of Covid 19 on the migrant workers with INHAF in the month of May 2020. Fifty-two sugarcane harvesting, 42 textile industry workers in Surat, and 30 industrial workers in Kadi were covered under the appraisal that was undertaken in collaboration with other CSO. This helped the team to understand the ground realities of the challenges that the migrants were facing owing to the lockdown and the kind of the assistance the workers were in need immediately.

Project : Project Title: Facilitating and Documenting Social Protection of Seasonal Migrant Workers in India

Funding Partner: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

Period: 01.01.2020 to 31.12.2020



As discussed above the activities of the project team were severely impacted by the protocols and restrictions placed under the lockdown and the Pandemic. The severity of the impact on livelihood of migrant workers was so much that that the relief and rehabilitation work continued for some time. It was expected that the severity of the lock down would reduce and it would take some time to start with regular project activities. However alternative mode of work was also planned starting with an online webinar in the month of May for dissemination of report of the Housing Consultation workshop organized in December 2019.

Mapping: Regular mapping activities took a break during the lock down period. However, project staff conducted impact appraisal activities that were reported in the previous section. Other mapping exercises are listed below:

- a) Construction Workers - 57 individual workers (34 male and 23 female workers) and 70 households were mapped across the labour stands of Surat through the android app.
- b) Sugarcane Harvesters - The team undertook mapping of 432 mukaddams and 534 children of sugarcane harvesters across 56 settlements across south Gujarat
- c) Migrant Agricultural Workers: For the study on the tribal migrant agricultural workers in Gujarat - 4801 - baseline survey was collected for 4801 workers, detailed households for 1056 households in addition to village profiles for 64 villages. The data collection exercise to map data on wage sharecroppers and agricultural casual workers was

conducted in partnership with seven grassroots organizations across 11 blocks of eight district

- d) Industrial Workers - 550 industrial workers and 50 factories are being mapped for a study on Post- Covid Assessment of Industrial Workers in Kadi and Kalol
- e) Workers in the Textile Industry - for the purpose of Textile Supply chain study in Surat undertaken in collaboration with PTRC, 83 workers mapped across Loading and unloading, box making, folding, and cutting.

Studies completed in the given year are listed below:

- (i) Time Motion study of Sugarcane Harvesting Work
- (ii) Footloose in Farms: A study of migrant workers in the farms across Gujarat
- (iii) Crammed and Bundled under Cloth: The condition of workers in the textile markets of Surat.

Agriculture labour study: The time schedule of the study has been severally impacted by the lock down. The Inception workshop was rescheduled in month of July and field work in the months of August-November. The findings of the study were released in the month of December.

Capacity building workshops: Six such workshops were planned. Two of these workshops have been conducted. Two are planned in the months of June and July and two more after that. This is one activity that would be difficult to do online. Though efforts will be made to that line.

Dissemination workshop: due to the restrictions placed on public gatherings the workshops had to be limited to the online mode. The inception and the dissemination workshops were organized through zoom..

Highlights of the efforts of the team in Surat are listed below:

Shelter for migrant construction workers: The project team in Surat is continuing its collaboration with SMC since May 2018 at Sahara Darwaja to manage the Home for Urban Migrant Construction workers. This collaboration is a result of long standing efforts and advocacy by the team with various state functionaries such as the SMC and Urban Development Corporation. The Shelter for Urban Homeless (being managed by the project team), has become a role model on which other family based shelters are being designed and constructed across the city of Surat by SMC.

- i. SUH at Sahara Darwaja has directly benefitted 527 residents. The beneficiaries comprised of migrant construction workers and their families who were earlier living out in the open.
- ii. Work during the Covid-19 lockdown- During the lock down period, the team worked to ensure that SMC provided cooked meals to the various laborers group who were

facing acute food shortages primarily due to loss of work and were unable to access PDS ration because they did not have identity documents in the destination of migration. So, the CLRA team approached and demanded SMC Authorities to provide foods to the lists of groups of workers that the team had shared with the SMC. In response to which the SMC provided cooked food to all for two months (March 2020-May 2020).

