THE 100 HOTSPOTS

April 2020 | Volume II

SNAPSHOT OF
SOCIALLY
EXCLUDED
& VULNERABLE
COMMUNITIES
VIS-A-VIS
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

Anchored and Coordinated By:
Wada Na Todo Abhiyan

WADA NA
TODO

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- Labour Education Development Society (Rajasthan)
- National Hawker Federation (West Bengal)

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Introduction

Sustainable Development Goals, decided upon in 2016, seek to address the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals. One of the most prominent lessons learnt from the Millennium Development goals is the need to mitigate their failure to be holistic and relevant for all population groups and communities. Thus, 'Leave No One Behind' and 'Reach the Farthest First' are not only the guiding principles, but incremental aspects in ever achieving the 17 SDGs. These mottos were framed to ensure approaching development in a manner that doesn't end up excluding or alienating communities, while also recognizing the intersectional processes by which underserved communities continue to remain underprivileged, and thus need dedicated focus to develop alongside the rest of the world.

Despite this explicit recognition, the gap in knowledge about these communities poses a key challenge in designing and implementing policies with direct impact to their development. Government and international agencies come up with aggregate statistics that, while representative of a large and generalized group, don't give an in-depth picture of any group. Without the presence of such data, there cannot be a comprehensive understanding that results in varied policies which will be significantly relevant to communities across the development spectrum.

This issue becomes even more pronounced in a country like India, where social, economic and geo-spatial diversity registers deep within groups and their sub-groups. There are nine religions being practiced across India. The 3000 recognized caste groups are further divided into 25000 sub-castes. Within the 705 tribes recognized across regions, there are 75 that have been designated as 'particularly vulnerable'[1].   Several communities classified within these identities are further excluded due to terrains that make service delivery and policy implementation difficult. To add to this, 27.9% (369 million) of the Indian population has been found living under multidimensional poverty.

Given the large population, all nationwide surveys are forced to categorize these groups into broad identity groups. Despite robust sampling processes, these categories aren't sufficiently representative of all the groups and can be used to create only generalized conclusions. These conclusions, while an important starting point, mask the lack of progress in certain communities due to the homogenous classification. Also, the sample size taken from each sub-group is too small to make specific policy-driven conclusions without further analysis.

This study was designed with the objective of bridging this gap and recognizing the communities that are being excluded and the processes of their exclusion, to help uphold the 'Leave No One Behind' pillar of the SDGs. With the pilot phase (the report for which was released in 2019), a mix methodology process was opted for, to create the maximum possible knowledge for these groups. A quantitative survey and focus group discussions were used to establish the baseline of development within 10 communities that were recognized as socially excluded and vulnerable. Even as the pilot project achieved its aim of collecting more data on the focused community and revealing a stark disparity from the national averages, this was done only to a limited extent.

In the second phase, the learnings of the first phase have been used to successfully expand the scope of the study. The focus is on 15 communities, selected to ensure that population groups vulnerable due to economic, religious and domicile factors are also included, going beyond social exclusion. With the recognition of more inequalities, this phase has also included a more comprehensive list of indicators and subsequent questions, covering all 12 SDGs.

The communities in the study represent the nearly invisible, vulnerable and poorly represented factions of our country. Unfortunately, their voice, concerns and interests are not able to be adequately protected nor implemented in our national development policies and plans. This report is an effort to promote important dialogue and interventions centered around these communities.

The following chapter will describe the methodology and the map after it depicts the location of each of the communities covered in this report. The next will discuss the composition of the communities being discussed. The succeeding chapters will then give an analysis in the framework of each of the goals that have been covered for this report. The findings, recommendations and challenges of the study are captured in the concluding chapters.

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Methodology

Given the lack of knowledge available regarding the chosen communities, a comprehensive research was carried out using a mixed methodology, to generate as much knowledge as possible, in keeping the framework of the SDGs. The concepts and techniques used to execute the research in an effective manner are explained further in the sections below.

Data Collection

To minimize the possible bias of an external researcher and maintain authenticity of the insights gathered, all primary data collection was done by field investigators who belonged to the communities they were working with. This also helped ensure that the respondents did not feel intimidated while answering to a stranger because the researcher was one of their own. To ascertain uniform methodology, all field investigators were brought together for a three-day intensive training to orient them with the study and familiarise them with data collection tools.

For the purpose of this research, the study used one quantitative tool for Household survey and two qualitative tools for Institutional observations and Focus group Discussions.

Household Survey

The survey was conducted in 100 households from each community[2] through an application-based platform called Collect. Making the process online helped monitor and maintain quality of data, while also making the tabulation and analysis process easier and faster. The app allowed the survey responses to be stored on the investigators' device in absence of a stable connection, and uploaded with the next available internet connection, making the data collection process convenient even in the remote areas.

Institutional Observations

The field investigators were given a detailed format and asked to assess the infrastructure and operations at the nearest government facilities that corresponded to the indicators being tracked through the household survey. The aim was to discover any implementation gaps that may be affecting the community's progress on ground. Due to the limitation of resources, these observations were carried out almost exclusively among the rural communities where government facilities are situated close together.

i With the exception of Street Hawkers, where due to logistical hold-ups only 50 households were surveyed

Focus Group Discussions

After the household survey and institutional observations, further lacunas in understanding of issues impacting the progress of these communities were identified through focus group discussions in order to best bridge these gaps. Three primary developmental issues were identified for each community, in consultation with the field investigators, and discussions were carried out with a mixed group of adults, mixed group of youth or people from specific genders depending on the issues in focus.

In the interest of not overburdening this report, the community-specific findings from the Focus Group Discussions have been kept outside the scope of this report. Those findings will subsequently be discussed in policy advocacy briefs that will be made for each community.

Research Design

The primary objective of this research was to generate contextual knowledge and real-time data about the nearly invisible, marginalised population groups in our society. These population groups belong to scheduled caste, schedule tribe, particularly vulnerable tribes, nomadic and de-notified tribes and religious minorities- all of these being a part of officially recognized disadvantaged communities that face social exclusion and/or discrimination in socio-economic as well as cultural dimensions. There is little discussion on these population groups in the policy making space, and there have been negligible affirmative actions regarding the uplifting of these population groups. Thus, the household survey was entirely exploratory, aimed at forming a baseline description on these communities that can be then built upon. The Institutional Observations and Focus Group Discussions were done to understand the causes of the issues revealed through the household surveys, along with the intention of gathering more information, and were thus a mix of exploratory and explanatory in nature.

Sampling

The objective of this research was very focused on generating data for specific communities. Therefore, the field investigators were asked to adopt purposive sampling to identify respondent households that belonged to the community in question. Purposive sampling was also used to maintain uniformity due to the difference in geographies across these communities, which posed unavoidable limitations to adopt a more robust sampling process within the given time frame and with the available resources.

Secondary Data and Analysis

All secondary data research and analysis was conducted by the WNTA Secretariat in New Delhi. NITI Aayog's SDG India Baseline (2018) and Index (2019) were heavily relied upon for the national statistics used in this report. In addition to that, all the average national statistics were sourced from various documents made public by the Government of India, or in a few exceptional cases, by other sources recognized by the government. Data cleaning and analysis was done using MS Excel and Stata at different stages.
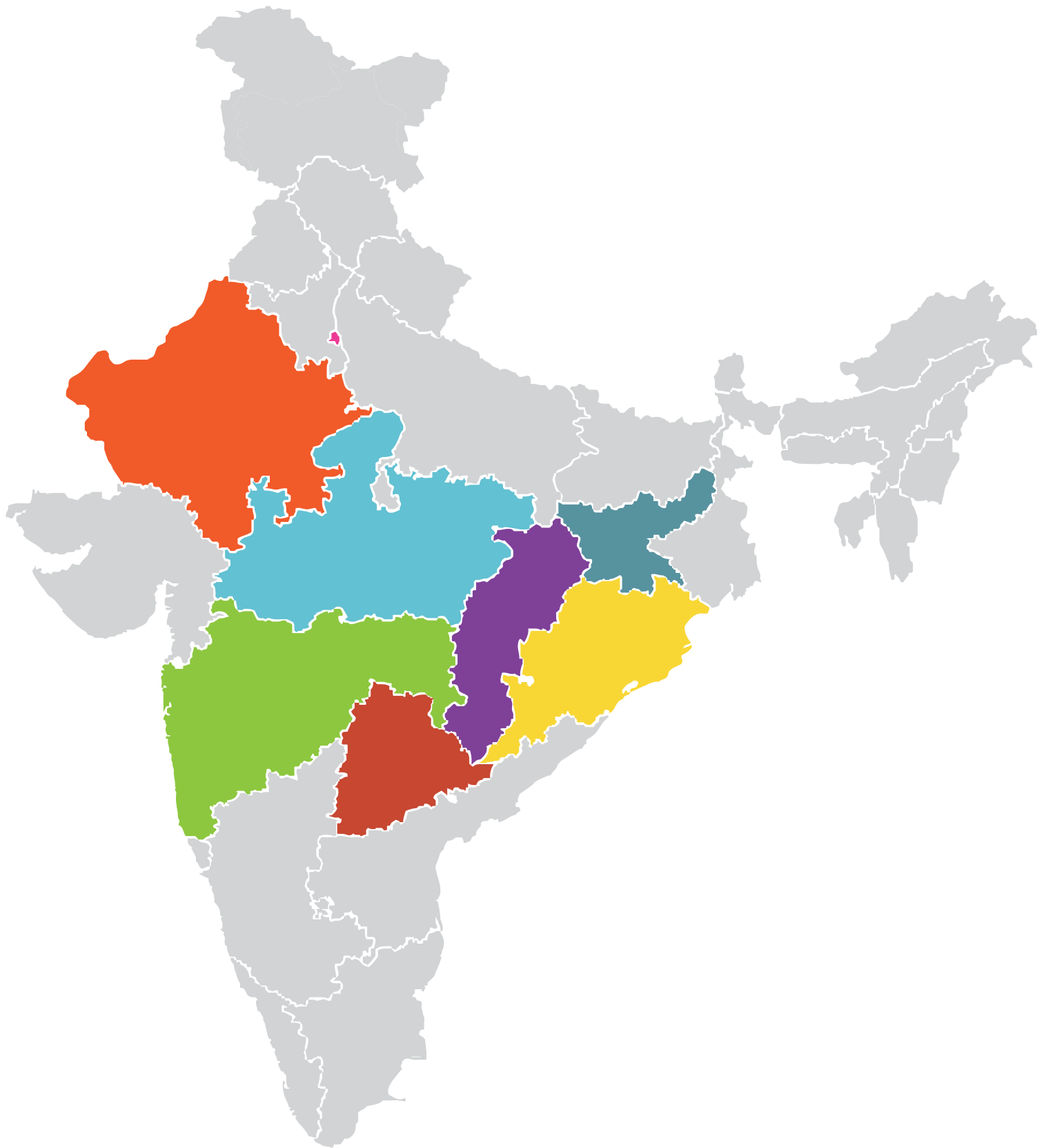
■	*Bhil* *Construction Workers*	■	*Sex Workers* *Street Hawkers*	■	*Baiga* *Sahariya*	■	*Gond* *Pahari Korwa*
■	*Konda* *Kuthiya Konda*	■	*Sex Workers*	■	*Domestic Workers* *Sewage Workers* *Street Hawkers*	■	*Oraon* *Santhal* *Chudihara Muslim*

Demographics

The survey covered 15 communities, nine of which are from tribal groups and the remaining six are classified based on their occupation. Among the tribal groups are Santhal, Oraon, Kuthiya Konda, Konda, Gond, Bhil along with Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups[3] (PVTGs), namely Pahari Korwa, Sahariya and Baiga tribes. The occupation-based communities included Sex Workers, Domestic Workers, Sewage Workers, Construction Workers, Street Hawkers and Chudihara Muslims[4]. These communities were spread across nine states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, and Telangana.

Figure I: Residential Location (%)

Urban   Rural (Near Urban)   Rural (Remote/Interior)
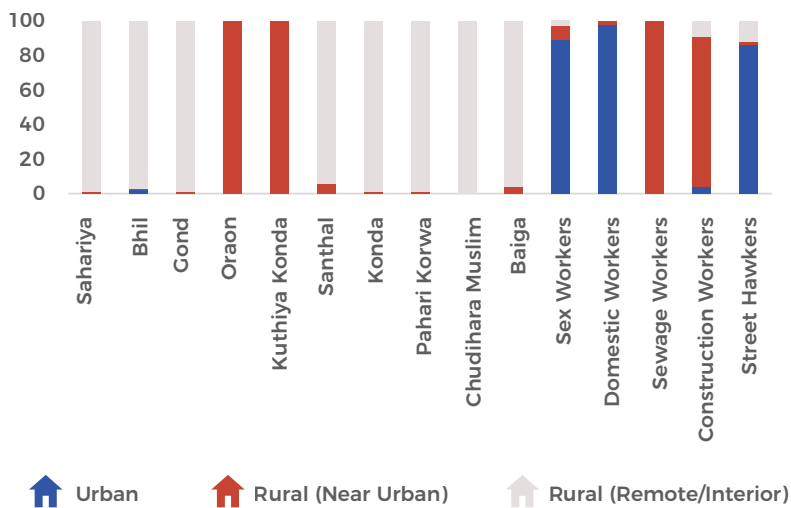
Figure (i) here shows the areas of residences of these communities within their respective states. Most among the Sex Workers reported to live in an urban area and most of the Sewage and Construction Workers reported living in rural areas, when actually all three communities resided in sub-urban areas. Upon further analysis of responses, it was found that the data for Sewage and Construction Workers was more comparable of urban communities and for Sex Workers was more comparable to rural communities[5] , and are thus analyzed further with those assumptions. As can be seen, most other rural communities reside in interior or remotely accessible villages, making them physically vulnerable and removed from development, thus enforcing an overarching vulnerability.

Figure (ii) here shows the gender composition for each of these groups. While on an average, the male to female ratio across these communities is nearly equal (both approximately 50%), significant deviance can be seen in some communities. Most notably, nearly 75% of the population in households of sex workers was reported to be males. The number of males is also higher among Sewage Workers and Street Hawkers, showing a skewed ratio in the urban communities. Within the Konda community, the number of females exceeded the number of males.

Figure II: Gender Composition (%)

Males   Females

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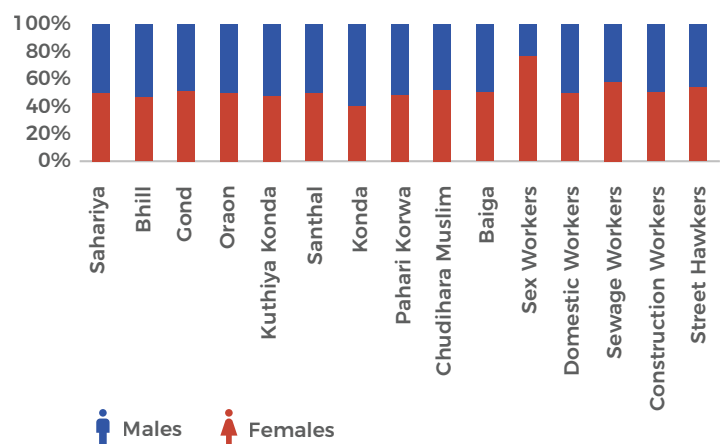
ii As recognized by the constitution of India

iii A community of Muslims that sells bangles for a living

iv Sewage and Construction Workers are residing in sub-urban areas of the national capital and a state capital respectively, while the Sex Workers reside in interior towns.

Figure III: Religious Composition (%)

Hinduism   Christianity   Other   Buddhist   Islam
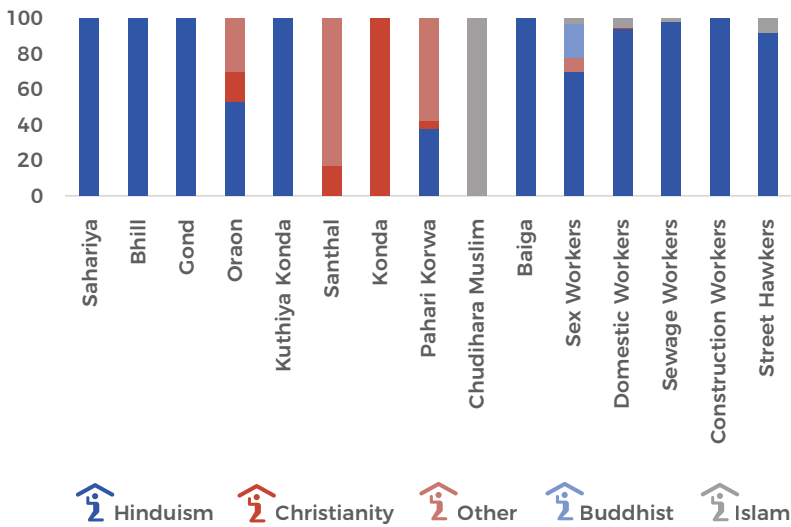
Majority of the population covered across communities practiced Hinduism (70%), but there were several from other religions as well, as shown in figure (iii) here. Around 17% of the population among Oraon and Santhal tribes along with the entire Konda population reported having faith in Christianity, which probably happened due to conversions. Chudiharas are an entirely Muslim population, but some occupation-based communities also reported the presence of people following Islam among them, albeit only an average 8%. All people reporting their religion as 'other' were referring either to an indigenous form of religion (common among tribal traditions) or having being practicing no religion at all.

As can be seen in figure (iv) here, while the Sahariyas, Pahadi Korwas and the Baigas fall under the PVTGs, the Bhils, Gonds, Oraons, Kuthiya Kondas, Santhals and Kondas belong to the Scheduled tribes, as already indicated earlier. Chudihara Muslims fall under the General category, thus, despite their abject poverty, have little access to national schemes and policies aimed at empowering especially vulnerable populations covered under various caste and tribe-based reservations. In the occupation-based communities, except for the Street Hawkers, all the other communities display high numbers of people belonging to underprivileged caste/tribe groups, and thus are targets of caste/tribe based social exclusion and marginalisation.

Figure IV: Social Composition (%)

General   Scheduled Caste   Scheduled Tribes
PVTGs   DnT & NT   OBCs
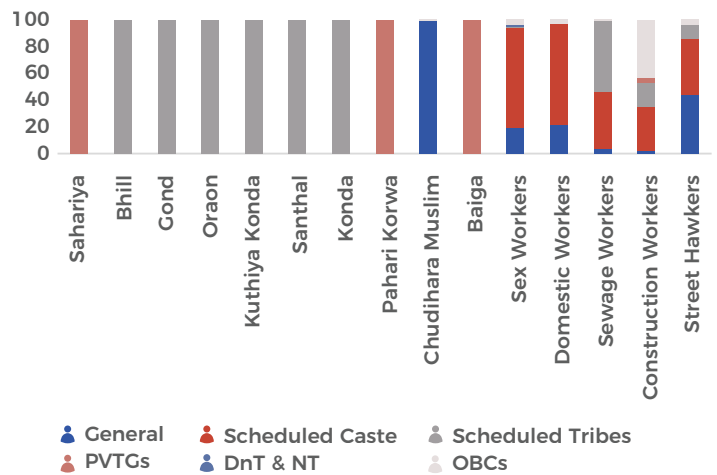
1 NO POVERTY

End Poverty in all its Forms Everywhere

Eradication of poverty is the first and foremost target under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to World Bank calculations, the International Poverty Line regarded for India stands at $1.90 per day per person[2], and the decided standard for minimum income in this regard is $1.25 per day per person[v]. The average household size in India, including urban and rural population, is 4.8[1]. Using these three standards, and taking the value of one dollar as Rs 71[vi], Figures specific to India can be calculated to compare the average income of the household as well as the average income of individuals collected during the survey.

Findings

As seen in the Figure 1.1, almost all communities fall below the SDG as well as World Bank standards of poverty. The only two exceptions are the communities of Sewage Workers and Street Hawkers, with average household income falling just above the SDG target. Further enquiry indicated that (i) Some Sewage Workers who get work through long-term contractual jobs, including ones from government departments, tend to earn higher wages than others. So, even while the community as a whole seems to be doing slightly better than others, the inequality present within must be remembered when looking at these numbers; (ii) Only 6.5% of people in the Street Hawker households reported to have irregular wages (Goal 8) and both genders were found to be earning, which can explain the slightly higher Household Income in the community. Many communities also fall into the 'Below Poverty Line (BPL)' spectrum, calculated at the national level, making it evident that these communities, most of which are categorically recognised as disadvantaged under the Constitution of India, continue to experience inter-generational poverty by every standard.

Figure 1.1 Average HH Income vs International Poverty Line, SDG Target, India Poverty Line (Rs)

Annual Average HH Income

SDG Target (HH)

International Poverty Line (HH)

Poverty Line (HH)

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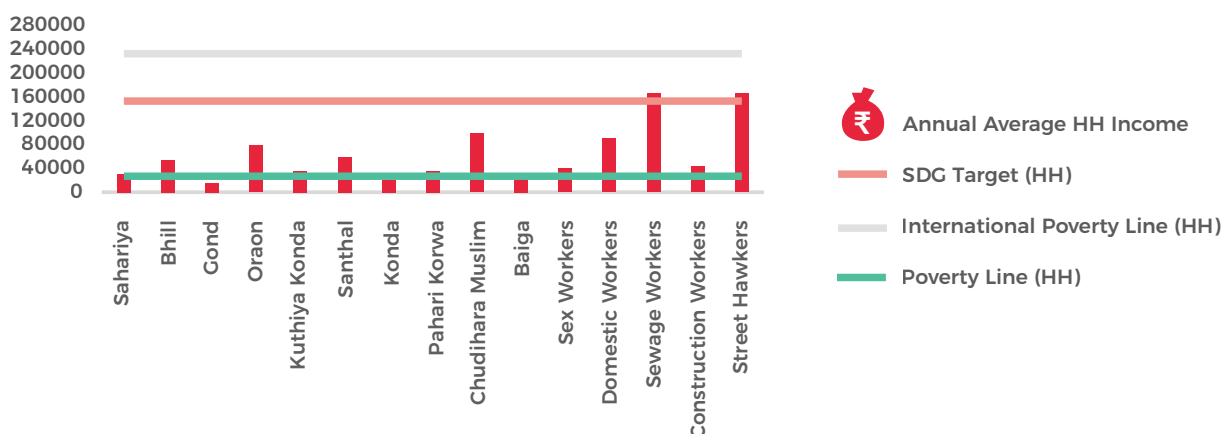
v *Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 1, Target 1.1*

vi *Exchange Rate, as on January 17, 2020*

According to the comprehensive definition of poverty laid out by the SDGs, equal access to social protection systems like housing, economic resources and land ownership for the poor and the vulnerable is instrumental to achieving the goal. Figure 1.2 and 1.3 describe the status of the communities regarding ownership of assets. As can be expected, the rural and tribal communities report higher ownership of land and livestock, which are also their primary livelihood.

The study only reported 'ownership' and did not go into the details of land or livestock owned. The fact that these communities continue to fall below the poverty line indicates that the income from land and live-stock is not adequate to pull them out of poverty. Vehicles seem to be the primary assets of urban population groups, as expected, as they are a necessity in urban areas. Ownership of land is almost negligible, given that land prices in urban areas are extremely high and beyond the scope of income of these communities. Renting houses, even in slums and urban poor areas, add to the living costs of these communities, that are already below the poverty line (Goal 11). The spike in the number of insurances in the Kondas is because of the community's village being covered under the government health insurance scheme on priority, due to their protected status under the Constitution of India.

Figure 1.2 Ownership of Assets (i) (%)

🚗 **HH Owning Vehicles**

🐄 **HH Owning Livestock**

🏭 **HH Owning Shop/ Factory/ Irrigation Equipment/ Fishing Boat**

☂ **HH Having Insurance**

🌱 **HH Possessing any land**
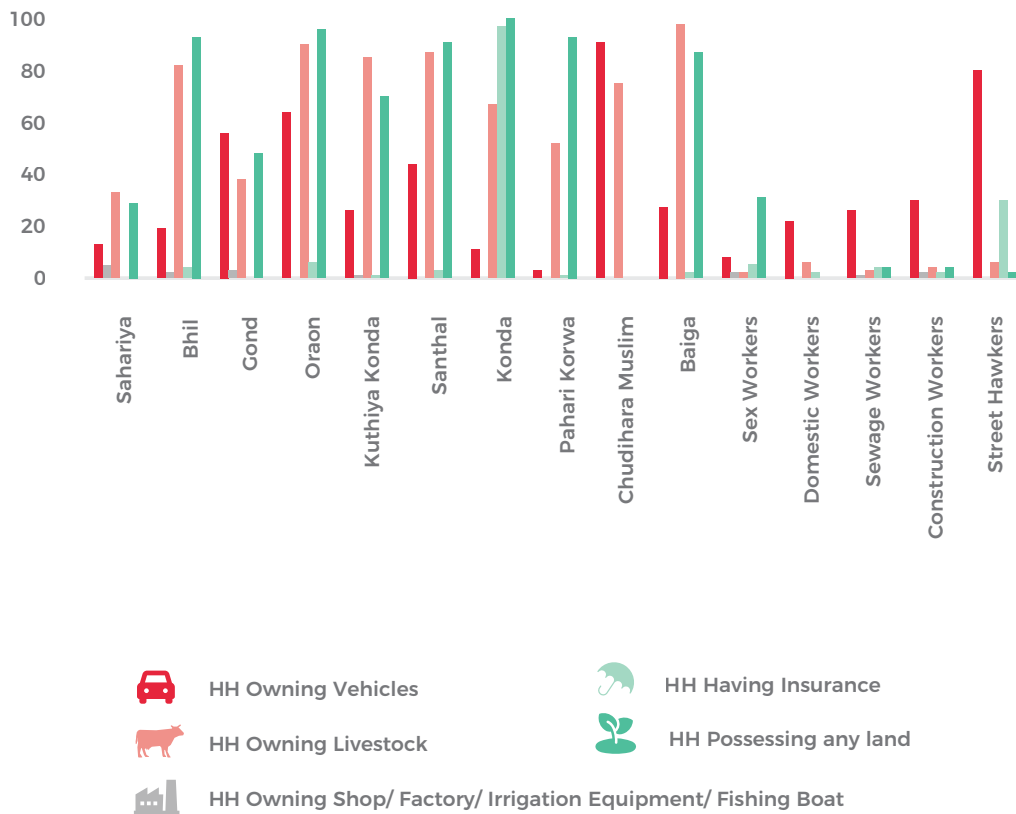
The Figure 1.3 depicts an overview of the living conditions of the communities, assessed through their housing. While the majority of households live in their own houses, owing to the larger rural population in the sample, the percentage of families living in pucca houses[vii] is significantly low (only 41%), and the people living in one-room households is high (33%). Over half of the houses did not have a separate kitchen (60%) and a toilet/bathroom (63%) within their premises.

