

Case city report: Kishangarh, Rajasthan

SMALL CITIES

The Front Lines of India's Employment, Migration and Urban Challenges

January 2020





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Published in January 2020 by Centre for Policy Research

Acknowledgments:

This report is part of a research program examining small cities in India and Indonesia from the perspective of employment, migration and youth, led by Mukta Naik, Fellow, Centre for Policy Research and Gregory F Randolph, Executive Vice President, JustJobs Network. This initiative is made possible through generous funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Think Tank Initiative (TTI). We thank those institutions, and particularly program officers Seema Bhatia-Panthaki and Navsharan Singh, for enabling us to explore critical development issues in creative and fulfilling ways.

We would like to express our gratitude to our mentors Sabina Dewan of the JustJobs Network and Partha Mukhopadhyay of the Centre for Policy Research for their encouragement. For the invaluable assistance in collecting data, we thank Baladevan Rangaraju and his team from Indus Information Initiatives Pvt Ltd and our partners in Kishangarh, Manthan Sanstha Kotri and Mr. Teja Ram.

This work would not have been possible without the contribution of CPR researchers Babu Lal, Deepaboli Chatterjee, Eesha Kunduri, Kanhu Charan Pradhan, Pranav Kuttaiah, Rimjhim Saxena, Sama Khan and Shamindra Nath Roy as well as Deepshi Arya, Harish Sai, Niti Deoliya, Sparsh Agarwal and Zainab Firdausi who spent their internship periods working on the project. We would also like to thank Ambrish Dongre and S. Chandrashekhar for inputs on the survey instrument as well as Neelanjan Sircar for guidance on data analysis.

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Introduction

Cities have an important role in creating employment opportunities for the approximately 10 million youth who enter India's working age population each year, especially in the wake of India's imminent demographic dividend, which it reaches between 2020-2040 with regional variations. Unfortunately, cities are struggling to play this role. India exhibits low levels of rural-urban migration and, for those with lower levels of education, rural-urban wage differentials only kick in when they are able to access regular jobsⁱ. High costs of housing and services in large cities further exclude migrantsⁱⁱ and perhaps discourage long-term migration. Indians from rural households moving 'off the farm' move to the city for work seasonally and for short periods of timeⁱⁱⁱ, and increasingly by commuting^{iv}. Thus, cities lie at the cusp of employment and multiple and complex forms of mobility.

This research project, of which this city profile is a part, turns its attention to the 'where' of the demographic dividend – what kind of geographies are experiencing the transition of youth from agriculture to non-farm work? Until recently, the focus of urban policy and scholarship has been on metropolitan cities and large movements of rural workers to metropolitan centres are seen as powering India's urbanization. On the contrary, recent evidence indicates that India's urbanisation is dispersed and driven by "the morphing of places" as opposed to "the moving of people."^v This entails the in-situ transformations of large, dense villages into census towns,^{1, vi} essentially

through transitions from farm to non-farm work. Manufacturing activity in India is also moving away from large cities^{vii}, adding credence to the idea that non-farm employment is available in a range of locations within India's urban system, as well as in areas that are yet to urbanise. Small towns in India also play an important role in creating urban jobs, with the growth of sectors like transport and construction in small towns aiding rural diversification, prompting Denis and Zerah to note that "despite contradictory evidence regarding the economic and spatial dynamics at work in the last decade or two, there is sufficient evidence to argue that a significant share of the Indian economy and jobs is located outside large cities."^{viii} In fact, 23.9 percent of India's youth (aged 15-29) and 33 percent of young workers are located in non-metropolitan locations². A diverse collection of such places including small towns, secondary and tertiary cities, 'rurban' settlements, and corridors of urban transformation – we refer to them collectively as small cities – lie on the front lines of India's demographic dividend opportunity and development challenges.

Despite their importance, small cities remain neglected in terms of public expenditure. Secondary data indicates that while private consumption is rising rapidly in small cities, public investment is not keeping pace. Small cities remain underserved in terms of public services like water and sewerage, and large central government schemes like the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) have

¹ A census town meets India's criteria for being urban (Population exceeding 5,000, at least 75% of male working population employed outside the agricultural sector and minimum population density of 400 persons per km) but is governed by rural panchayats

² As per Census 2011

had a 'metropolitan bias'^{6x}. Cities with fewer than 1 million inhabitants in India received only US\$ 12 per capita in municipal spending compared to US\$ 130 in major cities^x.

We know from the trajectory of developed nations that urbanization has been recognized as a ticket to prosperity; for emerging economies, it is touted as a pathway to poverty alleviation. Between 2001-2011, India succeeded in bringing down the percentage of people living in poverty from 35.4 percent to 19.8 percent. However, its middle class is relatively small. In 2011, India's middle, upper-middle and upper classes made up only 3.3 percent of the population. India needs to pull a large number of households not just over the poverty line, where falling back is only one medical emergency or economic shock

away, but firmly into the middle class. A focus on local economic development, job creation and improved governance in small cities are important policy directions in this regard.

This city profile focuses on Kishangarh, a small city in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan, India, which is transforming itself from an agrarian market town to a manufacturing and logistics hub for stone processing and trade. The first section utilizes secondary data to explain the context of Kishangarh. The second section shares findings of original primary data collected in 2018, and the final section offers policy recommendations toward expanding the city's economic potential and creating an inclusive labor market for rural and small city youth.

Kishangarh: Setting the context

Kishangarh is a town in Rajasthan's Ajmer district with a population of 154,886 people as of 2011. It lies 26 km north-east of Ajmer and is well connected to many parts of the state via the Indian Railways and National Highway 8. An erstwhile princely state and the birthplace of the Kishangarh style of painting, known as Bani Thani, Kishangarh has come to be known as the marble city of India, owing to its well-known marble processing industry. The city is an important node in the urbanisation process of Ajmer district in Rajasthan.

HISTORY AND REGION

Kishangarh traces its roots back to 1611 when it was founded by Kishan Singh, a younger brother of the Maharaja of Jodhpur. In 1653, the Maharaja Roop Singh erected the city's fort, which marks, what is today known as, the old city or purana sheher of Kishangarh. In 1947, after partition, Kishangarh also saw refugees coming in and new bastis springing up north of Gundolav tank. The city was influenced by processes of colonial modernity, starting in 1868 when the

Delhi-Ahmedabad railway line passed by it. A railway station was then created in an area called Madanganj - after the then Maharaja, Madan Singh. Eventually, in 1915, the Maharaja cotton mill was set up in the city, along the Jaipur-Ajmer highway, causing a growth spurt.

In 1967 the Aditya Mill was established in the Madanganj area and with it, many public amenities came up in the land between Kishangarh and Madanganj. The Ajmer-Jaipur bypass also came up north of Madanganj, further speeding up the growth of the city. The land between the bypass and the railway line saw housing development rise, and is now the most densely populated part of the city. The bypass also made it possible for a wholesale mandi and godowns to come up for the sale of agricultural produce from the region. From 1990-2000, Kishangarh benefited from the Indira Nagar Awasiya Yojana under a scheme called Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT). With the industrial parks developed by the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO) coming up along the road to Roopangarh in the 1980s, the city became a marble processing and trading hub and is known as the Marble City.

DEMOGRAPHY AND SOCIETY

As per Census 2011, about 83 percent of the city's population belongs to the General castes and 16 percent are Scheduled Castes. Caste and occupation is strongly linked, in business, sanitation as well as in specific sectors such as broom-making, drum-making, playing drums, etc. From a religion perspective, the city is predominantly Hindu (79.4 percent), with

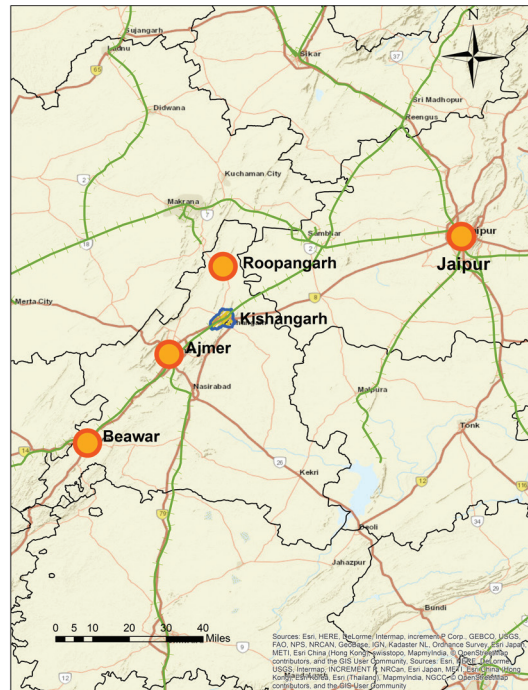


Figure 1: Kishangarh context map

prominent Muslims (14.8 percent) and Jain (5.5 percent) populations as well.

As it has grown, Kishangarh has incorporated numerous surrounding villages—in 2011, 25 villages were brought into municipal limits—and it continues to have a close relationship with surrounding rural areas, in terms of the movements of goods, people and resources. People from neighbouring areas – chiefly villages and smaller towns in Ajmer, Tonk and Beawar districts – commute to Kishangarh for work opportunities, chiefly in the marble sector. The commuter migration from nearby rural areas is also fuelled largely by agrarian distress and paucity of water. The city is seen as an important hub of employment for the region, and the

labour chowk or informal labour market is usually full every morning with people from many surrounding villages looking for daily wage work in the marble or construction industry. The region is also characterized by the city's relationship with another smaller marble hub, Roopangarh, to the north with the passage between the two cities rapidly urbanising and incorporating much of the seasonal agrarian workers in local villages into their economies.

LAND, ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

Though it had a traditional arts industry, Kishangarh has been an industrial city since the 1960s, with a focus on textiles and subsequently power looms, as well as some small-scale industry related to mineral processing, iron works etc. The city has gone through multiple cycles of de-industrialisation and re-industrialisation. The once significant textile industry, with large numbers of power looms, has diminished in the last two decades. Currently, marble and granite processing dominates its economic profile. RIICO currently has 5 phases of industrial areas in Kishangarh, two phases in Silora village adjoining Kishangarh on the south-west and one phase in Roopangarh to the north (see Table 1). The city also functions as a mandi town, a transport hub, an administrative centre and is also becoming a centre for education for rural youth from the surrounding areas.

