



DELAYED AND DENIED: INJUSTICE IN COVID-19 RELIEF

National Factsheet

How well are COVID-19 relief entitlements announced by the Central Government, under the first round of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyaan Yojana, reaching the poor and the marginalised?

An assessment of the extent of realisation of the key relief entitlements across 25,032 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households in India, by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR).

Introduction

The fallout of the novel coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic has been alarming and the consequences extreme. The disease, which, till date, has no known cure nor vaccine, has sent governments, the economy, and the media into tailspin. Since January 2020, there has been a dramatic acceleration in the spread of COVID-19 across the globe. In India, the first case was detected in late January, in Kerala. Nearly a month after, in the early days of March, the WHO declared the disease a global pandemic, a public health disaster that the world is still battling.

The country-wide lockdown that was announced by the Prime Minister on March 24, was lauded as a bold decision, one that puts the health and well-being of the people before commerce and moneymaking, to bring the machinery of an entire nation, barring a few essential services, to a juddering halt. However, in the days since the lockdown was announced, the spread of job loss, hunger, displacement, paranoia, and fear could rival the spread of the virus itself. Recognising that disasters don't recognise caste, class, gender, ability and age differences, but a majority of disproportionately affected population comprising the informal sector workers are unorganised, self-employed, migrant and homeless, with their women, children, elderly and people with disabilities. A massive proportion of these income and livelihood insecure population hail from Scheduled Castes (or Dalit) and Scheduled Tribes (or Adivasi) communities (Census 2011).

The COVID-19 Relief Inclusion Assessment therefore examines the extent of realisation of the key social protection schemes in selected geographies across 14 states, of which the top 8 states data have been analysed in the national factsheet, and the individual state factsheets. The main trends revealed across the schemes are threefold: *abysmal awareness about the announced entitlement; significant scheme coverage gaps; and low benefit realisation by those enrolled under the social protection schemes*. All these factors further deepen inequalities and financial insecurities

among marginalised communities thereby creating conditions of perpetual indebtedness and exploitation.

The Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data is the main determinant and identifier of the poorest and most vulnerable households for several national schemes, some of which are part of the COVID-19 Relief Package. As per the SECC 2011 data, 83.55% of the Scheduled Castes and 86.53% of the Scheduled Tribe households' highest earning members earned less than Rs. 5,000. The SECC data, along with the Census data, Agriculture Census data and the National Family Health Survey data enable deeper insights into the pre-existing poverty scenarios and multidimensional deprivations that are responsible for the vulnerabilities of these communities, and therefore, require special attention in disaster resilience and recovery planning, programming and budgeting. The findings of the assessment reaffirm these conditions of vulnerability.

The purpose of the inclusion assessment is to demand robust social protection cover and release of COVID-19 entitlements to the marginalised communities as a must for raising resilient communities and 'Build-Back-Better'. When struck by natural or health emergencies like COVID-19, these communities with their women, children, elderly, persons with disability require additional support to be able to care for them. The absence of adequate social protection coverage and full realisation increases risks to their dignity and deteriorates their psycho-social, emotional, and physical well-being. Therefore, NCDHR, a coalition of Dalit and Adivasi human rights activists, academics, humanitarian workers demand expeditious uniform social protection coverage of the SC and ST households with assistance to secure the required documentations; release of the public entitlements, both goods and services in-cash and in-kind as provided in the relief package, and adoption of additional or special measures to address the special needs of the marginalised communities are critical to inclusive recovery and disaster risk reduction.

We Claim-The Inclusion Monitoring of COVID-19 Relief Assistance Measures

The pre-existing caste and ethnicity induced gender, ability and age related vulnerabilities have laid a back-breaking burden on the SC and ST communities after the lockdown. Nationally, about 16% of the SCs and 8% of the STs constitute intra-state migrant workers engaged in casualised labour, with minimal or no social protection coverage, amid acute income insecurity. Among the SCs, 54.71% and among the STs, 35.65% landless households derive major part of their income from manual casual labour and some turn to begging (Census 2011). A vast section of the SCs (78.19%) own marginal landholding, and only 3.39% of the SCs and 4.17% of the ST households earn from cultivation (Agriculture Census 2015-16). Furthermore, 83.55% of the SCs and 86.53% of the ST households have their highest earning members' income at less than Rs. 5,000 (SECC 2011). The COVID-19 pandemic decimated even these delicate means of sustenance for the two communities.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic and nationwide shutdown to contain the spread of the virus, the NCDHR commissioned a remote mobile-app based inclusion assessment of in April-May 2020. India has a well laid out system of social protection floor to ensure basic income assistance and critical public services like healthcare and food and nutrition security to the marginalised. The COVID-19 relief inclusion assessment was primarily undertaken to identify the excluded households and enable them to realise the relief entitlements. Secondly, to advocate for the inclusive coverage and access to all entitlement. The assessment was conducted in selected geographies across 14 states of which 8 states have been analysed in the national factsheet. The key findings are as follows.

Summary of Findings

- 43% of the SC and 46% of the ST households did not receive information about COVID-19 symptoms and protective measures from the healthcare workers.
- 66% of the SC and 79% of the ST households lacked awareness about free testing and treatment provisions under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, with only 14% of both the SC and ST households registered with the scheme.
- 53% of the SC and 63% of the ST households lacked information about free LPG refills up to 3-cylinders under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)
- 63% of the SC and 62% of the eligible ST households were not enrolled with the PMUY
- 55% of the SC and 54% of the ST households lacked information about enhanced MGNREGS wages.

- 59% of the SC and 46% of the ST households were not registered with MGNREGS and only 37% and 22% of the SC and ST enrolled workers had secured enhanced wages
- 22% of the SC and ST households together reported having old-age pensioners in the households, with 22% widow pensioners, and 4% disability pension holders, but 68% of the SC and 59% of the ST pension-holders were yet to receive the ex-gratia assistance.
- 54% of the SC and 61% of the ST households were unaware about Rs. 500 cash assistance to women account holders under the Jan Dhan Yojana (JDY)
- 37% of the SC and 41% of the ST women were enrolled under the JDY, and of those with active bank accounts, 36% of the SCs and 55% of the ST women account holders had not received the cash assistance
- 53% of the SC and 45% of the ST beneficiary households had not received nutritional food support under the Integrated Child Development Scheme
- 83% of the SC and the ST beneficiaries, respectively, of the National Food Security Scheme received the supply of free food grains, but 32% and 50% of the SC and ST respectively, received less than full quota of the entitlement.