- iii. The project team continued to ensure food security through distribution of 1812 ration kits to the households of sugarcane harvesters even after lockdown was over. 150 families of these received food kits during the lockdown
- iv. In the month of April, the project team rescued 11 migrant workers belonging to Jharkhand from a fisheries unit in Dumas, Surat. The team received information that the workers were being held captive and had not been paid their wages for months. The project team ensured that the workers received their pending wages of Rs.8, 35,000 and were sent home through bus
- v. In the same month, the team intervened to ensure that 129 individuals were released from four brick kilns in Subir block of Dangs. The team members assisted workers to return to their homes in Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh.
- vi. Migrant workers (32 male) belonging to Uttar Dinajpur West Bengal who worked for L&T Hazira, were rescued and the project team helped the workers return home. The team booked two buses for the workers (wherein the expenses were borne by CLRA) and the travel agent sought permission for inter-state travel from the concerned state authorities. The permission was received for one bus and it left on May 25th, 2020.
- vii. The team ensured that 76 workers returned to West Bengal by the Labour special trains through SMC to help workers return to their native place by train.
- viii. Migrant workers (1235 workers) were helped to reach home to Odisha by Labour Special train on May 30th, 2020. These workers were rendered jobless after the textile sector had to closed down due to lockdown and had sought the project teams assistance during the lockdown
- ix. The project team received a list of migrants workers who were stranded in Surat a from the Jharkhand Government. From a list 23000 labourers who reported as being stuck in Surat due to covid-19 lock down. The project team with assistance from the volunteers from 12 universities across the nation and scores of individual volunteers called each and every worker on the list and enquired if they were still in Surat. The team found that 911 labourers were still stranded in and around Surat, and submitted a list of Jharkhand labourers with a demand for special Shramik Train to DM Surat on June 6th, 2020. In the meantime, the team also distributed 100 ration kits to those workers who were in need of ration. The shramik train was sanctioned Sabarmati, Ahmedabad via Surat to Ranchi on June 10th, 2020.
- x. The team helped 428 workers from Surat to return to their native place in Ranchi, Jharkhand through Shramik Special Train on June 10th, 2020.

- xi. Another train was sanctioned for June 18th - destined for West Bengal via Ranchi and railway ministry allowed workers from Jharkhand to board this train from Ahmedabad and Surat and thus 350 workers could board the train along with other workers travelling to West Bengal
 - xii. The team received nine cases of non-payment of wages and was able to resolve all of the cases during the period of lockdown. Total of 20 workers (19 male and 1 female) were able to receive their pending wages of Rs.9,35,587 due to team's intervention.
- For the last 5 years, the project team has been engaged in extensive awareness campaigns coupled with series of public meetings across Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh – which form a major source of sugarcane harvesting workers. The campaign has been focused to motivate workers to collectivize themselves and build the capacities of the worker leaders– for better bargaining and negotiating power with the management of sugar factories. Continuing with the momentum created across the source areas of the harvesters in the leadership of the worker leaders; the committee members presented a demand charter to the Mamlatdar Subir, Dangs and concerned stake holders on 10 August 2020. The worker leaders and the Dang committee members along with team members addressed the press. All Gujarati and Hindi electric and print media covered the story of sugar cane harvesters migrating to South Gujarat.
 - Responding to the demand of the sugarcane harvesters on August 14th- the Gujarat Sugar Cooperatives announced an increase in the wages of sugar cane harvesters and commission of mukaddams in the beginning of the season. The factories increased Rs.25 per ton for harvesters and Rs. 5 per ton commission for mukaddams. The workers will experience a 10% wage hike and shall receive (150tn per koyta* Rs.30* 125000 koytas=) Rs.56,25,00,000 additional wages for upcoming season 2020-21.
 - The extensive awareness campaign conducted during the mobilization among the sugarcane harvesters resulted in 3706 workers (male - 2031, female- 1675) becoming members of the workers collectives.

Project Title: Ensuring Decent Housing and Living Conditions for Seasonally Migrant Construction Workers in Cities of Gujarat

Funding Partner: Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Period: 01.04.2020 to 31.03.2021



The project team in Ahmedabad focussed particularly on responding to the exigencies created due to the lockdowns that severely impacted the livelihoods of informal workers creating acute food shortages. The PHF team tried to alleviate the acute food scarcity through both:

- (i) Distributing ration directly to the affected sections
- (ii) Ensuring linkage with Government PDS and Covid-19 relief packages announced by the state.

Ration support to needy: CLRA has distributed dry ration kits to vulnerable segments that comprised of inhabitants of untenable slums of Ahmedabad and stranded migrant workers

Linkage with state services – PDS, drinking water, and Covid 19 relief packages: The project team monitored implementation of the Government relief package announced to relieve the extreme distress caused by lock down. These included free ration to ration card holders and special package for non-ration card holders, later subsumed in Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme.