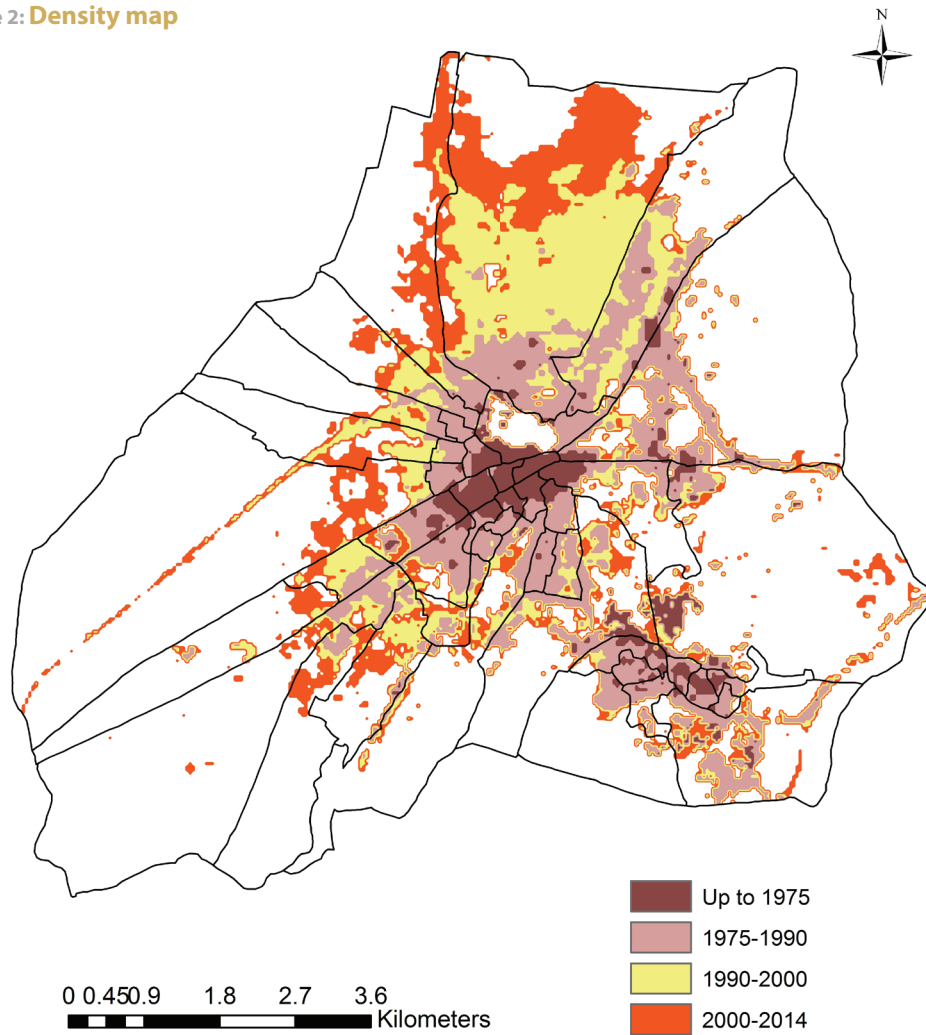
Kishangarh is split into two parts roughly by both the Ajmer Road and the Jaipur-Ajmer Expressway that run almost parallel to each other through the main city. Towards the north of the city,

particularly in wards 44 and 45, exists the bulk of the marble industry or RIICO area. This area is intensely built up with many factories but is relatively sparse in terms of the number of people actually living in the area. These wards are also home to areas like Sawantsar and Bohra Colony which are working class neighbourhoods. The new Kishangarh bus stand is a marker on the west of the city on the border of wards 41 and 42. Ward 42 also contains the Kishangarh Food Mandi, a large farmer's market for the region and a source of employment and livelihood for many of Kishangarh's older residents.

The land area under municipal limits, as per the city's Master Plan 2031, is 4579 hectares. Out of this, 2000 hectares is for development while the rest comes under agriculture, forest, watershed, hilly terrain and open space. The plan estimates the overall population density at 61 people per hectare, while the density in developed areas is 78 people per hectare.

The northern and western parts of the city, along the Roopangarh road, between the Ajmer-Jaipur bypass and the railway line, along the Bhilwara bypass near Silora, and the Khoda Ganesh road and Dhani Purohitan, are the populated parts of the city. The southern and north-east parts of the city are hilly and barely populated. However, there is vacant land between the Ajmer road and bypass as well as along Khoda Ganesh road. The city has not undertaken redevelopment or renewal projects, but private sector developers have built housing projects in the Aditya Mills land as well as commercial projects where the power looms are shutting down.

Figure 2: Density map



Source: Census of India, 2011

As per the Master Plan 2031, the key sectors of employment in the city are in industry, trade commerce and administration. It lists the following as commercial activity in the city:

- The mandi, which used to be on Khoda Ganesh road and is now on the Jaipur-Jodhpur NH.
- Transport companies located near the industrial zones along Ajmer road and Ajmer bypass road.
- Vehicle repair shops, dhabas and assorted businesses on the Bhilwara bypass and NH8.
- Hotels on the Ajmer road.

Demographics and Economy

Table No. 1

Total Population:	154,886
Migrants as percentage of Kishangarh's population:	41%
Total working age population (15-59):	96,032
Total Workers:	47,776
Youth (aged 15-29) as a share of working age population (15-59):	15,039 (33.7%)
Young males (aged 15-29) as a share of male working age population:	34.7 %
Young females (aged 15-29) as a share of female working age population:	27.2 %
Female Labour force Participation rate:	11.5%
Female Workforce participation rate:	8.5%
Workers employed in non-farm, non-household work as a share of total workers:	92.9 %
Percentage of population living in slums:	20.7 %

Source: Census of India, 2011

Details of RIICO industrial areas in and around Kishangarh

Table No. 2

	Land area (hectares)	No of units	Vacant plots
Kishangarh 1 & 2	62.88	129	
Kishangarh 3	224	245	
Kishangarh 4	442	698	
Kishangarh 5	138.89	24	
Roopangarh	36.4		56
Silora I	247	126	21
Silora II	102		14

Source: BRIEF INDUSTRIAL PROFILE of Ajmer District (2015-16)

Recently, the city has seen several new infrastructure projects including a mandi, bus stand, railway station and airport, which is expected to boost commerce. These infrastructure developments are fueling land transformations

in and around the city, as Kishangarh gets more integrated with Ajmer as well as smaller towns in the vicinity like Roopangarh, Parbatsar, Kuchaman and Nasirabad. Figure 3 clearly illustrates how Kishangarh's transformation in terms of built-up

area occurred first along the highway connecting with Ajmer and Jaipur; however, its recent growth is towards the industrial areas in the north towards Roopangarh.

About 30 percent of Kishangarh's population is part of the workforce and about a third of them are young, aged 15-29. These workers are predominantly male. As far as women's work is concerned in the city, the highest percentage of women workers – a maximum of 21 percent – are in Ward 45, which constitutes the marble area of RIICO. Few other wards, specifically 25 and 39, also show reasonable female workforce participation. Overall, women are not prominent in the city's workforce. As per Census 2011, the female labourforce participation rate for the city is a mere 11.5 percent, as compared to the national figure of 27.2 percent in 2011-12.

In 2011, migrants comprised about 41 percent of the city's population, up from 34 percent in 2001. Among male migrant, 46 percent reported economic reasons for coming to the city. Migrant worker data is unavailable at this time from Census 2011, but in 2001, migrants comprised 43.74 percent, 14.04 percent and 11.51 percent of the workforce in manufacturing and repair, wholesale and retail, and services respectively. Given the overall increase in the city's migration, these figures would be higher at present.

GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Kishangarh has a functional Municipal Council, also called the Nagar Parishad, which is a form of local self-government for smaller cities. A Chief Municipal Officer is the executive head

of the Nagar Parishad, who is advised by the Council Member who represents the voice of the elected councillor. The Nagar Parishad's chief responsibility is sanitation and sewerage. Since Kishangarh does not have a Development Authority, a parastatal form that often manages planning and land use in Indian cities, the Nagar Parishad also issues building plan approvals and land use change permissions in the city. The Master Plan, however, is prepared by the Town Planning Department of the Government of Rajasthan and not by the city government. Of its budget of Rs 2.56 billion for 2018-19, the lion's share comes from central and state governments and minimal amounts are raised through taxes, rents and fees. As such, the Nagar Parishad is also fiscally, and in part operationally, responsible for the implementation of central government schemes like Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), focused on sanitation, the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) and state government schemes like the Mukhya Mantri Jan Avas Yojana, a housing scheme, in the city.

The Nagar Parishad, like most municipal governments in India, is understaffed and disempowered (see Fig 3). Kishangarh is also the headquarters of the sub-district, a Sub-Divisional Magistrate with the powers of a civil court also is posted in the city. The SDM wields considerable influence in matters of law and order. A number of powerful central and state government institutions also operate in the city. Besides RIICO, the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DDFCIL), under the Ministry of Railways, is a central government body that is executing

the Dedicated Freight Corridor project, while the Airports Authority of India manages the city's new airport. Additionally, private players like the powerful Kishangarh Marble Association which represents the interests of the industry are also politically influential in the city.

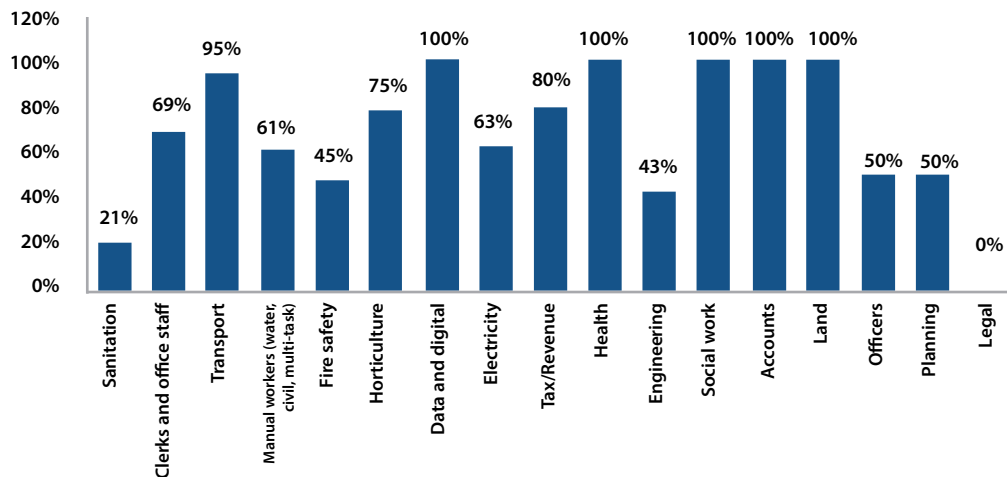
In terms of services, Kishangarh does very poorly in sanitation though housing quality is relatively good. In most cases where there exists some kind of latrine system, the predominant facility available is a septic tank. Very few households have piped sewerage systems in the entire city. Additionally, in wards that have relatively low percentages of latrine facilities within the premises such as Ward 23 (Housing Board) and also the wards in the marble area to the north of the city - open defecation is quite prevalent and even accounts for up to 60% of households in

the case of ward 23. Ward 45 which houses the bulk of the RIICO area too has an open defecation percentage of 28.5%.

