Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Seasonal Migration
Case of Maharashtra Migration Tracking System

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Abstract

- Distress-driven seasonal internal migration Remains a comparatively understudied subject.
- Such Migrants include Agriculture laborers, Brick-klin workers, construction workers etc.
- A complex issue with health & nutritional vulnerabilities, especially for women & children.
- The COVID-19 pandemic worsened the "feminization of vulnerability" among seasonal migrants.
- Lack of data makes seasonal migrants invisible to Policymakers and Researchers. This results in hindrance in social protection services to Migrating families.
- Policy Planning and State Intervention for mitigating vulnerabilities among seasonal migrants require a high level of collaboration among multiple government departments. Recently state of Maharashtra implemented one such program, Maharashtra Migration Tracking System.
- There have not been sufficient studies to assess the administrative effectiveness of the government's collaborative efforts in mitigating the vulnerabilities of seasonal migrants, This work is one such effort.
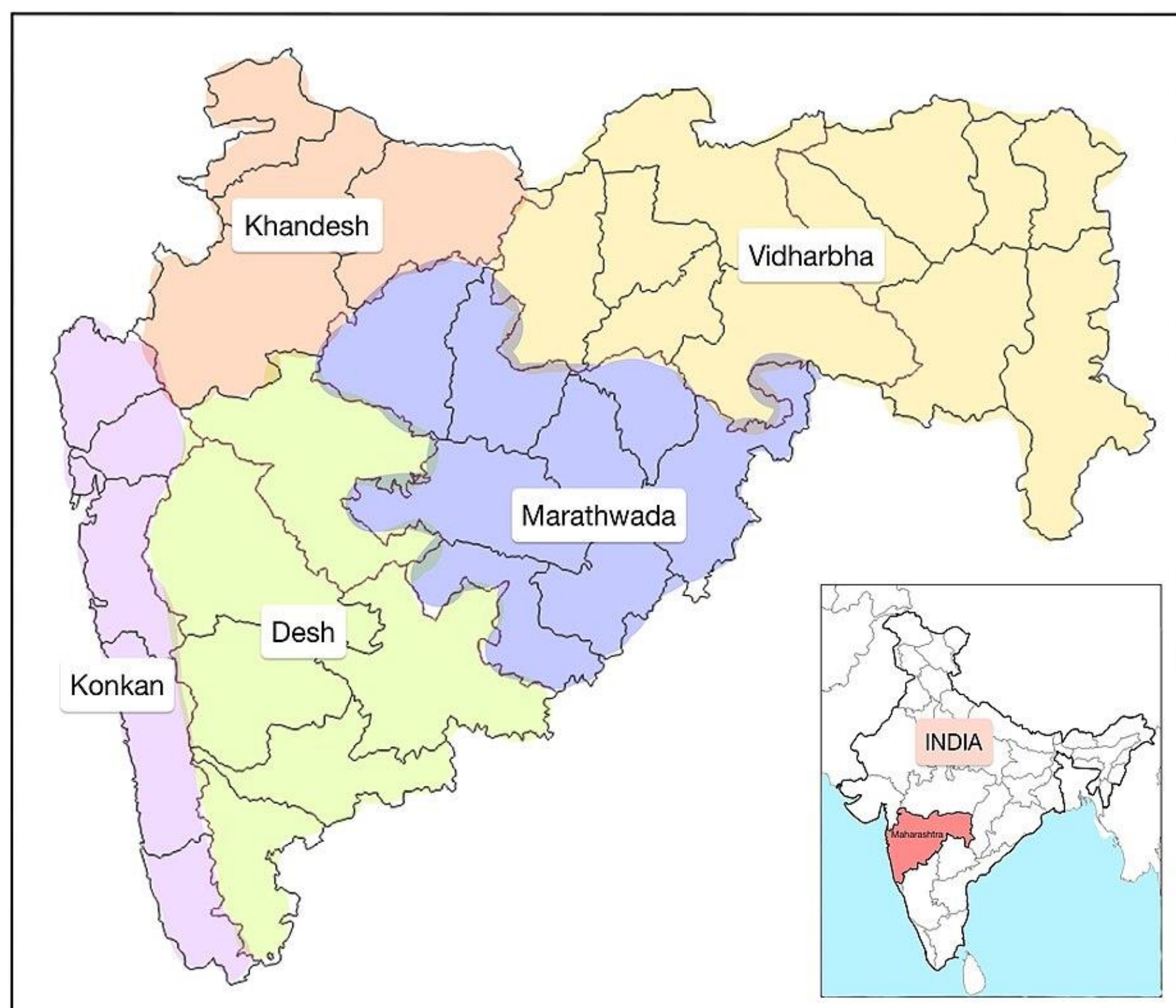
Introduction: Maha MTS

