

# Migrants' access to social protection: a case study of the Public Distribution System in Delhi

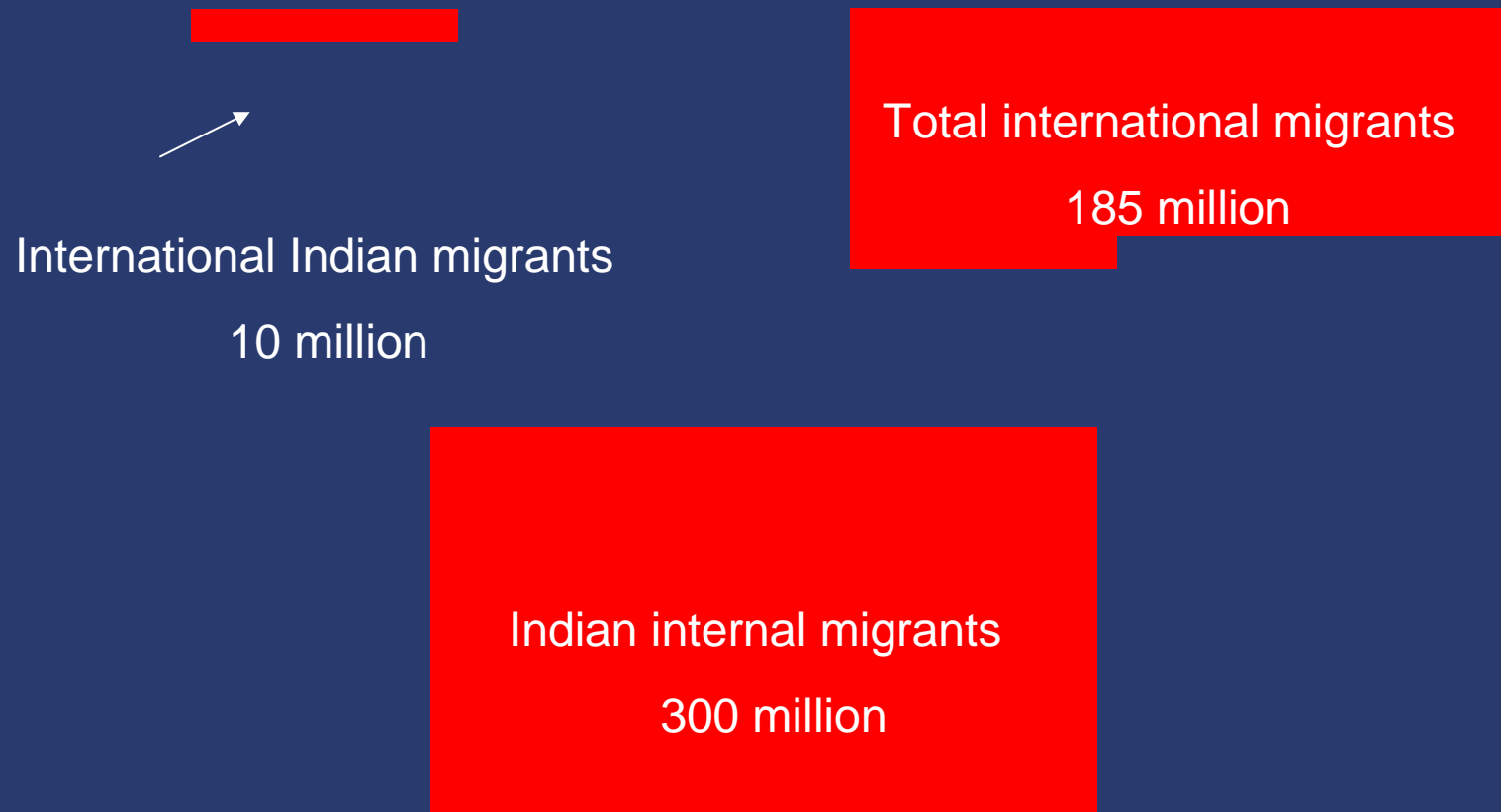
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# Migrants suffer double disadvantage

- Migration is a form of social protection...but:
- Double/triple disadvantage of migration
  - Migration creates needs for social protection
  - Migration reduces access to social protection
  - Migration reduces ability to demand social protection
- Technical and political disadvantage

