

# Leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure for Building Inclusive Social Protection Systems

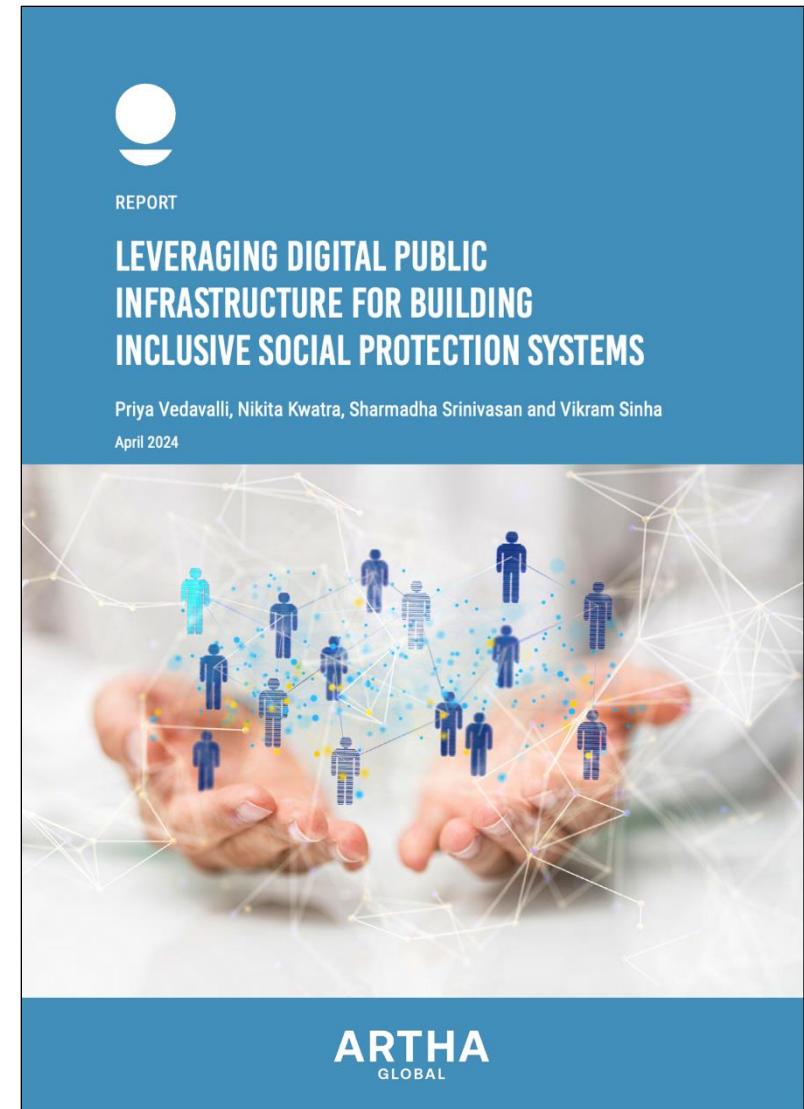
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ARTHA GLOBAL (April 2024)

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# Background

- **Artha Global:** Independent policy research, consulting & network facilitation organisation. Based in Mumbai & London.
- **Paper Commissioned by:** The Rockefeller Foundation.
- **Focus of Paper:** Using Digital Public Infrastructure to Make Social Protections More Portable – In the Context of India
- **What is Portability?**
  1. The quality of being easily transported
  2. To preserve, maintain and transfer social security rights and benefits

[Cruz A. T., 2004]



# Background

## Why does portability matter?

- Vulnerable income groups often migrate internally in search of jobs.
- They rely on social protections.
- India has over 400 million internal migrant workers [LSE, n.d.]
- Make-up a majority of the informal economy
- An estimated 120 million are circular (repeatedly move) [Sinha H., 2020]

## Digital Public Infrastructure [DPI]

1. Provide identity e.g. Aadhaar (digital ID)
2. Enable Payments e.g. UPI (mobile payments)
3. Facilitate the delivery of population-scale services by public and private actors e.g. DigiLocker (documents)
4. Other functions for the public good



# Approach

- 1. Investigate Indian & Global Context**
- 2. Selected 3 SP Schemes**
  - I. Public Distribution System (PDS)
  - II. ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services)
  - III. Building & Construction Workers Act (BOCW)
- 3. Conducted Primary Research**

## Quantitative

- Randomly Sample 900 beneficiaries
- In Nagpur & Chandrapur in Maharashtra

## Qualitative

- Interviewed key individuals such as officials from the departments overseeing each scheme

