

The Urban World

Quarterly Publication



RCUES
Mumbai

Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies
All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai





Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies (RCUES), Mumbai (Fully supported by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India)

Established in 1926, the All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), India is a premier autonomous research and training institution in India. The Institute was recognized as an Educational Institution by Government of Maharashtra in the year 1971. The Institute offers several regular training courses in urban development management and municipal administration, which are recognized by the Government of India and several State Governments in India.

In the year 1968, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), earlier Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India (GoI) established the Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies (RCUES) at AIILSG, Mumbai to undertake urban policy research, technical advisory services, and building work capabilities of municipal officials and elected members from the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and UTs of Diu, Daman, Dadra & Nagar Haveli. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India added States of Assam and Tripura from February, 2012 and Lakshadweep from August 2017 to the domain of RCUES of AIILSG, Mumbai. The RCUES is supported by the MoHUA, Government of India. The MoHUA, Government of India has formed National Review and Monitoring Committee for RCUES under the chairmanship of the Secretary, MoHUA, Government of India. The Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department, Government of Maharashtra is the ex-officio Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the RCUES, Mumbai, which is constituted by MoHUA, Government of India.

The RCUES was recognized by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India as a National Training Institute (NTI) to undertake capacity building of project functionary, municipal officials, and municipal elected members under the earlier urban poverty alleviation programme-UBSP. The RCUES was also recognized as a Nodal Resource Centre on SJSRY (NRCS) and Nodal Resource Centre (NRC) for RAY by Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.

The AIILSG, Mumbai houses the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Cell backed by the Government of Maharashtra for capacity building of municipal bodies and provide technical advisory services to ULBs in the State. The Water Supply & Sanitation Department (WSSD), Government of Maharashtra (GoM) established Change Management Unit (CMU) in AIILSG, Mumbai from 13th January, 2010 to 30th June, 2014 and also selected AIILSG, Mumbai as a Nodal Agency in preparation of City Sanitation Plans for 19 Municipal Corporations and 15 A Class Municipal Councils in Maharashtra State, under the assistance of Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India. The WSSD, GoM also established Waste Management & Research Centre in AIILSG, Mumbai, supported by Government of Maharashtra and MMRDA.

In August, 2013 Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India empanelled the AIILSG, Mumbai as Agency for providing technical support to the Cities / Towns of States / Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the field of Water Supply and Sanitation, Sewerage and Drainage systems.

In July 2015, Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India empanelled the RCUES & AIILSG, Mumbai an Agency for technical support in Municipal Solid Waste Management under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) programmes.

In February, 2016, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India empanelled the RCUES of AIILSG, Mumbai for conducting training and capacity building programme for experts of SMMU, CMMUs, COs, Key Officials and other stakeholders of the State and Urban Local Bodies (ULB) level under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY – NULM).

In December, 2017, AIILSG has been empanelled as a training entity regarding implementation of new Integrated Capacity Building Programmes (ICBP) under Urban Missions, viz. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Smart Cities Mission (SCM), National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), Housing for All (HFA), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) for Elected Representatives and Municipal Functionaries.

At present, RCUES and AIILSG, Mumbai is involved in providing capacity building, research and technical support to number of State Governments and ULBs for implementing various urban development missions and programmes launched by the GoI.

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The Urban World - Quarterly Publication of Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies of All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai

(April-June, 2021)

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The opinions expressed in the articles / presentations herein are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions of the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India or Publisher.

Printed by **All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai.**

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Editorial

The second wave of coronavirus pandemic in the urban areas of our country has posed additional challenges for the health care system, governance structures and mechanisms, micro-meso-macro-economy and the civil society. The articles in the current issues capture the nuances of the multifaceted and uphill tasks in the urban life and responses of the workers, employers and elected representatives of the urban local self-government bodies. The supply chains of the labour markets, factor markets and product markets have faced unprecedented bottlenecks, not only within the country but also in the global economy due to this global health emergency of COVID-19 pandemic.

The articles in this issue of The Urban World capture the ground reality as they are based on field work and analysed by expert social scientists.

Migrant workers in industrially throbbing city such as Surat have faced multiple challenges to staying afloat under the pandemic. More than half of the informal sector workforce in the city comes from over 8 state of India. Primary research findings in the article profiles the survival strategies of the industrial workers in an unorganised sector who have completed that cycle of reverse migration and circular migration during last one year affected by the pandemic triggered lockdown.

Contribution of Women Corporators in Urban Governance play significant role in meeting the needs and demands of their constituency, use the welfare schemes of the union and state governments for improving the lives of citizens and social and physical infrastructure by ensuring economic services, social services, welfare services and social protection. Systematic study and performance analysis of women elected representatives in the urban local self-government bodies is crucial to evolve evidence-based policy interventions in this trying times.

Precarity of domestic workers in the urban centre accentuated due to COVID-19 imposed requirement of body-distancing and fear of catching infection is captured vividly with this case study of Lucknow city. Several rapid assessment surveys of metropolitan cities have shown that nearly 85% of domestic workers have lost their jobs or are forced to accept reduced wages during the pandemic and lockdown.

Currently, the youth population in India is 46.4 crore. They can make crucial contribution to attain Sustainable Development Goals and targets decided by the government of India. For this, understanding the multifaceted developmental issues of the youth and road map for intervention strategies by harnessing creative energies of the Indian Youth has become a need of an hour.

The Urban World invites researchers, practitioners in the government organisations and in the citizen's groups, scholars at think tanks on urban development issues to contribute articles, reports, rapid assessments studies and book reviews for publication. The research-based articles and book reviews are welcome on priority areas of The Urban World are urban infrastructure, sanitation, public health, education, sectoral development, habitat-urban housing, migration, skill development of the workforce and occupational safety and urban environment.

Staying Afloat in an Adverse Condition: Industrial Workers in an Unorganised Sector of Surat City

Dr. Kiran Desai,

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Abstract

Based on empirical studies (Desai, K; 2014 & 2018), the essay is addressing issues concerning wage-earners who are eking out their livelihood by toiling in small and medium scale units of four premier industries, namely, weaving, dying - Printing, diamond and embroidery, of Surat city of Gujarat state, being considered as economic capital of the state. The delineation specifically revolves around working and living conditions of workers as well as their coping mechanisms to enable them floating on in an adverse milieu. Prior to dwell on it in detail a short sketch on Surat city is pertinent.

Key Words: *wage-earners, unorganised sector, small and medium scale industries, workers.*

Surat and its Unorganised Sector Livelihood Sphere

Surat, which is considered as one of the fastest growing cities of India as per various economic and 'development' indicators, is the twelfth largest city of India in terms of population that has touched 55 lakh mark as per latest estimate and which has more than quadrupled since 1961. Surat has registered the highest population growth rate since Independence among the major cities of Gujarat. The gender-ratio of it is lowest among all major cities in the State which has declined considerably

during the last five decades; from 921 in 1961 to 756 in 2011 as per census. Ever since the first expansion of city limits in 1966, when Surat was granted corporation status, the city limits have been extended six times. In 1961, the total area of the city was 24.01 sq. km., which had increased to 326.5 sq.km.as per latest information of corporation's website. Following the growth of the population, the density has reached a level of 25,194 persons per sq.km. in 2001 and which has decreased to 13,680 persons per sq.km.as per census 2011 primarily due to expansion of the city limits in that decade. Surat records 57.60 percent male work force participation rate, which again is highest amongst all the cities of the state, which in turn indicates very high employment potential of this urban-centre. This employment potential primarily exists in informal/unorganised sector, which is being reflected indirectly in the fact that the city has encompassed 334 slum pockets as per 2011 census.

The phenomenal population growth rate and low females proportion clearly indicate sizeable in-migration in the city, especially in the last three to four decades and that mainly signifies enormous employment potential of the city. Surat is known for its livelihood opportunities primarily in small and medium scale industries in unorganised sector, especially in the weaving and dying-printing sub-sectors of textile branch, embroidery industry as

well as diamond polishing industry. Textile and diamond industries are being considered as backbone of economy of the city. Together, the two sectors provide employment to nearly 58 percent of the total work-force. No wonder the city is famously known with twin names of “The Silk City” and “the Diamond City”.

Over the years, giant corporate units of Reliance, Larsen & Toubro and Essar Steel, and public sector concerns of Kribhco, ONGC, Shell and IOC have been established in the vicinity of the city, employing huge masses of mainly casual and contract workers.

The informal sector of Surat is huge in terms of types and nature of activities it encompasses. Apart from those eking out livelihood from small and medium scale units in mainline industries as well as contract and casual labourers of giant units; another very large segment of people are working in small workshops of varied kinds; in shops-malls, hotels and garages, in construction related activities, as casual labourers doing whatever labour-work at hand by standing at recruitment-points of the city also known as *Majoor Bazaars*, driving auto-rickshaw and other vehicles, as security guards in housing societies and industrial units, as elevator operators in multi-storied buildings as well as a significant proportion of self-employed who are engaged in micro production and processing activities, doing various repairing works, as service providers and those selling eatables and other items in carts, *gallas*, standing on road-sides and footpaths, including a large number of vendors-hawkers and also rag-pickers. These sets of livelihood activities are being encompassed as 'Fringe Sector' which comprises all livelihood earners in non-industrial unorganised sector activities. And as per one guesstimate the work-

force being engaged in the entire unorganised sector which envelops industrial sub-sector (which is the subject of present write-up) as well as 'the fringe Sector' [for details see K. Desai, 2014)] as delineated above have formed more than 85 percentage of city's working population. In all around 20 lakh workers are eking out livelihood in assortment of activities of unorganised sector as depicted above.

Profile of Small and Medium Scale Industrial Units Workers (SMIWs)

As per one guesstimate fifty to sixty percentage of Surat's population is migrant in nature and a very large portion of them are eking out their livelihood from industrial and fringe sub-sectors of informal sector activities as enlisted above. The slums of Surat, where most of those eking out their livelihood from varied informal sector activities live, are inhabited by migrants mostly (around 80%) as another study revealed (Das, 1993).

Breman, the renowned scholar, who has done pioneering research on Indian labour, especially of unorganised sector, is of the view that social origin of the worker frequently determines the type of work s/he carried out. Elaborating further he has mentioned that in recruitment to the better-skilled and better-paid tasks in informal industrial work intermediate groups and 'Other Backward Communities' (OBCs) seem to be strongly represented. In contrast, workers who perform the most humble and miserable form of informal sector works are mostly recruited from the lowest social ranks and are often from tribal and Dalit communities (Breman, 1999.b, P. 414) and that has to do with difference in educational level and obtained skills.

Table 1: Industry and Social Group wise Distribution of the Industrial Workers

Caste of the Respondent	Type of Industry				Total
	Power-looms	Dyeing - Printing	Diamond	Embroidery	
No Information / No response/ Not clear	02 (0.6)	01 (0.5)	01 (0.2)	00 (0.0)	04 (0.3)
Higher Castes	40 (12.9)	23 (11.9)	32 (6.0)	22 (8.8)	117 (9.1)
Intermediate Castes	61 (19.6)	10 (5.2)	334 (62.8)	53 (21.2)	458 (35.6)
Artisan Castes	09 (2.9)	9 (4.7)	113 (21.2)	12 (4.8)	143 (11.1)
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	27 (8.7)	29 (15.0)	07 (1.3)	32 (12.8)	95 (7.4)
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	11 (3.5)	14 (7.3)	07 (1.3)	10 (4.0)	42 (3.3)
Other Backward Communities (OBCs)	138 (44.4)	72 (37.3)	38 (7.1)	88 (35.2)	336 (26.1)
Muslims	21 (6.8)	34 (17.6)	00 (0.0)	30 (12.0)	85 (6.6)
Other Minority Groups	00 (0.0)	00 (0.0)	00 (0.0)	1 (0.4)	1 (0.1)
Other Groups	02 (0.6)	01 (0.5)	00 (0.0)	2 (0.8)	5 (0.4)
Total	311 (100.0)	193 (100.0)	532 (100.0)	250 (100.0)	1286 (100.0)

Source: Desai, K., 2018.
Note: Figures in the bracket indicate percentage.

