

Impact of Rural – Urban Labour Migration on Children’s Education – A Study in Mahabubnagar District of Telangana State

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Abstract

In developing countries, both education and seasonal migration are seen as playing an integral role in development outcomes. Education is understood to have a positive impact on development, playing a transformative role in the lives of poor people by providing them with skills, autonomy, freedom and confidence. Seasonal labour migration from rural to urban or from backward to developed region is a household livelihood strategy to cope with poverty. In this process, the children of those migrants are the worst affected whether they accompany their parents or they are left behind in the villages. The present paper explores the impact of temporary labour migration of parent(s) on school attendance of the children between 6–14 years and their dropping out from the school through an analysis of the cases from both the ends of migration stream in India. Data was collected from Mahabubnagar district. It is evident from the study that the migrants through remittances improve school accessibility for the left behind children and bridge gender gap in primary school education. However, among the accompanying migrant children of construction workers, many remain out of school and many are forced to drop out and some of them become vulnerable to work as child labour due to seasonal mobility of their parents. Thus, mainstreaming these children in development process is a big challenge in attaining the goal of universal primary education and inclusive growth in the country like India.

Key words: School dropout, seasonal labour migration, left behind children, caste system, poverty.

Introduction

In development debates, education and migration are both seen as playing an integral role in development outcomes. Education is understood to have a positive impact on development, playing a transformative role in the lives of poor people by providing them with skills, autonomy, freedom and confidence. In the last decade, migration has been increasingly seen among scholars, donor governments and development organisations as holding potential benefits for development, as well as significant risks and costs. This briefing explores the linkages between migration and education in four villages in India and Bangladesh. Although migrant remittances were not widely invested in education in these contexts, education nonetheless helped shape the migration trajectories for local villagers.

In developing countries, a large number of children are affected by temporary labour migration. In many cases, remittances have yielded increased investments in the education of migrants' children, as documented in studies in the Philippines (Yang 2004), El Salvador (Edwards and Ureta 2003), Guatemala (Adams 2006), Nepal (Thieme and Wyss 2005) and Pakistan (Mansuri 2007). However, there is a need to exercise caution about the positive correlation between remittances and education, as there is some evidence that in certain instances migration can actually create disincentives for education. For example, Mexican household surveys indicate that international migrants have a negative effect on the level of education of their children (McKenzie and Rapoport 2007). Mexican migrants' educational qualifications have little impact on the type of jobs most migrants can acquire in the US, and this may influence their ideas about whether educational investments are worthwhile, particularly if their children are also planning to migrate.

Living in a family with at least one parent away for long periods is part of normal childhood experience for many children in these countries (Nobles, 2013). Children who are left behind or who migrate with their parents face several challenges in terms of education and health care. They suffer through various psycho-social problems and are exposed to exploitation (Bakker et al., 2009). Education is one of the critical issues as the window of opportunities for these children is limited (Smita, 2008). Therefore, the inclusion of migrant's children may have implications in achieving the target of universal primary education and reducing child labour. It is an important issue of migration studies but very few researchers have addressed this problem (Whitehead & Hashim 2005; UNICEF n.d.), particularly in the context of internal migration.

The Distribution of Labour Migrant's Education

Education is a dynamic force in the life of every individual influencing his physical, mental, emotional, social and ethical development. In its absence the achievement of men would be limited by the powers and to the experience of the individual and what functions that could lend valuable support for the development of any deprived social group or social and economic. The role of these two factors is all the more crucial in developing such severely disadvantaged groups of people. Many economists have recently stressed the influences of the traditional economic approach to the issue of development and have emphasized the importance of the human or social facts of such factors education comes first.

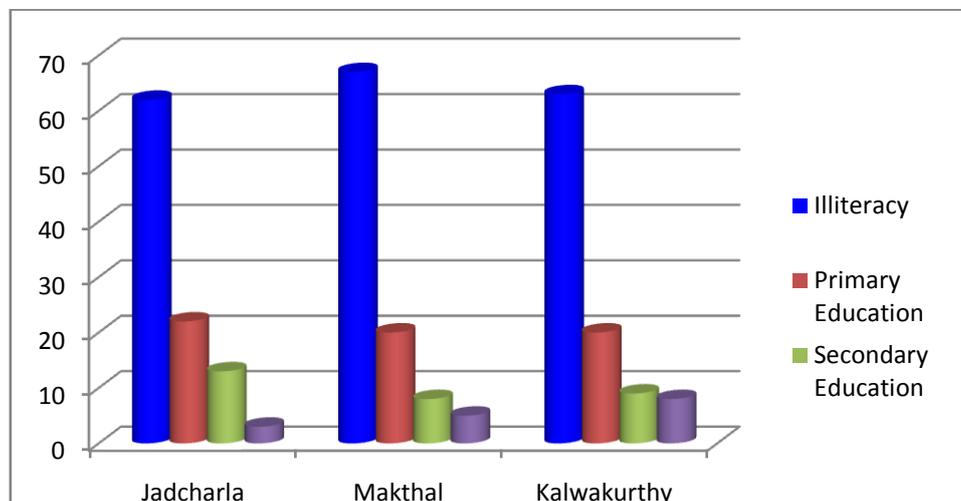
Education plays a predominant role in social mobility. In Western communities, the education system has acted as a major channel of individual mobility and it is producing a similar effect in India. Since India gained Independence, the Government of India has been giving high

