

# Digital Skilling of Migrant workers in India

Narrative Report 2021-22



## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

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**DEF-** Digital Empowerment Foundation

**IDS-** India Development Service

**ICT-** Information and Communication Technologies



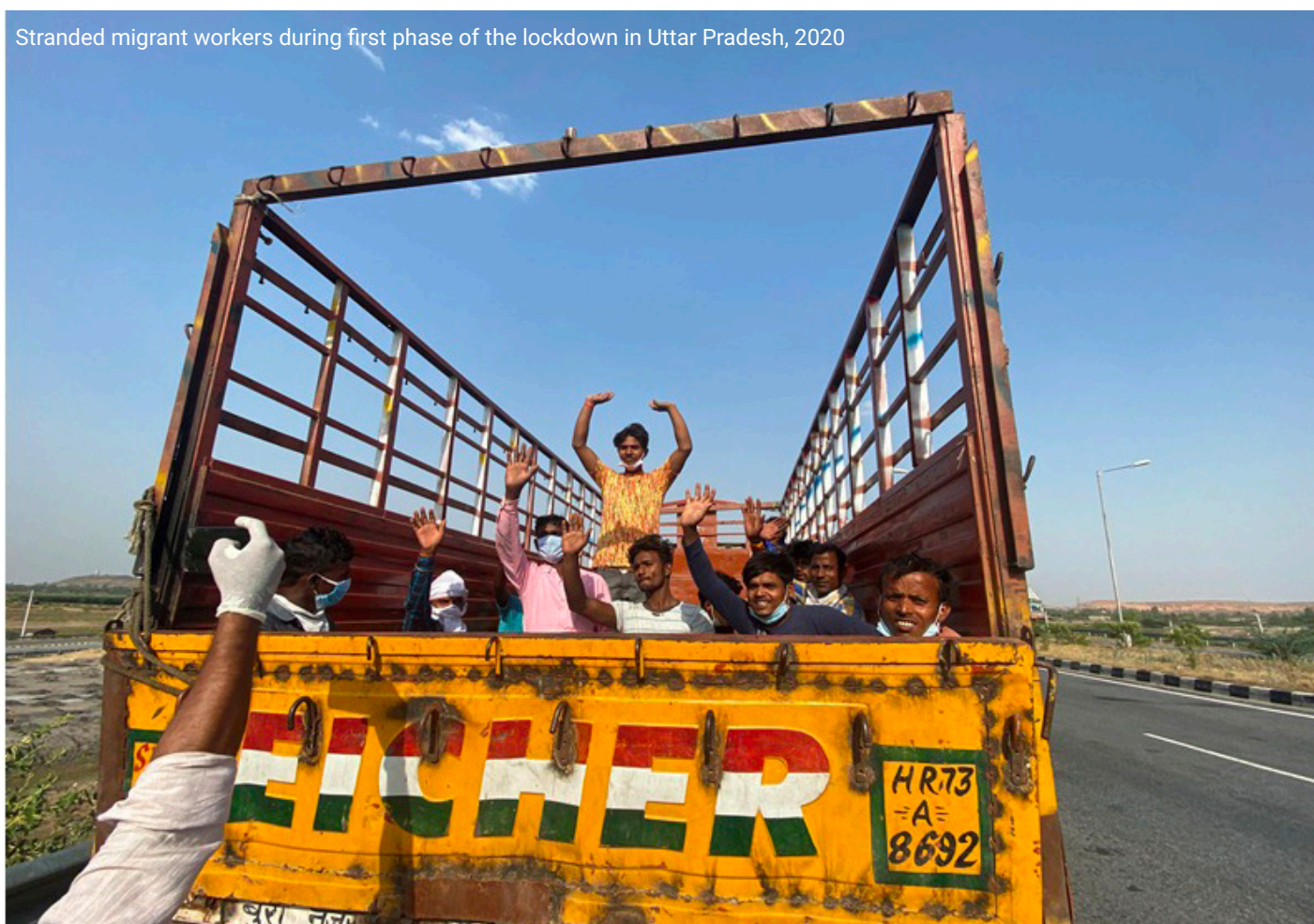
# 1. Executive Summary

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The Covid-19 lockdown led to large-scale unemployment, especially amongst people earning daily wages. The unemployment rate saw a sharp spike from 8% in March 2020 to 23.5% in April and May 2020 according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). This led to distress for 40 million migrant workers who were now stranded in urban centers without a source of income with their expenses increasing.