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vii Houses with walls made of concrete or stones packed with mortar

Figure 1.3 Housing Conditions (%)
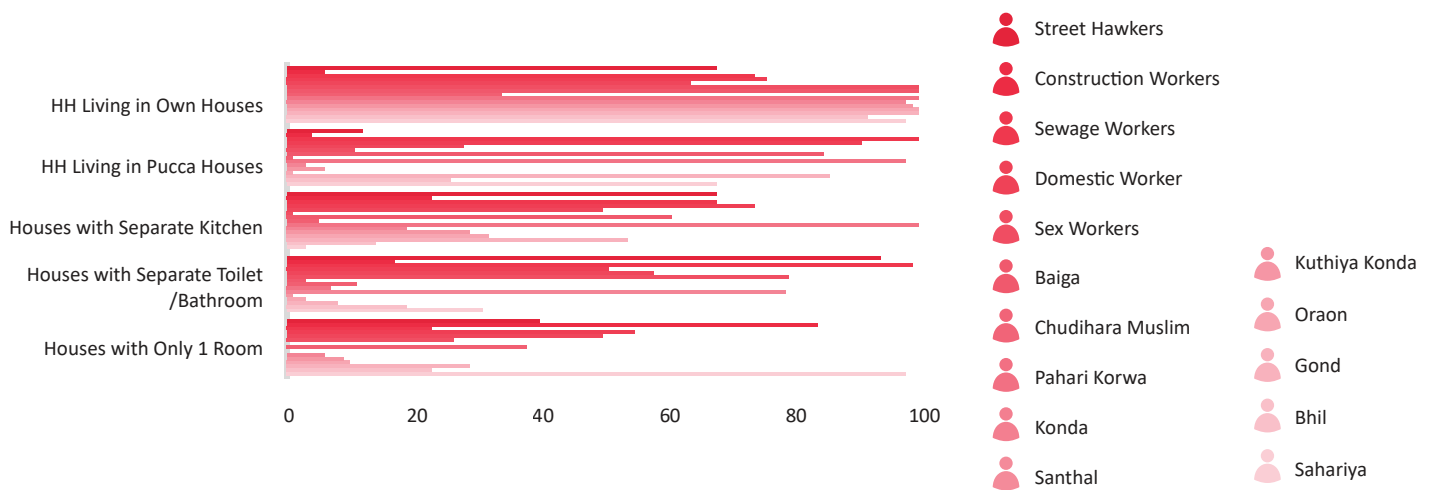
Conclusion

The study illustrates that the groups already vulnerable to various socio-cultural factors are also affected by economic vulnerability, in comparison to all national and international standards. Poverty, though, cannot be seen and understood in isolation, independent of other development goals. It affects nearly all the other SDGs and is affected by them as well, and therefore the discussions of the following sections must be viewed keeping in mind the findings discussed here.

2 ZERO HUNGER

End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition, and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

Access to adequate food and nutrition for all is the key to ensuring any form of holistic development. Lack of nutrition in pregnant women and children results in various growth-related issues. This leads to a cycle of increased mortality rates, survival risks, impaired cognitive development, reduced learning capacity, sub-optimal productivity in adults, and enforcing poverty which again limits nutritional intake[3]. All these factors cumulatively result in reduced economic growth, thereby forcing the population into a poverty trap and addressing the nutrition of problem with this understanding is called the life-cycle approach. Recognising this, SDG 2 sets the target to end hunger for the poor and the vulnerable by 2030.

In 2015-16, 38.4% of the population was reported to be chronically malnutritioned and 35.7% were reported to be underweight[4]. Cases of anemia were reported double among women than in men, and no improvement was recorded in either over the last decade. Mortality and malnutrition across India have reportedly declined in the recent decade, but majority of the states and districts still fall under 'very high' category according to WHO classification of the same[5] . Across states, the number of children getting a minimum acceptable diet has also been reported as extremely low.

The government of India has been working on decreasing hunger since even before independence (1947) with a Public Distribution System (PDS) giving subsidised grains. Over the years, various modifications have been attempted in the scheme to make it more focused and targeted. In June 1997, targeted PDS (TPDS) was launched to promote better access to vulnerable population groups, but the system was crippled in implementation due to errors of exclusion and inclusion[viii], along with rampant corruption.

Given the continuing high levels of hunger and malnutrition across the country, the PDS was revived under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 to promote 'food security' beyond providing subsidised grains. It came as a measure to address earlier challenges, and aimed to create an umbrella frame for various food assistance subsidies to improve food and nutritional security through the life-cycle approach. It sought to cover 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban population, once again reflecting the grave food and nutrition situation in the country. Institutions for monitoring and grievance redressal were put in place to ensure legal entitlements reach the beneficiaries. Eventually, Aadhaar and Electronic Point of Sale (EPoS) system were also integrated with PDS to make the process more 'transparent'.

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viii The exclusion error resulted in the poor and the vulnerable being left out of the list of beneficiaries and the inclusion error resulted in the non-poor and the non-vulnerable being included

Figure 2.1 Total Union Budget (in Rs. Crore) vs Percentage of Budget Estimate for PDS and Food Subsidies
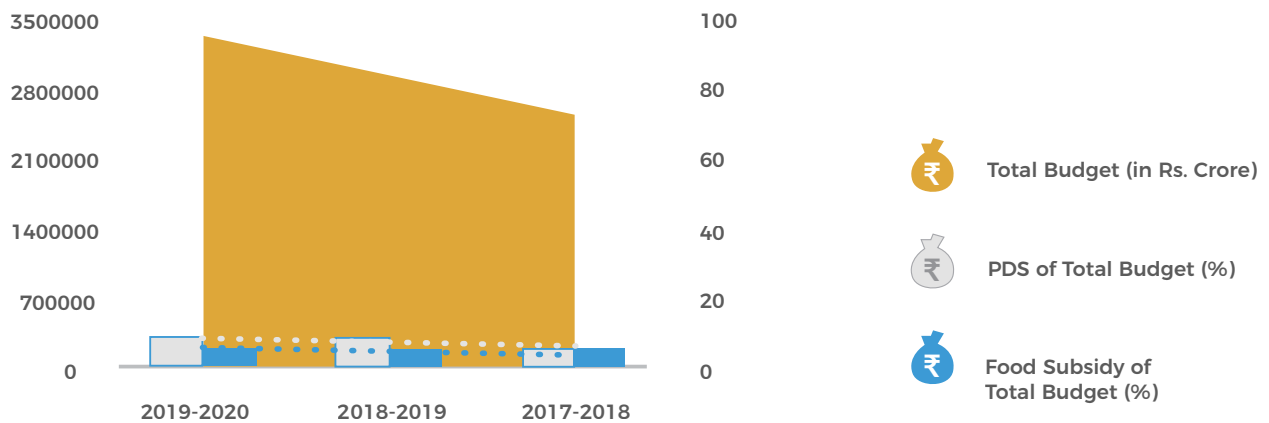
Comptroller and Auditor General of India reviewed the implementation of NFSA three years later in 2016 and found the implementation to be less than ideal. The report found that most states failed even to identify the number of beneficiaries mandated by law and conducted no fresh process. The report also identified that the available infrastructure is not equipped to efficiently transport or store the increased demand of grains for the revived PDS. These implementation failures were despite food subsidies comprising a constant approximate 5.5% of the total union budget. Also, PDS as a whole, has an increasing share of up to approximately 8.5% in the recent budget years (Figure 2.1), making it one of the highest budgeted schemes.

Figure 2.2 HH with Ration Card and Types of Ration Cards (%)
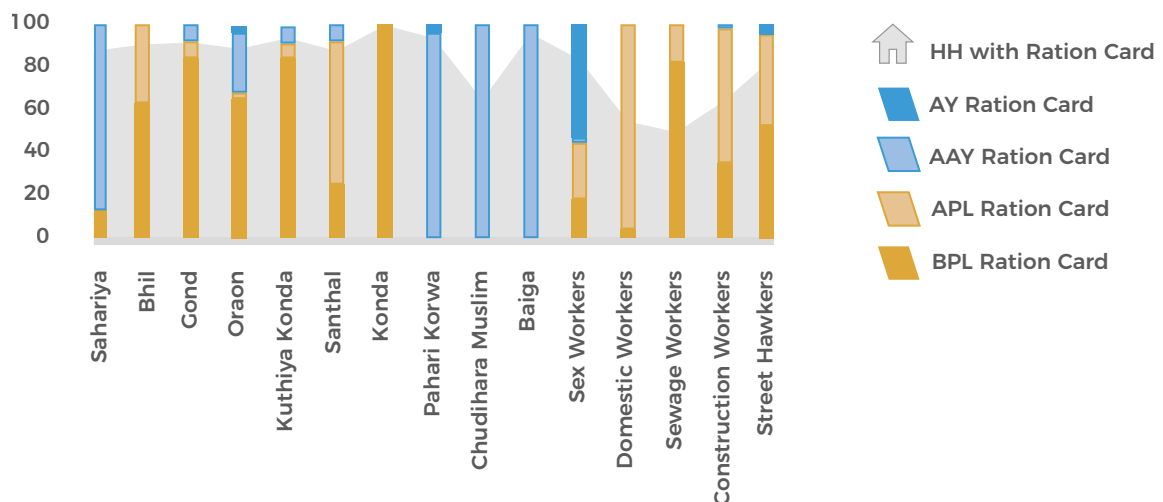
Findings

Four kinds of ration cards are currently issued across the country: (i) APL Cards – For households falling above the poverty line[ix] (ii) BPL Cards – For all households that fall below the poverty line2. (iii) AAY Cards – For households with income less than Rs. 250 per person per month, also classified as the poorest of the poor. Apart from this, some states have also launched AY cards under various schemes to offer people ration items (apart from food grains) at subsidised rates as well. The discussion below will track the status of PDS and food security in India through the vulnerable communities chosen for this research.

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ix Below Poverty Line Certificates are issued for households below income of Rs. 27, 000

Figure 2.3 HH with No Ration Cards (%)
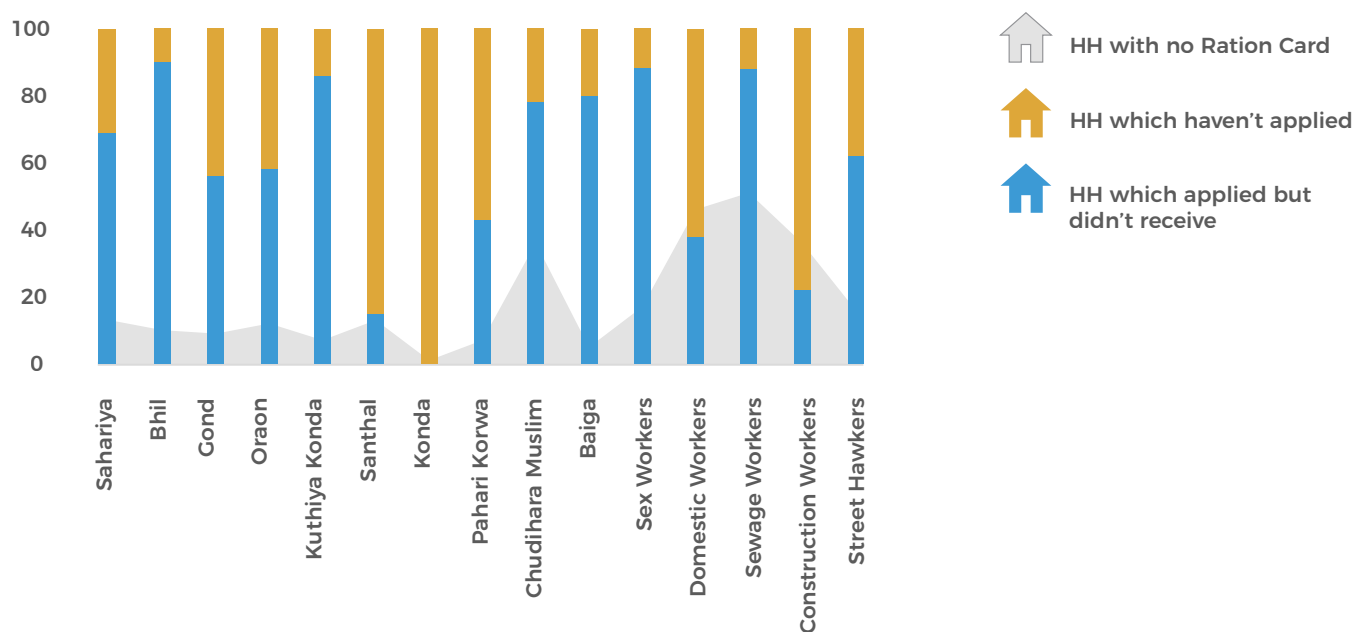
The area highlighted in Figure 2.3 states the total number of beneficiary households with ration cards in these communities. Rural communities report higher access to ration cards with an average of 89%. A significant dip in the figure is observed for Domestic Workers, Sewage Workers, Construction Workers and Chudihara Muslim communities, all of which had only about 50-60% of households with ration cards. Domestic Workers, Sewage Workers and Construction Workers reside mostly in urban areas. Given their poverty status and the additional costs of urban living, the lack of PDS adds to their vulnerability and survival challenges. Focus group discussions reported their challenges in accessing PDS cards, not having necessary social capital or political connect ions and inherent corruption in extending these provisions. In Figure 2.3 we can see that a peaking number of Sewage Workers' households without ration card have applied for ration cards (88%) but did not receive them . This number is considerably high for Domestic Worker (38%) and Construction Workers' (22%) households as well.

For the Chudihara Muslim community as well, the number of households that do not have ration cards despite having applied for them is quite high (78%). For them, and Sewage Workers, this number becomes more significant because of another significant reason. Most of the beneficiaries that have ration cards in these communities, have AAY (100%) and BPL (82%) cards respectively, making it likely that the households that have not received the ration cards are among the poorest. A similar inference can also be drawn for Bhil and Street Hawkers community where the majority of beneficiaries are from the BPL category (63% and 52%, respectively). These inferences, together, indicate a gap in the implementation strategies for NFSA when examined through the status of vulnerable communities.

Further gaps were highlighted by the observations made for the 'Fair Price Shops' or the delivery point of ration within the PDS closest to the communities. Four out of ten rural communities reported that the FPS near them did not display the price of ration outside, as mandated to maintain transparency and spread awareness. Eight out of ten communities also reported that their FPS did not have card-wise benefits displayed outside the shop. Four groups also reported issues in integration with Aadhar, including the Kuthiya Kondh community where the integration had not started at the time of the survey. Seven of the remaining nine communities reported that among those, whose Aadhar has been integrated with their ration cards, there were frequent hangups in receiving ration due to thumb prints being unrecognisable due to manual labour or just mistakes in records. This results in making the monitoring mechanism significantly detrimental to the existing level of access.

Figure 2.4 Population which ever received mid-day meal (%)
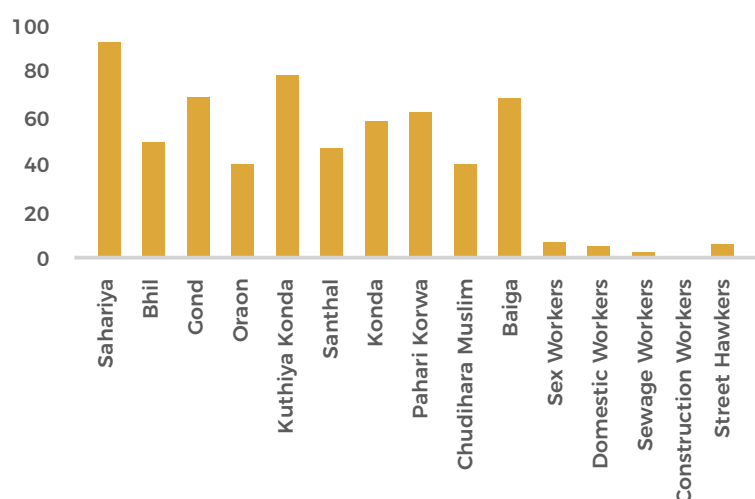
To counter the problems of hunger from the perspective of malnutrition, SDG 2 places a special focus on children. The government has recognised the mid-day meal (MDM) scheme, where children studying in government schools are provided with a meal in the school itself, as a pillar to achieving the desired target of the SDG[6]. As seen in figure 2.4, the coverage of the MDM scheme among the urban population is strikingly low, with 0% of construction workers or any of their household member ever receiving the benefits. This will further be explained later when other statistics for education and the impact of migration on them get discussed under Goal 4.

In the communities based in rural areas, the observations made on the infrastructure and facilities serving MDMs (Appendix) lacked on at least one parameter in all communities except the Chudihara Muslims. Eight out of ten communities said that the children of their community receive food cooked under clean conditions. Kuthiya Kondh community reported that the food comes from a private agency and several students have fallen sick from the food, and the Santhal community reported that while the food is prepared in the kitchen of the school campus, the kitchen is not clean and the cooks do not maintain cleanliness while cooking.

While most communities except Kuthiya Kondh and Baiga said that there was a fixed menu displayed in the school premises, four out of ten reported that the kitchen does not prepare food according to the decided menu. The children from the Kuthiya Kondh and Pahari Korwa community reportedly face discrimination during the serving of MDM, and children from Bhil and Sahariya community reported that the food provided was found inadequate to satiate the hunger of the children. Kuthiya Kondh community reported that there is no clean source of drinking water near the school and the Oraon community reported that while there is drinking water available inside the school premises, it has excessive iron and is not safe for drinking.

The number of beneficiaries of the MDM scheme in rural areas for most communities is around 50% (figure 2.4), which is low, considering that the scheme has been functional since 1995. When seen in the backdrop of the observations detailed above, the implementation of the scheme and its real-time effect on the most vulnerable communities come under acute scrutiny.

The implementation of another long-standing scheme on nutrition was checked through field observations. Aanganwadis, which have been functioning under the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) since 1975, are responsible for providing nutrition, pre-school education, immunization and track progress of all these for all children under age 6. Access to the ICDS scheme has increased over the years. However, five of ten rural communities reported to have found no records tracking weight and height of children available at the Aanganwadi Center, even though all except the AWC near the Oraon community had access to a weighing machine. All communities reported that some form of nutritional supplement was being provided in the AWCs, but Bhil community reported that the girl children did not come for it.

Conclusion

The importance of focus on nutrition is well-recognised, given the number of schemes and budget allocations for the same. But primary data shows significant gaps in implementation of these schemes among vulnerable communities that need them the most. In sight of 'very high' malnutrition continually prevailing among these communities, there is an eminent need for a robust feedback and monitoring mechanism to be in place to ensure maximum access of benefits for these communities.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages

Health care is central to the well-being and development of all, and SDG 3 reflects that, with setting specific targets for children, women, the poor and the vulnerable, with the perspective of ensuring both affordability and access. The Government of India lays out a comprehensive framework for achieving SDG 3- Emphasising on reducing maternal mortality ratio, reducing under 5 mortality, addressing the burden of communicable diseases, adopting a focused approach on non-communicable diseases and ensuring universal health coverage[7] . India has made significant advances in reducing maternal mortality ratio and infant mortality. Due to challenges of sample size[x], the findings in this section skip data on traditional health markers of mortality and birth rates, along with the prevalence of specific diseases. Thus, in the figure 3.1 are statistics from the datasets released by the government of India over the years [8 9 10].

Figure 3.1 Mortality Rates(Source: GoI Data)

Legend:
- 2004-06(Niti Aayog)
- 2005-06(NFHS 3)
- 2014-16(Niti Aayog)
- 20015-16(NFHS 4)
- 20018-19(SDG Index)
- 20019-20(SDG Index)
- SDG 2030 Target
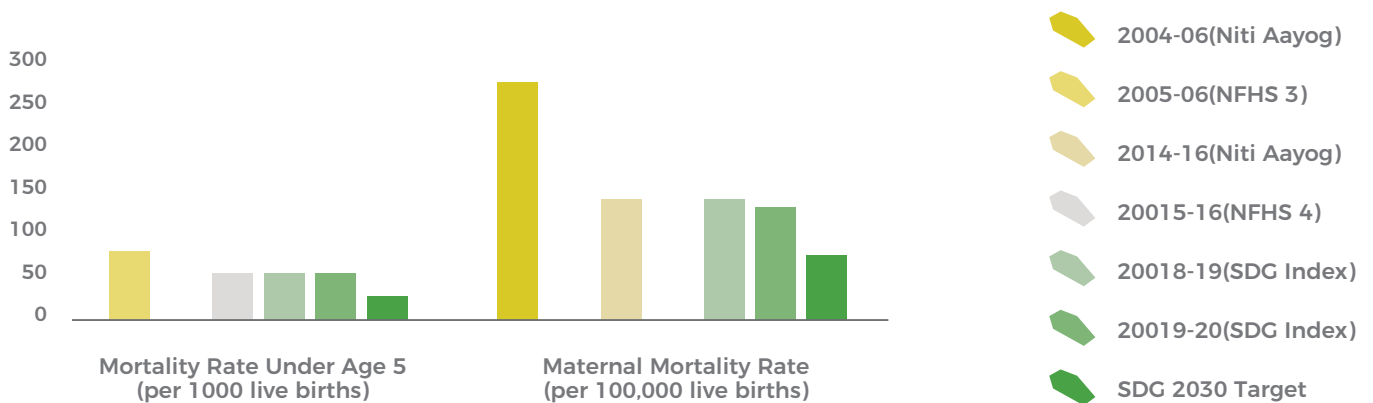
The bars in shades of yellow represent the pre-SDG statistics, the ones in green show numbers for the years after SDGs were adopted, and the bar in green stands for the SDG target that needs to be achieved by 2030[xi]. The figure illustrates a significant decline in the mortality rate of children under the age of five years (from 75 to 50) in the ten years between 2005-06 to 2015-16. Since then though, even under the renewed focus through the SDGs, the figure has been stagnant at 5o deaths per 1,000 live births up until 2019.

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x Detailed under Methodology

xi SGD Goal 3, Target 3.1 and 3.2

Figure 3.2 Health Department Budget Expenditure on NHM (In Rs Crores)

	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Total BE	62659.12	52800	47352.51
NHM BE	32995	30129.61	26690.7
NRHM BE	27039	24279.61	21188.65
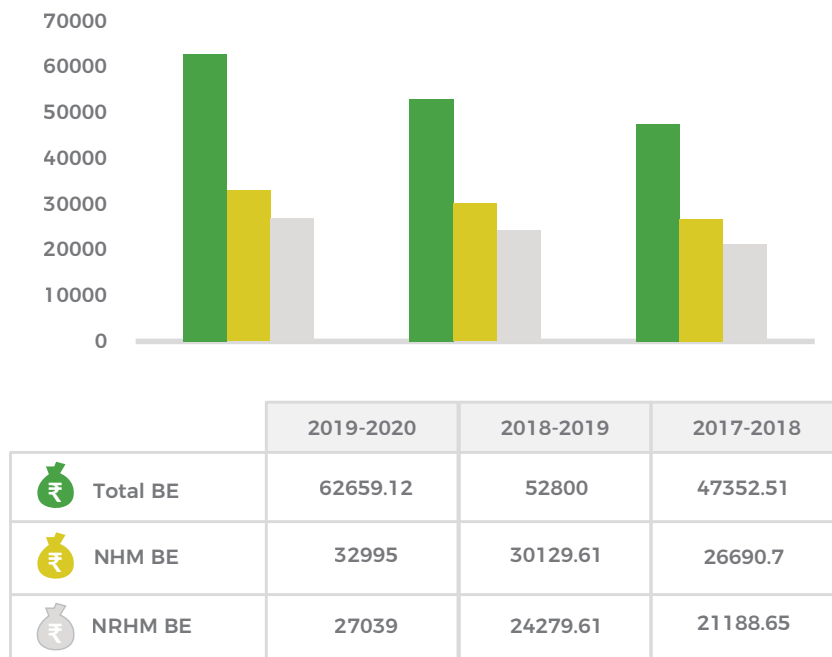
The trend in maternal mortality is also similar, in the sense that there was a steep decline from the numbers in 2004-06 to the ones observed ten years later in 2014-16. However, the numbers have been stagnant ever since (2018-19). The succeeding year has reportedly seen an improvement in statistics, with a significant reduction to the figure of 122 per 100,000 live births. The budget allocation for health, however, shares the stagnation of all the other statistics of health discussed so far, as can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 3.3 Health Expenditure (%)
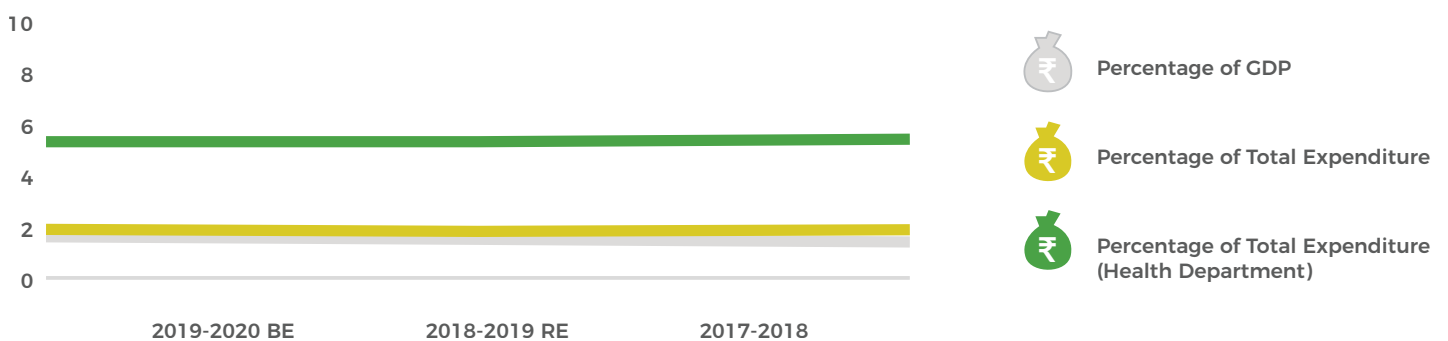
Percentage of GDP

Percentage of Total Expenditure

Percentage of Total Expenditure (Health Department)

National Health Mission is the all-encompassing health benefits programme, with the largest share of the health ministry allocated budget at its disposal, within which most funds are directed towards the rural spectrum, to fulfil the aim of improving access to healthcare in rural areas. Studies have shown that increased government spending on health tends to improve financial protection for individuals[11] and the targets of SDG 3 also emphasise the need for a substantial increase in health financing, but as shown in figure 3.3, there has been no growth in the spending on health when looked at alongside GDP and total expenditure. Health expenditure as a percentage of GDP has been increasing at an extremely slow rate of 0.1% each year since 2017[12] , with the danger of the government falling short of its target of reaching 2.5% by 2025[13] . Low budget allocation will also derail the progress on other health targets.

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Findings

In face of stagnant public spending on health, it is estimated that 80% of Indians incur out of pocket expenses on health, and large numbers fall into debt and poverty to meet these expenses[14]. Primary data on OOPE on Health was collected to assess the level of household expenditure on health, which is illustrated in the Figure 3.4. While the average trend in OOPE across the population groups at Rs 11,716, is comparable to the national average OOPE of Rs 11971.2[xii], it must however be kept in mind that the household income of these groups is low and the health care expenses are quite high in proportion.

The annual OOPE also varied significantly within these groups, with Domestic Workers (Rs 34,417) and Street Hawkers (Rs 33,840) especially standing out. They reported that they are unable to take time to access public health care facilities even when available, given the informal nature of their work. In the absence of a legal framework to protect informal sector workers in India, absence from work could result not only in loss of wages but loss of employment altogether. Public healthcare facilities require more time, due to long queues and multiple visits, leaving them with no option but to go to the local private practitioner. Additionally, Domestic Workers also reported a chronic prevalence of silicosis and tuberculosis in their area of residence.

