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Promoting safe overseas labour migration: Lessons from ASK's safe migration project in India

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Executive summary

More than a quarter (28%) of all overseas Indians resided in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in 2020. Migration to the Gulf countries from India is dominated by unskilled and semi-skilled workers who work on a contract basis and who have to return home once their contract expires. The Indian government has introduced several measures to promote safe overseas migration for work. Even so, labour exploitations in the India-GCC migration corridors are widely documented. Efforts to reintegrate overseas migrants who return because of labour exploitations are also limited in India. A review of published and grey literature reported that evidence about the impact of safe migration interventions was limited and came largely from process documentation. There is clearly a need for more evidence on what works to promote safe migration for overseas labour migrants than what is currently available.

The Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) in partnership with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) supported the Association for Stimulating Know-how (ASK) to pilot test a project aimed at building a safe labour migration ecosystem in source communities in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India. ASK implemented the project during April 2020–August 2022 in Siwan district of Bihar and Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh. The project established Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and integrated six pillars of activities. The activities included pre-decision and pre-emigration training sessions for migrants, families, and communities, behavioural-change communication campaigns, provision of paralegal services and reintegration services, linking vulnerable migrants and their families to existing government entitlements, and provision of migrant-focused financial products and services. The project also worked with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to build their internal systems and resilience to establish, sustain, and effectively run MRCs and provide services to the community.

The Population Council in partnership with GFEMS and Norad undertook a community-based quantitative study to assess male migrants' awareness of and engagement with ASK's project. We also sought to examine whether the intervention was successful in improving male migrants' knowledge about safe migration pathways and whether it helped them to follow such pathways. We used a pre-post difference-in-differences (DiD) design with longitudinal survey data collected from aspiring migrants from intervention villages and matched comparison villages at two points in time. The first survey was conducted during August–October 2021 and February–March 2022 before the aspiring migrants left for overseas and the follow-up survey was conducted some 6–9 months later from August–September 2022, presumably when they had migrated overseas. We collected the list of intervention villages from ASK and selected 30 villages randomly for conducting the study. We selected two districts—Gopalganj in Bihar and Deoria in Uttar Pradesh—to serve as comparison districts, after matching them with the intervention districts on such indicators as population size, proportion of rural population, female literacy rate, proportion of population belonging to scheduled castes/tribes, proportion of population belonging to the Muslim religion, and the volume of overseas migration to the GCC countries. We similarly selected 30 villages randomly from the comparison districts. Thus, our study was conducted in 60 villages from the intervention and comparison districts.

At baseline, we conducted a household survey in 12,270 households to identify aspiring migrants. We defined aspiring migrants as males aged 18–50 who had considered going to the Gulf in the year preceding the interview or were planning to go within a year of the interview. We identified 1,280 aspiring migrants, and from among them, we interviewed 1,154 aspiring migrants face-to-face, with a response rate of 90 percent at baseline. We re-interviewed 736 of the 1,154 respondents some 6–9 months later, with a follow-up rate of 64 percent. We used the DiD method to measure the effect of the intervention, and we conducted intention-to-treat as well as per-protocol analyses. The study protocol was approved by the Population Council's Institutional Review Board.

Key findings

Male migrants' awareness of and engagement with ASK's safe migration project

Findings that only 45 percent of respondents from the intervention area were aware of the project imply modest success of the project. However, we note that respondents in our study were drawn from a community-based, representative sample of male migrants and that the project was implemented in a challenging environment, particularly characterised by disruptions due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Findings also show that awareness of specific intervention activities varied. While 38 percent of respondents in the intervention area were aware of training sessions conducted, only 6–8 percent were aware of provision of paralegal services, support services to victims of labour exploitation, and information and support for accessing benefits from government schemes.

Engagement with the project activities among male migrants and their family members was low.¹ In total, 29 percent of respondents from the intervention area reported that they or their family members had some level of engagement with the project. Specifically, 21 percent of respondents reported that they or their family members had attended at least one training session conducted by ASK and 12 percent reported that they had paid attention to their campaign activities such as posters and street plays. Seven percent of respondents reported that they or their family had received paralegal assistance from the project and 2–4 percent reported that they or their family had received support services for victims of labour exploitations, information about or support for accessing benefits from government schemes, and financial services from Mitrata. At the same time, findings show no self-selection in participation in the intervention activities or selective targeting of the intervention activities by project staff for the most part.

Effect of the intervention on male migrants' awareness of forced labour and safe overseas migration pathways

Findings show that the intervention was successful in improving male migrants' awareness of forced labour and its different manifestations as well as government measures to make overseas migration for work safe. The average number of forms of forced labour spontaneously listed by respondents, for example, increased somewhat more in the intervention area (from 1.9 to 2.9) than in the comparison area (from 1.9 to 2.5). The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 35 percent in the number of forms of forced labour spontaneously listed by respondents in the intervention area in general [$p=0.027$] and 51 percent among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area [$p=0.028$], compared with those in the comparison area. Similarly, the average number of government measures for safe overseas migration that respondents were aware of increased more sharply in the intervention area (from 1.5 to 2.3) than in the comparison area (from 1.3 to 1.5). The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 56 percent in awareness of the number of government measures for overseas migration for work among respondents in the intervention area in general [$p\leq 0.001$] and 74 percent increase among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area [$p\leq 0.001$], compared with those in the comparison area.

However, a similar positive effect was not observed in improving their awareness of safe channels and procedures for overseas migration, the reasons for which were not discernible from the study data. Perhaps, respondents' awareness of safe migration channels and procedures were more influenced by their real-life experiences or that of others than by what is ideal, legal, and correct. It

¹ Engagement with the project is defined as respondents' or their family members' attendance in at least one training session conducted by ASK, attention paid to campaign activities, receipt of paralegal services, receipt of support services aimed at victims of labour exploitations, receipt of information about or support for accessing benefits of government schemes, or receipt of financial services by Mitrata.

is also possible that the content of the training sessions or campaigns may have covered different aspects of safe migration pathways unevenly.

Findings show greater positive effects among male migrants who were exposed or whose family members were exposed to the intervention than male migrants in the intervention area in general. This highlights the importance of reaching a larger proportion of migrants and their families directly for a more widespread effect.

Effect of the intervention on male migrants' safe migration practices

Findings show that only a small proportion of aspiring migrants who participated in the study managed to go to the GCC countries during the inter-survey period, perhaps because of travel restrictions and disruptions in economic activities with the outbreak of COVID-19 (26% of respondents from the comparison area and 20% of those from the intervention area). Many were still intending to go to the GCC countries (42–43%), although a noticeable proportion were no longer planning to go (15–16%).

Findings show that the intervention was successful in promoting selected safe migration practices among male migrants, for example, obtaining a passport, undergoing a skill test, attending a pre-departure training workshop, and equipping them with details of agencies to contact in case of an emergency. The average number of safe migration practices that respondents adhered to increased more sharply in the intervention area (from 0.9 to 1.5 on a scale that ranged from 0 to 4) than in the comparison area (from 0.8 to 1.3) and particularly among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area (from 1.0 to 2.0). The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 24 percent in safe migration practices in the intervention area in general [$p \leq 0.000$] and 58 percent among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area [$p \leq 0.000$], compared with those in the comparison area. However, the number of current or returned migrants who were re-interviewed were too few to assess comprehensively the effect of the intervention on adherence to safe migration practices, including practices related to job contract, visa, insurance, among others. Any future evaluation of the project needs to follow up intervention participants long enough to get a comprehensive picture of their migration journey and the effect of exposure to the intervention on their experiences during their migration journey.

Effect of the intervention on male migrants' use of formal financial products

Findings show that exposure to the intervention had a mixed effect on male migrants' use of formal financial products. We found no effect of the intervention on male migrants' ownership of a bank account, perhaps because ownership of a bank account was high even at the baseline. However, the intervention was successful in promoting the use of debit cards and insurance coverage among male migrants. The use of debit card increased among respondents in the intervention area (from 54% to 66%) and among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area (from 58% to 69%), while there was hardly any change among respondents in the comparison area. The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 15 percent in the use of a debit card among respondents in the intervention area in general [$p \leq 0.001$] and 13 percent among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area [$p \leq 0.039$], compared with those in the comparison area. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who reported their having an insurance policy increased from 16 percent to 27 percent in the intervention area and from 18 percent to 29 percent among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area, while there was hardly any change in the comparison area. The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of nine percent in the ownership of an insurance policy among respondents in the intervention area in general [$p \leq 0.010$], compared with those in the comparison area. However, no such effect was observed for respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area.

Help-seeking by male migrants for difficulties experienced in their preparation for going overseas for work and at destination

More than half of respondents in the intervention and comparison areas reported that they had ever experienced difficulties in their preparation for going overseas for work. Typical difficulties experienced included misinformation or lack of information, being overcharged, deception, among others. Help-seeking for resolving difficulties experienced was modest among respondents in both the intervention and comparison areas, with fewer than half of those who had faced difficulties reporting their having sought help to address their difficulties. For those who did seek help, it was typically sought from friends and families in both intervention and comparison areas (49%–61% of those who had sought help). Seeking help from formal sources such as labour authorities, police, trade unions, and NGOs was limited (19%–30% of those who had sought help). Even so, findings show that compared with respondents in the comparison area, a smaller proportion of their counterparts in the intervention area sought the help of recruitment agencies (16% vs 27% of those who had sought help), and a larger proportion of respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area sought help from formal sources (30% vs 19% of those who had sought help). Although these differences were only mildly significant statistically, they suggest that the intervention may have encouraged respondents to seek help from formal sources and discouraged them from approaching recruitment agents to resolve difficulties that they had faced. Of those who had emigrated for work during the inter-survey period, 38 percent of respondents from the comparison area and 39 percent from the intervention area reported their having experienced difficulties at destination. None of these respondents sought help from anyone to resolve their issue.

In brief, ASK has implemented the safe migration project in a challenging environment, particularly characterised by disruptions due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Project monitoring data and findings from our study that nearly half of the respondents from the intervention area were aware of the project indicate the feasibility of the project. Moreover, the project was successful in improving awareness of forced labour and government measures for making overseas migration safe among male migrants. The project was also successful in promoting selected safe migration practices among male migrants, for example, obtaining a passport, undergoing a skill test, attending a pre-departure training workshops, and equipping them with information about agencies to contact in case of an emergency. It had a positive effect in promoting the use of such financial products as a debit card and insurance. We did not assess rigorously the effect of the intervention on male migrants' help-seeking practices for difficulties faced in their preparation for overseas migration. However, there is some evidence that suggests the intervention may have encouraged male migrants to seek help from formal sources and discouraged them from approaching recruitment agents to resolve difficulties that they had faced. The success of the project, given the challenges, is all the more encouraging, and the programme holds great promise for replication in and upscaling to other parts of the district or state.

Recommendations for programme implementers

Findings show notable 'awareness-engagement' gap—while 45 percent of male migrants from the intervention area were aware of the project, only 29 percent reported some level of engagement with the project activities. Moreover, male migrants' awareness of and engagement with the intervention varied by intervention components. While 38 percent of respondents from the intervention area, for example, were aware of training sessions conducted, only six percent were aware of provision of information and/or support for accessing benefits from government schemes. It is possible that disruptions due to the outbreak of COVID-19 may have affected participation of migrants and their family. It is also possible that all strategies were not perhaps intended to be delivered to migrants and their families uniformly. However, it is important that programme implementers critically examine the challenges that they may have faced in delivering the intervention activities and in ensuring the participation of migrants, their families, and communities to draw lessons for scaling-up the intervention.

The intervention succeeded in improving awareness of forced labour and its manifestations as well as government measures for making overseas labour migration safe among male migrants. However, there was no significant improvement in awareness of safe channels and procedures for overseas labour migration among them. Implementers of safe migration interventions, including pre-departure orientation training programmes, need to ensure that content of their awareness programmes are sufficiently comprehensive or sustained to fill knowledge gaps, erase misconceptions, or combat misinformation.

Findings show greater positive effects among respondents who were exposed or whose family members were exposed to the intervention than respondents in the intervention area in general. These findings highlight that the safe migration projects like ASK's must invest in directly reaching a large proportion of migrants and their families for creating impact at scale. The feasibility of conducting awareness campaigns about safe migration at the village level at regular intervals need to be explored.