priority to efforts to ameliorate the conditions of the Weaker Sections. They are provided with all opportunities for the full growth of their personality to enable them to walk hand in hand with other groups of the society. The Government grants them liberal concessions in the fields of education since it alone will remove their social and economic disabilities. Article 29(2) says that "no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of the State funds on grounds of religion, race, caste, language or any of them". Thus the inherent right of the Weaker Sections to complete equality has been fully recognized under the Constitution of India. The main purpose of this part is to make a factual assessment of the educational progress among Migrant children in Mahabubnagar district.

Table – 1
Educational Status of Labour Migrants

Name of the Mandal	Illiteracy	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education	Total
Jadcharla	62 (20.67)	22 (7.33)	13 (4.33)	03 (1.00)	100 (33.33)
Makthal	67 (22.33)	20 (6.67)	08 (2.67)	05 (1.67)	100 (33.34)
Kalwakurthy	63 (21.00)	20 (6.67)	09 (3.00)	08 (2.66)	100 (33.33)
Total	192 (64.00)	62 (20.67)	30 (10.00)	16 (5.33)	300 (100.00)

(Source: Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)



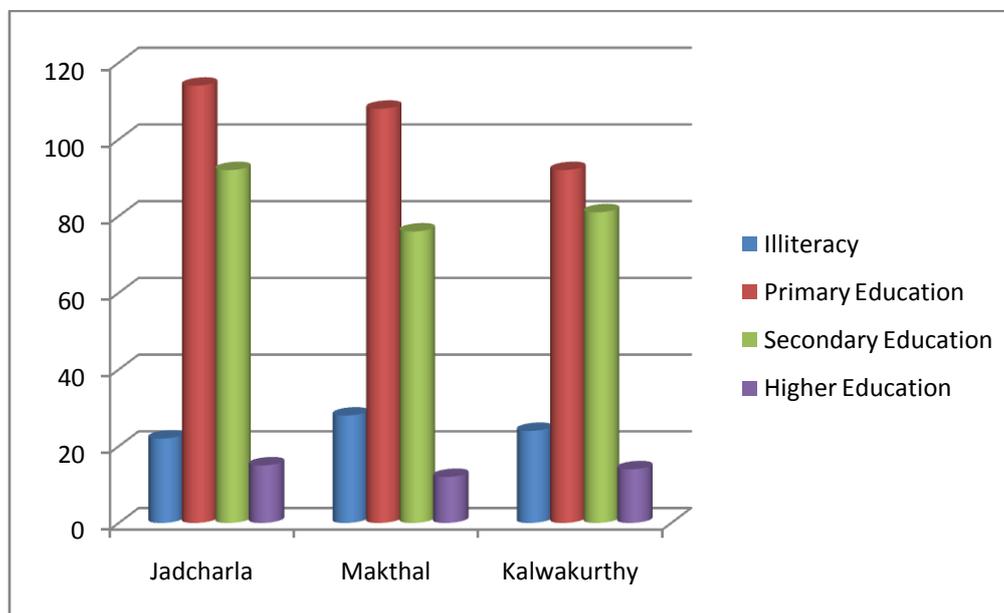
It is clear from the above table that the number of Illiterates are more (64 per cent) than the number of literates (36 per cent). Even among literates, primary level of educated persons are more than the secondary and higher educational levels. This pathetic situation may be the cause of poor economic background of the Labour Migrants.

