



## Internal Migration and the Right to Education

### Key Message

Migrant children are among the most educationally marginalized in India. The right to education (under the Right to Education Act, [RTE] 2009) of migrant children remains compromised, since seasonal and temporary migration results in disruption of regular and continued schooling of children, adversely affecting their human capital formation and contributing to the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

### Challenges

- There is an overlap between the academic session in schools (June–April) and the seasonal migration cycle (November–June), owing to which migrant children who are enrolled attend school only from June–November, following which they drop out or report irregular attendance. This temporary discontinuation of study subsequently results in their dropping out of school altogether.
- Migrant children suffer from learning deficits that are due to interruptions in education and that are exacerbated with inter-state migration because of differences in academic curriculum and language.
- Children who accompany migrating parents end up working at the destinations to supplement family income and are often inducted as labour at worksites as early as the age of 6–7 years.
- Re-enrolment in source schools at the end of a migration cycle is rare, and in case it

occurs, migrant children are often readmitted in the same class owing to inflexible school procedures and lack of remedial classes to cover learning deficits.

- High outmigration areas exhibit poor school infrastructure, poor school supplies and inadequate staffing, which serve as disincentives for retention of children in schools in sending areas.
- Each migration cycle is different in its timing, duration, frequency and numbers migrating, and these variations make planning for educational initiatives difficult.
- Out-of-school surveys for children do not take into account seasonal variations in enrolment and attendance rates caused by migration nor do they have definitional and methodological clarity on the status of migrant children among out-of-school children.

### Facts and Figures

- Although no clear data are available, estimates suggest that child migrants constitute approximately 15 million children in India (Daniel 2011; Smita 2011).
- Explicit provisions in the RTE pertaining to migrant children include:
  - Local authorities shall ensure admission of children of migrant families.
  - A child has the right to seek transfer to any school, following which the in-charge of school must immediately issue the transfer certificate.

## Policy Recommendations

### Fill knowledge and research gaps to enable evidence-based policy making

- Adopt harmonized definition and methodology for recognizing migrant children in the data on out-of school children and school dropouts through revision in categories and sampling strategy to include the under-represented vulnerable groups such as migrants.

### Assess seasonal and temporary migration and ensure joint planning between districts and states

- Undertake detailed mapping of type, pattern, scale and geographical and sector-wise spread of child migration across and within states (to be carried out by the Panchayati Raj Institutions with the support of schools).
- Conduct surveys in both sending and receiving migration districts and states – worksite surveys during migration months and village surveys during non-migration months need to be undertaken.
- Set up Special Joint Task Forces in sending and receiving districts to jointly plan and collaborate in facilitating migration (for example, consider special budgetary allocations and deployment of additional personnel in receiving districts).

### Make schools and teachers responsible for tracking and mainstreaming migrant children

- Tracking of migrant children by School Management Committees using child identity cards and tracking registers.
- Include migrant parents in School Management Committees.
- Deploy outpost staff of local schools at worksites to teach migrant children.
- Ensure worksite schools develop systems of transferring credits to mainstream government schools in sending areas or at any other destination.

- Adjust school calendar by making procedures pertaining to readmission, attendance and examinations flexible to suit migrant children.
- Appoint para-teachers or mobile education volunteers conversant in the native languages of migrant children.
- Arrange transport facilities for migrant children for easy access to schools in distant and uninhabited areas at the destination.
- Tap the Special Training Programme component of RTE to ensure age-appropriate educational competency of out-of-school and dropout child migrants.

### Adopt and upscale innovative practices by NGOs and local administration

- Make sending areas the base for all education interventions aimed at migrant children.
- Set up village or panchayat-based seasonal hostels in sending areas to provide residential facilities for children to stay back in the village and to promote retention of children in local schools.
- Establish worksite schools in receiving areas to prevent child labour and to ensure that children are in adult care in a safe and clean environment and have an opportunity to learn and play.
- Provide bridge courses and remedial education for children in sending areas on their return from migration.
- Lok Jumbish Parishad in Rajasthan, Aide et Action, American India Foundation (AIF), Lokadrusti in Orissa, Janarth in Maharashtra, and SETU in Gujarat provide good examples of such innovative practices.