Recommendations for governments

The Indian government has introduced several measures to promote safe overseas migration for work, but awareness and reach of these measures among aspiring, current, and returned migrants remain limited. The ASK project has demonstrated the feasibility of conducting pre-decision and pre-emigration training and behavioural-change communication campaigns targeted at migrants, their families, and community members, providing paralegal services and reintegration services, and linking migrants and their families with government schemes. Training curricula and content of communication campaigns used by the project may be shared with the Office of the Protector of Emigration, government-sponsored overseas recruitment agencies, and government departments entrusted with the task of promoting safe overseas migration and ensuring the welfare of migrants, including the Ministry of Labour. Collaborations between programme implementers, private sector, and government bodies are needed to make low-interest or interest-free loans with minimal documentation to potential migrants, and to provide job placement support to potential migrants. Furthermore, replicating and scaling-up intervention projects like ASK's require active support from and engagement with local, district, and state governments.

Recommendations for monitoring, evaluation, and learning practitioners

Our assessment has contributed to expanding the evidence on the effect of safe migration interventions, though evidence remains limited. There is clearly a need for generating more evidence on what works to promote safe migration for overseas labour migrants in general than what is currently available.

There were a few limitations in our assessment. Notably, there was substantial loss to follow-up. The number of respondents who emigrated and were re-interviewed were too few to capture comprehensively experiences of male migrants at destination. The follow-up interview was conducted after a gap of 6–9 months because of delays as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19 and local elections, and it was not sufficient to capture long-term and sustained impact of the intervention. Future evaluations of models like ASK's need to build in measures to overcome these challenges. It is important that evaluations of safe migration interventions have a longer time frame, to allow tracking of migrant workers over a longer period.

Our study could not shed light on why engagement with the project was low despite reasonable level of awareness about the project. The ASK's project comprised six pillars of intervention activities. However, it was not possible to explore in our assessment whether all components were equally important to achieve the project's objective of improving awareness of and adherence to safe migration pathways, because engagement with the project was low in general. It was also not possible to examine which pillar of intervention activities contributed to the positive effect observed in our assessment. Future outcome and process evaluation of projects like ASK's must use designs that can address questions on implementation research of this kind. There should be collaboration

between programme implementers and monitoring, evaluation, and learning practitioners to evaluate the process of intervention delivery, mechanisms through which the intervention achieved some successes, and external factors that might have affected the impact of such intervention projects. Similar collaborations are required to generate evidence on long-term effects as well.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and objectives

More than a quarter (28%) of all overseas Indians resided in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in 2020 (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, n.d.). The migration corridor from India to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was the third largest migration corridor in the world (over 3.5 million migrants in 2020), and the migration corridor from India to Saudi Arabia was the ninth largest (over 2.5 million migrants in 2020) (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2021).² Migration to the Gulf countries from India is dominated by unskilled and semi-skilled workers who work on a contract basis and who have to return home once their contract expires (Bhagat et al., 2013; Rajan and Zachariah 2019; Rajan and Arokkiaraj, 2020). The Indian workforce in the GCC countries includes legal, undocumented, and trafficked workers (Rajan and Joseph, 2017; Rajan, 2019).

The Indian government has introduced several measures to promote safe overseas migration for work (Table 1). The 'e-Migrate', a unique computerised portal, was set up to facilitate emigration of Emigration Check Required (ECR)³ category of passport holders and protect them against possible exploitation by dubious recruiters. The Emigration Act, 1983, was amended to put more curbs on recruiting agents to better protect migrants. The government also has set minimum referral wages for Indian migrant workers employed in various capacities. Further, for females proceeding for overseas work with an ECR passport, the Indian government has fixed a minimum age of 30 years for migrating and has permitted their recruitment only through state-run recruitment agencies. Multimedia campaigns to inform potential emigrants on safe and legal migration are run from time to time. The Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana, a mandatory insurance scheme for all ECR-category workers going to ECR countries, was revamped to ensure expedited settlement of claims (for example, accidental death or permanent disability while on employment abroad). The Indian government has signed with all the GCC countries a Labour and Manpower Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to safeguard the interests of Indian workers. It has launched Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana to upskill potential migrant workers to improve their employability overseas and also Pre-Departure Orientation and Training to enhance soft skills of Indian migrant workers going abroad. The government has also set up measures such as the Indian Workers Resource Centres in selected countries to provide guidance and counselling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers, 'MADAD', a 24x7 online portal to address grievances, and the Indian Community Welfare Fund in Indian Missions to provide welfare services in times of distress and emergency. Indian Missions organise 'Open Houses' to get feedback and address grievances of Indian workers.

Table 1: Schemes launched by the Indian government, and MOUs signed between India and the GCC countries

Schemes/MoUs	Launched in	Number of beneficiaries till September 2022
e-Migrate portal	2014	
Number of Indians who got emigration clearance through the e-Migrate portal	2014	3,713,626
Number of foreign employers registered with the e-Migrate portal	2014	261,444
MADAD, a 24x7 online portal	2015	

² The Mexico to United States corridor was the largest migration corridor in the world (nearly 11 million migrants) and the second largest migration corridor was from the Syrian Arab Republic to Turkey (nearly 4 million migrants) in 2020 (IOM, 2021).

³ As per the Emigration Act, 1983, Emigration Check Required (ECR) categories of Indian passport holders require to obtain emigration clearance from the office of the Protector of Emigrants, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, for going to selected countries, which include the GCC countries, for employment.

Schemes/MoUs	Launched in	Number of beneficiaries till September 2022
Grievances registered	2015	80,441
Grievances resolved	2015	76,601
Grievances under process	2015	3,840
Authentication of documents for use abroad	2015	8,913,795
Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana	2016	Not available
Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana	2017	Not available
Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs /Agreements signed with the GCC countries	Qatar in 1985 & 2007 Kuwait in 2007 UAE in 2006 & 2011 Oman in 2008 Bahrain in 2009 Saudi Arabia in 2014	

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

Despite these measures, labour exploitations in the India-GCC migration corridors are widely documented. Several factors contribute to the persistence of labour exploitations, including competition in the overseas labour market, low level of information among migrants and potential migrants about migration processes and employment opportunities abroad, high cost of overseas migration, vulnerabilities of migrants, proliferation of the illegal recruitment industry, and ineffective reforms in destination countries (Gaur, 2019). The chain of exploitation begins in the pre-departure phase of migration and continues during transit and right through into destination countries. Grievances such as contract violations, poor working and living conditions, salary issues, problems with the employer, and matters related to medical issues, insurance, death compensation, and claims filed at Indian Missions in the GCC countries have increased over time (Rajan and Saxena, 2019). As per the recent official data, 69 percent of 4,554 complaints of ill-treatment or exploitation of Indians working abroad received during 2017–22 came from the GCC countries (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2022). Efforts to reintegrate overseas migrants who return because of labour exploitations are also inadequate in India.

A review of published and grey literature globally reported that evidence about the impact of safe migration interventions was limited and came largely from process documentation (Zimmerman, 2015). There is clearly a need for more evidence on what works to promote safe migration for overseas labour migrants than what is currently available.

Against this backdrop, the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) in partnership with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) supported the Association for Stimulating Know-how (ASK) to pilot test a project aimed at building a safe labour migration ecosystem in source communities in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India. The Population Council in partnership with GFEMS and Norad undertook a community-based quantitative study to examine whether the intervention was successful in improving male migrants' knowledge about safe migration pathways and whether it helped them to follow such pathways. Specifically, the study assessed:

- Male migrants' awareness of and engagement with ASK's safe migration project;
- Effect of the intervention on male migrants' awareness of forced labour and safe overseas labour migration pathways; and
- Effect of the intervention on male migrants' safe migration practices.

This report describes findings from this study. Following a description of the intervention, the study design and limitations, and a profile of male migrants, this report describes male migrants' awareness of and engagement with the intervention implemented by ASK. It then sheds light on the effect of the intervention on male migrants' awareness of forced labour and safe overseas labour migration pathways and safe migration practices. The report concludes with recommendations for programme implementers, governments, and measurement, evaluation, and learning partners.

1.2 Safe Labour Migration Ecosystem Building intervention

The project ‘Building a safe labour migration ecosystem in source communities in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh,’ implemented by ASK, sought to build a migration ecosystem in source communities to reduce the prevalence of forced labour among overseas migrant workers. ASK implemented the project during April 2020–August 2022 in Siwan district of Bihar and Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh. Both these districts are characterised by a huge volume of overseas labour migration to the GCC countries (ASK Training & Learning, 2020). The project established Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and integrated six pillars of activities (see Table 2 for more details about the intervention activities as well as the reach of the activities). Specific vulnerabilities addressed by the project included migrants’ reliance on unsafe migration channels, lack of migrant preparedness in the recruitment process, lack of family and community awareness about the recruitment process, lack of support services for migrants and their families, and migrants’ economic vulnerabilities and debt bondage. The main activities included:

Pillar 1 - Migrant preparation: Pre-decision and pre-emigration training and behavioural-change communication campaigns were organised to improve the knowledge of migrants, families, and communities about overseas labour recruitment. The content of the training sessions and campaigns included vulnerabilities, good pre-departure practices, good employment practices, and orientation to technology-driven solutions for labour exploitations overseas (for example, MigCall a mobile app for seeking help).

Table 2: Reach of intervention activities, ASK’s safe migration project

Intervention activities	Sessions conducted/ participants reached
A. Pre-decision and pre-emigration training	
Training sessions conducted for migrants	863 sessions
Migrants who attended the training sessions	8,670 migrants
Training sessions conducted for family members of migrants	613 sessions
Family members who attended the training sessions	6,750 family members
Training sessions conducted for community members	1,280 sessions
Community members who attended the training sessions	10,240 community members
B. Paralegal services	
Training sessions conducted on paralegal services	260 sessions
Members of migrants’ households who attended the sessions	2,513 members
Cases of forced labour victims referred to authorities	108 cases
Cases resolved	19 cases
Pravasi Mitras identified and trained	310 Pravasi Mitras
C. Reintegration services	
Forced labour victims rescued	44 victims
D. Economic empowerment services	
Training sessions conducted to enable households to access benefits of government schemes	1,317 sessions
Households whose members attended the training sessions	12,547 households
Households that were supported to access benefits of government schemes	2,466 households
E. Financial health innovation services@	
Households that received financial service products	1,152 households
F. Capacity-building of CSOs	
Capacity-building workshops conducted	22 workshops
CSOs that participated in the workshops	40 CSOs

Note: @ This component was implemented in two of the five intervention blocks in Kushinagar district.
Source: ASK Final Narrative Report, 2022.

Pillar 2 - Paralegal services: Activities under this pillar included information sessions for migrants and their families on government legal aid structures and services, sensitisation of district-level legal aid authorities on challenges faced by migrants, referrals of cases of victims to authorities, creation of referral channels within the community through *Pravasi Mitra* paralegal volunteers, and documentation of fraudulent activities at source.

Pillar 3 - Reintegration services: These services included identification of victims of forced labour, provision of basic counselling services to victims, and provision of appropriate referrals for extreme trauma cases for medical and psychosocial care.

Pillar 4 - Economic empowerment: The project staff linked vulnerable migrants and their families to existing government entitlements. They informed vulnerable families about entitlements, assisted them in registering for entitlements, and provided follow-up support to ensure that families received their benefits and entitlements.

Pillar 5- Financial health innovation: ASK worked with Mitrata to design migrant-focused financial products and services (for example, low interest loans) to reduce migrants' and their families' vulnerability to debt bondage.