Around 21.69 lakh workers between 20-35 years returned home in Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Bihar (Chief Labour Commissioner, June 2020) as several of them lost their jobs due to shutting down of factories and establishments, wages not being paid, and landlords demanding and collecting rent. Moreover, the hardships have increased even in the present period of unlocking of the economy due to the increase in digital work and work from home policies. Therefore, investing in migrant workers who reflect the demographic profile of young India is the key to help them derive lasting benefits that are have enabled them to find better and new jobs or livelihoods on the salary they deserve. Hence, through this project, we aim to provide training to digitally upskill them so that they acquire skills that are suitable for the current market scenario, thereby, curtailing the problems of underemployment or low wages. The project was focused to select 200 migrant workers from 3 aspirational districts each and was trained to build digital skill capacities with the help of Digital Trainers. The project was delivered in a blended mode largely offering the major training components through the use of Mobile phones. It was deployed in 3 districts of 3 states in India- Bihar (Dist. Muzaffarpur), Uttar Pradesh (Dist. Chandauli) and Odisha (Dist. Nuapada). From this project, we hope to motivate the workers and thereby help them to extend their income earning capabilities.

Stranded migrant workers during first phase of the lockdown in Uttar Pradesh, 2020



Digital Empowerment Foundation in Partnership with India Development Service started a program called “Digital Skilling of Migrant workers in India”. With a presence across the country, we conducted a survey to find out which are the most affected parts and three districts popped up: Muzaffarpur in Bihar, Chandauli in Uttar Pradesh and Nuapatna in Odisha. The aim of the project was to provide training in digital tools to migrant workers so that their skillset is diversified and they have a better opportunity to get a fair job in the market. The digital training aimed to up-skill them in such a way that they are in a position to demand better pay for their work.

The pandemic and the lockdown have brought into focus the struggles of the migrant workforce especially during the exodus back to their villages though it is also believed that migration back to the cities is inevitable therefore it is important to ponder over the fact that how this workforce which constitutes majorly the youth can get access to decent work and wages in the longer run. One of the impacts of the pandemic is that more people are turning to e-learning methods. Contrarily, digital skilling of rural youth has always been the main concern. Inadequacies in training programmes remain one of the hurdles in skill development. They are forced to take up the physical labour and are often subjected to disputes and conflicts related to their payments. Hence, it is important to enhance the access to digital skills training to the migrant workforce, in particular youth.

Stranded migrant workers during first phase of the lockdown in Uttar Pradesh, 2020





## 2. Program Overview

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The program named “Digital Skilling of Migrant workers in India” was implemented in 3 aspirational districts of 3 states in India- Bihar (Dist. Muzaffarpur), Uttar Pradesh (Dist. Chandauli), and Odisha (Nuapada). These selected districts are classified as aspirational districts by the Government of India. The government have categorized them into “aspirational” locations as these are the underserved districts and improvement is needed in terms of the socio-economic status, quality of life and economic status of the citizens. According to Rapid Assessment Survey conducted by Digital Empowerment Foundation, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha are the migrant affected areas in India as 26% of people work as migrant labourers and, had to migrate back to their villages during the lockdown (2020). aimed to promote and inculcate digital literacy among the rural migrants aged between 14 to 44 years of age, and empower them to access, analyse, consume produce, and leverage information using Digital Interventions and ICT.

The project aimed to enhance the capacities of these migrants from their respective areas to access and avail information related to health, education, social and financial inclusion, livelihood, and employment. This was done through intensive training, community meetings, and monthly workshops to strengthen their knowledge and capacity to understand the basic functionality of digital tools.

Digital Skilling of migrant workers, Bihar



It supports the efforts and interest of such migrants to ensure that the information and knowledge to access and operate the ICT tools reaches every individual as they have been designed and implemented for. Since, April 2021, the program has made constant efforts to create a digitally-enabled environment. It was implemented in three specific areas of Sates - Bihar (Dist. Muzaffarpur), Uttar Pradesh (Dist. Chandauli), and Odisha (Nuapada) respectively, where the majority of the people come from a poverty-stricken background. A baseline survey was conducted at both the target areas where the identified trainers were responsible for conducting digital literacy classes.

The program aimed to provide digital literacy, information services, training, and various other digital services in an effort to help people fight information poverty. From July 2021 to February 2022, the project period carried out many activities that positively impacted the community. This report highlights the key activities, key issues faced on the ground, and steps taken to overcome such challenges.

Through this project, DEF had provided training to migrant workers, and in particular, youth in building their digital skill capacities. The services provided to 600 migrant workers (200 each) from 3 aspirational districts of 3 states in India- Bihar (Dist. Muzaffarpur), Uttar Pradesh (Dist. Chandauli) and Odisha (Dist. Nuapada).

