

NE National Portal for Informal Sector of Workers

Context & Overview

India's economy is characterised by a vast majority of unorganised workforce (about 90%) and we don't have any clear answers to the questions around size and scale of informal or unorganized workforce, neither by Sectors nor by States.

While 2011 census classifies workers in about 9 sectors, all States have their own categorisation for these sectors / workers for instance Karnataka has 43 categories of unorganised labour. These workers are hotel staff, drivers, construction workers, domestic workers, potters, agriculture workers, rag pickers, street vendors, delivery and so on with a lot of them also being migrant workers. These workers have no card or number which identifies them as a worker in a specific sector or category and no common database to register, monitor and keep their details up to date.

Every concerned Department / Ministry is struggling for details of these workers and mechanisms to map & reach them and in the absence of an exhaustive & comprehensive database and mechanism, we are facing innumerable challenges in being able to support them.

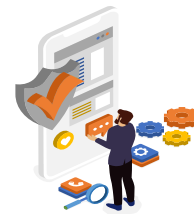
While we speak about Make in India, transitioning Supply Chains to India, creating jobs & livelihoods, providing social benefits to our blue collar workers and many such incentives & initiatives, we will struggle to achieve our set objectives as we do not even yet understand what are these sectors in which these workers are employed, what are numbers, what are skill sets and so on and so forth.

What do we envision?

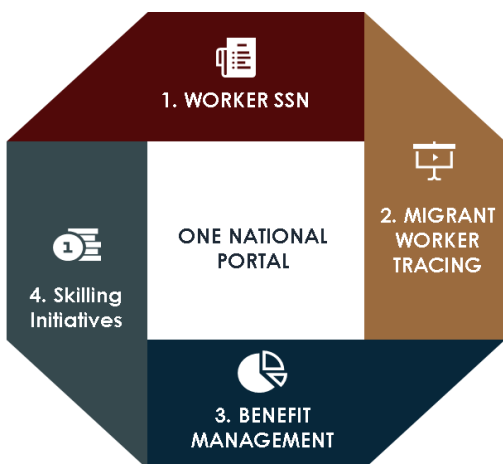
As a developing nation and one of the most populated countries, it is critical that we make our people our assets. This is only possible when we have mapped and tracked every worker in this country and can continue to do so sustainably.

As Policy makers, as Decision Makers, as Leads of key Portfolios, we do see ourselves bringing in extraordinary reforms for economic growth which is supported largely by these workers, We envision to convert many segments of this unorganised workforces into organised segments in the long run but we can do all of that when we understand these informal sectors of work, our workforces, map them, track them, reach them and then start provisioning best possible support.

While we are trying to deal with the current pandemic and provisioning whatever best for this most vulnerable section of the society, we do see ourselves maximising the impact and reach of all that Government provisions and enable this workforce to play a significantly higher role in the economic growth as well.



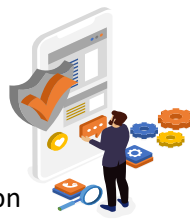
How do we get there – ONE National Portal



To set forward on our ambition to organise, manage our unorganised sector & maximise impact, what we need now is a platform and database of people, skills, sectors and labour markets pan India with uniformity, accessibility & portability across States. This Portal should capture and house information of every worker across States & Sectors and keep this information up to date real time. The process of capturing & updating information should be seamless and synchronised with all other key Govt Schemes.