The data of our study (Desai, K., 2018) clearly indicate that the proportions of Dalit groups as well as Scheduled tribes are very low as such among SMIWs on one hand and that of 'Other Backward Communities' and 'Intermediate Castes' are having huge majority. And the co-relations between social groups and industry wise nature of work suggests that as such no such relationship can be established between the two in terms of social hierarchy as pointed out by Breman. In the case of four industrial branches of Surat, the intermediate caste-group of *Saurashtra Patels* has overwhelming presence in all the work-sections of the diamond

polishing industry, whereas in the rest three branches the 'Other Backward Communities' (OBCs) as a combined social group shows significant proportions among workers (Table 1). So Breman's contention does not hold universal validity and each industrial centre signifies its specific characteristics in terms of composition of labour-force based on several factors. However, one common feature being found amongst workers of unorganised sector, irrespective of place and activity, is that the huge majority of them belong to bottom echelons in social and economic hierarchies.

Various erstwhile studies and reports have clearly mentioned on waning presence of women in industrial sector (Morris, 1965, GoI 1969, Sharma, 1974, Breman, 1999. a). However, they further have indicated towards more presence of women in home-based work. As Breman has noted, almost entire urban informal sector exhibits very strong masculine presence. Even though the scenario has, by and large, remained the same, significant presence of woman members belonging to the socially and economically lowly placed groups have been found working in the Fringe Sector (FS) (Desai, 2014), doing home-based work, as domestic servant, earning in self-employment sector activities -mainly doing roadside sales and so on.

Our study indicates the proportion of female workers in the industrial activities of informal sector of Surat as 12 percent. However, likewise FS and based on our qualitative information it is the contention of this study that the proportion of

female workers is much higher than the quantitative information divulge. Especially the embroidery and dying-printing industries have significant presence of woman workers. Data reveal that out of every 100 female workers 55 are working for embroidery units. The embroidery industry also provides option of work at home and that suits some of the woman-workers more as they can take care of domestic responsibilities too along with engaging in earning activity.

The following Table 2 indicates percentage of migrants in the workers of different branches of industries in Surat. As it shows only 7 percent of the workers are belonging to Surat district. Whereas on the other hand, 50 percent are migrants from other states, among them those who have come from far-off states are huge contingent (39%). Due to mainly Diamond industry another large group of migrants are from Saurashtra region too can be found among migrants. So in overall terms, almost 93 percent of the industrial workers are migrants in nature.

Table 2: Industry- wise Native Places of the Workers

Native place of the Respondent	Type of Industry				Total
	Powerlooms	Dyeing - Printing	Diamond	Embroidery	
This City itself	12 (3.9)	27 (14.0)	18 (3.4)	15 (6.0)	72 (5.6)
Nearby Villages of This District itself	02 (0.6)	03 (1.6)	00 (0.0)	00 (0.0)	05 (0.4)
Distant Villages of This District	00 (0.0)	09(4.7)	04 (0.8)	01 (0.4)	14 (1.1)
Neighbouring Districts of South Gujarat Region	04 (1.3)	04 (2.1)	05 (0.9)	04 (1.6)	17 (1.3)

North Gujarat	02 (0.6)	01 (0.5)	11 (2.1)	06 (2.4)	20 (1.6)
Central Gujarat	04 (1.3)	00 (0.0)	00 (0.0)	03 (1.2)	07 (0.5)
Saurashtra Region	02 (0.6)	09 (4.7)	467 (87.8)	28 (11.2)	506 (39.3)
Neighbouring States	59 (19.0)	36 (18.7)	13 (2.4)	36 (14.4)	144 (11.2)
Other States/Regions	226 (72.7)	104 (53.9)	14 (2.6)	157 (62.8)	501 (39.0)
Total	311 (100.0)	193 (100.0)	532 (100.0)	250 (100.0)	1286 (100.0)

Source: Desai, K., 2018.

Note: Figures in the Bracket indicate percentage.

Table 3: State-wise Native Places of Industrial Workers

Native place of the Respondent (State)	Type of Industry				Total
	Powerlooms	Dyeing – Printing	Diamond	Embroidery	
Gujarat	26 (8.4%)	53 (27.5%)	505 (94.9%)	57 (22.8%)	641 (49.8%)
Maharashtra	44 (14.1%)	16 (8.3%)	13 (2.4%)	15 (6.0%)	88 (6.8%)
Rajasthan	4 (1.3%)	6 (3.1%)	0 (.0%)	10 (4.0%)	20 (1.6%)
Madhya Pradesh	11 (3.5%)	14 (7.3%)	0 (.0%)	11 (4.4%)	36 (2.8%)
Uttar Pradesh	57 (18.3%)	45 (23.3%)	6 (1.1%)	88 (35.2%)	196 (15.2%)
Bihar	14 (4.5%)	36 (18.7%)	0 (.0%)	27 (10.8%)	77 (6.0%)
Haryana	0 (.0%)	2 (1.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.2%)
Jharkhand	0 (.0%)	1 (.5%)	0 (.0%)	3 (1.2%)	4 (.3%)
Odisha	148 (47.6%)	16 (8.3%)	8 (1.5%)	27 (10.8%)	199 (15.5%)
West Bengal	5 (1.6%)	1 (.5%)	0 (.0%)	9 (3.6%)	15 (1.2%)
Nepal	1 (.3%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.8%)	3 (.2%)
Delhi	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (.4%)	1 (.1%)
Other (Telangana, Uttarakhand, Assam)	1 (.3%)	3 (1.6%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	4 (.3%)
Total	311 (100.0%)	193 (100.0%)	532 (100.0%)	250 (100.0%)	1286 (100.0%)

Source: Desai, K., 2018.

Table 3 displays native states of the industrial workers in statistical terms which suggests that in overall terms representation of Gujarat outnumbers other states markedly. Taking proportional values industry wise diamond industry indicates very large percentage of home-state though as has mentioned in the above text most of them are migrants from Saurashtra region. Proportions of workers from home-state are significant in dying-printing and embroidery units too. As our qualitative information reveal a good number of tribal workers from rural hinterland of Surat as well as neighbouring district of Tapi are being employed in embroidery industry. Similarly, local workers have notice-worthy presence in dying-printing units. Amongst in-migrants from other states, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha have major and almost equal percentage of representation. Whereas the natives from the former are found in big number in all the branches except diamond units, with more than one-third of the work-force of embroidery industrial units are constituted of this group, migrants from Odisha have formed almost half of the workers in weaving sector. And as a survey conducted by South Gujarat University (SGU, 1985) too has shown in the early eighties, when the in-migration had accelerated in the city the migrants from Odisha had large presence in weaving sector (42%).

Theoretical Schools Explaining Migration¹

Different scholars have provided conflicting sets of explanations pertaining to factors which can be considered as causing migration. One school gives importance to individual factor whereas the opponent theoretical model considers structural reasons more vital. Sociologist Anthony Giddens argues "that an analysis has to take account of both sets of factors - of structures and of individuals"².

The present narration argues more in line of the structuralist model that for the weaker and marginalised sections of the population the root

causes of migration is the combinations of social, political and economic forces. The socio-economic structure primarily determines social processes and events. An individual cannot be separated from his/her social existence. For people at the bottom of social-economic order who are most of the time occupied in the struggle for eking out livelihood, course of life mostly tread along social and economic forces. And then an individual's choices are not shaped in vacuum. It is the very social milieu that shapes the preferences and choices of an individual. Thus, it is difficult to isolate an individual in terms of his/her choices from the social and economic as well as political forces under which he/she lives. For a common social being it is the set of larger social forces that determines his/her way of thinking and decision-making. Importantly, the apparent set of choices for an individual has not been broad and open. The visible availability of various choices seems to be deceptive. Especially the People who are languishing at the lowest bottom of social and economic echelons have awfully limited scope in terms of choices. The question one should raise is what sort of choices do they in effect have? Are they really being considered as choices? Does the set of choices available to the marginalised and deprived rural groups of people as free individuals are not restricted and obstructed by structure and system?

So Giddens' theoretical formulation and Haan's re-confirmation of the same about taking into account individuals having array of choices needs re-examination. Similarly, Giddens concept of 'duality of structure' that emphasises mutual dependence of structure and agency also requires questioning. His argument is that social systems are both the medium as well as the outcomes of the practices prevailing in the systems. In other words, he stressed significance of actions of actors or agencies in shaping the structure, the system. The question do all the sections and strata contribute in equal terms in doing so? Does the concept of 'Duality of Dominance and Subordination' has not

to be taken into consideration in highly unequal social order such as ours in this regard? Do the downtrodden, the exploited, the marginalised, such as the groups of FSEs and SMIWs of unorganised sector have any space to chip in with regard to outlining the structure? The answer is very obvious which both these scholars somehow are not addressing.

The data also clearly indicate that large majority of the migrant workers have moved out for livelihood purpose (Table 4).

NCEUS (2008) in its last report has suggested that in order to improve the living standards of the entire labour force of unorganised sector their skill level should be upgraded or unskilled labour should be

imparted skills and for that they have to gain formal education. But this is an unpractical and unfeasible dream as the data of the studies clearly indicate that education level of unorganised sector workers is extremely low due to poor economic status. For SMIWs any sort of skill requirement is not the prerequisite for them to be recruited. Industrial landscape pertaining to small and medium scale industrial units which was the focus of the present research is totally different. And as data suggest of this study more than 80 percent of workers have acquired education up to secondary level at the most. Similarly, technical expertise is not at all essential for getting work.

Table 4: Reasons for Migration (Industry Wise)

	Weaving	Dying-Printing	Diamond	Embroidery	Total
No Information/No response/Not Clear	04 (1.3)	06 (3.1)	05 (0.9)	01 (0.4)	16 (1.2)
Local and hence, Not applicable	08 (2.6)	35 (18.1)	19 (3.6)	13 (5.2)	75 (5.8)
To Seek work	192 (61.7)	55 (28.5)	169 (30.3)	123 (49.2)	531 (41.3)
Due to Marriage	08 (2.6)	06 (3.1)	20 (3.8)	32 (12.8)	66 (5.1)
Due to family migration	45 (14.5)	40 (20.7)	93 (17.5)	25 (10.0)	203 (15.8)
No employment in native	20 (6.4)	01 (0.5)	11 (2.1)	20 (8.0)	52 (4.0)
To get more remunerative job	43 (13.8)	51 (26.4)	161 (30.3)	55 (22.0)	310 (24.1)
To leave agriculture as not remunerative	18 (5.8)	04 (2.1)	113 (21.2)	15 (6.0)	150 (11.7)
As many from natives have come	06 (1.9)	00 (0.0)	17 (3.2)	09 (3.6)	32 (2.5)
No land/ livelihood	05 (1.6)	02 (1.0)	32 (6.0)	14 (5.6)	53 (4.1)
Other Reasons	19 (6.1)	01 (0.5)	108 (20.3)	05 (2.0)	133 (10.3)
Total	311 (100.0)	193 (100.0)	532 (100.0)	250 (100.0)	1286 (100.0)

Source: Desai, K., 2018.