Figure 3.4 Out of Pocket Expenditure on Health in LNOB Community vs India (Rupees)
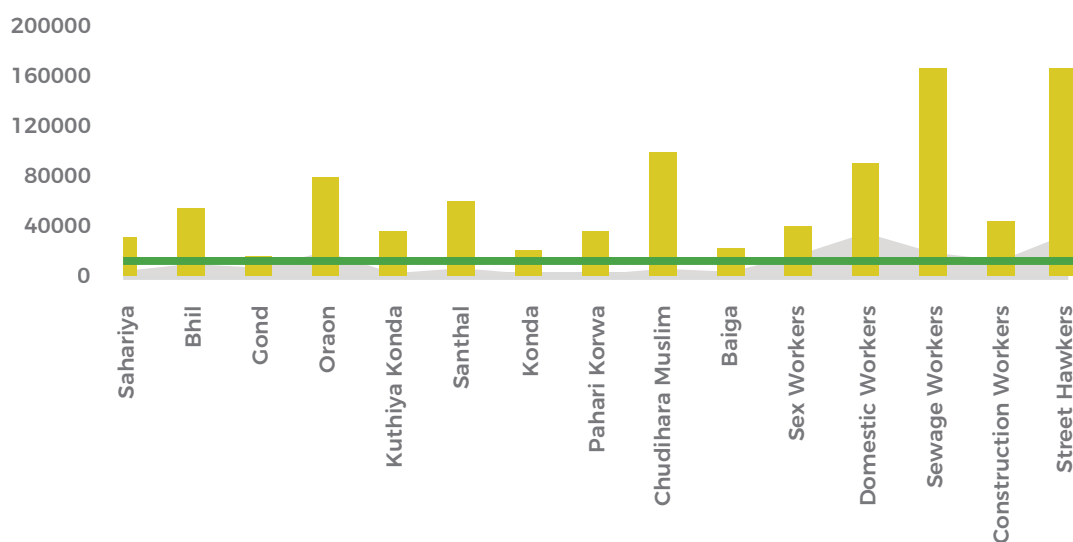
HH OOPE on Health (Annual)

Annual Average HH Income

National Annual HH Health Expenditure (NHAEI, 2018)

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xii Calculated using per capita OOPE = Rs 2,494 (National Health Accounts Estimates for India, 2018) and Average HH Size = 4.8 (Census 2011) -

Oraon community also spends above the national average, at Rs 19,283, even though the nearest Sub-Center is 3 km away. The lack of proper road access, electricity connection and limited services available in the public health centres force them to travel further and seek care in private establishments. Construction Workers are continuously relocating and thus seek care at the nearest available facility – hospital, nursing homes or clinics – which are rarely government-subsidized and thus end up spending over 28% of their income on health.

Sewage Workers and Sex Workers must have access to healthcare frequently due to the physically intrusive nature of their occupations, but they routinely face discrimination in government hospitals. As a result, they opt for private healthcare at higher rates. While it may seem like low OOPE is an indication of better access to public healthcare, the discussion below highlights how it isn't necessarily the case and is rather reflective of poor access and lack of awareness within the communities.

Kutiya Kondh, Konda and Pahari Korwa tribes and their near nil annual expenditure on health (less than Rs 2,500 per annum) are backed by accounts[xiii] of an absence of a health-seeking attitude and a preference for traditional methods of healing within the communities. The assessment of access and available infrastructure in the rural areas revealed that the except for Oraon community, the condition of which has been briefly discussed above, all have to travel farther than 3 kms[xiv] to access any form of health care, which also enforces alienation from modern healthcare.

Baigas need to go 10 kms and Sahariyas almost 30 kms to access any healthcare, which forces their OOPE on health to be under just Rs 4,000 annually. Santhals have the sub-centre relatively closer to their community residence area, at 5 kms. But they don't get proper care there, because the doctors come late and leave early, and only take care of minor health problems. This forces people to go further and seek medical attention at a higher cost, which they often choose not to, keeping their OOPE on health at Rs 6,195. The closest government-subsidised healthcare facility, that the Bhil community, which spends Rs 9,608, has access to, is a CHC which has the space to admit eight patients, no clean source of drinking water - even for patients, and electricity access for only 6 hours a day[xv].

Conclusion

Affordable and accessible quality public healthcare is critical to achieving SDGs for all. To that end, the GoI proposal to increase public spending on healthcare to 2.5% of the GDP by 2025 and establishing 150,000 health and well-being centres is an important and welcome step. Although, the current trends of public spending do not invoke confidence in this target being achieved in due time. There is a crucial need to focus on the vulnerable sections of our society and provide healthcare access to all, overcoming their diverse contexts and disadvantages. Increasing access to public healthcare and decreasing OOPE borne by these communities is a paramount goal.

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xiii From field investigators, who are also community members.

xiv IPHS Guidelines require entire population to have access to at least a sub-center within 3 km.

xv IPHS Guidelines requirements for CHCs is a minimum of 30 beds, clean source of drinking water and power back-up.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All

The first target under SDG 4 requires signatory nations to ensure free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all, given the well-established, empowering abilities of education. Because of the diverse social fabric of India, it becomes paramount to provide equitable access to quality education. This needs to be followed up with subsequent opportunities to enable people to overcome their inherited socio-economic disadvantages.

The Constitution of India has put the much needed emphasis on education since its inception. Several schemes and programs have been put in place to promote education for all. The Kothari Commission, in 1964 recommended that public expenditure on education needs to be at least 6% of the GDP. Even after more than 70 years of independence though, public spending fails to reach that target. UN estimates of government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, stand at 3.8% between 2013-2018[15]. Government of India's own statistics of total public spending on education (states and center combined) between 2014-2020 as a percentage of GDP is 2.9%[12].

Figure 4.1: Direct Expenditure on School and Higher Education (BE, In Rs crore)

2019-2020   2018-2019   2017-2018

█ School Education & Literacy

▬ ▬ Linear (School Education & Literacy)

█ Higher Education

▬ ▬ Linear (Higher Education)

Findings

In face of lacking public spending, private education, including in-school education, shows steady growth in India. It is currently estimated that of the eligible children in primary/secondary levels, 51.3% are in government schools and 48.7% are in private schools[xvi] . Private schooling is expensive but is perceived as better in terms of both education and infrastructure. However, parents from vulnerable communities can seldom access it for their children, despite aspirations of providing them with quality education in English-medium schools. Therefore, even when parents from the study groups sent their children to private schools, they often could only access poor private schools which are not necessarily better than government schools.

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xvi Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India, NSS 75th Round, Released in November 2019

Annual average Out of pocket expenditure (OOPE) across India, where nearly half of the population accesses private schooling, is Rs 26,859.6[xvii] . All the communities covered in the study have OOPE on education below the national average, including Santhals and Sex Workers, where a comparable number of approximately 45% people avail private education. For nearly all other communities, the low OOPE on education needs to be seen along with the lack of awareness and inability to holistically understand their development vis-à-vis Goal 4.

Figure 4.2: HH Expediture on Education (Rs.) vs People with Government and Private Education (%)
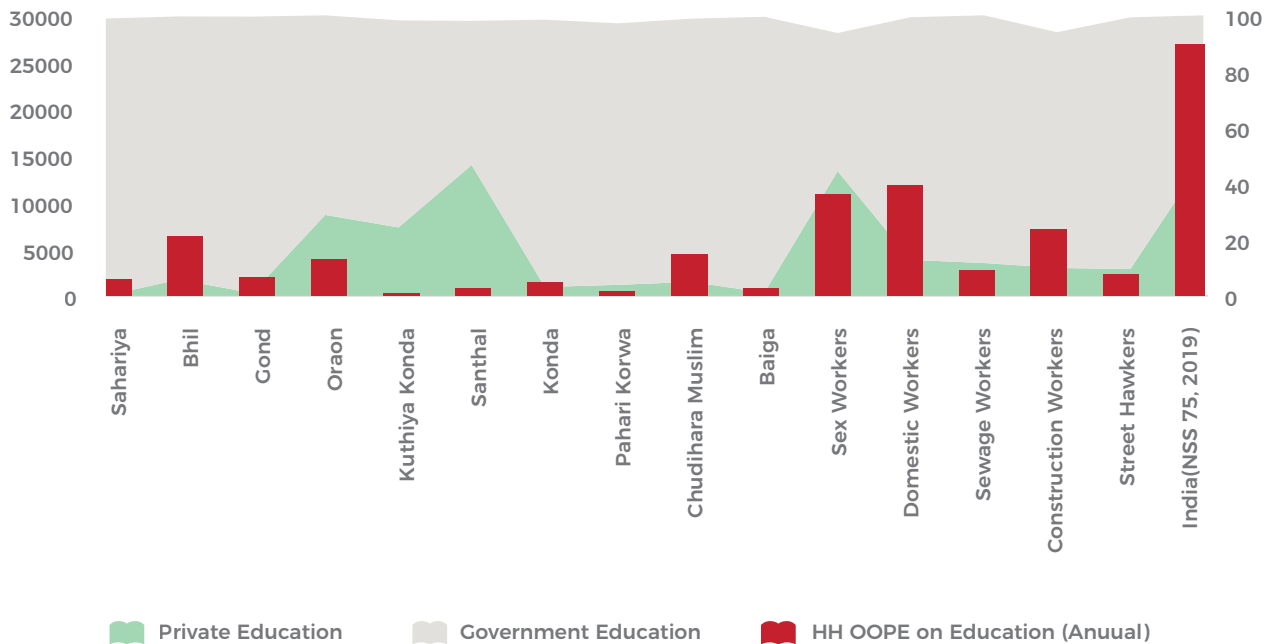
The burden of illiteracy is high among the vulnerable population groups. Figure 4.3 shows that only about half (exactly 53.2%) of the population in the study has ever accessed any form of education. Access to any form of education was found to be highest among Chudihara Muslims at 92.75% and least among the Konda and Pahadi Korwa communities at 24.8% and 26.3% respectively.

Figure 4.3: Education Status (%)
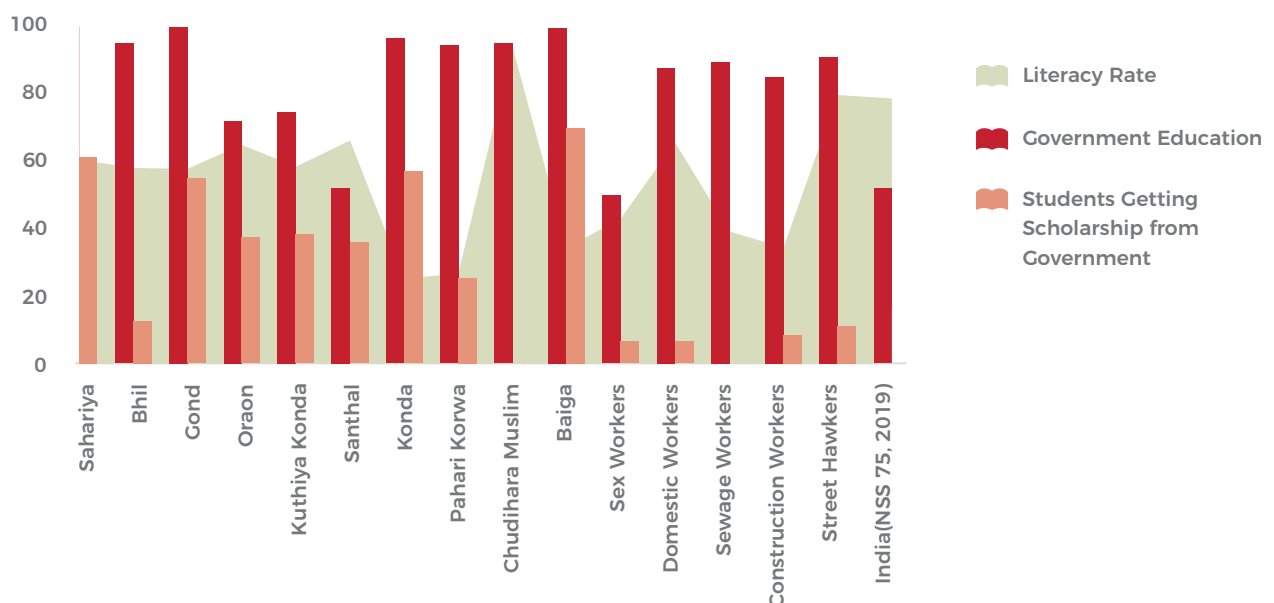
xvii Calculated using per capita OOPE on Education = Rs. 9,948 (NSS 75th Round Data) and number of people under 18
in each house = 2.7 (Census 2011)

Furthermore, irrespective of the education level of the community, majority of them have accessed education provided by the government.

The exceptions to this, as also stated above, are Santhals and Sex Workers, where 48.6% and 51.3% population has accessed or is accessing private school education. In the study, the Santhal community reported their disapproval of the poor state of government schools in their location, along with the availability of local private schools near their habitations. Among the sex workers, the number of people with any education remains on the lower end at 43%. They have aspirations of better education and employment opportunities for their children. But prevalent discrimination and stigma deters the children from any schooling, and especially through local government schools. In all cases, the combination of poor conditions of government schools and aspiration for better education motivate parents to send children to private schools which are ill-afforded.

Scholarships are affirmative actions by the government, to help people break the cycle of social and economic vulnerabilities, that may lead to non-admission, drop out or child labour. A number of scholarship schemes are designed based on caste, indigenous identity, economic status and gender. The entire population covered in the study has been constitutionally and socially recognised as disadvantaged, making them all eligible for some government scholarship. However, only 28% of the students were found to be getting scholarships from the government. Also, the share of students receiving scholarships in seven out of the 15 groups was lower than the national average of 16%5. Among the Sewage Workers and Chudihara Muslims, both of whom entirely belong to a singular identity group, based on caste and religion respectively, 0% students have availed any scholarship. The high rate of literacy in Chudihara Muslims despite this is due to extensive CSO intervention in their geographical area.
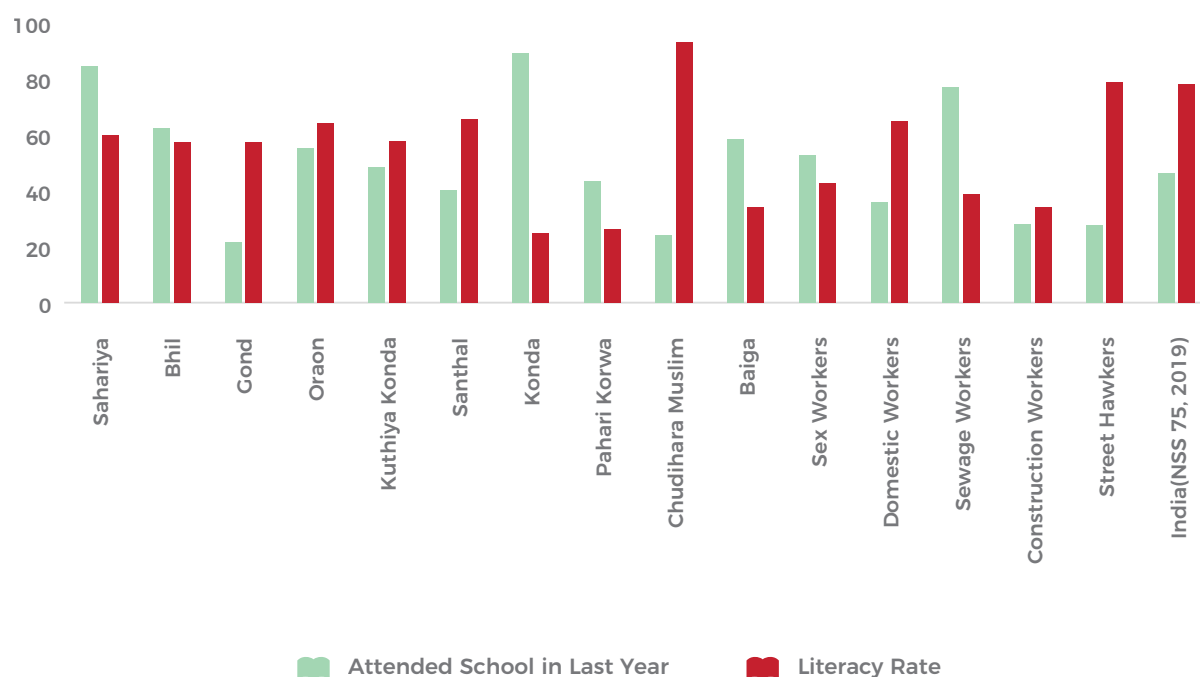
Figure 4.4: General vs Current Trend of Education(In Last Year, %)

The level of education though, needs to be read in consonance with the data for the population which attended school in the year of the survey, as shown in figure 4.4. This will aid in understanding the share of those with non-formal (technical or vocational) education and the current level of education accessed by children. One observes that nearly half (49.8%) the people within the population have some access to education or have been attending school in the last year. But these numbers cannot conclusively reveal a general trend, because here again the variation is high. Within the Chudihara Muslims, who have the highest level of general literacy, the number of people who attended school in the last year is one of the lowest (23.9%). The lowest rate is for the Gonds (21.5%), despite physical and spatial access to schools (further discussed below). This indicates that schooling is still not adequately institutionalised within the community. Kondas have the lowest general rate of education (24.8 %) but the percentage of the population that attended school in the last year is the highest

(89%). Reasons leading to higher school attendance rates include parents' awareness and aspiration, availability of schools and increased CSO intervention that has focused on education with these groups.

Right to Education Act (2009) mandates that all population should have access to a primary school within 1 km, middle school within 3 km and a high school within 5 km of their area of living. However, Government school education is reportedly suffering from multiple challenges. Some of the most notable ones are poor infrastructure, shortage of teachers, teacher absenteeism, delay in providing books and uniforms, gaps in mid-day meals and scholarships. Only 12.7% [16] of the government schools have been reported to be RTE compliant on basic parameters.

Figure 4.5: Geographical Access to Educational Institute (%)

Legend: Up to 1 km | >1, <3 km | >3, <5 km | More than 5 kms
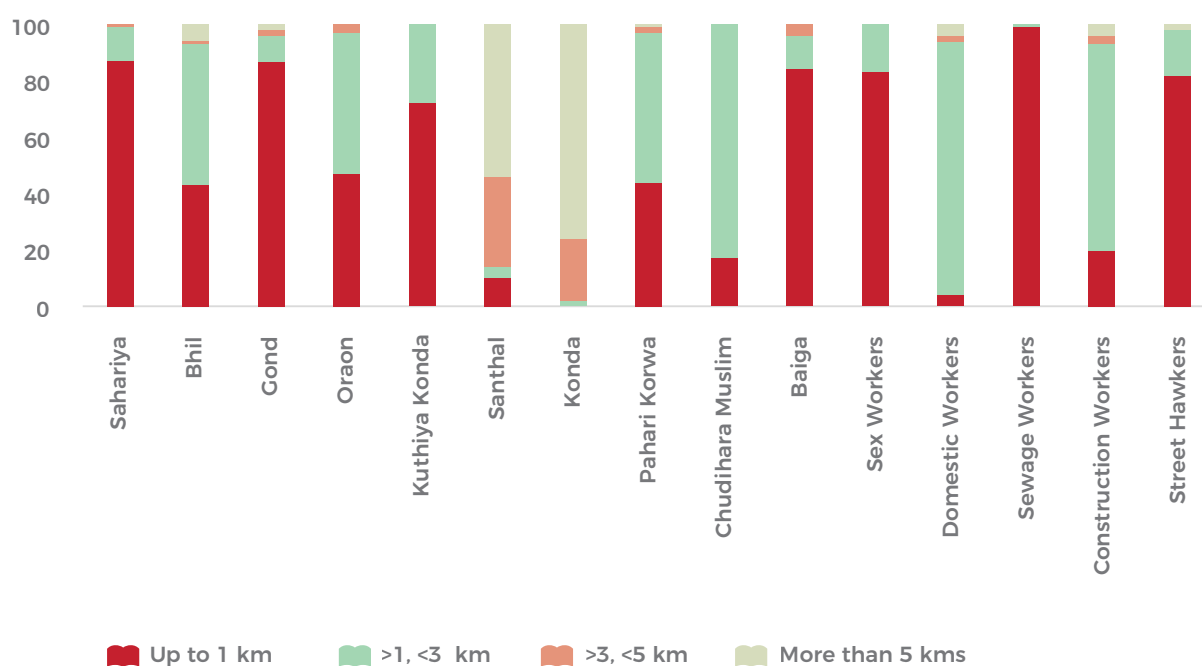
Six out of the ten rural communities reported that the primary school standard distance was not upheld. Four out of ten complained about the middle school and six about the high school. Kuthiya Kondh and Baiga communities reported that the nearest high school was 10 kms away and Sahariya and Oraon communities reported to have the nearest one at 7 kms. The responses collected for the distance between residential address and the educational institute are in figure 4.5. The highest number of people removed from any educational institutes are Santhals and Konda, both of whom also reported that they do not have all-weather roads to access schools. Apart from them, three more groups reported that their path to schools was not all-weather accessible.

Except for Pahadi Korwas, all communities found a significant number[xviii] of students from the community enrolled and attending. There was found to be a slightly imbalanced gender ratio in favour of the boys. Children of Pahadi Korwa communities were not present in class at the time of the survey. It was reported that there continues to be low understanding of significance of education among people, which is changing but very slowly, even as the school is located nearby. On the other hand, construction workers, most of whom have migrated from rural areas, reported that even if their children are enrolled in schools, they are unable to attend due to continuous relocation, which is why children either start going to private schools or drop out and start taking up odd jobs for daily wages. This is also true for children of other communities who drop-out because of the distance. They are either too young, or unwilling to travel.

In four locations, it was also reported that even the schools located far away do not have proper access to clean drinking water or separate bathroom for girls. This also ends up pushing people away from the system. Santhals also reported that apart from a lack of clean drinking water and defunct toilets, there is a shortage in availability of books as well, due to which some students don't get access to them at all.

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xviii Exact number not comparable because different categories (primary, middle and high) of schools were observed

Conclusion

Government of India recognises the social barriers and inter-generational burden of illiteracy on these communities. The evolution of multiple schemes, including scholarships and the promulgation of the Right to Education Act as a fundamental right, are indicators of the same. However, issues of allocations and implementation defies this intent. People belonging to these vulnerable communities continue to deal with illiteracy due to lack of access or resources. OOPE on Education and enrolment in private schools indicates an awareness of and aspiration for education. The poor literacy rate of these communities, the continuing burden of not attending schools, the lack of quality government school education available within mandated distance and the growing privatisation of education, have the danger of further pushing children from these vulnerable population groups out of school. Increased budgetary allocation, increased participation of the communities, Free, quality and compulsory education with a focused attention on children from vulnerable communities is imminently important for ensuring the right of every child to education. Thus, a nuanced multi-stakeholder approach is critically required to meet the education goals for all children.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

This goal is considered to be an anchor goal, without which no other SDGs can be completely achieved. The focus of this goal is on almost half of the population (49.6%)[17] of the world, which naturally leads to intersection of targets and relevance across SDGs. In the interest of streamlining focus, this chapter will aim on mapping economic vulnerabilities, educational status and employment status within the tracked communities vis-à-vis the women – basic issues which have also been addressed from a gendered perspective through schemes and policies to an extent as well.

Since schemes and policies in isolation cannot make a difference without proper allocations, gender budgeting is an important aspect towards empowering girls and women. Gender Budgeting is a term used to make mindful allocations towards schemes in place to empower women. The Indian fiscal budget has two parts in its Gender Budget – (i) 'Part A' which is towards schemes that are 100% women-centric and (ii) 'Part B' which is towards schemes that are 30% women-centric.

Figure 5.1 Gender Budget Allocations (in ₹ crores)
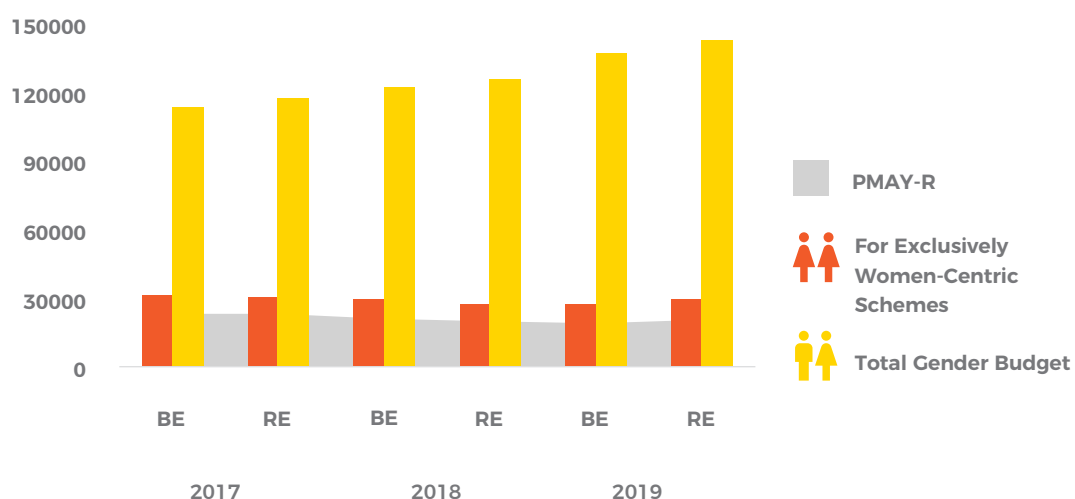
The figure 5.1 shows the budget allocations that have been made for Part A, and the total gender component. While it is evident that budget for exclusively women-centric schemes only makes up a small portion of the total Gender Budget, it's noteworthy that over 70% of the 'Part A' budget comprises of the allocations for *Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana - Rural (PMAY-R)*, the rural housing scheme of the government. The reason for including PMAY-R in 'Part A' is that the house deeds are handed over to the women of household with the aim of increasing assets ownership among women. While an important aspect, putting women's names on the assets don't automatically empower them if they are being subjugated in every other area.

Figure 5.2 - Gender Budget Allocations vs Total Budget (%)
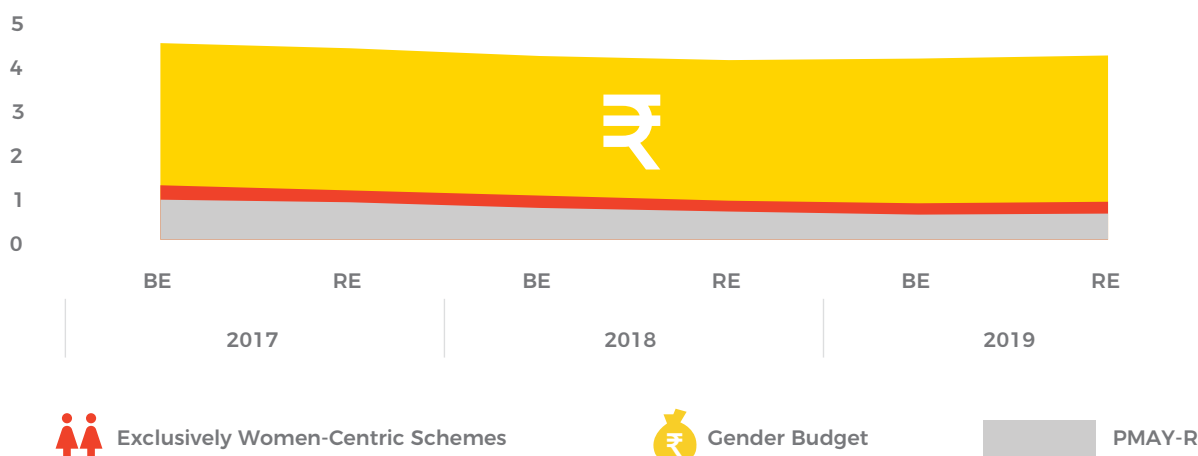
Components of Gender Budget are not limited to the Ministry of Women and Child Development. They are in fact spread across ministries and departments. Allocations for MoWCD in 2019 were less than 1% of the total Union Budget, and as seen in Figure 5.2 have been lowering over the years. The principal component under the MoWCD budget was for the *Mission for Protection and Empowerment of Women*. This includes programs and schemes aimed at decreasing violence against women in all spheres, which received only 0.04% allocations of the total budget in 2019. The Gender Budget in total had 4.1% of total budget allocations in 2019, but keeping aside the funds for PMAY-R, exclusively women-centric schemes got only 0.3% of allocations. The status of implementation of PMAY-R, which also remains far from ideal, is further discussed under Goal 11.

