

Activity report on field visit to migrant worker sites in Hyderabad:
A joint effort of Youth Council for Development Alternatives
(YCDA) and Yugantar Organization

A three-day field visit was organized by Youth Council for Development Alternatives (YCDA) in association with Shramika Sahayata O suchana Kendra to Hyderabad to review the conditions of the migrant workers from Odisha living and working in Hyderabad. There are several issues faced by migrant families at the destination places. Hyderabad has a long history of being the destination place for distress migration, particularly from western Odisha. Migrant workers at destination areas remain marginalized and have limited access to basic amenities. Yugantar Organization in Hyderabad has been working to facilitate the transition of inter-state migrants into an urban space through skill development, counseling and ancillary support activities.

YCDA and Yugantar have recognized the importance of co-ordination between origin and destination places of migrants for a more forceful implementation of advocacy and research programs centered on the livelihood of internal migrants. This three-day visit at the destination sites is an initiative in that direction to strengthen collaboration of activities of the organizations working on internal migration.

It has been recognized that the state (government) needs to be sensitized on the



issue of migrant labourers who remain outside the purview of development schemes and initiatives. Respective state governments need to be made aware on the number and the negligence of migrant labourers at destination places.

YCDA along with Yugantar held a discussion with the Deputy Labour Commissioner and Assistant Labour Officer of Andhra Pradesh to take stock of the situation of seasonal migrants from Odisha living there.

It is important to recognize that both civil society organizations (CSO) and the state need to work together to realize the objective of the state of sustainable development for all. Inclusion of all sections of the society in its development agenda is the responsibility of the state. However, CSOs are required to fill the vacuum of services delivery left by the government.



Following the meeting with the Labour Department, YCDA, Yugantar and the Andhra government reached a consensus was reached on the issues that need attention and immediate action-

- Providing Health facilities to the migrants from Odisha in RSBY scheme,
- Promoting and securing Anganwadi centres for education of migrant children at work sites.
- Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), a development NGO that works on providing improved access to basic services, inclusive and participatory governance and building of Community Based Information System has been working for provision of educational access to migrant children education and also ensure the entitlement of Mid-Day Meal for those children.
- Migrants have been enabled access to the Public Distribution System (PDS) in Andhra Pradesh by the government.
- The minimum wages paid to the migrant workers in Andhra Pradesh is fixed at 260 Rupees per day

Working with the migrant families is weighed down with its own set of troubles as it was realized during the second day of the field visit. A review of working condition of migrant workers in a local factory by YCDA draws focus on the difficulties faced by Non-Governmental Organizations. The difficulty is not only at the physical level of identifying and/or reaching out to the target group. The problem lies at a more fundamental level- the inability to bridge the gap between the marginalized/victimized and the aide.

NGOs like Yugantar have to undergo a battery of tests to be able to win the trust of the people for whom they intend to work.

In this case, it was observed that the migrant workers were under the functioning and directives of the labour



contractors. They have no contact with the outside world, live in settlements on the outskirts of city limits and are at the mercy of their lords (employers). Attempt at engaging into a dialogue with the migrant families is met with hostility at first. The labour contractor is the voice for the families in the destination places and the migrants remain unaware of the helping hand that is trying to reach out to them.

In this case, Yugantar had to struggle initially to get acquainted with the migrant families and win their trust. It is hard to convince them that the particular organization is there for the betterment of the migrants. The role of Yugantar in mobilizing the migrant community of Odisha has been commendable.

Starting with organizing health camps, Yugantar has been able to create a community group of the Odisha migrants which now acts as the voice of the migrant families.

The third aspect of the field visit was to understand the living conditions of the migrant construction workers at the destination sites. The YCDA representatives interacted with a group of migrant workers at a construction site and observed their dwelling conditions. The major issues faced by the workers were-

- The hutments are acutely undersized compared to the number of persons sharing the space.
- Lack of hygiene is rampant. Access to safe drinking water is limited and storage is also another problem-there lacks effective storage facilities for portable water.
- Sanitation facilities are dismal with lack of proper bathrooms and sewage disposal.
- However, the workers reported getting their wages on time and maintaining cordial relations with the labour contractor.

During the course of the visit, YCDA took the initiative to inform and make the migrants aware regarding the importance of identity registration. Majority of the migrants lack any proper identification documents. This has led to cases of repeated harassment at the destination places. The flow of migrants from western Odisha to neighboring states is seasonal in nature and arises due to conditions of distress at the origin. Poor living conditions, lack of assets and minimal or negligible farm incomes leads to families migrating in hordes to other places. They lack proper documents of identity and thus are left out on receiving basic delivery services. YCDA has been able to mobilize the migrant families in registering with them and provide them with certain signatory card that authorizes their work status at the destination.

The field visit has led to better co-ordination among the organizations at the source and destination in terms of information sharing that will help the NGOs in restructure the activities and also enable a smoother transition of the migrants from the state of origin to the destination.