

## **Abstract**

### **Locating the Migrant in the Urban during COVID-19 Pandemic: A view from Policy and Practice**

Through this paper, I wish to understand the migrant in the cities; the migrants whose lives have been studied through (and sometimes reduced to) by numerous statistical analysis need to be understood in relation vis-à-vis their lived realities in the urban and what they had to bear in the times of the pandemic. I posit and investigate the existing urban policies of state welfare before the lockdown laid bare the inbuilt bias against the migrants in the Urban. And thereafter, the lockdown and ensuing state response only reinforced that leading to the mass movement of people and the trauma suffered; thereby arguing and trying to understand the real causes of the migrant crisis in the pre- lockdown urban and its structuring of policies, while not absolving the state and society of 'just' inaction and indecision during the chaos following lockdown. Such an attempt is markedly different from the other approaches until now. Firstly, it gives a glaring policy gaps and timelines through which the State angst on migrant issues becomes visible. Secondly, the policy perspective reveals a deep-seated bias that treats migrant bodies with an equal amount of contempt and desire. The research also hopes to contribute to the Metanarrative of the conflict of migrants and informality in the urban. I will also hope to share the efforts made by CSOs and other organizations working on the ground to address the issue of migrants and highlight the key learnings, and of how even the CSOs and their interventions were corrupted by state policy prescriptions. I also hope to share with the research group the so-called progressive State responses that we studied in detail in leading up to policy formulation for migrants. The research will contribute to the larger discourse on assessing the migrants' crisis and other informal sector livelihoods through the prism of the policies of relief and support introduced by the union government and different State governments following the pandemic. The inquiry will be heavily based also on the practice of the CSO interventions and assessments that I was a part of.