# Ramaiah Webinar on
# Migrants Policy in India during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth one of the largest migrants crisis in post-independence India. The crisis poses both short-term and long-term challenges. Policymakers have been confronted with diverse, complex, and dynamic problems, which need comprehensive understanding and systematic solutions. The repercussions of the lockdown due to COVID-19 have been devastating for the country's nearly 40 million internal migrants. Migrants have been exposed to a series of issues ranging from economic, moral, physical, psychological, social, political, and legal. It has adversely impacted the livelihoods of a large proportion of the country's migrant labourers and informal workers. This large workforce that contributes to 50% of India's national economy and constitutes 85% of the total workforce faces loss of jobs and lack of social security while stranded in an alien city. Further, the vulnerabilities of their overcrowding in temporary shelters and an increased risk of contagion have prompted a chaotic and painful process of their mass return along India's inter-state migration corridors. The governments at the central and state levels have adopted conflicting policy measures, which are debated by political economists, public health officials, academic researchers, crisis response teams, and members of civil society.

We seek to understand migrants' policy in India during COVID-19 through the lens of the ontology in Figure 1. The ontology is our cognitive map of the challenge – a 'Google' mindmap. It will be used to systematically analyze, assess, and refine the polices on and schemes for migration to determine and reinforce the effective pathways, fix and redirect the ineffective ones while identifying the innovative ones. It will be used for feedback and learning from the past, in the present, and the future by the policymakers, practitioners, and academics.

Figure 1 encapsulates the core logic of policies on and schemes for migrants to abate their distress, advance their eustress, and ameliorate their redress. The migrants include workers, families, and communities from within the state, other states, and other countries. The object of the policies is to manage the migrants' economic, moral, physical, psychological, social, political, and legal stress. The focus of the policies is housing, food, skill, medical, wages, education, transportation, and credit support. They cover immediate, short-, medium-, and long-term periods to address problems at various stages of the evolution of the challenge – prevention, mitigation, response, recovery, restoration, and

renascence. The policies have been legislative, executive, judicial, financial, and social. The webinar discussion will be structured using the ontology.

**Migrants Policy in India during COVID-19**

| Policy | | Impact | | | Migrant | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Type** | **Focus** | **Temporality** | **Type** | **Effect** | **Location** | **Entity** | **Stage** |
| Legislative | Housing | Immediate | Economic | Distress | Intra-state | Worker | Prevention |
| Executive | Food | Short-term | Moral | Eustress | Interstate | Family | Mitigation |
| Judicial | Skill | Medium-term | Physical | Redress | Neighbor | Children | Response |
| Financial | Medical | Long-term | Psychological | | Regional | Women | Recovery |
| Social | Wages | Restoration | | | | | |
| | Social | | Political | | International | Community | Renascence |
| | National Elders | | Legal | | | | |
| | Education | | | | | | |
| | Transportation | | | | | | |
| | Credit support | | | | | | |

Rotated connector labels across the ontology: [policy impact on] · [of] · [migrant] · [during COVID-19]

The webinar's brainstorming will be structured and free flowing. It will be for about two hours among policymakers, practitioners (NGOs, industry, volunteers), and academics on migration policies in India in response to COVID-19. Its structure will follow the ontology and will address the following questions:

- What policies have been implemented? What types of policies? What has been their focus?
- Which migrants have been addressed? What types (location) of migrants? Who have been addressed and not addressed?
- What impact have the policies had on the migrants? How have they affected their stress? What types of effects did/will they have? Over what periods?
- What have been the stages of the policy interventions?
- What combinations of policy, impact, migrant, and stage have been effective? What combinations have been ineffective? What combinations can be tried?

The results of the discussion will help in formulating migrant policy by delineating a roadmap for its research on, policies for, and its practice to address the problem systematically and systematically.

**Date:** August 7, 2020
**Time:** 3 pm to 5 pm (IST)

**Facilitator:** Dr Arkalgud Ramaprasad, Director, Ramaiah Public Policy Center, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA
**Moderator:** Dr Chetan Singai, Deputy Director, Ramaiah Public Policy Center, Bengaluru

**Coordinators:**
1) Dr Susanna G. Mitra, Senior Research Fellow, Ramaiah Public Policy Center
2) Mr M Anilkumar, Research Fellow, Ramaiah Public Policy Center

# List of Panellists

| Sl.No | Name | Affiliation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Mr Anmol Narain | Young Professional, Cabinet Secretariat, Niti Aayog, Government of India |
| 2. | Prof E Aravind Raj | Associate Professor, NIMHANS, Bengaluru |
| 3. | Prof Debolina Kundu | Associate Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi |
| 4. | Ms Harshita Sinha | PhD Scholar, Department of International Development, London School of Economics, UK |
| 5. | Prof Irudaya S. Rajan | Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram |
| 6. | Dr Jyotsna Jha | Director, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bengaluru |
| 7. | Dr Kaberi Das | Associate Professor, Gauhati University, Guwahati |
| 8. | Dr Kaustubh Deka | Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh |
| 9. | Dr Kunal Keshri | Assistant Professor of Population Studies, Allahabad University, Allahabad |
| 10. | Dr Marchang Reimeingam | Assistant Professor, Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru |
| 11. | Ms Neha Mallick | Independent Policy Consultant and Researcher |
| 12. | Dr Prateek Raj | Assistant Professor, Strategy, Indian Institute of Management Bengaluru |
| 13. | Ms Reshma Roshania | PhD candidate at Emory University, Atlanta, USA |
| 14. | Mr Shabarinath Nair | International Labour Organisation, Geneva & New Delhi |
| 15. | Dr Sugandha Nagpal | Assistant Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs, Sonepat, Haryana |
| 16. | Prof Sunita Roy | Associate Professor, Patna University, Bihar |
| 17. | Prof Suparna Majumdar Kar | Department of Sociology, Christ University, Bengaluru |
| 18. | Dr Supurna Banerjee | Assistant-Professor, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata |
| 19. | Mr Umi Daniel | Director, Migration & Education Thematic unit at Aide et Action South Asia, Orissa |