# Internal migration is significant



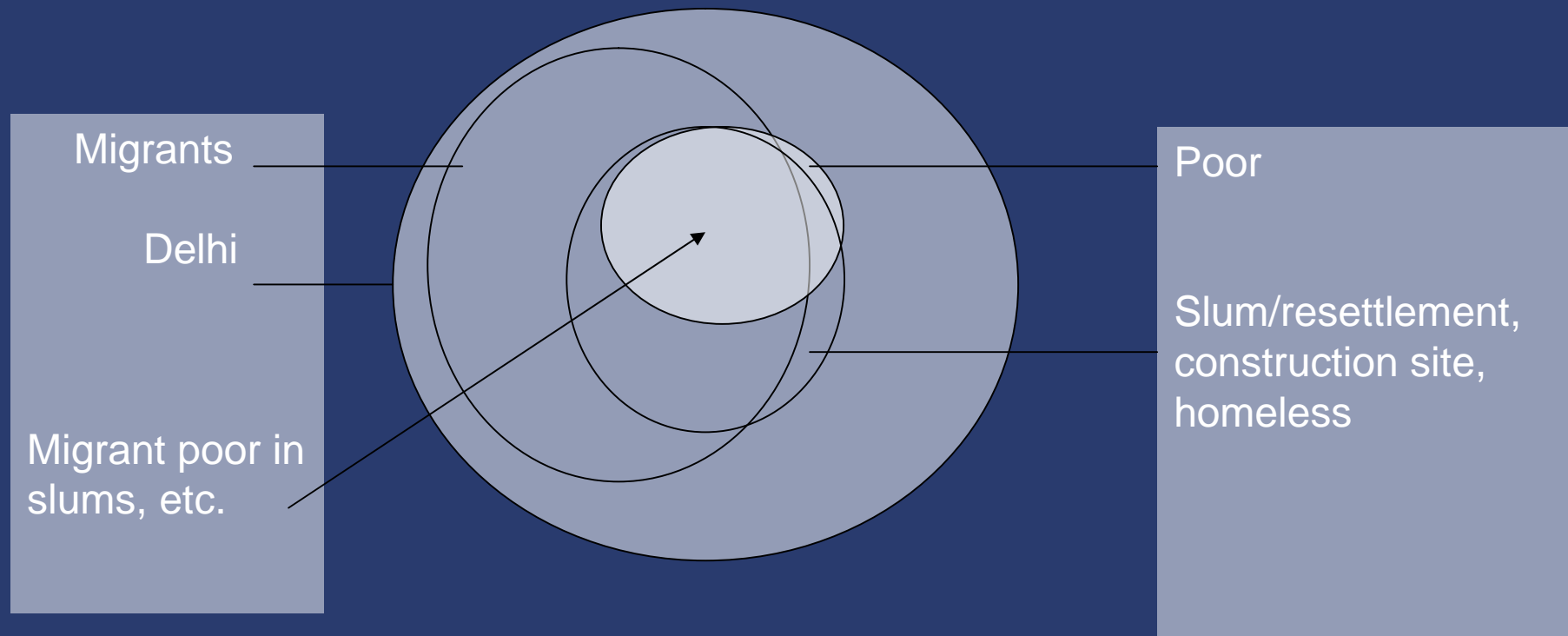
# Informal economy dominates

- Social protection vs social security
  - Social security is for formal economy workers and comes through employers
  - Informal economy workers may be in the formal sector but need social protection not from employers
- 90% of workers in India are in informal economy
  - Unorganised Sector Workers Social Security Bill
- Social protection through non-market distribution
  - Transfers of goods or cash
  - Universal or targeted
  - PDS distributes food

# Indians need PDS social protection

- 1 billion people
- 35% \$1/day poverty (2004)
- 18% severely underweight under 5s
- PDS distributes 35kg rice and wheat to every Indian household
  - Cheaper for households with lower incomes
- 5% of Central Government expenditure (2003/4)

# Poor households in Delhi live in slums and are migrants



# Theorising migrant disadvantage

	Examples of disadvantage			
Determinant of disadvantage	Migrant-specific	Intensified (for e.g. low-income actors)	Bureaucratically imposed	Over-representation
<b>Spatial/environmental</b>	Unfamiliarity with surroundings.	Lack of knowledge	Public information in local language	Health risks associated with informal settlements.
<b>Socio-political</b>	Lack of representation (illegal).	Uncertainty interacting with government	Discrimination in access to services	Lack of political access for slum dwellers.
<b>Socio-cultural</b>	Xenophobia	Social discrimination based on ethnicity, language, illegal status.	Additional stigmatising requirements to access services	Social perceptions of 'criminal poor'