Recommendations to the Central and State Governments

1. Inclusive, universal coverage of all SC and ST households under the existing national social security schemes particularly on livelihood and income support, preventive and curative healthcare, food and nutrition security, on a mission mode.
2. Extended and enhanced cash and in-kind assistance under the PDS-ICDS, Jan Dhan Yojana, Pension schemes for SC, ST, and other marginalised communities.
3. Introduce social security measures especially for livelihood and income security of the informal sector workers from the SC, ST, and other marginalised communities.
4. Expedient release of the COVID-19 entitlements to those enrolled with the social security schemes, and identify those who still haven't secured the entitlements till now, and ensure that they receive what was due to them for the entire period for which the PMGKY has been extended.
5. Ensure financial inclusion by opening and reactivating Jan Dhan accounts for the SC and ST communities across the country is done in a time-bound manner



Ayushman Bharat: Free testing and treatment for COVID-19

The Ayushman Bharat Yojana, launched in 2018, is a national health insurance scheme to provide secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to vulnerable families that form the bottom 40% of the population, as determined by the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011. The Scheme offers Rs. 5 lakh health insurance cover to each family, annually.

On the contrary, the assessment reveals an appallingly dissatisfactory level of awareness about free testing and treatment under the Scheme, made further inconsequential by a distressingly poor Scheme coverage among the

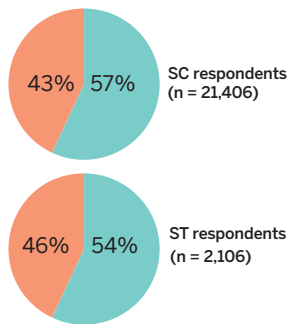
Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households. This increases the probability of out-of-pocket expenditures and/or a severely curtailed capacity to afford medical assistance in the pandemic.

The stated purpose of the Scheme stands defeated to reduce financial burden on poor and vulnerable and meet the Sustainable Development Goal 3 on 'Health and Well-being' by leaving no one behind. The surveyed households reported the presence of significant vulnerable population and a large number of them denied visits by healthcare workers to check-on symptoms, except Andhra Pradesh.

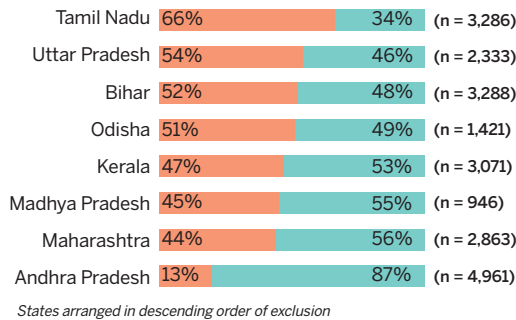
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ No ■ Yes

Households visited by the health workers for checking symptoms

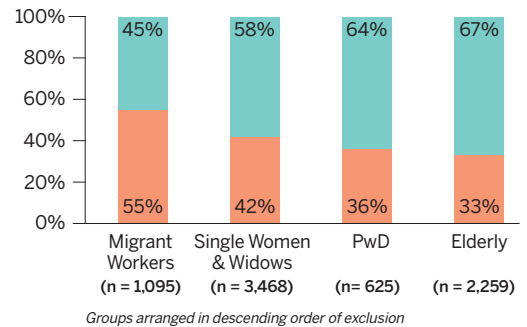
Overall



Key States

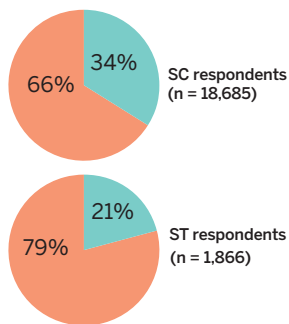


Households with Vulnerable Groups

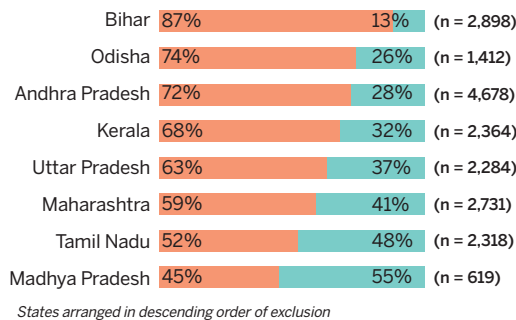


Awareness about free testing and treatment under the Scheme

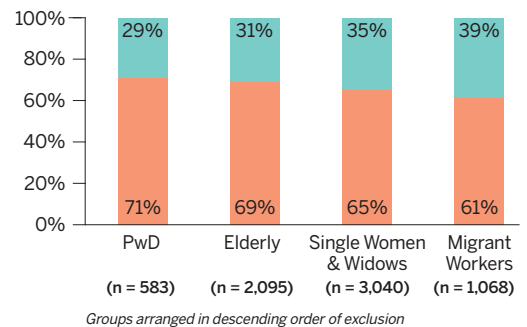
Overall



Key States

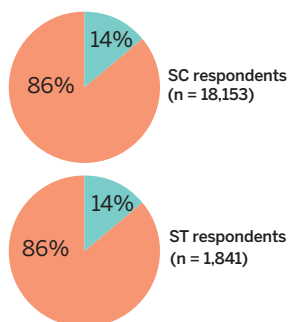


Households with Vulnerable Groups

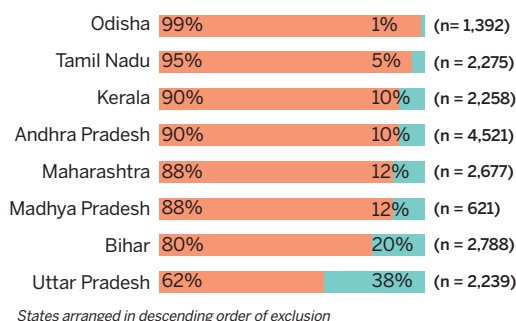


Households enrolled with the Scheme

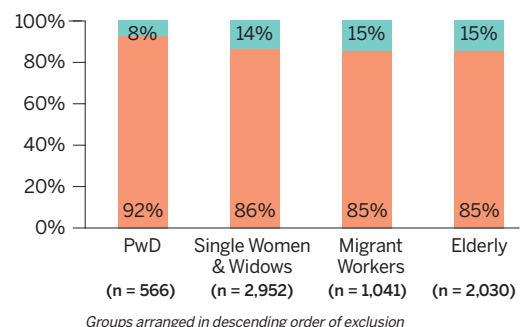
Overall



Key States



Households with Vulnerable Groups





Ujjwala Yojana: Free gas cylinders for 3-months

The scheme was launched in 2016 for the BPL families as determined by the SECC 2011 data, with the aim to safeguard the health of women and children by providing them with a clean cooking fuel – LPG. The overall analysis shows massive lack of awareness about the entitlement, inadequate coverage, and low realisation of the benefit, especially by ST households. Although the benefit has satisfactorily reached those enrolled, except in states like Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra where it is below 50%, such alarmingly low scheme coverage stipulates systemic neglect in ensuring timely and prioritised enrolment of

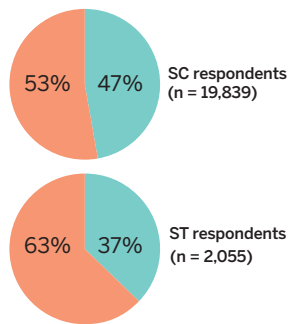
marginalised communities.

