

Leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure for Building Inclusive Social Protection Systems

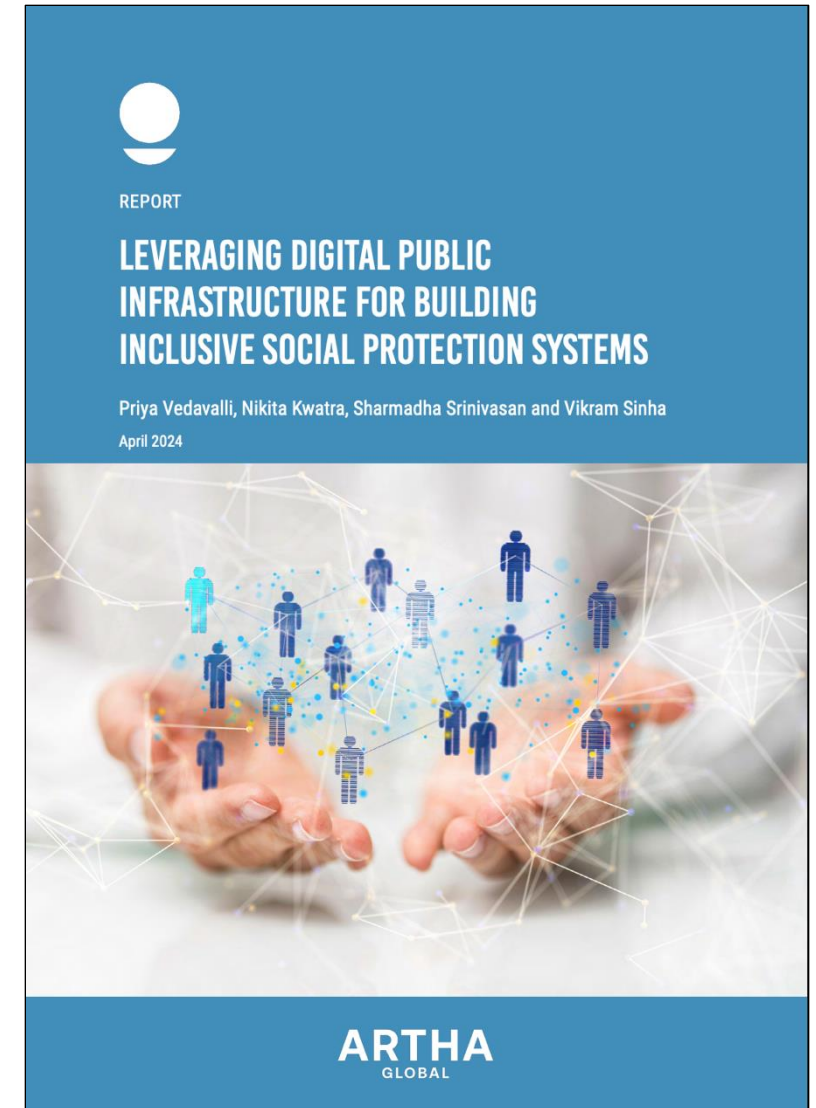
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ARTHA GLOBAL (April 2024)

Journal Club 17/04/2025

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

- Reveiwed 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 Greivance 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. Greivance redressal
5. Heavily reliant on manual record keeping