The services provided are- (i) Digital skilling of 600 Migrant workers in digital literacy, financial literacy, and e-governance through offline and online modes (WhatsApp or Telegram) (ii) 200 trained migrant workers were transformed as “Digital Volunteers” so that they could provide digital skills training to other migrant workers in their community (iii) Providing relevant information about government services, schemes and entitlements to migrant workers.

Given below is a tabloid of the target achieved throughout the program: -

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of Direct beneficiaries reached   | 643  |
| Total Female Beneficiaries reached             | 280  |
| Total Male Beneficiaries reached               | 363  |
| Total number of Indirect Beneficiaries reached | 1000 |



### 3. Introduction

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Digital literacy is an umbrella concept for important skill clusters– just like traditional literacy and numeracy. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have penetrated all areas of contemporary life. In this context, digital literacy has become much more than the ability to handle computers, it comprises a set of basic skills which include the use and production of digital media, information processing and retrieval, participation in social networks for creation and sharing of knowledge, and a wide range of professional computing skills.

More than half of all migrants lack access to the online world. That means more than 2 billion migrants don't have access to the benefits of being online. Through this digital literacy program, migrants in digitally isolated communities gain the skills to get online and source information, helping them to bring the world's opportunities to them. Migrants can then train their community and help others to get online too. When migrants have equal access to information and opportunity, anything is possible. Migrants with access to economic opportunity disproportionately benefit their families and their communities.



Migrants needed the training to become digitally literate. Digital literacy training opens the door to other essential skills needed to operate in a broadband environment, including financial literacy skills and career training, and ICT-enabled career training. Such training enables migrants to set up online businesses or use broadband services, such as social networking sites, to enhance their ongoing livelihood and economic activity.

Reaching out to migrants (both men & women) at the bottom of the pyramid requires more than merely ensuring access to ICTs and broadband networks. Migrants need the training to become digitally literate. Digital literacy training opens the door to other essential skills needed to operate in an internet-friendly environment, including financial literacy skills and career training, and ICT-enabled career training. Such training enables migrants to set up online businesses or use broadband services, such as social networking sites, to enhance their ongoing livelihood and economic activity.

The concept of delivering to the last mile has been a challenge that India has not yet been able to overcome -- and this reflects in the lack of Internet penetration in rural regions. The government needs the support of NGOs and other private establishments to make the youth and people of rural India part of India's modernisation by empowering them with digital literacy -- changing their lives and the fortunes of India's economy as a whole.





## 4. Project implementation

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Master trainers at all three locations undertook different kinds of activities and facilitated digital literacy training for identified migrants and allowed the community to avail their daily needs using digital and communication tools. Following were the name of topics taught by DEF master trainer team using the existing curriculum:

1. Basics of Smartphones
2. Digital Literacy – How to use a computer/Laptop & other digital platform
3. Creating an email I'd and its importance
4. Digital Financial Literacy (Online Banking)
5. Introduction to Internet, WWW and Web Browsers
6. social media: Use of social media platforms (WhatsApp & Telegram)
7. How to access information and identify fake news
8. Learning Concept of e-governance
9. How to find and apply in online jobs

### Activities and Results

#### a. Basics of Smartphone

In this module the trainings were conducted around

What a smartphone is?

What a touchscreen is and how gestures work?

How to turn the phone on and off?

How to make a call and take a picture?

How to download new apps for your smartphone?

Even though it seems that we've covered a lot, we've really only just scratched the surface of what smartphones are capable of. People use them as personal organisers, web browsers, music mixers, media players, to access email and Facebook, to send and receive electronic business cards, to navigate to a destination, to share media and much, much more. Spend even a little bit of time playing with the apps built into your phone and downloading new ones from the App Store and Google Play and you'll no doubt be amazed at all the things your smartphone can do.

## **b. Digital Literacy Training**

Digital literacy is expounded as a set of skills, required using tools such as computers, smartphones, the internet, and any other information technology. It is pertinent that knowledge of digital tools is augmenting as a pre-requisite among all the sectors whether it's private or public. And interestingly a large population base, comprised of rural population has been found completely devoid of it. Information-deprived sections of societies need interactive platforms to learn, grow, adapt, and compete with the cut-throat competition in this world. In order to achieve that, every master trainer made sure that digital literacy reaches every individual possible. Certain community meetings were conducted to aware people about the program. Community mobilisers went door to door, distributing pamphlets and informing people about the importance of digital literacy. As a result, numerous people turned up to register themselves for the program.

The classes are scheduled in small batches with 10-12 migrants, following all the COVID-19 safety protocols. From teaching basic computer training which includes handling and using digital tools and their applications to imparting awareness about financial literacy, the program covered various topics through both, theoretical and practical approaches.