On the whole, in normal times also the SC and ST households find it undeniably difficult to get cylinder refilled for lack of money, even if they are reimbursed later. However, although they were supposed to get the money advanced into their accounts under the COVID-19 relief to be able to avail free of cost refills, on the ground it was reportedly the same reimbursement model that was followed. This challenged people's capacity to avail the benefit of the relief package.

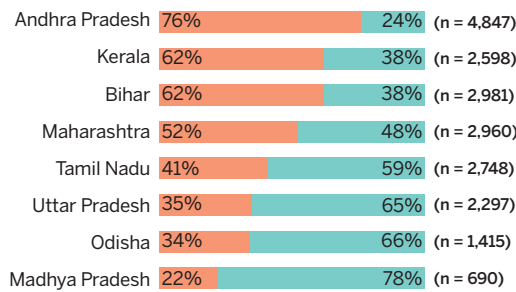
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ No ■ Yes

Awareness about relief announced under the Scheme

Overall

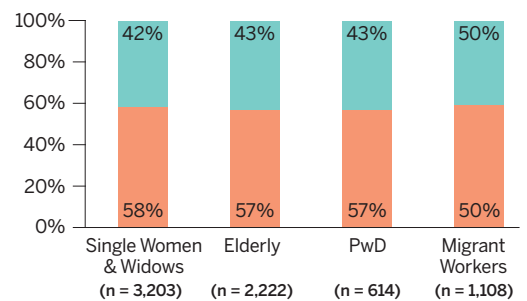


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

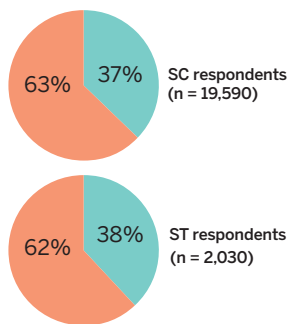
Households with Vulnerable Groups



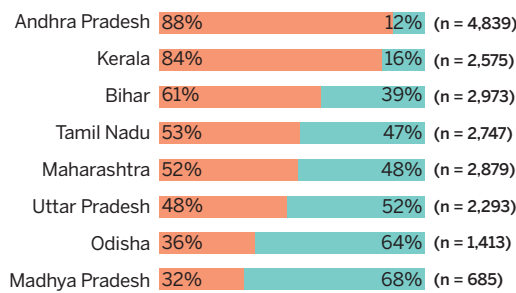
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households enrolled with the Scheme

Overall

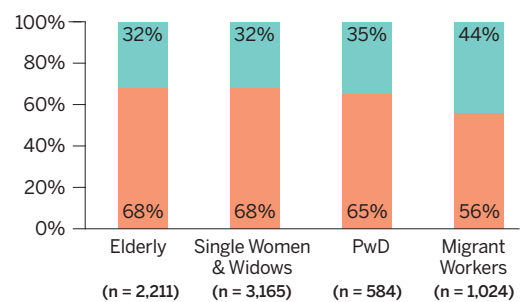


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

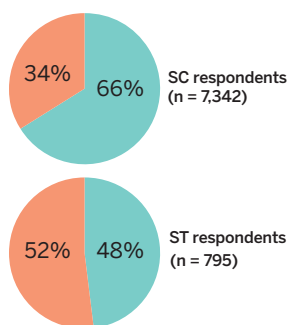
Households with Vulnerable Groups



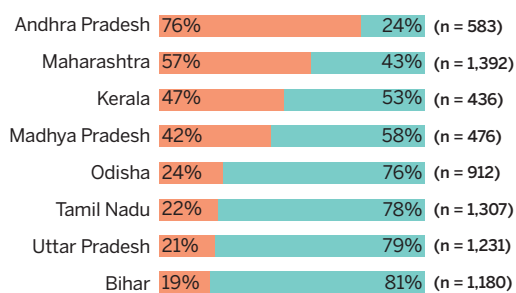
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

Status of realisation of the entitlement

Overall

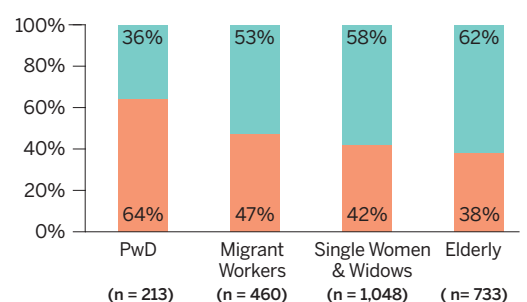


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with Vulnerable Groups



Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion



MGNREGS: Enhanced wages

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provides for 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural poor households annually. Under the COVID-19 Relief Package, MGNREGS wages were enhanced by Rs. 20 from April 1, 2020, to Rs. 202 per day. Besides, pending wages of Rs. 6,000 crores as of March 2020 had to be paid to the beneficiaries.

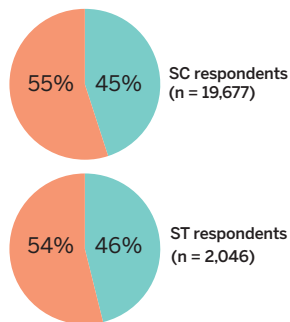
The assessment reveals a huge gap in awareness about enhanced wages, frillscheme coverage, and scanty realization by the SC and ST households (Tamil Nadu is an exception). Moreover, a significant presence of vulnerable groups is seen

in these households. Low coverage translates into denial of entitlement, especially when it is established by the 2015-16 Agriculture Census that of the predominantly landless SCs those with landholdings, 78% own unproductive marginal landholding. For the STs, marginal landholdings is 56% and smallholding 23.5%. Besides, out migration is higher among these groups, particularly among women, accompanied by child labour (Census 2011). Poor scheme coverage and low realisation of the enhanced wages is therefore more likely to expose them to other social risks without full livelihood restoration and income assistance, including loan waivers.