Note: Figures in the bracket indicate percentage.

On Working and Living Conditions

The central theme of the essay is working and living conditions of workers. But as an organic and integral part it also addresses social sphere of workers. The contention of this narration is that both the spheres are interrelated and the phenomenon of informality is not just confined to economic domain but it also percolates in social sphere. In order to cope up with set of fragilities and vulnerabilities in life people at lower echelons have to resort to means which are informal and non-traditional, transcending the prevalent norms. This needs to be captured. It is argued that instability and insecurity pervades every aspect of their life; economic and social. In the former, it is termed as informal/unorganised and in the second, it may be termed non-traditional or asocial.

Unorganised sector thrives and survives itself on inter-dependence of its sub-sectors in terms of 'enhancing' and providing space for sustenance to masses of livelihood-seekers. One of the main contentions of the study with reference to the urban centre of Surat city is that the informal sector in its entirety that comprises of its different components, with ensemble of economic activities, from industrial sub-sector to fringe sub-sector forms a continuum. This includes livelihood options in vast gamut of production related activities as well as service sector. Unorganised sector in this sense presents itself as continuum enveloping under its rubric all the activities of specific location; industrial as well as non-industrial. And as qualitative details of present search suggest, to an extent this vast canvass of activities include agricultural and non-agricultural related subsistence activities of rural sector too. The point is in order to comprehend these two sub-sectors in terms of activities they offer and entire work milieu covering both, one must locate each of the sub-sectors in the entirety of informal sector. And that

has proved vital in comprehending complex and nebulous world of work-force of unorganised sector of Surat city.

More than anything else it is the network of social, relational or other ethnic ties or acquaintances through which livelihood seekers enter the labour market and get the particular job or livelihood activity. Although, other traits and qualifications of new entrants such as education, technical know-how can be proved important in getting appropriate job it is not the prime determinant for accessibility of work in industrial or fringe sub-sectors of informal sector of Surat. The parameters and variables that characterise the functioning of informal sector activities are complex and quite different in compare to formal sector.

The working conditions are pathetic. Except diamond industry and to some extent embroidery industry the workers have to toil in extremely oppressive conditions at the shop-floor level. Minimal facilities of fans and ventilation are absent in several units in weaving and dying-printing branches. Pollution being generated due to heat, fumes and dust has made working conditions of dying-printing units extremely unbearable. And in all the four branches the SMIWs are prone to health problems as well as physical injuries and they are not given any protective gears. Working hours are long; 12 and even more and as the payment is made on piece-rate method, workers tend to self-exploit themselves. Despite that the wages are hardly considered as substantial. In comparative terms, workers of diamond polishing units are receiving better wage-packet than the other three branches (see Table 5).

Table 5: Monthly Wages

Monthly Wages (In Rupees)	Type of Industry				Total
	Powerlooms	Dyeing – Printing	Diamond	Embroidery	
6000 or less	22 (7.1%)	42 (21.8%)	3 (0.6%)	61 (24.4%)	128 (10.0%)
6001 to 8000	49 (15.8%)	28 (14.5%)	23 (4.3%)	32 (12.8%)	132 (10.3%)
8001 - 10000	112 (36.0%)	54 (28.0%)	67 (12.6%)	99 (39.6%)	332 (25.8%)
10001 - 12500	79 (25.4%)	29 (15.0%)	73 (13.7%)	29 (11.6%)	210 (16.3%)
12501 - 15000	41 (13.2%)	22 (11.4%)	119 (22.4%)	20 (8.0%)	202 (15.7%)
15001 - 17500	0 (0.0%)	8 (4.1%)	60 (11.3%)	3 (1.2%)	71 (5.5%)
17501 - 20000	8 (2.6%)	5 (2.6%)	84 (15.8%)	2 (0.8%)	99 (7.7%)
20001 - 25000	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.6%)	64 (12.0%)	4 (1.6%)	71 (5.5%)
25001 or more than that	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.0%)	39 (7.3%)	0 (0.0%)	41 (3.2%)
Total	311 (100.0%)	193 (100.0%)	532(100.0%)	250 (100.0%)	1286 (100.0%)

Source: Desai, K., 2018.

Most of the SMIWs are not getting any legally enshrined rights and benefits. Leave aside other sets of rights and benefits or social security measures such as earned leaves, sick leaves, pension, provident fund and employees' security insurance (ESI), even the weekly or in cases fortnightly leaves are unpaid. The leave system takes care of workers' social and other than work, worldly life. This way their social dignity is being maintained and respected. Not only that, the crucial aspect of personality development of the workers can be addressed. As one essential factor for progress and growth of social order is development of specific personal traits of individuals. The SMIWs do not have such dignity caring and personality development related mechanisms. They have to surrender, to subject themselves to their livelihood activities in order to survive. Their private or social life is completely dependent on their livelihood activities. Contrary to taking care of social dignity and personality development, the working conditions of unorganised sector activities, both in industrial and non-industrial

spheres, have been proving detrimental for the well-being of workers in overall terms.

The pathetic work related conditions are reflected in the data pertaining to age-group which show that proportion of workers above the age of 50 years is very small. And it indirectly signifies that the longevity of workers is also detrimentally affected. Renowned scholar Jan Breman who has done extensive research on informal sector has noted with regard to weaving sector of textile industry of Surat that,

“Only one in ten powerloom operators is older than forty. The labour process is so exhausting that very few are able to perform adequately after middle age.”

(Breman, 1996, p. 61).

In overall terms, for SMIWs, together with treacherous conditions at work-places, their living conditions too are extremely wretched. Combination of these two factors has harsh and harmful effects on SMIWs' physique and psyche.

Not only they have been exploited and self-exploited and have to work in oppressive conditions as well as have to live in filthy, unhygienic habitats, in overall terms they live and work amidst illegal and unethical milieu. Almost each and every aspect related with their life smacks of their proneness with and related vulnerabilities to nefarious elements. On one hand, owners or contractors are unabashedly exploiting them by violating legal bindings as well as keeping aside human values for their parochial, selfish economic interest; and on the other, those who are supposedly protectors of lawful rights such as police as well as officials from various government departments are acting hand in glove with these violators. Slum localities too are ruled by slumlords, bootleggers and other 'immoral' elements. Bereft of any human tenderness, senses and emotions slowly but surely the unorganised sector livelihood earners (USLEs) too become integral elements and parts of this illegal and unethical milieu affecting their mind-set, emotional terrain, consciousness and behaviour and mutilating their humanness as a net result.

Coping Devices

In the present context the primordial ties have become one of the major mainstays for SMIWs and FSEs in terms of social security and support as unions are facing extinction, state apparatuses have almost withdrawn in terms of providing protection and livelihood market has been facing instability and fluidity for both the sub-sectors. This phenomenon certainly raises theoretical issue pertaining to relationship between industrial and urban social order vis-à-vis primordial social institutions. It has been envisaged by the sociologists that with the evolution and advent of industrial urban social order traditional and primordial social ties and bonding would get weakened, institution of joint family too would get feeble and institutions related with work milieu would get strengthened. But this has not to be. Without the support of extended family, the

migrant workers would find it difficult to sustain. The inter-relationship between industrial urban order and traditional social institutions is determined more by the nature of industrialization and urbanization than their mere evolution and existence. It is true that in the case of many of the European societies decline of age-old social institutions was witnessed due to an advent of robust nature of industrialization that had features of marked advancements of individual freedom and organizations based on achieved status. But that has not happened in third world countries such as India and that possibility has completely quashed with the advent of globalization project.

Horizontal mobility does occur in some cases mostly within same activity of an industrial branch. However, the informal structure of industries denies probability of vertical mobility as it thrives on the system not having up-gradation scheme in terms of status or even emoluments. So ambitious and experienced workers who have got the knack of prevailing industrial practices seek their masters' favour in order to get 'informal' up-gradation, that is mostly associated with a wage-hike, and very rarely with legal rights. But as data clearly indicate workers frequently change units within a branch in an unrestricting way mainly due to dissatisfaction over working conditions, primarily wages, though inter-branch mobility is never easy.

The inter-sector or intra-sector mobility is organically associated with another prominent feature of urban unorganised sector. Labour market in an informal sector is highly fragmented. The argument, that varied nature of industrial and non-industrial activities provide plethora of employment opportunities in informal sector of urban economy is a myth and needs a close scrutiny. It is argued that scope and possibilities do exist in terms of intra-industry, inter-industrial and inter-informal sector mobility, both at vertical and horizontal levels. In city-centre such as Surat, labour market segmentation has taken shape

mainly on the lines of demographic as well as social-cultural-regional specificities of labour. In the textile industry of Surat, for instance, varied nature of weaving operations are carried mainly by migrants from Odisha whereas migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, a good number of them are Muslims, are employed mainly in dying - printing units. Similarly, migrants from Saurashtra, are found working in diamond units. In construction business, labour work has been primarily carried out by tribals of Central Gujarat region as well as other states whereas plumbing operation has been taken care of by Muslims of West Bengal and colouring work is a specialised task of migrants from Uttar Pradesh, a large section among them Muslims. Among the auto-rickshaw drivers migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are in large numbers and amongst security guards States of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have higher representations. When few years back, diamond industry was under crisis and workers were laid off it was almost impossible for retrenched workers to move over to weaving units or dying-printing units of textile industry as nature of works in both the industries are entirely different from diamond industry. Even otherwise in a highly segmented labour market where a particular job specification in one industrial or non-industrial activity has been mainly taken care of by a group with specific demographic characteristic, crossover is extremely difficult. This can be viewed as a security device of a group of labour. In order to stay afloat and sustain in highly competitive labour market various sections of labour, based on regional as well as ethnic identity/specificity, have been creating a 'cordoned niche' in a specific nature of work. This has created a situation of quite complex and contradictory order. Informal nature of economic activities on one hand atomises, and on the other, fragmentises the labour. But this mechanism of 'cordoned niche' is antithetical to both ideological strands; those who vouch for solidarity on 'class' basis and also those who propagate informal sector for flexibility of labour

market. Another contradiction it generates is that on one hand, there is abundance in supply of cheap labour but on the other, entry in any one kind of work is not all that smooth sailing.

Even after striving and stretching to the limit, exerting and exhausting all the energy and capabilities a human being may possess, and irrespective of activities, considering the wage-rates and resultant income-level, the unorganised sector livelihood earners cannot sustain their families on single working-hand. And so each and every able-bodied member of the households, irrespective of the age - children, young and aged are compelled to earn a share in the family's livelihood. As statistical figures of the study clearly indicate almost 8 out of every 10 SMIWs have more than one earning member in the family. And out of them more than one-third of the workers have reported that their families have more than 3 earning members. This is another coping mechanism the SMIWs as well as FSEs have been applying.

Similarly, a large section of the SMIWs and even FSEs, mainly casual labourers from the latter group who are working as construction labourers, make all sorts of effort to be in good book of their employers; who may be owners or contractors. They do not view their contractors and owners solely as their masters but someone who support them in needs and crisis situation. They try to surmount their insecurity and pathetic conditions of employment by dealing personally with employers/contractors to get better treatment from them by assuring subordination and loyalty and in return, seeking assistance in terms of monetary support. Beliefs in pantheon of gods and goddesses as well as various saints and religious sects also signify such submissive surrender in face of extremely harsh and arduous life.

