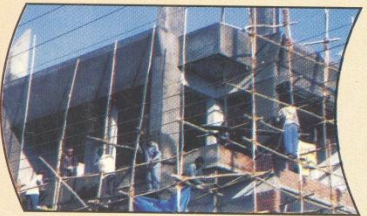
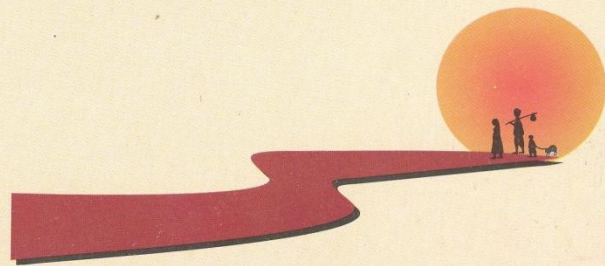


Migrant Labour Support Programme

An innovation to improve the plight of the migrants



GRAMIN VIKAS TRUST
ग्रामीण विकास ट्रस्ट



The Backdrop:

Migration is an indispensable means of livelihood for many rural poor in rain fed areas. Due to degraded, unproductive land, rural communities are forced to migrate to urban areas in search of employment. The rain-fed agriculture and drought prone characteristic of western India further accentuates the process of migration. Although migration is essential for the subsistence of the poor families, there have been limited efforts so far to address this problem.

While implementing sustainable livelihood enhancement programmes under Western India Rain-fed Farming Project (WIRFP) for the past one decade, Gramin Vikas Trust has observed that the natural and land resources in the poor rain-fed areas could not contain the migration and further, it has been completely ignored by the existing schemes of the government and NGOs.

GVT realised that there are a number of problems faced by the migrant communities. These include unavailability of information on job opportunities; lack of transport facilities; ignorance of labour laws; difficulties in finding suitable work at destination; intense exploitation and harassment at destinations; difficulties in sending money and communicating with home and lack of access to basic amenities. Children often drop out of schools and lack access to health care and educational services at home as well as at destinations.

MLSP - An Initiative :

In 2002 GVT initiated the Migrant Labour Support Programme (MLSP), as a component of WIRFP, to address the problems of migration and to empower migrants towards their rights and privileges. The goal of MLSP is to enhance livelihoods of the poor in select tribal districts of Western India.

The project seeks to build and demonstrate replicable and sustainable model of migrant support programme which address the needs of tribal migrants from resource poor districts.

Coverage: 1170 villages
Reach: 8, 82,000 migrants
Number of Rural facilitation centres: 126
Number of Urban facilitation centres: 37

Objectives:

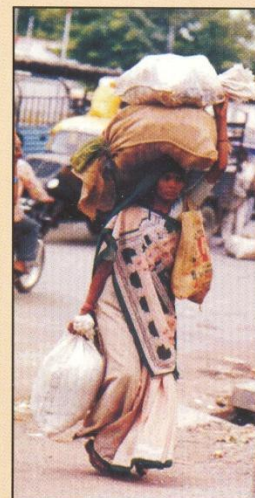
- Reducing costs of migration
- Increasing returns from migration
- Improving protection and safety of migrants and their families
- Increasing awareness of migrants' rights to migrants and other stakeholders
- Facilitating access to basic services
- Creating a supportive enabling environment
- Building a sustainable model that ensures operational and financial independence

Road Map :

- Build strategic partnerships among all stakeholders. This will ensure:
 - The availability of a range of appropriate services
 - Operational sustainability
- Build financial sustainability by linking expenses to user fees and other income sources.
- Ensure quality and relevance of services by obtaining regular feedback, identifying new areas of support.
- Be useful and relevant to large proportion of communities through quick and efficient scale-up.
- Documenting the outcomes and impacts for learning, developing and replication.
- Defining viable and constructive role for all stakeholders.

The MLSP strategy is three pronged:

Before setting out on migration, migrants need adequate finance to embark on their journey, information on where the jobs are, skills to get better remuneration, and a range of other information and services.



Findings of the Research Study in the Project Area

- 80 per cent of cash income generated from migration in a tribal family
- 65 per cent of the house-holds migrate to outside area for livelihoods
- 2-3 persons from the households migrate for nearly 5-6 months
- 42 per cent are women
- Women migrants struggle to find fuel and water, have to take up additional work burden, get less wages than their male counter part and suffer sexual harassment.
- Migrants are recruited through Labour contractor, or individually for daily work through the *nakka* (labour market)

MLSP is a unique programme that provides support at the villages and urban worksites based on migrants' needs.