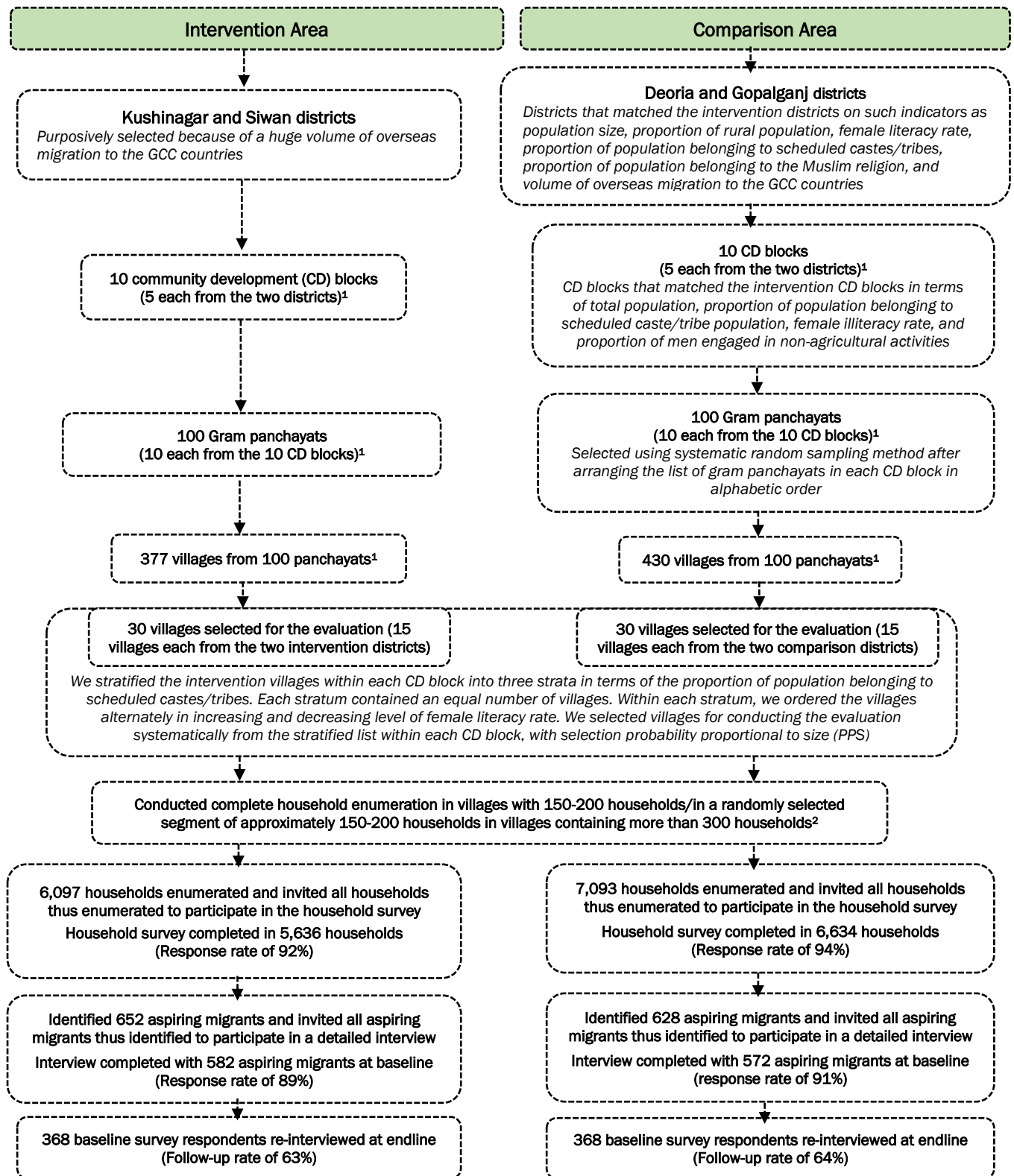
Pillar 6 - CSO capacity-building: The last component entailed working with CSOs to build their internal systems and resilience to establish, sustain, and effectively run MRCs and provide services to the community.

1.3 Methodology

We used a pre-post, difference-in-differences (DiD) design with longitudinal survey data collected from aspiring migrants from intervention villages and matched comparison villages at two points in time. The first survey was conducted before the aspiring migrants left for overseas and the follow-up survey was conducted some 6–9 months later, presumably when they had migrated overseas. While all respondents were aspiring migrants at baseline, their migration status changed during the inter-survey period—some had emigrated, some had emigrated and returned, some were still aspiring to go, and some others were no longer intending to migrate (see Table 9). Therefore, the term 'respondents' referred to aspiring migrants at baseline and aspiring, current, returned migrants, and those who no longer intend to migrate at endline.

We collected the list of intervention villages from ASK and selected 30 villages randomly from the two intervention districts for conducting the evaluation study (see Figure 1 for more details about the sample selection). We identified two districts—Gopalganj in Bihar and Deoria in Uttar Pradesh—to serve as comparison districts, after matching them with the intervention districts on such indicators as population size, proportion of rural population, female literacy rate, proportion of population belonging to scheduled castes/tribes, proportion of population belonging to the Muslim religion, and the volume of overseas migration to the GCC countries. We similarly selected 30 villages randomly from these two comparison districts.

Figure 1: Schematic presentation of selection of male migrants for the survey, intervention and comparison areas



Note: ¹List of CD blocks, gram panchayats, and villages was obtained from ASK for the intervention area, and from the Indian Census for the comparison area. ²In villages containing more than 150–200 households, segments of 150–200 households were made in consultation with the elected representatives of the local self-government body or others knowledgeable about the village. Data on the number of households in each village were obtained from 2011 Indian Census.

We conducted a household survey at baseline, using a structured questionnaire to identify aspiring migrants in these villages. A total of 13,190 households were listed in the four districts. Of the 13,190 households listed, we completed the household survey in 12,270 households, with a response rate of 93 percent.⁴ We defined aspiring migrants as males aged 18–50 years who had considered going to the Gulf in the year preceding the interview or were planning to go within a year of the interview.⁵ We identified 1,280 aspiring migrants in the households listed. We invited all of them to participate in a detailed interview, using a structured questionnaire that gathered information about respondents' awareness of safe migration pathways and preparations that they had taken to go to the GCC countries for work. Of the 1,280 aspiring migrants identified, we interviewed 1,154 aspiring migrants face-to-face, with a response rate of 90 percent (89% in the intervention area and 91% in the comparison area). A team of 35 male research assistants, trained by the Population Council staff, completed the baseline fieldwork (household survey and survey of aspiring migrants) during August–October 2021 and February–March 2022.⁶ We note that the baseline fieldwork was interrupted because of the outbreak of COVID-19 and local elections. The main reason for non-response for the aspiring migrant survey was that the respondent was not at home (8%). Just one percent of potential respondents refused to be interviewed.

We re-interviewed 736 of the 1,154 respondents some 6–9 months later from August–September 2022, with a follow-up rate of 64 percent.⁷ The re-interviews were conducted over phone for those who had migrated within/outside India (26%) and in person for those who were residing in the place of their baseline interview. Reasons for loss to follow-up are presented in Table 3 and show that the leading reason was that the respondent's family members had not shared the telephone number of those who had migrated overseas (24–26% of the overall sample, and 81–83% of the respondents who had emigrated), followed by calls' being not received by the respondent (3%) and refusal by the respondent (6–8%). We note that despite substantial loss to follow-up, the sample size achieved was much larger than the minimum required sample for regression analysis in estimating the effect of the intervention.⁸ We note that the baseline characteristics of respondents who were re-interviewed and who were lost to follow-up were similar for the most part (Annex Table 1). However, those who were re-interviewed were slightly younger than those who were lost to follow-up (mean age of 30.0 vs 31.2). A larger proportion of those who were re-interviewed were Hindu than those who were lost to follow-up (77% vs 61%). Moreover, a larger proportion of those who were re-interviewed were non-migrants than those who were lost to follow-up at endline (91% vs 34%). We also note that the baseline characteristics of those who had emigrated and those who had not during the inter-survey period did not differ, except that a larger proportion of emigrants were Muslim than non-emigrants (39% vs 25%; see Annex Table 2). The study protocol was approved by the Population Council's Institutional Review Board.

Study tools—household survey questionnaire and questionnaire for aspiring migrants—were reviewed by colleagues from GFEMS and ASK, and their suggestions were incorporated into the tools. The household survey questionnaire and the aspiring migrant survey questionnaire were finalised after pre-testing among a small group of respondents (five respondents for the household survey questionnaire and five respondents for the aspiring migrant survey) to see whether any questions should be changed, and whether the framing of the questions needs to be simplified so as to ensure that the questions are well understood by the study participants. A data interpretation workshop, facilitated by researchers from the Population Council, was held in Kushinagar district in October 2022 to validate the research findings with key stakeholders and to solicit their recommendations. The participants included aspiring migrants, migrants returned from the GCC

⁴ The respondent for the household survey was an adult member of the household, who was acknowledged by household members as usually responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the household. The household survey questionnaire gathered information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the household members, and details of returned, current, and aspiring male migrants, if any, among household members.

⁵ We note that we did not come across any households with a female migrant in the surveyed villages.

⁶ We typically engage male investigators to interview male respondents and female investigators to interview female respondents, because it enables better rapport-building with respondents and is culturally more acceptable.

⁷ The baseline survey questionnaire with additional questions to capture participants' awareness and engagement with ASK's project and migration-related experiences during the inter-survey period was used for the follow-up interview.

⁸ The minimum required sample was 566 respondents.

countries, and influential adults in the community. A total of 14 people participated in the workshop. Researchers from the Population Council shared key findings from the study in the local language (Hindi). This was followed by small group discussions during which participants shared their views about the study findings and gave their suggestions for making migration to the GCC countries safer. Overall, the findings from the study resonated with the participants' opinion. The workshop participants made some specific recommendations, including conducting fortnightly awareness campaigns about safe migration at the village level, making low-interest or interest-free loans with minimal documentation to potential migrants, providing job placement support by government bodies or CSOs for potential migrants, and punishing local agents who exploit migrants, which were incorporated in the final report. They also suggested that ASK's intervention activities should be continued for sustaining the effect.

We used the following key indicators to assess the effect of the intervention: (1) awareness of various forms of forced labour, (2) index of awareness of safe migration channels and procedures, (3) index of awareness of government measures for safe migration, (4) index of adherence to safe migration practices (two variants), (5) use of formal financial products, and (6) help-seeking for difficulties experienced in the preparation for going overseas for work and at destination (see Annex Table 3 for a detailed description of these indicators).

Table 3: Follow-up rate at endline and reasons for loss to follow-up by study arm and migration status at endline

	Comparison			Intervention		
	Combined	Non-migrants *	Migrants *	Combined	Non-migrants *	Migrants *
Baseline						
Respondents interviewed at baseline (N)	572	NA	NA	582	NA	N
Endline						
Respondents re-interviewed (%)	64.3	86.4	17.5	63.2	81.9	19.1
Respondents' family did not share the contact number for those who had migrated (%)	26.4	0.0	82.5	24.1	0.0	80.9
Respondents did not receive the call/ respondents could not be located (%)	3.0	4.4	0.0	3.4	4.9	0.0
Respondents refused (%)	5.9	8.7	0.0	8.1	11.5	0.0
Respondents' parents refused (%)	0.4	0.5	0.0	1.2	1.7	0.0
Number of respondents	572	389	183	582	409	173

Note: *emigration status at the time of the endline survey. NA – not applicable because all respondents were aspiring migrants at the time of the baseline survey.

We used (DiD) method to measure the effect of the intervention (Ashenfelter, 1978; Ashenfelter and Card, 1985). The DiD method contrasts the difference in average outcome in the intervention group before and after exposure to the intervention with the difference in average outcome in the comparison group at baseline and endline. In this way, the method isolates the effect of exposure to the intervention by cancelling out the effects of other factors external to the intervention that both groups may have experienced in the period between the baseline and endline surveys. The method also isolates the effect of any pre-existing differences between the intervention and comparison groups. In view of the fact that a sizeable number of respondents in the intervention area did not participate in the intervention, we present findings separately for three groups of

respondents: those who were from the comparison areas; those from the intervention areas;⁹ and those who/whose family members were exposed to the intervention in the intervention areas (intervention participants). We defined male migrants' engagement with the intervention as attendance by respondents or their family members in at least one training session conducted by ASK, attention paid to campaign activities, receipt of paralegal services by anyone in the family, receipt of support services for victims of labour exploitations by anyone in the family, receipt of information about or support for accessing benefits of government schemes, or receipt of financial services by Mitrata. Respondents who answered affirmatively to any of these components were categorised as intervention participants. We fitted multivariate regression analyses using the DiD method to estimate the effect of the intervention after controlling for differences in key socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents who were re-interviewed and who were lost to follow-up.