## Desk Research

- Reviewed online resources

## 4. Discussion

- i. Findings**
- ii. Opportunities**
- iii. Limitations**

# PDS



## PDS (Public Distribution System)

- Largest welfare program in India with nearly 800 million beneficiaries
- **Targets:** Below Poverty Line Households
- **Benefits:** Subsidized grains obtained from FPS (Fair Price Stores)
- **Sponsor:** Central Government [non-contributory]
- **DPI:** Aadhaar enable ONORC (One Nation One Ration Card) was launched in 2019

## Qualitative Research

- Visited food grain warehouse
- Visited FPS shops

# PDS: Findings

- 1. High proportion of ration cardholders**
- 2. Majority of cards issued in home districts**
- 3. Low awareness of portability**
- 4. High success rate in getting ration card if respondent knew of portability**
- 5. Misinformed about the need for the card**
- 6. Low Awareness of Grievance Redressal**
- 7. Challenges in Stock Management**



# ICDS



## ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services)

- **Targets:** All pregnant & lactating mothers and children below the age of 6.
- **Benefits:**
  - I. Nutrition & health
  - II. Pre-school
  - III. Supplementary nutrition
  - IV. Immunisation
  - V. Health check-ups and referrals
  - VI. Non-formal education etc.
- **Sponsor:** Central Government [non-contributory]
- Administered from *Anganwadi* centers (1.36 Mn)
- No Documentation needed / Universal Coverage
- **DPI:** Maha MTS was launched in Maharashtra

## Qualitative Research

- Visited *Anganwadi* centers

# ICDS: Findings

- 1. Low attempts to access**
- 2. High awareness of portability**
- 3. High rate of successful access**
- 4. Grievance redressal**
- 5. Heavily reliant on manual record keeping**





## BOCW (Building & Other Construction Workers Act)

- **Targets:** Construction Workers
- **Benefits:** BOCW card enables workers to separately apply for pension, medical assistance, housing loans etc.
- **Sponsor:** States create a fund by levying a cess of 1-2% on construction projects. [contributory]
- E-Shram portal created by Ministry of Labor to track unorganized workers. Potential application

# BOCW: Findings



- 1. Low awareness**
- 2. Low uptake of BOWC cards**
- 3. Low uptake of benefits**
- 4. Challenges in claiming benefits**
- 5. Complicated registration process**

# Summary of Issues

Based on triangulating data from surveys, field study and secondary research:

## PDS

1. Lack of awareness and uptake of portability benefits
2. Challenges with stock management and reconciliation
3. Siloed data systems leading to exclusion errors in PDS.

## ICDS

1. Poorly located Anganwadi centers for a migrant population.
2. Poor tracking of migrant women and children.
3. Duplicate entries and errors. Extensive manual record keeping is needed.

## BOCW

1. Lack of awareness
2. Complicated registration process
3. Misunderstanding about the two-step process

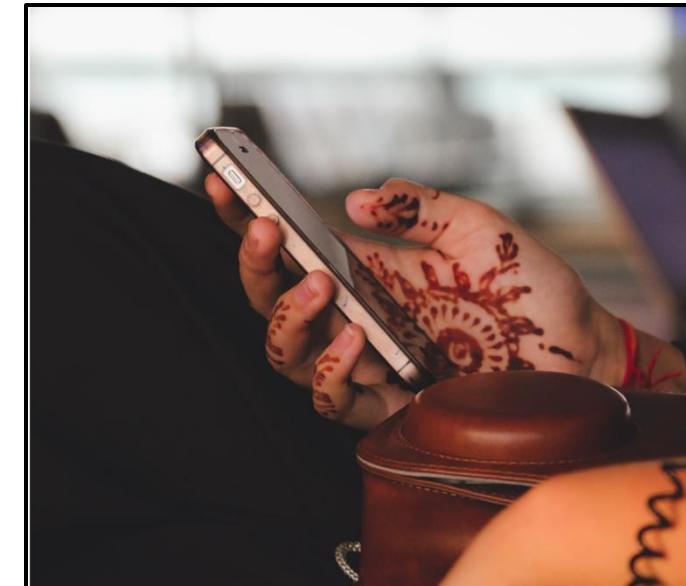
# Opportunities

## Social Registry

1. Reduces duplication of efforts
  - The application process for BOCW is very time consuming
2. Reduces exclusion errors
  - ICDS can pull information on domicile status and target women who have migrated
  - BOCW could do likewise and use the eShram portal for push text messages

