![IPA Innovations for Poverty Action]

# Short- and Long-term Effects of the Lockdown on Young Rural Migrants from Bihar and Jharkhand

## Researchers

Clément Imbert, Bhaskar Chakravorty

## Abstract

The nationwide lockdown announced by the Indian government on March 24, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 has had a tremendous effect on the Indian economy. Labor migrants are among the most affected: usually employed in informal, low-paid jobs, they are now without work, with no social protection, no assistance from previous employers, and no network to fall back to in their 'host' states.

Researchers assessed the short and long-term effects of the lockdown on labor migrants from Bihar and Jharkhand. This project focuses on labor migrants under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana (DDU-GKY), one of India's most prominent skills and job creation schemes. DDU-GKY offers training as well as placement opportunities to rural poor youth, often in urban centers outside their home states. Drawing on a sample of a recently completed randomized evaluation with DDU-GKY trainees, this project consisted of two additional follow-up surveys:

The first survey round (conducted from June - July 2020) assessed the ways in which the lockdown has affected labor migrants in the short term: their employment, earnings, food consumption, movement, and access to government and civil society-led relief measures.

The second survey round (to be conducted in late 2020) will explore the questions that will arise in the longer run, once the lockdown is lifted: will workers be able to return to the same jobs they held before the COVID-19 crisis? Will they take up similar jobs in the same industry?

Will they need to be re-skilled for another industry altogether?

## Project Outcomes of Interest

Migrant's employment, earnings, and movement (location); Access to social protection schemes

## Partners

J-PAL South Asia, International Growth Center (IGC), Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS), Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS)

## Key Findings

A phone survey conducted with youth from Bihar and Jharkhand in June and July 2020 to assess how the nationwide lockdown had affected inter-state labor migrants found that:

- Almost half (45 percent) of the respondents who resided outside of their home state in the pre-lockdown period had returned to their home state.
- 32 percent of the respondents who had a salaried job in the pre-lockdown period had lost their jobs. Of those still employed, 37 percent were on leave, mostly unpaid.
- 30 percent of the migrants who were still employed received support from their employers and a few withdrew money from their Provident Fund (social security) account.
- 51 percent of migrants received government assistance, mainly food supplies. The Aapda program of the Bihar government (the state's disaster compensation scheme) reached 61 percent of migrants.
- 31 percent of the interstate migrants did not receive any support from any source. As a result, 31 percent reported that their daily food intake was less than usual.
- At the time of surveying, the respondents reported higher levels of anxiety and lower levels of life satisfaction than in the pre-lockdown period.
- Among the migrants who returned home, 68 percent of male migrants wanted to re-migrate, but only 37 percent of female migrants did.

## Link to Results

Blog post: Covid-19 lockdown and migrant workers: Survey of vocational trainees from Bihar and Jharkhand

## Impact Goals

- Build resilience and protect the financial health of families and individuals

- Build resilient and adaptable businesses and employment opportunities
- Improve social-safety net responses

# Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

# Implementing Organization

J-PAL South Asia

# Results Status

Results