Workers have cultivated a trait of not listening and responding to abusive and obscene language and

spiteful behaviour of owners and contractors. It is also considered as a kind of defence mechanism. The abusive language is meaningless if it is not received and responded. The passiveness and docility are cultivated by workers as a defence strategy.

Working conditions on shop-floors in weaving and dying-printing are extremely oppressive and hazardous (Patel, 2017) in general and during hot summer period, the work-place turns into furnace and hence, working on the shop-floor becomes torturous. The qualitative details of the study disclose that very large proportion of workers take break in this oppressive season for 1 to 2 months and return back to their native places. Around 30 to 40 % of the total work-force goes back, as per one authentic estimate given by a senior worker. And due to that some of the owners are compelled to halt production-activity during this period. The owners who do not allow their workers to take even a small break to freshen up with tea as that may affect production in normal time, are forced to face loss of production for long period and if, want to continue

production-work, they have to hire alternative hands by offering higher wages. This collective action on the part of workers to return to the native places that can affect production activity detrimentally can be read as other 'weapon' migrant workers apply effectively. And its effectiveness lies in the fact that on return they get work, if not in their earlier units, then in other work-places, in the same industrial branch. Both these responses on the part of SMIWs may be considered as, to use, James Scott terms, 'Weapons of the Weak' (Scott, 1990).

In Lieu of Conclusion

Surat provides livelihood opportunities to quite large number of migrant population, mostly from other states, in small and medium scale industrial units of informal sector. But their working and living conditions are pathetic and they are deprived of legally enshrined protection measures. In order to keep them afloat in an adverse and exploitative situation they have devised coping mechanisms that signify informal milieu of work.

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Contribution of Women Corporators in Urban Governance

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Abstract

Governance and good governance have become important ideas today. Good governance demands participation of both men and women. To what extent women participate in political affairs? Although Women in India constitute half of the population of the country, their representation in the various governance and decision-making bodies is not adequate. Constitution of India guarantees equal political status to women in India. But they are not able to exercise their right to participate in political affairs. Their representation in Lok Sabha and in State Legislative Assemblies is less. Very few of them could become ministers or party heads. Women participate in movements but their participation in formal structures is limited.

Key Words: *Constitutional amendments, good governance, municipal corporations, women corporators.*

Introduction

The issue of underrepresentation of women was first discussed in 'Towards Equality' report. Report recommended for reservation for women at least at the local level. National Perspective Plan (NPP) of 1988 recommended reservation for women in panchayats and municipalities. Karnataka became first state to reserve 25% of seats for women in local elections. Maharashtra followed the example of

Karnataka. This paved way for 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments.

In this background 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments passed in 1993 are very important. 73rd Constitutional amendment provided for reservation for women in rural local bodies whereas 74th Constitutional amendment provided for reservation for women in urban local bodies. There have been various articles written about role of women in rural local bodies. Compared to that, role of women in urban local bodies is not discussed in detail. Therefore, it was decided to study role of women Corporators in urban areas.

It was thought opportune to find out whether entry of women in urban local bodies is just quantitative development or is it possible for women to play an active role as decision makers?

The author conducted a research on the above, in Municipal Corporations of Thane District and they included Thane (TMC), Kalyan-Dombivli (KDMC) and Navi Mumbai (NMMC). TMC was established in the year 1982, Kalyan in 1983 and NMMC was established in the year 1991. As these Corporations have completed more than 25 years, it was thought imperative to select these corporations.

Research Methodology

Data for this study was collected through primary sources. A detailed questionnaire was prepared

which dealt with various aspects of Corporators. 50 women Corporators were interviewed through open ended questions. They consisted of sitting (current) Corporators and ex Corporators. Some were senior and some junior to have a fair cross section. Out of 50 Corporators, 32 were from Thane Municipal Corporation and 18 from KDMC and NMMC.

Through questions attempt was made to find out their beliefs, values and understanding of women Corporators about municipal system. During interviews they were observed too. On the basis of these interviews certain observations have been made.

While presenting data, feministic frame is used. Feminism aims that providing equal role and opportunities to women. Despite patriarchal structures, how women got opportunity to enter public sphere and what role they played in last 25 years is explained in the article.

Demographic Profile of the Corporators

- Most of the Corporators were in the age group of 31 to 60 age group in general and 30 to 40 in particular. Among 'sitting' Corporators, the maximum age at the time of contesting was 53 and among seniors it was 57. Fear of character assassination and traditional attitude of society seems to keep young girls away from politics.
- Large section of Corporators had education up to secondary level. Number of Post graduates and professionals was higher in KDMC and in NMMC. With the passage of time percentage of graduates is increasing.
- Most of the respondents in both the corporations belonged to Hindu religion and were Maratha or OBC by caste. OBCs were from Agri and Koli community.

- Most of them were married and homemakers who contested elections as the seat became reserved for women.
- Husbands of many Corporators were civil contractors or in construction business. In interviews it was observed that most of the Corporators were having opulent lifestyle.
- When woman enters public sphere the most important issue that emerges is of carrying domestic responsibilities. Therefore, it was thought essential to find out about their children. Most of them had two children especially in case of sitting Corporators as prescribed by law. In case of TMC, most of them had their children above ten when they first contested elections. This endorses the fact that generally women enter politics after their reproductive responsibilities are over.
- Most of the Corporators had familial political background. They had male relatives in politics and entered politics at the insistence of male relatives. It was obvious that when the ward became reserved or when the male representatives had further political opportunities, female relatives especially wife was encouraged to contest elections. In case of two Corporators they had political legacy but could contest elections only when ward was declared as reserved.
- As wife is considered as most trusted, the baton is handed over to her. In this process good party workers are deprived of tickets. This may lead to declining number of party workers. In most cases decision to enter politics had been taken under the influence of male relatives.

Only two Corporators had won elections four times in TMC. In KDMC, one Corporator had won election five times. Most of them had won election

for one time. Here it must be noted that this is because they start career late and there are many factors which decide whether they can contest election again. Of course, there are respectable exceptions. Party defections have been seen in case of women Corporators. This is mainly because the decisions are taken by male relatives on the behalf of women.

Very few were active in social movements before entering politics. Most of them were member of organizations promoted by their own families. Most of them had nursed further political ambitions. In some cases their ambitions were because of familial political background. In case of few active Corporators, they wanted to become Mayor, MLA or MP. But are their parties willing to give tickets to them? This is important question. Those who know these equations are aware of limitations.

Role and Contribution of Women Corporators

Before we see their role, it is interesting to note that most of them were unaware about 74th Constitutional amendment which paved their entry into politics. Few of them were lawyers but unaware about constitutional this important constitutional amendment. Most of them agreed that they could enter into politics only because of reservations. They agreed that they will not be fielded by parties in the absence of reservations. When asked about their representation in party organisation, most of them were satisfied. But they agreed that they are accommodated in women's wing of the party and not in main organisational structure. They also agreed that women's wings are not as powerful as main organisation.

Perception of Own Role as Corporators

As far as their perception about role of Corporators is concerned, most of them told that their most important duty is to solve day to day problems of

the people in the ward related to 'water, meter and gutter'. They have to implement the policies devised for women. They must develop rapport with people and understand their personal problems. All of them believed that that it their most important duty is to provide people in ward the basic amenities or facilities like roads, drainage facility, water, streetlights etc. But they have did not seem to be aware of their special role as Women representative. They seemed to follow the male Corporators while playing the role. While celebrating International Women's Day too they organise stereotype programmes and did not seem to think out of box.

Their initiatives mainly consisted of Civic responsibilities, responsibilities towards women, providing transport facilities and waste management. Their responsibilities towards women consist of instituting self-help group (bachat gats), organising medical camps, implementing policies of Women and Children Welfare Committee. But most of them could not answer questions related to budget satisfactorily.

When asked about relations with municipal officers, they had to interact with different levels in Municipal Corporation from sweepers to engineers and officers from different departments and sometimes even with and Additional Commissioner and Commissioners. If these Corporators were elected for the first time and did not have male relatives, they did not get any cooperation from municipal officials and they had confrontations with municipal officials. Most of them agreed that municipal officials cooperate if they have male relatives in politics and only if they prove themselves and get re-elected.

Among the 'sitting' Corporators of TMC, most were not positively thinking about towards the idea of training. They told that as they get information about political proceedings at home, there was no need of training. Few Corporators have pursued municipal

training and few parties have also organised training for women Corporators. Few Senior Corporators were provided training at Rambhau Mhalgi Academy and very appreciative of the training. But on the whole they seemed to be influenced by male relatives. Possibly their male relatives themselves do not understand the importance of training. Or probably they were of the opinion that because of their ignorance they will work according to the guidance given by family members. It must be mentioned that training should not only incorporate municipal procedures but on gender sensitization, personality and leadership development, soft skills, methods of stress management etc. should also be important component of training.

Discrimination is clearly seen in case of committees. In all three corporations, women are members of committees like Women and Child Development, education or health. They have rarely been Chairperson of Standing Committee or as its member that handles financial matters. They are not adequately represented in Transport Committee. The perception of women Corporators is probably influenced by male Corporators. Therefore, they consider Standing Committee more important than other committees. As they are not members of Standing Committee their role in budgetary procedure is confined to putting forth their demands. Most of them were unaware about idea of 'gender budgeting'.

Most of them feel that they have inadequate funds. Few were aware that once they understand municipal process, they realize how to acquire them. Most of them told that they spend their funds on provision of basic amenities like repairing of roads, construction of roads, sewage lines, streetlights etc.

Obstacles Faced by Women Corporators

As far as the issue of obstacles faced by women Corporators is concerned, one of the important is male domination. Some of them stated that they are

not allowed to speak in the house. They are not taken into confidence while taking important decisions. Some Corporators also opined that after becoming Mayor, their career comes to an end whereas men get tickets for Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. For few others, municipal administration is also an obstacle. They told about lengthy municipal procedures, complicated municipal rules and regulations, administrative delay. They also shared that nature of municipal officials; male domination in municipal administration also becomes obstacle. Few Corporators told that the kind of proximity the male Corporators developed with municipal officials is not possible in case of female Corporators. Impatience of the people, and inadequate funds were other obstacles. Few Corporators were also apprehensive about character assassination.

Lack of Solidarity

A large percentage of women Corporators were of the opinion that there is no solidarity among the women Corporators beyond party lines. Their mobilization on women's issues is very important. Two reasons responsible for this may be party instructions and the familial political background of women Corporators. Many a times they prefer to discuss their problems with male relatives or mentors. One example is illustrative. In Thane about a year ago, one girl was misled by one auto driver. She was scared and she jumped from the running auto and fell unconscious. One woman Corporator saw the girl and took her to hospital and helped her. However, she did not do any follow up to take up the cause of security of girls and women. She could have mobilized all women Corporators on this particular issue which was beyond party and which was close to everyone's heart. There was no solidarity among women Corporators.

Managing Dual Responsibilities

When they were asked about management of dual responsibilities, most of them had dual roles. They

first do their domestic chores and then turn to the job of Corporator. Many of them were proud that their priority is domestic responsibilities. They seemed to have accepted stereo type roles as far as division of work at home is concerned. As they themselves have entered politics because of someone's influence, most of them are not able to encourage young girls to join politics.

With the exception of few Corporators, others were confident in the use of public office agreed that this office has given them confidence. They expressed that being woman, women in their ward come closer to them and share their problems. They got status and identity. They became extrovert and confident.