- A pioneering state intervention by the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Maharashtra.
- Maha MTS works as a collaborative project between various government departments like Public Health, School Education, Public Distribution, Tribal Development, Employment Guarantee scheme etc.
- Maha MTS aims to:
  - Enumerate seasonal migrants in high-burden districts.
  - Deliver essential social services & entitlements to migrant families.
  - Develop Technology platform for seamless service transfer.
  - Leverages existing government field functionaries and officers for uninterrupted transfer and access to state's social protection services.
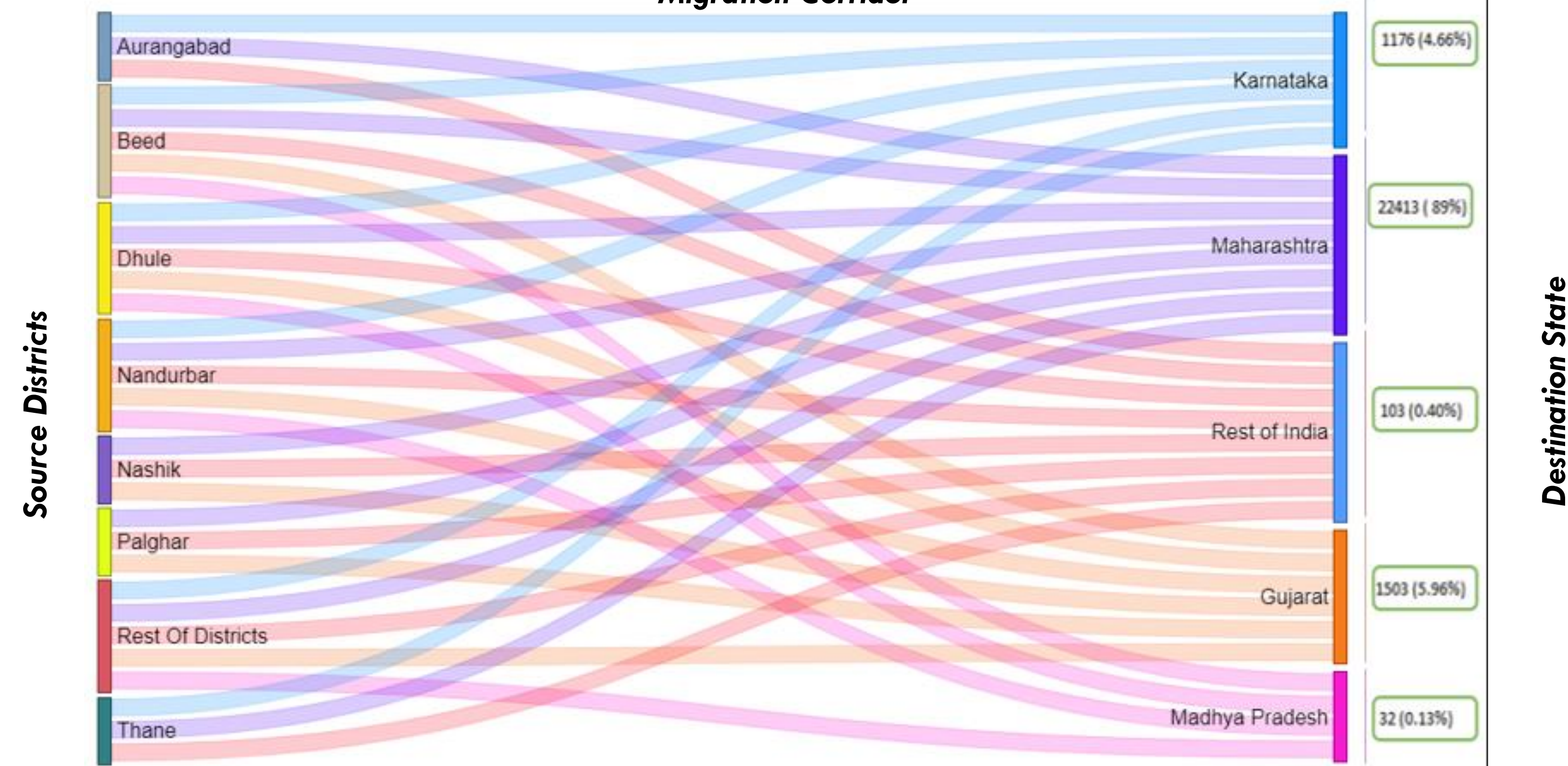
Data and Method