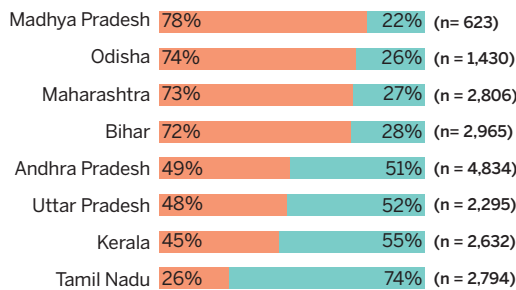
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ No ■ Yes

Awareness about enhanced wages post COVID19 lock-down

Overall

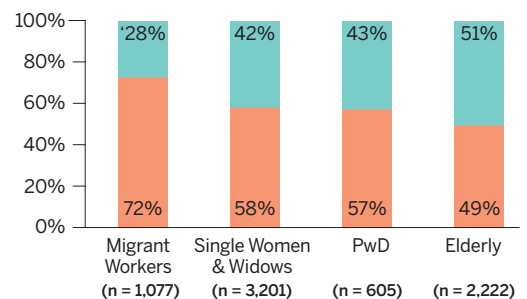


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

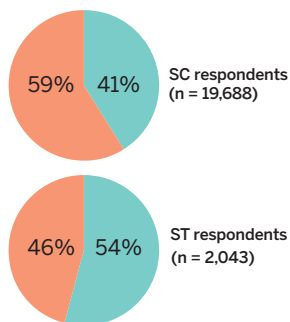
Households with Vulnerable Groups



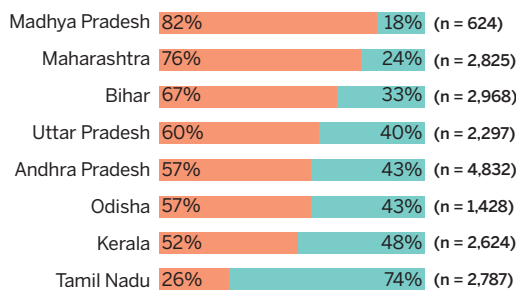
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

Respondents enrolled with the Scheme

Overall

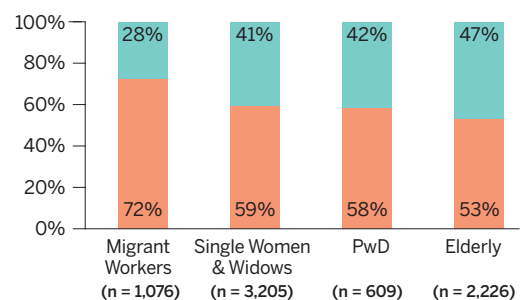


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

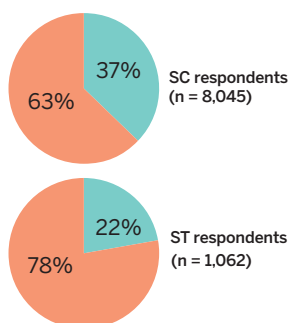
Households with Vulnerable Groups



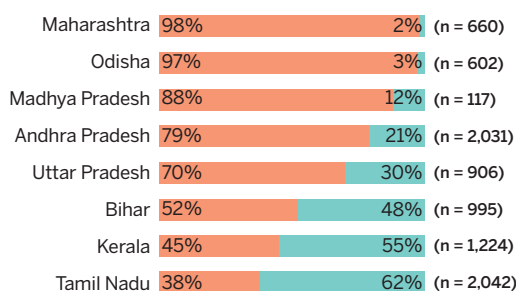
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

Status of realisation of the entitlement

Overall

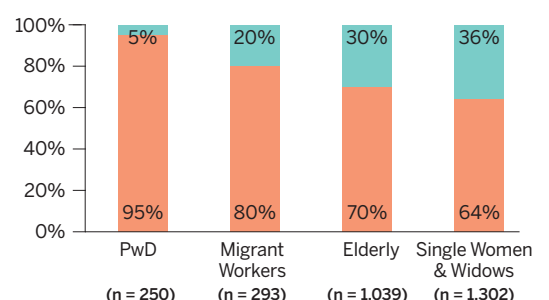


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with Vulnerable Groups



Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion



Pensions: Senior citizens, widow and disability: Ex-gratia of Rs. 1,000

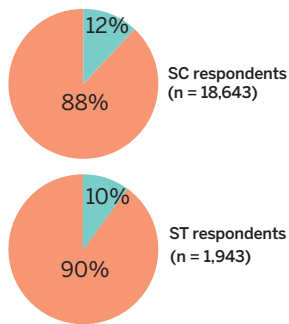
The Central Government announced ex-gratia payment of Rs. 1000 to the pensioners registered with the National Social Security Schemes, as a direct bank transfer in two instalments from April to June. Customarily, the elderly, PwDs and widows /single women are predominantly dependent upon their families for care and sustenance. Having some degree financial security therefore is also a matter of one's dignity. Of those surveyed, 22% of the SC and ST households together reported having old-age pensioners in the households, with 22% widow pensioners, and 4% disability pension holders across the eight states,

but 68% of the SC and 59% the of ST pension-holders were yet to receive the ex-gratia assistance. Although Rs. 1000 is highly inadequate to manage through the spell of indefinite lockdown amidst rampant joblessness, timely disbursement of the small provision would have brought some respite to the pension holders. The significant delays increase their vulnerability to abuse, neglect, and moral and physical abandonment by the families in addition to curtailing their say in prioritisation of needs and expenditures.

