



Tathya Macwan

Migration, Informality and Development

Who can apply?

PhD scholars, early career researchers, and development practitioners

A learning workshop by **Work Fair and Free (WFF) Aajeevika Bureau** and **Institute of Development Studies (IDS)**

Workshop Dates (Two Editions)

19th to 23rd January 2026 | Bengaluru

16th to 20th February 2026 | Jaipur

Deadline to apply: **Monday, November 17, 2025**

About the Workshop

Migration, Informality, and Development is a five-day, residential learning programme that brings together doctoral scholars, early career researchers, and practitioners to critically examine the intersections of informal labour and migration in India and South Asia.



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The movement of people across regions and employment sectors is central to India's socio-economic fabric. The workshop explores how the story of labour migration is multifaceted and contradictory in many ways. While mobility opens employment opportunities, it exposes workers to precarious work regimes. This paradox is rooted in structural inequalities.

Migrants, largely from marginalised caste, class, and gender identities, encounter social and political exclusion at both their places of origin and destination. They often find themselves locked into the most precarious occupational niches. Women migrants bear the double burden of productive and reproductive labour, and their contributions remain undervalued and invisible, undermining their well-being and political agency. Urban centres, celebrated as engines of growth, often fail to integrate migrants equitably, and the planning of cities rarely accounts for the needs of this workforce, resulting in inadequate housing and limited access to social infrastructure.

The workshop also goes beyond the more familiar rural-urban migration lens to explore diverse and underrepresented forms of mobility, including commuting migrants and those engaged in seasonal or circular migration, all critical to sustaining livelihoods and regional economies. By situating these groups in broader development debates, participants are encouraged to think critically about inclusion, rights, and recognition for all forms of mobility.

Migration trajectories are increasingly shaped by climate impacts, deepening the vulnerabilities of migrant workers and, at times, prompting adaptive responses. For instance, rising heat exacerbates already hazardous working conditions, while recurrent droughts, floods, crop failures, and changing agricultural patterns drive migration as a resilience strategy. Through case studies, participants will examine how existing social and economic inequalities, political voice, and cultural capital work to influence mobility as they intersect with changing spatial dimensions and environmental pressures.

The workshop will also address emerging challenges such as platform-based and technology-mediated work, which redefine employer-employee relations and introduce new forms of precarity. More broadly, weakening labour legislation continues to erode workers' rights and entitlements. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the glaring structural exclusions of migrant workers and has simultaneously deepened the labour crisis, underscoring the urgency of these debates.



Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, this workshop situates migration within broader contexts of informality and development, both increasingly marked by seemingly exogenous drivers like environmental challenges and new technological regimes. It aims to develop a nuanced understanding of labour migration in India, including the historical patterns, labour market dynamics, exclusionary urban imaginations, and the emerging challenges of climate and technology-related changes, while also examining the legal and policy frameworks regulating migration and the strategies of labour movements to achieve a dignified world of work.

Workshop Themes

The workshop will explore various themes, including:

- Theoretical frameworks to understand migration, informality, and development
- Patterns and trends of internal and international migration
- Intersections of caste, gender, and migration
- Urbanisation and service provisioning
- Migration and sustainability in the context of a changing climate
- Occupational safety, health, and well-being
- Migrant workers and platform-based work
- Strategies for addressing precarity through advocacy and worker collectivisation

It will also include skill-building sessions on:

- Using public data sources to analyse migration patterns
- Applying qualitative methods to understand diverse forms of mobility
- Leveraging media and digital tools for labour rights advocacy
- Designing strategies and tactics for movement-building

The sessions are facilitated by leading scholars, trade unionists, and civil society leaders. The workshop will be in-person and blend interactive lectures, group discussions, guided learning activities, case analyses, and film screenings. Participants can address their questions in small group settings and benefit from peer exchange and networks built through the course.



Learning Objectives

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:



Interrogate the intersectional and gendered dimensions of migration

Understand labour market dynamics and exclusions



Question emerging technologies, forms and rules of work, and informality

Review legal and policy frameworks governing migration and work



Workshop Anchors

This workshop is led by researchers and practitioners from WFF and Aajeevika Bureau, bringing decades of research, teaching, and field experience.

Dr Tara Nair

Director (Research), Work Fair and Free | Aajeevika Bureau

Dr Geeta Thatra

Associate Director, Work Fair and Free

Divya Varma

Director (Policy and Practice), Work Fair and Free

Dr Varinder Jain

Assistant Professor, Institute of Development Studies

Dr Harchand Ram

Assistant Professor, Institute of Development Studies



Programme Details

When and Where?

The workshop will be held in **two editions**. Applicants are encouraged to indicate their preferred location in the application form, keeping proximity in mind. Both editions will follow the same structure, ensuring an equally rigorous and enriching learning experience.

- **19 - 23 January 2026 | Visthar, Bengaluru**
- **16 - 20 February 2026 | IDS, Jaipur**



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How to apply:

Fill out and submit the Google Form by **Monday, November 17, 2025**. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

Participants will be selected based on their work on migration or labour and their motivation for joining the workshop.

Logistics:

Accommodation and food will be provided during the workshop.

Partial travel support will be available for budget travel to and from the workshop venue, reimbursed as per actuals.



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Key Dates

Bengaluru

17th
November
2025 | **Deadline to submit the application**

17th
December
2025 | **Email notification to selected candidates**

21st
December
2025 | **Last day to register**

19th to 23rd
January
2026 | **Workshop at Visthar, Bengaluru**

Jaipur

17th
November
2025 | **Deadline to submit the application**

7th
January
2026 | **Email notification to selected candidates**

14th
January
2026 | **Last day to register**

16th to 20th
February
2026 | **Workshop at Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Jaipur**

Diversity Policy

WFF, Aajeevika Bureau and IDS aim to have a diverse cohort for this workshop. We encourage women, persons with disabilities and those from economically and socially excluded communities with requisite qualifications and skills to apply.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the application, please write to
contactus@workfairandfree.org



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Work Fair and Free

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