BOCW



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

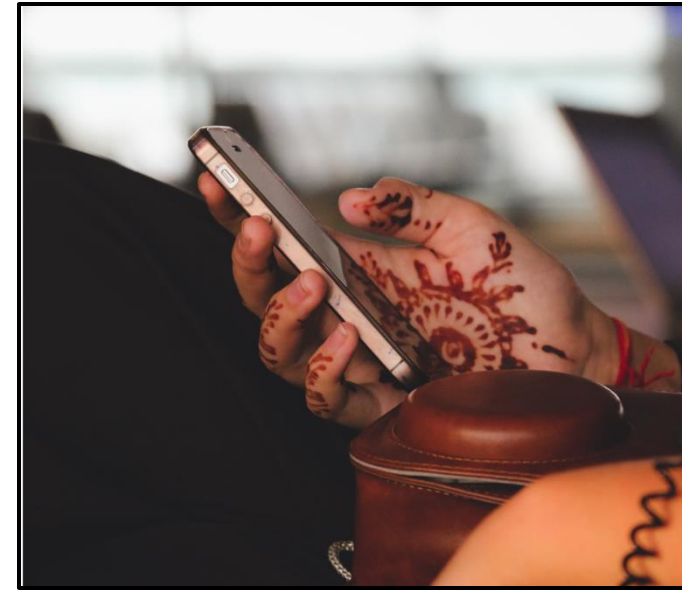
Opportunities

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

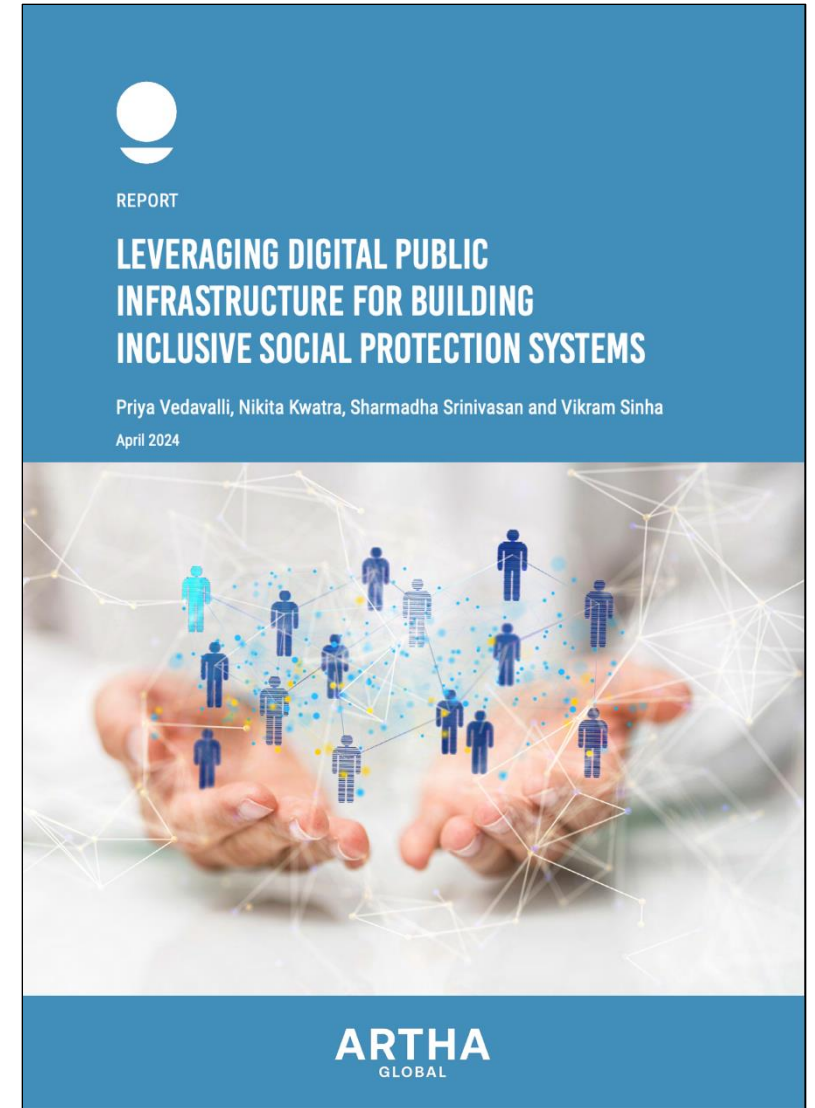
1. Ensuring state capacity to implement
2. Ensuring inclusivity