The housing and houselisting data tables of the Indian Census 2011 divides households into Good, Livable and Dilapidated. Within the municipal wards of Kishangarh, the number of households listed as 'dilapidated' is negligible, with the exception of Ward 45 (the marble area) which has 35 dilapidated households. The lower percentages of 'good' households are observed to be largely in the northern parts of the city, as well as the purana sheher.

The city also shares a close relationship with the district headquarters Ajmer, which acts as the administrative headquarters while Kishangarh emerges as a regional economic hub in the district. Ajmer, which was an important town in

Figure 3: Staffing gaps in Kishangarh Nagar Parishad (% posts vacant in Sep 2018)



Source: Data collected from NP office in September 2018

Figure 4: **Ward map**

Population Density by Ward in Kishangarh

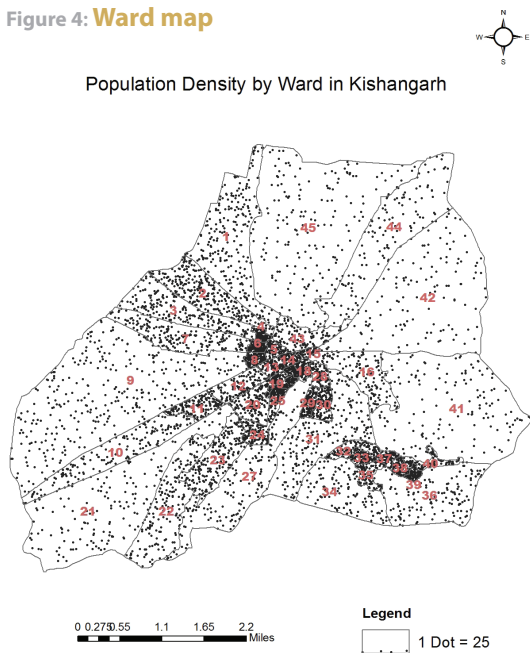


Figure 5: **Sanitation**

Percentage of Households having a Latrine facility Within the Premises

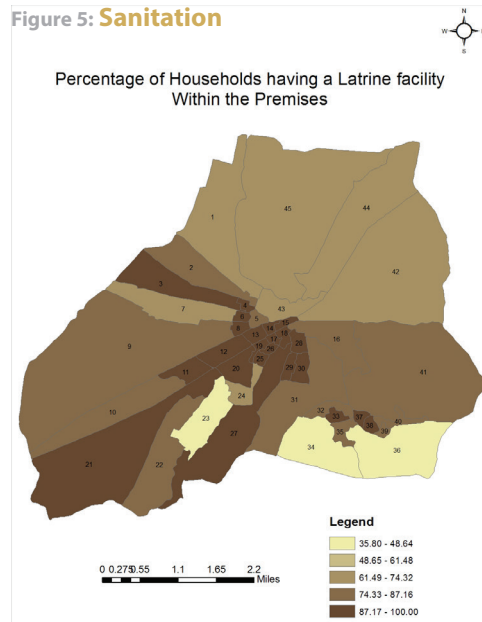


Figure 6: **2-wheeler ownership**

Percentage of Good Households to Total Households in Kishangarh

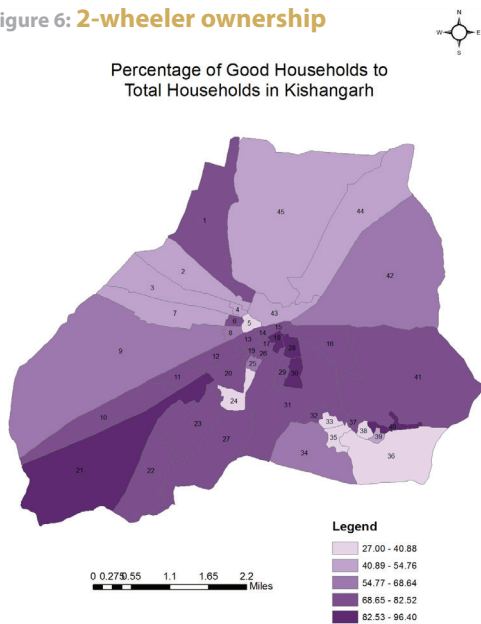
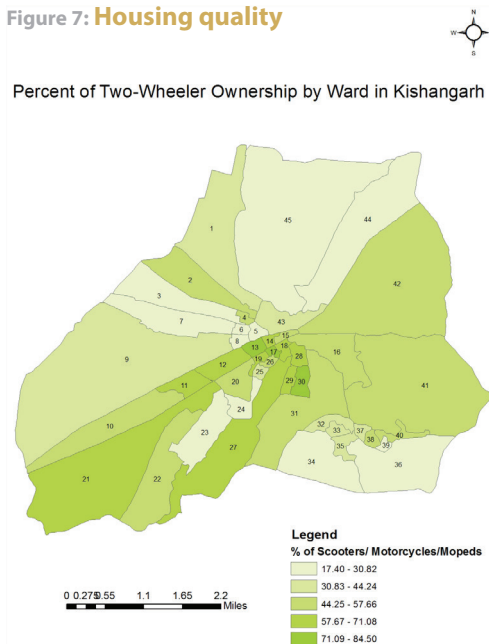


Figure 7: **Housing quality**

Percent of Two-Wheeler Ownership by Ward in Kishangarh



Source: Census of India, 2011

colonial times, is home to several prestigious educational institutions, where many Kishangarh residents aspire to attend. However, for the working class, Kishangarh seems to be creating more opportunities for employment compared to Ajmer, where jobs remain concentrated

in government services and tourism. With improved transport networks, Kishangarh is now increasingly linked with transformations in the state capital, Jaipur, and integrated economic links and mobility patterns appear to be emerging between Jaipur, Kishangarh and Ajmer.

Migration, Life & Work in Kishangarh: Findings from primary data

A survey of 397 working youth in the age group 15-29 was undertaken in March 2018 in Kishangarh. The sample included migrants and residents (40.1% and 59.9% percent respectively), as well as men and women (80.1% and 19.9% percent respectively). Additionally, 8 focus group discussions with youth in education and employment and 20 key informant interviews with government officials, employers, industry experts, union leaders, residents and civil society organisations were also conducted between July 2017 and September 2018. The data offers important insights into what opportunities for employment and economic mobility the city offers and who is coming in to seek them, youth experiences of the labor market as well as their relationship with the city.

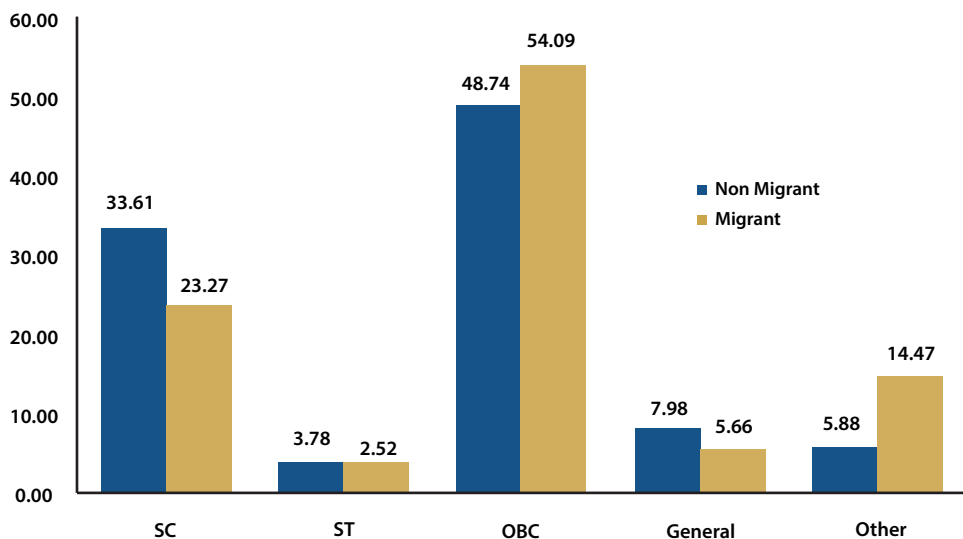
COMPOSITION OF YOUTH WORKFORCE

Youth in our target age group of 15-29 comprise about 31.5% of the city's working age population, as per Census 2011. Our survey reveals that this youth workforce is predominantly male, poorly educated, from rural backgrounds; nearly all of

them identify themselves as Hindu in terms of religion, and most belong to the backward and other backward castes. About half the workers in our sample belong to the Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and about 30 percent from the Scheduled Castes (SCs). Non-migrants are more likely to be SCs, while migrant workers are more likely to belong to the OBC category. About 93.7 percent of our sample is Hindu in terms of religion, while about 6.2 percent identify as Muslims. Linguistically, there is some variation, with the local population speaking Marwari and migrants speaking varying dialects of Hindi.