## **c. Creating an email Id and its importance**

In this module, training of how to create an email I'd in any system for sending and receiving messages over a network that called Electronic Mail was taught which can be included attachments such as pictures or sound files. The knowledge around benefits of email was also imparted. This was a guide to What is Email? Here we also discussed the introduction and importance of email along with its uses and advantages.

## **d. Financial Literacy (a. Digital Financial Literacy (Online Banking)**

Achieving sustained behaviour change in the adoption and usage of digital financial services is a critical breakthrough for the Digital Literacy for migrants' program. Most of the migrants from the community lacked the knowledge of the banking system, only a few of them had their bank accounts, but still were unaware of various banking facilities they can avail themselves by using their mobile.

Understanding how financial inclusion can empower these migrants and be one of the steps in bettering their lives, a session on digital financial literacy was conducted to educate these migrants about the basics of mobile banking services. The migrants of the community were given training and workshop which include- how to book an online train ticket, how to book a bus ticket using the Chartr app, how to make a UPI id, to create a Paytm, Phonepe, Gpay, etc. profile and how to effectively use them in their daily lives.

When told how advantageous it is to use Mobile banking, instead of going to Banks and standing in long queues, many migrants who were initially hesitant about using the apps, overcame their reservations and created their profiles on various e-wallet platforms.



### **e. Introduction to Internet, WWW and Web Browsers**

Internet is a global communication system that links together thousands of individual networks. It allows exchange of information between two or more computers on a network. Thus, training around internet helps in transfer of messages through mail, chat, video & audio conference, etc. It has become mandatory for day-to-day activities: bills payment, online shopping and surfing, tutoring, working, communicating with peers, etc.

In this topic, we are going to discuss in detail about concepts like basics of computer networks, Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN), concept of internet, basics of internet architecture, services on internet, World Wide Web and websites, communication on internet, internet services, preparing computer for internet access, ISPs and examples (Broadband/Dialup/Wi-Fi), internet access techniques, web browsing software, popular web browsing software, configuring web browser, search engines, popular search engines/search for content, accessing web browser, using favorites folder, downloading web pages and printing web pages.

### **f. social media: Use of social media platforms (WhatsApp & Telegram)**

In this training module, participants learnt about :

- Understand what social media are and how they work
- Create a Facebook profile and manage its basic functions, including safety and privacy settings
- Use Facebook for health and wellness purposes
- Understand what Instant Messaging Applications are and how they work
- Download and use WhatsApp and Skype, also for health-related purposes

### **g. How to access information and identify fake news**

In this module, training was imparted around:

- What is Information
- Understanding the different types of information
- Recognize that credible sources of information are important for research
- Identity the different types of information and its uses in your studies

### **h. Learning Concept of e-governance**

E-governance raises the transparency, accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness and inclusiveness in the governing process in terms of reliable access to the information within government, between government, national, state, municipal, and local level governments, citizens, and businesses and empowers business through

access and use of information.

The main focus of the E-Governance or electronic governance is to provide transparent, equitable, and accountable service delivery to the citizens. The aim of the e-governance facilitates and improves the quality of governance and ensures people's participation in the governing process through electronic means like e-mail, websites, SMS connectivity, and others.

### **i. How to find online and apply in jobs**

Workshops around job skilling were and how to search jobs online by external trainers and off-farming activity, on Advance Excel and Tally. The workshop was mainly organised for migrants from the commerce background. The specific objectives of the workshop were to assist the participants to develop an understanding of all the subject mentioned above by providing appropriate knowledge and explain them how it can unlock various career opportunities.

Around all migrants (program beneficiaries) participants of 14-44 years of age took part in these workshops. It begins with a warm-up session in which the facilitator asked the participants about their knowledge of how to search jobs online and apply in it, off-farm activities training, Tally and Advance Excel. The Session continued where the migrants were given hands-on training in the creation of company, ledgers, and groups, and posting Voucher entry in Tally.



Digital Skilling of migrant workers, Odisha



## 5. Outcome

DEF through their master trainers aims to foster not only a sound knowledge of digital tools but also to provide employment along with expanding avenues of livelihood for the underserved and marginalized communities with the help of our dedicated trainers who worked really hard to nurture these bright young migrants into future digital leaders.



Digital Skilling of migrant workers, Uttar Pradesh



## 6. Annexure

### Annexure 1: - Branding and Communication technique

1. Banner printed and distributed for outreach among each trainer to create awareness about the Digital skilling program for Migrants.