# Theorising migrant access – the ideal type queue



- Gate: applicants claim eligibility for service
  - Indian national
- Line: applicants wait for service
  - First come first served
- Counter: applicants prove eligibility for service
  - Residence document
- Applicants know requirements and costs
- Administrators apply rules made by Weberian rule-makers



# Theorising migrant access - complex queues



- Supplementary gates of language, class, etc.
- Multiple queues together
- Administrators do not follow rules
  - Simplify or interpret process
  - Poor morale
  - Different interests – compete for resource
  - Accept non-formal criteria – friendship, exchanges.
- Applicants do not follow rules
  - Do not know or understand rules
  - Cannot comply with rules
  - Stigma

# Migrant responses (exit, voice, and loyalty)

## Loyalty

- Accept investments of time etc.

- Exit

- Market providers

- Theft

- Voice

- Administrative appeals

- Manipulate rule-makers or implementers

- Competitive individualised voice

- Mobilisation

- Violence

- Mass exit

# Intermediary action

- Three types of broker
  - Representatives have better knowledge of the rules
  - Fixers can change the rules
  - Agents find alternative sources of provisioning
- Politics affects availability and choice
- Rule-makers can change rules, but greater complexity gives greater scope for informal gain

# The PDS in Delhi



Oxford  
Policy  
Management

Monthly per capita consumption expenditure (Rs)	Number of households	Household rice + wheat consumption (kg/month)	% Household rice + wheat covered by 35kg PDS	Total actual household PDS purchase (kg/month)	% Household rice + wheat covered by actual PDS
0-335	16,043	41.0	85.4%	0.3	0.8%
335-395	18,717	31.6	110.6%	1.6	5.7%
395-485	64,174	45.5	76.9%	5.0	11.1%
485-580	147,065	49.0	71.5%	7.4	15.3%
580-675	179,151	46.0	76.1%	4.1	8.9%
675-790	192,521	54.5	64.3%	1.4	2.6%
790-930	299,477	43.7	80.0%	1.5	3.5%
930-1100	310,172	39.6	88.4%	0.9	2.4%
1100-1380	371,672	42.1	83.0%	0.0	0.0%
1380-1880	454,563	32.6	107.4%	1.2	3.9%
1880-2540	237,977	26.2	133.6%	0.2	0.9%
2540-	385,042	29.5	118.7%	0.3	1.0%

# Migrants' access to the PDS - technical



- Complex access structures
  - 2 queues: 3 categories of card to obtain and present
    - Above poverty line
    - Below poverty line
    - Poorest of the poor
- Slum households (30%) excluded periodically
- Permanent residence criterion excludes temporary migrants (?1m construction workers)
- Migrants miss quotas (poor full in 2002)
- Migrants pay to re-access

# Atul



Atul works for an organisation helping to organise construction workers, and is literate. He has a 'poor' card, and is applying for a 'very poor' card because he is the only earning member of his family, which contains 3 children. He is originally from Bihar, and moved to Delhi in 1988, living in a slum. It took 3 years or so to understand the system of acquiring ration cards, and then he got one when the government allowed their issue around 1990. In 2002, he acquired a 'poor' card under the targeted PDS. In 2003, the slum was cleared, and the household moved to Bawana, allocated a 12m<sup>2</sup> plot because of their post-1990 ration card. Transferring the card was relatively easy and no extra-legal costs were involved, although of course 2 months of ration were foregone during the process, and there were a significant number of journeys to offices, costing money and preventing work.

# Queuing for a card

- Added costs of office closures etc.
- Knowledge problem
- Aggregate exit is not voice
- Administrative appeal risks persecution
- Politicians can help individuals, but unreliably
  - Hard for recent migrants
  - No voting rights
- Supreme Court/NGOs help groups, but rarely

# Identity and rights

- Ration cards are identity documents
- Delhi Government wishes to avoid social tourism
- Entitlement 'black hole'
- Citizenship rights?
- Does the government have incentives?
- Bilateral agreements are few (Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh)



# Where do we go from here?

- Internal migrants' social protection is endangered and important
- Informal economy social protection is vital
- Legal frameworks are not enough
- Access structures are important
- What does 'universal coverage' mean?
- Do incentives exist for the government to socially protect disenfranchised migrants?