Table – 2

Educational Status of Labour Migrants Children

Name of the Mandal	Illiteracy	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education	Total
Jadcharla	22 (3.24)	114 (16.81)	92 (13.57)	15 (2.22)	243 (35.84)
Makthal	28 (4.13)	108 (15.93)	76 (11.21)	12 (1.77)	224 (33.04)
Kalwakurthy	24 (3.54)	92 (13.57)	81 (11.95)	14 (2.06)	211 (31.12)
Total	74 (10.91)	314 (46.31)	249 (36.73)	41 (6.05)	678 (100)

(Source: Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)



The above table reveals that the educational status of Labour migrant's children in the study area out of 678 children 314 (46.31 per cent) children are from the category of Primary Education. 249 (36.73 per cent) are secondary education 41 (6.05 per cent) are higher education and 74 (10.91 per cent) are illiteracy.

Impact of Labour Migration on Children's Education:

Although investing in education was not a major expenditure stream for most of the migrants, the availability of secondary school stipends and scholarships had a significant negative impact on the probability of migration in Telangana State. In Mahabubnagar district for instance, a large number of children received stipends and scholarships. These children were more likely to complete their secondary education and move only for professional training or jobs thereafter. On the other hand, both boys and girls in the other villages, This is partly related to the low quality of schooling and the conditions for continuation of the scholarships a minimum score of 50 per cent and attendance rate of 75 per cent. In Mahabubnagar district poverty and poor-quality schooling made children lose interest in education and develop a preference for earning incomes instead, and

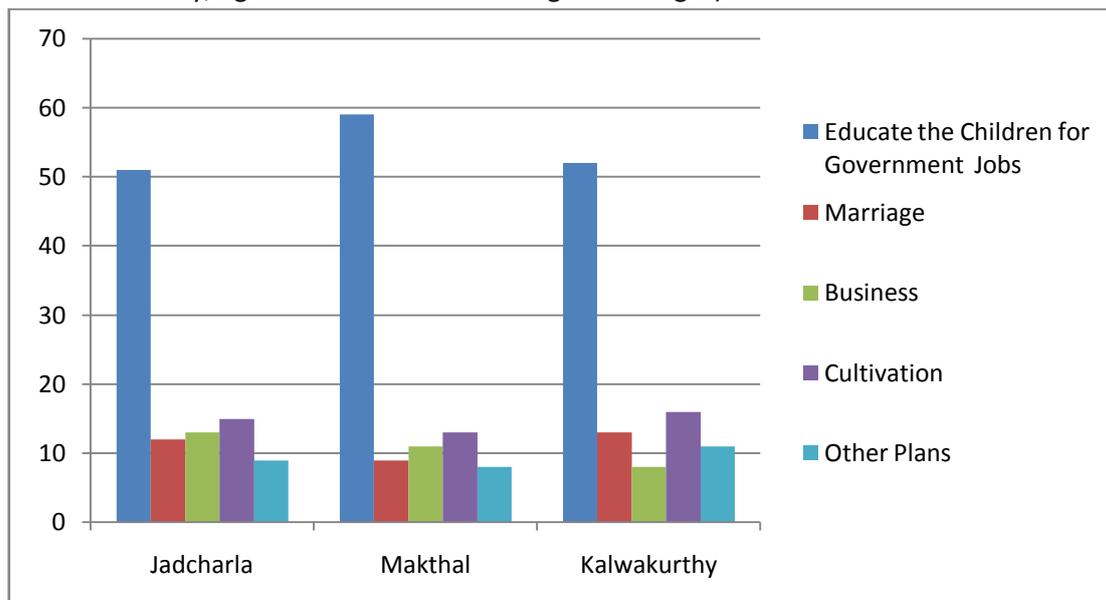
a number of them migrated in order to pursue work, including a relatively small number of young girls who were employed in the industries.

A huge number of children move with their temporary labour migrant parents. An estimation done by McKenzie, (2007) reveals that four out of five migrant children aged 12–14 moves with their parents. In China, almost a tenth of child population, or 27.3 million children, took part in internal migration with their parents in 2008 (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2010). In India, the number of children migrating seasonally, whether by themselves or with their parents is estimated to be in the range of four to six million (ILO & UCW, 2010; Smita, 2008). Against these backdrops, this research explores the impact of temporary labour migration of parent(s) on school attendance of the children between 6–14 years and their dropping out from the school through an analysis of the cases from both the ends of migration stream in India. The next section draws on review of literature.