During interviews, it was observed that in case of few women Corporators, their husbands or brother in law were present at the time of interview. In one case one of the male colleagues was present. Even during simple discussions many male sponsors did not allow the respondents to express independently. They interfered and even answered on the behalf of respondents. Unfortunately, respondents did not have the courage to oppose them.

While interviewing woman Corporators at their residences, one striking feature observed was that that they were never given personal space. They sat and spoke in the presence of other family members who were busy watching blaring television programs. None of them found it necessary to give space or silence when interview was in progress. The families did neither attach any importance nor could Corporators ask for their legitimate space.

With the exception of a few women Corporators who had created their own identity and work independently, others were influenced by male relatives or mentors. Male dominance seemed to be an integral part of our society and was reflected in political field.

Recommendations for Active Role by Corporators

Following recommendations can be made for women Corporators to play their role effectively:

- Political parties must give tickets to women candidates at all levels of electoral process. They must be given equal representation in the organisational structure of political parties. At present they are accommodated in women's fronts of political parties. Political parties must promote their women workers at local levels elections. Political parties can have the experience criterion which can reduce the concept of 'proxy candidates.'
- At local level, educational qualifications are already prescribed for Sarpanch. Similarly, educational qualifications should be prescribed for elections in urban local self – governing institutions. It will encourage educated people in general and educated women to enter politics.
- Gender sensitization should be in such a manner that both boys and girls should be inculcated with the value of gender equality. This can help girls to be relieved from shouldering all domestic responsibilities and concentrate on their public role.
- Training can help women Corporators to play an active role. Through training Corporators must be acquainted with important laws and constitutional amendments, with municipal proceedings, rules and regulations and different aspects of municipal system. They must be made aware regarding duties and functions of a Corporator. They should have understanding of the political system from national to local level. They must be given training as special representatives of women. There should be sessions on personality development and gender equality.

- Male Corporators must be trained to accept women as equal partners. Women are intentionally kept away from certain committees. There should be 50% reservation for women in each committee.
- If seats are reserved for women in higher bodies of governance, some capable women will get an opportunity to climb higher ladders of power.

Though today these recommendations seem to be too idealistic, with the passage of time they will come into reality.

Concluding Observations

Many women Corporators are elected with the support of male family members or other male supporters. But once they are elected, they must realize complexities of their work, express their opinions, participate in the discussions. They must work as a pressure group to influence policy making. For playing important role, number is not enough. They must play active role. They must look at themselves as human beings and evolve as human beings. They must internalise the role assigned to them and perform it. That will help them to become active partners in urban governance.

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COVID-19 and Livelihood Crunches of Paid Domestic Workers - Musings from the Field

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Abstract

Domestic workers are the most invisible and consequently vulnerable group among the informal workers. They are faceless and voiceless. This was clear as there was no space for them in the relief measures. The vulnerability of domestic workers was seen in the fact that the employers and resident associations/housing societies would not let them in, seeing them as a health risk (Unni, 2020). With no work, no wages and livelihood crunches, these paid domestic workers remain the most deprived due to Coronavirus pandemic in Uttar Pradesh. The present paper is contextualised within the increasing marginalisation and vulnerability of the domestic workers and analyses the impact of the pandemic particularly on the livelihoods of women paid domestic workers and their physical and emotional well-being through a primary investigation conducted in an urban setting.

Keywords: *Pandemic, Domestic Workers, COVID Carrier, Employment, Financial Crisis, Lockdown.*

1. Introduction

Being during a pandemic shock and resultant deep economic recession the backbone of domestic chores in urban setting- the “paid domestic workers” faced unprecedented health and socio-economic crisis in India. Emerging evidence and discussions collated through primary survey shed light on the fact that the impact of the pandemic on

these marginalised community was very deepening and devastating. The pandemic, even though, is a completely new paradigm, does not preclude the social-economic inequalities that prevailed prior to its onset driven by the social and patriarchal norms of our society. This has now been layered with India's universal lockdown and physical distancing as guidelines and measure to combat the spread of COVID-19. Undoubtedly, the necessity of these measures cannot be debated, a blanket and universal imposition without a charter of measures to mitigate the differential outcomes is outright discriminatory (Nanda and Anand, 2020).

The study by Samantroy and Sarker (2020) have stated that the pre-existing inequalities gets further accentuated during the crisis including increasing instances of violence against women. These domestic workers are found to be living in urban shanty locations facing the double brunt of the pandemic and loss of employment due to the state's measure to contain the crisis through stringent lockdown. Their work is often low paid, insecure and invisible (Vishwanath, 2020). Often to break the silence about the neglected, marginalised and vulnerable lives of these domestic workers we conducted a survey from 1st July to 15th July 2020 among the already sampled households (100 respondents) in the different locations of Lucknow city. The survey was conducted to assess coronavirus induced impact on domestic worker's livelihood and physical and emotional well-being during lockdown and its aftermath.

As most domestic workers were not able to work during lockdown and government exhorted people to pay their workers during the current hard times, the truth is that many were not paid, were unable to manage rent payment or even get enough food. Transcribing about the many woes and challenges faced by paid domestic workers during the pandemic which even filters after the lockdown, this paper strives to suggest measures for social and health protection along with welfare policy measures to upgrade the livelihood of these neglected yet mushrooming workers due to urbanisation and return migration after loosening of lockdown.

The paper is organised as follows. In Section 2 we focus on the research design i.e., data and methodology of the study on domestic workers. Section 3 examines the challenges in terms of employment, income and social protection followed by Section 4 engages in drawing lacuna in policy formulation and drawing roadmaps for the wellbeing of these workers (not accepted as workers) through policy thrust.

2. Data and Methodology

The study is based on quick survey conducted based on larger study on unorganised workers in urban labour market of Uttar Pradesh but for this paper we specifically tried to contact 100 sampled respondents (domestic workers) from Lucknow city but could revisit only 72 domestic workers located in different locations. Hence our sample was restricted to 72 domestic workers and the remaining 18 could not be contacted though lockdown was relaxed. The reasons for such a scenario were due to financial pressure they left the city. A very thorough and inquisitive questionnaire reflecting upon livelihood challenges during lockdown and afterwards was served. At the outset, during both quantitative and qualitative questioning, respondents were explained the purpose of the study, and how the findings would help us in delineating their plight.

3. Challenges in terms of Employment, Income and Social Protection

Undoubtedly COVID-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown imposed in two phases from 24 March 2020, initially for 21 days and eventually extended till 30 May demanding 'physical distancing' and 'stay at home' orders have wreaked havoc by exacerbating the already existing gender inequalities with substantial implications on women and girls (Patel, 2020). Domestic workers are no exception. The impacts of the lockdown have been disruptive and changed the way in which humans perform their daily activities and go about their routine lives (Chauhan, 2020). Specifically, the lockdown has widened the existing gender inequalities and limited the opportunities for women [United Nations. (2020), World Bank. (2020)]. Samantroy and Sarkar (2020) have rightly put that “The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has provided a new dimension for understanding the informality with increasing vulnerability of women workers. No doubt this is more pronounced for the “domestic workers” who enter the informal labour markets in the urban cities”.

These deprived lots are more dependent on market for their daily requirements and lockdown thrust upon brought forth two problems for them; one, they were deprived of income and secondly, with all shops and market closed due to lockdown these domestic workers suffered catching up with their daily requirements. The middle class retains a share of daily requirements of food and other requisites for their consumption for months together, while domestic workers and ones in the informal sector were largely dependent on market for their daily foods. Another disadvantage faced by the urban domestic workers is that they must pay house rent, which is a substantial part of the total expenditure incurred. The absence of public transport, as has happened during the lockdown significantly reduced their vigour to pursue their work. Domestic workers without identity or address proof are also

devoid of accessing public services (PDS) etc. and remain outside the ambit of the social security cover which guarantees several protective schemes, adding challenges to their survival. These issues in the urban sector make the urban workers more vulnerable to the employment and income shocks.

- **Loss of Employment / Income**

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit all sections of the society, but domestic workers, who are otherwise in high demand in urban areas due to emerging dual earning families, are among the worst hit with majority of them without employment and hence without wages during lockdown era. Though a lot of restrictions have been lifted and many businesses have restarted operations, there is no clarity on resumption of work by domestic helps, prolonging their misery. Loss of income because of lockdown and denial of work at the hand of their employers caused upheaval in the lives of these workers ultimately threatening their very existence

much more than the virus- pandemic (Kumar and Baliyan, 2020).

Rinku Devi's story is not an aberration but there are many domestic workers like her who work in the same apartment and are worried for themselves and their family members. She lives in Rajajipuram, Lucknow. Before lockdown she was working in 3 households but due to lockdown she was "carrier of corona virus", so she was rendered jobless and suffered financial stress.

Our survey found as to how the personal and occupational life of female domestic workers have been affected and how they are adapting and coping with little or no support from the government. These 72 respondents agreed that the pandemic has tremendously affected not only their employment opportunities but also hit them financially, socially and mentally.

Table 1 shows that respondents (43.64 percent) lost their job during lockdown. They retorted about

Table 1: Impact of Lockdown on Respondents

Impact of COVID-19	During Lockdown
Lost Employment	24 (43.64)
No other source of Income	52 (72.22)
Not received Full Salary	70 (97.22)
Loss of Employment of Family members	70 (97.22)
No Work, No Wages hence:	
Financial Crisis	33 (45.83)
Stress/Depression	42 (58.33)
Health Crisis	10 (13.89)
Anxiety	45 (62.50)
Sleep Concern due to Loss of Livelihood	34 (47.22)
Total	72 (100.00)

Source: COVID-19 Survey, 2020. Multiple Responses.

being extremely stressed due to unavailability of any financial help from any other source. Threat of virus spread restricted work opportunities of these workers as people do not want to risk their lives. The unemployment due to the pandemic caused extreme poverty and hunger, especially for those domestic workers who were the sole bread earner in the family.

Seema, a household worker who has been working for more than 25 years, happens to be a sole earner in the family of four members. Despite being ill she has never given up on her job. Earlier, she and her son were the two who were earning, but due to the outbreak of pandemic, her son lost his job. Before the lockdown, she used to work in five households, but unfortunately during lockdown she did not venture out hence few employers hired someone else. Now, she only has three houses to look forward to with meagre earnings to save for food, her daughter's education, medical expenses and electricity bills. As per the discussion, this lockdown has caused upheaval in her savings and resultant financial crisis stressed her tremendously.

Many were left in the lurch being replaced by someone else. In Lucknow, paid domestic workers living in slums must travel quite a bit of distances to reach posh colonies, apartments for work, spending money on transport or often by cycle. With lockdown being relaxed, these workers thought of joining back to work, but many of them were not able to do so due to hampered transport facilities and rest were not welcomed in the societies/apartments- being considered as COVID carrier. The anxiety of losing work due to lack of transport, and looming apprehension about being COVID carrier can be felt in the statements by Suniti she says that “we cannot travel on foot to Nirala Nagar about 3 Km. from Joshitola where we reside” and Kamala and Ranjana says that “in New Hyderabad apartment where they work, people have not

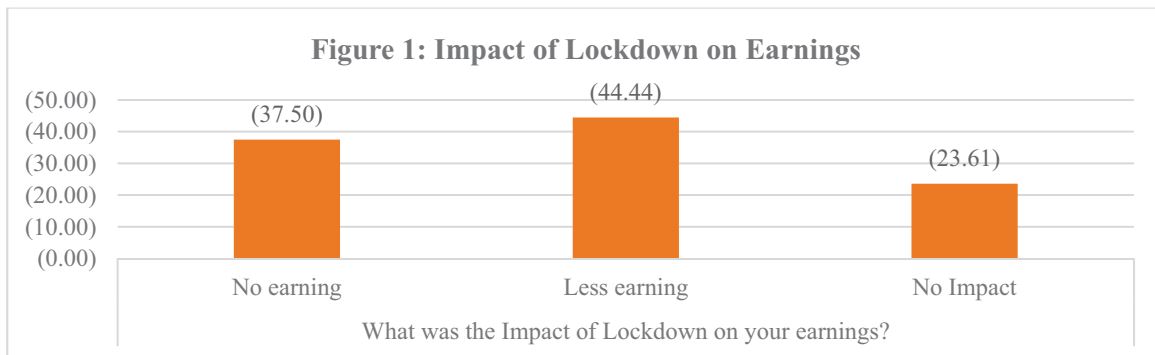
allowed them to enter being afraid of bringing infection as they work in other houses and have to cross several localities”.