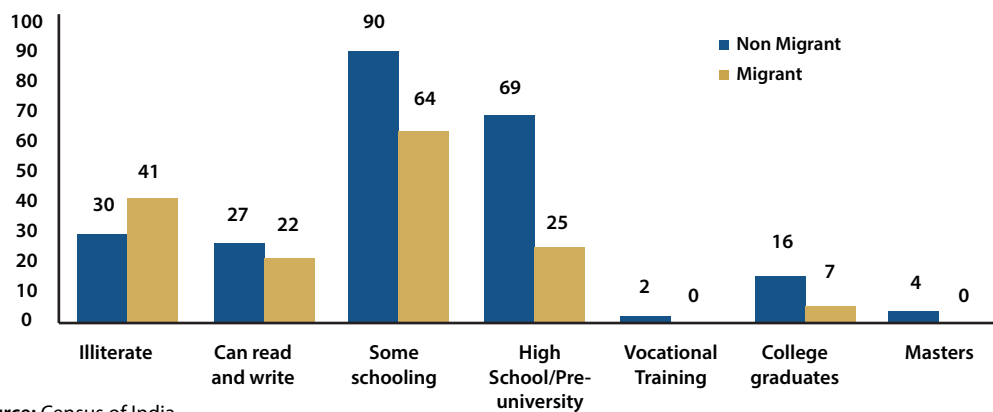
The workforce is poorly educated: about 17.8 percent of youth in our sample are illiterate, about a quarter have completed schooling, but only 6.8 have a college education. About 34.7 percent of these youth workers come from households that own agricultural land; while more migrants (45.9 percent) came from agricultural backgrounds, several non-migrants (27.3 percent) also reported the same, indicating the intertwined nature of rural and urban economies in this region. While nearly

Figure 8: Caste composition by migration status



Source: Census of India

Figure 9: Education by migration status



Source: Census of India

all the women in our sample are married, a large number of men — 56% of migrant males and 37% non-migrant males in our sample are

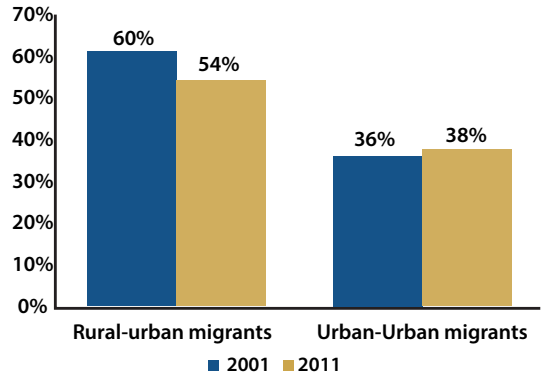
married as well. The majority of Kishangarh's youth workers contribute their income to large agrarian or semi-agrarian households.

WHO IS COMING TO THE CITY?

Kishangarh, as an industrial town, largely attracts local migrants from within Rajasthan as well as migrants from the Hindi belt states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The MP2031 reports that workers in the marble sector come from within Ajmer district and migration data corroborates that intra-district migration is predominant. However, Census 2011 shows that the shares of inter-district migration from other parts of Rajasthan as well as inter-state migration has risen. There is also an increase in the proportion of in-migrants from urban areas and a fall in rural-urban migration, indicating significant shifts in the urbanisation and mobility patterns in the region.

In our survey, we find that Kishangarh attracts migrants from within Rajasthan as well as other north Indian states. We find that 64 out of 159

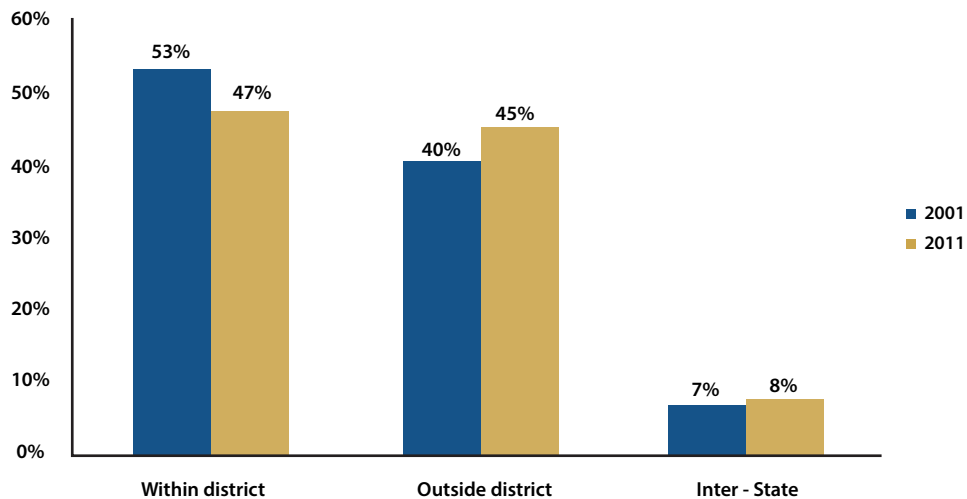
Figure 10: Migration from rural and urban areas



Source: Survey data

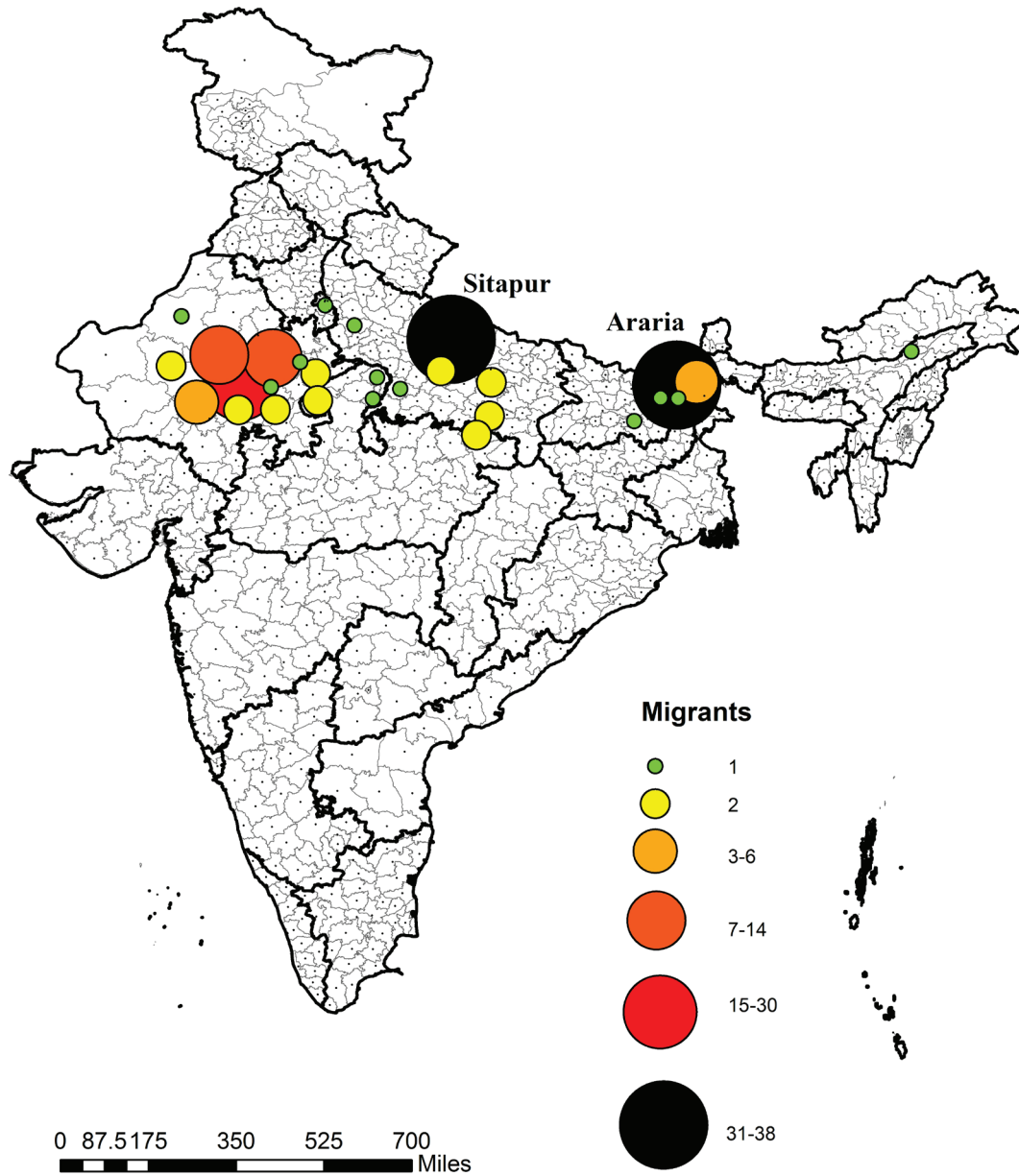
migrants are from within the state of Rajasthan, comprising 40% of the migrants in the sample, as compared to 92 percent in Census 2011. This discrepancy is likely because the Census is not designed to measure seasonal and short-term migration.

Figure 11: Distance of in-migration



Source: Survey data

Figure 12: Kishangarh - Migrant Sending Districts



Source: Survey data

Of the 40% in-state migrants in our sample, 23 are from Ajmer district, i.e. intra-district migrants, comprising 14.5% of the migrants in the sample. Another 20 are from districts that share a border with Ajmer district, namely Nagaur, Jaipur, Tonk, Bhilwara and Pali. Among the inter-State migrants, the majority are from UP (47) and Bihar (40), and a few from Madhya Pradesh (7) and Delhi (1). Interestingly, 36 of the 40 migrants from Bihar are from a single district, Araria in Eastern Bihar. Similarly, 38 of the 47 migrants from UP are from Sitapur in central UP, which is located just north of the capital city Lucknow. This specificity indicates caste-based labour networks that connect particular geographies in distant states with Kishangarh. Most of those migrating from beyond Rajasthan come from caste groups that engage in semi-skilled industrial work and whose networks stretch across the country, enabling circular migration patterns.

In terms of local migration, the emergence of the marble industry in Kishangarh has spurred an influx of commuter migration from nearby villages, particularly from those that are experiencing the worst effects of agricultural distress. These migrants live anywhere between 2 and 20 kilometres away from the city and travel daily from their native villages and towns to Kishangarh for work. In addition to this, there are a number of intra-state migrants who have moved to the city from more distant parts of Rajasthan to work in service sector jobs in the public and private sector. The city is seen as the emerging economic hub that is growing symbiotically with the more culturally attractive tourist-hub of Ajmer being nearby. Lastly, Kishangarh is also

emerging as an education hub for rural youth given that a government degree college and several institutions run by charitable trusts are located here. These include commuters but also those who live in the city with relatives or on rent.

Our qualitative interactions also underscore that Kishangarh's proximity and connectivity with Ajmer and Jaipur, coupled with the paucity of well-paid jobs in the city, facilitate the out-migration of youth from elite households in pursuit of higher education and high-skilled jobs.

HOW DO MIGRANTS RELATE TO THE CITY?

Kishangarh has long been a market town for the surrounding agricultural areas, but with growing public and private investments in infrastructure it has now become a hub for higher education, transportation, logistics and trade. Migrant workers from areas adjacent to Kishangarh articulate it as a place of work, while describing their own identities as rural. With families urgently dependent on their wages for subsistence, these workers do not seek leisure and entertainment in the city; indeed, Kishangarh does not have a single functional movie theatre nor well developed public spaces. For young girls traveling to Kishangarh to study and for rural women who work in the market, though, the city is a place where they can move and interact socially with relative freedom.

