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 O.P. Jindal Global University  
 Sonipat Narela Road, Sonipat- 131001, Haryana

Jindal School of Government  
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# Urban Rhythm to Rural Rhythm: Reverse Migration of Mumbai's Ex-millworkers and Challenges of Incorporation in the Rural Habitat



**SPEAKER**

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Dr. Sumeet Mhaskar is Humboldt Research Fellow at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS), University of Göttingen. He is also Junior Research Partner at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity (MPI-MMG). Sumeet has obtained his doctorate in Sociology from St. Antony's College, University of Oxford; and M.A and M. Phil degrees in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. Previously, he has held Post-Doctoral and Visting scholar positions at CeMIS/Max Weber Stiftung, Center for South Asia, Stanford University and MPI-MMG. Sumeet's research interests include labour sociology, informal economy, migration, social movements, and inter-generational educational and occupational mobility.

**Abstract**

Rural-urban migration has historically constituted the most important source of labour supply to the urban industry in the Mumbai city. In most cases, migration took place within the networks of caste, kinship and village; these networks became much stronger in the city. The Konkan region, a few districts of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh had similar patterns of migration to Mumbai city. From these places, at least one male member of the household migrated to work in Mumbai. Not surprisingly, these were also the places that witnessed Mumbai's ex-millworkers' migrating back in substantial numbers once the textile mills began closing down at the end of twentieth century. The phenomenon of reverse migration and ex-millworkers' challenges of incorporation into the rural habitat is the subject of investigation of this paper. It investigates following questions. What are factors that led ex-millworkers to employ reverse migration as a survival and coping strategy? Did the reverse migrated workforce face any challenges in integrating into the rural milieu? If yes, what were the obstacles to integration? And finally, what does the experience of reverse migration tell us about their urban experience? This paper uses qualitative and quantitative survey data collected between August 2008 and August 2009, and from December 2010 to January 2014. The qualitative data comprises of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and informal discussions conducted with reverse migrated ex-millworkers from western Maharashtra and Konkan region. The quantitative data consists of the survey data of 924 ex-millworkers based in the city of Mumbai and 113 reverse migrated ex-millworkers.

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