1.4 Study limitations

Findings presented in this report should be interpreted with some limitations in mind. First, we were not able to re-interview 36 percent of the baseline respondents. As noted earlier, respondents who were re-interviewed and who were lost to follow-up differed in terms of age, religion, and migration status. We have controlled for these differences in the multivariate regression analysis to examine the effect of intervention. Second, respondent's reluctance to discuss experiences of labour exploitation cannot be ruled out. Third, the number of current or returned migrants who were re-interviewed were too few to draw any definitive conclusions about the effect of the intervention on migrants' adherence to safe migration pathways and their help-seeking for difficulties experienced in the process of going overseas for work or at the destination. Fourth, we note that the intervention and comparison districts were geographically adjacent, and as a result, there was a potential for diffusion of intervention effects. However, we note that just four percent of respondents in the comparison area had heard about ASK project. Finally, we acknowledge that the project implementation and our assessment were disrupted because of the outbreak of COVID-19.

1.5 Profile of surveyed male migrants

Table 4 presents a profile of aspiring male migrants who participated in the baseline survey. Findings show that background characteristics of respondents in the intervention and comparison areas were similar for the most part. Most respondents were young, had completed secondary education (grade 10) or above, and had engaged in paid work in the six months prior to the baseline survey. The majority were Hindu and belonged to socially disadvantaged groups—scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes.

Table 4: Background characteristics of male migrants at baseline, intervention and comparison areas

Baseline characteristics	Comparison (%)	Intervention (%)
Age		
<=29	48.8	48.5
30–39	39.9	40.9
40 or more	11.4	10.7
Completed years of education**		
0–7	13.3	16.5
8–9	25.4	31.4
10 or more	61.4	52.1
Religion		
Hindu	72.9	68.9
Muslim	27.1	31.1

⁹ Includes those who were exposed and those who were not exposed to the intervention activities in the intervention villages.

Baseline characteristics	Comparison (%)	Intervention (%)
Caste		
Scheduled castes/tribes	19.8	16.7
Other backward castes	69.1	70.4
General castes	11.2	12.9
Any paid work in the last 6 months		
No	70.1	65.3
Yes	29.9	34.7
Household standard of living index		
Low	18.5	20.1
Medium	30.9	33.5
High	50.5	46.4
Number of household members*		
1-4	23.6	19.2
5-10	67.1	66.3
10 or more	9.3	14.47
Number of respondents	572	582

Note: * and ** indicate that there was statistically significant difference between male migrants in the intervention and comparison areas at $p \leq 0.05$ and $p \leq 0.01$, respectively.

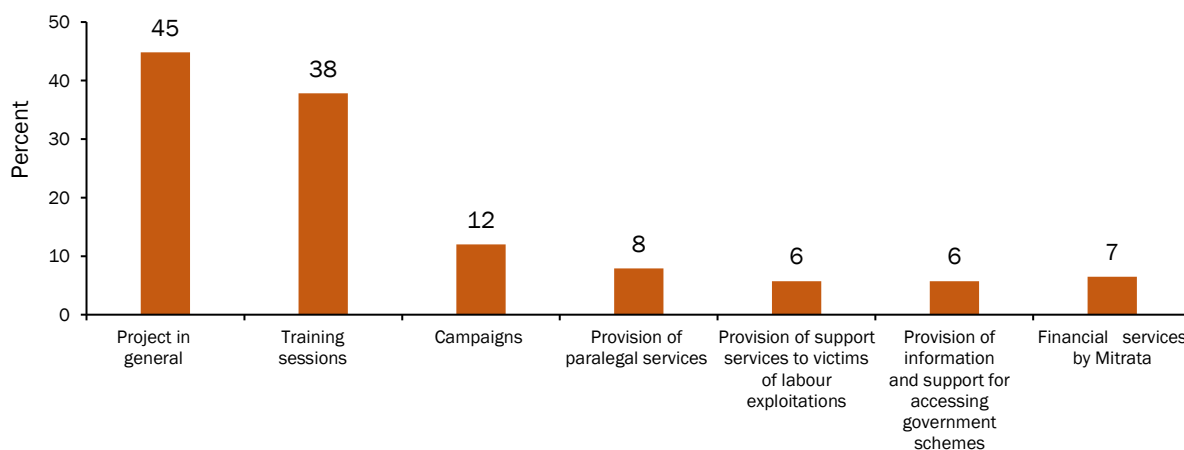
Chapter 2: Male migrants' awareness of and engagement with ASK's safe migration project

Drawing on data from the endline survey of respondents from the intervention area, this chapter presents findings on respondents' awareness of and engagement with ASK's safe migration project. Findings show that awareness of the project and its components was modest among respondents in the intervention area. However, we note that respondents in our study were drawn from a community-based representative sample of male migrants and that the project was implemented in a challenging environment, particularly characterised by disruptions due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Engagement with the project activities was low. At the same time, findings show no self-selection in participation in the intervention activities or selective targeting of the intervention activities by project staff for the most part.

2.1 Awareness of ASK's safe migration project

At endline, all the respondents from the intervention and comparison areas were probed about their awareness¹⁰ of the safe migration project implemented by ASK and the activities conducted as part of the project. Just four percent of respondents from the comparison area reported that they had heard about ASK's project (not shown in Figure 2).¹¹ In the intervention area, 45 percent of all respondents, including those who reported some level of engagement with the project and those who did not report so, were aware of the project (Figure 2). However, awareness of specific intervention activities varied. Thus, 38 percent of all respondents in the intervention area were aware of training sessions conducted, 12 percent had paid attention to campaign activities, such as wall posters and street plays, and 6–8 percent were aware of provision of paralegal services, support services to victims of labour exploitation, and information and support for accessing benefits from government schemes. Seven percent of all respondents in the intervention area had heard about financial services provided by Mitrata. We note that the financial services by Mitrata were not pilot tested in all the intervention villages; 13 percent of respondents from intervention villages in which Mitrata had pilot tested financial services reported awareness of their services (not shown in Figure).¹²

Figure 2: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention area who had heard about ASK's safe migration project and its components, endline survey



Note: Based on all respondents who were re-interviewed in the intervention area regardless of their engagement with the project (N=368).

¹⁰ All respondents who had heard about the ASK project in general or its components, namely, training sessions, campaigns, provision of paralegal services, provision of support services to migrants who have experienced labour exploitation, provision of information and support for accessing government schemes, and financial services by Mitrata were considered to be aware of ASK's intervention.

¹¹ We do not have data to say how respondents from comparison area came to know about ASK's intervention; however, we note that the intervention and comparison districts were geographically adjacent.

¹² Three villages out of 15 intervention villages included in our assessment had received financial services by Mitrata.

Awareness of ASK’s project did not differ by socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents for the most part (Table 5). However, a larger proportion of Muslim than Hindu respondents reported that they were aware of the project (54% vs 42%). Similarly, a larger proportion of non-migrants were aware of the project than migrants (61% vs 43%), perhaps because of their longer exposure to the project activities as a result of their continued residence in the intervention area.

Table 5: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention area who had heard about ASK’s safe migration project by selected baseline background characteristics, endline survey

Characteristics	Percentage	Number of respondents
Age		
<=29	45.5	176
30–39	44.7	150
40 or more	42.9	42
Completed years of education		
0–7	46.4	56
8–9	36.3	113
10 or more	49.3	199
Religion*		
Hindu	41.9	277
Muslim	53.9	91
Caste		
Scheduled castes/tribes	43.1	65
Other backward castes	45.4	258
General	44.4	45
Any paid work in the last 6 months		
No	48.4	128
Yes	42.9	240
Household standard of living index		
Low	44.8	134
Medium	45.4	119
High	44.4	115
Number of household members		
1–4	51.9	79
5–10	42.3	239
10 or more	46.0	50
Migration status@		
Non-migrant	60.6	33
Migrant	43.3	335
Overall	44.8	368

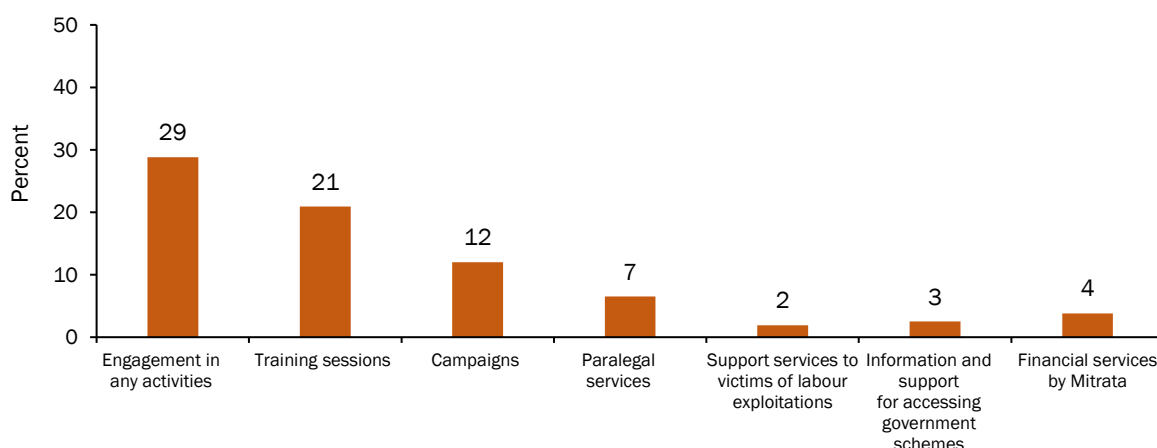
Note: * indicates that there was a statistically significant difference in the awareness of ASK’s project by the selected characteristic at $p \leq 0.05$; @ migration status of respondents was ascertained from the endline survey, while all other characteristics were based on their baseline status.

2.2 Engagement with ASK’s safe migration project

We defined respondents’ engagement with the project as respondents’ or their family members’ attendance in at least one training session conducted by ASK, attention paid to campaign activities, receipt of paralegal services, receipt of support services aimed at victims of labour exploitations, receipt of information about or support for accessing benefits of government schemes, or receipt of financial services by Mitrata. In total, 29 percent of all respondents from the intervention area had some level of engagement with the project (Figure 3). Specifically, 21 percent of all respondents reported that they or their family members had attended at least one training session conducted by ASK and 12 percent reported that they had paid attention to campaign activities

organised by ASK. Seven percent of respondents reported that their family had received paralegal assistance from the project, and 2–4 percent of respondents reported that they or their family members had received support services for victims of labour exploitations, information about or support for accessing benefits from government schemes, and financial services from Mitrata. We note that nine percent of respondents from intervention villages in which Mitrata had pilot tested the financial services had received financial services from them (not shown in Figure).

Figure 3: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention area who reported that they or their family members had participated in or received support from ASK’s safe migration project, endline survey



Note: Based on all respondents who were re-interviewed in the intervention area (N=368).

Engagement with the intervention did not differ by socio-demographic characteristics of respondents for the most part, indicating no self-selection in participation in the intervention or selective targeting of intervention activities by project staff (Table 6). However, a larger proportion of those who had not worked in the six months preceding the interview reported engagement with project activities than those who had worked (36% vs 26%), perhaps because of their availability in the intervention villages to take part in the intervention activities. Similarly, a larger proportion of non-migrants reported engagement with the project activities than migrants (49% vs 28%), plausibly because the project might not have reached migrants before they migrated or because of continued availability of the non-migrants in the intervention villages to participate in the activities.

Table 6: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention area who reported some engagement with ASK’s safe migration project by selected baseline background characteristics, endline survey

Characteristics	Percentage	Number of respondents
Age		
<=29	30.1	176
30–39	30.7	150
40 or more	21.4	42
Completed years of education		
0–7	30.4	56
8–9	27.4	113
10 or more	30.2	199
Religion		
Hindu	26.7	277
Muslim	37.4	91
Caste		
Scheduled castes/tribes	23.1	65

Characteristics	Percentage	Number of respondents
Other backward castes	32.2	258
General	22.2	45
Any paid work in the last 6 months*		
No	35.9	128
Yes	25.8	240
Household standard of living index		
Low	28.4	134
Medium	26.1	119
high	34.0	115
Number of household members		
1-4	30.4	79
5-10	26.4	239
10 or more	42.0	50
Migration status*, @		
Non-migrant	48.5	33
Migrant	27.5	335
Overall	29.4	368

Note: * indicates that there was a statistically significant difference in the engagement with ASK's project by the selected characteristics at $p \leq 0.05$; @ migration status of respondents was ascertained from the endline survey, while all other characteristics were based on their baseline status.

