



Urban Jobs and Solutions for Urban Poor

India Livihoods Collective

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Livihoods Action Series

The Livihoods Action Series are a set of ideation modules addressing various livihoods challenges. Through these modules, the India Livihoods Collective, focuses on exploring co-creation and amplification opportunities for benchmarked livihood interventions through peer-exchange and brainstorming to device innovative strategies and action points to stir collective action in the livihoods sector.

India Livihoods Collective

India Livihoods Collective is India's first non-financial and non-funding commitment based collaborative platform to leverage cross-sectoral expertise of organizations, enabling collective action towards creation of sustainable and local livihoods in rural and urban India.

For more information please visit www.ilc.org.in

Curated and Published

By

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Introduction

Majority of the urban workforce (about 80%) is engaged in the informal sector, either self-employed or working as wage workers. The urban workforces are challenged with uncertainty associated with job availability and wage disparity, lack of affordability for basic necessities and occupational illnesses. These challenges further intensify during contingent times, like the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to loss of jobs and consequent reverse migration at a large scale. The current estimates highlight that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted more than 40 million migrants working in urban areas. While many have migrated back to their native places, it is important that the urban livelihoods sector rebuilds its workforce, providing a better employment opportunity for these communities and our session today is an attempt in the same direction.

This document provides a summary of the proceedings of the Module-III: Urban Jobs and Solutions for Urban Poor under the Livelihoods Action Series organised by India Livelihoods Collective. The event took place virtually on 14th July, 2020, between 3.00-4.40 PM. The aim of the series is to explore co-creation and amplification opportunities for benchmarked livelihood interventions through peer-exchange and brainstorming, to device innovative strategies and action points that stir collective action in the area of urban livelihoods.

Objectives:

- Understanding the key challenges for urban livelihoods
- Benchmarked solutions implemented by various partners across India addressing specific challenges
- Exploring mutual synergies between partners to device potential for co-creation and scale-up
- Streamlining the co-creation and scale-up, leveraging the policy response, partners' network and alliances and scalability opportunities of projects within the current livelihoods landscape
- Defining the role of the collective in implementing the strategies

Overview

The module witnessed attendance by 90+ participants from various fields. The event included experience sharing by a special speaker with domain expertise and best practice sharing by 6 organisations including a mix of NGOs, corporates research organisations, and consulting agencies, followed by an ideation session on mutual synergies and future plan of the Collective.

The event was initiated with the brief introduction about the Livelihoods Action Series and the scenario of urban livelihoods in India, presented by **Ms. Bhagyashree Patil, Coordinator, India Livelihoods Collective.**

The presentations were divided into two sessions – (I) **Urban Livelihoods Challenges:** internal migration, creating an enabling environment, social protection and post COVID-19 livelihood strategies and (II) **Urban Livelihoods Programmes:** entrepreneurship, skill building, women centric urban livelihoods initiatives.

Session Plan

Time	Session	Speaker
3.00-3.05 PM	Introduction & Context Setting	Ms. Bhagyashree Patil, Coordinator, ILC
3.05-3.20PM	Special Speaker	Dr. Debolina Kundu, Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs
		Q&A and Discussions
3.20-3.50 PM	Session I Internal Migration, creating an enabling environment, social protection and post COVID-19 livelihood strategies	Mr. Varun Aggarwal, Co-founder & Lead, India Migration Now
		Mr. Anuj Alphonson, Director-Livelihoods and Partnerships, Magic Bus India Foundation
		Mr. Manoj Nayak, Manager, MicroSave Consulting
		Q&A and Discussions
3.50-4.20 PM	Session II Entrepreneurship, skill building, women centric urban livelihoods initiatives	Mr. Pranav Kumar Chaudhary Director Operations, Dr Reddy's Foundation
		Ms. Sandhra Jose, EDII
		Ms. Malathy M, Director-Education and Livelihoods, Apnalaya
		Q&A and Discussions
4.20-4.40PM	Ideation and approach plan for the Collective	

Experience Sharing by Special Speaker

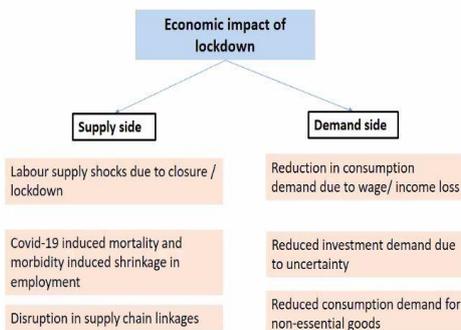
Visit <https://youtu.be/3pcwuG0qLMo> to view the session
 Visit <https://csrbox.org/media/Mod-III-Urban-Special%20Speaker.pdf> to view the PPT. Deck