The portal will enable:

- 1. Worker SSN (Social Security Number):** Registration of every worker by category, sector, location etc. ensuring all optimal yet minimal details are captured and a Card with SSN no is generated that is linked with JAM (Jan Dhan Yojana, Aadhaar, Ayushman Bharat and Mobile numbers). Most workers for example the Domestic Workers, Delivery boys etc. are not registered anywhere and there isn't any database covering them which makes it impossible for State / Central governments to reach them in times like now. A card & no to identify every worker with profession and skills along with other optimal set of details is what will revolutionise the way we are trying to solve our biggest problem.
- 2. Migrant Worker Tracing:** India has millions of migrant workers across sectors who either switch jobs or locations without any registration / updates in any system. Hence, tracking, tracing and supporting them is a huge challenge for all State Governments. This platform should enable mechanisms for appropriate mapping of migrant workers and consistent real time updates along with enabling In-State, Inter-State and Intra-State coordination for them.
- 3. Benefit Management:** Facilitation of Central as well as State Schemes Benefits transfers in coordination with JAM and leveraging innovative means to reach beneficiaries like Kiosks, Handhelds, Drones, Digitally etc. Government currently has a lot of Social welfare schemes but unless we have mapped all workers and have adequate details to reach them, these schemes are not creating an impact they can and should. Current situation is a clear example where every State is struggling to show its numbers, assess the benefit they need to provision and finally reach these beneficiaries coz no State has enabled registration for all categories of



its workers. Maharashtra has done some work around Labour registrations for Construction Workers but that is not sufficient.

- 4. Skilling Initiatives:** Mapping skills of workers across work categories to enable skill enablement initiatives for creating more jobs, reskilling to ensure livelihoods, industry assessments and skilled workforce creation. Currently, if we do not know who are these workers, what sectors do they work in, what skills do they have and what do they need reskilling in, a lot of our skilling efforts are incomplete. And this mapping of all workers by sectors will enable us to build that picture. Tomorrow, we want to bring a new supply chain to India, or start manufacturing in a specific area, this database will help us identify who are the workers who could potentially be reskilled to align to the new area of work. This platform will also boost our Make in India & various such Industry growth initiatives tremendously for this reason.

Approach to drive the Initiative

Given the current scenario with this pandemic impacting the unorganised sector of workers adversely, the nation has no choice but to be reactive to be able to support our workers in the means & ways feasible.

But we definitely have an option to be more planned to overcome these situations in a more structured manner in the future. There is a need to build a task force who is working for the future on a war footing so that we are not in a similar position ever again. What this means is an immediate plan, strategy and programme to mobilise this task force towards developing this ONE National Portal and piecemeal onboarding the workers onto the platform. The approach will have to be a mix of central cum distributed mechanisms:

1. **Centralised Design & Solution:** The Centre will need to set protocols and standards around the workforce categories, sectors & skills along with designing and developing the unified platform for the unorganised workforce. This provision a stepping stone, structured mechanism and institutionalise the Initiative and implementation.
2. **Decentralised Execution:** The execution will require States and various Nodal agencies to play a primary role in mapping, tracing and onboarding their workers onto the platform in collaboration with Trade Unions, NGOs and various supporting agencies.
3. **Centralised Project Management:** The Project Management and execution of this Initiative will have to be managed at the Centre to ensure adherence to set protocols, standards and mechanisms along with ultimately ensuring complete coverage across States, Sectors, Workers and associated agencies.

Ministry of Labour & Employment (MLE) & NSDC at the Centre should anchor this Initiative given their mandate and understanding of sectors, skills and workforces.

Assocham is best suited and will be very pleased to drive this Initiative for MLE and NSDC:

- ✓ Apex Trade Association of India with 100 years of existence is associated with 250 Chambers and Trade Associations



- ✓ Has been playing a catalytic role in shaping Trade, Commerce and Industrial environment of the Country
- ✓ Fountainhead of knowledge for Indian Industry and all sectors we operate in
- ✓ Operates 59 Expert committees, 10 State Councils and 11 International Councils to facilitate economic, industrial and social growth
- ✓ Access to unorganised sector of workers in numerous sectors either directly or through partner associations
- ✓ Has been at the forefront of critical surveys, research & vision for India around economic & industry growth with government industry partnerships
- ✓ Plays a significant role in developing new-age Indian Corporates and livelihoods
- ✓ Member of International Chamber of Commerce and World Business Organisation to bring in world best practices and collaboration for this exercise