Ensuring payment of wages and releasing workers from bondage like situations: Often migrant workers faced non-payment of wages, at situation that was exacerbated during the lockdowns because of sudden closure of industry and exodus of workers. When the team contacted workers to go home, it was realized that many workers were being held back by their employers. The team came across a large number of such cases and actively intervened in all the cases leading to release of workers and payment of unpaid wages.

Research, Networking and Advocacy: Realising that the nature of impact, it required a coordinated response, the project team actively networked with likeminded agencies. It also engaged actively with the state and civil society directly and through media.

- a. **Research:** the team was part of two research initiatives that documented impact of Covid- 19 on vulnerable sections of population. The research was undertaken in collaboration with InHAF and CISHA in late April and early May.
- b. **Networking:** There were two initiatives that the team was a part of and took active role in promoting
 - i. **CISHA:** Citizens Alliance for Shelter Ahmedabad is a network of civil society organizations working on rights of housing for the urban poor. CLRA coordinated the first phase of relief distribution in Ahmedabad city within the aegis of this network. All funds were pooled and relief distribution was coordinated.
 - ii. **Send Migrant Workers Home:** This was a national campaign launched to put pressure on the state to ensure early and safe return of migrant workers to their home states.
- c. **Advocacy:**
 - i. The team members participated as resource persons in a number of webinars that were organized around the theme of impact of Covid on migrant workers.
 - ii. Memorandum was written to different state agencies drawing their attention to the plight of migrant workers.
 - iii. A number of news articles were facilitated in news media.

Rehabilitation: As lockdowns gave way to unlockdowns, the team focused attention on Rehabilitation, trying to build back shattered lives and assisting workers to get back their livelihoods. The interventions have included distribution of seed and fertilizers to needy tribal farmers in Dahod district and seed fund to the migrant workers in Ahmedabad who wanted to start a business initiative of their own as they had lost their livelihood due to the lockdown.

Right to Housing Campaign: In addition to this, the team undertook an intense campaign to demand dignified housing and provision of utilities for migrant workers in the city of Ahmedabad. It was borne out of the demand by the community members who wished to organize Awas Haq Abhiyan that concluded with a public meeting on February 16th, 2021 in front of the Collectors office. This meeting was attended by about 450 members from various bastis and

nakas that the team has been working with in Ahmedabad. This was also the time when the team members were detained by the police along with the community members. Few women leaders also sustained injuries when the police lathi charged. But the community members stood with all their might and resisted the police.

Project Title: Ensuring Rights of Migrant Children at Brick Kilns in Rajasthan and Gujarat

Funding Partner: ING Foundation

Period: 01.10.20 to 31.03.21

CLRA teams has been working intensively in Rajasthan and Gujarat so as to ensure that the rights of migrant children in the brick kilns. The activities undertaken by the project teams under the aegis of the project are listed below:

Mapping of children: A brief schedules (Gujarat and Rajasthan) were designed for mapping of total number of children (age between 0-14years) at different brick-kilns. Considering the current situation of pandemic, special focus was on health and nutrition. Therefore, the mapping was conducted of children below five years, pregnant women, lactating mother and adolescent girl in Gujarat regions. Objectives of the survey were:

- To know the current status of children who have come with their parents at the brick-kilns during pandemic situation.
- To get an idea of about children, pregnant women, lactating mother and adolescent girls at the brick-kilns.

Rajasthan: The number of transportation services had become less due to covid. A confirmed reservation ticket was required to travel in the train. All these situations had led to labours' arrival at site at different time periods. Labours were arriving at the brick-kilns till end of December. So, the project team has visited the site at different time period. Finally, a survey was conducted on 10 brick-kilns in Ajmer district of Rajasthan state mapping 307 children age between 6 to 14 years. The team selected ten brick-kilns specifically on which last year CLRA education centres were opened.

Gujarat: Survey of 9 brick-kilns was conducted in Adalaj-Uvarsad area of Gadhinagar, 9 brick-kilns in Mehsana district and 9 brick-kilns in Dholka-Bavla areas of Ahmedabad district, Gujarat. Survey purpose was to locate children below 5 years (853), pregnant women (50), lactating mother (114) and adolescent girls (244) in Gujarat state.



- a. The mapping has covered 1,568 people, that includes children of age between 0-14 years, adolescent girl, pregnant women and lactating mother
- b. Based on the initial visits in brick-kilns, details were shared with the concerned departments.