Dr. Debolina Kundu, Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs

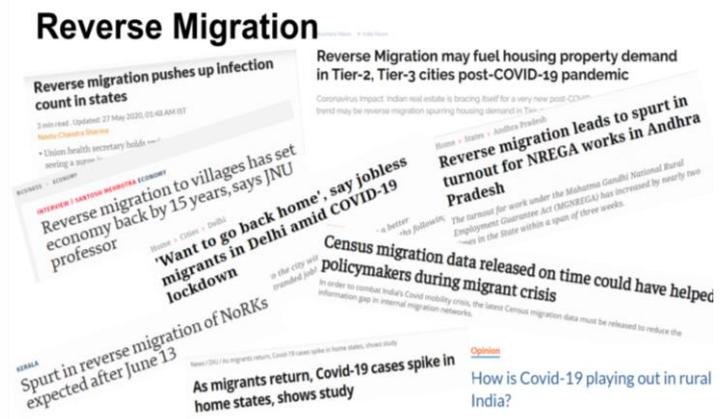
Prof. Debolina shared interesting findings of a survey of slum dwellers across 12 cities (100 households per city) conducted to study the impact of pandemic on the urban labour market. The employment scenario in pre-COVID era was characterised by a declining participation rate, which was sharper in rural areas and an increasing unemployment rate that was highest in urban male (5.9%). The composition of employment changes and the share of regular employment in urban areas increased with 55.6% urban workers employed in regular salaried employment.

The COVID-19 impacted the labour market with labour supply shocks, mortality and morbidity induced shrinkage in employment, disruption in supply chains, reduction in demand due to income loss and reduced investments. The unemployment rate increased from 8.75% in March 2020 to 23.5% in April 2020 and has come down to 11% in June 2020. The urban areas have been more affected by the pandemic. The survey highlighted that 60.8% were at high risk during the pandemic due to employment in non-essential industries and only 17.5% workers can work remotely from home. The manufacturing, hotel, wholesale trade and arts and entertainment are the worst-affected industries.

Impact of COVID-19 induced lockdown on labour market



Various survey based studies by NCAER, NIUA, Azim Premji University has shown massive job loss and reduction in income



Prof. Debolina stressed that migrants are a heterogeneous group. The rich and educated migrate permanently, whereas, the poor, SCs and illiterates are short-term/circular migrants, more than 60% of whom are absorbed in the construction sector. A comparison between the impact on migrants and non-migrants reveals that migrants face higher risk during the pandemic.

Moving on to skill training, Prof. Debolina shared that only 4.69% workforce in India has undergone formal skill training and there is an additional requirement of 109.73 million skilled manpower by 2022. Lack of expert trainers and trainings for women are the causes behind this skill gap. The current share of CSR grants for livelihood and vocational training initiatives is only 8.6 %. Along with Government initiatives like the Skill India Mission, AtmaNirbhar Bharat and NULM, CSR being a self-regulated business model can play a key role in reducing reverse migration.

Ms. Debolina concluded her address by highlighting new sectors of demand that can be leveraged to create livelihood opportunities for urban poor – healthcare, manufacturing of masks, sanitisers, gig economy (online retail), sanitation workers, horticulture and food processing and construction workers to create homes for the ‘new poor’.

Session 1: Urban Livelihoods Challenges

Internal Migration, Creating an Enabling Environment, Social Protection and Post COVID-19 Livelihood Strategies

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8oCbinuax0> to view the session

Visit <https://csrbox.org/media/Mod-III-Urban%20Livelihoods%20Challenges.pdf> to view the PPT Deck

Internal migration is an important process in the Indian economy and development. Migrants face several challenges like political inclusion, livelihood opportunities and health and sanitation. To discuss these challenges and ways of providing equal opportunities and rights to migrants, this session was represented by 3 speakers who are currently working on migration and urban livelihoods.