- This study critically assesses the operational feasibility of MTS in mitigating health and nutrition vulnerabilities among migrant populations. We examine its functionalities and implementation strategies through the lens of efficacy in guaranteeing uninterrupted delivery of health and nutrition services, including those offered by the Public Health Department and Women and Child Development Department (health services, child vaccinations, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), etc.).
- Analysis of data for 37,848 seasonal migrants (for the year 2021-22) from high-burden districts in Maharashtra was conducted, employing operational efficiency indicators like "enumeration efficiency," "destination acceptance rate," and "service delivery rate" to assess the achievement of MTS's objectives.
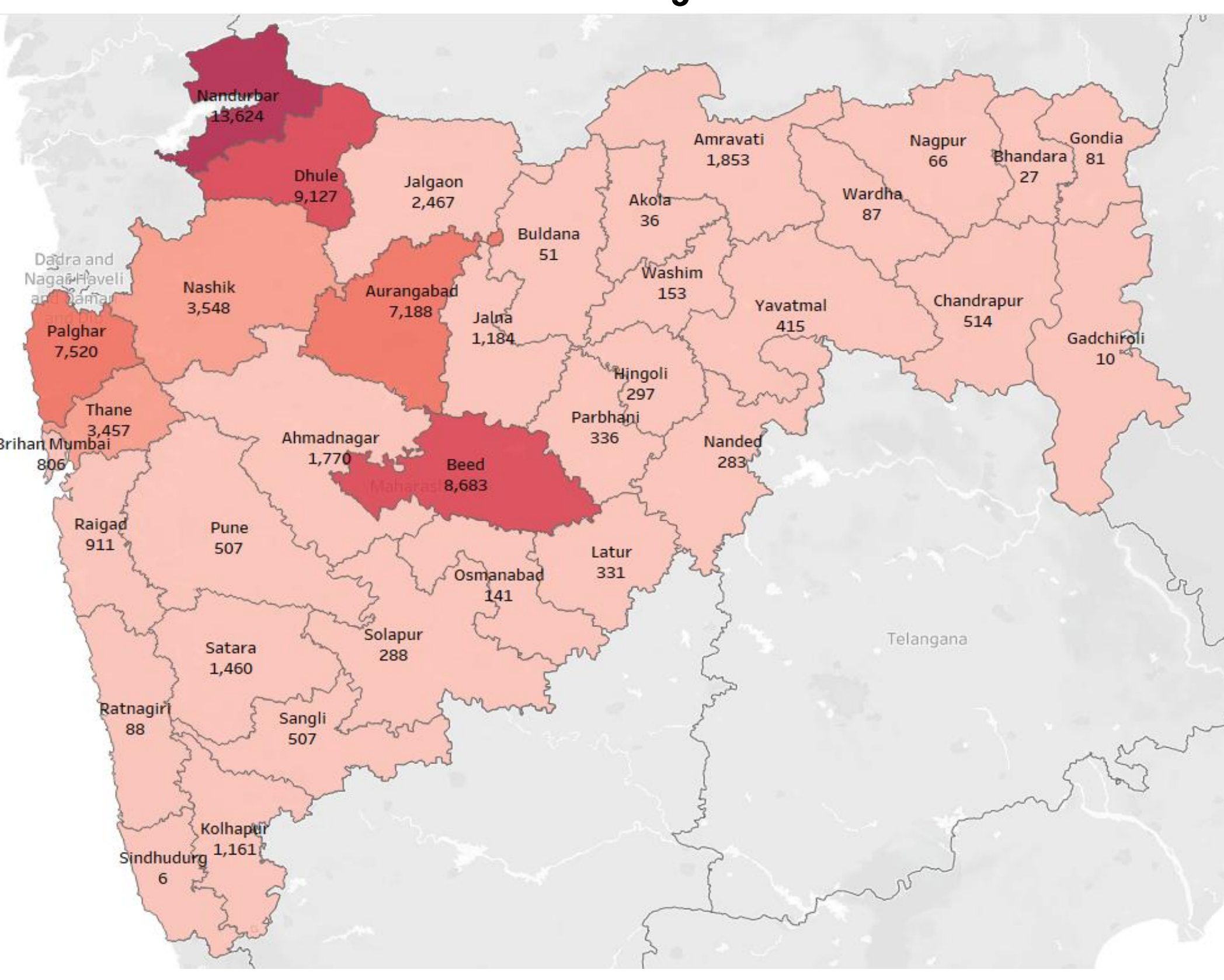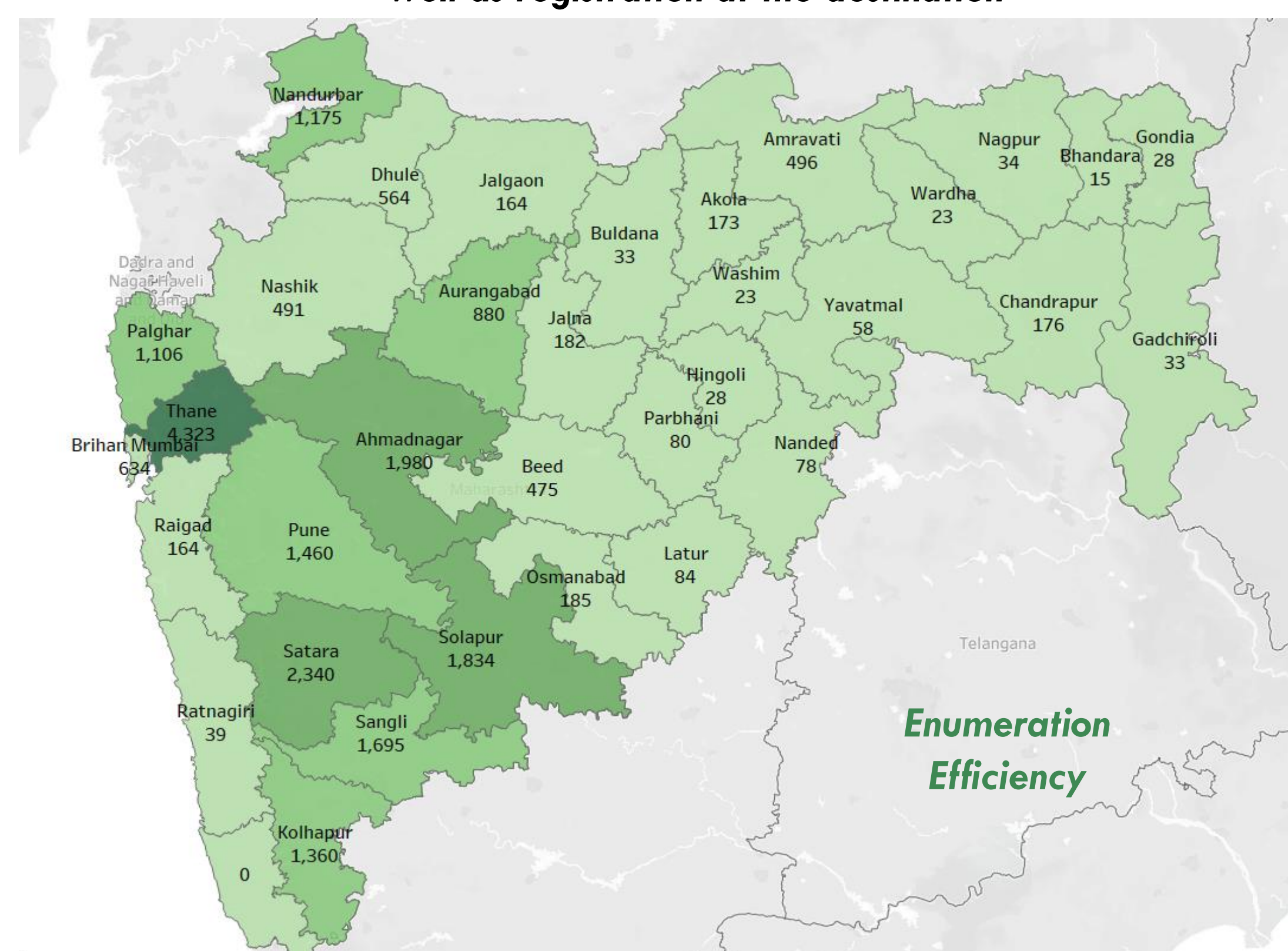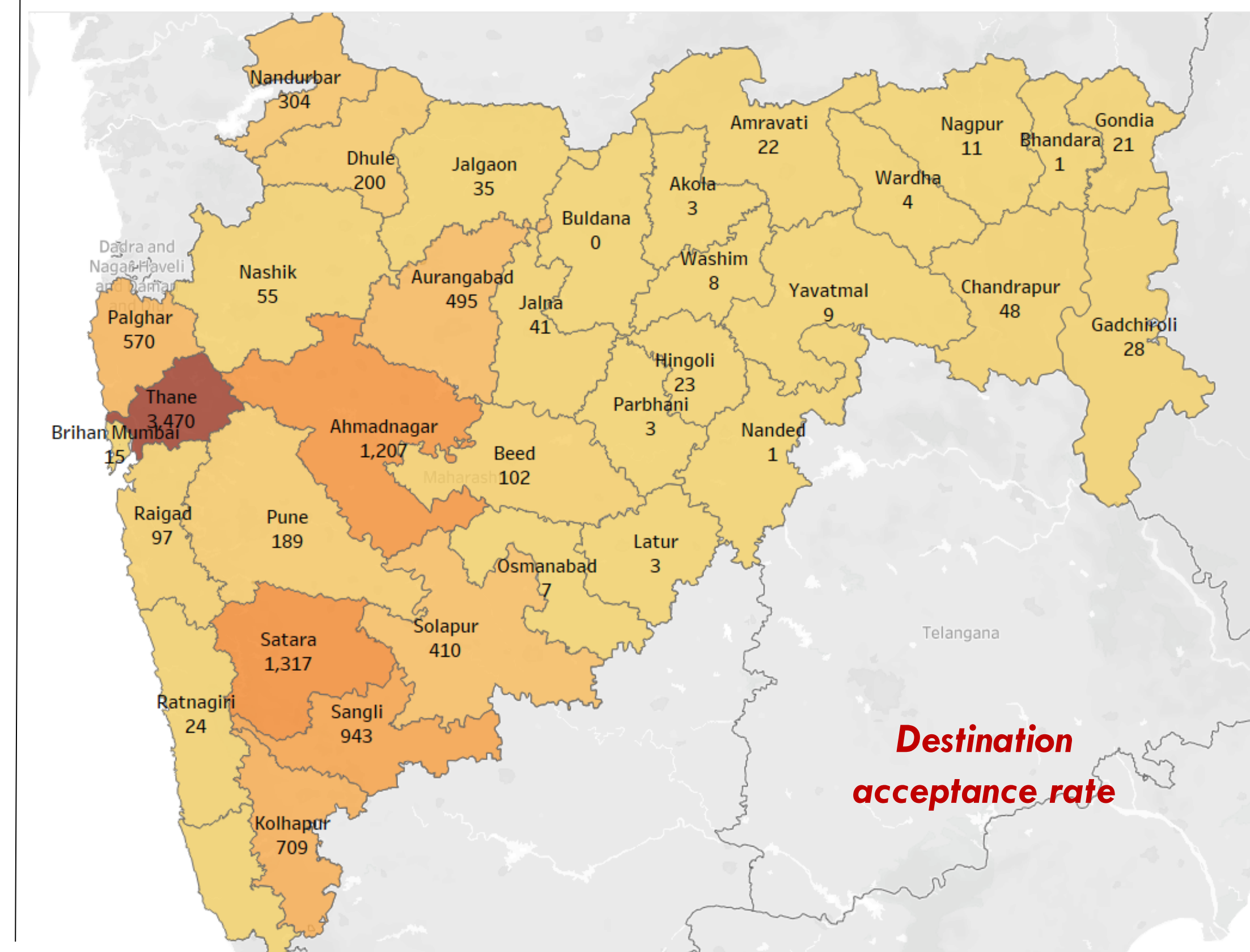