Migrant workers from Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar



## Annexure 2: - Case stories

### Migrant Labourer to Community Leader

Deepak Kumar Munda, 21 was one such migrant worker. He used to work in Delhi as a labourer and returned to his village in UP as the 2020 lockdown left him unemployed. He migrated in 2020 because he couldn't find a stable source of income in the village. He had to leave his studies after class 10 because his family couldn't afford sending him to school anymore; they needed him to earn money. He has two younger sisters who are studying in a government school. His father is a labourer and his mother a housewife. His father's income is not enough to run the house.

Deepak was identified for Digital skilling project and was asked to join the trainings. Deepak grabbed this opportunity and dedicated himself to the project. He is an optimistic and determined youngster and is always excited about working for the betterment of his community and family. Seeing the quality of his work and the dedication master trainer gave him an opportunity to serve the community further and so the support was extended to him.

Under these circumstances Deepak has taken the responsibility to teach primary and high school students twice a day at his digital center. He is teaching them all the major subjects and also conducts tests and examinations every few weeks to judge their aptitude and level of education. Moreover, Deepak provides these students with digital literacy, giving these students practical skills that they will require when they look for employment. Deepak uses the tablet provided to him by DEF to find course material for the students, in fact he has very few books, he uses the device in class to conduct his lessons.

Deepika became a role model in his locality and people are inspired by his selfless effort. The future of a whole generation is at stake because of lack of access to education and Deepak is doing his part to help students gain access to education. Deepak understands better than anyone what it means to struggle and he chose to struggle through his difficult time and overcome it on the basis of his dedication and hard work.



### Our Centers: Tackling the Migration Challenge

Kadir Ahmed is the son of Sagir Ahmed, a resident of village Sahavpur of District Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh. He is 25 years old migrant laborer, he is like the other migrant workers, who moved to the city to earn a livelihood and support his family in UP. Due to the uncertainty of work, he had to return to his native place. Where due to Aadhar-enabled payment systems, he was not able to get his bank account opened and could avail of the benefits of government schemes.

The Master Trainer at Sahavpur district got to meet Shamim and registered him to the Program and help him to understand the importance of digital literacy and provided him with necessary training. The master trainers also helped him avail the benefit of the government schemes that will be received in his bank account.

Soon after weeks of his training, Shamim himself apply for his PAN card and Aadhar Card. The training was insightful as it aware him of how important it opened his bank account to receive the benefits from various scheme that was launched during the Lockdown. Soon after that, he got to receive the benefit from the amount sent to the accounts by the honorable Chief Minister.

He is very thankful for this initiative that helps him during his toughest time. With the help of the Gareeb Kalyan Yojana Scheme, his family has never gone to bed with an empty stomach.



### A DIGITAL PUSH TO A LITERATE FUTURE

Once one says 'yes' to positivity, the affirmation turns contagious as 18-year-old Kiran Kumari is a living testimony of the dictum. Since she is a native of Bihar, so during her growing years she has experienced a sea of changes in her overall personality. From a typical silent and shy girl to a diffident girl who went outside her town to earn wages. Initially in her job, she was a bit anxious about the new environment and faced a little trouble with the language and found the environment very uninspiring," but she decided to leave the job and went back home to grow through distance learning programs. To help, DEF opens a Centre close to her house was an immense blessing to her where she

actively implements all the training activities at the center, and her presentation and public speaking skills have improved notably over the months she's been working in the digitally equipped center. Kiran's mother is a housewife while her father works as a tailor. In the initial days of starting the Centre, they were not very keen on letting her daughter attend trainings regularly. Since the classes were being conducted without any charge at the Centre, her mother would repeatedly persuade & motivated her to grow and earn a livelihood through the center only. Even though she spends more time at the training centre than at her house, the learning has increased to open new boxes of opportunities for new careers. Digital literacy classes at the Centre were conducted through learning and practical activities. Also, every Saturday they have special activities there, such as STEM activities, drawing, painting and excursions, and science & technology experiments. And today, Kiran's enthusiasm to attend the Centre also percolated her community in perceiving the positive change. She was the one who motivated the adolescent girls of her community to attend the Digital literacy classes at the Centre. "I had attended the classes once and I found it very interesting. Kiran, owing to her inherent abilities, uses to guide students in the Centre, which has been an exponent of nurturing foundational academic aspirations.

## Training glimpses from Field - Bihar



Master Trainer *Rita Devi* conduction training with migrants in Bihar





## Training glimpses from Field - Odisha



Master Trainer *Bonita Sahu & Sunil Rana* conduction training with migrants in Odisha





## Training glimpses from Field – Uttar Pradesh



Master Trainer *Mr. Anit* conducting training with migrants in Uttar Pradesh





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