Findings

Figure 5.3 Land Ownership (Men vs Women, %)
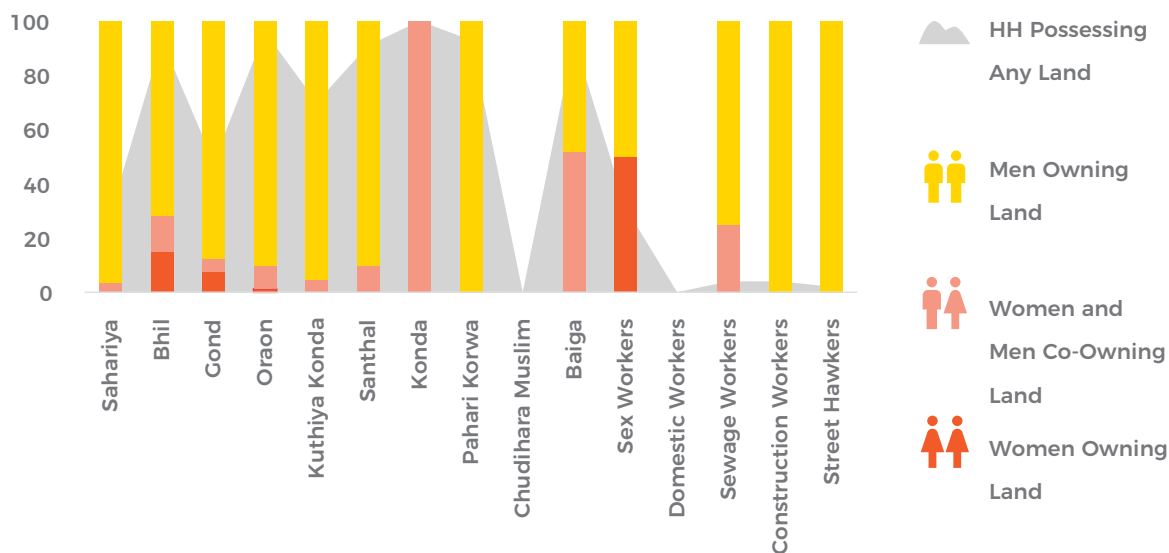
1. The distinct difference between ownership of land between the urban and the rural communities was seen in the discussion under Goal 1. The Figure 5.3 below shows how the trend of women owning land remains largely the same across communities, with the seeming exceptions of Kondas, Baigas and Sex Workers. On an average, much fewer women (4.9%) solely own land in comparison to men (67%), but in the case of the Konda community, all land was reported as co-owned. In the case of the Baiga community, a little over half the population with land has co-ownership between a woman and man, but no women has individual ownership of land. In case of Sex Workers, while 50% women owned land, the number is still unsatisfactory, considering that majority of women in the community are the sole-bread earners in their families. Land and property ownership is the primary step towards independent economic development. The lack of it often becomes the reason for inter-generational poverty, which is why, the state of land ownership among women is of concern across communities.

Figure 5.4 Population with Bank Account (Men vs Women, %)

Men Owning Bank Account

Women Owning Bank Account
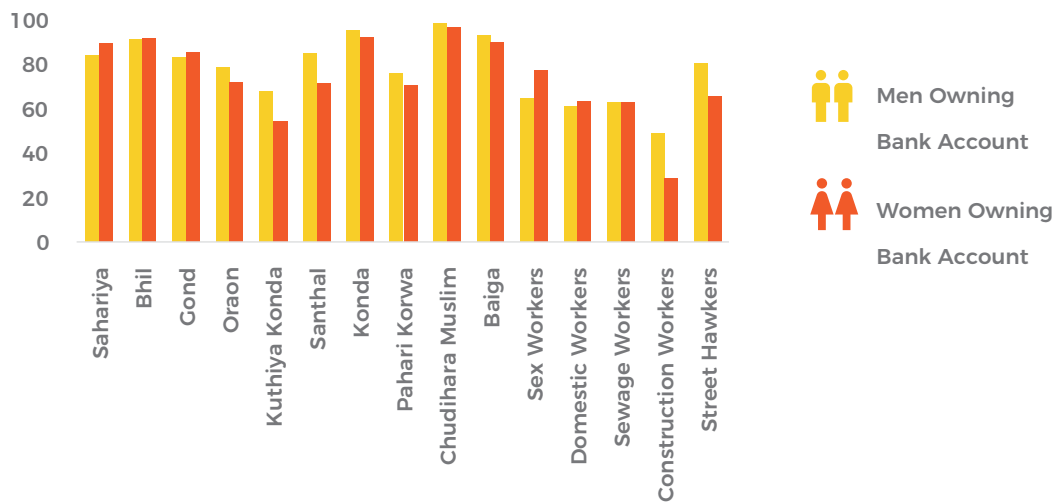
2. Jan Dhan Yojana was launched in 2014 with a special focus on women. It aimed to increase financial inclusion and to make financial services such as bank accounts, credit and insurance more accessible. On an average, men have a slight lead in number of bank accounts at 88% compared to the accounts held by women which stands at 83%. Bank accounts for women and men were reported to be more or less equal across many communities. However, more women reported to have accounts among Sex Workers and Domestic Workers, which can be attributed to their earning status in the family (Figure 5.4). There has been a concerted effort on the part of the government to open bank accounts for all communities. The enhanced status of bank accounts among both women and men in these communities can be attributed to this governmental thrust.

Figure 5.5 Education Status (Men vs Women, %)

General Trend of Education

Men With Any Education

Women With Any Education
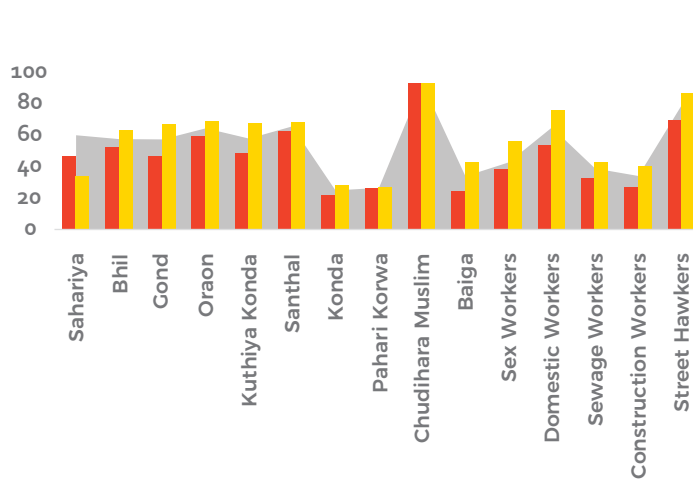
Figure 5.6 Current Trend of Education in Last Year (Men vs Women, %)

Current Trend of Education

Women Currently Attending School

Men Currently Attending School
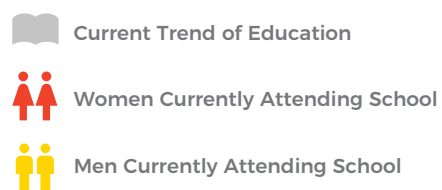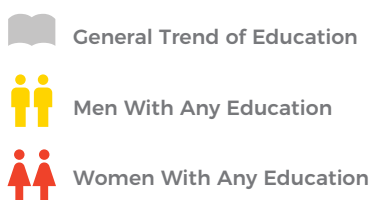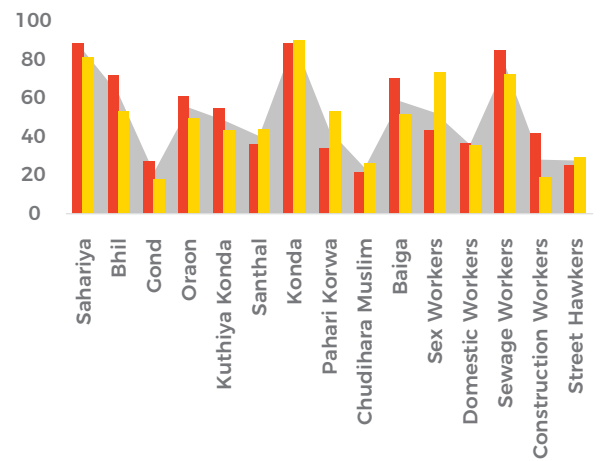
3. Trends in education show some improvement for women across communities. While on an average more men (57.4%) have received any education (Figure 5.5) in comparison to women (46.9%), the trend seems to be changing with more women (52.3%) in comparison to men (49.3%) to have attended any schooling in the last year (Figure 6). Though this change is not uniform within all communities, one can attribute this to the increased focus on girl child education through additional benefits and scholarships for female students. In two rural communities, where women are involved in agriculture –Santhals and Pahadi Korwas – the number of girls going to school remains lower than the boys in the year before the survey. The other communities, where the number of school-going girls continues to be low, also are the ones where women are more involved in earning wages such as Sex Workers, Chudihara Muslims, and Street Hawkers.

Figure 5.7 Vocational Training Status (Men vs Women, %)

Women with vocational training

Men with vocational training

4. The other avenue for capacity building is vocational training, which provides skills that can be monetized towards a better living. Although more women have received such training in comparison to men, the total number of people across communities with any vocational training was only 2.7%. This implies that the number is not high enough to reflect increased opportunities or empowerment for women in any real form.

The lack of monetizable skills becomes more concerning when seen together with the unemployment rate shown in the Figure 5.8. It can be seen that around 76% of both men and women are seeking work but haven't found employment. In rural communities, unemployment rate among women is 73% and among men is 75%. In urban communities, more women are unemployed (83%) in comparison to men (79.7%). The reasons for this may be attributed to both the lack of optimal jobs and the increased number of women looking to get employed.

Figure 5.8 Unemployment Rate (Men vs Women, %)

General Level of Unemployment

Women Seeking Work

Men Seeking Work
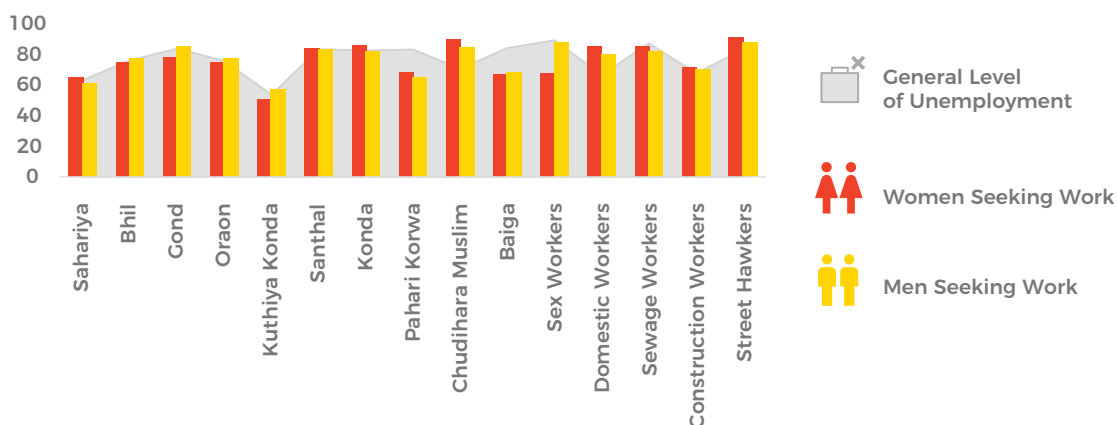
5. The figure 5.9 and 5.10 shed further light on the condition of employment and the differences faced by the men and women from these communities. Of the employed women in rural areas, 58% reported to be earning irregular wages. In urban areas, women earning irregular wages were around 8%, a number significantly influenced by the 0% irregular wages among domestic workers. On an average more women in comparison to men earn irregular wages in rural areas, while the case is reversed in urban areas. In the case of Sex Workers, where the households are almost entirely dependent on the women for income, even as the unemployment rate among women is lower than men, women are less likely to be earning regular wages, or getting employment all year round.

Figure 5.9: Earning of Irregular Wages
(Men vs Women, %)

Legend:
- General Level of Irregular Wages
- Women Earning Irregular Wages
- Men Earning Irregular Wages
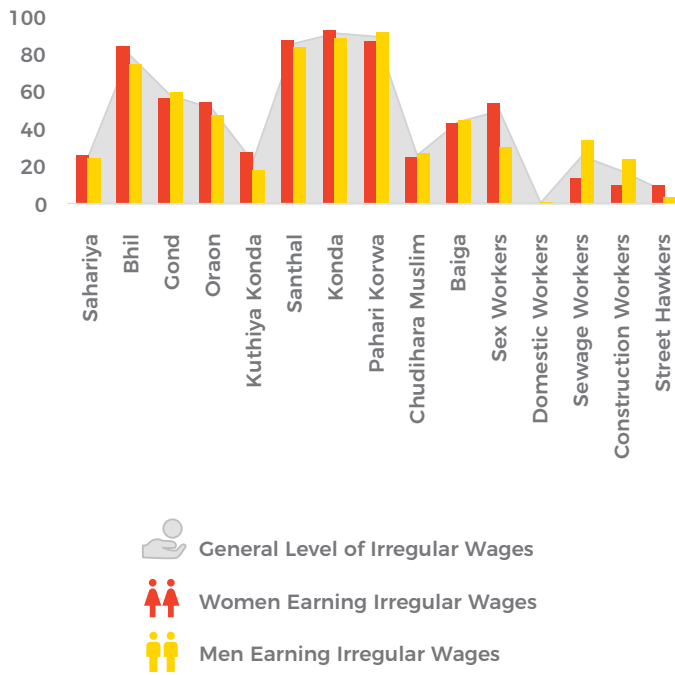
Figure 5.10: Year-round Availability of Paid Work
(Men vs Women, %)

Legend:
- People Getting Paid Work for 12 Months
- Women Getting Paid Work for 12 Months
- Men Getting Paid Work for 12 Months

6. While the availability of year around employment is low across communities, it is even lower among women. In rural areas, only 2.6% of women get employment all year. This number is around 13% in urban areas, despite the spike seen for domestic workers. Among Domestic Workers' households, where more women are employed in the profession, 43% women reported to be getting year-round employment and 0% reported irregular wages. This is because once they find employment it's likely to be for long periods due to the constant need for house helps in urban areas.

Figure 5.11: Employment Under MGNREGS
(Men vs Women, %)

Legend:
- Ever Employed Under MGNREGS
- Women Ever Employed Under MGNREGS
- Men Ever Employed Under MGNREGS
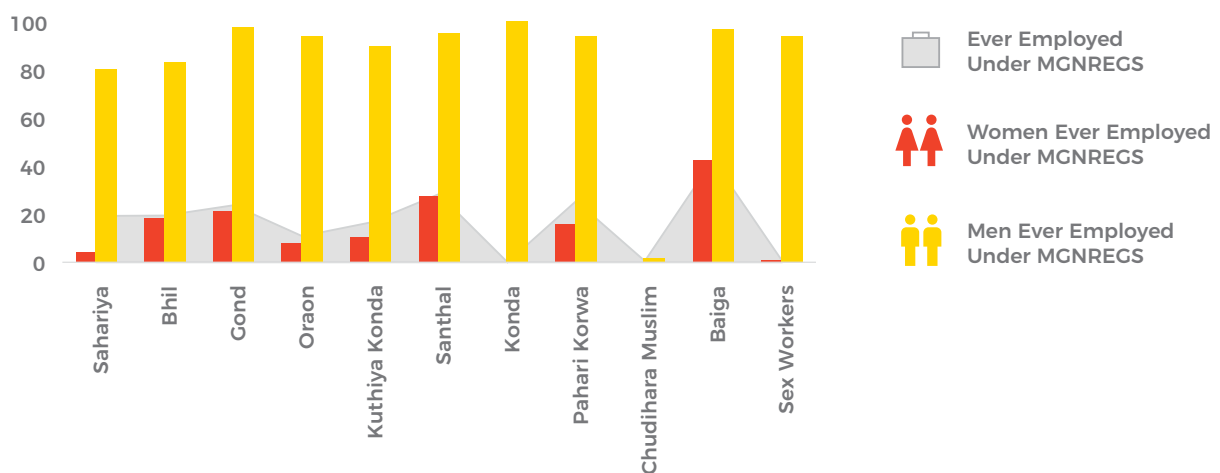
7. *The Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme* (MGNREGS), which has a statutory requirement that 1/3rd participation is reserved for women is inadequately implemented in these communities, as can be seen in the Figure 5.11. While the coverage is varying and low across communities (average 17%), only an average of 13% women have ever been employed under the employment guarantee scheme, despite it being touted as a landmark scheme for empowering women in their own places of residence in rural India, since traditionally they find it harder to migrate only for employment.

Figure 5.12: Person(s) Usually Getting Water (%)
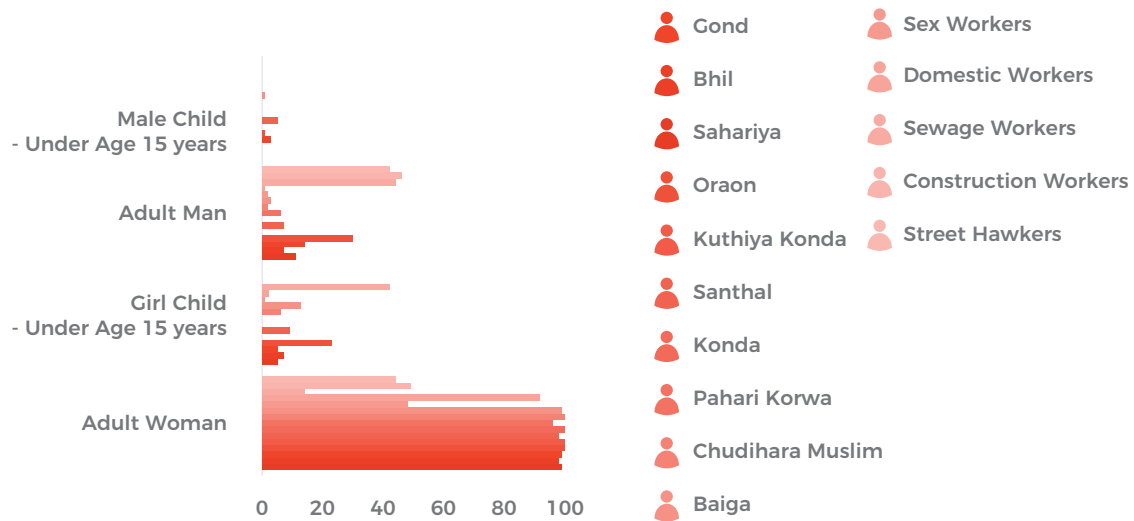
9. Apart from increasing employment and providing equal opportunities, SDG 5 also targets to recognize the value of unpaid work provided by the women of the household. Evidence to back this observation can be found in the Figure 5.12, where it can be seen that across communities, adult women are the ones getting water for the household, spending over 30 minutes on an average in doing so (Figure 5.13). In urban communities, the number is closer to half between the adult men and women, except in the case of Domestic Workers, where 91% of adult women are responsible for getting water. In rural areas, the responsibility is fulfilled almost entirely by adult women only. While some girls under 15 also take up the responsibility, nearly no boys of the same age group are involved in this work.

Figure. 5.13 Time Spent in Getting Water for HH(%)

- Less than 30 mins
- 30 mins to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour
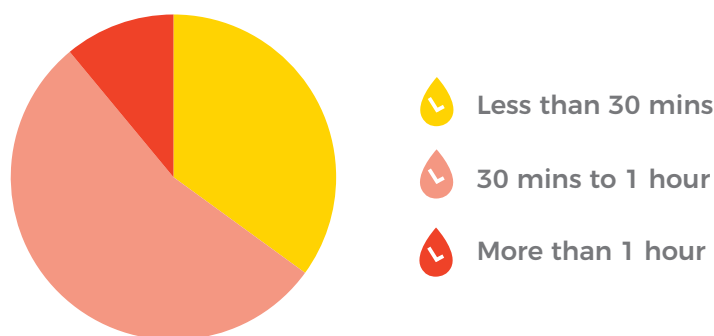
9. Across communities, 72% of households continue to use unclean sources of energy for cooking, as shown in Figure 5.14, which produce smoke and have been proven to be hazardous for health. When 60% of these households exist without a separate kitchen and 30% have only one room, the consequences from the use of these fuels are bound to be negative. These are mostly borne by the women who traditionally take up the role of cooking for the family in Indian households. To promote switching to clean cooking fuel for women, the government of India also launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

Figure 5.14 HHs Using Unclean Energy Sources for Cooking (%)
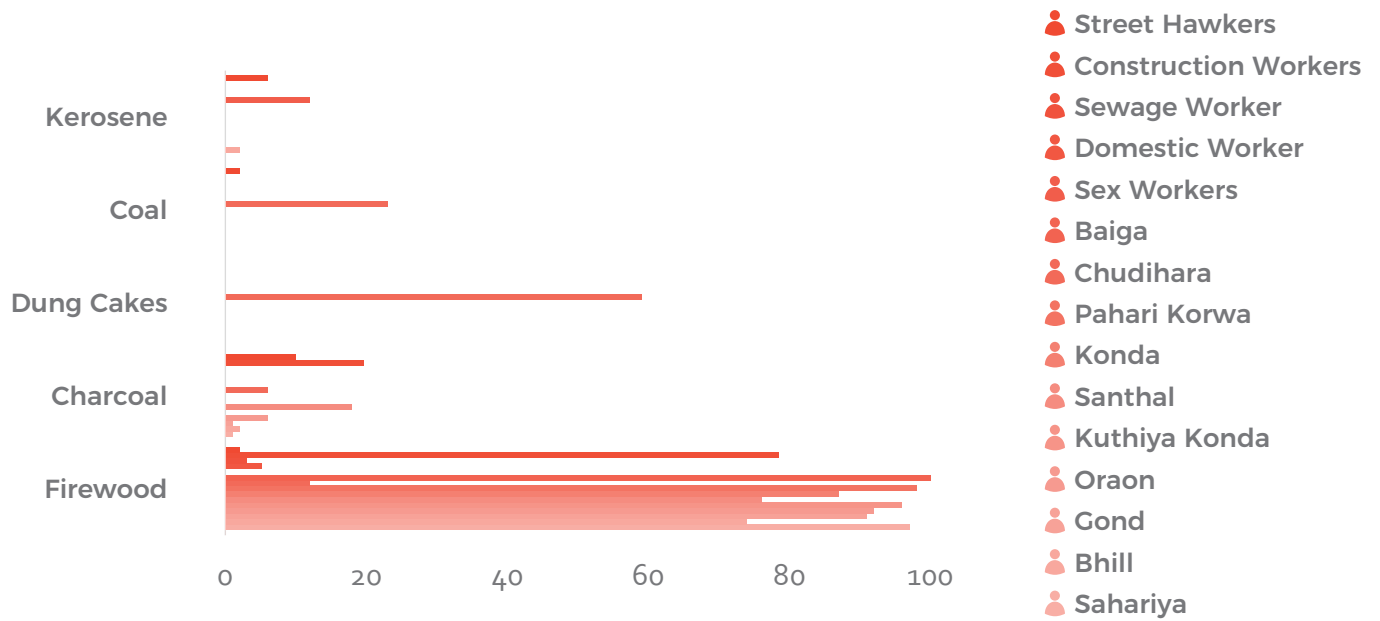
in May 2016. The scheme aimed to provide LPG connections to women from BPL households by March 2020. While 90% of the scheme's target coverage was achieved in by December 11, 2019, it was reported that the scheme was lacking on various counts (further discussed under Goal 7), one of the main concerns being a lack of sustained usage of LPG due the scheme not covering refill costs[18]. This can also be corroborated through primary data found in this research, where firewood still remains the most used form of cooking fuel with 61% of households using it.

Figure 5.15 Safe Access to Toilets (%)
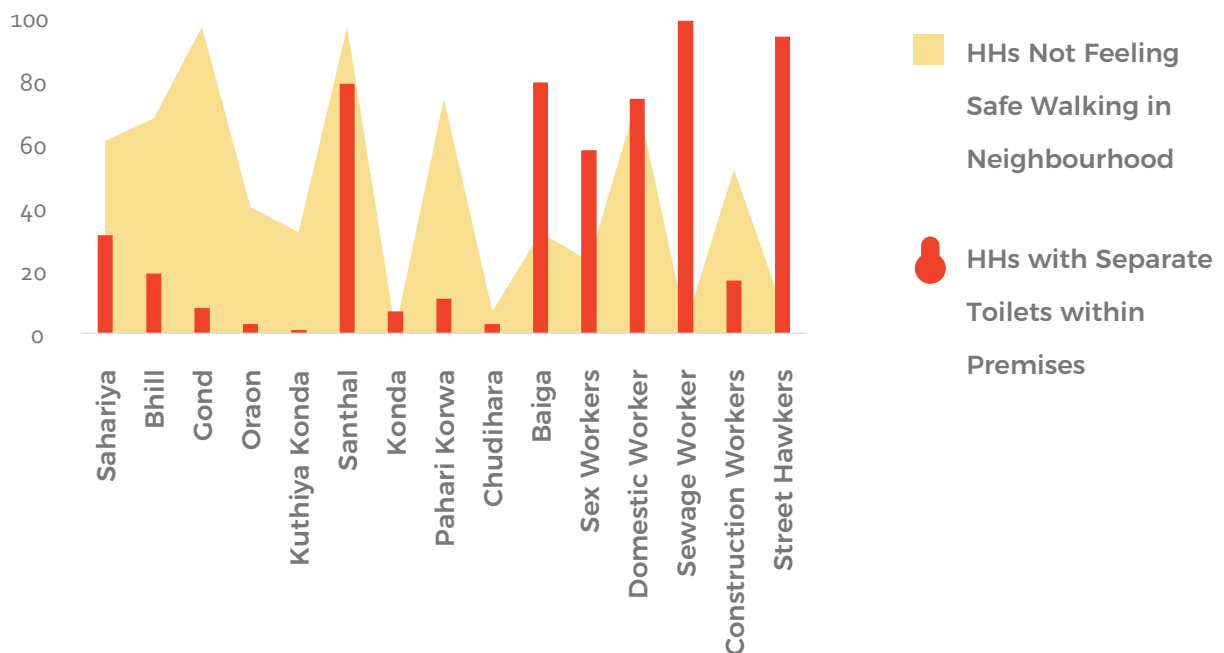
10. Eliminating all forms of violence against women is inherently important towards achieving any development for the gender, as is recognized under SDGs as well. It has been well-established that absence of sanitation facilities in or near households puts women at higher risk of sexual violence[19]. This has been an advocacy point for changing the behavioral practice of open-defecation under the Swachh Bharat Mission (further discussed under Goal 6). Although, as we can see in the Figure 5.15, several households were reported to be in unsafe neighborhoods, according to the respondents' own perception. Not having access to toilets within their homes force the women out of their houses and put them at risk of sexual violence . This risk is higher in rural areas on an average, where 73% of households don't have toilets within their premises and 48% neighborhoods were reported unsafe for walking. This results in affecting women from over 60% households. In urban areas, 34% household reported to be residing in areas unsafe for walking, and 29% of the households were reported to have no toilets within their premises. This indicates that on an average, over 30% of women in the urban areas are at risk of sexual violence.

Conclusion

The study, though not exclusively focused on women, provides information on some important gender dimensions. There has been very limited information on these communities in the past and an obvious lack of recognition of their issues, especially regarding women. Thus, enquiry into these communities with a more gender specific approach will contribute to designing specific provisions to promote the empowerment of women. Given that gender is an extremely important marker for achieving SDGs, tracking the empowerment of women from these communities will certainly make a huge difference.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All

The first target under SDG 6 mandates universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all. The second, equally important target, aims at ensuring access to adequate and non-discriminatory sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation by 2030. Drinking water has a direct impact on nutrition levels and hygiene. Good sanitation practices positively impact health as water-borne diseases are a leading cause of death among children aged five or below. With increasing scarcity and deterioration in water quality due to climate change and pollution, the need for interventions to ensure safe drinking water is imminent.