Chapter 3: Effect of the intervention on male migrants' awareness of forced labour and safe overseas migration pathways

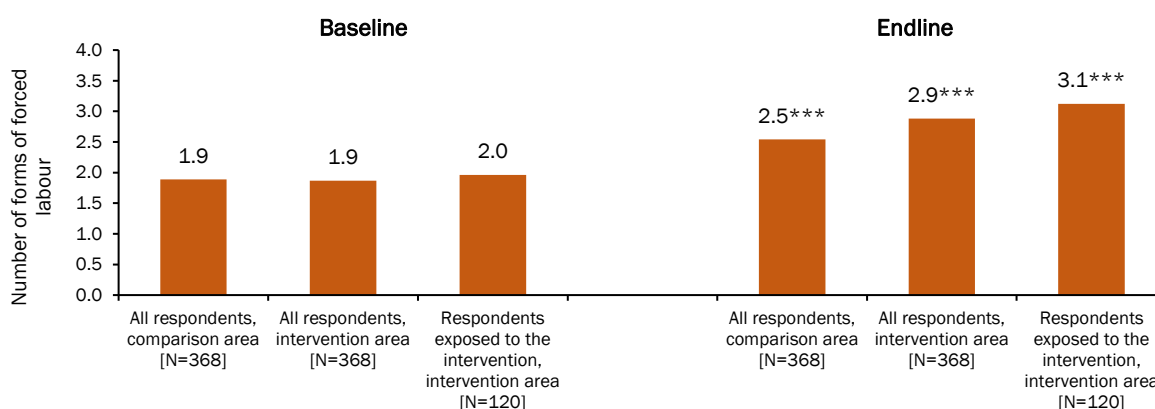
One of the key pillars of ASK's safe migration project was migrants' preparation for safe migration, and as described in Chapter 1, the project organised pre-decision and pre-emigration training and behavioural-change communication campaigns to improve the knowledge of migrants, families, and communities about overseas labour recruitment. This chapter presents findings with regard to the effect of the intervention on three indicators related to male migrants' awareness of forced labour and safe overseas migration pathways. We present results of bivariate analysis separately for the three groups of respondents: those who were from the comparison areas; those from the intervention areas; and those who/whose family members were exposed to the intervention in the intervention areas (intervention participants). Also presented are the estimated effect of the intervention for the intervention arm overall (intention-to treat analysis) and for intervention participants (per-protocol analysis).

Findings show that the intervention was successful in improving male migrants' awareness of forced labour and its different manifestations as well as government measures to make overseas migration for work safe. However, a similar positive effect was not observed in improving their awareness of safe channels and procedures for overseas migration, the reasons for which were not discernible from the study data. Perhaps, respondents' awareness of safe migration channels and procedures were more influenced by their real-life experiences or that of others than by what is ideal, legal, and correct. It is also possible that the content of the training sessions or campaigns may have covered different aspects of safe migration pathways unevenly. Findings show greater positive effects among respondents who were exposed or whose family members were exposed to the intervention than respondents in the intervention area in general. This highlights the importance of directly reaching a larger proportion of migrants and their families for a more widespread effect.

3.1 Effect of the intervention on male migrants' awareness of forced labour

We asked respondents whether they were aware of forced labour in overseas employment, and those who were aware were asked to spontaneously list forms of forced labour in overseas employment. We created a summary indicator of respondents' awareness of forced labour, that is, the mean number of forms of forced labour spontaneously listed by the respondents (see Annex Table 3 for more details about the construction of this indicator). We considered only those responses that corresponded with the forms included in the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) definition of forced labour (ILO, n.d.). Most frequently cited forms of forced labour included deception in the recruitment process or at work, restriction of movement, excessive overtime, and withholding of salaries and benefits. Findings show that awareness of forced labour improved over time in the comparison and intervention areas (Figure 4). However, the average number of forms of forced labour spontaneously listed by respondents increased somewhat more in the intervention area (from 1.9 to 2.9) than in the comparison area (from 1.9 to 2.5). The average number of forms of forced labour spontaneously listed by respondents who had been exposed to the intervention in the intervention area increased from 2.0 to 3.1.

Figure 4: Number of forms of forced labour listed by male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas at baseline and endline



Note: *** indicates that the difference between baseline and endline was significant at $p \leq 0.001$. Forms of forced labour mentioned included deception, restriction of movement, retention of identity documents, excessive overtime, withholding of salaries/wages, intimidation and threats, physical or sexual violence, and abusive working and living conditions.

The results of the unadjusted DiD model, presented in row 1 of Table 7, show the extent of change in awareness of forced labour among respondents in the intervention area in general and among those who were exposed to the intervention in particular, as compared with the extent of change experienced by respondents from the comparison area. Findings confirm that the change was significantly greater in the intervention area, specifically among those who were exposed to the intervention. The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 35 percent in the awareness of forced labour in the intervention area in general [$p=0.027$] and 51 percent among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area [$p=0.028$], compared with those in the comparison area. (Table 8).

Table 7: Effect of exposure to the intervention on male migrants' awareness of forced labour and safe overseas migration pathways: Difference-in-differences estimators

Indicators of awareness	All respondents, comparison area (N=368)	All respondents, intervention area (N= 368)		Respondents who were exposed to the intervention, intervention area (N=120)	
	Change ¹	Change ¹	Impact of intervention (DiD estimate) ²	Change ¹	Impact of intervention (DiD estimate) ³
Awareness of forced labour					
Awareness of forms of forced labour [mean number of forced labour forms spontaneously listed; range 0–8]	0.65*** ($p=0.000$)	1.01*** ($p=0.000$)	0.36* ($p=0.042$)	1.16*** ($p=0.000$)	0.51* ($p=0.044$)
Awareness of safe overseas migration pathways					
Index of awareness of safe overseas migration channels & procedures [range 0–11]	0.11 ($p=0.362$)	0.11 ($p=0.397$)	-0.01 ($p=0.963$)	0.12 ($p=0.587$)	0.003 ($p=0.992$)
Index of awareness of government measures for safe overseas migration [range 0–7]	0.23* ($p=0.047$)	0.79*** ($p=0.000$)	0.56*** ($p=0.001$)	0.97*** ($p=0.000$)	0.74*** ($p=0.001$)

Note: ¹ Endline value minus baseline value. ² Change among all respondents in the intervention area minus change among respondents in the comparison area. ³ Change among respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area minus change among respondents in the comparison area. * and *** indicate that change was statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$ and $p \leq 0.001$, respectively.

Table 8: Effect of exposure to the intervention on male migrants' awareness of forced labour and safe overseas migration pathways: Multivariate regression analysis results

Indicators of awareness	Adjusted DiD estimates	
	Model-1 (N=736)	Model-2 (N=488)
Awareness of forced labour		
Awareness of forms of forced labour [mean number of forms of forced labour listed]	0.35* (p=0.027)	0.51* (p=0.028)
Awareness of safe migration pathways		
Index of awareness of safe overseas migration channels and procedures	-0.01 (p=0.956)	-0.01 (p=0.955)
Index of awareness of government measures for safe overseas migration	0.56*** (p=0.000)	0.74*** (p=0.000)

*Note: Controlled for: religion, caste, type of ration card, number of members in the household, rural/urban residence, completed years of education, ever attended vocational training, and migration status; Model 1 shows DiD estimate of the intervention effect, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, for the intervention area in general, using the full sample of respondents who were interviewed at both baseline and endline in the intervention and comparison areas (N=736), and Model 2 shows the DiD estimate of the intervention effect, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, for those who were exposed to the intervention, using the full sample of re-interviewed respondents from the comparison area and the sub-sample of re-interviewed respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area (N=488); * and *** indicate that the estimated effect was statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$ and $p \leq 0.001$, respectively.*

3.2 Effect of the intervention on male migrants' awareness of safe overseas migration pathways

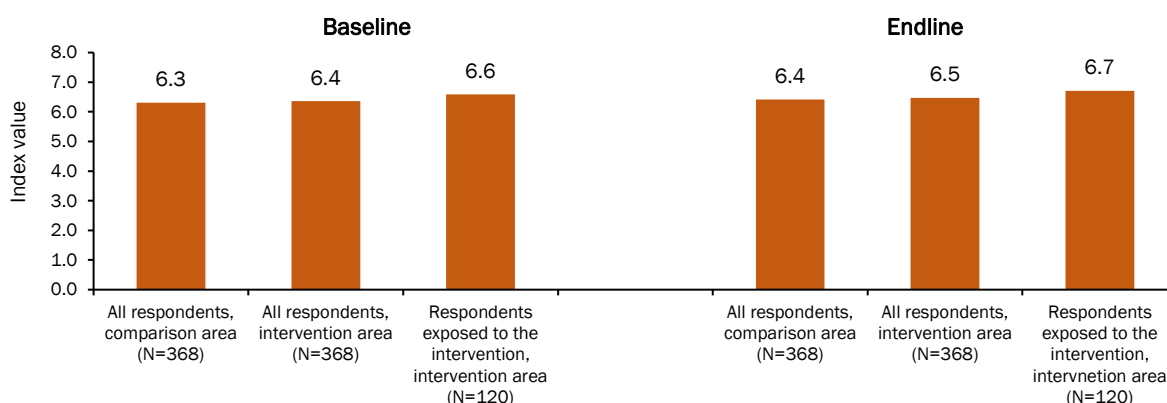
We used two indicators to measure participants' awareness of safe overseas migration pathways—an index of awareness of safe channels and procedures for overseas migration and an index of awareness of government measures for safe overseas migration.

The index of awareness of safe channels and procedures for overseas migration drew on responses to 11 questions (see Annex Table 3 for more details about the construction of this index).¹³ These questions covered such aspects as safe channels to seek employment abroad, essential documents required before they migrate, essential contents of a job contract, amount of legitimate agent fee, essential documents that workers must obtain in the country of employment, and grievance redressal mechanisms overseas, among others. The respondent was given a score of 1 for each question that was answered correctly and 0 otherwise. In order to summarise respondents' awareness of safe overseas migration channels and procedures, an index was created that summed the number of correct responses. The value of the index ranged from 0 indicating no awareness to 11 indicating high awareness.

Findings show that awareness of safe channels and procedures for overseas migration for work did not change over time in the comparison or intervention areas (Figure 5). The average number of safe channels and procedures for overseas migration for work that the respondents were aware of was similar in both baseline (6.3–6.6) and endline (6.4–6.7) surveys.

¹³ Questions and response categories used for constructing the index were same at baseline and endline.

Figure 5: Number of safe channels and procedures for overseas migration for work that male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas were aware of at baseline and endline



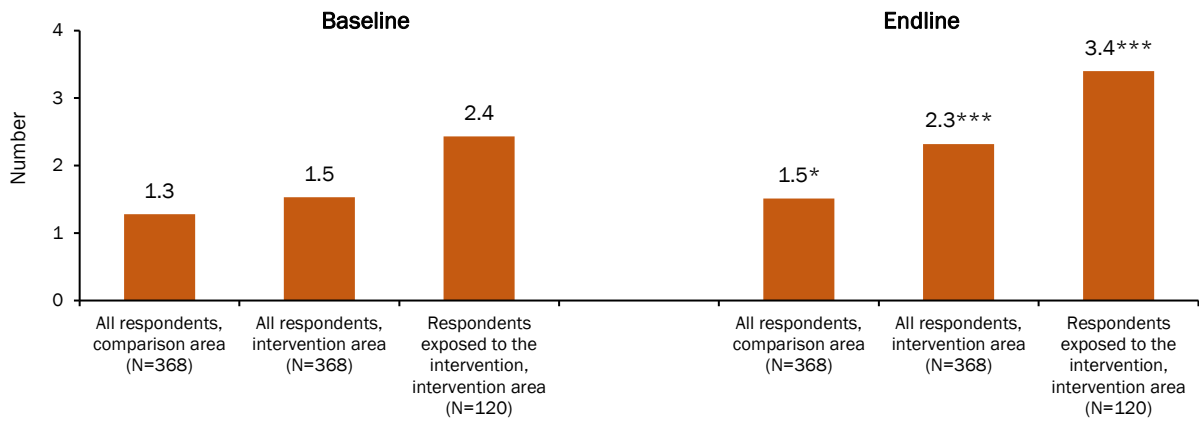
The index of awareness of government measures for safe overseas migration drew on responses to seven questions (see Annex Table 3 for more details about the construction of this index).¹⁴ These questions covered such measures as e-Migrate portal, Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, MigCall mobile app, migration resource centre (MRC), government-sponsored employment bureau/recruitment agency, non-resident external savings account, and pre-departure training workshops for potential migrants. The respondent was given a score of 1 for each question that was answered correctly and 0 otherwise. In order to summarise respondents' awareness of government measures for safe overseas migration, an index was created that summed the number of correct responses. The value of the index ranged from zero indicating no awareness to seven indicating high awareness.

