

Empowering India's Migrant Workforce

Key Schemes and Progress

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"We salute the determination & hard work of countless workers who play a big role in India's progress. Shrameva Jayate!"

~ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi



India's migrant workers are essential to various sectors. In search of better opportunities, many leave their homes, often facing challenges along the way. The government is actively working to empower these workers by ensuring their rights are protected and providing essential support. Migration is a common phenomenon in India, as workers frequently move across states for improved livelihoods and opportunities.

Migration in India is a dynamic process and the 2011 Census reported over 41 million interstate migrants. According to the 2020-21 Migration report, the overall migration rate is 28.9%, with 26.5% from rural areas. Around 10.8% migrate mainly for employment. To improve their lives, the government is committed to making their journey smoother through various initiatives. The eShram portal is one such initiative aimed at enhancing their quality of life.



eShram Portal – One Stop Solution

The Ministry of Labour and Employment launched the [eShram portal](#) on 26th August 2021 to create a National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW), verified with Aadhaar. On 21st October 2024, the eShram "One-Stop Solution" was introduced, integrating various social security and welfare schemes into a single portal. This enables registered workers to access and track benefits from multiple schemes directly through eShram.

Welfare Schemes for the Migrant Labourers

Employment schemes are designed to improve the lives of workers by providing access to opportunities for skill development, financial assistance, and social security. These initiatives aim to empower workers, offering support that enhances their livelihoods and ensures greater security for their future. **Few such schemes include:**

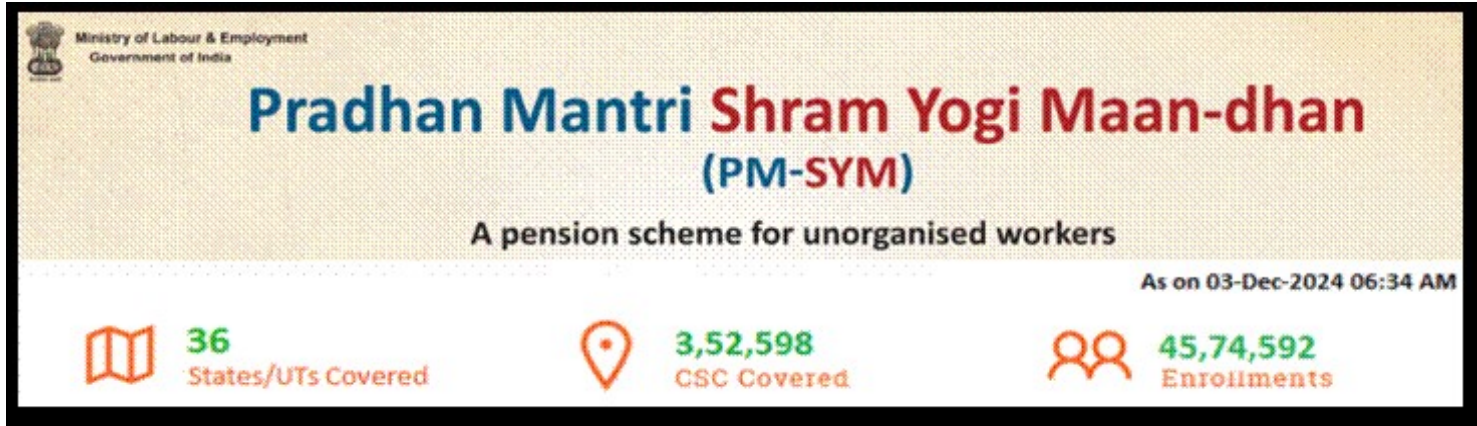
PM Street Vendor’s AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)

Launched on June 1, 2020, the scheme aims to provide collateral-free working capital loans to street vendors. This initiative was introduced to help vendors resume their businesses, which were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, offering them financial support for recovery and self-reliance.