Advocacy with Officials: In order to link children with public services in education, early

childhood care, and health, the project team has submitted memorandum to the responsible officials to provide education structure to the children, provide nutrition and vaccination to the beneficiaries. As mentioned above, team has visited to different brick-kilns to get an idea about brick-kilns labours along with their families. This season labours had started reaching at brick-kilns in late of October, 2020. Although team had started coordinating with officials



since September, 2020. Through preliminary visits findings, officials' attentions were drawn to the issues of health, nutrition, vaccination and education of brick-kilns children.

- a) *Co-ordination with Department in Rajasthan:* Co-ordination has been made with the Department of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Women and Child Development Department, Subdivision Office and Health Department. In the first place, the officials of the department were informed earlier about the labours at the brick kilns and their arriving with children and families. The officials were informed about the last year conditions during lock-down phase and their difficulties in surviving. Memorandums were submitted on the issues of children's health, education and nutrition, and the departments were requested to prepare their budget plans and other necessary steps. In the second phase, meetings were conducted to make them aware of the conditions encountered during the preliminary visits and survey and pressurized them to make arrangements. Additionally, meetings and correspondence with departments and officers were also done as a reminder about the children's education, health and nutrition. First few meetings and correspondence were

done with the higher officials to make arrangements and issue order letters to the block levels officials.

In order to provide services to the children of migrant labours, correspondence and meetings were conducted with the office of Women and Child Development, Health Department and SMSA. As a result, the project teams had successfully pressurized the officials, that issued a permanent order for their respective departments. The team then further met with the district and block level officials to provide necessary services at brick-kilns.

b) Advocacy with concerned departments in Gujarat: The project team in Gujarat also did a preliminary visit in November, 2020 at Adalaj-Uvarsad brick-kilns of Gandhinagar district. The visits informed the team about the number of migrant labours, their arriving at the brick-kilns. Brick-kilns owner had communicated with the project team about the labour's situation after lock-down phase. Brick-kilns in Gujarat started properly in the end of November, 2020. Although, many labours were informed the owners about their late arrival due to tickets issues. The project team based on preliminary visits and with the last year survey data, submitted a memorandum to the concerned departments and officials.

Departmental coordination Achievements:

- a.** An order letter was issued to the Child Development Project officer for all blocks in Rajasthan to provide nutrition and immunization services to all migrant labours' children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mother by the Women and Child Development Department. The letter was copied to PRAYAS (Annexure 1).
- b.** A letter was issued for all the concerned departments to take an account of children at brick-kilns and providing education facilities by the Joint Labour Commissioner, Rajasthan.
- c.** A letter was issued to the All Women Supervisor, Anganbadi workers to survey children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mother in their respective areas by the Child Development Project Officer, Bhilwara district.
- d.** A letter was issued, to survey children of age between 6 to 14 years of age and their admissions in schools, to the District Education Officer and the Block Development Officer by the Major District Officer, SSA of Ajmer. The letter was copied to PRAYAS also (Annexure 2).

Supplementary education program at select sites (Education Centres): As we all are aware of current pandemic and school running status. Most of the schools were not opened, especially government schools. Rajasthan project team had been finding difficult to open education centres at the brick-kiln.

Although, with great efforts survey of 10 brick-kilns, as mention above in the activity1, were submitted to the Gram Panchayat Prasar Adhikari along with a letter. And that resulted in getting permission to open learning centres at the brick-kilns. CLRA has opened 10 education centres at 10 brick-kilns to provide education to children, who are bereft of education at brick-kilns.

Children come along with their parents to stay 6-7 months at brick-kilns, where the education facilities are not available for migrant children. In the situation of no institution facilities for children, the project team had started running few education centres at brick-kilns by their own. A total of 307 (159 boys and 148 girls) children were enrolled in the centres. Education centres started running from March, 2021.



Strengthening open learning centres through pedagogy and education material support: (Quality Education)



a) Two days training programme was organised on 6-7 March, 2021 at Ghughra, Ajmer. A total of 10 teacher were participated in the training programme. The first session was started with introducing to each other. The facilitator had started discussion on the working conditions of brick-kilns. Teachers were made aware of difficulties of migrant labours working at the brick-kilns. Then the discussion moved towards understanding the educational conditions of children at brick-kilns. The teachers were also asked to coordinate with parents and owners to make them accountable for children education. Then the facilitator explained the participants about collective accountability approach and importance of parents-owners involvement. The participants were also made aware of psycho-social background of children. Further the discussions were held on the understanding children's pre-education status. They were trained to prepare questionnaire and accordingly benchmark the education status of a child.