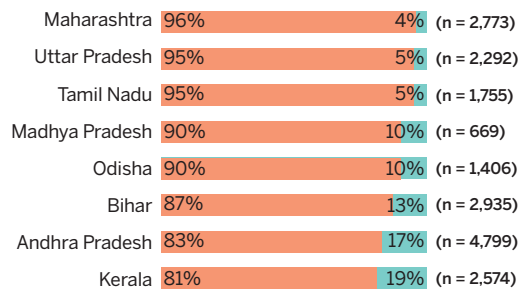
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ No ■ Yes

Households with at least one member enrolled in elderly pension scheme

Overall



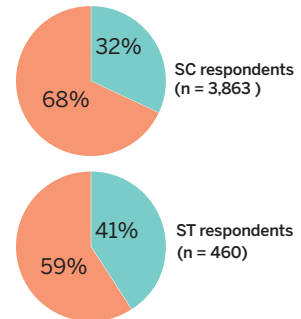
Key States



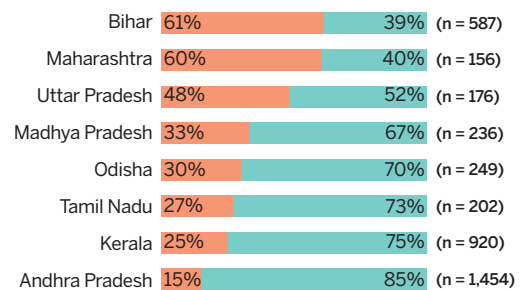
States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Overall realisation status of pensions for all three categories of pensioners: If your bank account is active, have you received Rs. 1,000 (Rs. 500p/m)?

Overall



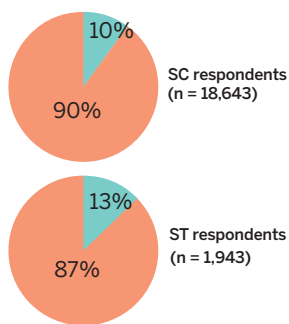
Key States



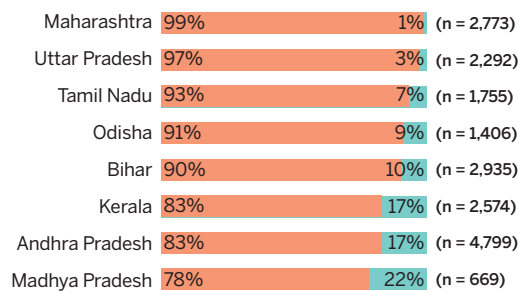
States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with at least one member enrolled in widow pension scheme

Overall



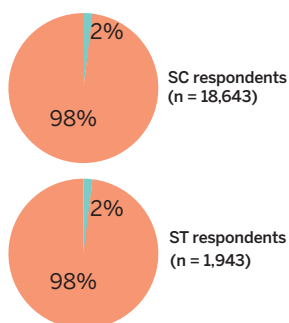
Key States



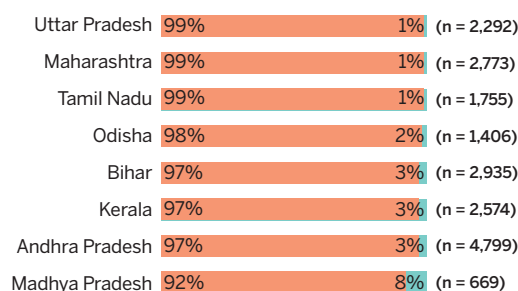
States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with atleast one member enrolled under disability pension

Overall



Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion



Jan Dhan Yojana: Ex-gratia amount of Rs. 500 for women account holders

The COVID-19 Package included online transfer of Rs. 500 for three months to women account holders under the Jan Dhan Yojana, which was launched in August 2014 to ensure access to financial services to the poor. As on 23.01.2019, there were 34.03 crore accounts under PMJDY, with 53% being women (Source: Government of India, Ministry of Finance, LOK SABHA. Questions and Answers).

The inclusion assessment found a near complete lack of awareness about the COVID-19 assistance, and greater proportion of SC and ST households with substantial vulnerable population, not enrolled in the Scheme. Among

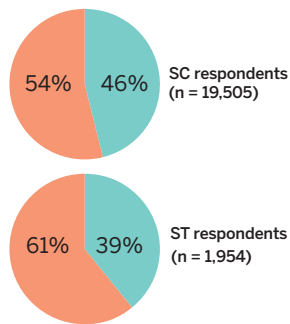
the eligible beneficiaries, a large proportion of the ST households had not received the ex-gratia assistance, and a significant percentage of the SC households were yet to receive the benefits despite DBT operations. This was also on account of inoperative bank accounts.

The poor scheme coverage and delay in cash transfer stand out as serious concerns in the pandemic response for the most marginalized. The denial of the Jan Dhan assistance, which is the only targeted financial assistance scheme for the women, reflects and reinforces the intersection of caste/ethnicity and gender induced vulnerability.

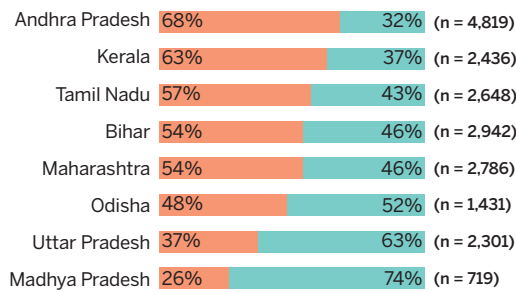
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ No ■ Yes

Awareness about financial assistance announced under the Scheme

Overall

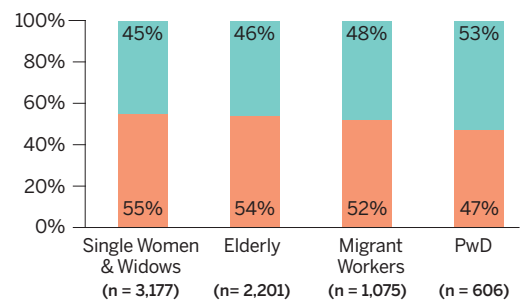


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

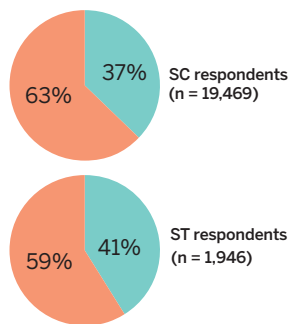
Households with Vulnerable Groups



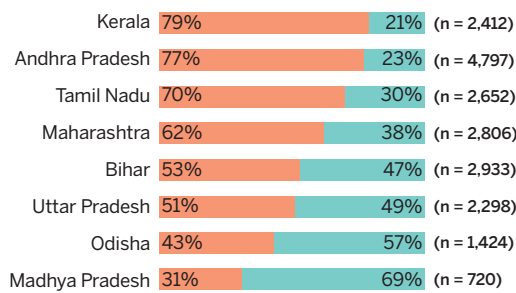
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households enrolled with the Scheme