For migrant workers from UP and Bihar, Kishangarh is a destination and a work site, not a place they think of putting down roots. Living on worksites that are located inside the industrial area and moving back and forth between their

rural homes and the city seasonally through the year, they have limited social interactions with Kishangarh's residents. Ironically, their 'captive' nature on worksites is often interpreted by local residents as a housing subsidy. Local workers, over whom the city's capitalists have considerable power, interpret the enhanced ability of migrant workers to negotiate wages via contractors as a form of privilege. Our regression analysis shows this to be true. Data on living conditions offers a muddled picture. Survey data indicates that more

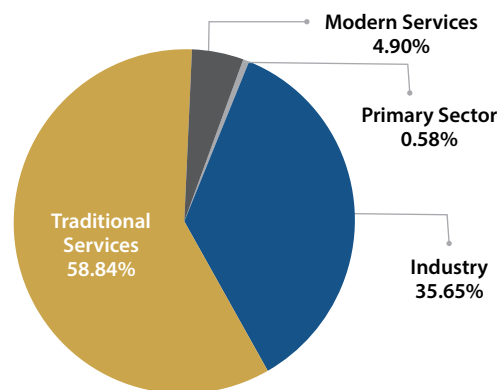
migrants live in non-permanent housing (55.5 percent) as compared to non-migrants (88.24 percent). Most of our respondents report poor sanitation conditions, however more migrants report government sewer connections (11 percent compared to 3 percent for non-migrants). Open defecation is common in the city, though less migrants (18 percent) report it than non-migrants (21 percent). Overall, living conditions in the city are largely poor, and migrants are not particularly disadvantaged in this regard.

What is the nature of Kishangarh's labor market?

SPECIALISED ECONOMY, DIVERSE AVENUES FOR EMPLOYMENT

Our survey data confirms that, sectorally, Kishangarh's workers are concentrated in industrial work (see Fig 14 & 16) and that most workers are engaged in wage work or casual work, with proportionately few entrepreneurs. However, despite the key role of the marble industry in Kishangarh's economy, only 27.2 percent of the youth workers in our sample work directly in the industry. First, the marble sector itself creates a host of opportunities in related sectors like logistics and transport, as well as retail stores and food outlets that cater to workers. Over the years, Kishangarh has become an important place to source processed marble and granite, acting more like a wholesale market in addition to a processing hub. Therefore, it has become a place through which foreign and domestic buyers and salespersons circulate. New hospitality establishments that serve these clientele have also emerged as employers in the city in recent

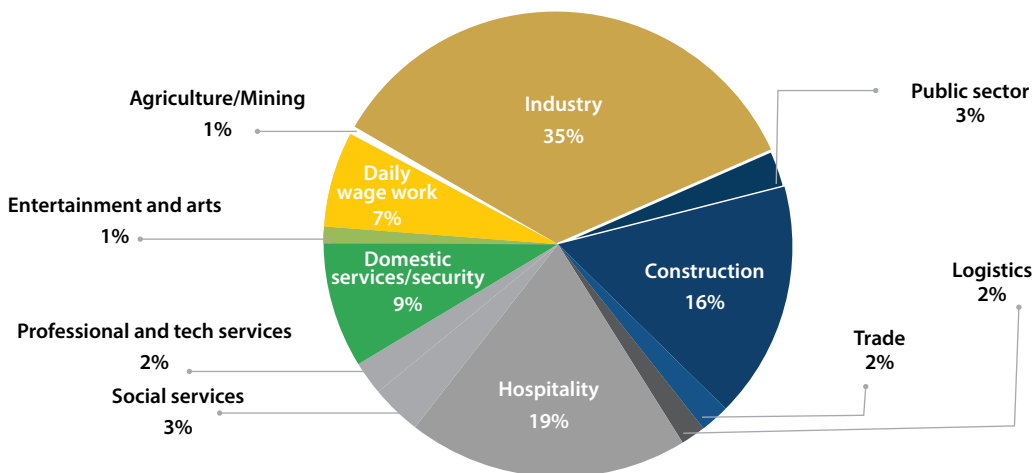
Figure 13: Sectoral composition of workforce



Source: Survey data

times. These businesses have received a shot in the arm with the opening of the airport in the city, as tourist traffic to Pushkar and Ajmer gets routed via the city. Besides, Kishangarh is important for the rural areas around it in its capacity as an administrative centre for the tehsil (sub-district), as a mandi – wholesale market for agricultural

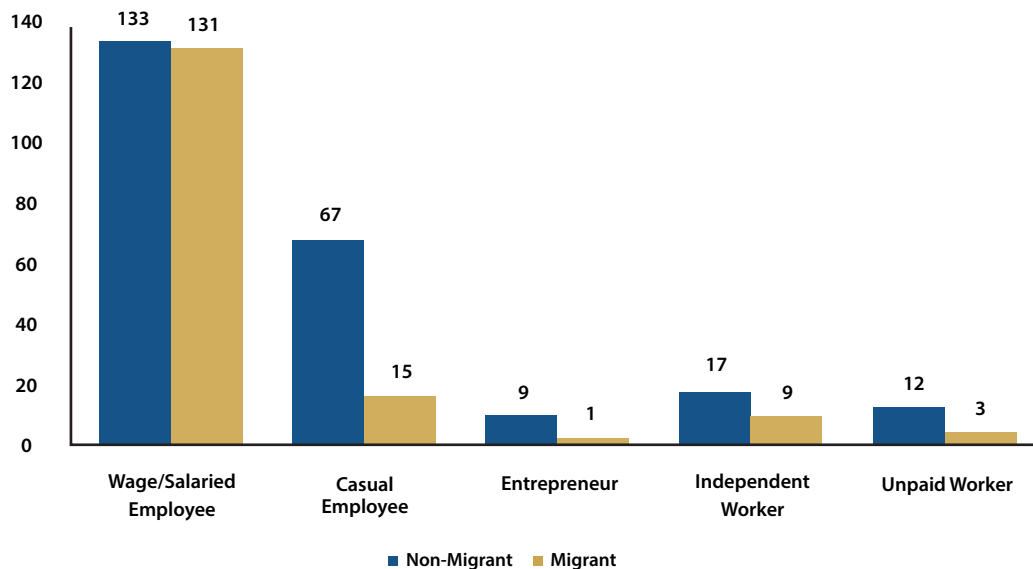
Figure 14: Sectors of employment*



Source: Survey data

*346 responses comprising wage and casual employees

Figure 15: Type of employment



Source: Survey data

produce – and as a transportation and education hub. Running boarding facilities and renting rooms out to young men, and increasingly women, are also emerging as a livelihood option for locals in the city.

Therefore, despite its industrial nature, Kishangarh has opportunities for service sector employment, though much of it is informal and often casual work. The growth of the marble sector, and the service sector around it, is also associated with the decline of the traditional arts and craft industry, chiefly bani thani paintings, as well as older forms of industry like power looms and leather tanneries which were the mainstay of Kishangarh's economy.

A FLAT LABOR MARKET WITH LOW RETURNS ON EDUCATION

Kishangarh's labour market creates jobs that require basic levels of education and in which workers are expected to perform a limited range of routine and repetitive tasks. The majority of workers in our sample are engaged in low-paying work. The median monthly income reported in our survey was INR 8000. This roughly equates to US\$ 4 per day, only slightly above the World Bank's poverty cut-off – US\$ 3.2 per day for middle income countries like India.

Regression analysis of our survey data reveals that the level of education has no bearing on wage levels or wage level increases in Kishangarh's labor market; instead they depend most on gender, caste and the mode of seeking work (see Table 3A, 3B). Regression analysis

shows that men are likely to earn higher wages than women. Married respondents are likely to earn more. This could be an outcome of being older and more experienced, but our qualitative accounts suggest that married workers likely negotiate for higher wages with employers, citing increased family responsibilities. In Kishangarh, those who find work through contractors are likely to earn better wages than those who seek work through labour chowks (markets) or approach employers directly. Importantly, migrants are not disadvantaged compared to non-migrants in the amount of wages they earn.

It is not surprising, therefore, that education levels in the city are low: only 6.8 percent in our sample have a university degree. The route for economic mobility in the city is usually micro-entrepreneurship within the marble business in wholesale/retail or in specific parts of the supply chain or in transport (e.g. automotive repair, one-vehicle transport operations), food retail (e.g. dhabas, small kiosks) and small retail (e.g. grocery stores); in these too, it is not education and skills but social networks that are the key determinants of success.

Overall, while characterised by low levels of education and a concentration in low-paying wage work, Kishangarh's labour market seems to offer a pathway for youth from rural backgrounds into non-farm work; however, the opportunities for economic advancement and career growth in the city appear limited.

Regression Analysis To Estimate Factors Determining Wages And Wage Increases

Regression 1 - Kishangarh (Current Salary)

Table No. 3A

Dependent ~ Current Salary	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t)	Significance
(Intercept)	1.75E+03	2.11E+03	0.831	0.406674	
Gender: Male	3.44E+03	4.31E+02	7.98	2.63E-14	***
Caste: Scheduled Tribe	-2.91E+03	7.86E+02	-3.698	0.000256	***
Caste: Other Backward Caste	-1.57E+02	3.09E+02	-0.508	0.612113	
Caste: General	8.94E+02	6.17E+02	1.449	0.148369	
Caste: Other	-1.10E+03	5.28E+02	-2.082	0.038155	*
Language: Marwari	4.79E+02	2.93E+02	1.634	0.103183	
Language: Other	-3.60E+03	2.51E+03	-1.435	0.15227	
Marital Status: Unmarried	-1.36E+03	2.82E+02	-4.815	2.27E-06	***
Marital Status: Widowed	5.93E+02	1.46E+03	0.407	0.684221	
Marital Status: Divorced	-2.18E+03	2.41E+03	-0.907	0.365316	
Marital Status: Separated	-6.93E+02	2.50E+03	-0.277	0.781679	
Original Salary	6.68E-01	4.97E-02	13.433	< 2e-16	***
Sector: Traditional	-1.80E+03	1.79E+03	-1.006	0.315209	
Sector: Industry	-8.80E+02	1.80E+03	-0.489	0.625235	
Sector: Modern Services	-1.26E+03	1.89E+03	-0.67	0.503528	
Salary Frequency: Per week	4.14E+03	1.76E+03	2.346	0.019589	*
Salary Frequency: Per month salary	6.12E+02	4.64E+02	1.319	0.188127	
Salary Frequency: Once a month salary	-1.94E+03	1.36E+03	-1.431	0.153269	
Salary Frequency: Less than once a month salary	6.52E+02	7.88E+02	0.827	0.408762	
Salary Frequency: More than once a month salary	-2.02E+02	8.56E+02	-0.236	0.813916	
Company Type: Private Company	9.31E+02	7.78E+02	1.198	0.231966	
Company Type: NGO	1.75E+03	7.72E+02	2.271	0.023782	*
Company Type: Own Business	6.26E+02	8.83E+02	0.709	0.478985	
Company Type: Contractor	2.39E+03	8.83E+02	2.709	0.007111	**

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Multiple R-squared: 0.6412, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6143

F-statistic: 23.82 on 24 and 320 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16

Original Model of regression includes independent variables for Religion, Migrant, Education, Salary Quality and House Type. The stepwise AIC while choosing the best model removed these variables as they were not explanatory.