Findings show that awareness of government measures for safe overseas migration improved over time in the comparison and intervention areas (Figure 6). The average number of government measures for safe overseas migration that respondents were aware of increased more sharply in the intervention area (from 1.5 to 2.3) than in the comparison area (from 1.3 to 1.5). The average number of government measures for safe overseas migration that respondents were aware of increased from 2.4 to 3.4 among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area.

The results of the unadjusted DiD model, presented in row 3 of Table 7, show that the extent of change in awareness of government measures for safe overseas migration was significantly greater among respondents in the intervention area, specifically among those who were exposed to the intervention, compared with the extent of change experienced by respondents from the comparison area. The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 56 percent in the awareness of government measures for overseas migration for work in the intervention area in general [$p < 0.001$] and 74 percent among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area [$p < 0.001$], compared with those in the comparison area (Table 8).

¹⁴ Questions and response categories used for constructing the index were same at baseline and endline.

Figure 6: Number of government measures for safe overseas migration for work that male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas were aware of at baseline and endline



Note: * and *** indicate that the difference between baseline and endline was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ and $p \leq 0.001$.

Chapter 4: Effect of the intervention on safe migration practices among male migrants

This chapter presents findings related to the effect of the intervention on male migrants' safe migration practices. It begins with a description of respondents' migration aspirations and status at the time of the endline survey.¹⁵ It then presents findings related to the effect of the intervention on respondents' adherence to safe migration practices and use of formal financial products. The chapter also presents findings pertaining to help-seeking for difficulties experienced in preparations for going overseas for work and at destination.

Findings show that only a small proportion of aspiring migrants managed to go to the GCC countries during the inter-survey period, perhaps because of travel restrictions and disruptions in economic activities with the outbreak of COVID-19. Findings show that the intervention was successful in promoting selected safe migration practices among male migrants, for example, obtaining a passport, undergoing a skill test, attending a pre-departure training workshop and equipping them with details of agencies to contact in case of an emergency. However, as noted in the section on study limitations, the number of current or returned migrants who were re-interviewed were too few to assess comprehensively the effect of the intervention on adherence to safe migration practices, including practices related to job contract, visa, insurance, among others. Findings also show that exposure to the intervention had mixed effect on male migrants' use of formal financial products. There was no effect on their ownership of a bank account, perhaps because bank account ownership was high even at the baseline. However, the intervention was successful in promoting use of debit cards and insurance coverage among male migrants. Finally, findings show that help-seeking for difficulties experienced in the process of their migration journey from formal sources was limited in both the intervention and comparison areas. Even so, compared with respondents in the comparison area, a smaller proportion of their counterparts in the intervention area sought the help of recruitment agencies, and a larger proportion of respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area sought help from formal sources. Although these differences were only mildly significant statistically, they suggest that the intervention may have encouraged respondents to seek help from formal sources and discouraged them from approaching recruitment agents to resolve difficulties that they had faced.

4.1 Migration aspirations and status

Findings presented in Table 9 show that 26 percent of respondents from the comparison area and 20 percent of those from the intervention area were working in a Gulf country at the time of the endline survey. Some 42–43 percent were still intending to go to the GCC countries, while 15–16 percent reported that they were no longer planning to go. Migration aspirations and status did not differ between respondents who were exposed to the intervention and those who were not in the intervention area (not shown in Table). We note that we captured only a small proportion of those currently in the GCC countries in the re-interviewed sample.

Table 9: Migration aspirations and status, intervention and comparison areas, endline survey

Migration aspirations and status	Full sample		Re-interviewed sample	
	Comparison (%)	Intervention (%)	Comparison (%)	Intervention (%)
Currently in a GCC country	25.7	19.8	4.1	5.2
Currently in a non-GCC country	1.1	2.2	0.5	0.3
Returned from a GCC country	2.1	2.1	3.3	3.3
Returned from a non-GCC country	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.3
Still intending to go	42.8	42.3	66.6	66.9

¹⁵ All respondents were aspiring migrants at baseline.

Migration aspirations and status	Full sample		Re-interviewed sample	
	Comparison	Intervention	Comparison	Intervention
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
No longer planning to go	15.9	15.3	24.7	24.2
Status not known	11.9	18.2	--	--
Number of respondents	572	582	368	368

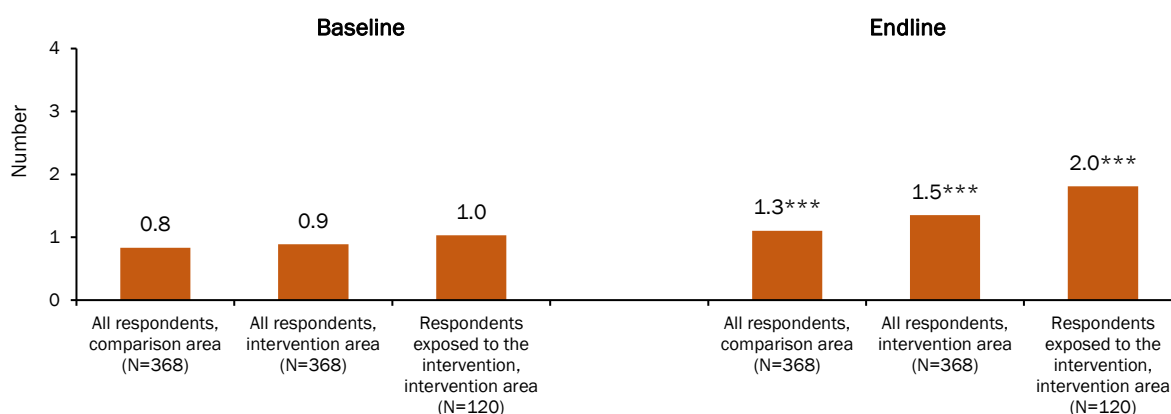
4.2 Effect of the intervention on male migrants' adherence to safe migration practices

We used a series of questions to capture the preparations that respondents had made and/or procedures that they had followed for migrating overseas for work. Based on responses to those questions, we created two indicators of adherence to safe migration practices—one that comprised a smaller set of indicators to measure adherence of the full sample and a second that comprised a larger set of indicators to measure adherence of the sub-sample of those who had secured a job overseas but were yet to migrate or had already migrated during the inter-survey period.

The first measure captured whether the respondents had obtained a passport, had undergone a skills test, had details of at least one agency to contact in case of an emergency, and had undergone a pre-departure training workshop (see Annex Table 3 for more details about the construction of this index). The respondent was given a score of 1 for each question that was answered affirmatively and 0 otherwise. In order to summarise respondents' adherence to safe migration practices, an index was created that summed the number of affirmative responses, the value of which ranged from zero to four.

Findings, presented in Figure 7, show that adherence to safe migration practices improved over time in the comparison and intervention areas. The average number of safe migration practices that respondents adhered to increased more in the intervention area (from 0.9 to 1.5) than in the comparison area (from 0.8 to 1.3) and particularly among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area (from 1.0 to 2.0).

Figure 7: Number of safe migration practices that male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas adhered to at baseline and endline



Note: *** indicates that the difference between baseline and endline was significant at $p \leq 0.001$.

The results of the unadjusted DiD model, presented in row 1 of Table 10, show that the extent of change in safe migration practices was significantly greater in the intervention area in general and among those who were exposed to the intervention in particular, as compared with the extent of change in the comparison area. The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 24 percent in safe migration practices in the intervention area in general [$p \leq 0.000$] and 58 percent among those who were exposed to the

intervention in the intervention area [$p \leq 0.000$], compared with those in the comparison area. (Table 11).

Table 10: Effect of exposure to the intervention on male migrants' adherence to safe migration practices and use of formal financial products: Difference-in-differences estimators

Indicators of practices	All respondents, comparison area (N=368)	All respondents, intervention area (N= 368)		Respondents who were exposed to the intervention, intervention area (N=120)	
	Change ¹	Change ¹	Impact of intervention (DiD estimate) ²	Change ¹	Impact of intervention (DiD estimate) ³
Index of adherence to safe migration practices [mean; range 0–4]	0.42*** (p=0.000)	0.65*** (p=0.000)	0.23* (p=0.013)	1.01*** (p=0.0000)	0.59*** (p=0.000)
Use of any formal financial products (%)	0.02 (p=0.323)	0.07 (p=0.003)	0.04 (p=0.162)	0.04 (p=0.268)	0.02 (p=0.645)
Has a bank account (%)	1.4 (p=0.560)	5.7* (p=0.014)	4.3 (p=0.187)	3.3 (p=0.409)	2.0 (p=0.671)
Use of a debit card (%)	-2.4 (p=0.499)	12.5*** (p=0.001)	14.9** (p=0.004)	10.8 (p=0.088)	13.3 (p=0.069)
Has an insurance policy (%)	2.4 (p=0.431)	11.4*** (p=0.001)	9.0* (p=0.041)	10.8 (p=0.052)	8.4 (p=0.192)

Note: ¹ Endline value minus baseline value. ² Change among all respondents in the intervention area minus change among respondents in the comparison area. ³ Change among respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area minus change among respondents in the comparison area. * and *** indicate that change was statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.001$, respectively.

Table 11: Effect of exposure to the intervention on male migrants' adherence to safe migration practices and use of formal financial products: Multivariate regression analysis results

Indicators of practices	Adjusted DiD estimates	
	Model-1 (N=736)	Model-2 (N=488)
Index of adherence to safe practices	0.24*** (p=0.000)	0.58*** (p=0.000)
Use of any formal financial products	0.04 (p=0.096)	0.02 (p=0.564)
Has a bank account	0.044 (p=0.103)	0.022 (p=0.559)
Use of a debit card	0.148*** (p=0.001)	0.130* (p=0.039)
Has an insurance policy	0.088* (p=0.010)	0.081 (p=0.099)

Note: Note: Controlled for: religion, caste, type of ration card, number of members in the household, rural/urban residence, completed years of education, ever attended vocational training, and migration status; Model 1 shows DiD estimate of the intervention effect, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, for the intervention area in general, using the full sample of respondents who were interviewed at both baseline and endline in the intervention and comparison areas (N=736), and Model 2 shows the DiD estimate of the intervention effect, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, for those who were exposed to the intervention, using the full sample of re-interviewed respondents from the comparison area and the sub-sample of re-interviewed respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area (N=488); *** indicates that the estimated effect was statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

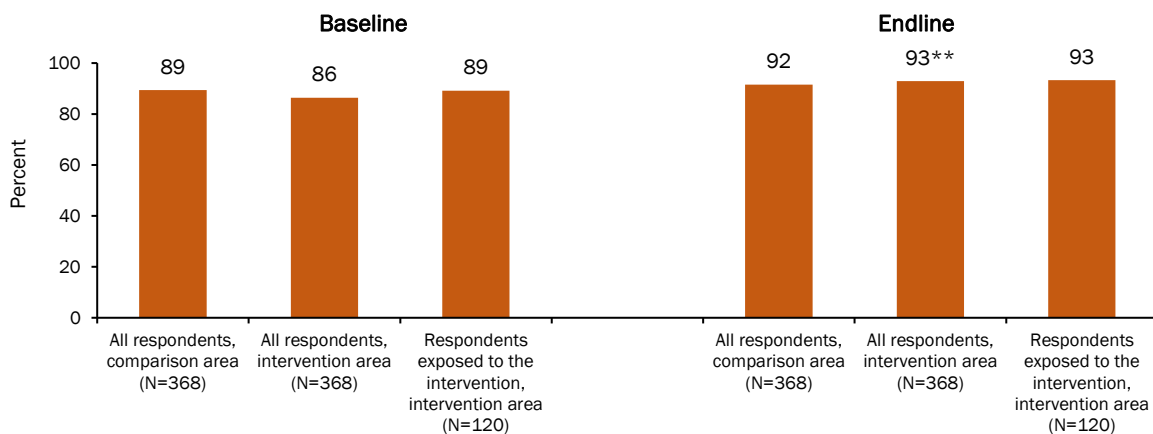
The second measure of adherence to safe migration practices drew on, additionally, nine questions related to job contract, employment visa, and insurance (see Annex Table 3 for more details about the construction of this index). The respondent was given a score of 1 for each question that was

answered affirmatively and 0 otherwise. In order to summarise respondents' adherence to safe migration practices, an index was created that summed the number of affirmative responses to these nine questions and the four questions used for constructing the abridged version of the index of adherence to safe migration practices, described earlier. The value of the comprehensive index, thus, ranged from 0 to 13. As noted earlier, we could measure adherence to safe migration practices, using this comprehensive indicator, only for those who had secured a job overseas but were yet to migrate or had already migrated during the inter-survey period. The number of those who had secured a job overseas but were yet to migrate or who had already migrated and were re-interviewed were small in the study (35 respondents in the comparison area and 38 respondents in the intervention area). The average number of safe migration practices that these respondents adhered to did not differ between those in the intervention area and those in the comparison area at endline (7.4 vs 6.1, $p=0.098$; not shown in Table or Figure).