Overall

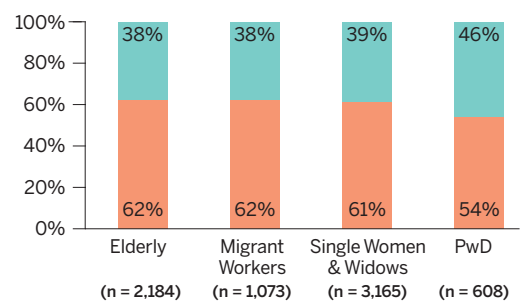


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

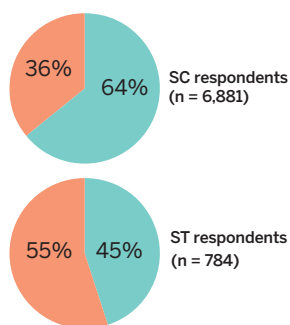
Households with Vulnerable Groups



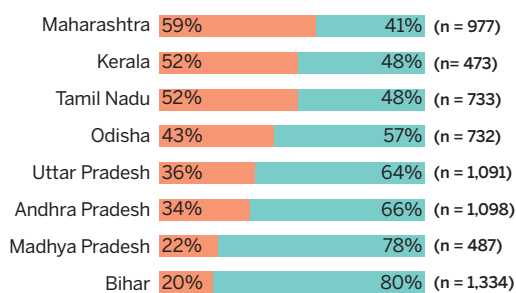
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

Active bank account, availed the benefit

Overall

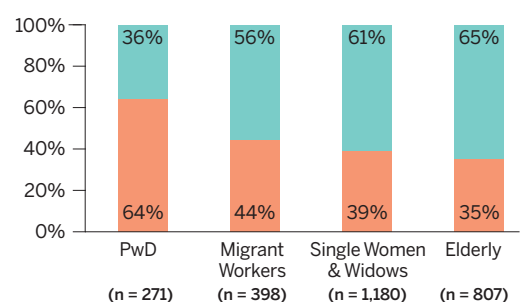


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with Vulnerable Groups



Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion



Integrated Child Development Scheme: Home delivery of raw food material

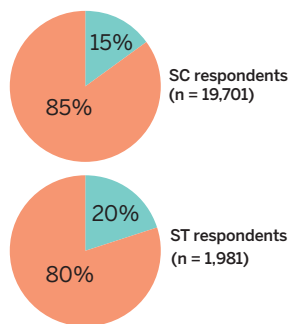
The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) aims to combat child hunger and malnutrition with special considerations for SC and ST children. Women and children are often the most vulnerable in a food crisis, the impact of which is compounded when they are hit by disasters. The situation gets worse for the SC and ST women and below-6-year-old children who are gripped by acute malnutrition (underweight, stunting, and wasting) higher than any other social group, as per the National Family Health Surveys, including NFHS-IV (2015-16). The Rapid Survey on Children 2013-2014 (MoWCD) attributed poor nutritional status of

SC and ST children to the households' low-income status. The COVID-19 Relief Package provided for delivery of raw supplementary food material by Anganwadi workers to households with pregnant / lactating women and children aged 0-6 years under ICDS post the lockdown. The findings reveal that among the eligible households, substantial proportion of eligible households had not received the nutrition support, thereby further risking the lives of SC and ST children to hunger and disease in the absence of income and livelihoods in the pandemic instead of addressing their special food requirements going by the official data.

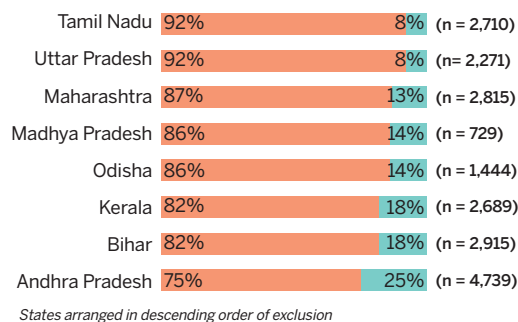
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ No ■ Yes