The facilitator on the second day of the training proceeded with specific focus on subjects. English, Maths, Hindi, Environment subject pedagogy were discussed in minute detail with the participants. The discussion was extended to teaching children's game, songs, stories and picture stories. Activities were discussed in detail to make it joyful for children. The two days training programme ended with taking responsibilities of teaching children at brick-kilns.

- b) Teachers' meeting: A day meeting was organised on 22nd March, 2021 with teachers (Shiksha Mitron) at Ghughra, Ajmer. A total 10 teachers were participated in the meeting. The facilitator discussed the objectives of the meetings with the teachers. All participants shared their experience of teaching at the brick-kiln centre amongst themselves. The facilitator, then to motivate and maintain the quality of education centres, discussed all experience one by one. In the last meeting participants were asked to evaluate children' education status. The facilitator reviewed all the evaluation and also highlighted pedagogy according to the level of education. Then the discussion went on to discussing language learning methods at different level, joyful method of learning Maths and English. The teachers were trained to prepare daily worksheets by their own based on each child level. The worksheets were also discussed to maintain the quality of teaching and pedagogy. The other work of the teacher is to attract children towards reading different other books apart from subjects. Library was already setup in each centre, the children were free to take one book from library to read. At the end of meetings, a discussion was held on the measure steps to avoid corona infections. Teachers were also trained to discuss covid safety rules with children.

Although the other schools were not opened and not functioning, the CLRA project team managed to run the centers and provided the pedagogical tools to 10 participants.

Training of Nutrition of Child and Women Health: In the pandemic situation, health and education centers were not functioning regularly or at all in Gujarat state. The project team decided to do nutrition training program at different brick-kilns. 9 brick-kiln from the sampled brick-kiln were selected to conduct two-hour session on women health and nutrition at each brick-kiln. The project team had used posters on nutrition, women health, pregnant women nutrition, lactating mother nutrition chart, menstruation book with pictures, children nutrition chart and also small books on daily health care for children below 7 years of age.

A survey was conducted before the training program, on which children below 6 years arms were measured. Based on the evidence of that, workers were informed about the nutrition level of children at different age. The importance of nutritious food at this age was discussed with parents. Children were also participated in the meeting. The project team had conversation with the children about the daily health care routine, that includes washing hand at regular basis, drinking a lot of waters, cleaning teeth, taking bath daily, combing, cutting nails etc.



Brick-kiln workers work more than 12 hours a day. Women working at brick-kiln and also handling kitchen and other household works at the same time, had impacts on their health. Women were asked about their daily food habits, especially lactating mother and pregnant woman. Based on their response, the discussion was made around improving nutrition values in the daily food intakes. The food charts were discussed with the participants. The main objective of the training program is to convey about how to take care of nutrition in the daily food consumptions.

Many adolescent girls were also participated in the training program. There were asked to discuss in a group about menstruation and issues. A book was provided, that beautifully explained the process of menstruation, to them to discuss. The girls also opened up and discuss on the issues of hygiene, cramps, irregular period etc. and also raise concern about this issue. Another discussion was conducted on the higher number of iron deficiency among adolescent girls. A nutrition chart and importance of taking certain amount of iron pills were discussed with them.

A total of 253 women and adolescent girls were trained through health and nutrition training program. The figure in the table doesn't include children participation numbers.

- b. Immunization Program in Rajasthan:** A letter was submitted to District Medical Officer, Block Medical Officer and BPM on the issue of facilitating immunization at the brick-kilns.



The result of which a vaccination program was conducted by the Health departments. Many were devoid of immunization program. 74 additional beneficiaries were availed services due to this initiative.

Meetings with Workers and Owners at brick-kiln:

- a) Meetings with Brick-Kiln Women Workers: The project team conducted meetings with women workers to intensify and sensitize about the children education, children health and nutrition, gender equality etc. The team organized eleven meetings in Ajmer and Bhilwara district of Rajasthan which had 225 women participating. The meeting objectives was also to spread awareness about women rights. The meeting took the shape of discussion among the participants. The facilitator discussed the women rights of equal wage, minimum wage policy of Rajasthan, gender sensitization along with health and nutrition program.
- b) Meeting with Male Workers: The project team has organised 4 meetings with participation of 56 male workers of brick-kiln to discuss the issues of wage, children education and nutrition. The objective was to spread awareness about services and labour rights to the participants.
- c) Meeting with Brick-Kiln Owners: Meetings were organised with six brick kiln owners to make brick-kiln owners accountable for taking responsibility of health and education of children came along with workers at the brick-kilns. Owners were asked to keep an account of children numbers. Owners also agreed to help the project team as required. This had the following effect:
 - i. Quality Education: The lock-down and closure of all schools had made difficulty in terms of education for children of workers. Although the project team was able to get a permission letter from government officials to open learning centres at brick-kilns. Total 307 children were enrolled at the brick-kiln schools. The quality education was also ensured to the children of brick-kilns. Teachers were trained with teaching pedagogy methods.
 - ii. Children Immunized by Health Department: A total 13 Mamta-Card was distributed, 38 children and 23 women were immunized by Health Department.