4.3 Effect of the intervention on male migrants' use of formal financial products

We assessed respondents' use of formal financial products, given that one of the six intervention pillars was financial health innovations. We asked respondents whether they had a bank account, a debit card, a credit card, or an insurance policy (see Annex Table 3 for more details about this indicator). Findings, presented in Figure 8, show an increase in the use of any formal financial products in the intervention area (86%–93%); however, no such change was observed in the comparison area. The results of the DiD model presented in row 2 of Table 10 and the results of the multivariate regression analysis presented in Table 11 show that there was no significant improvement in the use of any formal financial products, despite the intervention.

Figure 8: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas who reported use of any formal financial product at baseline and endline

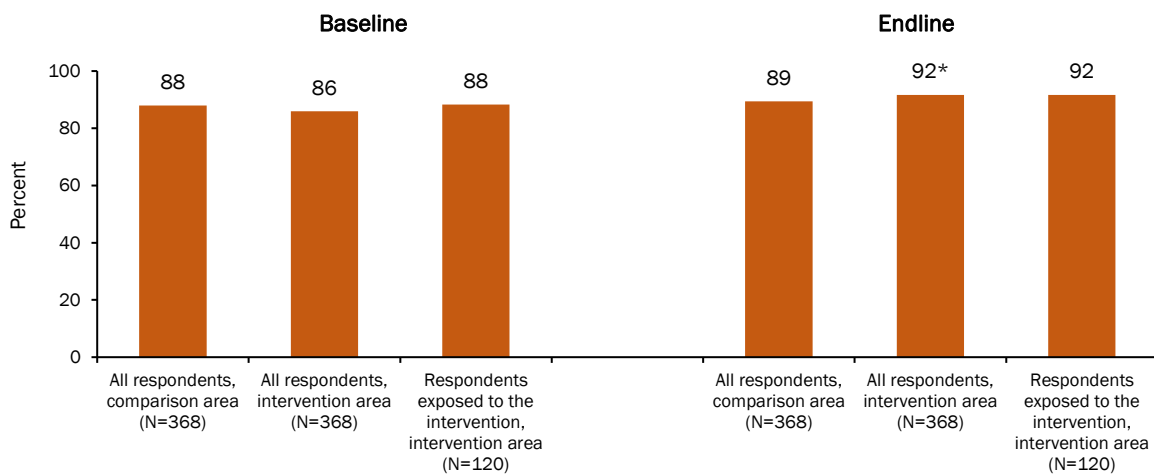


Note: ** indicates that the difference between baseline and endline was significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

We also examined the effect of the intervention on male migrants' use of specific financial products, namely, a bank account, a debit card and an insurance policy.¹⁶ Findings, presented in Figure 9, show an increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that they have a bank account in the intervention area (from 86% to 92%); however, no such change was observed in the comparison area. The results of the DiD model presented in row 3 of Table 10 and the results of the multivariate regression analysis presented in Table 11 show that there was no significant improvement in male migrants' ownership of a bank account.

¹⁶ Just 6–8 percent of respondents in the intervention and comparison areas reported that they had a credit card at baseline and endline, and therefore, we did not estimate the effect of the intervention on their use of credit cards.

Figure 9: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas who reported that they have a bank account at baseline and endline

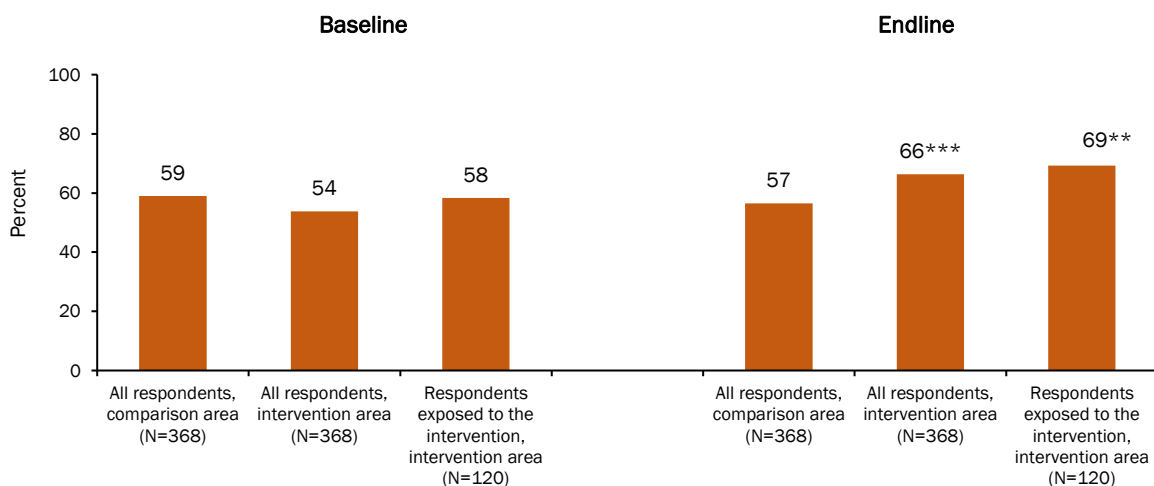


Note: *indicates that the difference between baseline and endline was significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

Findings, presented in Figure 10, show that use of debit card improved over time in the intervention area, but no such change was observed in the comparison area. The use of debit card increased among respondents in the intervention area (from 54% to 66%) and among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area (from 58% to 69%).

The results of the unadjusted DiD model, presented in row 4 of Table 10, show that the extent of change in the use of a debit card was significantly greater in the intervention area in general, as compared with the extent of change in the comparison area. The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of 15 percent in the use of a debit card among respondents in the intervention area in general [$p \leq 0.001$] and 13 percent among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area [$p \leq 0.039$], compared with those in the comparison area (Table 11).

Figure 10: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas who reported that they use a debit card at baseline and endline

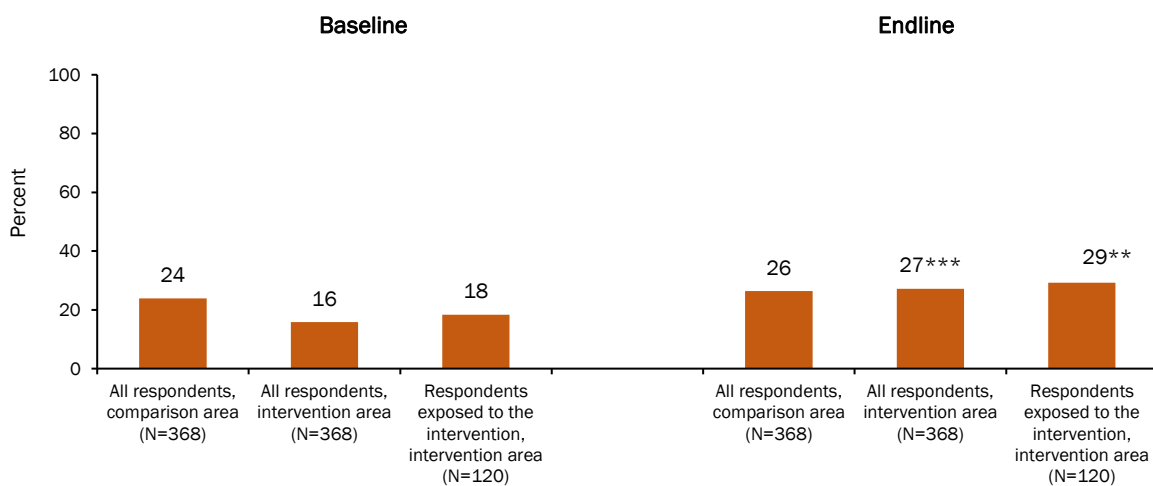


Note: ** and *** indicate that the difference between baseline and endline was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ and $p \leq 0.001$, respectively.

Findings, presented in Figure 11, show that ownership of an insurance policy increased over time in the intervention area, but no such change was observed in the comparison area. The percentage of respondents who reported their having an insurance policy increased from 16 percent to 27 percent in the intervention area, and among those who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area (from 18% to 29%).

The results of the unadjusted DiD model, presented in row 5 of Table 10, show that the extent of change in the ownership of an insurance policy was significantly greater in the intervention area in general, as compared with the extent of change in the comparison area. The DiD estimate, based on multivariate analysis that adjusted for potential covariates, shows a net increase of nine percent in the ownership of an insurance policy among respondents in the intervention area in general [$p < 0.010$], compared with those in the comparison area (Table 11). However, no such effect was observed for respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area.

Figure 11: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas who reported that they have an insurance policy at baseline and endline



Note: ** and *** indicate that the difference between baseline and endline was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ and $p \leq 0.001$, respectively.

4.4 Help-seeking by male migrants for difficulties experienced in their preparation for going overseas for work and at destination

We asked respondents whether they had experienced any difficulties in their preparation for migrating overseas for work, and those who reported their having experienced difficulties were asked whether they had sought anyone's assistance for resolving the difficulties.¹⁷ More than half of the respondents in the intervention and comparison areas reported that they had experienced difficulties in their preparation for going overseas for work (55% in the intervention area and 52% in the comparison area; Table 12). A somewhat larger proportion of respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area reported their having experienced difficulties, perhaps because of their increased awareness of labour exploitations and thus, increased reporting of difficulties. Typical difficulties experienced included misinformation or lack of information, being overcharged, deception, among others (not shown in Table or Figure).

¹⁷ Although these questions were asked at baseline and endline, we present results from the endline survey to show respondents' experiences over the course of their migration journey. Therefore, we did not estimate the effect of exposure to the intervention on migrants' help-seeking for difficulties experiences, using DiD method.

Table 12: Percentage of male migrants from the intervention and comparison areas who had faced difficulties in their preparation for migrating overseas for work and who sought assistance to resolve the difficulties

Difficulties faced and assistance sought	All respondents, comparison area	All respondents, intervention area	Respondents exposed to the intervention, intervention area
Ever experienced difficulties in the preparation for going overseas (%)	52.4	54.9 (p=0.507)	61.7 (p=0.078)
Number of respondents	368	368	120
Sought help for difficulties experienced (%)	47.7	45.5 (0.455)	58.1 (p=0.128)
Informal sources (friends/family/community leaders/others) (%)	25.3	27.7 (p=0.601)	28.4 (p=0.620)
Recruitment agency (%)	13.0	7.4 (p=0.069)	12.1 (p=0.863)
Formal sources (labour authority/police/MRC/other NGO/trade union) (%)	9.3	10.4 (p=0.723)	17.6 (p=0.060)
Number of respondents who reported difficulties in their preparation for going overseas	193	202	74

Note: Data were drawn from the endline survey; p value in column 3 (all respondents, intervention area) shows whether practices of respondents in the comparison area and respondents in the intervention area differed; p value in column 4 (respondents exposed to the intervention, intervention area) shows whether practices of respondents in the comparison area and respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area differed.

