

SHRAMIC Report

Establishing Trust with the Migrants:

A field Report

In association with Yugantar Organization, Hyderabad

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SHRAMIC

Hyderabad has emerged as a major migrant [destination](#) for migrants mainly from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan according to Census 2001 data compiled from SHRAM [database](#). However what is not revealed is the mass migration of labour into the industrial sector of the city. They remain outside the ambit of Census survey due to their absence at the place of origin and similarly unaccountability at the destination as they remain invisible and outside the purview of the state, living secluded lives.

Industrial sites as hub of migrant workers in Hyderabad-there exists many small and medium scale industries and factories in the outskirts of Hyderabad in Kattedan. There exists no data with the government on the industrial units-no registration, no record of the number of labourers working, amount of power consumed, production, etc.

These units hire only migrant labour because of their cheap availability. Local workers, well versed with their rights and entitlements, are hard to deal with. They cannot be exploited nor be paid according to subsistence levels. Migrants are ready to work for the half the wages (5000 per month approximately) as compared to that which have to be paid to locals. The owners limit mobility of the migrants thereby restricting their interaction with the outer world. They live in ghetto format colonies or within factory premises. The workers have only one weekly off to themselves which they use to carry out other activities including procuring essentials for their sustenance, recreation, medical needs, etc. The lives of the migrant workers are confined within the limited geographical and mental space. In such exacting conditions, the migrants have a rigid mindset which doesn't allow them to trust any outsider. They consider any outside interaction as harmful and posing a threat to their living.

Such situations make it difficult for the Yugantar team to approach the migrant communities. They are viewed with suspicion and refrain from any sort of interaction with the field researchers of Yugantar. The primary task in such a scenario is to establish trust with the alien community. In social context, trust typically refers to a situation characterized by the following aspects: One party (trustor) is willing to rely on the actions of another party (trustee); the situation is directed to the future. In addition, the trustor (voluntarily or forcedly) abandons control over the actions performed by the trustee. In order to successfully implement the migration program, Yugantar needed to build this trust with the recipients. This was far easier said than done. In Kattedan, the presence of an Odiya community helped mediate the dialogue and facilitate the process of service delivery. The second hurdle was faced by the union of industry owners. Surprising in this case is the unionization of owners whereas there exists no such united front of the migrant workers. The owners do not allow any inspection or survey to be conducted. Any services that are required by the migrant labourers are either provided by the owners or not available at all. There is no authorized record of their employment in the factories. Hence none of the migrants are entitled to any employment related benefits.

The process of service delivery of Yugantar begin with provision of services which they are need of the most and have no access as such to them. The organization saw an opportunity in building a rapport with the migrant labour community and in turn creates a long term association with them. As mentioned earlier, the presence of a migrant society helped set up the process. The project was initiated through health service delivery, which was urgently required by them. Medical camps were set up which sensitized the labourers regarding the ailments or diseases they were suffering from. Later the labourers were further helped by connecting them with doctors and hospitals for cashless treatment. Migrant families were provided with basic medical amenities, periodical doctor visits were arranged and other peripheral activities were undertaken. However, it was realized early on that only focusing on temporary service delivery would not prove to be a permanent solution for the migrants; for their lives.

It is an accepted fact that migration is a phenomenon which is associated with development-people, either in groups or as individuals migrates in search of alternative livelihood with a probability that income at the destination will be higher than at the origin. In reality, migration is related with several negative externalities at the destination-it is simply moving from one bad condition to another. At the destination, they are constrained by the lack of skills and capability to increase their earning opportunity. Hence, at every destination work site, the labourers remain subjugated and exploited. In order to realize a higher earning, they have to be provided with skill training and development. To realize this objective, the project team has started targeting the migrant women. They are being provided with skill training program to supplement the earning of the migrant household and help secure a stable future of their children. Here, one question could arise as to why Yugantar is not targeting the migrant labour for skill up gradation. The problem arises due to unavoidable circumstances-with one weekly off, any intrusion into the personal space of the migrant is viewed with irritation and hostility to a certain extent. Hence, the steps have to be taken with precaution. There are a number of industries in the region (Kattedan) which are still beyond the reach of Yugantar. Almost all the factories whether small, medium or big, employ cheap migrants as semi-skilled or unskilled labour. The migrants are ready to work for the paltry sum, within which they have to live, save and remit back home. In that limited mental space available, Yugantar is making steady progress by involving the migrant themselves in their uplifting process.



Another geographical area within the city limits where Yugantar has initiated its project is near the vicinity of Charminar in old city, a part of the state of Telangana now. In Kattedan, majority of them are unskilled or semi-skilled rural landless labourers from Odisha, Bihar predominantly. They possess no special skills and work as daily wage earners in factories. In the old city, the migrants are skilled craftsmen who have left their villages in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to sell their skills. Hyderabad offers an opportunity to earn a living through their skills. A visit to the area speaks of the apathy of the local government in bringing about any change in the living conditions of the people. Civic infrastructure is stagnant and in need of urgent attention. The entire area seems to survive on its own merit (demerit). On the other hand, public participation is almost absent-there is nothing surprising since people have been accustomed in thriving within squalor. The migrants also have become a part of this socio-economic system. Their lives depend on the owners who provide with the earning opportunity and dwelling at the destination. Workers share the small premises among themselves where they eat, work, and sleep. Manufacturing units include chappal making which require the specific skill set of migrants.

As mentioned earlier, the problems are similar in both the areas. Specifically in Charminar, the migrants do not possess any document of identity, thereby no access to financial services and no option to remit their savings. The workers have to be sensitized of the requirements of such services and also be informed of the benefits. What has been understood is that migrants have acquired a fear of being duped by the locals. This inhibits their interaction with the local residents and are content in their minor surrounding. Yugantar has inspite of the inherent hurdles has been making steady progress with the migrants. Trust is one such intangible asset which the team of Yugantar has been trying to build from scratch-providing them assurance that the

organization is there to support and provide services which will make their livelihood at the destination better.