Mr. Varun Aggarwal, Co-founder & Lead, India Migration Now

Mr. Varun started by stressing that migration is an opportunity that India needs to leverage. Migration Now has designed an Inter-State Migration Policy Index marking the Indian States out of 100 based on the inclusion of migrants through policies, wherein, the average score of all states was around 30. The integration of migrants at destinations, such that they have access to equal opportunities as the non-migrants, is a multi-dimensional process. It requires layered interventions in political inclusion, health and sanitation, financial services and education opportunities. He further explained the three guiding design principles for interventions with migrants – (i) Multi-locational shifting patterns of migrant households, (ii) Circular nature of migration, (iii) Engagement with all key stakeholders. Hence, he suggested that programs need to be designed to cater to both the source and destination challenges faced by the migrants.



Key findings of Socio-economic survey

Key findings	
Livelihood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 76% drop in Family income 40% with no income during the period ; similar percent lost full salary and 20% received half their salary 40% youth and 45% Fathers lost jobs 70% of the women were either not working or with no jobs 60% confirmed they didn't have any savings 60% who lost jobs will pick up any work for living post lockdown 45% who lost jobs weren't sure of finding a job quickly post lockdown Top fears faced by Families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income insecurity- required for basic needs Fear of not been able to cover education cost of children at home Fear of sustained low income due to Covid impact Fear of moving deeper into Poverty Fear of getting infected
Childhood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of learning- 41% parents will not be able to cover education cost...Risk of Drop Outs Children supporting economic activities through part time or full time engagement. Rise of Child labor cases Risk of early marriage among female

Magic Bus had conducted a survey among 1000 Urban Households across 08 high-employment States in India.

Alphonson's screen

Mr. Anuj Alphonson, Director-Livelihoods and Partnerships, Magic Bus India Foundation

Mr. Anuj started by giving a brief introduction of the Magic Bus India Foundation and shared the results of a survey conducted by the organisation with 1000 urban households across 8 high-employment states in India. As per the survey conducted by the organisation during the pandemic, 76% of the respondents reported a drop in family income, 40% had no source of income and 60% had no savings to support. Income insecurity, inability to cover the education costs of children, sustained low income even postthe lockdown, and increasing poverty were the top fears of the respondents. The pandemic has increased the chances of dropouts and child marriages, especially for females. The Magic Bus India Foundation has an employment linked skilling program that aims to align the youth aspirations to realistic market trends.

The program has a successful placement rate of 70%+ and has doubled family income of participants. The Foundation is also implementing a Digital Employment Marketplace program for better employer-employee connect and opportunities for micro-entrepreneurship. Mr. Anuj also discussed the challenges in implementing these programs like unrealistic expectations of youth, nearby job placement, job opportunities for women and availability of smartphones for the digital programs.

Mr. Manoj Nayak, Manager, MicroSave Consulting

Mr. Manoj highlighted the contribution and significance of Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Indian economy. MSMEs’ contribution to India’s GDP is 30% and they employ 110 million people. India has 633 million MSMEs, of which 49% are in urban areas and 68% are unregistered. MSMEs can be a sources of stable wages and safety net if the challenge of formalisation and scaling up is overcome. Mr. Manoj shared two programs under which MSC provided technical support to 5 microfinance institutions and banking correspondent network managers to create value proposition for microenterprise lending product and enhance excellence in service delivery to support urban MSMEs, and technical support to Lynk – a gig platform in Kenya to develop insurance for gig workers. Mr. Manoj pointed out the challenges of the informal economy that can be leveraged as an opportunity to create a social net for informal workers. Digital platforms have reduced the barriers to entry in jobs, and have increased flexibility. Technical assistance for digitization of MSMEs, programs to improve women labour force participation and research on social security plans and schemes for informal workers are areas for co-creation among the key players in urban livelihood.

The rise of the digital platforms for personalised work has led to the creation of an alternate avenue for employment

- 1 **The low barriers to entry for jobs**
Be it food delivery companies like Zomato and Swiggy or ride hailing apps like Ola or UBER, barriers to being self employed have gone down
- 2 **Informality continues to persist despite the apps**
While the growth of the platform economy in India has created micro-entrepreneurial opportunities for gig-workers, formalization and associated social security benefits remain a distant possibility
- 3 **The platform economy can support the participation of women in the labor force disparities**
Low barriers to re-entry and the flexibility that platforms provide in terms of job timings allows women to manage their personal needs

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the challenges and precarious nature of informal work in the economy. This is an opportunity to reimagine a social safety net for informal workers.

Key Take-Aways from Session 1:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted challenges that can be leveraged as opportunities to facilitate digitisation of livelihoods.
- Income instability, lack of savings, job loss and reverse migration are the key challenges for the urban poor.
- There is a need for a multi-dimensional approach to provide economic and social security to the urban poor.