Regression 2 - Kishangarh (Increase In Salary)

Table No. 3B

Dependent ~ Increase in Salary	Value	Std.Error	T val	P value	Significance
Gender: Male	3.058854857	1.03E-01	2.96E+01	0	***
Caste: Scheduled Tribe	-2.159863671	1.86E-02	-1.16E+02	0	***
Caste: Other Backward Caste	-0.139793018	2.02E-01	-6.93E-01	0.49	
Caste: General	1.021057682	2.85E-02	3.58E+01	0	***
Caste: Other	-0.797849874	8.81E-02	-9.05E+00	0	***
Marital Status: Unmarried	-0.646010646	1.38E-01	-4.70E+00	0	***
Marital Status: Widowed	-2.894865342	9.46E-03	-3.06E+02	0	***
Marital Status: Divorced	13.65429056	2.34E-07	5.83E+07	0	***
Original Salary	-0.000337099	5.93E-05	-5.68E+00	0	***
Migration Status: Migrant	0.519634817	1.86E-01	2.80E+00	0.01	**
Company Type: Private Company	0.266078197	2.01E-01	1.33E+00	0.18	
Company Type: NGO	2.297111761	1.5E-01	1.53E+01	0	***
Company Type: Own Business	1.521015698	1.13E-01	1.35E+01	0	***
Company Type: Contractor	1.638975954	1.71E-02	9.56E+01	0	***
1 2	0.024643668	7.94E-02	3.1E-01	0.76	
2 3	0.774516384	1.52E-01	5.08E+00	0	***

Original Model of regression includes independent variables for Religion, Language, Education, Industry, Salary time, Salary Quality and House Type. The stepwise AIC while choosing the best model removed these variables as they were not explanatory.

PRECARIOUS, INFORMALISED WORK WITH NEGLIGIBLE AVENUES FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Kishangarh's labour market is characterised by contractual and informalised work. About 44 percent of the workers in our sample are employed by contractors and 34 percent work for private companies; however, these workers do not have written contracts, nor do they receive employment benefits. Government jobs, the only ones to offer benefits like insurance and pensions, employ a meagre 1 percent of our sample (See Fig

18). Most workers – 64.4 percent of the all wage and casual workers in our survey, and 76 percent of migrants – report that they work unskilled jobs (see Fig 19).

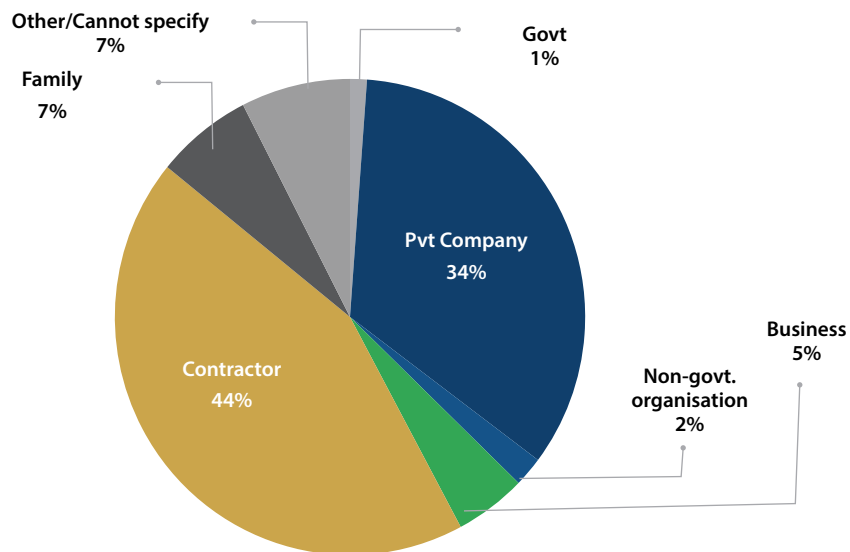
Our qualitative enquiries reveal that the majority of Kishangarh's workers – migrants as well as locals – work in low-paying jobs that provide them cash, often to supplement household farm incomes. In the marble industry, workers work long hours in extremely difficult conditions with low levels of mechanization. For example, we

observe high levels of manual labour among loaders and unloaders who carry cut slabs of marble on their shoulders with only a cement bag as back support and a cloth piece as head support. Of the 12 percent workers in our sample who reported problems at their workplaces in our survey, 90 percent identified physical injuries or health hazards as a concern area. While about 60 percent of our sample worked for a fixed wage, about 18 percent reported being paid by the number of hours they worked, and 19 percent reported they got paid only after completing the amount of work assigned each day. Many workers we spoke with reported having to work late without being paid for overtime hours. The marble industry's sole holiday in the month is on amavasya, or new moon day. There is no collective

action among industrial workers that would allow them to demand better conditions of work.

Infact, the Kishangarh Marble Association (KMA) that represents factory owners, holds sway over labour issues like Provident Fund, Employees State Insurance, accident cover, compensations in the event of injury and death, and so on. It also runs a charitable hospital for workers. Factory owners, who are largely from dominant castes, have prevented worker agitations by cultivating a narrative of 'apnapan' (bonding) that is held together through social networks, while migrant labour is controlled through intermediaries. From our interactions, it appears that the local government and the district level labour department buy into this idea of the 'accha udyogpati' or the good industrialist, when in fact

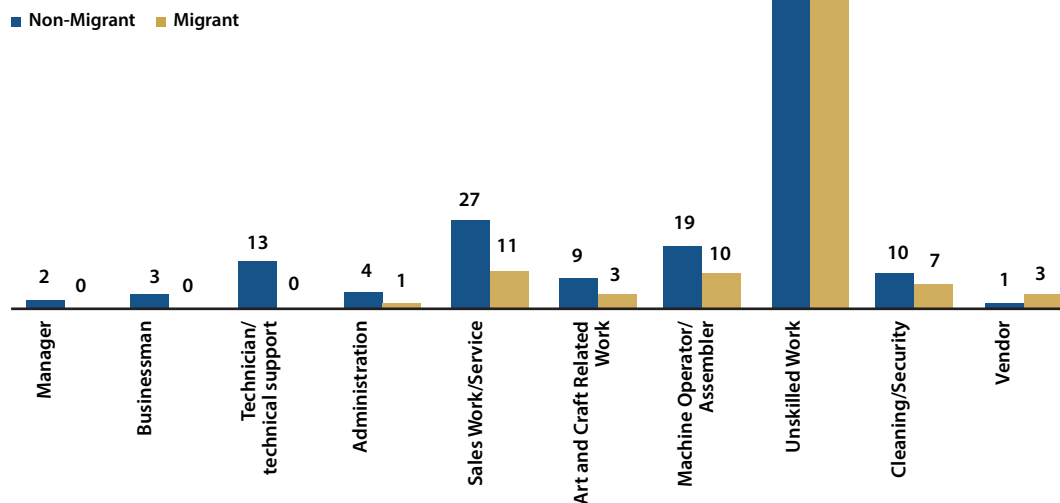
Figure 16: **Type of Firms***



Source: Survey data

*346 responses comprising wage and casual employees

Figure 17: Skill levels*



Source: Survey data

*346 responses comprising wage and casual employees

they are shirking their responsibilities towards the implementation of labour regulations related to minimum wages, working conditions, and employee benefits. Furthermore, workers also internalise this idea, referring to their employers as “hamaara seth” (“our boss”). Many work with one “seth” for long periods of time. In fact, in response to our questions on whether there is any workers’ collective in the industry, most workers ironically referred to the KMA, pointing to the lack of any form of collective mobilisation, and the stronghold of the owners’ association. The only trade union whose presence we were aware of is the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), which was active with powerloom workers, but whose influence seems to have dwindled with the decline of the industry.

ECONOMIC MOBILITY LINKED TO SOCIAL NETWORKS

Despite the flatness of the labor market in terms of wage levels, access to work and opportunities for economic mobility especially via entrepreneurship are circumscribed by identity factors, chiefly caste and gender. For instance, as per our qualitative data, despite the wage similarities there are differences in the type of work done by migrants and non-migrants. We found migrants to be particularly concentrated in low-paying industrial and informal services work. Within the marble sector, for example, inter-state migrants are likely to perform manual tasks such as loading and unloading, and live on-site while non-migrants and local commuters from Rajasthan

perform machine operation and polishing tasks. On the other hand, migrants are more likely to come from land owning households – 45.91% of migrants compared to 27.31% of non-migrants – explained by their overwhelmingly OBC background: in our survey sample, 54% of the migrants are OBC compared to 48.74% non-migrants. Conversely among SC workers, a significantly higher proportion (33.61%) are non-migrants and commuters compared to the migrants (23.27%). While lack of land ownership may be a critical factor determining entry into wage work for commuters and locals, the ownership of land is a significant marker of rural ties that migrants have with their source locations.

Kishangarh's economy, including its impressive marble sector, has been built via the entrepreneurship of local elites. These local business communities, organised along lines of religion and caste (e.g. Jains, Agarwals, Maheshwaris) are highly influential in the city, having leveraged their capital over the years to invest in the city's social infrastructure and become patrons of education via community-run colleges, hostels and social amenities. Our qualitative enquiry in the city reveals that those young people who belong to these influential castes are much more likely to be able to access the capital and social networks required to set up successful businesses. Besides the traditional business classes, we also find young entrepreneurs from rural land-owning upper caste Jat and Rajput families are leveraging their access to capital to try their hand at a range of businesses in the city.