Even with world's second-largest population, India holds only 4% of world's potable water, reflecting how critical the situation is. The focus on making things better is evident in launching the **National Rural Drinking Water Programme** (NRDWP) in 2009 and the **Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation** in 2011. The ministry, has since, been merged with newly found Ministry on **Jal Shakti** in May 2019, to renew emphasis of action towards the emerging needs of a rising population.

By 2014, only 38.7% of rural India was reported to be open-defecation free(ODF), despite multiple interventions over several decades. The current running scheme on sanitation – the **Swachh Bharat Mission** (SBM) was launched in October 2014, with the aim to make India open defecation free (ODF), to convert unsanitary toilets, and also to nudge a wave of positive behavioural change in people by 2019.

Figure 6.1: Allocations for WASH Schemes
(BE, In Rs Crores)

Legend:
- 2019-2020
- 2018-2019
- 2017-2018

Categories: Swachh Bharat Mission-Rural, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, National Rural Drinking Water Program
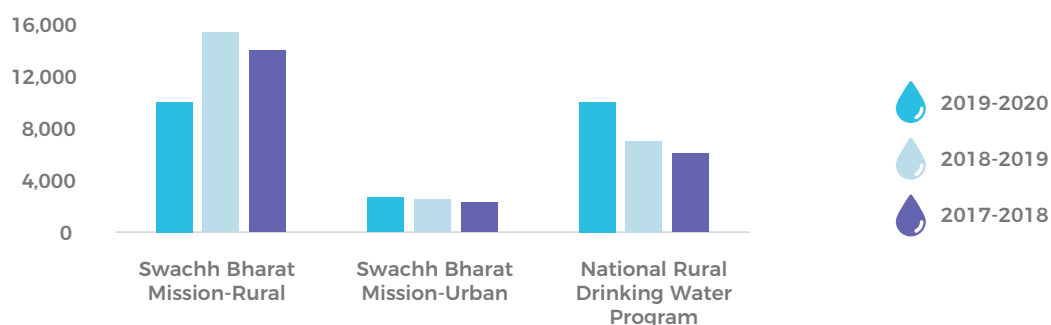
Figure 6.1 shows the budget allocations for the two components of SBM – rural and urban – and NRDWP in the recent years. The government declared the entire rural India as ODF in October 2019 with 100% households having individual toilets . This was a significant jump from the already high rise (to 82.72%) recorded in 2018[10], which was followed by sharp decline in the allocations for SBM-Rural in 2019. The statistics for households with individual toilets in urban areas is 97.22%[7], and thus records a slow but steady increase in allocations.

NRDWP was however deemed lacking in achieving its targets of providing safe and adequate water for drinking, cooking and other domestic needs to every rural person on a sustainable basis in 2017[20]. This was despite government figures showing that 71.8% of rural India had access to safe and adequate drinking water in 2018[10]. Households having improved source[xix] of drinking water in 2019 were reported to be 95.5% across India, despite the uncharacteristic rise in budgetary allocations in the same year.

Findings

In addition to raising caution in their own might, the national numbers also show a stark gap when compared with the data collected for LNOB communities in this study, as shown in figure 6.2 below. The number of houses in rural areas with access to individual toilets stands at a staggering low when compared to the national average of 100%, except in the case of Baigas where the figure is at 90%. Five out of the 15 groups tracked, reported that less than 10% houses had access to individual toilets, with Kutiya Konda community of Odisha reporting only 1% and Oraon and Chudihara Muslim community of Jharkhand reporting only 3% each. According to government data, 100% of Odisha districts and 83.33% of Jharkhand districts were verified to be ODF1. Chhattisgarh is another state with 100% districts verified to be ODF, but of the two communities tracked there only 8% of Gond houses reported to have access to individual toilets while the number was reported as 11% for the Pahadi Korwas. Since the share of people using community toilets is also not significant in these communities, it would be prudent to assume that a majority of the population defecates in the open. The average level of access for all the communities tracked in this survey is 38.89%, which remains gravely under even the national verified figure of 88.41% districts being ODF. Discussions also reported that the marginal number of toilets constructed for households in these communities often go unused because of improper construction or inadequate counselling for behavioural change in terms of defecation practices.

Figure 6.2: HH with access to toilets(%)
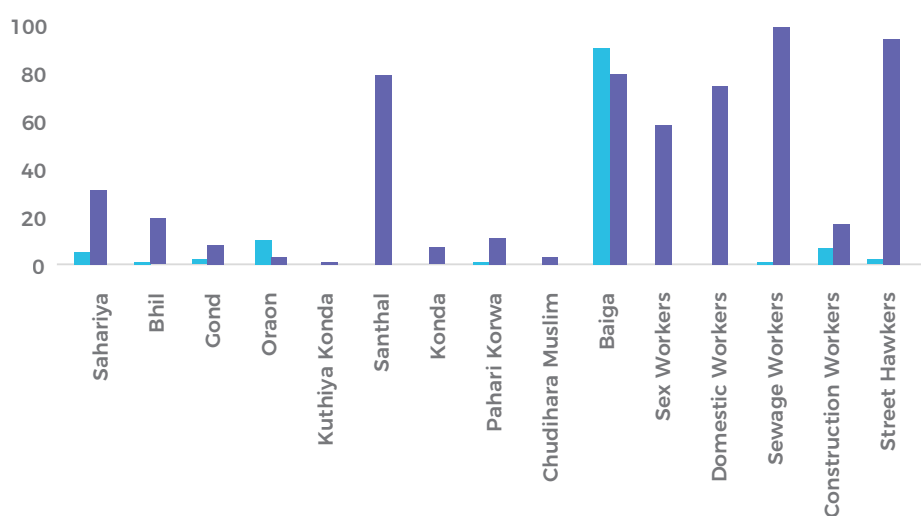
HHs Paying and Using Community Toilets   HHs with Separate Toilets within Premises

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xix Bottled water, piped water into dwelling, piped water to yard/plot, piped water from neighbour, public tap/standpipe, tube well, hand pump, protected well, public tanker truck, private tanker truck, protected spring and rainwater collection (Classification as per NSS 76 Data)

Figure 6.3: Sources of Drinking Water(%)
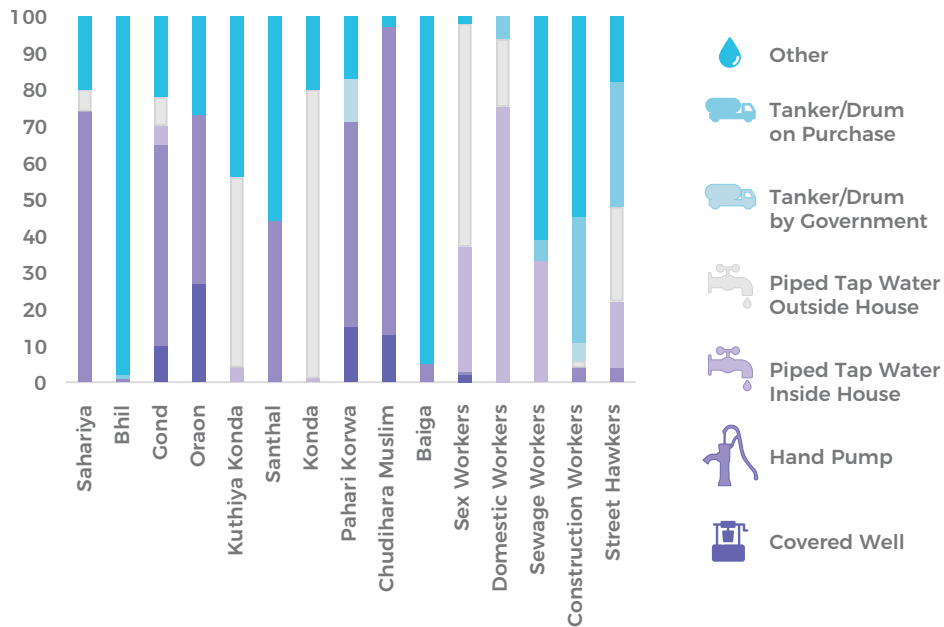
The situation in case of drinking water is not much better for the LNOB communities, as shown in the figure 6.3 here. The unclean and unfiltered sources of drinking water are clubbed under the 'other' category[xx] which averages up to 38.87% for all the groups. While this is already high in comparison to the national average of 95.5% people with access to improved sources of drinking water, it should also be noted that the 6.3% of average population of these groups source drinking water from tankers or drums purchased from private entities, which too may be unclean or unfiltered. An average of 32.8% population within these groups is highly dependent on ground water, with their source of drinking water as hand pump (26.7%) or a covered well (6.1%), which also cannot be definitively categorised as clean due to the presence or absence of various micro-nutrients.

Figure 6.4: HH Purchasing Drinking Water (%) and Respective Weekly Expenditure (Rs)
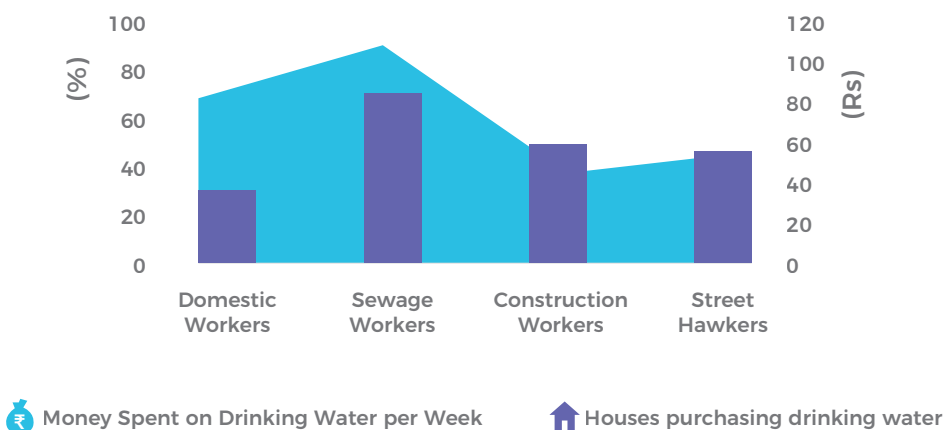
Apart from the health and nutritional impacts of drinking unsafe water, those purchasing drinking water are also bearing an added cost to access this basic necessity. The population that is purchasing drinking water is limited to the four communities residing in urban areas and their access and expenditure is described in figure 6.4. Sewage Workers have reported the highest weekly expenditure on purchasing drinking water (Rs. 107.85), even as 61% of their population resorts to consuming

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xx Including, but not limited to, spring, river, canal, tank, pond, lake, tube well, borewell, uncovered well etc

water from unclean or unsafe sources, purchasing water from tankers or drums from the government or from private sellers (Figure 6.4). All the other groups too have a similar direct correlation between the people sourcing drinking water from tankers or drums (purchased from the government or from private sellers) recording a higher expenditure.

Overall, the situation is worst for the Bhil and Baiga tribal communities, who have 98% and 95% of their population currently consuming unsafe or unclean water. The Oraon community has 27% of people drinking unsafe or unclean water, but their rest of the consumption is based on ground water sources, in an area where the water has been tested to have excessive iron and thus is not fit for consumption. Domestic Workers, Chudihara Muslims, and Sex Workers are the only three communities which have a nil to marginal portion of people drinking unsafe or unclean water.

Conclusion

The Govt of India envisages to provide piped drinking water for all by 2024 under the recently launched Jal Jeevan Mission. The Government plans additional measures for water conservation, rainwater harvesting, renovation of traditional water bodies, water shed development and intense afforestation through broader community participation for a water-secure future. As seen from the data gathered in this study, the measures are not equitably availed by vulnerable LNOB groups. Hence, even as the country may well march towards these targets, achieving SDG 6 requires enhanced community mobilisation, engagement, specific measures and budget allocation specifically for the vulnerable population groups. Women and girls from these communities bear the additional burdens of ensuring water for the family, especially in rural areas (refer to Goal 5). They need to be at the centre of the government dialogues, planning, design and monitoring, of both, drinking water and sanitation.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

Energy is an essential building block for ensuring the socio-economic development of any set of population. Given the non-renewable nature of many readily available energy resources, it becomes essential to review what energy sources are being used for lighting and cooking, to be able to map and improve upon the sustainability of the current practices. In keeping with this, the first target within SDG 7 focuses on ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

Findings

As of 2017, there were 1% of villages in India (3,146) still remaining to get electrical connectivity, and approximately 23% households without access to electricity. Energy Statistics released in 2019 stated that the number of electrified villages has reached 99.9%, but there was no recent data available on the household figure. Represented in figure 7.1 below is the data collected for the source of lighting being used in the LNOB households, which shows that while a majority of population (88.35%) has access to electricity, a significant (8.1%) population does not. Around 4.5% of the population is still relying on the primitive, unsafe and depleting sources of lighting such as kerosene and wood. Use of solar power as a lighting source is on the rise with 30% HHs of the Oraon community and 11% HHs of the Pahari Korwa community reporting the use of solar power. This is a positive outcome of the government initiative to develop solar micro grids in hard to reach areas.

Figure 7.1: Source of Lighting in HHs (%)

Legend:
- Street Hawkers
- Construction Workers
- Sewage Workers
- Domestic Workers
- Sex Workers
- Baiga
- Chudihara Muslim
- Pahari Korwa
- Konda
- Santhal
- Kuthiya Konda
- Oraon
- Gond
- Bhil
- Sahariya

Figure 7.2: Status of Electrification (%)

🏠 HHs with Electricity Connection   🏠 HHs with Legal Electricity Connection

A correlation was made between the legal, documented use of electricity and informal access. More households in rural areas reported to have a legal connection (69%), than in urban areas (47%). As shown in the figure 7.2, the lowest formal coverage in rural areas was reported in the Oraon community, where there were no legal connections. In urban areas, 42% households reside in rented housing, where electricity connections are rarely in their own name, forcing them to often pay higher per unit costs complying to the landlord's demands. The case of construction workers is stark where 90.2% have access to electricity in their houses, but only 8.7% have the electricity in their own names, which results in higher charges despite low income. Electricity bills are universally accepted as identity and domicile proof by the government and private entities. Therefore, not having these documents also excludes the population from easy access to a multitude of benefits and services.

Where there is a connection, there are also problems of irregular power cuts. In the Oraon community, it was also reported that their nearest health facility too doesn't have access to electricity, even though there are connections in that neighbourhood. Four other communities – Bhil, Kuthiya Konda, Sahariya and Baiga – also reported frequent power cuts at their closest health facility. The Chudihara Muslims reported that there is regular power cut of 12-hours at their closest health facility.

Figure 7.3: Cooking Fuel (%)

Apart from sourcing light, the other household activity which intensively used energy resources is cooking. The consumption of various sources of fuel used in the houses of these communities can further be used to assess the level of shift towards more environmentally sustainable energy sources. Figure 7.3 shows that more than half of the tracked households (60.8%) continue to use firewood for cooking. Including the population using charcoal, coal, and kerosene, we see that 68% of households rely on non-renewable fuel for cooking. These, along with dung cakes, are also high smoke producing fuel sources which not only increase air pollutants but also have a severe impact on the health of those cooking and living in the house. The fact that they cover 72% of the total HHs is alarming. Also, gathering fuel and firewood is a household chore which typically becomes a woman's job, further affecting their life opportunities and health.

In May 2016, as an initiative to promote usage of clean energy for cooking, *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana* was launched. Under the scheme, LPG coverage went from 61.9% in 2016 to 94.3% in 2019. However, the coverage within the communities studied was recorded at 27.8%, which is lower than the national average (as was also before PMUY was launched). Though there have been some people in each community who have heard about the benefits or even been covered under the scheme, the sustained use of LPG for cooking has still not found traction within these communities due to the high cost and lack of easy access.

Conclusion

Increased access to reliable and sustainable energy sources greatly enhances education, employment, livelihood opportunities and well-being. The Government of India is taking multiple steps to enhance reliable and sustainable energy sources. However, the reach and access of these services among the vulnerable communities continues to be markedly below the national average, displaying significant gaps at the operational level of these measures. There is thus, a need for disaggregated data and community engagement to understand these gaps in their context and act to channel equitable national growth and development.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All
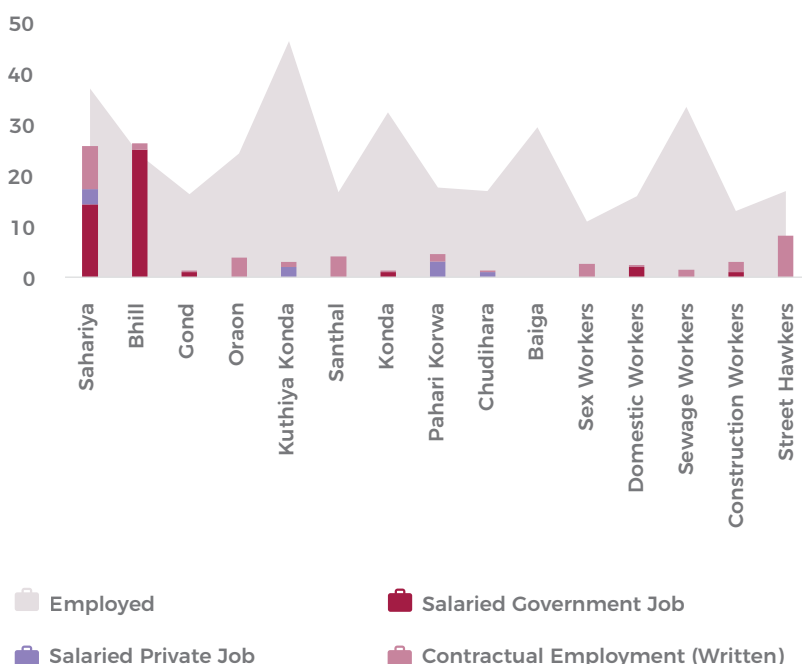
This goal is focused on achieving higher economic productivity and job creation through diverse and innovative technology, while also protecting labor rights as well as promoting safe and secure work environments. With one person out of six in the world living in India, the country's progress is instrumental in achieving economic growth globally. Given the various internal and external socio-economic challenges, developing and maintaining a strong economy, through increasing and promoting safe employment, has been a continuous policy focus for India. At present, there are 40 Central Acts governing matters of fair wages, labor welfare, industrial safety and health, industrial relations, social security, and employment[21] .

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which sets up an employment scheme (MGNREGS) for unskilled rural labourers, aims to secure a minimum of 100 days of wage employment each financial year, against manual labor, to every volunteering adult. Additionally, Skill India program, launched in 2015, focuses on short-term vocational-education programs and seeks to create a minimum of 400 million skilled people by 2022. The data below covers certain aspects of employment amongst the surveyed communities to map the status through availability, wages and quality of labour.

Findings

Figure 8.1: Employment Status (%)

Legend:
- Employed
- Salaried Government Job
- Salaried Private Job
- Contractual Employment (Written)

It was found that on an average, 23% of the population across the communities had some form of employment, but most of it consisted of informal labour. Only 2% of the population on an average was found to have a salaried job or a job with any form of written contract. The rest of the workers were involved in manual labour across sectors, earning daily or monthly wages depending on the nature of the job. As shown in figure 8.1, within the working population, the Bhil community reported the highest number of people to have been employed by the government (25%). Eight communities, excluding Street Hawkers[xxi] , reported to have 0% population with any government job, despite all these communities being recognized as underprivileged within the Constitution of India and thus being entitled to the empowering and enabling mechanism of reservation in all government services.
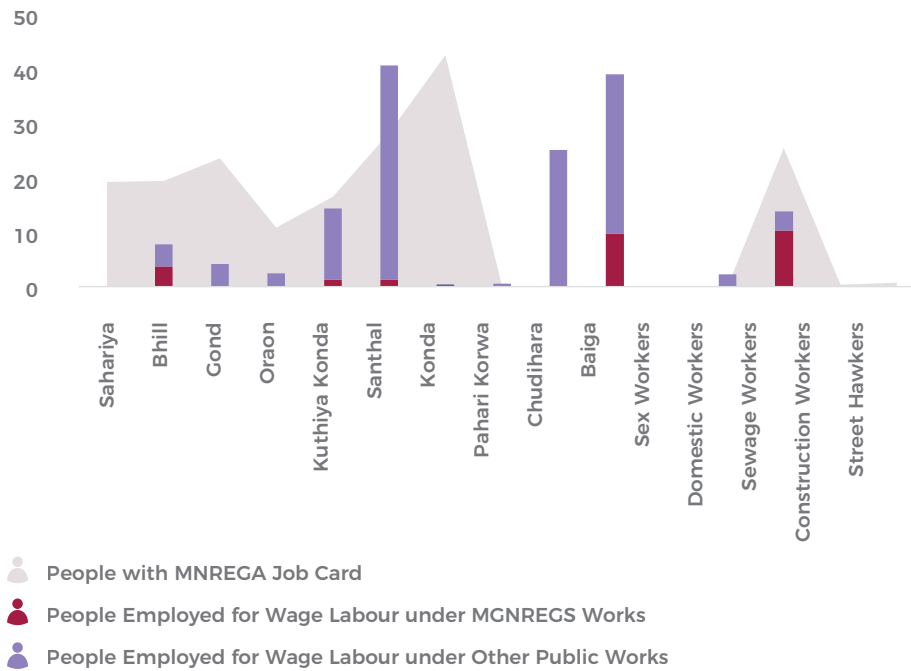
Figure 8.2: Wage Labour Status (%)

People with MNREGA Job Card

People Employed for Wage Labour under MGNREGS Works

People Employed for Wage Labour under Other Public Works

Figure 8.2 shows the number of people working as wage labourers under MGNREGS or other public works. MGNREGS does not cover urban areas[xxii] , but even in rural areas, the average number of people with a job card remains low (15%). No one in the Sahariya community reported to have worked on any government wage work, despite 20% of the population possessing job cards entitling them to work as per MGNREGS norms. The highest population with job cards was reported to be amongst Konda (43%), but the number of people who have worked under the employment guarantee scheme were found to be only marginally above nil. A higher average number of people (11%) reported working in public wage works other than MGNREGS work.

Figure 8.3 further describes the status of wages earned by the working population in the studied sample group in the year before the survey. As can be seen, earning irregular wages is most common in the Santhals (86%), who also reported the highest number of people engaged in casual wage labor (40%). The least prevalence of irregular wages was found among domestic workers (1%), who tend to be employed for long durations. Street Hawkers also reported a low 6% of people earning irregular wages, owing to the fact that they usually set out to sell essential products every day and thus keep earning some wages regularly.

Chudihara Muslims, who have the traditional occupation of selling bangles, reported a relatively high number of people earning irregular wages (17%) because they might not be able to make business every day given the non-essential nature of their product. They do, however, have the highest population that gets paid work for over 6 months in a year. Kondas

xxi There are no government positions available for the profession

xxii Sewage Workers inhabit the sub-urban area of the National Capital Region which is legally recognized as a rural area, making them eligible for benefits under MGNREGS

(1%) and Kuthiya Kondas (5%) have the lowest population with paid work for over 6 months in a year, flagging a need for generating more employment opportunities in Odisha. On an average, only 7% of the working population in these communities is getting year-round work, despite various employment schemes in place, with the highest number of people belonging to the community of Domestic Workers (33%), exhibiting an overall need for increased emphasis on employment generation.
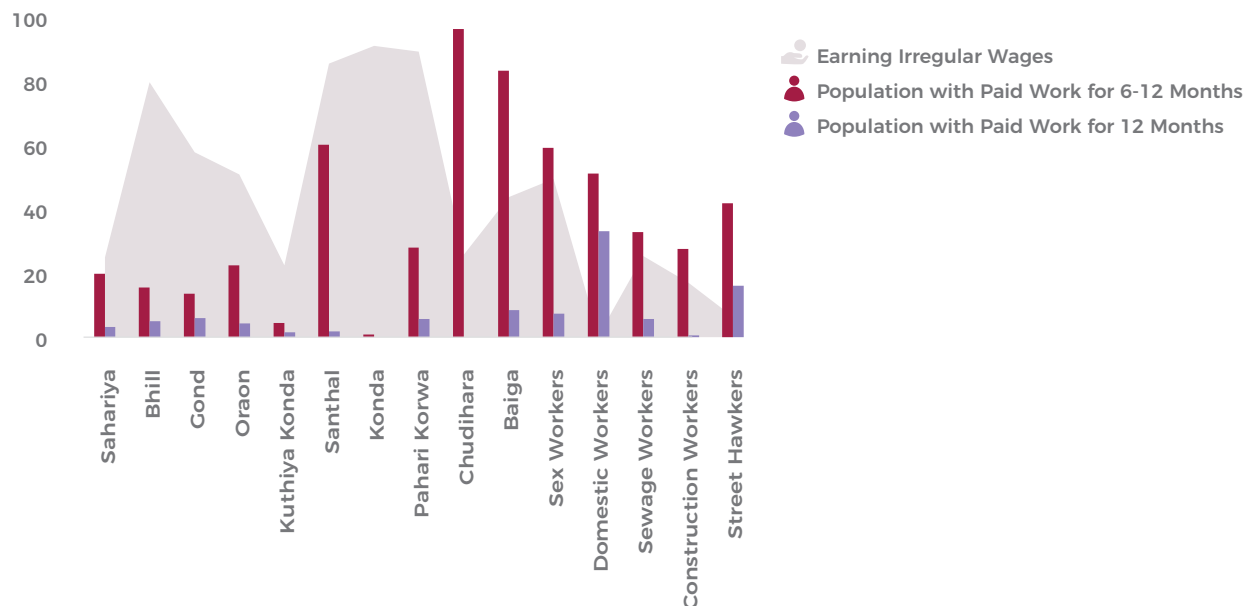
Figure 8.3: Wage Status (%)

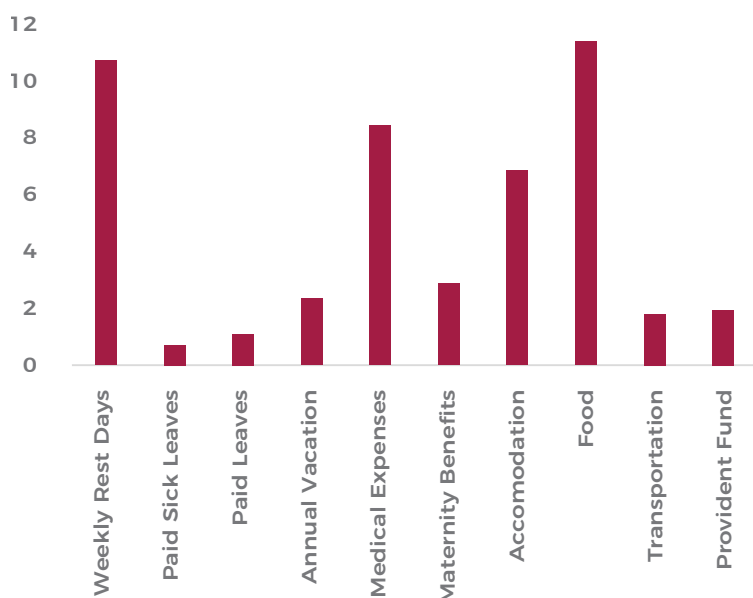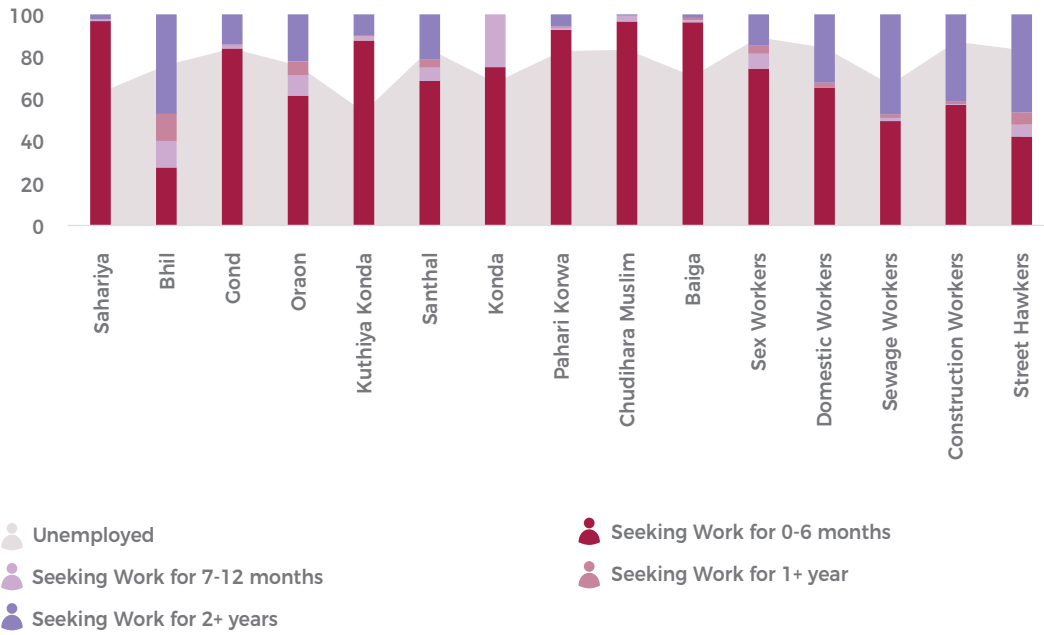**Figure 8.4: Population Getting Added Job Benefits (%)**

Figure 8.4 gives a brief on additional benefits that might be made available for the employed population across these communities. The survey discovered that food is the most common benefit that is provided to the workers, with nearly 60% of the employed population among Sahariya and Construction Workers having reported to have availed it. Among Construction Workers, 40% also reported to be getting medical expenses to some unspecified extent. Only 3 % of the working population reported the presence of any maternity benefits and only 2% reported having any access to transportation facilities, revealing the continued exclusion of women from the workforce.