Kaanti Gautam, a separated mother, lives with her three daughters in her own house in Rajiv Gandhi Pratham. She used to help in household chores in two houses before the onset of the pandemic. Since March, she was instructed by her employers not to come to the work following the lockdown. According to her “Our employer considers us to be more unhygienic and unsanitary, though it is we, who cares for cleanliness.” When asked if she was been paid for the term she did not work, she said that they just gave INR 500 in the first month.

Adding further, she said “now that lockdown has been lifted, I have called both the houses, explaining them that I am a responsible citizen and will adhere to all the guidelines, but they hung up saying we have small children at home and cannot invite risk.”

She received INR 500 for three months from the government and insufficient ration (wheat and rice) from the Government ration shops, which is inadequate for the family's survival. Her savings were all exhausted and she has started buying essentials on credit. Corona has hit the family drastically both financially and mentally.

The difference in the situation before and after the lockdown is that while they have geared up to learn to live with Covid, they still are helplessly waiting for a call to resume their work. Ironically, while those wanting to hire a domestic worker asked them to be tested for coronavirus before entering their premises- Shanti of New Hyderabad apartment irritatingly told “...they do not want to undergo the test themselves as if only the domestic workers are susceptible to the virus, and their employers are not”.



Source: COVID-19 Survey, 2020.

There were households where there were multiple hands to share and support in raising earnings but due to lockdown their sources were eroded. From the domestic workers from these households, 23.61 percent reported that there was no impact (Fig. 1). 44.44 percent were affected by getting lesser earnings and 37.5 percent blankly refuted by saying that they were deprived of any income. The financial loss also erupted from the fact that with no money in hand these workers found it difficult to make ends meet and suffered a great disappointment when asked to pay the rents.

Sushila lives with her 4 daughters and a son in a rented room in Alambagh. She and her two elder daughters worked as a domestic worker in six, two and one house, respectively. The income so earned, was sufficient to pay the rent of the house, the education fee for her daughter and son, the food etc.

During the lockdown, the employers of the daughters' refrained them from coming to work while Sushila kept working in four houses which were in her vicinity. Things were still working when her younger daughter was stricken by jaundice and she had to fend for medicine. Sushila had to quit her work as her daughter was hospitalized in a private hospital, where the per day expenditures ranged between INR 2000-3000. She resumed her work after 15 days but had ended up exhausting her entire savings.

Social Impact

They not only suffered financial distress due to partial and complete unemployment but were also overburdened with work within household along with spree of domestic violence. Table 2 highlights the different social impacts as briefed by these workers.

Table 2: Social Impact of PANDEMIC on Domestic Workers and their Families

Parameters	Frequency	Percent
Financial Distress	59	81.9
Dual burden of work at home and outside	14	19.4
increased demand of children and husband at home	22	30.6
Prey to Domestic violence	16	22.2
Total	72	100.00

Source: COVID-19 Survey, 2020.

Most of these households had the overlapping problems of less work, financial crises and no support from the government/other sources for procuring ration/ food essentials. There were some domestic workers who suffered a lot as their husbands also lost their jobs and staying at home resulted in domestic violence due to exhaustion of the household savings. There were few employers who provided ration and monthly salary with or without letting them to work. The children further contributed to enhancing their problems, as their presence at home the entire day raised demands for various items which the workers could not afford.

The ration shops distributed ration to these needy people in these hard times. Many kind hands came forward to help and aid into government efforts on their own by distributing ration and other necessities to these groups. Table 3 elaborates on the responses on outreach of public support policy's implications of these domestic workers.

The government was able to help most of the workers and it was endorsed to be beneficial by workers. Supply of ration was stated by 81.9 percent respondents and government's clarion call to provide health security via 'physical distancing' and 'stay at home' proclamations. The government's efforts at cash transfers were helpful was claimed by 31.9 percent domestic workers as the remaining had several issues with availability of 'adhar card' and hence were deprived of the benefits thereof. But the main problem to which these domestic workers were confronted with people who considered them to be a source of virus spread hence were devoid of their jobs and salary. They already had their own problems when this stigma also had a bearing on their mental stress.

Ninety one percent of the respondents report of receiving some kind of assistance during lockdown. Government assisted- primarily in the form of food and grocery supplies through its

Table 3: Responses on Outreach of Public Support

Variables	Responses	Percent
Support from the government in providing ration	59	81.9
Insufficient food and grocery supply	26	39.39
Have the policy of cash transfers for low-income households in urban areas beneficial?	23	31.94
Is health communication strategy of government effective in sustaining social distancing and hygiene practices?	71	98.6
Did this lockdown increased pre-existing social stigma?	41	56.9
Inadequate medical help	5	6.9
Total	72	100.00

Source: COVID-19 Survey, 2020.

established public distribution system. However, the proportion of respondents reporting insufficient food and essentials was some 39.39 percent i.e., 26 out of the total of 72 respondents.

Gudi is just 23 years of age and mother of 2 children. She lives at her parents' home and is separated from her husband, as he and his family use to torture her. Now that she is living at her mother's place, she started doing household work.

Despite the current crisis she has managed to stick along with the houses she earlier worked by following the proper hygiene factor. Gudi, raised many complaints against lockdown and thus Government. The main problem her family faced was lack of food. If government wants such lockdown, then it should offer helping hands towards us. She said it is only in newspaper that government is helping, but needy like us remain at the threshold.

In another case Ranjana, being a widow is the sole bread earner of the family. On being asked about the ration facility in her area she told that being alone at her home it is not easy for her to reach on time, so she missed the opportunity of getting ration. She told that in the nearest ration centre they only distribute rice and wheat which is not sufficient to meet her daily needs. She said if a person does not have money for purchasing oil, gas, vegetable and spices then what would he/she do with only rice and wheat. She also told that her employer takes care of her food but considering her to be "Carrier" of COVID restrains her entry to her household. Her employer lives in her vicinity and very often she distributes the ration to needy people.

Another angle to public provisioning was that many had no bank account and hence funds which was being transferred to the needy could not be furnished to them. The situation of Santoshi Kumari worsened with lockdown as her husband

could no longer work at the tea stall. She could not bag the cash transfers made by the government as she did not have any bank account, nor could she acquire any ration from the "controls" as her husband's name has been cluelessly removed from the register. It was difficult to run the family with a meagre amount and so she kept borrowing from her employers. For her the future has become uncertain and bleak and that even after the lockdown has been lifted, getting work easily is not possible now.

There is no doubting the fact that COVID-19 have impacted all spheres of life and livelihood. Where the families are finding it difficult to face, let alone cope up with the devastation caused by it, the domestic workers, the most vulnerable groups are estimated to be worst hit with no guarantee or security of any overcoming mechanism. Most of these workers are the sole bread winners of their family and so the money they raise from their job, helps them make ends meet. This clearly marks the importance of the need to work and earn for their existence and survival. The moment the Lockdown was announced in the country, these groups were in-peril for all the financial crises, social loss and policy stricken. In addition, the worst outcome of the pandemic is: rise in inequality and increased domestic violence against women. They were the epicentre for collectively all kinds of problems in lieu of any support from anywhere. There were many employers who had no constitutional security over employment and hence were facing danger of losing their own jobs, and many were left unpaid for a considerably longer period and so could not make payments to their domestic workers.

Though the fear or COVID-19 is still alive in the minds of many people, still these domestic workers have started getting a ray of hopes when they are re-bestowed with their jobs. The thoughts of virus have started diluting and this is making people hire workers for help. These workers have resumed

their jobs following basic protocols of sanitizing the hands, changing cloths before working, using masks and not touching other household items during their work (Table 4).

These workers felt that the lockdown extended would result in fatality if not by COVID-19, then either of starvation or due to horrible living conditions in the containment zones. Financial concerns persisting have been number one source of stress for these marginalized lots in urban labour-market across the period and between phases as no one was available to rely on for their financial needs. We could decipher an increase in health concerns, depression and anxiety as well as sleep disorders during and after lockdown as these respondents reported. The facts that prevail is that the survey reveals that as the shutdown in social and economic activity stretched, mental stress increased accompanied by financial crisis. This is the most but less covered aspect of the ongoing pandemic and needs to be addressed since it can

typically influence workers' productivity and accompanied with economic distress would exacerbate further (Afridi, Dhillon and Roy, 2020).

4. Lacuna in Policy Formulation- an Eye-Opener

Women constitute a significant part of the urban informal sector, and it is true that the informal sector does not get much of the protection under various labour legislations (Samantroy and Sarkar, 2020). The persisting abuse faced by domestic workers urgently necessitates a national policy to provide social and economic protection elaborates a new thread floated by Engage EPW on 2 November 2018 which is of current relevance in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. Truly speaking due to the absence of a national policy, domestic workers are easily exploited as they belong to the larger chunk of unorganised sector and their working depends on the mercy of the employers. They are largely poverty stricken with little to no

Table 4: Challenges Post Lockdown

Post Lockdown Effects			
Now that the phase of lockdown is over are you still discriminated in terms of following	Responses	Problems faced post lockdown	Responses
Sanitize your hands	55 (76.39)	Shortage of work	31 (43.06)
Change your cloths before doing household tasks	16 (22.22)	Financial problem	47 (65.28)
Not allowed to touch household items	16 (22.22)	Paying for ration which was free earlier	5 (6.94)
Using face masks while doing task	35 (48.61)	Price of essential goods increased	2 (2.78)
Total	72 (100.00)	Total	72 (100.00)

Source: COVID-19 Survey, 2020.

education and prone to competing demand for jobs which depresses their wages. The reason behind non-formulation of laws for domestic workers fall under the premise that they do not fall under the definition of “worker” nor is their workplace an 'establishment”. This characterisation is put forth by Centre to explain the non-existence of laws/regulation in labour market. They are workers and should have all the rights of workers as defined by our laws.

Taking cognisance of the exploitation faced by the domestic workers, Neeta N criticises State's policy for ineffective legislation which, apart from not enforcing minimum wage, refuses to close loopholes surrounding work hours. She also elaborates upon the gendered nature of domestic work, its segmentation and classification as a “non-skilled” occupation which leads to its valuation based on tasks undertaken (EPW, 2018).

The lockdown has exposed the vulnerability of domestic workers and highlights the absence of any legislation for domestic workers in India. The Centre pushed their responsibility to the State and State's too are not seen to be serious about taking the issue forward. There are mushrooming domestic workers in the urban areas who help facilitate middle class and upper-class women's participation in labour markets but themselves are not considered as “workers”. It will not be wrong to say that domestic workers contribute significantly to the nation's economic development as many families in urban areas especially double-income ones with females working, are excessively dependent on this workforce for cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the elderly and children in their households. Our study found that these domestic workers are perennially in debt as they borrow money from employers' households where they work and survive under the threat of debt.

