

A New Platform to Raise Voice

Migration is an emerging trend and new phenomenon in the process of development. The migrant population keeps shifting from one place to another without any identity and legal safeguards. There is a need to understand the migration cycle to ensure the safety of the migrant family and reducing the harassment at the hands of the middle men and labour contractors.

Looking to the migration panorama Youth Council for Development Alternatives (YCDA) organizes meetings with the migration community and mobilized them to organize groups-migrating to brick trade industries, migrating on daily basis to nearby towns and urban areas and local potential youth working on local labor intensive schemes. Focus of this initiative is to build their skill capacity, so that they can bargain and collectively take decisions. During the project period we formed three collective from brick kiln sector, three collective from agro based sectors and eleven collectives from the construction sector respectively. The main objective is to provide a unique identity, platform to discuss the issues and work together for the growth of their opulence. Keeping these facets in mind meetings and workshops with contractors were organized, laborers and Labor department to internalize the facts and Rights of the collective.

Agreement with Middleman



At present some collectives are affirm and bargaining is effective with the contractors in preparing their rules and regulation for migrants and structuring to keep discipline within the group. The story from Gurudampur village says that an agreement was made between the collective and Contractor to migrate for the construction work to Sambalpur district. This small initiative will influence the other collectives for the safe Migration. The specific agreement clearly states the amount of advance received by the collective from middle man, facilities available at the destination point and wage payment according to number of bricks made.

Making District Administration responsible for maintaining village registration

To manage migration, registration is the key activity to propagate the initiative at the bottom point. The sramik mitra (Labour coordinators) were intended to register the names of the migrants so as to smooth the process a migration registration in every village.

In January 2014, a Block level workshop was conducted at Harbanga Block. In this workshop District Labour Officer, Boudh and Block Chairman and BDO of Harbanga Block were the Honorable guest. The participants were Migrant Labors and Panchayat representatives. The adage was to mobilize elected Panchayat representatives and government departments on the issues related to migration and entitlements in relation to role of panchayat and government. The keen objective is to make acknowledge the tracking system in registration process. Most of the migrant shared their experience and misfortune at the worksite. He ensured that this initiate will be taken care by the



Collaborating with DLO on Blue print of Format of Registration



Along with YCDA staff, advisory committee met the DLO to sensitize the Labor officer on blueprint of registering the Migrants. After several rounds of discussion, the DLO agreed to implement through labor department.

Changing scenario towards migrant population in western odisha

Western Odisha has long been known for all the wrong reasons — starvation deaths, drought, famines, poverty and distress. With unproductive landholdings and very few means of sustenance, the rural poor are caught in crisis every year. Their only option is to migrate to other states in search of work. Among the most favored destinations for them are the brick kilns firing the construction boom in cities such as Hyderabad. A well-entrenched chain of labor contractors and middlemen, based in Andhra Pradesh and going down to touts located in the interior villages of the KBK districts; organize the trafficking of labor from these villages to the cities. Every year, after the 60-day paddy crop is harvested around the beginning of September, comes the festival of *Nuakhai*, meaning “eating new rice,” an old tradition of western Odisha. Poor families take an advance from the labour contractors at this time. Soon after, men, women and children start migrating in large numbers to pay off this advance by offering their labor to the contractors.

Seasonal migration has long been a practice for improving livelihoods in rural areas, with some male members of the family leaving the village for part of the year to look for paid work. In the last few decades, however, there has been growing incidence of 'distress seasonal migration'. This occurs due to the lack of livelihood options after the harvest of the monsoon crop (kharif) in most rain fed parts of the country, which gives rise to

indebtedness and food insecurity.



Ward Member maintaining the Migration Register in village.

This forces the entire family to leave home in search of work in order to survive. Persistent drought and environmental degradation have led to the escalation of this trend. Children, who have no choice but to accompany their parents, drop out of schools and are forced into hard labor.

Looking to all this aspects many organizations has come up to address the issues associated with this trend and to make the migration manageable. So to chalk up the situation YCDA is holding the hands of the implementing agencies to make the migration fruitful/smooth. YCDA has succeeded in motivating the Labor department to initiate the Migration Registration process in Boudh district which gives the migrant a right to live a dignified life. Recently Labor department is tracking migration through registering the number of persons migrating out of the villages. Ward members have taken the initiative to update the Migration Register which has made it easy for the migrants to register their names.