With only a minority of the population employed, unemployment rate[xxiii] among these communities stands high at 77%. Most of these people had been unemployed for 0-6 months before the survey (72%), and were still looking for work at the time of the survey (Figure 8.5). A considerable population of 21% among those unemployed reported to have been looking for work for as long as two years preceding the survey. Sewage Workers and Bhils were the two communities that reported the highest unemployed population (47%) over two years. The unemployment rate in India for 2015-16 was reported as 50.3%[22]and was reported as 6% in 2019[7] revealing that unemployment within these communities is high not only on its own, but also starkly so in comparison to the national average.

xxiii Defined as the number of unemployed people looking for work

Figure 8.5: Unemployment Status (%)

Legend:
- Unemployed
- Seeking Work for 7-12 months
- Seeking Work for 2+ years
- Seeking Work for 0-6 months
- Seeking Work for 1+ year

Goal 8, along with the Constitution of India, also focuses on preventing child labour. Figure 8.6 shows the age at which people across communities first got employed. It is evident that 28.7% of the working population started their first job under the age of 10, the number at 31.6% for ages 11 to 15. This means that over 60% of the population studied in the survey, started working before they turned 16, indicating that there is a need for stringent measures to curb child labour in these communities. Such prevalence of child labour, where people start working before turning 16, was found to be the highest among Santhals (98%), Sewage Workers (97%), Construction Workers (88%), Kuthiya Kondas (86%), Oraons (81%) and Baigas (84%) – all of whom are dependent on informal wage work (see Figure 8.1). The highest number of people starting work between age 11 to 15 were found among Domestic Workers, where 0% people reported working before age 11. Child labourers have been recorded to be earning less than fair wages generally, which means that the poverty trap of these communities is further enforced with the presence of a high percentage of children getting involved in unskilled, informal labour undertaken at low wages.

Figure 8.6: Age when Population Started Working (%)

Legend:
- 0 to 10
- 11 to 15
- Above 16
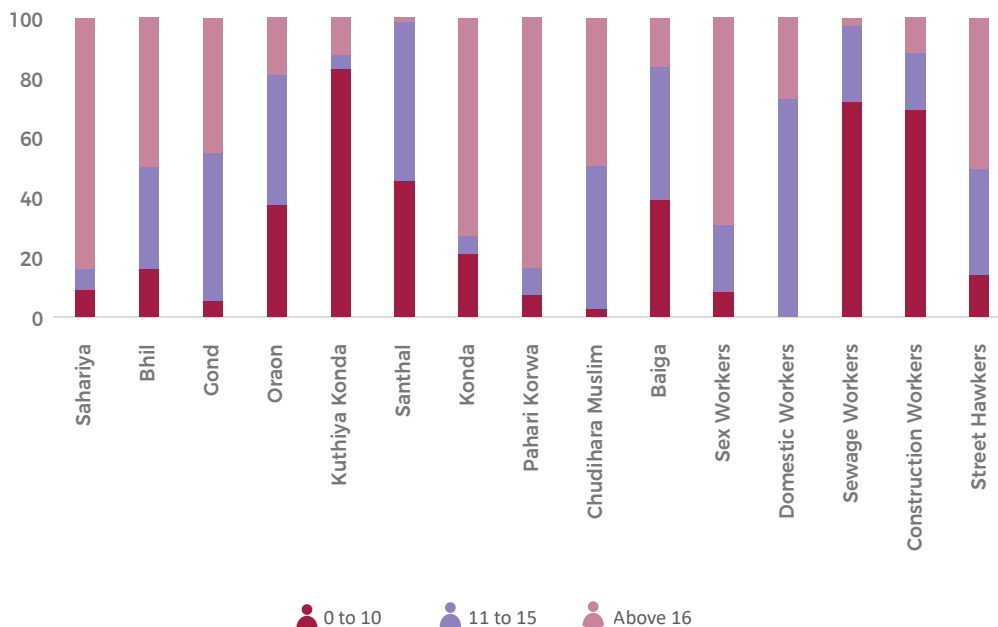
Conclusion

The study, thus, clearly indicates the poor status of employment among these vulnerable communities. With the average unemployment level at 77%, some of them have been seeking employment for as long as two years. Even when employed, these communities face multiple issues- irregular wages, lack of any job security or labour standards. Women face even greater disadvantages, with no access to transport or maternity benefits. Despite nearly all of these communities falling within the ambit of the provision of reservation for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, being the most vulnerable sections even within these categories, their access to state provision is way below average. Earlier sections of the study have already elaborated on their poor level of education and lack of vocational skills, as well as the high prevalence of child labour. It is disheartening to see that specific measures like the MGNREGS/A and the skills training programmes do not break the cycle of unemployment and scarce employment opportunities for them. Authorities responsible for prohibition of child labour have not taken the much needed concrete steps to address the problem. It is distressing that the state does not pay specific attention to these communities, almost denying them any way to break the vicious cycle of poverty, deprivation and disadvantages.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialisation and Foster Innovation

The need for good quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure to support human and economic development is well recognised and prominently featured under SDG 9. This is more so for those living in remote areas. The Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana was launched in the year 2000 with the aim to provide single, all-weather road connectivity to unconnected habitations in rural areas. Ten years later, a review of the program between 2010-15[23] found that the scheme was lacking on multiple counts, not having enough trained personnel, a mounting number of pending projects and inept monitoring processes being just a few of them.

To revamp the flailing program, the funding for the scheme was increased in the 2017-18 fiscal year. Furthermore, while the budget estimates (BE) have remained more or less the same, the revised estimates (RE) have seen substantive cuts year after year (figure 9.1), undermining the relevance and necessity of the scheme for far flung and difficult to reach communities.

Figure 9.1: Budget Allocations for Rural Road Construction (in Rs crore)

PMGSY RE   PMGSY BE
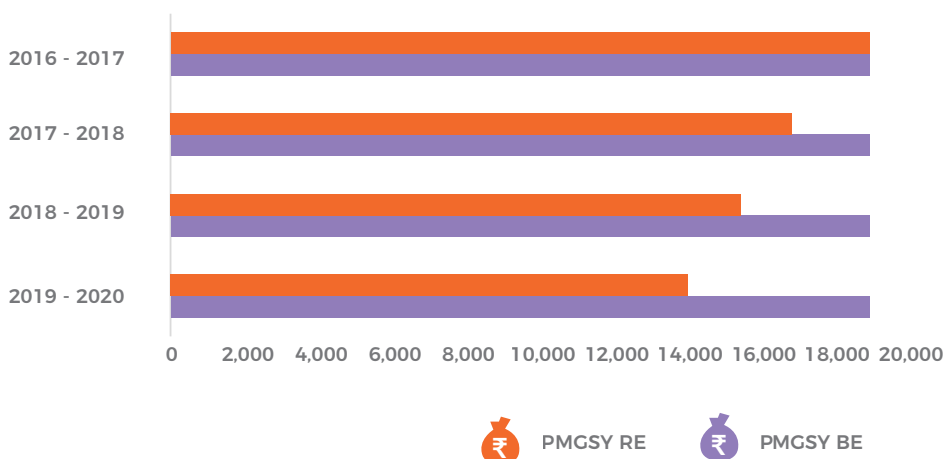
Findings

The communities under the study included some of the most difficult to reach, rural and even forest dwelling communities. These communities also suffer historical disadvantages and deprivations. They are considered to be priority population groups under the Constitution of India. When assessed for the presence of all-weather motor-able roads, six of the ten rural communities claimed that they did not have such access to their nearest health facility. Five out of ten communities reported that they did not have access to educational institutions. Both health care and education are critical to the well-being and development of any community and the dropping budget allocations for all-weather roads evidently have a serious negative impact on these communities, blocking further opportunities and increasing inequalities.

Figure 9.2: Population Access to Technology (%)
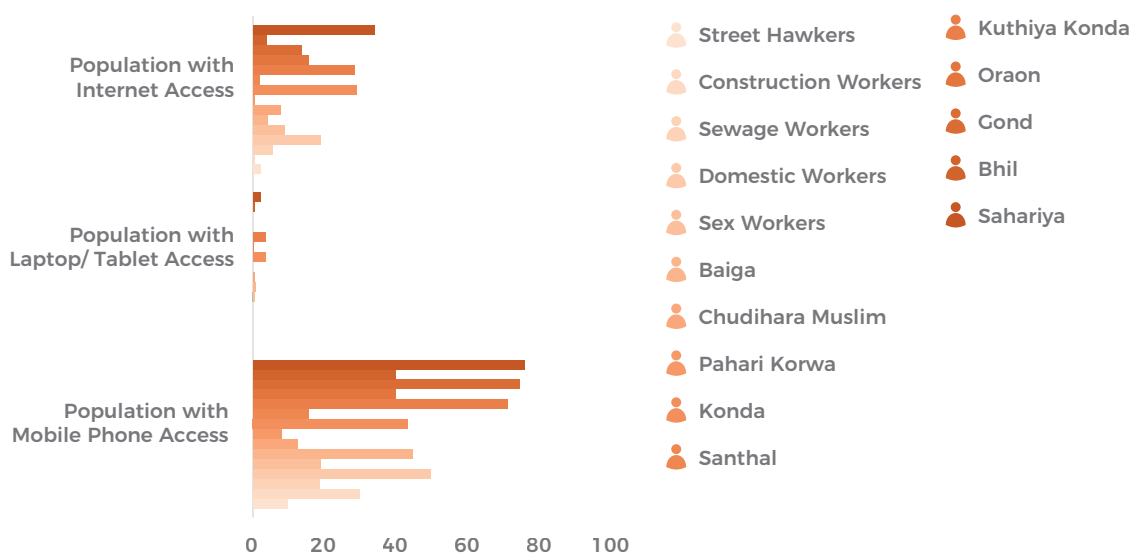
SDG 9 also mentions the importance of access to information and communications technology for development, and sets a target for achieving universal and affordable access to the Internet by the year 2020. Figure 9.2 illustrates the access to mobile phones, laptop/tablet and internet across these communities. On an average, 36.6% of people have access to mobile phones. These numbers, while already low in comparison to the national average of 88%[24], cannot be studied as a homogenous observation. The disparity between the highest – Street Hawkers (75.5%) and Sewage Workers (74%) – and the lowest – Pahadi Korwas (7.84%) and Sahariyas (9.64%) – is just as relevant. It helps us conclude that while access to technology is high and rising in urban areas, the rural and tribal population is getting left out of the grid. This, in turn, directly impacts their access to information about various schemes and benefits they might be entitled to as well.

While the use of mobile phones is more prevalent, access to other technological equipments like laptop and tablets is far too low. Laptops and tablets have become necessary equipments in modern education. Children from middle/upper classes, particularly in urban areas, have easy access to them. A review of the urban population groups in the study – domestic workers, sewage workers, street hawkers and sex workers also reported very low access to laptops and tablets, thereby depriving children of these learning equipments and also mapping the inequality between them and other children in and around their environment.

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Figure 9.3: Internet Access (%)
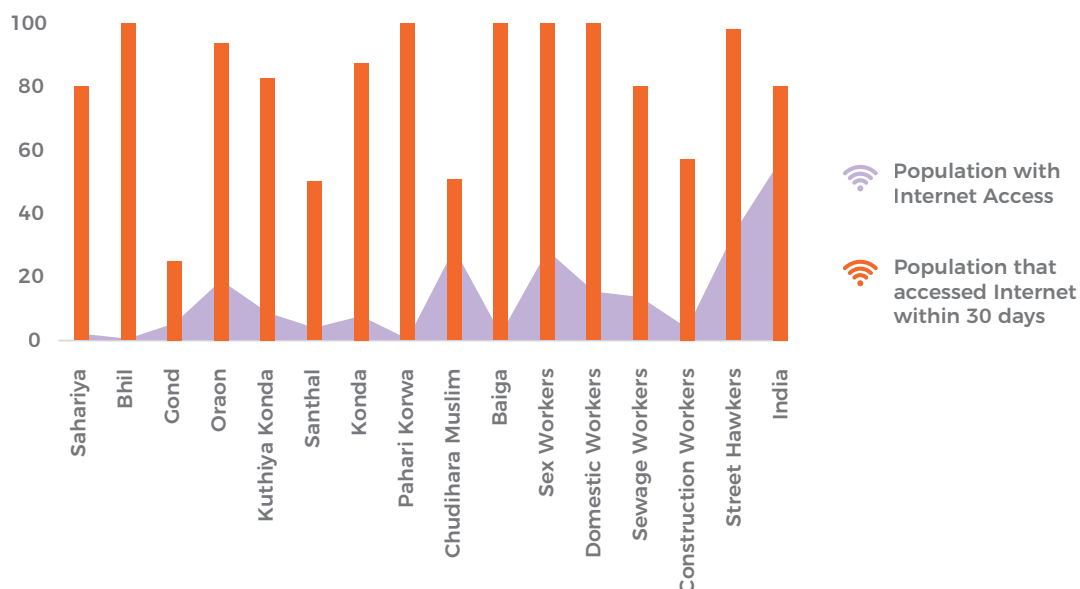
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47 88% of households in India have a mobile phone; *Pramit Bhattacharya, Live Mint; December 2016*
https://www.livemint.com/Politics/kZ7j1NQf5614UvO6WURXf0/88-of-households-in-India-have-a-mobile-phone.html

Figure 9.3 shows the community-wise data for their access to the internet which is just 11.53% in comparison to the national coverage, which stands at 56.78%. The primary study data reported access to internet to be 17% in urban populations and 10% in rural populations. Internet access was found extremely low in the tribal communities, especially among the Bhil and Pahari Korwa communities where it's almost nil. The highest level of access to the internet is among Street Hawkers (33.78%), followed closely by Chudihara Muslims (28.89%).

A high average (80.34%) of people reported using internet, when available, within a period of 30 days leading up to the survey, reflecting people's ability and interest to use technology even across these vulnerable population groups. Some groups, such as the street hawkers, sex workers and domestic workers also reported its use in their current occupations. All groups' reported usage of internet when it is available, reflects the potential need and benefit of expanding the internet coverage.

Conclusion

Modern technology has re-defined communication, which forms the basis for enhancing education, employment, livelihood and registering one's presence in the global space today. This micro study reports high levels of inequalities when it comes to having access to modern technology by these communities, thus, negatively impacting multiple opportunities for development and exercising their rights. The high usage of modern forms of technology, when available, reflects interest and ability to use modern technology, particularly among the younger generation. Hence exposing the children and youth of these communities, in particular, to technology, can promote enhanced access and help address some of the historical disadvantages they have faced. Special attention and provisions are essential to ensure they are not left behind in the emerging development areas, without which, they will be at the risk of their historical deprivations being reinforced.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
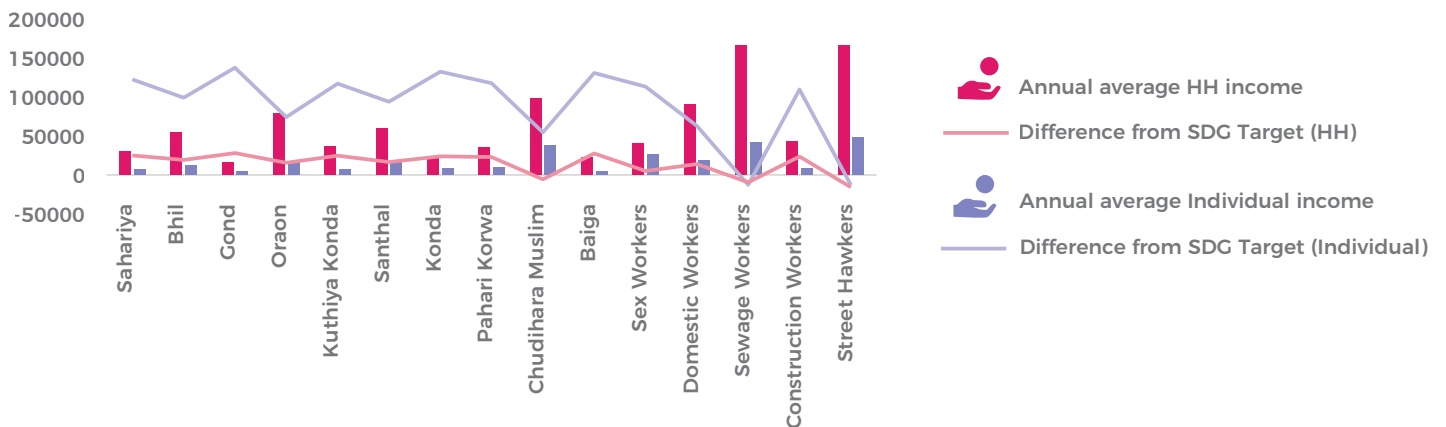
Reduce Inequality Within and Among Countries

Recognizing inequalities is important for any planned intervention, especially in a country as diverse as India. There exist long-standing divisions based on gender, caste, creed and class along with regional inequalities which have festered with the on-set of urbanization. The Human Development Index 2019 puts the country in a medium human development category[25], where it has been since 1990 despite a 50% improvement on indicators[xxiv]. When adjusted for inequalities of life expectancy, education, income, and other such latent inequalities, India backtracked significantly close to the 1990 figures[xxv] . This reveals that even though there has been growth, it hasn't been equitable.

Findings

There are a multitude of government schemes focused on social development and empowerment, that aim to reduce inequalities in India. The study, however, found that there continue to be significant gaps between the incomes of these population groups and the annual income target of Rs. 1,53,360[xxvi]   under SDGs by 2030. As seen in figure 10.1, only three communities – Chudihara Muslims, Sewage Workers and Street Hawkers – fall outside the limits of extreme poverty as recognized within SDGs. Gond and Baiga communities have the highest gap between their present household income and the SDGs targeted income. For the majority, there continues to be a large gap between their household incomes and the SDG target revealing their state of abject poverty. This is so, when calculated both at the household and individual levels.

Figure 10.1: Income Inequality (in Rs)

Legend:
- Annual average HH income
- Difference from SDG Target (HH)
- Annual average Individual income
- Difference from SDG Target (Individual)

X-axis: Sahariya, Bhil, Gond, Oraon, Kuthiya Konda, Santhal, Konda, Pahari Korwa, Chudihara Muslim, Baiga, Sex Workers, Domestic Workers, Sewage Workers, Construction Workers, Street Hawkers
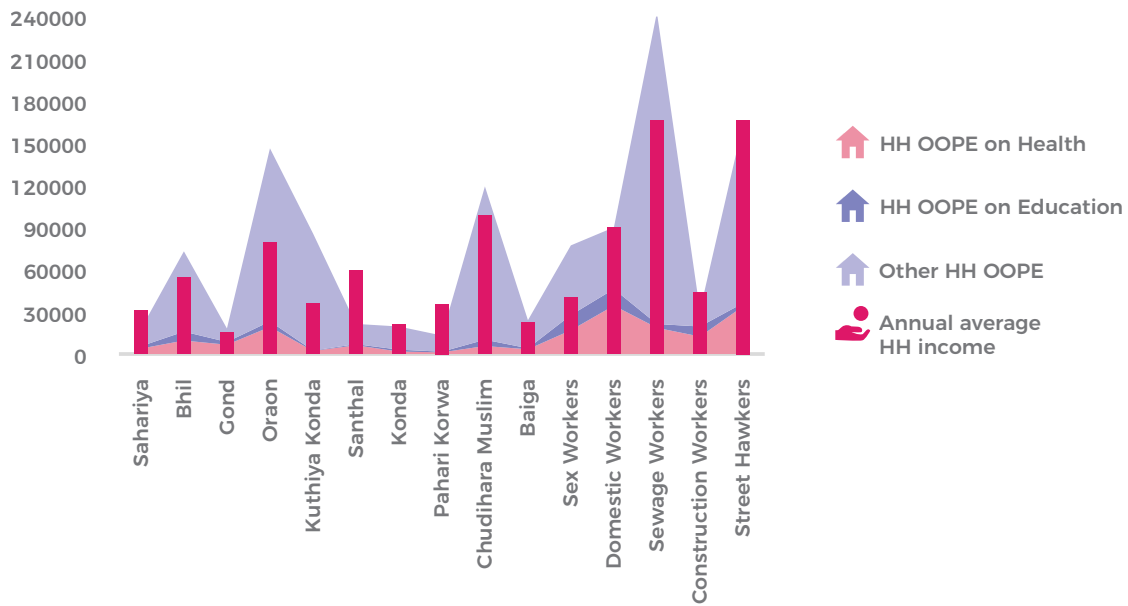
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xxiv HDI categorizes countries on a relative-basis.
xxv HDI value of India in 1990 = 0.431; Inequality-adjusted HDI in 2018 = 0.477
*xxvi Minimum income should be $1.25 per capita per day. Calculated in rupees with rate $1 = Rs 71 and HH Size 4.8.*

**Figure 10.2: Annual Household Income
vs Annual Expenditure (in Rs)**

Economic inequality can be further explored by looking at the expenditure profiles of the groups, in figure 10.2. It can be seen that most groups are either making ends meet with spending almost as much as the household income or spending even beyond their income. This in turn means that most of these groups are living with no savings or are piling up a sizable debt. The exceptions to these are Sahariyas, Santhals, Pahari Korwa, and Street Hawkers, whose data showed the household income to be marginally more than the total expenditure. It needs to be recognized that the income of many of these communities continue to be below SDG target.

**Figure 10.3: Household without Access to
Government Benefits (%)**
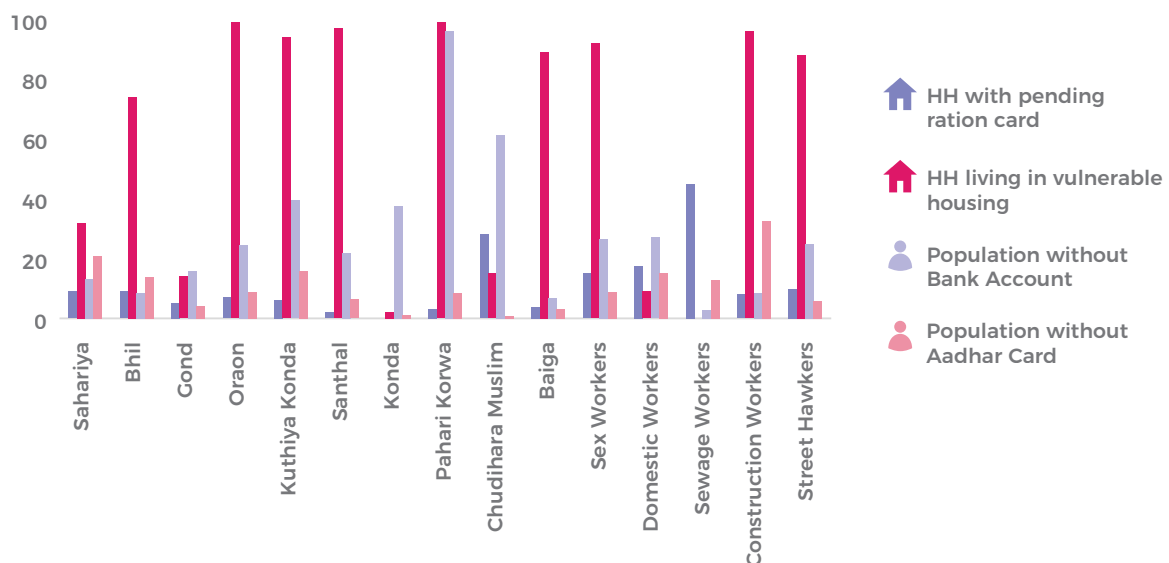
In the face of negligible economic prowess, government schemes focused on reducing inequalities become the instrument for these communities to empower themselves. Figure 10.3 shows that considerable population within these communities is bereft of government benefits of food, housing and financial inclusion despite being eligible. Among Chudihara Muslims,

there are over 28% households which have applied for ration cards but haven't received. This number is only second to Sewage Workers, who reported that nearly 45% of households are waiting for their ration cards. A high population can be seen living in vulnerable makeshift houses across communities (average 64%), despite a robust housing scheme[xxvii]

Figure 10.4: Migration Status (%)
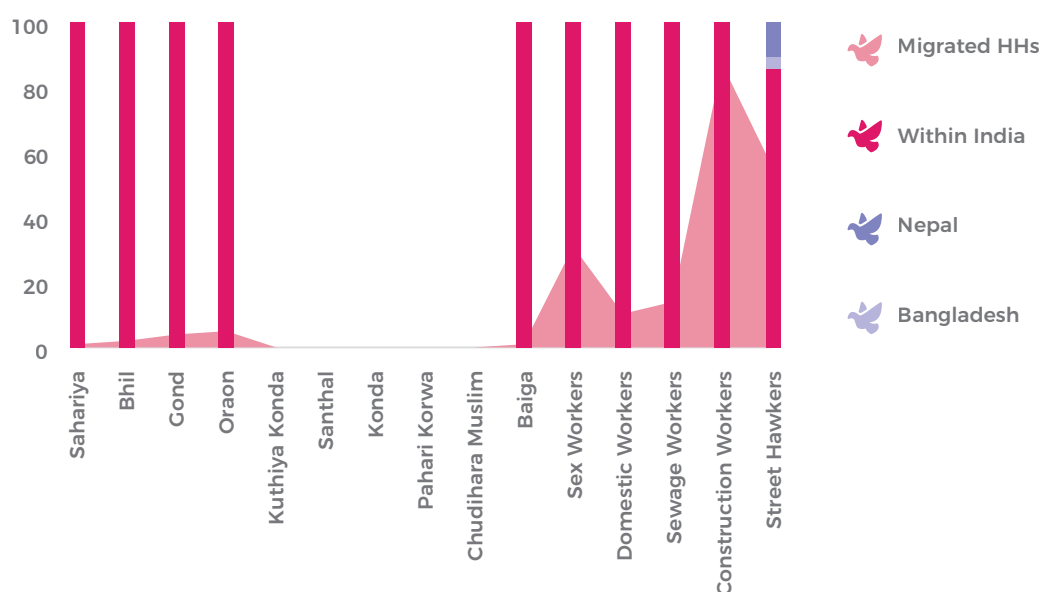
The highest population without bank accounts can be seen among Pahari Korwas and Chudihara Muslims, despite the government's popular Jan Dhan Yojana which allows people to access banking services by opening zero balance accounts. The lack of bank accounts in over 27% of the surveyed population is alarming also because government benefits are increasingly using Direct Bank Transfer (DBT) in the interest of making the process of providing monetary benefits accountable. Without bank accounts, this population would be further removed from access to government benefits. All DBT schemes are also mandatorily linked to the Aadhaar Cards of the beneficiaries, therefore the population without Aadhar Cards also stands excluded from a bulk of government welfare schemes. The highest population without Aadhar cards is among Construction Workers with over 32% people not owning one, probably because of constant migration and the consequent lack of permanent address.