Of those who experienced difficulties in their preparation for going overseas for work, 48 percent of respondents in the comparison area and 46 percent in the intervention area reported their having sought help to address their difficulties (Table 12). A larger proportion of respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area had sought help (58%), although these differences were not statistically significant. For those who did seek help, it was typically sought from friends and families in both intervention and comparison areas (25%–28% of those who had experienced difficulties, and 49%–61% of those who had sought help). However, compared with respondents in the comparison area, a smaller proportion of respondents in the intervention area in general sought the help of recruitment agencies (13% vs 7% of those who had experienced difficulties, $p=0.069$, and 27% vs 16% of those who had sought help). Similarly, compared with respondents in the comparison area, a larger proportion of respondents who were exposed to the intervention in the intervention area sought help from formal sources such as labour authorities, police, trade unions, and NGOs (18% vs 9% of those who had experienced difficulties, $p=0.060$, and 30% vs 19% of those who had sought help).

Of those who had emigrated for work during the inter-survey period, 38 percent of respondents in the comparison area and 39 percent in the intervention area reported their having experienced difficulties at destination (not shown in Table or Figure). None of these respondents sought help from anyone to resolve their issue.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

ASK has implemented the safe migration project in a challenging environment, particularly characterised by disruptions due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Project monitoring data and findings from our study that nearly half of the respondents from the intervention area were aware of the project indicate the feasibility of the project. Moreover, the project was successful in improving awareness of forced labour and government measures for making overseas migration safe among male migrants. The project was also successful in promoting selected safe migration practices among male migrants, for example, obtaining a passport, undergoing a skill test, attending a pre-departure training workshops, and equipping them with information about agencies to contact in case of an emergency. It had a positive effect in promoting the use of such financial products as a debit card and insurance. We did not assess rigorously the effect of the intervention on male migrants' help-seeking practices for difficulties faced in their preparation for overseas migration. However, there is some evidence that suggests the intervention may have encouraged male migrants to seek help from formal sources and discouraged them from approaching recruitment agents to resolve difficulties that they had faced. The success of the project, given the challenges, is all the more encouraging, and the programme holds great promise for replication in and upscaling to other parts of the district or state.

This chapter presents evidence gaps and policy and programme recommendations informed by the study findings for different stakeholders, such as programme implementers, governments, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning practitioners.

Recommendations for programme implementers

Findings show notable 'awareness-engagement' gap—while 45 percent of male migrants from the intervention area were aware of the project, only 29 percent reported some level of engagement with the project activities. Moreover, male migrants' awareness of and engagement with the intervention varied by intervention components. While 38 percent of respondents from the intervention area, for example, were aware of the training sessions conducted, only six percent were aware of provision of information and/or support for accessing benefits from government schemes. It is possible that disruptions due to the outbreak of COVID-19 may have affected participation of migrants and their family. It is also possible that all strategies were not perhaps intended to be delivered to migrants and their families uniformly. However, it is important that programme implementers critically examine the challenges that they may have faced in delivering the intervention activities and in ensuring the participation of migrants, their families and communities, in order to draw lessons for scaling-up the intervention.

The intervention succeeded in improving awareness of forced labour and its manifestations as well as government measures for making overseas labour migration safe among male migrants. However, there was no significant improvement in awareness of safe channels and procedures for overseas labour migration among them. Implementers of safe migration interventions, including pre-departure orientation training programmes, need to ensure that content of their awareness programmes are sufficiently comprehensive or sustained to fill knowledge gaps, erase misconceptions, or combat misinformation.

Findings show greater positive effects among respondents who were exposed or whose family members were exposed to the intervention than respondents in the intervention area in general. These findings highlight that the safe migration projects like ASK's must invest in directly reaching a large proportion of migrants and their families for creating impact at scale. The feasibility of conducting awareness campaigns about safe migration at the village level at regular intervals need to be explored.

Recommendations for governments

The Indian government has introduced several measures to promote safe overseas migration for work, but awareness and reach of these measures among aspiring, current, and returned migrants remain limited. The ASK project has demonstrated the feasibility of conducting pre-decision and pre-emigration training and behavioural-change communication campaigns targeted at migrants, their families, and community members, providing paralegal services and reintegration services, and linking migrants and their families with government schemes. Training curricula and content of communication campaigns used by the project may be shared with the Office of the Protector of Emigration, government-sponsored overseas recruitment agencies, and government departments entrusted with the task of promoting safe overseas migration and ensuring the welfare of migrants, including the Ministry of Labour. Collaborations between programme implementers, private sector, and government bodies are needed to make low-interest or interest-free loans to potential migrants with minimal documentation, and to provide job placement support to potential migrants. Furthermore, replicating and scaling-up intervention projects like ASK's require active support from and engagement with local, district, and state governments.

Recommendations for monitoring, evaluation, and learning practitioners

Our assessment has contributed to expanding the evidence on the effect of safe migration interventions, though evidence remains limited. There is clearly a need for generating more evidence on what works to promote safe migration for overseas labour migrants in general than what is currently available.

There were a few limitations in our assessment. Notably, there was substantial loss to follow-up. The number of respondents who emigrated and were re-interviewed were too few to capture comprehensively experiences of male migrants at destination. The follow-up interview was conducted after a gap of 6–9 months because of delays as a result of outbreak of COVID-19 and local elections, which was not sufficient to capture long-term and sustained impact of the intervention. Future evaluations of models like ASK's need to build in measures to overcome these challenges. It is important that evaluations of safe migration interventions have a longer time frame to allow tracking of migrant workers over a longer period.

Our study could not shed light on why engagement with the project was low, despite reasonable level of awareness about the project. The ASK's project comprised six pillars of intervention activities. However, it was not possible to explore in our assessment whether all components were equally important to achieve the project's objective of improving awareness of and adherence to safe migration pathways, because engagement with the project was low in general. It was also not possible to examine which pillar of intervention activities contributed to the positive effect observed in our assessment. Future outcome and process evaluation of projects must use designs that can address questions on implementation research of this kind. There should be collaboration between programme implementers and monitoring, evaluation, and learning practitioners to evaluate the process of intervention delivery, mechanisms through which intervention achieved some successes, and external factors that might have affected the impact of intervention projects like ASK's. Similar collaborations are required to generate evidence on long-term effects as well.

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Annex Table 1: Baseline profile of respondents who were re-interviewed and who were lost to follow-up

Characteristics	Interviewed at endline	Did not interview at endline
Age [mean]***	30.0	31.2
Completed years of education (%)		
0-4	4.4	6.0
5-7	10.6	8.9
8-9	28.0	29.2
10-12	44.8	46.2
Graduate and above	12.2	9.8
Religion (%)***		
Hindu	76.8	60.5
Muslim	23.3	39.5
Caste (%)		
Scheduled castes	14.8	9.8
Scheduled tribes	5.2	5.3
Other backward castes	69.0	71.1
General	11.0	13.9
Household standard of living index [mean]	25.2	25.7
Marital status (%)		
Unmarried	29.5	23.0
Currently married	70.1	76.8
Separated or widowed	0.4	0.2
Engaged in any paid work in the last 6 months (%)	31.9	33.0
Migration status at endline (%)		
Migrated within/outside India	34.0	91.0
Number of respondents	736	418

*Note: *** Indicates that the difference between those who were re-interviewed and those who were lost to follow-up was statistically significant at $P < 0.001$.*

Annex Table 2: Baseline profile of respondents who had emigrated and who had not emigrated during the inter-survey period

Characteristics	Non-migrants	Migrants
Age [mean]	30.5	30.7
Completed years of education (%)		
0-4	4.4	6.2
5-7	10.2	9.4
8-9	27.0	31.8
10-12	45.8	44.1
Graduate and above	12.5	8.5
Religion (%)***		
Hindu	75.1	60.9
Muslim	24.9	39.1
Caste (%)		
Scheduled castes	14.4	9.7
Scheduled tribes	5.2	5.3
Other backward castes	68.4	72.9
General	12.0	12.1
Household standard of living index [mean]	25.4	25.4
Marital status**		
Unmarried	29.0	21.2
Currently married	70.5	78.8
Separated or widowed	0.5	0.0
Engaged in any paid work in the last 6 months (%)	33.7	29.1
Number of respondents	814	340

*Note: ** and *** Indicate that the difference between those who had emigrated and those who had not emigrated was statistically significant at $P < 0.01$ and $P < 0.001$, respectively.*

Annex Table 3: Key outcome measures used for measuring the effects of the intervention

Outcomes	Indicators	Items
Awareness of safe migration pathways	Awareness of forced labour and its forms (Number of forms of forced labour spontaneously listed; min 0 and max 8)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deception (duped to travel without an employment visa, duped to travel without a job contract, duped to travel illegally, cheated on the job or salary promised, sudden termination) 2. Restriction of movement (not allowed to go outside the labour camp/place of residence, not allowed to exit workplace during work hours) 3. Retention of identity documents 4. Excessive overtime 5. Withholding of salaries/wages 6. Intimidation and threats 7. Physical or sexual violence 8. Abusive working and living conditions and lack of medical care or assistance for health problems faced at workplace
	Index of awareness of safe channels and procedures (Range:0 [no awareness]-11 [high awareness], Cronbach's alpha: = 0.48)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. R aware of safe channels to seek employment abroad (government agencies, foreign employer directly, or registered recruitment agents) 2. R aware of essential documents required before they migrate (a passport with at least six months validity, an employment visa, and a written job contract) 3. R aware that it is not alright for a worker to handover his passport to recruitment agent/foreign employer/anyone else after he has reached the Gulf country 4. R aware of essential content of a job contract (job category of work offered, salary/wage, duration of employment, benefits and other terms of employment) 5. R aware that an agent should not charge more than Rs 20,000 as his/her fee 6. R aware that the foreign employer should bear their airfare 7. R aware that one should keep contact details of the Indian Mission/embassy/consulate and foreign employer before travelling abroad 8. R aware that it is illegal to accept work from a non-sponsor 9. R aware of the importance of keeping a copy of important documents with the family before travelling overseas 10. R aware of essential documents that workers must obtain in the country of employment (resident permit/identity card, and labour card/<i>iqama</i>) 11. R aware of grievance redressal mechanisms overseas (Indian embassy, Protector of Emigration, MADAD helpline, and Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra). <p>The respondent (R) was given a score of 1 for each question that was answered correctly and 0 otherwise. The index was created by summing up the number of correct responses.</p>
	Index of awareness of government measures for safe migration (Range 0 [no awareness] – 7 [high awareness]; Cronbach's alpha= 0.66)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. R aware of Indian government's e-Migrate portal 2. R aware of Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana 3. R aware of a mobile application, MigCall, that migrant workers in the Gulf countries can use to seek help 4. R aware of migration resource centre (MRC) in their district/state 5. R aware of government-sponsored employment bureaus /recruitment agencies 6. R aware of non-resident external savings account 7. R aware of pre-departure training workshops for potential migrants <p>The respondent (R) was given a score of 1 for each question that was answered correctly and 0 otherwise. The index was created by summing up the number of correct responses.</p>

Outcomes	Indicators	Items
Safe migration practices	index of adherence to safe migration practices (abridged version) (Range 0 [adhered to no safe migration practice] – 4 [adhered to all four practices]; Cronbach's alpha= 0.37)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. R had obtained a passport 2. R had undergone a skill test 3. R had details of at least one agency to contact in case of an emergency 4. R had undergone a pre-departure training workshop <p>The respondent (R) was given a score of 1 for each question that was answered affirmatively and 0 otherwise. The index was created by summing the number of affirmative responses</p>
	index of adherence to safe migration practices (comprehensive version) (Range 0 [adhered to no safe migration practice] – 13 [adhered to all 13 practices]; Cronbach's alpha= 0.81)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. R had obtained a passport 2. R had undergone a skill test 3. R had details of at least one agency to contact in case of an emergency 4. R had undergone a pre-departure training workshop 5. R had received a written contract 6. The contract was signed by the employer 7. R had signed the contract 8. R had shared a copy of the contract with his family 9. R had verified the employer 10. R had undergone medical check-up 11. R had got a work visa 12. R had verified the visa 13. R had bought Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (insurance). <p>The respondent (R) was given a score of 1 for each question that was answered affirmatively and 0 otherwise. The index was created by summing the number of affirmative responses</p>
	Use of formal financial products (%)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. R has a bank account 2. R uses a debit card 3. R uses credit card 4. R has any insurance coverage <p>Respondents (R) who answered affirmatively to any of the four products were categorised as a user of formal financial products</p>
	Help-seeking for difficulties experienced in the preparation for going overseas for work and at destination	Sought the help of anyone to resolve the difficulties experienced in their preparation for overseas migration or at destination



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