On the other hand, the mediation of labour market by caste constricts opportunities for lower caste groups. Among Valmikis, who remain outside the caste hierarchy and are stigmatized as untouchables, finding work outside of the traditional occupations linked to sanitation and cleaning is near impossible in Kishangarh. In our qualitative fieldwork, a technically qualified Valmiki youth told us he was stuck working with a sanitation contractor because no one would give him a technical job in the city, and he did not have the financial means or networks to migrate out to a larger city where his caste might be less of a barrier. In another instance, a Valmiki youth from a politically influential family told us that the highest position he could achieve in the marble industry was as a sanitation supervisor in a large factory. Workers spoke of caste discrimination — “chuachut” (untouchability) and “ghrina” (loathing) — on part of upper castes in the city which work to keep them in low-paid, caste-designated occupations. Even opening a shop in the city was a distant possibility as it would invite the ire of upper castes. Thus, economic mobility via better paid work within the city or via out-migration for education or work is only accessible to a select few and highly influenced by caste in Kishangarh.

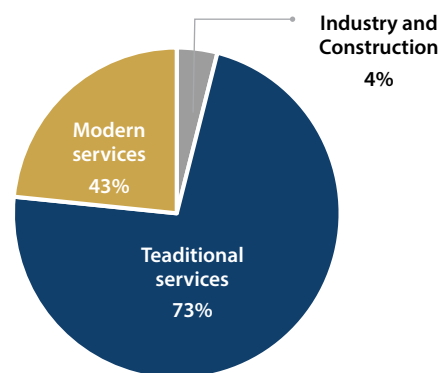
BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION AND THE 'PATRIARCHAL BARGAIN'

Since we were interested in understanding women's work more closely, particularly in the light of concerns over India's falling female labour force participation, our survey deliberately oversampled for women. We find that as in

many parts of northern India, patriarchal norms and expectations of early marriage are one of the biggest hurdles for women's economic empowerment in Kishangarh. In focus group discussions, informants expressed concerns over having to fight and reason with their families for their 'right to work' and to study. They spoke of the widely prevalent notion that women don't need to work or study a lot as their primary responsibility is to manage the household, while income generation is considered a male responsibility. There is also considerable stigma attached to women working outside the home. Young women's work is also impacted by care responsibilities, which fall squarely in their domain with very little responsibility being taken by spouses. This creates over-dependence on extended family networks for women to enter the workforce as well as to continue working.

Women are absent or an absolute minority in Kishangarh's workplaces: among the 331 respondents who answered a question on proportion of women co-workers, 62.8 percent said there were none and 27.1 reported less than a quarter. Most women in our sample work in low-paid, exploitative work – including sorting and cleaning jobs in the marble sector, domestic work, home-based work such as tutoring, and small-scale retail, tailoring and craft. They report that the additional income helps them support expenditure that is not prioritized by men in the household, such as educating their daughters. There are, however, significant class and caste differences. Like elsewhere in India, caste and class are significant factors in women's participation in the workforce, with women in

Figure 18: Sectoral composition of women's work



Source: Survey data

upper caste and upper class households more or less absent from the workforce, despite good levels of education. Qualitative enquiries with college educated young women from wealthy business families and/or middle class families in the city reveal that they are expected to marry appropriately according to their parents' wishes, and discouraged to be financially independent. In contrast, women from lower caste, lower income households are more likely to work and contribute to the household income in whatever measure possible. The concentration of Dalit women in sanitation work is a case in point.

In our qualitative work, we found that women are actively and passively negotiating within their homes and communities in order to tap into the opportunities being offered by the city. Firstly, we find that young women legitimize their participation in the labour market by entering into professions that are considered "suitable" for women, primarily comprising NGO jobs that are considered as social service, work-from-home livelihood options and family businesses.

Secondly, despite the city's conservative social context, young women across social class are preoccupied with delaying and negotiating marriage. They do so by placing pressure on themselves to perform well at school and college in a bid to delay marriage; parents support these initiatives in the hope that educated girls will get better husbands. A third strategy is to negotiate for marriage into what they perceive as a more progressive household, looking for educated spouses in desirable locations; for instance for rural girls, this could be a small town. From these 'better' marriages, they expect more exposure and the possibility of work outside the family.

Overall, we find that women's work in the city is precarious and low paying – the median income for women in our survey is Rs 3000 compared to Rs 9000 for men – with no real prospects for career advancement. However, key informant interactions also point out that women are more visible than before in retail occupations like vending, operating small shops as well as in family businesses. This visibility of women in public spaces is also interpreted by our informants as an outcome of the pursuits of non-farm jobs by men in the city, leaving women to fill roles that typically men perform, such as retail shopping, home-based work, banking,

participation in community life, meeting social obligations, among others.

Some enabling conditions also do exist for women's work. The city seems to offer considerable mobility to women. Women driving two-wheelers and commuting conveniently in shared auto-rickshaws or on foot is a common sight.

Related to mobility is the question of safety. The smallness of the city where people know each other and social ties are strong renders certain neighborhoods and parts of the city as safe; the purana sheher (the old city) where people have lived as neighbors over generations was often referred to in this context. For instance, in one interaction, a male informant told us, "Women can go to fill water from the handpumps at one in the night in purana sheher, the men need not accompany them as there are no instances of chhed-chhaad (stalking/harassment)."

Lastly, self-help groups organised under the government NULM scheme are instrumental in helping poor women operate savings and credit schemes to meet emergency expenses and even start new businesses. The local government is supportive of such efforts, and has also enabled these entrepreneurs to reach out to appropriate markets where possible.

Key labor market challenges

Kishangarh's success at building a large marble processing cluster has created a large number of low-wage jobs, with precarious and often exploitative working conditions. Opportunities

for economic mobility are limited, available only to those with social and economic capital. It is very difficult for women to find remunerative work and well-educated workers must leave the

city to gain suitable employment. Kishangarh's economic success does not translate into robust economic opportunities for most individuals and this is a pressing challenge for the city. Labour market challenges are therefore interlinked with a larger task of re-imagining Kishangarh's economic and future economic resilience.

BUILDING A VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKET

Addressing precariousness

The majority of workers in Kishangarh work low-wage jobs with minimal job security and social security. In the marble sector, labour relations are managed through an association of factory owners. Labour regulations are not adhered to. Unsafe working conditions with frequent injuries and long working hours without mandated off days are the norm, with no possibilities of collective action. The informal services sector too is characterised by informal work contracts and low wages, with no social protection. The city needs to address the vulnerability of workers and improve outcomes on their health and well-being in order to improve the productivity of the city's key sectors. This would enable workers to expand their economic opportunities and earn improved incomes, pulling rural and urban households out of poverty. Many of Kishangarh's challenges are linked with labour relations and the quality of basic services in the city.

Including women workers

Women are conspicuous by their absence in the data on Kishangarh's labour market, yet they



are visible in the markets and on the streets engaged in the everyday actions linked with social reproduction. For a city where the majority of households are poor or barely middle-income, remunerative employment for women is an urgent need. However, the city's economy has been unable to create opportunities for women to acquire skills, nor are there mid-level service sector jobs for women from the educated elite in the city. The city's labour market must address the skills mismatch issues that pose barriers for women seeking work opportunities. Powerful state and non-state actors must make efforts to engage and overcome the deeply entrenched patriarchal mindset that deeply stigmatizes women's work. Moreover, women's jobs are so invisibilized and their lives so controlled by patriarchal structures

that seeking recourse for exploitation is daunting for the few who do work; this too must be addressed to encourage women workers.

Overcoming identity-based barriers for economic mobility

Overall, while characterized by low levels of education and a concentration in low-paying wage work, Kishangarh's industrial sector seems to offer a pathway for youth from rural backgrounds into non-farm work, however opportunities for economic mobility remain a challenge. These opportunities are circumscribed by identity factors like gender and caste. Caste structures especially are key to the flow of economic and social capital. The intersectional impacts of caste and gender make this particularly challenging



for women, and marriage emerges as the key pathway for economic and social mobility. A key labour market challenge for Kishangarh, therefore, is to overcome identity-based barriers for workers to access jobs and start businesses.

PLANNING FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

The danger of over-specialisation

This paradoxical situation of having a diverse labour market that is dependent on a highly specialised economy, leaves Kishangarh somewhat vulnerable. If the marble industry were to relocate or see its competitiveness erode, it would spell a death knell to local economy and employment, especially because the development of other complementary sectors have not been the focus of policy in recent years. Interestingly, while the marble industry might have had its origins in the proximity of extraction sites, at present the nearest marble quarries are over 100 km away. Kishangarh receives stone blocks from all over the country – and even internationally – to process. Instead of a locational advantage, the development of the marble industry is credited to the business savvy and political connections of elites from the region. In this sense, Kishangarh might not be threatened by the “footloose” phenomenon in the same way as manufacturing activities that are deeply entrenched in global value chains, like garment manufacturing, that rely largely on foreign investment. However, it remains an area of concern.

Exploring avenues for diversification

Moreover, Kishangarh seems to have neglected other sectors that it might be a natural home

to. Basis the findings of our study, the following could be explored: (a) economic activities around heritage, arts and craft building on the bani thani painting tradition; (b) tourism focusing on the inner city's historic architecture, the Gundolav lake and significant sacred sites in Ajmer, Pushkar, Nareli and other nearby locations; (c) manufacturing and service sector opportunities linked to the city's superior logistics infrastructure that capitalise on Kishangarh's links; for instance, agro processing activities, warehousing and transportation services, cold chain etc; and (d) student housing markets around its growing education sector. In exploring new sectors, Kishangarh would be following the lead of several small and mid-sized cities across the world in building economic competitiveness around its unique advantages.

Addressing the workforce needs of the future

Economic transitions will impact the nature of jobs in Kishangarh over time. For instance, automation in the marble sector will require technical personnel, while growth in hospitality and tourism will need educated and skilled service sector workers. While this might create opportunities for elite youth from Kishangarh who get educated in metropolitan centres to return to the city as skilled workers, those currently employed in the city will be left unprepared for this transition. Preparing workers for this transition is a significant challenge that the city faces since it continues to provide economic pathways for rural youth in the region and for migrant workers from elsewhere in India.