While domestic workers do come under the ambit of laws such as the Unorganized Workers' Social

Security Act, 2008, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, there are loopholes/gaps which are far from being addressed. Few states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Bihar have fixed minimum wages, but the registration process is ambiguous. It is time lawmakers go beyond ruminating over the proposed draft Bills and come up with a comprehensive legislation to offer these vulnerable workforce dignity and legal protection. The impending national policy framework needs to resolve social protection, mandate a minimum wage and fix maximum number of working hours per day for domestic workers to provide voice to these voiceless.

The observation, inquisitiveness and cohesion of the present research can lead the way to the better and brighter future imagined under the ambit of the much-awaited legislations. While the COVID-19 crisis has exposed stark inequities, fragilities and unsustainable practices that existed even before the pandemic, it has also provided an opportunity to recover better, to reimagine our societies' most foundational systems using a human rights lens, and to initiate the kind of transformative changes needed for survival.

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India's Youth Towards Reaching the SDGs - Review Article

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Book:

Chitturu Saigita (Ed) Youth and India's Sustainable Development Goals, Delhi: Vitasta Publishing, 2021, ISBN Number : 8194820081, 9788194820086

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development considers youth to be a significant catalyst to bring change across the world. This collection of essays- Youth and India's Sustainable Development Goals edited by Saigita Chitturu, Faculty Centre for Lifelong Learning of TISS Mumbai focusses on various facets of government and civil society for engaging with youth towards their participation in SDGs 4 and 5 in India. The essays have touched upon various aspects of development and justice and is a comprehensive book on the subject. As the Draft National Youth Policy, 2020 of India emphasises the role of youth in nation building, this book becomes even more relevant for academics, students and development practitioners alike. This book is the outcome of the annual conference organised by The Centre for Lifelong Learning of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences on National Youth Day 2020, focused on Sustainable Development Goal 2030 and the Role of Youth and Youth- based organisations in achieving these goals. There are nine chapters of this book that examines various dimensions of the role of youth in examining various stakeholders, themes like education, gender equality, livelihood, gender-based violence etcetera.

Stakeholders relevant to Youth

The first chapter- Changing Narrative-State and Non-State Sector's Role in SDG & Youth, written by Veerendra Mishra, points out that, by definition, as given in the National Youth Policy of India, the average age of a person in India falls within the purview of being a youth, and whether this automatically means that India has a demographic dividend in youth. He goes on to discuss how this demography is not static and would soon move into the category of adults. This implies that the country and the relevant stakeholders would have to move quickly guiding the youth into constructive participation. He emphasises that role of both state and non-state sectors is vital in directing the youth towards positive nation building efforts and contributing towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. He also points out how aspirations and frustration of youth becomes unmanageably high due to the onslaught of information technology leading to an extremely competitive and comparative life.

Therefore, he states that appropriate planning and strategic directions are required to provide direction to the aspiring youth and channelise their energy in constructive ways. Interestingly he points out to the mismatch of education being provided in comparison to employability which further needs attention from the government as both unemployment and underemployment coexists in India which is also related to the frustration of

youth. This also leads the discussion towards mental health of youth and how there is little focus on that in the country. The interesting discourse on volunteerism pointed out by the author also shows the impact of globalisation and corrosion of certain social values creating confusion and mayhem. Therefore, he points out that to see a constructive future Meaningful Engagement (ME) coupled with Mindful Participation (MP) is the key. He points out that both State and Non-state sectors would then be able to tap the potential of youth in engaging them meaningfully towards raising social awareness and nation building.

Mathew Mattam discusses about the 'bottom 30' from the economically weaker background in being often excluded from the entrepreneurial ecosystem due to lack of skills and support in the second chapter - Fostering 1st Generation Micro-entrepreneurs- opportunities and challenges. He points out how Youth entrepreneurship is a subject of interest especially when it comes to micro-enterprise although largely remains unexplored in research. He examines various studies that are conducted to understand this subject and emphasises that since India has the largest youth population in the world, the labour market will find this a major determinant of the future of work in India and how jobs might be generated for youth. Since India scores 25.1 out of 100 in Global Entrepreneurship Index, he points out that entrepreneurship development especially amongst the youth in India is vital.

Significantly he points out the challenge of 1st generation micro-entrepreneurs who often lack in management skills and are not able to put the appropriate rigour to develop business/enterprise. He recommends that it is critical therefore to impart training and capacity enhance meant to young people about innovation and entrepreneurship and in this he sees the role of both the public and private sector in creating ecosystems to support entrepreneurship development. He discusses the

various policies available in this area for youth and also points out the challenges. In conclusion he speaks about the vital role of entrepreneurship development, amongst economically backward and grassroots population. Along with this the author points out that quality education and skill development amongst youth has to be made relevant.

The third chapter - Teachers and Society in Mumbai and Hong Kong - Comparative Perspectives for Quality Education of Youth in India, written by Shamim Suryavanshi focusses on a comparative understand of teachers keeping in mind the Sustainable Development Goals. She points out that due to the SDGs, school education has changed from input to outcome-based interventions which has an implication on the youth and their future. The author goes on to point out that in case of India there are challenges around realising the SDGs and it requires appropriate attention to curriculum development, safe use of technology, enhancing community participation and most importantly teachers training.

The author also speaks of the NITI Aayog's efforts in developing the SDG India Index, 2019-20, towards reading the SDG 2030 with two main indicators that focus on trained teachers and teacher student ratio. However, the author reiterates that India needs more teachers, and examines the role of the teacher in the Indian education system, where there are multiple challenges. This chapter focuses the discourse on teachers in India from lived experience and teachers from Hong Kong which are both port cities. She examines deeply the education philosophies and education systems of these two cities in details and it is exiting for any reader to get a thorough knowledge of the same. The author examines requirement and working conditions of secondary teachers in both the cities and shares the insights gathered through semi-structured interviews. She finally shares that the lessons learnt from the comparison, can help policy

making in India for strengthening the work in the area of youth and SDG 2030.

Gender Implications

The fourth chapter is on Gender Equality and Youth Development: With regard to SDG 5 is written by Vibhuti Patel focusses on gender concerns. She points out that in terms of Gender Gap Index amongst 142 countries, India stands at a 114 according to the World Economic Forum. The author points out that significantly the SDG's have not addressed the unpaid social and reproductive labour, which is primarily carried out by women. Therefore, gender inclusivity and equity largely remain unaddressed. She further lists the challenges for youth in regard to SDGs and aspects of gender equity.

The disparity in the gender ratio of India needs to be understood by the youth along with disparity on the need to increase the enrolment of Indian girls in higher education. In the case of child mortality, she points out that India is still losing at least a million children annually before their 5th birthday along with neonatal mortality that takes place by preventable diseases. Safety of women she points out should be a major component in various transportation and infrastructure development schemes and to ensure support services needed by women. Youth also need to understand that livelihood opportunities that have been disrupted due to the pandemic have to be restored for women with adequate wages and social protection. Majority of agricultural labourers are women, but the social security of these women seems to be missing. She urges that focus on mental health services at the time disasters needs to be prioritised. She urges that the youth need to play a crucial role in the understanding and acting for reducing such violence along with understanding their role in gender justice and equity. The author points out that youth in supporting education, strengthening nutrition and food security and other infrastructure.

In continuation of the discourse of gender justice the fifth chapter written by Trupti Panchal and Nolina Sarah Minj, is - Violence against Young Women and Girls in India: A Barricade to Youth Development and SDG Goals. This chapter is distilled from the learning's from the 35 years' experience of Special Cell for Women and Children provide psycho-social-legal services to women and children who are survivors of violence. The authors point out how violence against women (VAW) and girls promoted unequal participation of women and men in the society and recognising this in the SDG is a welcome opportunity. They further explain how the Special Cell which a friend project of Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) is strengthens gender justice from their interventions on VAW rooted in feminist social work practice.

The authors point out that the research carried out in the special cell show that women between 18 to 34 years are subject to domestic violence one of the most prominent form of gender- based violence in India. Interestingly the Special Cell also realised that due to such high rate of cyclical gender-based violence, it was important and critical to carry out meaningful contribution with men and boys by challenging men's beliefs and attitudes, to achieve gender justice and prevent gender-based violence. The authors also focus on the various changes in laws related to preventing gender-based violence through the contributions from the women's movement in India. However, they point out that implementation of the laws is still a challenge. Therefore, organisations that work with youth, the authors say need to engage youth in orienting, sensitisation and promoting them to work in prevention of violence against girls and women.

Civil Society Interventions

The sixth, seventh and eight chapters showcase interventions undertaken by civil society organisations various development issues. The sixth chapter - Recipients to Change Agents,

Participation in Enhancing Health & Sanitation in Marginalised Urban Geographies is written by Rama Shyam, Anuja Jayraman, Vinita Ajgaonkar and Neeta Karandikar collated from experiences of SNEHA. The authors focus on looking at health issues and related rights for youth and they point out that four major concerns are studied, one sexual and reproductive health, second nutrition, third mental health and fourth substance abuse. They point out that Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), the National Adolescent Health Programme, have expanded the scope of specifically looking at issues pertaining to young people and to a certain extent enables them in making informed and responsible decisions. They point out that in spite of higher awareness on contraceptives however the use amongst girls is minimal.

Significantly they point out the persisting problem of death by suicide amongst adolescents is higher than any other age group in India. Not surprisingly therefore there is truly little focus on mental health issues and related mortality and morbidity in adolescents and youth. The stark reality of ill health in youth is also shown through NFHS (2015-16) data that show prevalence of anaemia is over 50 per cent for women 20 per cent for men in the age group of 15-29 years. They postulate that in order to ensure overall well-being of young people enabling them to access their rights, equipping them with life skills and knowledge ; building support for them by working with their eco-system; creating an environment of gender equity and equality and providing a safe and supportive environment especially for girls is of paramount importance. Through this chapter the authors showcase how SNEHA's EHSAS programme builds on a multi-pronged strategy that works with young people and related stakeholders simultaneously. They point out that such an integrated approach on working with key stakeholders like parents and service providers enables in transforming social structures that restrict opportunities and prevent participation, especially of young women.

The seventh chapter also focusses on the work of a well-known youth organisation of India Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) that works through youth collectives. Beyond Skilling: An Alternative Praxis of Livelihood for Urban Poor Youth is written by Alicia Tauro and Sachin Nachnekar. The focus of this chapter is to portray the education and employment opportunities for urban poor youth and the barriers they face in accessing them. Urban context is ridden with frequent evictions and insecurity that leads to frequent drop-out from the education system at a young age. The authors point out that the youth therefore become unemployable as the education and skills do not match the market requirement. Additionally, despite growth in GDP of India the economy has not created many jobs.

To counter this a youth-led development approach is adopted by YUVA through youth groups and networks that work towards youth self-development and development of the communities they live in. The authors show how the skill development and the vocational programmes have not benefitted the youth due to mismatch in the reality and design of these courses. Significantly they point out how the education system needs strengthening that provides impetus to youth to pursue their aptitude think creatively beyond just jobs. Further the authors elaborate on the approach taken by YUVA towards holistic development of youth. This approach focusses on empowering the youth by access to food and nutrition from the public system. YUVA also facilitates college through scholarships and to ensure employability hands-on training and vocational skills, training is imparted. One of the important parts of this approach also is developing life skills and essential skills while facilitating understanding of rights, laws, and the constitution. Finally, all these efforts are sustained through the Youth groups that are formed to enable youth transformation.