Goal 10 also focuses on the importance of safe, regular and responsible migration, in order to reduce inequalities. As seen in figure 10.4, the highest number of migrated households are among Construction Workers (87%) and Street Hawkers (56%). Majority of both these groups are residing in vulnerable housing (figure 10.3) with Construction Workers also not having access to Aadhar Cards to be eligible for government benefits. Sex Workers, 31% of whom are migrants, also live in vulnerable housing. Nearly 25% of the population surveyed among Street Hawkers and Sex Workers were also found to be without a bank account, removing them from access to any loans or DBT schemes they might be eligible for. Since most of these challenges enforced by migration are due to the lack of documents, they can be reduced through planned migration policies, especially since a majority of the migration is domestic.

Conclusion

As is evident, These population groups experience inequalities across a range of development indicators. There is little possibility of many of them achieving minimum income levels under the SDG targets. They live under precarious conditions because of increased costs in urban areas and the lack of stability of wages and self-employment. The income-expenditure data of some of the vulnerable tribal groups are misleading, given both minimal incomes and minimal expenditures. The study emphasises that government poverty reduction policies and other benefits are important for the very survival of these families, and gaps in accessing them adds to the vulnerabilities of these communities. The abject poverty of these groups cannot be tracked through data reflecting national averages. Carefully tracking disaggregated data at the community level for these population groups is paramount to design and implement targeted policies and provisions, in order to meet their specific context and needs.

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xxvii Discussed in detail under Goal 11

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

Cities have always been considered the hubs of development: a center for people to migrate and settle, with the aim of achieving a modern way of life, through improved employment opportunities and increased access to benefits and services. Though, if left unchecked, these centers risk the possibility of turning into spaces that infringe upon the very rights of people they aspire to uphold. Census 2011 reported 31.16% of the Indian population to be residing in urban areas, which was an increase from 28.53% in 2001. Many vulnerable population groups migrate to urban centers to make a living, given the challenges they face in their rural environment. Hence, the targets under SDG 11 promise making cities and human settlements inclusive and equitable for all.

Figure 11.1: Budget Allocation for Housing Schemes (in Rs crore)

2019-2020
2018-2019
2017-2018
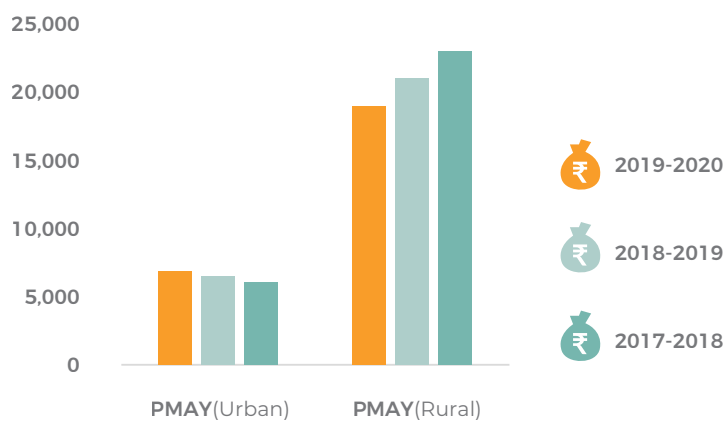
Housing is one of the biggest challenges in the city, with increasing urbanization, and is also a challenge for vulnerable population groups in rural areas. Both rural and urban housing has been a priority for the government of India over the years, addressed through various schemes. Allocations for the current scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana', which was inaugurated in June 2015 are shown in figure 11.1. The scheme aims at constructing new houses, as well as upgrading the temporary constructions. The target under PMAY-Urban is to construct 10 million houses by 2022. As of February 2019, 72.7 lakh houses have been approved, 14.4 lakh were constructed and 13.9 lakh occupied, which makes the completion rate to be around only 15%[26] . The government would need to take drastic measures to achieve the set target by 2022, which seems difficult when the marginal increase in an already low budget is considered.

PMAY-Rural, which aimed to construct 10 million houses by 2019, was found incapable to reach target output and effectively utilizing the already insufficient funds, in the 2015-16 period[27] .The budget allocation for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 also shows a consistent decline, as evident in figure 11.1. Government figures, however, show that almost 92% of the target houses were completed by 2019[28], but an analysis of these numbers shows that it takes into account the over 6 lakh houses completed in the 2013-15 period and about 35.8 lakh completed between 2015-17. Hence, government capacities for PMAY seems inadequate and how the targets are being accounted for under the PMAY (rural) is unclear.

Findings

In absence of limited data on the housing benefits accessed by vulnerable groups, the study reviewed the status of housing and schemes accessed by the vulnerable population groups in the framework of the promise of 'housing for all' by 2022. As can be seen in figure 11.2, the number of beneficiaries of housing schemes among these communities is extremely low (16.6%), even as a majority of them (60%) continue to live in 'kuchha' or temporary housing. This includes any form of shelter, which doesn't comprise walls made with concrete or stone packed with mortar. The five rural groups with nearly the entire population living in kuccha housing – Oraon, Kuthiya Konda, Santhal, Pahari Korwa and Baiga – are settled in remote areas, including forest areas, which brings to front the fact that those living in the farthest corner have not been reached. Among sex workers, 0% people have availed any housing benefits due to their migration. Lack of documents, and occupational stigma continues to alienate them out of the system.
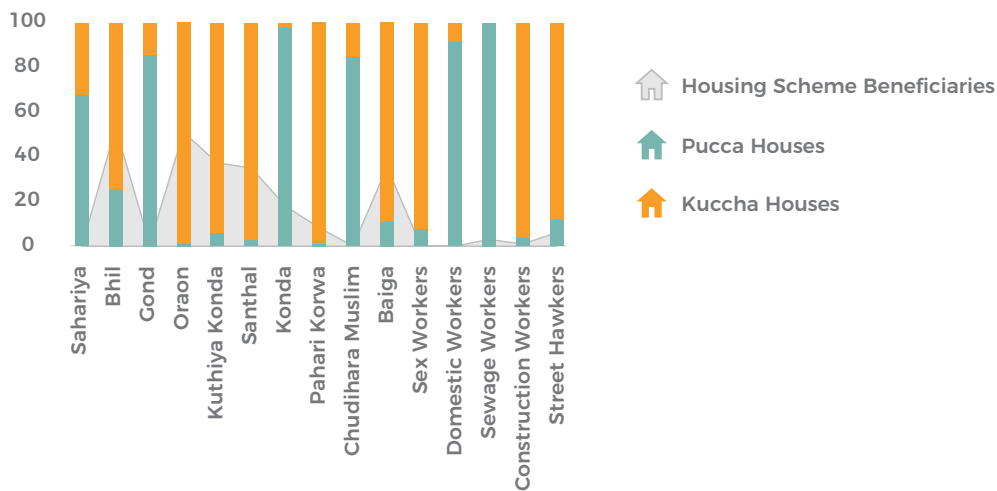
Figure 11.2: Housing Status (i) (%)
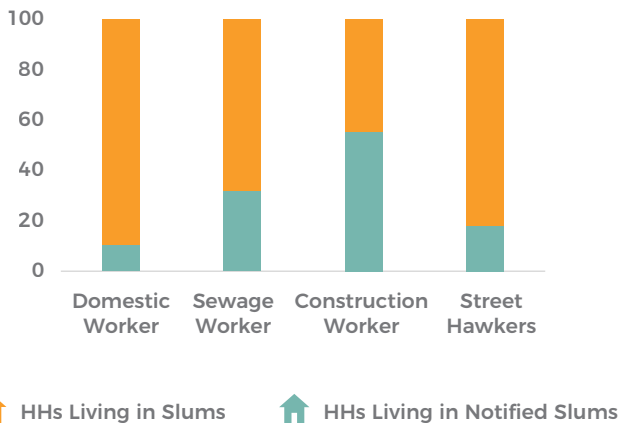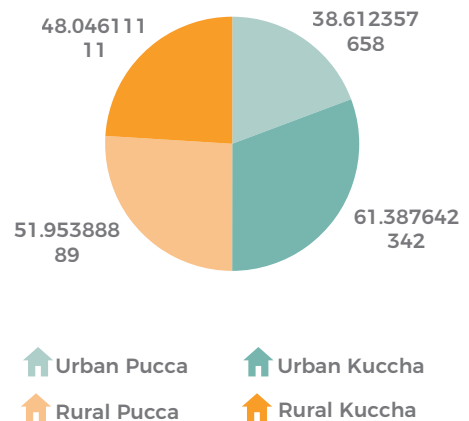

Figure 11.4: Urban Housing (i) (%)

Figure 11.3: Housing Status (Urban vs Rural, %)

In keeping with the national level of coverage of the housing scheme discussed above, the coverage among the urban groups is much lower than among the rural groups. The issue with this is further highlighted by figure 11.3, where it shows that more people in urban areas are deprived of resilient housing. This is particularly true in the case of construction workers (96%) and street hawkers (88%) – the communities that frequently migrate. Of the 15 population groups in the study, 81% live in rural areas and 19% in urban areas. Among the population groups studied, access to housing in rural areas is better than that in urban areas. Figure 11.4 here reflects that 48% of rural households live in pucca houses compared to 38.6% in urban areas.

Figure 11.5: Housing Status (ii) (%)
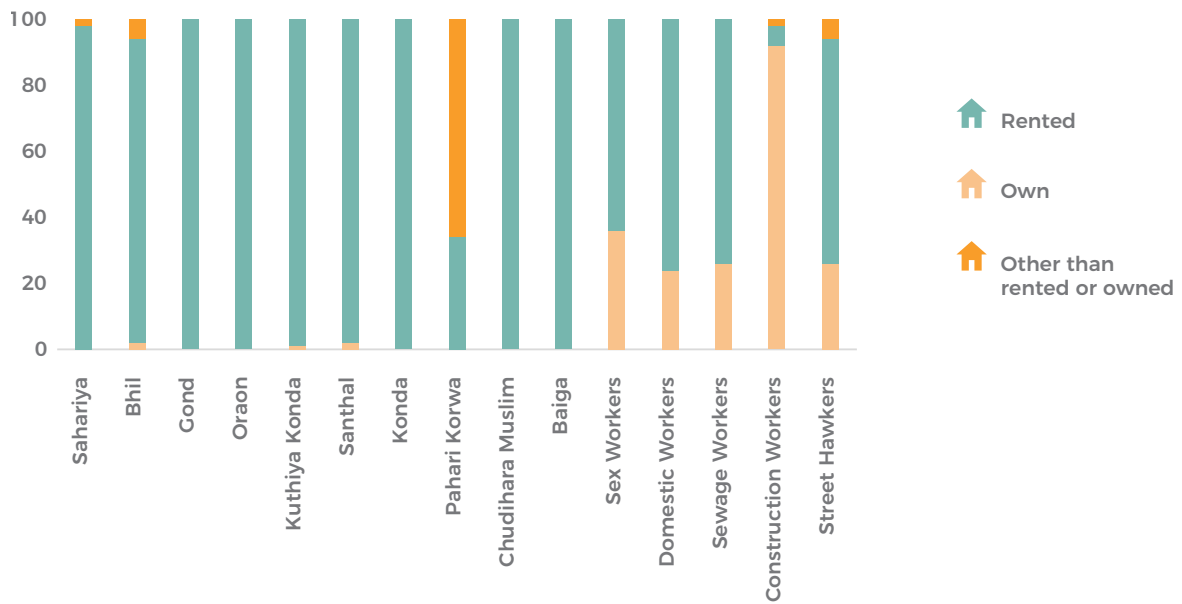
Figure 11.6 specifically discusses the housing conditions of the urban population covered in the survey, stating the number of households living in slums in urban areas, and how many of those slums are notified. The total number of urban households living in slums is 29% out of which 24% are notified, and thus eligible to be covered under improved government housing. Over half of the construction workers (55.5%) live in slums, which also needs to be seen with the number of HHs living in rented houses (figure 11.5) to further understand their living conditions.

Figure 11.6: Housing Status (iii) (%)

Figure 11.7: Open Spaces Access (%)

Access to Open Public Space   Access to Open Public Space

The standard for housing under PMAY is 2 rooms with a separate kitchen and bathroom. Of the total houses surveyed, 33% continue to reside in one-room houses, over 63% don't have a separate kitc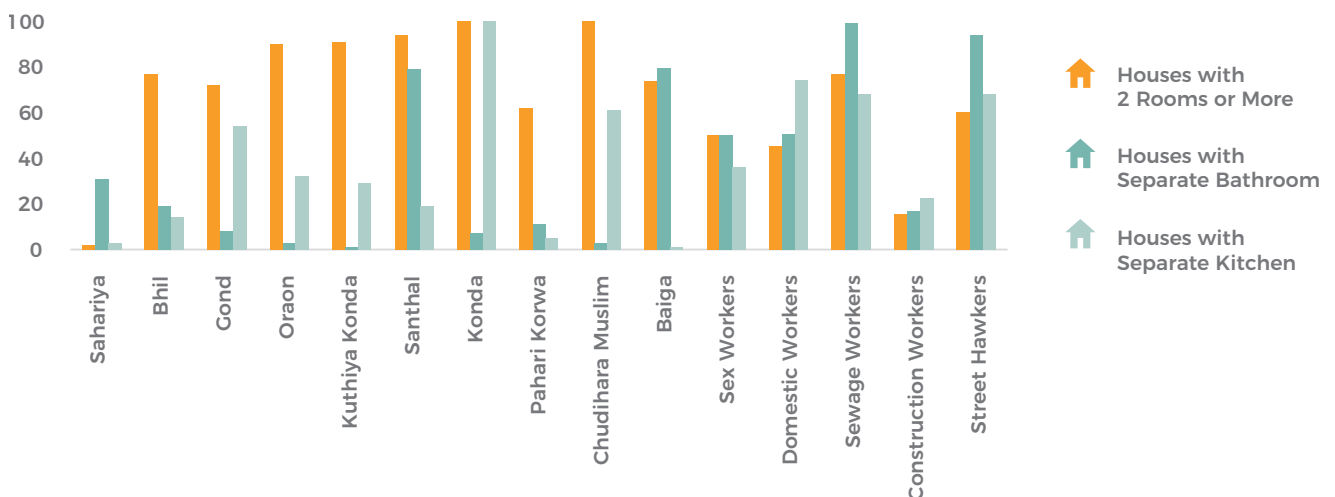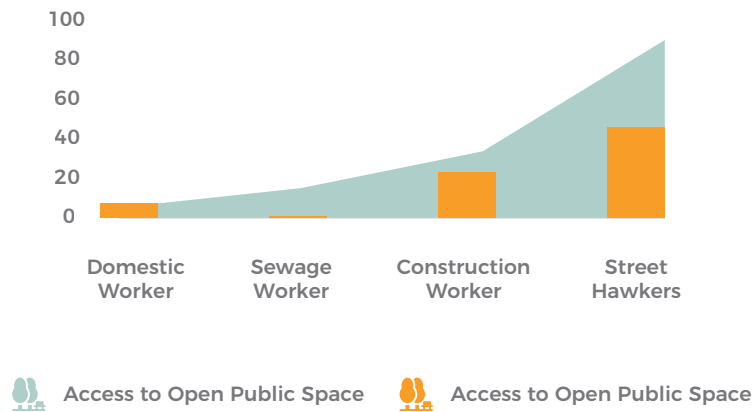hen and only 39% reported to have a separate bathroom within their premises. On an average, the number of people owning houses is larger in rural areas, than in urban areas, but this number is significantly brought down by construction workers, only 5.9% of them being house owners. Due to their migratory work, they often end up renting spaces for short periods. Those living in spaces that are neither rented nor owned by the HHs, are spaces provided by employers or just fragile structures made of scraps or mud in rural areas. These rented spaces come with only limited access to basic necessities as can be seen through figure 11.7. Given the average household size of the surveyed population (3.8 per house) or the national average (4.8 per house), these places of residence cannot be considered adequate for a safe and healthy living.

Figure 11.8: Groups with Access to Open Spaces (%)

Domestic Worker   Sewage Worker   Construction Worker   Street Hawkers
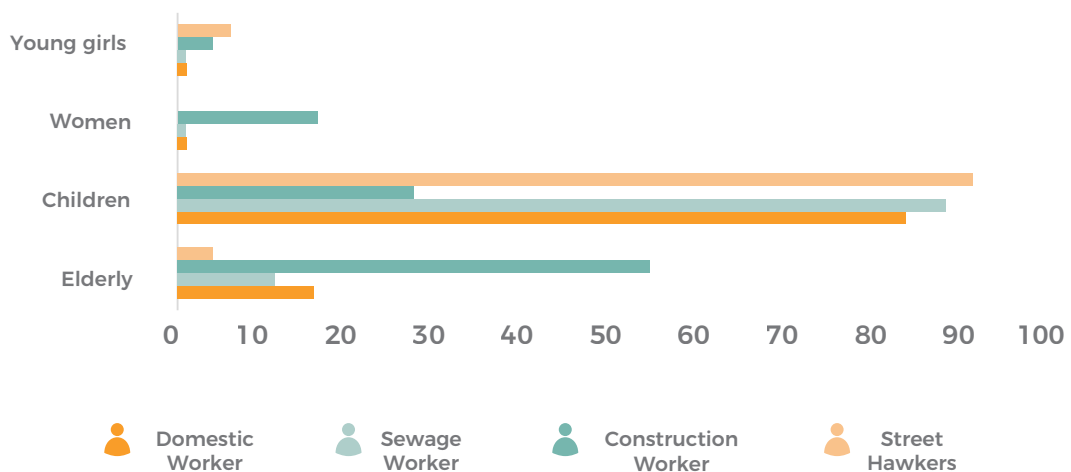
In addition to the condition of the house, safe and inclusive access to open and green spaces is also necessary for human development. Availability of open spaces was studied only in urban areas due to the assumed abundance in rural areas, but neighborhood safety was assessed for all to see how safe and inclusive it is for communities to spend time in open spaces. While the majority of the Domestic Workers and Sewage Workers do own houses, very limited (5% and 15%, respectively) of them have access to an open space near their homes. The number is highest for Street Hawkers, with nearly half (46%) of them able to access it under 10 minutes, hinting towards a better urban planning in and around the areas of Kolkata they reside in.

Although, access to open spaces is no good if people don't feel safe in their neighborhoods, which 25% of people reported that they didn't (figure 11.9). Almost 45% people reported that they don't feel safe walking in their neighborhood, and the numbers were not set apart by their residence being in urban or rural areas. Over 22% of people reported that they fear the threat of violence in their neighborhood, with the number actually being higher in rural areas. The threat of eviction, overall, was almost 8%, but drastically high among construction workers (48%) due to their place of residence being directly dependent on employment.

Figure 11.9: Neighbourhood Safety Status (%)
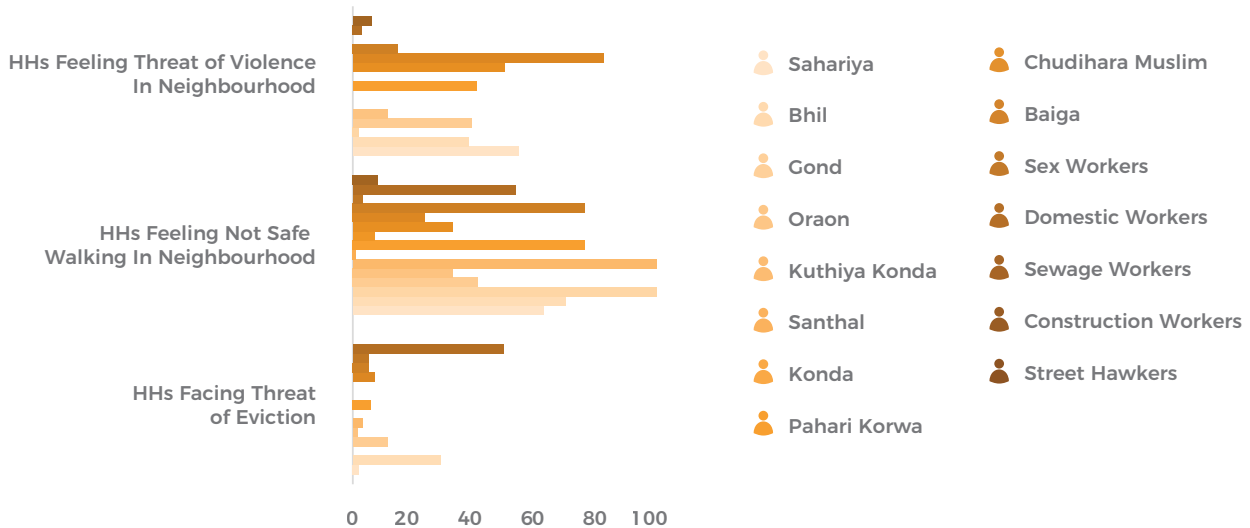
Conclusion

In many ways, the sewage workers, the street hawkers, the construction workers and domestic workers constitute the poorest and most vulnerable population groups in urban areas. Some migrate to urban areas periodically, while a large majority end up settling down in urban areas. They face serious challenges in terms of housing, basic amenities and identity documents (as recorded elsewhere in the study). Safety issues and lack of access to green spaces are of particular concern for children, girls and women in the urban context. It would not be wrong to say that current urbanisation processes and mechanisms rarely engage them or take their requirements into consideration. In this frame of reference, the focus on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements everywhere is a welcome, but challenging goal. To make this real for the most vulnerable communities is even more arduous.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels

History is witness to the fact that development and progress cannot sustain in a society without peace. Prosperity and effective governance cannot be aspired for, if not together with peace, security and protection of social and political rights of the people. SDG 16 lays down the basic framework for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and institutions for accessing justice. The Government of India, through its National Indicator Framework, has identified 8 indicators related to reducing violence, death, crimes against children, trafficking, corruption, promoting legal identity, setting up of courts and increasing judiciary to track justice in a localized context. These national indicators, however, cover only 5 of the 12 targets set under goal 16 and entirely fail to capture any perspectives on discrimination and exclusion.

The diverse social fabric of India is made of thousands of different socio-cultural groups, with predominant social hierarchies and dynamics of exclusion. The Constitution of India has hence laid down a robust framework for social justice, with special focus on promoting liberty, freedom and inclusion of the vulnerable populations. The founding principles in the Constitution, stated through Article 14 to Article 21, are directed to ensure equality, prohibit discrimination, and promote socio-economic equity by law. However, even after 70 years, divisions along caste, class, gender, religion and their inherent sub-categories challenge the upholding of these laws and instances of violence based on these fault-lines are still fairly common.

Findings

Figure 16.1 shows the extent of physical and verbal violence experienced in the communities studied. On an average, over 4% of households have at least one member who has experienced physical or verbal violence. The highest violence was reported among the Bhil tribe of Rajasthan (27%), where clashes with people from dominant other castes living in the region were reported to be fairly frequent. Street hawkers, sewage workers and sex workers also reported considerable incidents of violence.

At a community level, people's confidence in reporting violence to the local police is low. Even as the study reported more incidents of violence in rural areas, it was found that the number of underreported instances was more. Of the total incidents, only 32% cases in rural areas and 44% cases in urban areas were reported to the police. Despite the highest instances of violence, the reporting to the local police was at only 6% in the Bhil community.

Figure 16.1: Physical or Verbal Violence (%)
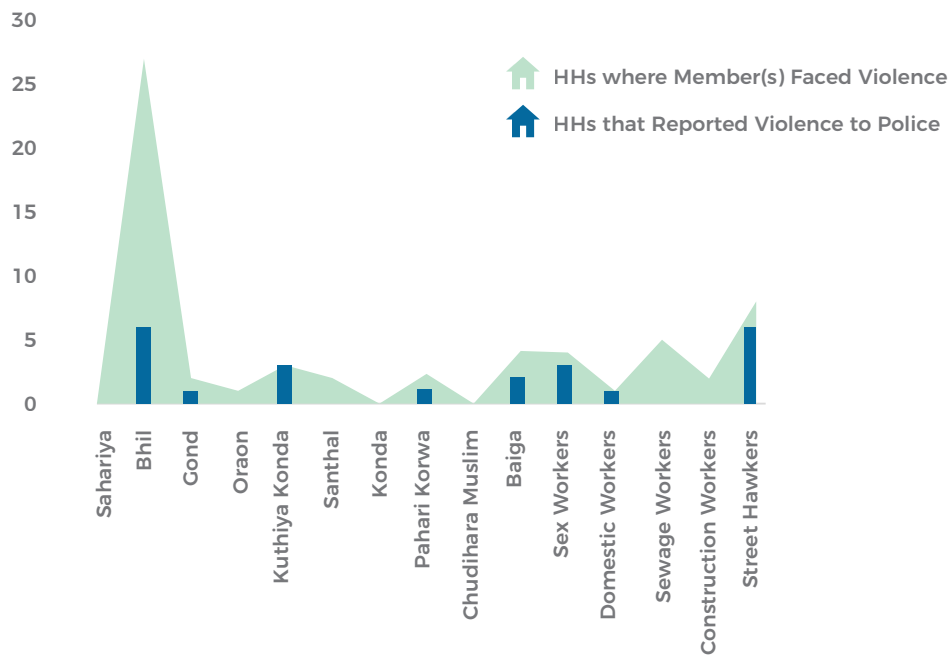
The vulnerabilities of these groups are further accentuated by various threats of violence, as discussed in figure 16.2, experienced by a high average of 22%. The highest number was recorded among Sex Workers, where 80% reported a sense of threat. While prostitution in itself is not a legal crime in India, several related acts including owning or managing a brothel and soliciting in public spaces are considered to be crimes, which results in frequent confrontation with police in order to run their business. Additionally, the stigma and the associated socio-cultural vulnerabilities further makes the Sex

Figure 16.2: Perceived Threat of Armed Violence(%)
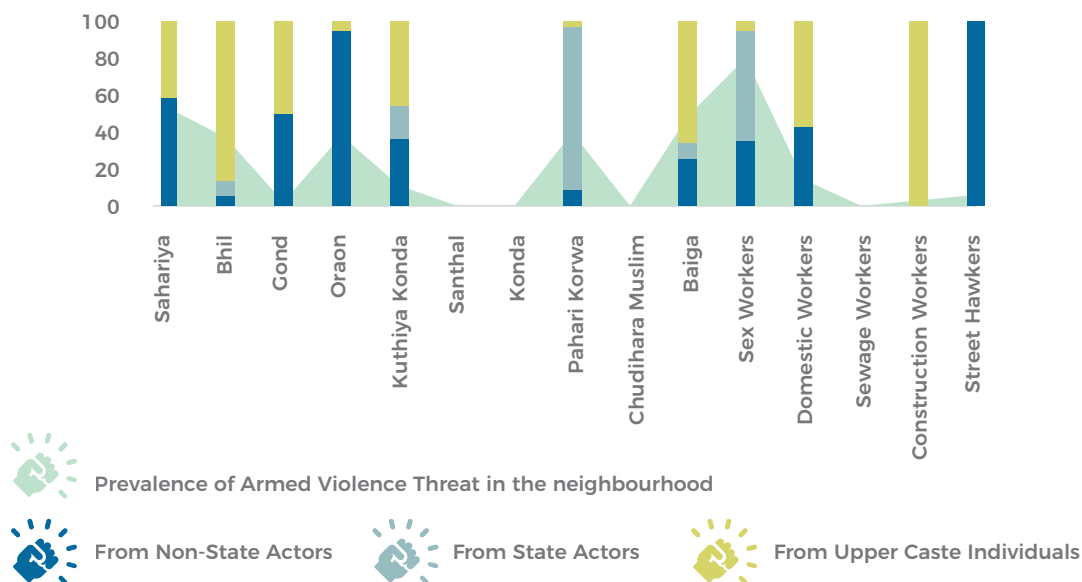
Workers susceptible to such threats from other communities and anti-social actors.