The Source Strategies :

The provision of migrant friendly services through *Palayan Seva Kendras* (Migrant Service Centres).

PSKs are service hubs that coordinate, anchor and deliver migrant relevant services, based on the need of migrants. They are designed based on a need's assessment of migrants accessing the particular PSK. Services are charged, based on demand and affordability in order to ensure their sustainability.



Services include:

- Social Security through identity card Provision, support in getting insurance, Protection of assets and family
- Communication through telephone booth and messaging services Information related to job opportunities and remuneration
- Ensuring entitlements through negotiation with contractors and resolution of disputes
- Facilitating remittances either directly or through existing financial institutions
- Any other services that migrants need.

Networking and Linkages :

MSP empowers migrants to organise themselves and to access the existing services like local SHGs and financial institutions for credit support and skill-upgradation. Opportunities created for bringing migrants and service providers together to have interfaces. Appropriate network created amongst various stakeholders to ensure more migrant friendly services and demonstrates migrant's contribution towards development through regular sharing meetings and workshops. MLSP provides information and links migrants to existing government programmes (e.g. food for work, old age pension, etc).

Destination Strategies :

PSKs in the urban centres provide support services to migrants at their destination. Urban PSKs are usually managed in collaboration with local NGOs having experience in working on labour issues, with a rights based approach. They deliver wide range of services based on need assessment and organise them as groups and federations.

Services include:

- Social security, communication, information, ensuring entitlements and facilitating remittances
- Food security; MLSP coordinates between rural and urban PSKs to supply food grains at affordable rates.
- Provision of basic amenities - sanitation and water facilities.
- Shelters known as *raen baseras* are temporary shelters for emergency situations or support to first time migrants
- Mobile crèches for children and mothers to provide safety and literacy to children while mothers work.
- Recreation facilities; hubs of interaction for entertainment with facilities such as carrom

board, newspapers, television, etc; these centres are used for bringing migrants together.

Cross-cutting strategies:

• Need based relevant services:

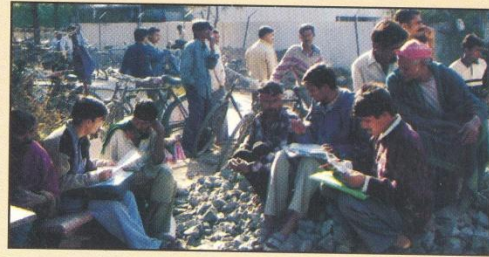
Usefulness and sustainability of MLSP rests on it being relevant to migrants' need. The needs of migrants are varied. The project recognises that it needs to keenly listen to and understand and adapt to meet the most immediate and most important needs. Migrants are particularly unaware when it comes to their rights to basic services such as education, health, sanitation. MLSP links migrants with service providers such as health departments to ensure that these rights are realised. The project helps migrants to organise themselves into pressure groups to demand their basic entitlements from the concerned departments to provide these services. Priority areas for services are: drinking water, subsidised food (Public Distribution System), education for the migrant's children, health, sanitation.

MLSP has also built mechanisms for information and communication flow between rural and urban PSKs. This will ensure that services provided are well aligned between the source and destination.

• Capacity building:

MLSP provides capacity building for skill upgradation to enable them get better employment opportunities. Need based training programmes are organised to provide awareness on rights and safety issues. Capacity building takes place at source and destination in the following areas:

- Upgradation of performance skills on specific technical areas and certification through Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) in collaboration with IGNOU.



- Training and awareness on HIV/AIDS.
- Ability to deal with difficult situations in urban centres violence, malpractices, harassment, etc
- Awareness on rights and how these can be converted effectively into entitlements
- Awareness on safety measures in work places particularly in hazardous jobs

• Advocacy for improving policies and environment

GVT has been working in close partnership with organisations such as DISHA, MARG, CIDC and HADOTI for facilitation support, training and skill upgradation, organising the migrant workers into groups and federations. These organisations are providing strategic support at different destination sites for implementing and upscaling the programme in close collaboration with the contractors and civil society organisations. Besides, GVT has established adequate linkages with District Administration, Panchayatiraj Institutions, line departments, Municipal Bodies, Labour Welfare Institutions etc, towards strengthening existing laws, policy advocacy and creating a conducive and supportive environment for ever increasing migrant labourers from the rural areas.

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