Session 2: Urban Livelihoods Programmes

Entrepreneurship, Skill building, Women centric Urban Livelihoods Initiatives

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im8GdKpblPEt> to view the session

Visit <https://csrbox.org/media/Mod-III-Urban%20Livelihoods%20Programmes.pdf> to view the PPT.

The post COVID-19 era will require newer skills and entrepreneurial abilities to grow in a recovering economy and existing skilling programs will need to modify and upgrade their interventions to implement demand-led skilling. This session was represented by 3 speakers currently working on the implementation of such skilling and entrepreneurship programs

Mr. Pranav Kumar Chaudhary, Director Operations, Dr Reddy's Foundation

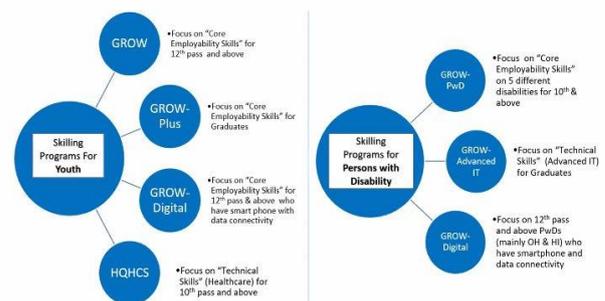
Mr. Pranav started by giving a brief introduction of Dr. Reddy's Foundation (DRF). DRF implements placement-oriented skilling programs for youth and persons with disability. The key focus of these programs is on developing (I) **core employability skills** – English, digital literacy, sector readiness and soft skills and (II) **technical skills** – trainings in healthcare programs and advanced IT. The programs, spread across 18-19 centres across multiple locations, have accomplished 70% placements. The COVID-19 pandemic tested the organisation health, strategic priorities and resilience of the Foundation and highlighted the importance of demand-led skilling and delivery models. The Foundation has used this as an opportunity to create a strong Learning Management System (LMS) platform and an online program called 'Grow Digital' for the students of class 10 and 12. DRF is looking forward to scale-up these programs with Government and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) organisations

Project Challenges and Learning



- Lack of access to resources- monetary , material, skill, time
- Time Constraint- Training in between their daily wage work
- Spatial constraints for group enterprises
- Competition from cheap alternatives

Key Interventions and Outcomes Under Urban Jobs & Livelihoods



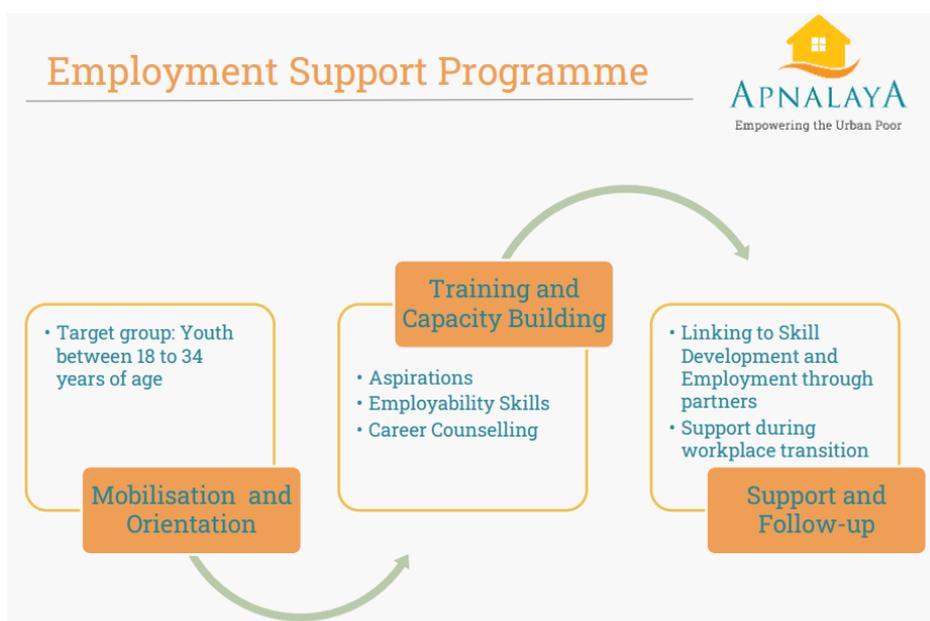
Core Employability Skills & Technical Skills are the fulcrum of all our skilling initiatives. All initiatives are placement linked. Our average salary is in the range of INR 12000-13000 in tier 1 cities (FY 2019-20). Programs are able to accomplish 70% placement.