Among Pahari Korwas, a forest dwelling tribe, 40% households reported a perceived threat of neighborhood violence – a majority (88%) of which was from state actors. Across communities, violence due to caste-based oppression emerged as the top threat to the surveyed communities, revealing the strong grip of caste-based hierarchy. Evidently, the legislations and protective mechanisms against caste-based discrimination or violence have not sufficiently dismantled the discriminatory social structures and practices. Street hawkers, Oraon and Saharia communities reported high levels of threat from anti-social actors, indicating a lack of law and order in their neighborhoods.

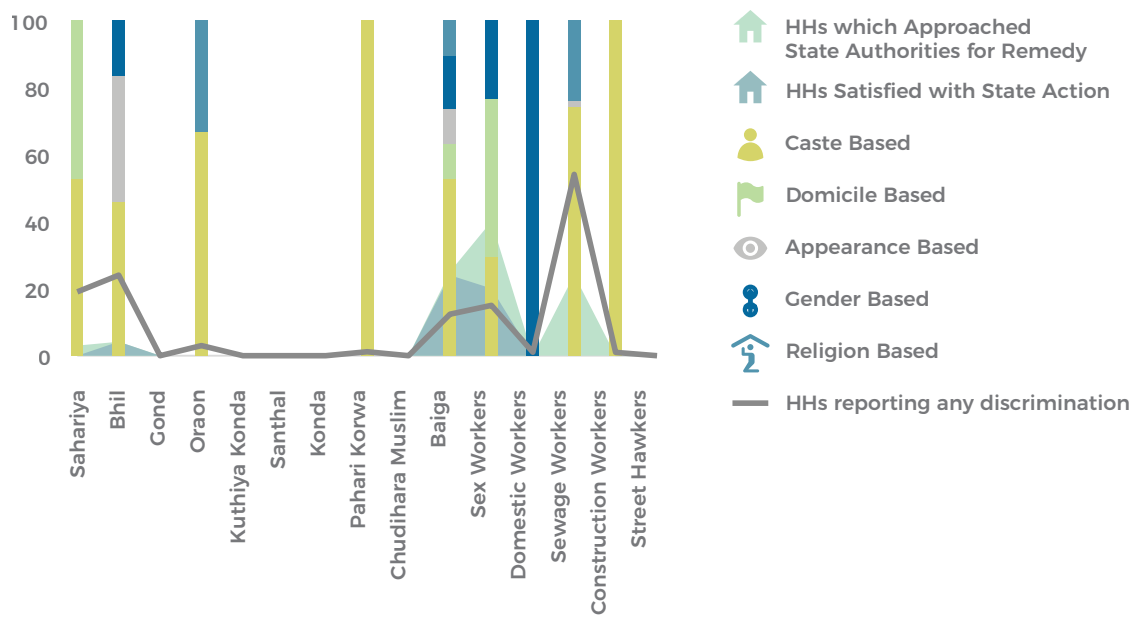## Figure 16.3: Prevalence of Discrimination (%)

Figure 16.3 reports the prevalence of discrimination among the communities. Sewage Workers reported 54 % instances of discrimination, 74% of which were reported as caste-based and 24% based on religion. Sewage Work is a strictly caste-based occupation, taken up by the communities considered 'lower' within the caste hierarchy. There are also inherent stigmas associated with Sewage Work, which are the ground for discrimination against persons of any religion within the occupation. The sex workers are the second highest to face discrimination. While a significant share of it is gender-based (23.5%), caste-based and domicile-based discrimination was reported to be even higher (29.5% and 47%, respectively). In the study, 75% households of Sex Workers were reported to be from Scheduled Castes, and thus vulnerable to caste-based discrimination. Households also migrate from their domicile, as discussed under Goal 10, which also leads to discrimination.

The Bhil and Baiga tribes also reported gender-based discrimination, which is rooted in the orthodox patriarchy prevalent within the community, where women are constantly subjugated. The number would likely be higher than the one reported, if the field investigators were given a more nuanced understanding of gender discrimination. A number of instances of blatant discrimination- of women being denied the space to speak in front of men from the community were reported. Some women from the households of Domestic Workers also reported gender-based discrimination, the exact nature of which could not be determined through the survey.

Figure 16.4: Violence-Related Government Mechanisms (%)
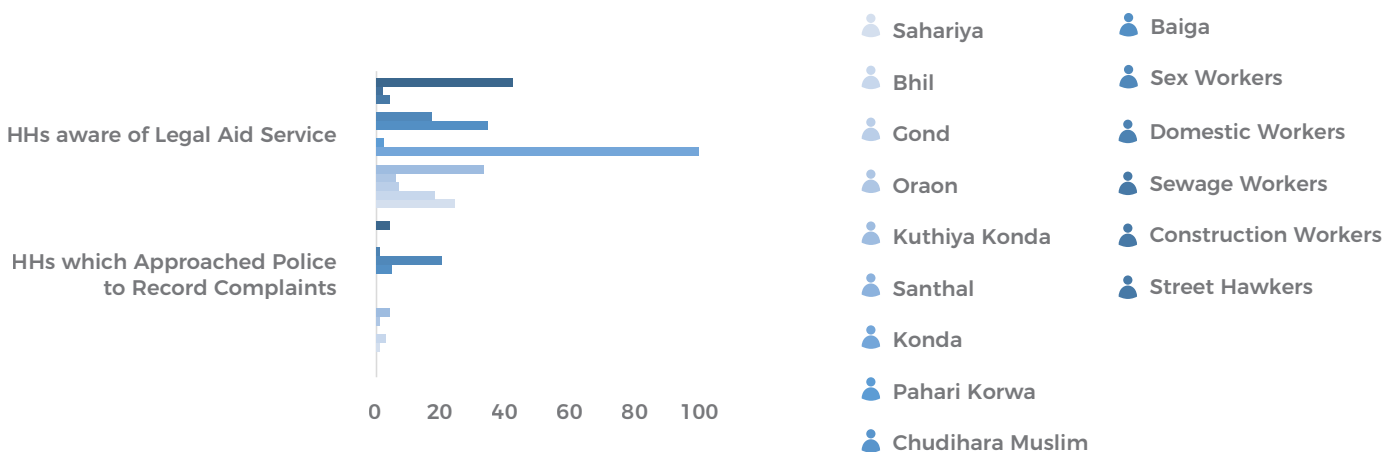
The government seeks to reduce violence, increase access to justice and build transparent institutions to promote SDG 16. Accountable government mechanisms and their access to the populations in particular becomes central to protecting their rights and ensuring justice. The population studied here has long been vulnerable to experiences of socio-cultural discriminations and violence. Therefore, adequate information on state mechanisms, ability to use them and confidence to ensure responsiveness is paramount for the rule of law to persist. To that end, the study reviewed awareness of legal aid service and a household's ability to record complaints to the authorities, the findings of which are recorded in figure 16.4.

The level of awareness of legal aid was found to be the highest among the Konda community of Odisha, where CSO intervention has helped. Within communities that reported higher levels of threat of violence – such as Sahariya, Baiga, Bhil, and Oraon – only around 25% people reported any awareness of legal aid. Among Sex Workers, who reported the highest threat of violence and discrimination, only 17% households had awareness of legal aid.

The average number of households that have approached the police to record complaints, across communities, is 2.6%, with the highest among Sex Workers at 20%. Among all other communities, this number was reported to be between 0-4%, despite incidents of violence. As seen in the previous section, most cases of violence are perpetrated by dominant caste members. Often, authorities in charge of law and order are associated with or belong to oppressive communities, which leads to further victimization of vulnerable communities and underreporting of crime. NITI Aayog refers to 'the problem of data, adequate reporting of cases of violence as well as violation of other rights as challenges' in promoting goal 16.

Goal 16 explicitly sets a target of curbing bribery and corruption entirely, and in all forms. The Corruption Perception Index, which ranks countries by the perceived levels of corruption in their public sector using expert assessments and opinion surveys, in 2019 ranked India at the 80th position in 180 countries[29] . This rank and the score on which it is based has seen marginal to zero change in recent years, indicating that no effective measures have been taken to tackle corruption in India.

Figure 16.5: Bribery (%)
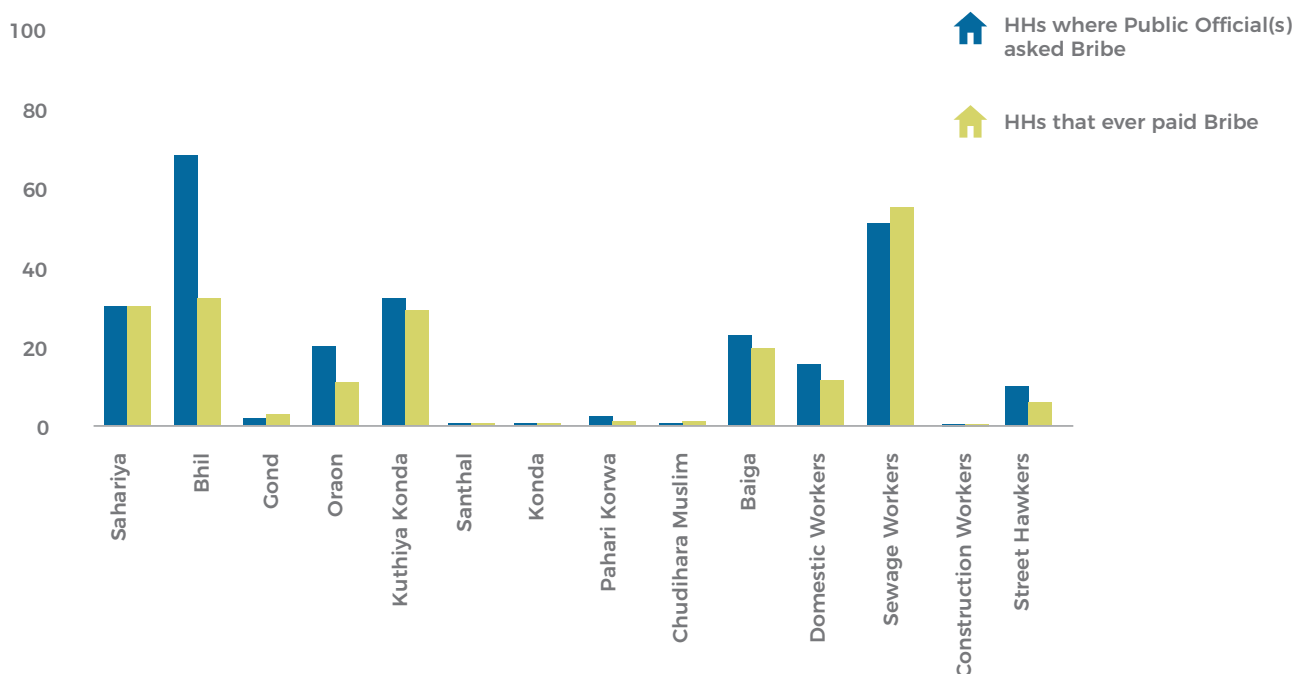
Figure 16.5 shows that the forest dwelling tribal communities reported the highest incidences of being asked for a bribe and also complying with the demand. This is also proven from reports where these communities are in constant encounters with the Forest Department and other law enforcing officials. While the Forest Rights Act is positively oriented and supportive to the tribal and forest dwelling communities, implementation of the same has been a huge challenge. Instances of asking for bribes as well as being paid bribes is higher in urban areas, especially among Sewage Workers. The government has

continuously cut down the permanent employment of the sewage workers, pushing them to be at the mercy of contractors. There has been negligible recruitment for permanent employment to the category. Hence the sewage workers are often forced to bribe their way to get work opportunities.

Figure 16.6: Population with Legal Identification (%)
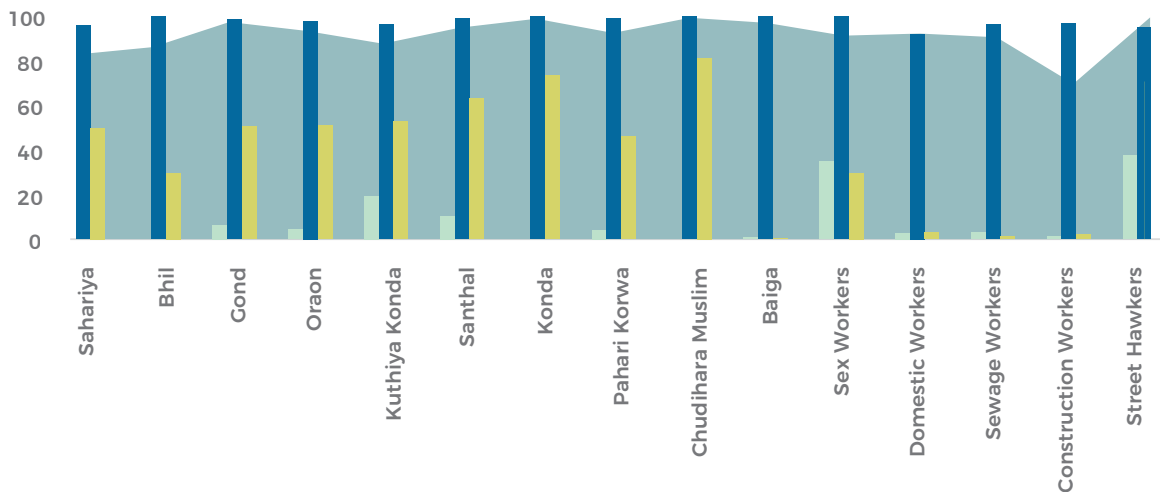
Population with Legal ID   Population with Birth Certificate   Population with Aadhar Card   Population with Voter Card

There is also a target within this goal to provide everyone with a legal identity, including birth registration, and make them part of the government database so that there is adequate information to make policies for various groups. Figure 16.6 states the possession of legal identification among the tracked communities. On an average, 91.5% people reported to have some form of legal identification in their possession. This average is significantly influenced by the possession of Aadhar Card, a legal identity card with the individual's biometric information, that is not legally mandatory to make, but is necessary to have for availing any government benefits, subsidies and services. Only 9% of the people from all the households surveyed reported to have a birth registration certificate, despite the state actively promoting it. Awareness on the relevance of birth certificates was also negligible. Out of the 62% people eligible to vote, only 40% had a Voter Card, which is a mandatory requirement for being able to vote in any election.

Conclusion

Despite being critical to achieving the SDGs, adequate indicators on Goal 16 are yet to be developed in the national context. This study, conducted among these 15 groups, all of whom are disadvantaged in some form, reveals the lack of awareness about mechanisms of justice, along with a lack of confidence within the system. There are also communities such as Sex Workers and Sewage Workers, who were found to be especially susceptible to violence and discrimination, indicating the need to protect the rights of those in stigmatized professions. Increased engagement with the communities to develop a nuanced understanding of their issues, thus, is of paramount importance, so that it can lead the way to inclusive and effective policy decisions.

Conclusions

The 15 communities covered in the study represent the most vulnerable, nearly invisible and poorly represented factions of our country- communities whose voices can hardly percolate deeper than the fringes of the developmental dialogue. The findings of this study have emerged to be significantly removed from the national narrative of progress along SDGs and overall development. The overall conclusions that can be made after analysis from the previous chapters are briefly discussed under the points below.

1.   The Omnipresent Poverty Trap

The household income of all the surveyed communities was found to be falling below the International Poverty Line (Goal 1). But their expenditure profiles revealed that most of them are living with either no savings, or are piling up a sizable debt (Goal 10). This puts them in a trap which results in blocking further development due to the limited disposable resources, thus enforcing inter-generational poverty across all these communities. Most communities were found to be bearing high expenditures on health and education – both of which are welfare provisions that the government should be spending on, to minimize public expenditure. It was also observed that the communities that were spending less on health and education, were doing this due to poverty or unavailability of quality government services rather than out of personal choice.

2.   The Lack of Impact of existing Government Interventions

A majority of the entire population covered in the survey lives in abject poverty, which makes them all eligible for government welfare benefits, but the study revealed that this was not being achieved in practice. Government benefits and services related to food (Goal 2), health (Goal 3), education and school benefits (Goal 4), drinking water and sanitation (Goal 6), clean energy sources of electricity and cooking fuel (Goal 7), employment and related benefits (Goal 8), and safe and permanent housing (Goal 11) were tracked in this study and conclusively, all 15 communities were found to have only a limited extent of access to these. There are an array of schemes and dedicated programs such as Swachh Bharat, Skill India, Mid-Day Meal, Ujjwala Yojana, and several more that are already in place, but problems of both coverage and implementation were discovered as the findings of the study, emphasizing how there is a need of understanding context so as to develop strategies for more impactful outreach.

3.   Inequitable access to Technology

Among the surveyed population, less than half owned a mobile phone and just over 10% had access to the internet (Goal 9). In the age of campaigns like Digital India, Start-up India and Smart India, a limited technological access significantly lowers the dissemination of information and also actively alienates the already marginalised population further from development.

4.   Lack of focus on Behavioral changes as part of Implementation

Due to the strong history of civil society movements in India, there exist several laws and schemes pertinent to crucial socio-cultural issues. Their effect although, has not translated from paper to practice, as instances of child labour (Goal 8), gender/caste-based discrimination and violence (Goal 5)(Goal 16) were found to be prevalent among all 15 communities. Instances of violence by state authorities, such as officials of police and forest departments, were also reported among forest-dwelling tribes, Sex Workers, Street Hawkers and Sewage Workers. Despite high prevalence of such incidents, reports of approaching the police regarding the same were found to be negligible. This reflects the lack of implementation of the Constitution and legislations, as well as the continued stranglehold of social exclusion and hierarchies. Promoting and incentivizing behavioral changes is thus the key to ensure that centralized laws and policies reach these communities in a meaningful way.

5.   Need to reassess the Budget allocations in view of Ground reality

Each financial year announces budgets for empowering women, minorities and tribes under the union budget to promote equity and equality. While an important step to track the spending on socio-economic and cultural issues, the classification of budgets has resulted in creating only limited impact. These budgets need to go through an in-depth analysis to see where is money being spent and where is it needed, which can help concentrate the funds to areas that indicate the need for it because the current assessment of state machineries has left a lot to be desired.

Recommendations

The previous chapters and the overall findings have made a strong case for having nuanced measures in place for each community. The following are some recommendations that can be made on the basis of the valuable insights that have been discussed thus far.

1.   Need for Disaggregated Data

The Study indicates that development indicators vary widely even across these communities despite them sharing many common characteristics. To address this, disaggregated data at the community level should be the basis for making policies and provisions for vulnerable communities. Furthermore, understanding local contexts is critical to facilitating and supporting them in order to address their specific constraints and barriers. The study busts the myth of use of data of averages gathered in current public surveys to promote the development of vulnerable communities. Community-specific ground level needs and socio-cultural and economic contexts need to be better captured to ensure the progress of vulnerable communities in particular.

2.   Governmental need to recognize Citizen-led data as Legitimate Grounds for Policy Measures

Many civil society organisations have access to vulnerable communities across the country and are actively engaged in working to promote their development. Many community leaders and activists with ground level involvement and understanding of the specific concerns and contexts have also used the civil society framework to engage with the challenges faced by their communities. These organisations and individuals have contextual and experiential knowledge of these communities. State needs to create a standardised framework for inclusion of these additional resources and peoplepower where relevant data can be gathered in a robust manner that can supplement and be used in synergy with the national data.

3.   Overall Stronger Feedback systems

Given the diversity, inequality and variance across communities, the state needs to strengthen its redressal mechanisms to hear the voices of marginalized communities, their constraints, strengths and aspirations. The greatest strength of India is its human resources which is innovative and resilient. The opportunities for village development planning need to be encouraged and decentralised governments at the local levels (PRIs and ULBs) need strengthening and relevance. The grievance redressal mechanisms under different ministries and departments need to be strengthened, as the current official knowledge database omits many ground level challenges which in turn affects policy implementation.

4.   Equity based Specific and Additional Budget allocations

These vulnerable communities carry inter-generational deprivations and disadvantages. Government offered provisions are critical to their survival and sustenance. Schemes and Policies of the government including all services and welfare programmes need effective implementation. A clear chain of command with accountability and last mile accessibility along with additional budget allocations is necessary to address the backlog of deprivations and disadvantages. Scheme related

targets may be delegated to individual states with a comprehensive and strict plan of implementation. The continuing developmental inequalities and challenges in accessing their rights despite affirmative actions, reflects the need for both effective implementation as well as context specific additional provisions to address the existing challenges and disadvantages.

5.   Need for Convergent and Socio-culturally Contextual Policies

The non recognition of consistent intersectional dynamics of marginalization and differentiation is one of the biggest roadblocks in effective disbursement of policy and scheme benefits to these vulnerable communities. For example, Gender is not just an issue to be addressed by the gender related policies, since the study clearly demonstrates gender as a limiting factor everywhere in deciding the access of state benefits for individuals from these communities. There has to be a nuanced understanding of local socio-cultural issues, so that any specific challenges posed by them can be taken into account before making policies around the communities in that area.

6.   Government should move towards a Rights-based approach for all Developmental work

A people's rights-based approach will ensure that the state-sponsored entitlements become justiciable so that the beneficiaries can approach the courts in case of any misconduct or lapse in the system. This approach will also motivate the state to take responsibility for tackling the active and default translation of traditional cultural and feudal prejudices into modern governance and administrative systems.

7.   Decentralized Advocacy Strategies need to be adopted

The study has helped inform the communities as well as the organisations working with them regarding SDGs and their rightful entitlements. With this information, the revealing analysis of this report, and the governmental emphasis on progress through SDGs, there is great scope for advocacy. The community and its leaders can use this to create strategies such as multi-stakeholder consultations involving government officials at the local level to advocate for policy measures to support their development.

8.   Renewed Focus on the LNOB principle and SDGs at National and Global levels

The 'leave no one behind' principle, even as it is central to the SDGs achievement, is often overlooked in both planning and monitoring at the national and global levels. The country depends on existing data and mechanisms in aligning its national policies, programmes and monitoring mechanisms for the SDGs. Innovative strategies are not explored for challenging issues and LNOB is one among them. The current global pandemic consumes national and global attention, resources and energy at this point of time. A sense of 'SDGs are not possible' is already setting in. It is however important to not lose the larger vision of the SDGs and create policies based on the 5 Ps of the SDGs of People, Planet, Prosperity (to all), Peace and Partnership to continue moving towards a progressively better world for all.

Study Challenges and Way Forward

1.   Re-working the Questionnaire

Developing the questionnaire is a crucial but also the most challenging part of the research. Primarily due to the fact that there is a need to strike a balance between adding more questions to improve the findings, and limiting the size of the questionnaire so that the respondents don't tire out in due process. In our case, the balance tilted towards adding more questions and hence the questionnaire ended up being quite lengthy. By the end of the questionnaire, the respondent often gets restless and hence does not put an honest effort in answering. *A reworked questionnaire is already underway, based on the feedback received by us, with the aim to strike the aforementioned balance.*

2.   Maintaining Quality of Data Remotely

At the data collection step, someone from the community acted as our Field Investigator and data collector. Digitization of surveys is a new trend, and even the seasoned FIs have limited technical ability to flawlessly use the mobile application. While the app had in-built features to prevent hurdles due to intermittent internet, there were operational issues during the survey process, resulting in manual verification of data. This was taken care of through field visits by the research team for handholding support but was only possible at the cost of bearing added costs for travel across multiple states. To ensure authenticity of data without extensive back and forth or added travel costs, the training process of the next phase of study would involve more intensive run-throughs of the application and survey system

3.   Making the Household Surveys more Inclusive

In this phase, there was an attempt to capture the progress and narratives of communities that have little or no data, so the focus was on getting any two people from the community who could understand the app-based model of the study and carry it out. However, on the field we faced difficulty in getting responses if the FIs and the respondents were opposite in gender or had an age gap or some such socio-cultural aspect that created an uncomfortable dynamic. *Guidelines addressing these nuances will be formed for the FIs conducting any future citizen-led surveys to prevent tainted responses due to interpersonal dynamics. The team composition of the FIs for each community will be done more mindfully to have members who can make all respondents feel comfortable during the survey.*

4.   Expand the Study to other Communities

Currently, the study has been able to select only a few vulnerable communities due to paucity of resources. The study has definitely expanded in the multiple iterations it has gone through, but there are still a lot of marginalized groups which could benefit from such a study. Since there exist reliable civil society organizations working with a wide variety of communities to partner with, *there is a distinct possibility of being able to further carry out this study should resources get mobilized.*

5.   Use the Data and Community knowledge for Policy Advocacy

The study has been used to great effect in putting forth the problems faced by the marginalized communities in their need and pursuit to achieve equal status in the country. There is hope that the administration would be open to considering the recommendations of this report. *To that end, there are plans to strategically use the civil society network along with the community knowledge developed on SDGs in the course of this study for advocacy purposes. Ensuring safe and efficient implementation of the existing policies would be the first point of conversation in that respect.*

Abbreviations

AAY	Antyodaya Anna Yojana
APL	Above Poverty Level
AWC	Anganwadi Centres
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BE	Budget Estimates
CHC	Community Health Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DBT	Direct Bank Transfer
EPoS	Electronic Point of Sale
FPS	Fair Price Shops
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HH	Household
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services Scheme
LNOB	Leave no one behind
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas
MDM	Mid Day Meal
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MoWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NFSA	National Food Security Act
NRDWP	National Rural Drinking Water Programme
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OOPE	Out of Pocket Expenditure
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMAY-R	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Rural
PMUY	Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
PVTG	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
RE	Revised Estimates
RTE	Right to Education
SBM	Swachh Bharat Mission
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TPDS	Targeted Public Distribution system
UN	United Nations
WNTA	Wada Na Todo Abhiyan

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Wada Na Todo Abhiyan is a campaign formed by Civil Society Organisations to hold the government accountable to the national and international commitments made by them. It has 4,000+ partners across India which include INGOs, Local Networks, Forums and nearly every other form of CSO. During the initial years, it used to increase government accountability by tracking the performance of Five-Year Plans and Millennium Development Goals and has now moved on to conducting governance reviews and tracking Sustainable Development Goals. WNTA is the national partner of the Global Call for Action against Poverty (GCAP).

'**The 100 Hotspots**' has developed as an initiative to increase focus on development of vulnerable communities and amplify their own narratives. There are currently three reports that have been released under this umbrella with focus on different vulnerable communities across the nation, the southern region and in urban spaces. Another report focusing on children of vulnerable communities is also under production. All of these reports have helped unanimously establish the need for listening to the marginalized voices and building solutions from ground up in order to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals agenda of 'Leave No One Behind'.

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