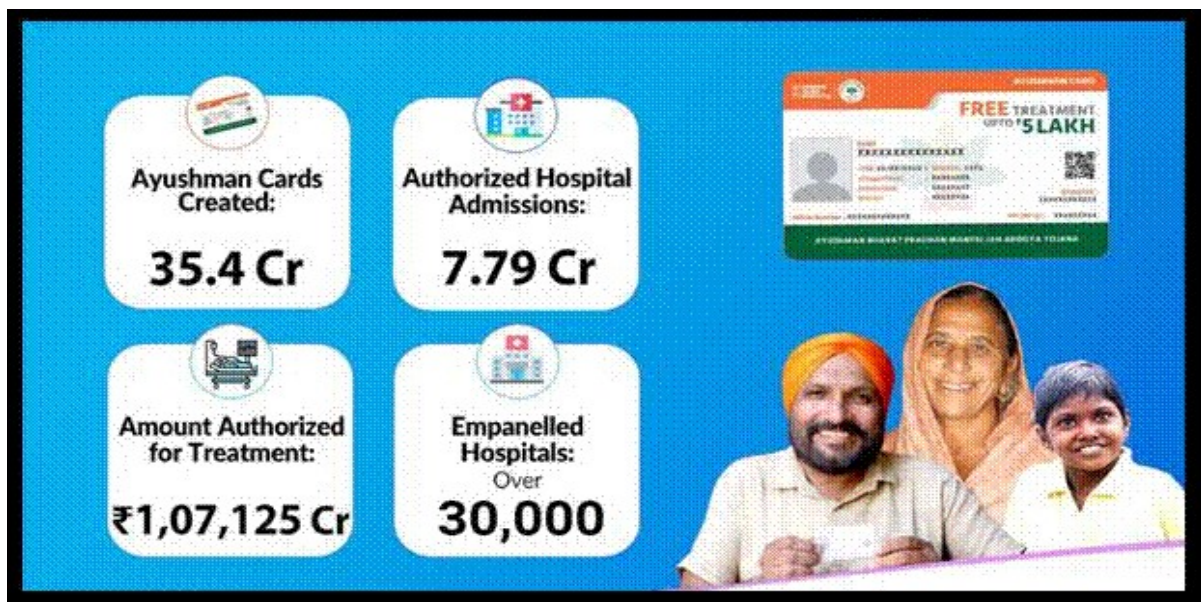
Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PMSYM)

This scheme launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on 15th February 2019, aims to provide a minimum assured pension to workers in the unorganized sector, including migrant workers, upon reaching the age of 60. The scheme, announced in the Interim Budget, targets workers earning less than ₹15,000 per month and offers a monthly pension of ₹3,000 after they turn 60, ensuring financial security for their future.



Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya

Launched on September 23, 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by providing health coverage to India's most vulnerable. Covering over 12 crore families (nearly 55 crore individuals), it provides Rs.5 lakh health coverage for secondary and tertiary health benefits to those migrant workers who are covered as eligible beneficiaries as per deprivation and occupation criteria. The scheme's portability feature allows beneficiaries to avail treatment at any empanelled hospital across India, regardless of their home state. Notably, 11.9 lakh hospitalizations worth ₹3,100 crores have been authorized under this portability feature, enhancing accessibility for beneficiaries nationwide.



Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)



Additionally, the government's commitment to food security is strengthened by the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)**, which has been extended for the next five years starting from 1st January 2024. This scheme provides free food grains and direct cash transfers to families below the poverty line, including migrant workers. In addition, the **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)** scheme, launched in 2018, ensures food security through the portability of ration cards across India. Together, these initiatives create a robust safety net for migrant workers, guaranteeing access to food security no matter where they are in the country. Migrant laborers can easily access the benefits of the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme by following these simple steps:

- 1. Use Your Existing Ration Card:** Migrant workers can use their existing ration card to get subsidized food at any Fair Price Shop (FPS) across India, regardless of their location.
- 2. Check Details on ePoS Devices:** At FPSs, ration card details and entitlements are available through ePoS (electronic point-of-sale system) devices, ensuring a smooth and transparent process.
- 3. Download the MERA RATION App:** Migrant workers can download the 'MERA RATION' app, available in 13 languages, to get real-time updates about their ration card, nearby FPS locations, and entitlements. By linking their ration card to the MERA RATION app, migrant workers can easily access food grains from any FPS, ensuring they continue to receive food security benefits no matter where they go.

By ensuring continuous access to food security, the government is laying the foundation for a more secure and supportive environment for migrant workers across India.

Conclusion

Empowering migrant workers is not just about providing immediate relief but ensuring long-term security and opportunities for growth. Through various schemes and legal protections, the government is working to create a safer, more supportive environment for migrant workers, helping them access skills training, social security, and fair wages. These efforts aim to address their challenges and make sure that, no matter where they go, they can build better lives for themselves and their families. While there's still work to be done, the journey towards a more secure and empowered future for migrant workers is well underway.

Reference

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Santosh Kumar/ Ritu Kataria/ Kamna Lakaria

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