Rural young migrants and COVID-19

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Source: Photo: Manoej Paateel | Shutterstock.com
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- How many were stuck? Did they get home eventually? Have they migrated back since? What will happen now?
- Recent nationally representative data on migration is not available (Census 2011, NSS survey 2007-08).
- Overall, my best guess ex-ante and ex-post is that about 11 million inter-state migrants came home.
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- We will present results from our survey of rural migrants, started in 2019, last round completed a week ago!
DDU-GKY training programme and our study

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana:

- Targets rural disadvantaged youth:
  - Below Poverty Line households.
  - Education: some high-school.
  - Quotas for female and SC / ST.

- Training + placement into salaried job.

- Since 2014: 1m youth trained, 0.5 placed.

Our study:

- Study of DDU-GKY trainees from Bihar and Jharkhand.

- Started in 2018, multiple JPAL experimental projects.

- Collaboration with BSLPS, JSLPS and MoRD.
Phone survey

- Sample of 2,259 youth who were trained in 2019.
  - 1/3 from Jharkhand and 2/3 from Bihar.
  - 30% 10th grade, 50% 12th grade.
  - 57% female, 45% ST and 17% SC.

- Three rounds of survey:
  1. Pre-lockdown March 2020 (attrition 5%).
  2. After lockdown eased June-July 2020 (attrition 10%).
  3. One year later March-April 2021 (attrition 15%).


- Funding from EQUIP / ESRC, Warwick and IGC (Thanks!).
Survey Results: Employment

Source: Survey of DDU-GKY trainees
Survey Results: Employment by gender

(a) Female

(b) Male
Survey Results: Migration

Source: Survey of DDU-GKY trainees
Survey Results: Migration by gender

(c) Female

(d) Male
Survey Results: Migration aspirations

Source: Survey of DDU-GKY trainees
How did migrant workers cope?

- 26% of employees received help from their employers.
- Very few employees withdrew from their PF accounts.
- Very few migrants received family support.
- The Bihar Aapda programme reached 61% of migrants.
- 51% of migrants relied on government assistance.
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- Very few migrants received family support.
- The Bihar Aapda programme reached 61% of migrants.
- 51% of migrants relied on government assistance.
- In the end 31% of migrants received no support at all.
- 32% of them had to reduce their daily food intake!
Survey Results: Wellbeing

Source: Survey of DDU-GKY trainees
Conclusion

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- Through training and placement policies like DDU-GKY, governments can bridge that gap.
- Due to COVID-19 many rural young migrants have lost their job and eventually gone home.
- Some did engage with labor markets again and migrated between June-July 2020 and March-April 2021.
- But one year later, many are still at home doing either casual or housework and gave up on migration.
- With the second wave, it will be ever harder to integrate them into urban labor markets.