Regulatory

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

Discussion

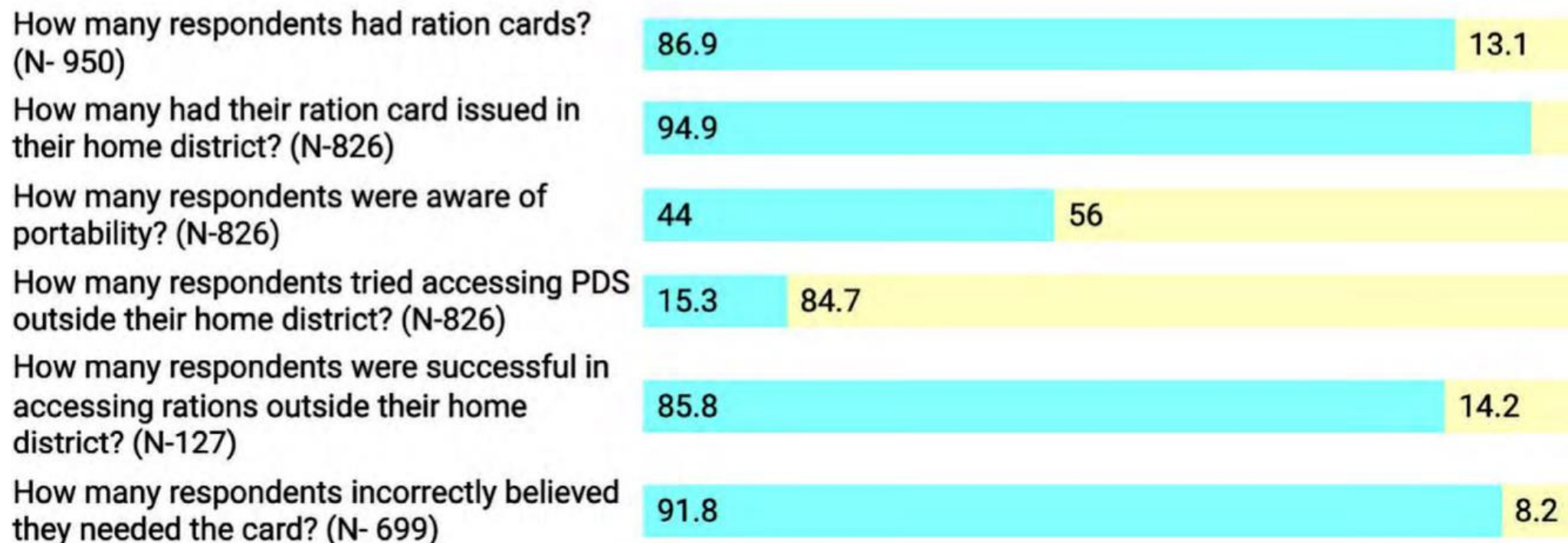
- 1) Comments or Questions
- 2) Limitations of Paper
- 3) Potential Discussion Points
 - A. What are the key issues with Sri Lanka's Social Protection system. Can DPIs address this?
 - B. How do the opportunities of using DPI relate in a Sri Lankan context?
 - C. GIZs Data Protection Principles for Social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



Appendix: PDS: Survey

Values given in %

Yes No



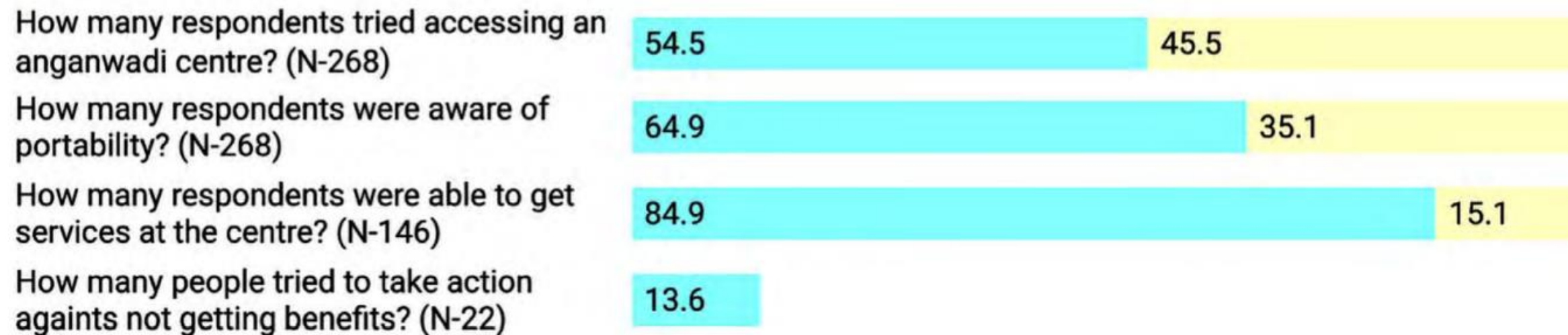
'N' refers to the number of respondents for each question.

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.