## Awareness

1. Targeted Awareness Drives
2. Open Data Access with Verified 3rd Parties



# Opportunities

## Enrollment & Registration

1. One-time submission of documents by beneficiaries
  - Eg. DigiLocker
2. Automatic Updates

## Delivery of Benefits

1. Tied to unique identifier
2. Automatic eligibility

## Greivance Redressal



# Limitations of Using DPI

## Technical Limitations

1. Building enterprise architecture
2. Managing the procurement process
3. Developing technical capacity within the government

## Governance challenges

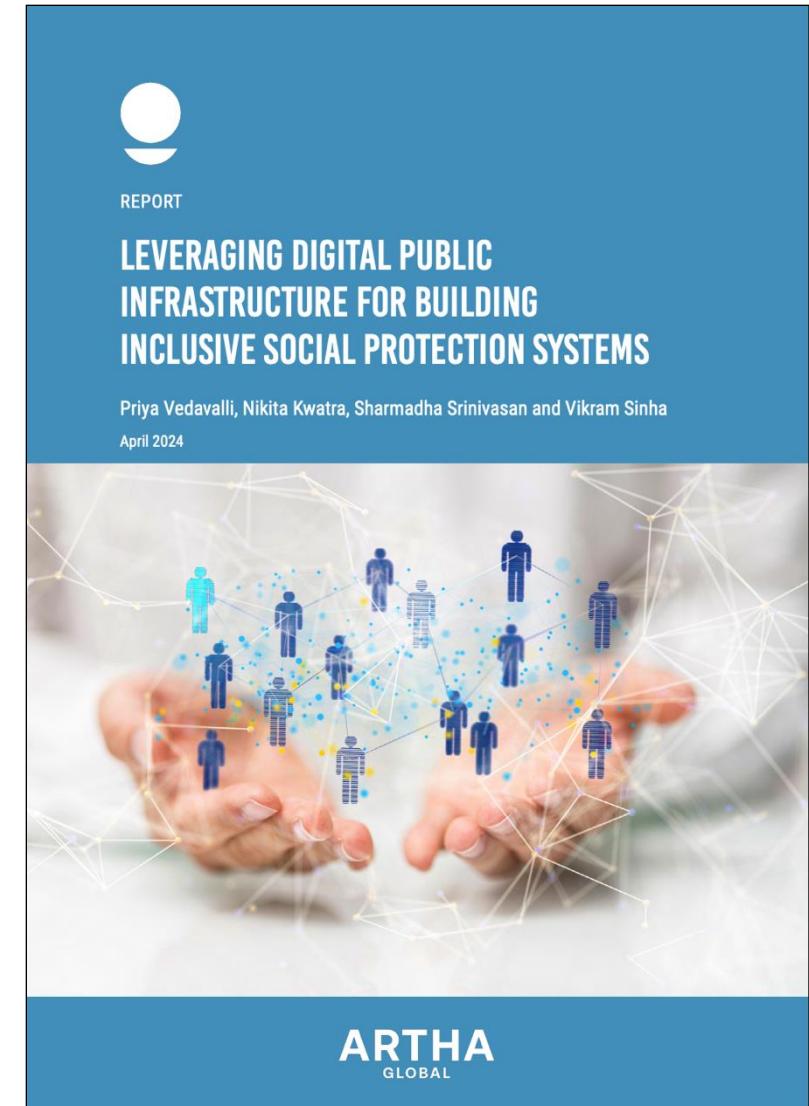
1. Ensuring state capacity to implement
2. Ensuring inclusivity

## Regulatory

1. Defining the regulatory mechanism
2. Data security & privacy
  - Accountability
  - Data minimization
  - Purpose limitation
  - Accuracy
  - Storage
  - Integrity & Confidentiality