Challenges faced during the period:

a. Labour's arrival at brick-kilns: This season labours arrived late. The exact number of children, workers were unknown till the end of December, 2020. It was difficult to give exact survey to the officials.

b. Meeting with officials in Gujarat was difficult. In the beginning, memorandums were sent through email. The officials were not allowing to meet to the officers directly. As in many cases, letters were submitted to office assistant.

c. Opening education centres were big challenge in Rajasthan. The officials were not allowing to run learning centres at brick-kiln due to Covid-19. It was made possible after regular meetings.

Project Title: Facilitating development of Strong workers' organization of

- i. Construction, agriculture, and brick kilns in Dahod and Ahmedabad in Gujarat**
- ii. Brik kiln worker in Ajmer and Bhilwara in Rajasthan**

Funding Partner: Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative

APPI has been supporting CLRA in its objective to develop strong workers' organization and collective strength since October 2019 in four locations across two states : Gujarat (Dahod and Ahmedabad) and Rajasthan (Ajmer and Bhilwara). A brief detail of activities undertaken by the project teams are listed below:

Mapping of Workers, worker collectives and labour contractors: Brick-kiln workers migrate to Ajmer, Bhilwara and Jaipur district of Rajasthan from Uttar-Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar around end of the October. Mapping was conducted on 22 brick-kilns of Ajmer, Bhilwara and Jaipur. Chhota-Udaipur, Santrampur and Dahod districts of Gujarat are counted as main source area of migration in Gujarat. The mapping work was done mainly during village level meeting.

During the second wave of covid, project team conducted rapid survey in Rajasthan and Gujarat to assist worker, who are in distress situation.

A total of 2617 workers were mapped during the last nine month of project period. The following table provides state-wise mapping number of workers.

Table 1: Mapping details of workers

S.No.	Project Area	No. of Families
		Target = 5500

1	Rajasthan	1512
2	Gujarat	722
3	Covid Assessment Mapping	383
Total		2617

Data Entry and Analysis of the mapped workers: For the purpose of mapping the team relied on digital data collection methods. A scheduled (google form) was developed to do mapping work in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Shramshakti application has been used to capture the household details. A total of 2231 workers were mapped through schedule (google form) and 234 workers were mapped in the Shramshakti application. The team had mapped 2617 workers against the target of 5500 workers.

Informal meetings at small collective level nakas, brick-kilns, markets and villages: Meetings were organized to collectivise workers and also to sensitize workers on the issues of labour laws, prevailing wages, social services etc. A total of 49 meetings were conducted during the project time period. A total 830 workers participated in the meetings.

Highlights of the project Activities:

- **Impact of Covid on Rajasthan brick-kiln worker:** Covid has affected the workers adversely. The workers used to come by train, and with lockdown the number of trains had been decreased completely. The team had observed that due to conveyance problem and the first lock-down distress situation the number of brick-kilns worker decreased by thirty percent. The workers generally arrive by September-October, but during the season after lockdown, workers arrived by December. Many workers got ill and that has impacted their income. The team has also observed that the final payment of many workers was found to be in debt, which can put the workers in bondage situation.
- **Case of Witch-Hunting:** A case of extreme atrocity against woman has come to light in Rajkot district, where a tribal woman worker was set on fire after being suspected of witch-craft. Woman was set on fire by cousin brothers and his family(accused). The victim was 80 percent burnt and that had led to death. The incident highlighted the extreme unsafe and isolated environment under which tribal migrant workers are forced to work in Gujarat. The witch-hunting is prevalent among the tribal and rural communities across India including rural parts of Gujarat, but the state has no separate law to address the issue. Although, the project team has demanded the state to set up committees at block and district level to break this isolation and ensure a safe work place for women workers.
- **Demolition of the tribal workers settlement at Motera in Ahmedabad:** The AMC tried to demolish it during the visit of POTUS Trump in February 2020. Adverse media reports forced the AMC to hold back. The workers lost the appeal filed in High Court. The basti was finally demolished in March 2021. it has now come under the alignment

of the Metro Phase 2. The team is making efforts to ensure compensation for the residents under the guidelines of the metro project.