Households with pregnant and lactating women

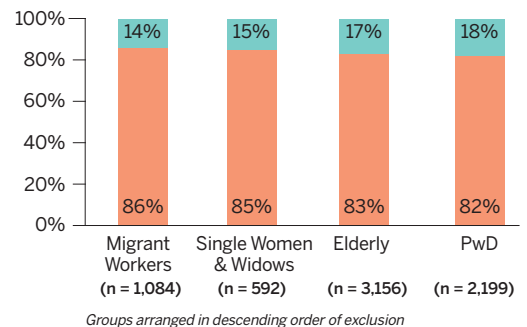
Overall



Key States

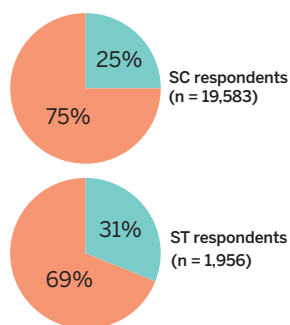


Households with Vulnerable Groups

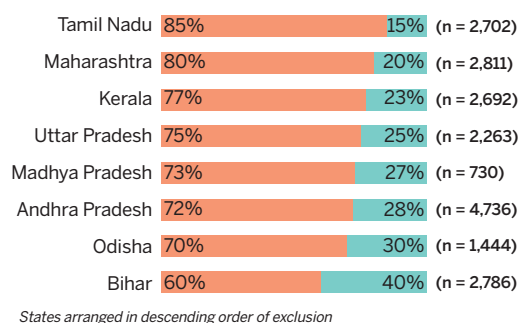


Households with children aged 0-6 years

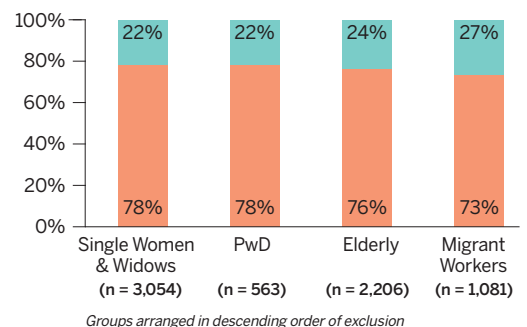
Overall



Key States

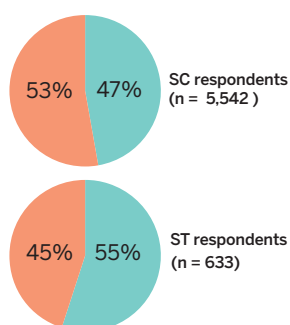


Households with Vulnerable Groups

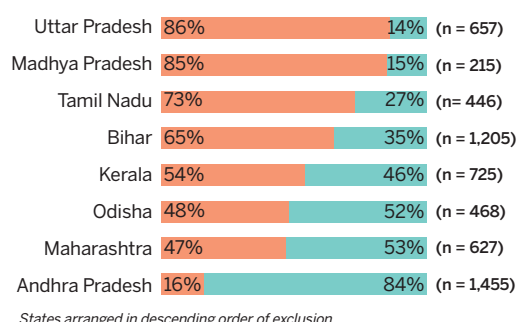


Status of receipt of nutritious food materials from Anganwadis

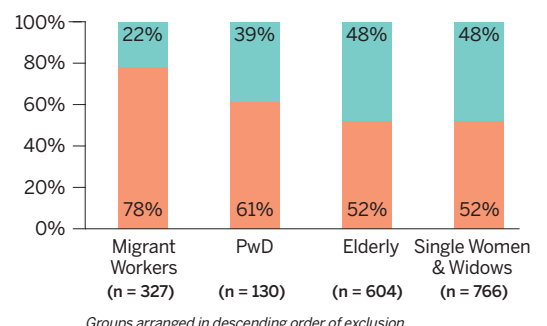
Overall



Key States



Households with Vulnerable Groups





Public Distribution Scheme: Additional /free food-grains

The Central government announced free additional food grains for three months for the beneficiaries of the Public Distribution System (PDS) under the National Food Security Act 2013. The scheme aims to provide subsidized food grains to the poorest households. Those with ration cards were eligible to receive 5 kg cereal and 1 kg pulses for the next quarter, per person per household, directed through Public Distribution Service outlets instead of the cash transfer as in the case of other relief schemes.

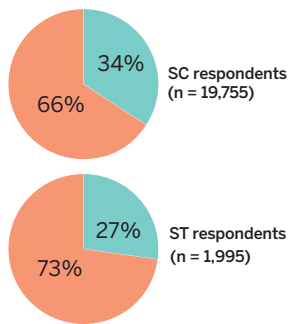
PDS is the only flagship scheme which shows greater SC and ST coverage and delivery of food grains to households

with significant population of single/widowed women, migrant workers, elderly and PwD. But sadly, a significant proportion of households reportedly received only a portion of the quota, as contrary to full quota. This explains the reason for a majority reporting that their food needs remained unfulfilled. To add to their woes, the quality of ration distributed was also reportedly of inferior quality.

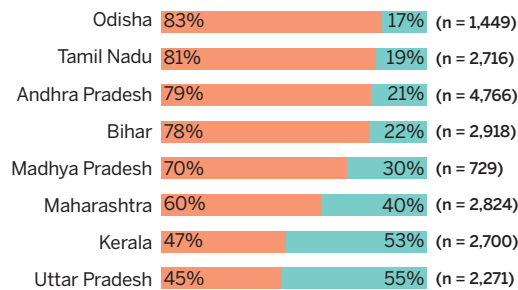
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ No ■ Yes

Have your family's food needs been met?

Overall

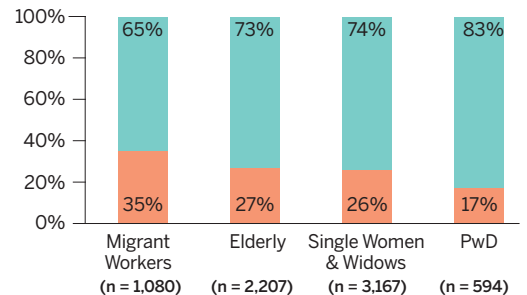


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

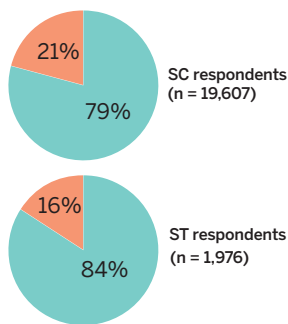
Households with Vulnerable Groups



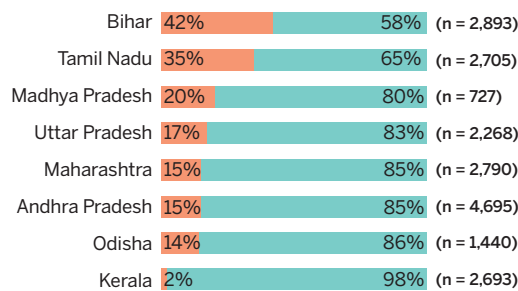
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

Do you have a APL/BPL/Antodya Anna Yojana card?

Overall

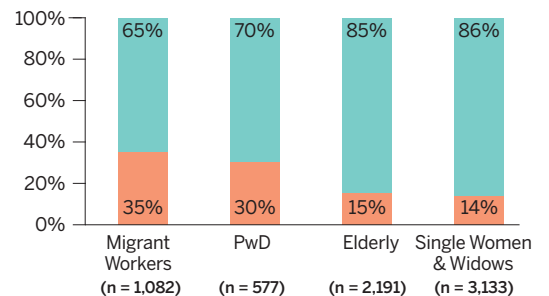


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

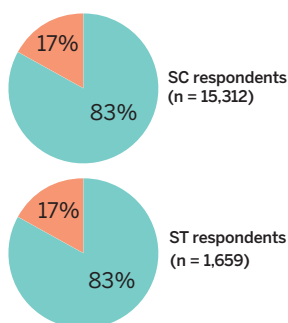
Households with Vulnerable Groups



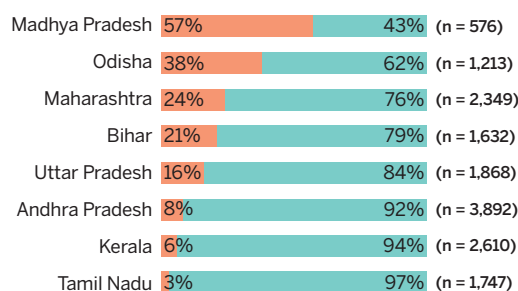
Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

If you have card, have you received your PDS quota?