# Discussion

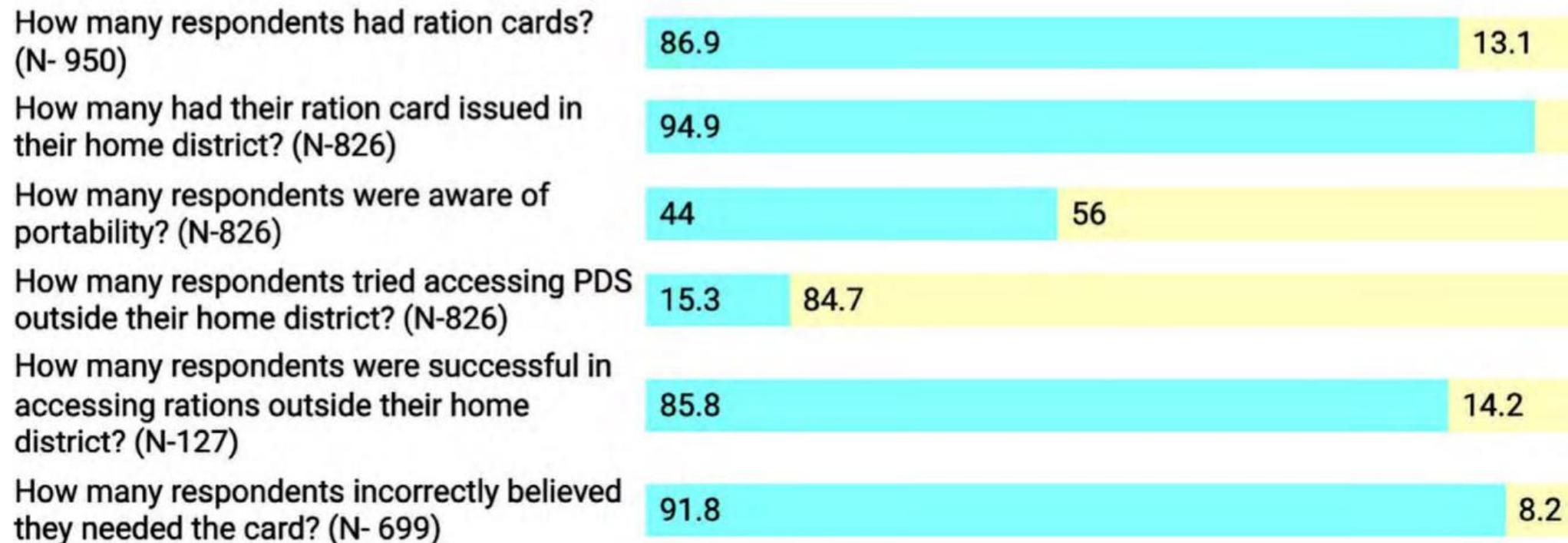
- 1) Comments or Questions**
- 2) Limitations of Paper**
- 3) Potential Discussion Points**
  - A. What are the key issues with Sri Lanka's Social Protection system. Can DPIS address this?**
  - B. How do the opportunities of using DPI relate in a Sri Lankan context?**
  - C. GIZs Data Protection Principles for Social Protection**
  - D. How does India compare with other examples of DPI?**



# Appendix: PDS: Survey

Values given in %

Yes      No



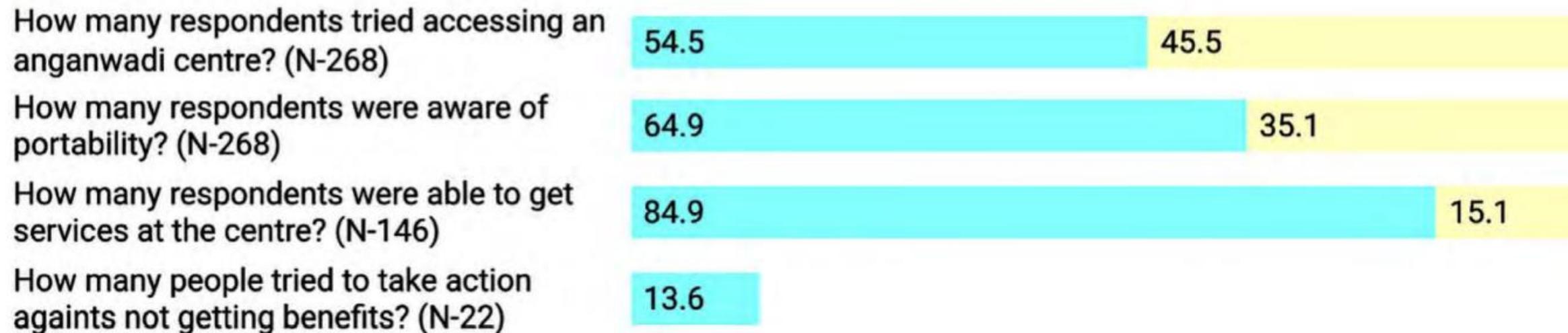
'N' refers to the number of respondents for each question.

# Appendix: ICDS: Survey

## ICDS

Values have been given in %

Yes      No



'N' refers to the number of respondents for each question.

# Appendix: BoCW: Survey

## BoCW

Values have been given in %

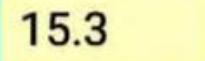
 Yes  No

## BoCW

How many respondents were aware of the BoCW card and its benefits? (N- 839)

39.6  60.4 

How many respondents were BoCW card holders? (N- 332)

84.7  15.3 

Among BoCW card holders, how many respondents tried applying for benefits? (N- 129)

55.9  44.1 

'N' refers to the number of respondents for each question.