- **Impact of second wave and Vaccination Rumours:** Workers employed in informal sectors have suffered major loss of work days, which has made them struggling for rations as the second wave hit the country. Workers were found avoiding the public health facilities and any mention disease. In the initial phase of vaccination program, there were many rumours around vaccination. When the project team were doing rapid survey, people were feared to talk. Many people ran away when they were asked about covid and vaccination questions. The team observed that there were an extreme reluctance and hesitation on the part of the workers to discuss matters related to Covid and Vaccination. The team has faced difficulties in approaching people during the second-wave.
- **Agriculture Workers of Madhya-Pradesh:** The team received a case of 17 agriculture laborers of Savarpani, Pati, Badwani district of Madhya Pradesh had gone to work as farm-labor in Keshod block of Junagadh, Gujarat. They were working in the field of Sanjaybhai (land-lord) and worked for about 70 days in the field. During the time of payment, the land-lord refused to pay. He slapped the worker Mohan Bhai Barela. And at the same time, he was not even letting those laborers go. The farmers exercising power over migrant labour is a very common feature across Saurashtra. The physical and verbal abuse are used in general to threaten workers. The laborers somehow able to approach Travels company and communicated their conditions. Travel company contacted Mazur Adhikar Manch regarding the case. With MAM's intervention the owner was informed about the violations he had committed under the labour laws and he agreed to release the payment accrued to the workers.

The project activities undertaken resulted in the following outcomes:

- 1) Team has observed that local committees and volunteers during the pandemic time have come out as major league and strength for work in the villages and brick-kiln areas. They are more connected to communities and approaching through the committees and volunteers will help to spread the work. During the next project period the focus will be on the local committees formation and volunteers training
- 2) Formation of a network at destination and source areas had helped the migrant agricultural workers and the team to approach and spread the work. Collectivizing workers at the destination areas are difficult, so the team in the source area are required. Similarly, travelling to the destination areas for case work is difficult in terms of conveyance and time, so the team at destination areas can help in case works. Networking with like-minded people and similar works can help us to organize and collectivize workers.
- 3) Local Leadership: Forming a strong committee at the local level will be helpful in spreading the work. The local committee formed in different district during the project period has provided support to the team. Cadre-meeting was helpful to build the committee strong.

- 4) Migrant Women Workers: During the project period, many cases of women safety at workplace have come. The team are also trying to focus on improving and addressing the issues of safety of women migrants separately and distinctively.

Project Title: Draft proposal research into wage sharecropping in cottonseed production and upstream supply chain mapping of cottonseed production in Gujarat, India

Funding Partner: ARISA, Netherlands

Period: 01.08.2020 to 15.11.2020

Both Arisa and the Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action (PCLRA) focus on working conditions in the cottonseed production in India and more specific in Gujarat by doing research and creating awareness among different stakeholders including companies and governments.

Arisa has been addressing the human rights issues in the cottonseed sector in India by publishing research reports and lobby activities towards seed companies, the Dutch sector association and the Dutch government. Arisa also focusses on the working conditions in the Indian textile industry amongst others by creating awareness of Dutch textile and garment brands. Up to now Arisa had not linked the outcomes of the research into the cottonseed sector with the garment and textile industry. In 2020 Arisa would like to create awareness by publishing a paper for various stakeholders, including seed companies, garment & textile brands, governments and initiatives including Better Cotton Initiative about working conditions and practises in the production of cottonseed in Gujarat, India.

As part of CLRA's ongoing study on migrant agricultural workers in Gujarat, the report was based on desk research, the reports by CLRA and Arisa and 5 case studies based on the research that was conducted by CLRA in 2020 that highlighted the severe practise of sharecropping that is a labour type observed in Gujarat.

CLRA conducted a study in the period July – October 2020 on the practice of agriculture wage sharecropping in Gujarat. The study attempted to understand the practice and the extent of wage sharecropping (also known as *bhagiya*) prevalent across the state of Gujarat. With shrinking landholdings, climatic change and shrinking opportunities of alternative livelihood(s) - together have induced a large number of small and marginal farmers into becoming contractual agri-labourers. *Bhagiya* farming also promotes labour migration - both from within the state and also from the adjacent districts of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to various parts of central and northern Gujarat across agricultural seasons. In spite of being a widely prevalent practice and the magnitude of families involved, there exists scant documentation of the practice and the impact on the lives of the people involved in it.