Overall

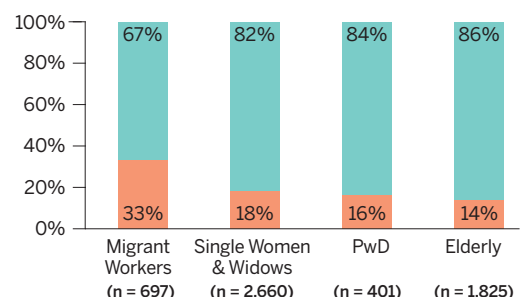


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with Vulnerable Groups



Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

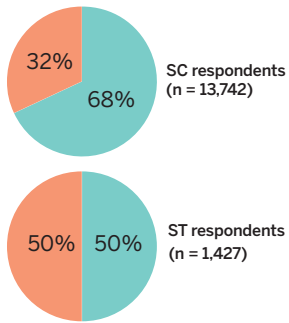


Public Distribution Scheme: Additional /free food-grains

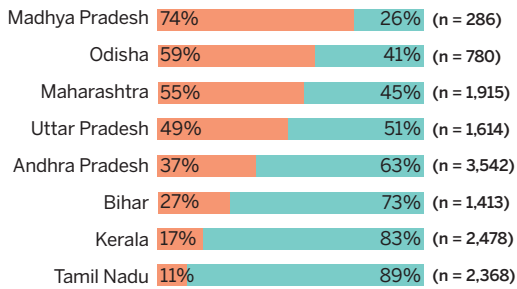
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ Partial ■ Full

How much of your PDS quota have you received?

Overall

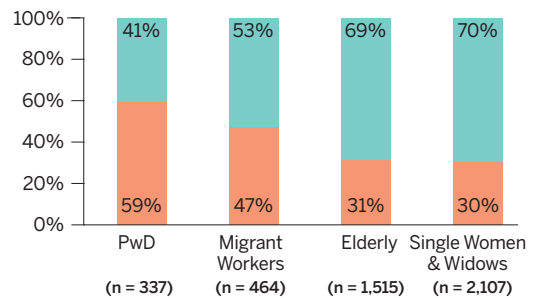


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with Vulnerable Groups

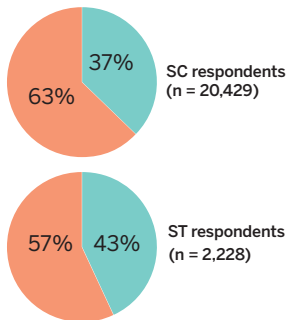


Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion

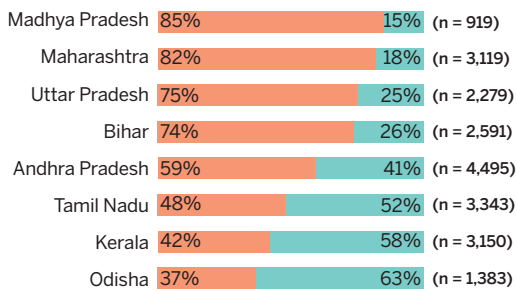
Percentage of respondents who replied ■ Poor ■ Good

Is the quality of ration/food distributed good?

Overall

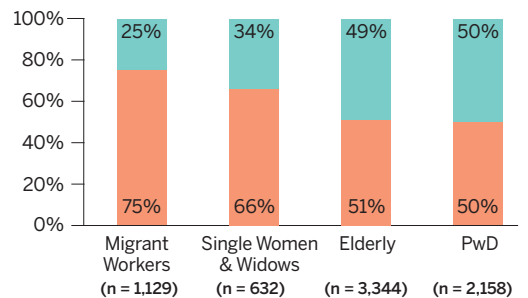


Key States



States arranged in descending order of exclusion

Households with Vulnerable Groups



Groups arranged in descending order of exclusion



Methodology: The NCDHR is conducting a phase-wise inclusion assessment of the awareness, enrolment, and the extent of realisation of COVID related national and state relief entitlements announced by the Central Government, by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes across the states in India. The process aims to enable greater inclusion and realisation of the social protection schemes by the SC and ST communities to enhance their capacity to cope with the pandemic. This is done by sharing real-time information and appeals with the district and state authorities for urgent action. Conducted on a mobile app by a network of local partners and hundreds of volunteers, the first phase of the survey was conducted from April 16-May 25, 2020.

Factsheet design: How India Lives (www.howindialives.com)

About Us

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), a coalition of Dalit and Adivasi human rights activists and academics, founded in 1998, is dedicated promoting social equity and inclusion, particularly focused on enabling the Scheduled Castes and the Schedule Tribes to access their Constitutional rights, justice system, and development and humanitarian entitlements, through the following specialised units:

All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM), is a platform for women from Dalit communities in India to escalate their voices for justice. AIDMAM raises and nurtures Dalit women activists that spearhead initiatives of support to survivor of caste atrocities, grassroots activism, leadership development and international advocacy to effectively challenge, tackle, and solve caste-based violence and discrimination; and put an end to the culture of impunity.

Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA), monitors government budgets to ensure the budgetary allocations committed for the Dalit and Adivasi communities that constitute 25% of the population are spent for their welfare and development only. DAAA facilitates the process for the realisation of entitlements by the Dalit and Adivasi communities, and engages in budget and policy research and advocacy with the legislature, the executive and the constitutional bodies mandated to protect the rights of Dalit and Adivasis.

National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ), is a democratic, secular, non-party movement of Dalits survivors, rights defenders, academics and organisations headed by Dalits to address the issues of caste based discrimination and violence primarily untouchability and atrocities to create and strengthen access to criminal justice system. NDMJ engaged with the executive, judiciary, policy makers and communities for protection and promotion of human rights of Dalits and Adivasis.

The National Dalit Watch (NDW), is an initiative to respond to the scenario of exclusion of Dalit and Adivasi communities during disasters. Built on the experiences of NCDHR during the Tsunami in 2004 and later in Bihar Floods in 2007 and 2008, NDW enables Dalit and Adivasi rights organizations, local activists and community leadership, and other humanitarian organisations to effectively monitor discrimination and exclusion during disasters and the extent of realisation of relief entitlements. The findings are fed to the policies and advocacy engagements with the humanitarian stakeholders, viz, the Government, bilateral agencies, I/NGOs, academia and so on to establish an inclusive disaster response and disaster risk reduction system.

Inclusion Assessment Partners:

Chittoor Community Welfare, Andhra Pradesh

Dalit Bahujan Shramik Union, Andhra Pradesh

Forestry Upland Development Society, Andhra Pradesh

Sri Vinayaka Rural Development and Educational Society, Andhra Pradesh

Magadh Jayoti Gramin Vikash Samiti, Bihar

Centre for Development, Gujarat

RIGHTS- Kerala

Satyakam Jan Kalyan Samiti, Madhya Pradesh

Ambedkar Lohia Vichar Manch, Odisha

Centre for Dalit Rights, Rajasthan

Social Awareness Society for Youths, Tamil Nadu

Bundelkhand Dalit Adhikar Manch, Uttar Pradesh

Avadh Gramin Vikas Seva Sansthan Bichhiya, Uttar Pradesh

Sahyogi Gramin Vikas Evam Shodh Sansthan, UP