Ms. Sandhra Jose, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India

Ms. Sandhra introduced Skillpreneurship - a one-month training program conducted in batches of 40-50 women by EDII for urban poor women. It provides support in establishing enterprises in areas like cloth mask making, jute bags, manufacturing of toiletries and handmade jewellery. The women entrepreneurs are provided with initial handholding (up to 6 months), support by EDII in areas like procuring licenses and permissions. Lack of access to monetary resources, skills and time, spatial challenges for group enterprises and competition from cheap alternatives are some of the challenges faced during the program implementation. EDII plans to move forward with capacity building for secondary sources of income and structural support to encourage savings and investment practices.

**Ms. Malathy M,
Director-Education and Livelihoods, Apnalaya**

Apnalaya has been working with urban poor since 1973. Ms. Malathy shared the initiatives of the organisation in Shivaji Nagar, M East Ward, Mumbai. She started by giving an overview of the conditions of the area where every 2nd employed person is a casual labour, only 1 in 7 women is employed and the average family income is INR 7802. The trainings, capacity building and skilling programs by Apnalaya have led to 17% reduction in under 5 mortalities, dropout rates and supported 1600 women and youth in livelihood. The organisation works at 3 levels – individuals, community and government to bring about sustainable change. Ms. Malathy also threw light on the socio-cultural challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and shared ‘Svavalamban’ - a livelihood program for women where women are trained and linked with micro enterprises. Apnalaya has also supported Community Child Care Centres by providing training support, equipment and learning aids, start-up grant and handholding and guidance for 6 months. 176 mothers are earning a livelihood due to affordable child care with an average monthly income of INR 6000.



Key Take-Aways from Session 2:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to focus on demand-led skilling and flexibility in delivery models.
- Core employability skills and technical skills are some key intervention areas for skilling programs.
- Women-oriented livelihood programs need to cater to the socio-cultural challenges faced by them and design innovative solutions that enable them to earn a living.

Ms. Bhagyashree Patil, Coordinator, India Livelihoods Collective introduced Project Aalamban, a unified digital platform designed to work towards supporting the blue-collar workforces by connecting them with recruiters or companies in India. With the backdrop of the current shocks and disruptions in the blue-collar employment sector due to COVID-19, the platform solves the issues at both the ends - work-seekers as well as the opportunity providers in the blue-collar jobs market.

The platform uses an AI-enabled 24*7 work helpline with an IVR system to register, map, and match the candidates with suitable opportunities in preferred geographic regions, industries, skill-sets, and engagement modes. The project is powered by CSRBOX and its technology partner firm. It aims to leverage the opportunities opened through the Gig economy by matching skills with opportunities and has targeted outreach in English+9 local languages and regional-level Digital Job Fairs. The platform also caters to the needs of livelihoods enablers such as the corporates, NGOs, Skilling Agencies, etc., by curating customised projects for blue-collar employment by and on-boarding of candidates for placements.

Concluding Remarks and Way Forward

The Module III of the Livelihood Action Series came to an end with discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market, examples of skilling, social protection and entrepreneurship programs and ways in which the challenges posed by COVID-19 can be leveraged as an opportunity.

Key Take-aways from the Module-III

- The COVID-19 impacted the labour market with labour supply shocks, mortality and morbidity induced shrinkage in employment, disruption in supply chains, reduction in demand due to income loss and reduced investments. An increment from the current 8.6% in the share of CSR grants for livelihood and vocational trainings is required to deal with the impact of COVID -19 on the urban livelihoods.
- Digital platforms have reduced the barriers to entry in jobs and the new sectors of demand are healthcare, manufacturing of masks, sanitisation, gig economy and horticulture and food processing.
- A multi-dimensional approach is required for the integration of migrants both at source and destinations.

The India Livelihood Collective can facilitate partnerships for replication and scaling up of these individual initiatives to amplify the outcome. The Collective will further collate the practices as per sub-thematic groups to build partnerships around shared goals and also create geographical clusters to scale-up in different states. More focussed and closed discussions will be organised for partners with similar projects including expert sessions and presentations to explore symbiotic opportunities, identifying existing gaps that can be fulfilled with such partnerships.