The report thus published is attached :

<https://arisa.nl/wp-content/uploads/SeedsOfOppression.pdf>

Project Title: Research on Labour Conditions on Fairtrade Organic Cotton Farms in India

Funding Partner : SÜDWIND-Institute, Bonn/Germany

Period : 01.10.2020 to 31.01.2021

This research was primarily about stimulating change - a tool to be used in empowering and organising, including education, training, campaigning, advocacy and lobbying. Hence, the research was oriented to analyse in order to better contribute to attempts to gradually overcome fundamental injustices. CLRA was to identify five Indian cotton farms / cooperatives that produce organic cotton and are Fairtrade certified (focus on Western part of India), conduct a survey on labour conditions of 250 seasonal workers on these farms, identify relevant actors in cotton production and offer 3 trainings on labour rights to them (focus on seasonal workers). A report was submitted to the Sudwind with recommendations. The same was shared with the Fairtrade partners and organizations in India and in Germany. The report was able to inspire a lot of response. The report was also released in India through an online dissemination workshop. At present the report is in the process of being published for circulation in India.

Project Title: Building a child rights-based model of sustainable food sovereignty for children of seasonal migrant families

Funding Partner : Terres de Hommes Germany e. V.

Period : 01.01. 2021 to 31.03.2021

The three local agencies HAQ, CLRA (Centre for Labour Research and Action) and CEC (Centre for Education and Communication) are registered under the *Societies Registration Act 1860* and have registration of *Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA)*.

HAQ has many years of experience in advocating for children's rights through political work, legislation and action. HAQ works closely with legislators and parliamentarians on the implementation of children's rights and provides empirical evidence for its demands through its research and documentation.

Through their regional and national presence, **CEC** and **CLRA** organizations have been able to influence laws and policies regarding migrant workers and non-organized workers in the sector. Both these organizations have experience of working in brickworks, with both migrant brick workers and brick owners and bring a large network from this sector to the project.

The feasibility study has underlined the individual and collective strengths of all three proposed partners of this project which will contribute to the effective implementation and sustainability of the project.

Beneficiaries:

The selected target groups come from 20 brickworks in two districts (Ajmer and Bhilwara) of Rajasthan which are particularly affected. In all brickworks, the target groups are selected on

the basis of their economic and social vulnerability. A special focus will be placed on migrant worker families who migrate from the regions of origin Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, where indicators of malnutrition are already low. When these poor families move to the other states, they no longer have access to the health and nutrition programmes of their states of origin and at the same time are denied access to state services in the target states.

The direct target group of the project (families of brick factory workers) is economically and socially very vulnerable. It is a migrant population. They move with their contractors from the regions of origin to the target areas and work in different brickworks every year. It is therefore likely that the group of beneficiaries will change in each project year. Therefore, the project design is such that regular training and meetings take place every year. At the same time, it is expected that some families will come to the project locations each year, as they will be assured that their children will have better chances to receive education, health and nutrition. It is expected that one third of the children, adolescents, girls and breast feeding and pregnant women will leave the project each year and the same number of new target groups will be added.

The project envisions that the nutritional situation of 5,250 children of migrant worker families in 20 brickworks in Ajmer, Bhilwara and Mathura will be improved significantly, and migrant workers will be standing up for their rights together with civil society actors at regional and national level.

The project activities are designed to reach at all relevant stakeholders such as Government, employee collectives, CSO networks and campaigns at local, regional and national level and are part of a common multi-stakeholder approach. Their capacity building, cooperation and understanding of food security and migrant working families will continue beyond the project and support the structural sustainability of the project. The effective components of advocacy work which aim to involve children in Government programmes also strengthen the structural sustainability of the project. Similarly, the capacity-building activities of migrant workers and local worker collectives, which enable them to advocate for their own issues contribute to structural sustainability.

The inclusion of employee collectives and the commitment to fair working conditions and fair wages for men and women strengthens the economic situation of the target group and thus ensures the economic sustainability of the project.

The empowerment of women, who are empowered to stand up for their rights and to take a stand on issues that are important to them, as well as the work with children and young people, who influence the future as Agents for Change strengthens the social sustainability of the project.

The project design does not include activities that explicitly aim at ecological sustainability. In the long term, the existence of centres for children in the brickworks, which will be taken over by the Government or the brick owners after the end of the project, will also contribute to social sustainability, as the children of the workers will receive education, nutrition and health there.