GOVERNANCE REGIMES AND URBAN PLANNING CAPACITIES

Agency of local government

Kishangarh's Nagar Parishad (city council) is disempowered as well as understaffed. Our interactions with officials indicate that local government is confined largely to the role of executing the decisions and implementing the schemes of state and national government. Further, they are not consulted before major investments are made in and around the city, e.g. neither the industrial parks set by RIICO, a state government organisation, nor the upgradation of the railway corridor and a new station by the DDFCIL, a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Railways, Government of India, took the local government's



views into account. This creates a situation in which the local government has to take responsibilities for consequences, while not having a say in the actions that trigger these consequences. While the master plan is not prepared at the local level, the local government is expected to regulate building and construction as well as provide services for the city's residents. In the context of employment too, the local government is expected to manage the National Urban Livelihoods Mission, without any say in how infrastructure is provided or how firms are regulated.

Weak state capacity and low awareness levels

Further, local business elites are politically powerful in the city and influence decisions taken about Kishangarh by state-level politicians and bureaucrats. Disadvantaged groups like the poor, migrants and Dalits

do not have much of a voice, and a weak local government is not able to give them one either. Weak state capacity both at local and state level has also resulted in poor public amenities and services, however our respondents were optimistic that the enhanced fund flows from the state and central governments is improving the situation. Given weak state capacities, a planning regime that bypasses local government and a fragmented governance system heavily influenced by local elites, building a coherent vision for the future is an acute challenge for the city of Kishangarh. These fundamental weaknesses also mean that there is very little thinking about employment access and conditions of work; as well as low awareness about the particular governance requirements that the city might have owing to high levels of migration and mobility.

Policy recommendations

Build a diverse, resilient local economy

Retain and future-proof job-rich industries

By all indications, Kishangarh's marble processing sector is expanding, with new units coming up in RIICO's industrial parks adjacent to Roopangarh and Silora. New processes, like granite cutting, have been introduced recently. As the footprint of this cluster goes global, it is likely that business owners will turn to mechanisation to remain competitive. It is important that the local and district administrations work closely with KMA to prepare a robust assessment of these future challenges. Besides programs to upskill existing workers, industry and government should collaborate to explore avenues for value addition, including mosaic tiles, products from stone waste etc. The experiences of Italy, China and Turkey can provide invaluable inputs for these initiatives. The government should offer fiscal incentives for industrialists who move to value added production, as well as for ethical environmental and labour practices that would enhance the cluster's global reputation and competitiveness.

Kishangarh is also well positioned to leverage new logistics infrastructure to enhance manufacturing capacity in sectors like agro processing, chemical production and powerloom that it is already exploring. This would require an integrated approach involving not just RIICO, but also state government departments like finance, industry and labour, district and local government, DDFCIL, as well as relevant associations of industry.

Leverage existing competencies to build a robust service sector

Kishangarh is seeing nascent activity in a number of service-oriented sectors, which the city must explore to enhance its local economy. Its potential as an arts and crafts cluster building on the bani thank traditions must be integrated with its potential for tourism. This will require concerted heritage conservation efforts directed towards the inner city, the puraana sheher, in order to develop a heritage precinct in the city. Further, the state government must market Kishangarh as part of the heritage and cultural tourism circuit that already exists around Ajmer and Pushkar. Bringing in design inputs to revive and upgrade local art and craft will go a long way towards supporting local businesses and giving them access to larger markets. Further, the government can support the hospitality sector by ensuring the availability of land and infrastructure for hotels, restaurants and cultural centres in the city.

Services related to transportation, warehousing and logistics are also ripe for investment in the city and will benefit both from improved access to land in suitable locations and uninterrupted affordable power. A third sector that can be supported is the housing sector, especially rental housing for migrant workers and boarding and lodging facilities for students. In this, the local government can help out in the development of a student rental housing market by notifying a city-level rental housing policy, and putting in

place a simple registration system for tenants and landlords that would offer a semblance of formality and protection to both parties from rent-related risks like eviction, rental increases and refusal to vacate.

Invest in workforce development and entrepreneurship

Improve quality of education

While the number of educational institutions is increasing in Kishangarh, the quality on offer is low, rendering graduates unfit to compete outside the city for opportunities related to work or higher education. A greater emphasis on teacher adequacy and competence, physical amenities, regular attendance of students and teaching staff, is required. The creation of a council comprising of representatives from public and private sector educational institutions, government and employers could be one way to evolve a roadmap for improving the education outcomes in the city.

Become a workforce development hub

Kishangarh experiences an in-migration of low-skilled workers as well as an exodus of better-skilled talent from the city. As such, it is well-placed to become a hub for workforce development. First, leveraging the existing power of the KMA, the city must create upskilling opportunities for workers in the marble sector. These efforts must focus on preparing workers for anticipated changes in manufacturing processes and technology. Second, the city is transitioning and developing new sectors like education, tourism and hospitality,

logistics etc. Strategic investments can prepare a trained workforce for these sectors. Third, a mapping of upcoming sectors in Ajmer, Jaipur and other nearby metropolitan centres, could guide the creation of additional skilling courses that graduates from local colleges could access before migrating out of the city.

Provide career guidance to local graduates

Graduates from Kishangarh's colleges are often unaware of the broader landscape of employment in the region, state and beyond. By providing information and advice, career guidance facilities at the city level can open new avenues for talented and ambitious graduates who are currently crowding into low-paid work that is easily available in the city.

Support entrepreneurs

Beyond supporting entrepreneurs in their personal capacity, Kishangarh's wealthy business owners must come together to create a pool of funds to provide capital support to upcoming entrepreneurs in the form of seed grants and low-cost loans to start new business and expand existing ones. If this fund can support entrepreneurs from low-income and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, it would contribute substantively to the city's reputation as a place of inclusion and opportunity, with substantive benefits to the local economy.

Protect vulnerable workers

Improve access to safety nets and social welfare

Presently, the city's economic growth is not reaping dividends for its workers who get little beyond their wages despite long hours of work. An emphasis on public healthcare, with upgraded primary and secondary facilities and a new tertiary healthcare facility, would go a long way to ensure that health expenses do not make large dents in savings for workers. Health insurance and social security, especially pensions, is another area of concern. These could probably be addressed through the implementation of existing schemes like the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) for health insurance and Pradhan Mantri ShramYogi Maan-dhan (PMSYM) scheme for pensions.

Implement labour regulations

The state must assure that labour laws are implemented in letter and spirit, not only for the economic protection of workers, but also to ensure their dignity. In this, the implementation of a weekly off day, payment of overtime, the freedom of association and recourse to justice are key areas of urgent attention. Improved conditions of work, like the provision of toilets in work premises, as well as access to compensation for work-related injuries are other areas of concern, which are currently regulated by the KMA with little oversight from the labour department or RIICO.

Create awareness on issues of discrimination towards women & disadvantaged caste groups

District and local governments must also focus attention on prevalent discriminatory attitudes and practices that severely hamper the potential of youth in Kishangarh. Building on

the success of campaigns against specific issues like child marriage, the government must initiate conversations around women's education and employment and caste-linked barriers to access labour markets. A buy in from civil society and getting prominent citizens and local politicians involved in such campaigns would send out a strong message to employers and job seekers alike.

Improve women's access to education and employment

Support rural girls to study in Kishangarh

Kishangarh can encourage young women studying in its educational institutions by leaning on its wealthy citizens to donate towards scholarships for the meritorious and the underprivileged. Further, an enhancement in regional transport links, housing options, as well as facilities to counsel and guide parents would all contribute to keeping these girls in college, and giving them the skills and self-confidence for their future lives.

Link women with emerging work and entrepreneurship opportunities

As Kishangarh's economy grows, diversifies and adds value, the government and industry will have to work extra hard to upskill women and connect qualified women with emerging labour market opportunities. Among these, given Kishangarh's social realities, home-based work and entrepreneurship opportunities through cloud-based platforms and online marketplaces could be a thrust area. For example, transitioning

individual creative capabilities into a creative industry would require skilling, design inputs and connections with mentors, incubators and larger markets. Further, counseling and matchmaking services targeted towards women will also be helpful.

Upgrade physical and social infrastructure

Improve basic services and social amenities

Kishangarh must invest in basic infrastructure like sewerage, drainage, public transport, public education and health in order to provide decent standards of living for its residents. Sanitation, especially, is a key priority given the high rates of open defecation. While the centrally sponsored AMRUT scheme has had some impact, there is still a long way to go and the city must find ways to fund creation and maintenance of social and physical infrastructure going forward.

Create public spaces for leisure and social interaction

In a city sharply divided along lines of caste, class and gender, well-designed and accessible public spaces are vital to foster social interaction and provide opportunities for leisure. Kishangarh must focus on developing its lakefront, market areas and public parks as spaces of leisure if it is to be more than just a place of work for its young workforce.

Improve and streamline governance

Enhance local capacity

Given the city's size, Kishangarh can meet its infrastructure and service needs if local politicians demonstrate commitment towards demanding and raising adequate funds to fully staff the Nagar Parishad. Additionally, the district labor department also requires adequate staff to implement labour regulations given the growth of industry and commerce.

Improve coordination across levels and between departments

The proper implementation of the 74th Constitutional amendment that devolves power to cities might be a long time coming. However, for the current governance structures to deliver increased and improved employment, it is necessary to put in place a coordination mechanism across multiple levels of government to dovetail land use and urban planning, public and private investments, infrastructural development and services, labour welfare and human capital. To valorize the immediate potential of Kishangarh, this team will have to be positioned at the district level with direct oversight from the Chief Minister's office. However, setting up an Urban Knowledge Centre at the Nagar Parishad level that will, over time, take over these coordination functions and develop capabilities to anticipate change and set new agendas could be a forward looking strategy.

Conclusion

Kishangarh, located at the cusp of multiple mobilities, is ideally positioned to create quality employment and opportunities for economic mobility for young people. Youth – especially those vulnerable on account of their gender, caste or migration status – must be at the center of efforts to envision futures and craft policy

for Kishangarh. In order to realize the city's embedded potential, conversations about the human and economic development in the city must open up between the various stakeholders involved. We hope that the ideas and directions outlined in this report will inform these dialogues and debates.

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About Manthan Sanstha Kotri



Manthan Sanstha Kotri is an NGO that works on empowering marginalised rural communities in Ajmer and Nagaur districts in Rajasthan, India. It started as a Social Work and Research Centre for Barefoot College based in Tilonia, but became an independent organisation in 1998. Working in over 60 villages, Manthan's key area of intervention has been water conservation, adult literacy and basic amenities. Taking a rights-based approach, Manthan empowers communities to find sustainable solutions for pressing issues of social and economic development. Manthan's motivation to collaborate on this project is rooted in the increasing dependence of rural households on urban livelihood options.

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