

**WEBINAR**  
**COVID-19: Preparedness and Responsiveness of PRIs in Dealing with Reverse Migration**

Date: 14 April 2020 (Tuesday); Time: 11 am – 12.45 pm

Thirty seven percent or 45.36 crore Indians are migrants. Approximately three crores of them migrate for employment or work (Census, 2011). Majority of these are employed in informal sector in the cities. 'India on the move and churning' – a chapter in the Economic Survey 2016-17 revealed that an average of nine million people migrate between states every year for either education or work. However, no one has ever thought that this 'moving and churning' will become a nightmare. Amidst lockdown due to COVID-19, it became clearer that 'reverse' migration of millions of people back to villages would be an unprecedented phenomenon. Most of these migrants originated from the poorest and most backward districts of the country, and belonged to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. A majority of them do not have land or any productive asset, depend on daily/weekly wages to support their families, and live in densely populated informal settlements and colonies in the cities. The sudden 'lockdown' to halt the spread of COVID-19 virus has created panic of infection and death triggering this reverse migration. By all accounts, this situation is likely to continue because of the uncertainty of lockdown period and might have serious consequences in the long run. There are reported incidences where the returning people are facing harassment and restrictions on movement when they reach their villages. Misinformation, prejudices, and lack of awareness are major bottlenecks as returnees are being treated as carriers of virus and are not welcomed by the local villagers. The biggest challenge they are likely to confront is the lack of opportunities for employment and livelihood – the most compelling reason for which they migrated in the first place.

The central and state governments have announced several interim relief packages. However, to make it work, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) can play a major role being the most proximate institutions. The Panchayats can play critical roles in this situation, promoting hygienic practices, creating local quarantine facilities and assuring food for such families.

Many panchayats have already taken several steps in these regards, and demonstrated their relevance and effectiveness. Panchayats can be supported to do even more, provided they are facilitated to understand:

- Preventive health measures under COVID-19
- Entitlements announced by the state and central governments
- Right to livelihood and social security to migrants
- Synergising the efforts by government and civil society
- Developing an information system at the Gram Panchayat level about the migrants

PRIA International Academy (PIA) is hosting a webinar on **“COVID-19: Preparedness and Responsiveness of PRIs in Dealing with Reverse Migration”** on **14 April 2020 (Tuesday), 11.00 am to 12.45 pm**. This will explore the following questions:

- What are some of the immediate responses panchayats are making to address vulnerabilities arising out of the reverse migration?
- What roles can PRIs play to deal with pandemic and its impacts in the medium-term?
- How can PRIs be supported to play such roles effectively and sensitively?

Panellists:

- Ms Rita Sarin, Vice President & Country Director, The Hunger Project, New Delhi
- Shri Jagadananda, Mentor and Co-Founder, CYSD, Bhubaneswar

- Dr Joy Elamon, Director, Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Thrissur
- Dr Yogesh Kumar, Executive Director, Samarthan, Bhopal
- Dr Kathiresan, Associate Professor and Head, Centre for Panchayati Raj, NIRDPR, Hyderabad (tbc)

Moderator:

- Dr. Anshuman Karol, Senior Programme Manager, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), New Delhi

**Register** in advance for this webinar:

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_zA173cP7RteyvhC2PMeXTw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zA173cP7RteyvhC2PMeXTw)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.