

For Immediate Release

Anant National University launches a Research Report
‘Shelter Solutions for Migrant Construction Workers’

Ahmedabad, 16th Sept 2022: Anant Centre for Sustainability at Anant National University (AnantU), Ahmedabad, launched a comprehensive research report on **Shelter Solutions for Migrant Construction Workers**. The research aims to develop an overall understanding of the housing issues of the workers during the break of the COVID 19 pandemic in India from spring 2020. The data-driven research report also provides unique and practical solutions for migrant workers in the construction sector.

Anant Center for Sustainability & Habitat and Humanity's Terwilliger Centre for Innovation in Shelter collaborated to study the housing challenges of migrant construction workers who make up for 41.6% of short-term and 5.3% of long-term migrants of rural origin across India. Researchers Sharadbala Joshi, Dhaval Monani, Asima Sahu and Anurita Bhatnagar focused on western India, specifically Maharashtra, a state that attracts the maximum number of inter-state migrants. The findings of this primary data-driven research inform policymakers and private companies in the construction sector of the aspects related to social infrastructure and housing that are critical to migrant workers.

The research focussed on the journey of the migrant construction workers from the villages to the cities to understand certain key parameters like the kind of accommodation they looked for in the cities, with whom did they share it, and the reasons that prompted them to return to the villages during the covid-19 lockdown, in what ways has life changed for them since their return to the city post-pandemic, and what kind of housing solutions would work best for them.

The research found that a significant 69.2% of respondents from Mumbai-Navi-Mumbai-Panvel-Vasai (MNM-PV) are interstate migrants and those in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (Pune-PCMC) are 88.2%. Out of these, 29% and 95% of respondents found their houses independently in MNM-PV and Pune-PCMC, respectively. Despite the push for pucca houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U), 37.3% of respondents in Mumbai live in kuccha accommodation and the same is at 80% in Pune-PCMC. The study, while identifying the day-to-day challenges faced in their settlements, deduced the fact that 36% of respondents in MNM-PV pointed to poor conditions of toilets and washing facilities and limited timing and quantity of water supply. A staggering 31% of respondents in MNM-PV said that one of the main reasons for them to return to their respective villages in March 2020, was finding "No opportunities to earn income" in the city.

Based on these crucial findings, the research report attempts to explore alternative affordable housing options for migrants. These include short-term accommodation options with flexible tenure and access to basic services, co-living Shelter Solutions for Migrant Construction Workers accommodation, as well as on-site portable shelters. On the latter, the students also built a prototype with the leftover tarpaulin from the emergency response auto rickshaws built by the Anant Centre for Sustainability during the pandemic, to create cross-laminated and insulated tarpaulin units.

Speaking about the research report, Miniya Chatterji, Director Anant Centre for Sustainability and CEO, Sustain Labs, Paris, said, “Anant Centre for Sustainability has been actively engaged in innovating with implementing practical solutions to serve the most disadvantaged sections of the society who were hit the hardest by the pandemic. During the pandemic, we established 28 COVID care quarantine centres and temporary hospitals equipped with medical devices across five states. We also transformed the humble autorickshaw to design, create and put on-the-road emergency oxygen response vehicles and mobile COVID testing facilities in 2 states. In the same pioneering spirit, Anant Centre for Sustainability is recommending innovative, alternative and affordable solutions in this report for improving living conditions of migrant construction workers”.

Based on the research findings and the need for exploring alternative affordable housing options for the migrants, some temporary, rental and co-living housing options have been recommended.