From Recipients to Change Agents: Participatory Action Research for Gender Equality and Youth Development is the eighth chapter by Anita Patil-Deshmukh, Payal Tiwari and Sunil Gangawane which speaks about PUKAR's work with Youth. Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research (PUKAR) is a Mumbai based non-government organisation started to create a space for cross-disciplinary research. It is flagship programme 'Youth Fellowship' engages and empowers youth from the city of Mumbai with a belief on right to research. This implies questioning production and ownership of accepted knowledge the authors point out, which also forms the basis of the youth fellowship programme. During the eleven months of the programme community-based youth are facilitated to engage in participatory action research on issues of their own lives and communities in the role of a researcher. Further the chapter speaks of how the research study thus conducted is used for advocacy for addressing the community's issues with the data gathered by the youth. Interestingly youth from excluded and marginalised groups are identified such as Sex Workers and HIV positive groups, Dalits, adivasi, religious minority, marginalised sexual identity etc.

The programme also applies feminist pedagogical ideas to challenge traditional learning methodologies and focusing on experience as theoretical knowledge. This applies to both the youth participants and the facilitators as they remain engaged during the entire period of data collection and analysis, the value adds being that facilitators are often people who have been fellows in the past. As co-creators of knowledge the authors explain, youth are engaged in an effective human approach to collecting data. They state that thus using evidence-based data and critical thinking skills youth have been able to bring change in their lives and communities and the authors emphasise that this programme has received recognition from various academic institutions as being effective and meaningful.

Youth as Work Force

In the final and ninth chapter Creating Spaces for Lifelong Learning Skills in Youth- Intervention to Generate Sustainable Workforce of the Future written by Saigita Chitturu is relevant to the current status of youth development in relation to core skills necessary for them to meaningfully engage in work and bringing about social transformation. She emphasises how awareness of policies and programmes for youth designed by the government has to be created amongst youth along with relevant skills. This she points out cannot be done only by the education system in India. Significantly she talks about the policy gap in lifelong learning leading to a very narrow understanding of the same; additionally, the lack of convergence of the National Literacy Mission and the National Skill Development Mission has proven to be the major hurdle. She proposes therefore new lists of lifelong learning has to be provided so that learning is enhanced and becomes effective.

Although globally young people are provided skills to make them job ready or market ready, the Indian youth face the huge burden of unemployment. While she elaborates on the need to create opportunities, enhance capabilities and enable the youth for second chances, she points out that spatial and social inequalities have to reduce. Pointing out the challenges for Lifelong Learning the transition from school to work has to be reduced, long-term unemployment has to be dealt with and re-skilling has to be the focus to respond to fast changing work environments. Emphasising on the need to build skills, the author feels that unless relevant skills like that of life skills, leadership skills, problem solving skills etcetera are not integrated the policy will remain incomplete. In conclusion the author points out how just making youth job ready through skills is not enough, but physical and mental well-being needs are essential as well along with providing them a conducive environment for growth.

This book has successfully examined the role of youth in achieving the goals of SDGs by collective efforts and convergence of Civil Society Organisations and the government to enable and empower the youth of India in doing so. Some pertinent themes like gender justice, appropriate skill development, effective education in relation to achieving the SDGs have been clearly articulated.

Overall, through robust ideas and successful experiences, the book is able to point towards an action plan for academic, development practitioners and policy makers of youth in India. Making youth leadership the pivot, this collection expounds how young people are capable of transformation when provided enabling environment and support.



Call for Research Papers!

The **Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies** is pleased to invite contributions for **Urban World** in the form of articles and research papers from researchers, authors, publishers, academicians, administrative and executive officers, readers and well-wishers on any one the following topics:

- **Impact of COVID-19 on Urban Development.**
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- **How Smart Cities are Adapting to a Post Pandemic India.**
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Articles could be between 2000 to 4000 words. They may contain compatible tables, charts, graphs, etc. We reserve the right to edit for sense, style and space.

Contributions may be e-mailed in digital form as a Word file to the Director, RCUES, Mumbai.

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ROUND & ABOUT

Popularity of Miyawaki Forests

Urban forestry, protection of environment and promotion of ecology is one of the mandatory functions to be performed by urban local bodies as included in the XII the Schedule of the Constitution of India. These are the times of innovative and adopting approach of improvement of quality and thinking of betterment. Municipalities for long have been maintaining parks and gardens, which has become a routine activity. A new approach has emerged in respect of this function called *Miyawaki Forests* being developed in the cities on the existing parks and gardens. This is an afforestation method developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki in 1980s. The idea is to have dense plantation on small plots including shrubs, trees and turning them into tiny forests. As against the usual spaced plantation, the number of trees planted in this approach is very high. For example, on a plot of 40 sq. meters in a garden in Mumbai, about 120/150 trees are planted in close proximity to each other. On another plot of 350 sq. meters about 1050 trees are planted. One of the scientific principle on which this method works is that as trees surrounded by other trees do not get sufficient light, they grow in search of sunlight vertically. Similarly, here the local species are chosen which are suited for the soil and climatic conditions. Ensuring bio-diversity is a key part of this strategy. Some of the reports of these forests show that the trees grow faster, are spaced densely and are highly bio-diverse than the conventional plantation. The developed forests on small areas have shown substantial increase of flora and fauna in the forms of birds population and presence of squirrels, chameleons and a large number of insects that thrive on trees, cool air around and pleasant to look at. Incidentally, it is noted that according to greenery experts presence of these small creatures is a sign of richness of greenery. It is hoped that in future cities would be dotted with these mini forests giving out their immense benefits.

(Source: Various media reports and Budget Speech of the Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, Maharashtra)

Increased Number of e-Vehicles Targeted

Deterioration of environment has taken place hugely, and it requires enormous efforts to ameliorate the environment and work towards protection of the environment. These efforts requiring immediate measures, short term, medium term and long term planning are matters of priority. Replacement of fuel-run vehicles by e-vehicles is one of the measures being on the agenda, which comes under long term planning. The Government of Maharashtra has formulated the new draft Electric Vehicles Policy 2021, which is awaiting final nod by the Cabinet. A few policy measures from the draft policy are as under:

- (i) It is proposed that from April, 2022 all new government vehicles will be electric across major cities listed as proposed in the draft policy. There is a plan to convert 15% of the current fleet of 18,000 MSRTC buses to electric.
- (ii) The Government intends to make four highways and expressways fully ready for electric vehicles by 2025, including the under construction Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway, the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, the Mumbai Nashik highway and the Nashik-Pune highway.
- (iii) Electric vehicles need the availability of charging stations. In the draft policy, target for charging stations by 2025 are as under:
 - (a) Mumbai Metropolitan Region- 1500.
 - (b) Pune Metropolitan Region- 500.
 - (c) Nagpur Metropolitan Region- 150.
 - (d) Aurangabad Metropolitan Region- 75.
 - (e) Vision is to have at least one public charging station in a 3 km by 3 km grid or a minimum of 50 charging stations per 10 lakhs population.
- (iv) One gigafactory for the manufacturing of advanced lithium-ion batteries is proposed to be set up in Maharashtra.
- (v) Presently, the state's share of the country's electric vehicle registrations is around 12% (32000). This is a very low level amounting to negligible position. By taking advantage of the Government of India's scheme and own efforts, the State intends to become a leading manufacturer of EVs. The target is to have at least 10% of all new vehicle registrations of e-vehicles by 2025.

(Source: The Times of India, Mumbai, 28th May, 2021).

World Earth Day and World Environment Day

In this column, every year in the April-June issue of this journal, reports about these two Days of international significance are mentioned briefly. It is interesting to know the origin of these days of international importance.

World Earth Day: World Earth Day is celebrated on 22 April every year. Origin of this day could be said to be the *public protest or public angst* against the government for not doing *anything* for protection of environment during a particular period. This happening relates to the U.S.A. The word *anything* is aptly used here because it was a fact that prior to 1970s there was no national or international concern about the environment protection in the U.S.A. or elsewhere in the world. There was no Environment Protection Act, no Clean Air Act and no Clean Water Act or similar legislations in any country. These are the subsequent legislations in the U.S.A.

During late 1960s when many accidents or happenings damaging the environment took place, there was no public outcry as happens now. There were some initiatives like an announcement by John McConnell who **first** introduced the idea of a global holiday called "Earth Day" at the 1969 UNESCO Conference on the Environment. The first Earth Day proclamation was issued by San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto on March 21, 1970. These were solitary initiatives limited to being just good suggestions. Environment damaging incidents continued to be taking place.

During 1969 there were protests in America against the Vietnam War. These protests were generally limited to the civil society and the students in college and university campuses. This medium in the form of energy, a potent force of concern and right protest proved to be handy for a protest against the incidents of environment damages. One such incident of massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California was fresh in the minds of the people. Over a period there was emerging consciousness against the air and water pollution. In this scenario, Senator Gaylord Nelson who was long concerned about the deteriorating environment in the United States gave a call for massive protest on 22 April, 1970 in which 20 million people participated.

This created a deeper public opinion and the Government and the world had to take a note of this. This proved to set off several measures like passing of environment protection legislations including Environment Protection Act, Clear Air Act, Clean Water Act, etc. Environment protection occupied the key position in public policy. The Day continued to be an inspiring Day and has been celebrated every year since then. The UN recognition to this Day came in 2019.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 22 April as the International Mother Earth Day through a resolution adopted in 2019. The Day recognizes the Earth and its ecosystems as humanity's common home and the need to protect her to enhance people's livelihoods, counteract climate change, and stop the collapse of biodiversity. This year, the theme for 2021 is ***Restore our Earth***.

(Reference: Websites of the World Earth Day and UNEP - <https://www.unep.org/events/un-day/international-mother-earth-day-2021>).

World Environment Day: World Environment Day is celebrated on 5th June every year. It is also interesting to trace its origin. The first half of the 20th century was a period of disastrous two World Wars, colonization and struggle for the people in many countries for freedom. Countries of the world came had come together with the formation of the United Nations. However, after 1950 about 10-15 years were the years of reconstruction of the economies of the world. It was only in the 1970s that the UN's attention came on various problems and issues concerning the humanity as a whole. Thus, the concern of environment protection came late on the international and national levels. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference) held in Stockholm (1972) under United Nations auspices was the UN's first major conference on international environmental issues, and marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics and passing of environment protection legislations in most of the countries.

In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly established the **World Environment Day** on the first day of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Two years later, in 1974 the first WED was held with the theme "Only One **Earth**".

The foundation of the present day institutional framework for environmental programmes in India goes back to India's participation in the Stockholm Conference in 1972. This led to the establishment of the National Committee of Environmental Planning and Coordination immediately after the historic Stockholm Conference on Environment held in 1972. Pollution Control Boards were set up at the Central level and in the States. Acts relating to Air Pollution Control and Water Pollution Control were passed by Parliament. The said Committee was gradually upgraded into a Department of Environment in 1980. Passing of the Environment Protection Act in 1985 led to formation of a full-fledged Ministry of Environment and Forests. Now the subject of Climate Change is also added to the Ministry. The State Governments have also their own Departments of Environment to address the rapidly increasing policy initiatives and programmes in the environment and forests sectors. (Source: Note by the columnist)

The theme of this year's World Environment Day is **Ecosystem Restoration**. Pakistan will act as global host of the day. **World Environment Day 2021** will see the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

(Reference: UN website on the World Environment Day).

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