Area of Work: Maharashtra, India

Migration Corridor

Potential Out-Migrants

In-Migrants – Comprises of the migration from source as well as registration at the destination
Enumeration Efficiency

Accepted In-Migrants
Destination acceptance rate

Results

- The Maha MTS mobile-based application has proven instrumental in enumerating a total of 69,195 potential migrant beneficiaries, with 21,472 individuals actually undergoing migration. Among these migrants, 10,161 were successfully accepted at their intended destinations, allowing services to be delivered to 31% of the beneficiaries.
- Most seasonal migrants were 'Intra-State' migrants (89%), about 6% went to Gujrat, 4.6% Karnataka and rest to other states.
- Sugar cane cutting and Brick Kline work together comprised of 84% of total seasonal migrants enumerated. Rest 16% include agricultural laborer, construction workers and other odd informal jobs.
- The Migration acceptance rate was highest for Pregnant mothers (49%) followed by Children (46%) and Nursing Mothers (43%).

Conclusion

1. Analysis of data for seasonal migrants from high-burden districts in Maharashtra shows variation in operational efficiency indicators like 'enumeration efficiency' and 'service delivery rate' across districts.
2. Positive outcomes include improvement in health and nutrition service uptake among seasonal migrants.
3. The study identifies policy recommendations for strengthening the health and nutrition system for seasonal migrants.
4. Maha-MTS presents a replicable model for protecting the health and nutrition of vulnerable seasonal migrants.
5. This research contributes to informed policy responses in similar contexts.

Future Work

- National Expansion and Challenges:
  - The app's features are being considered for a national migrant tracking system. This might exclude children aged 6-18 who aren't covered by the current program.
- Ensuring Child Safety:
  - Local committees and volunteers are crucial to ensure the safety of children during migration. Training for volunteers is needed to support migrant child tracking.
- Collaboration between departments can improve migrant lives.

Acknowledgement

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