Table – 3
Future Plans about Children of Migrant Respondents

Name of the Mandal	Educate the Children for Government Jobs	Marriage	Business	Cultivation	Other Plans	Total
Jadcharla	51 (17.00)	12 (4.00)	13 (4.33)	15 (5.00)	09 (3.00)	100 (33.33)
Makthal	59 (19.67)	09 (3.00)	11 (3.67)	13 (4.33)	08 (2.67)	100 (33.34)
Kalwakurthy	52 (17.33)	13 (4.33)	08 (2.67)	16 (5.34)	11 (3.66)	100 (33.33)
Total	162 (54.00)	34 (11.33)	32 (10.67)	44 (14.67)	28 (09.33)	300 (100.00)

(Source: Field Study, figures in brackets indicating Percentages)



On the whole, the table reveals that future plans of migrant respondents about their children 162 (54.00 per cent) respondents are educating their children for government jobs, followed by 34 (11.33 per cent) respondents are cultivation and 28 (9.33 per cent) are other plans for their children. We can understand clearly from this data that there are higher number of respondents in the category of educate the children for Government jobs, because they are coming to know the importance of education.

Policy implications

The findings of the Migration DRC's study reveal quite heterogeneous patterns of migration as well as differing levels of educational attainment in the four village sites. Given the existence of other studies showing a positive correlation between migrant remittances and children's education, it would be unwise to dismiss this connection completely. However, the Migration DRC's study does demonstrate that the quality of local education varies in different contexts, and this has an impact on its value. In some cases, migration for work is a more pragmatic strategy for achieving social mobility than routes achievable through local education systems and this is particularly so in instances where the local job market for educated people is limited. Thus, policy responses must be multi-dimensional, tackling issues both of educational quality and of migrant workers' rights. Potential policy options include:

- Programmes and policies to improve schooling in rural areas, including improving facilities, providing teacher training and ensuring funding for children from poor families. These measures will ensure that rural youth have a wider array of opportunities.
- Policies to promote social protection and rights for both internal and international migrants are also necessary to ensure migrants a better return from their migration. This includes better regulation of migrant recruitment agencies, ensuring 'decent work' for migrants as defined by the ILO and ensuring that migrant workers have access to basic rights and services.

Review of Literature

Most modern research on migration forms the basis of Ernst Georg Ravenstein's laws on migration (Ravenstein, 1885). In the said context, this research can be put under the law that "most migration is rural to urban" (Ravenstein, 1885). This research however deals with the impact of rural-urban labour migration on education of children. This is because migration has wide-ranging implications on children whether they are left behind by one or both migrating parents, or move with the parents (or born abroad), or migrate alone (UNICEF n.d.). Most of the studies on impact of migration on children's education are conducted in the context of international migration.

Studies on Mahabubnagar, otherwise better known as Palamur District, reveal that there are several systems of seasonal migration from the District (Krishnaiah 1997; Reddy, 2003), where people migrate to engage in activities like private/public project work, construction, migration for agricultural work in irrigated areas and traditional stone crushing work, and this has been transformed over the years. For many of the poor living in the underdeveloped areas of Andhra Pradesh, wage work is very often the key means of livelihood and migration and commuting are the only ways of accessing the benefits of growth in other locations (Deshingkar et al., (2009).

However, the results from the case studies conducted by UNICEF and SU-SSC in 2006 indicate that the absence of the father often results in increased household responsibilities on

children left behind. Also, the children who migrate with the family are at the risk of family labour, risk on street and social exclusion. In Moldova, the absence of the father has little negative consequences on a child's development (Vladicescu et al., 2008). School performance of children left behind is often compromised by increased household responsibilities and obligations to care for their younger siblings. Adolescents from left behind households may become labour migrants as part of their transition to adulthood. In a Mexican context where remittance from the USA lowers the likelihood of children labour- force participation and increases resources for consumption of education-related goods (Kandel & Kao, 2001), 61% of children left behind still suffered from psychological problems and felt abandoned (UNICEF-UNDP Survey, 2006 cf. UNICEF, n.d.). Similarly, a study on the Caribbean migration and its impact on children by Bakker et al., (2009) find that children who have been left behind as well as taken along are placed in a vulnerable situation thereby, affecting their psycho-social well-being and exposing them to increased risk of poor academic performance as well as interruption of schooling.

Various Researches in the Caribbean islands (Bakker et al., 2009) and in Mexico (Kandel & Kao, 2001) on the psychological aspects of left behind children observed a negative impact of the migration of the father on children's behaviour in rural societies. Many children left behind suffer from depression, abandonment and low self-esteem that can result in behavioural problems such as engaging in violence and crime or running away from home. In some cases, these children face a permanent struggle against a sense of low self- worth, insecurity and neglect throughout their childhood and well into their adulthood. They are increasingly subjected to substantive neglect of health and nutritional care, poor academic performance and interruption of schooling due to additional responsibilities at home.

Some studies noticed that the impact of the migration of parents on children is relative. Research carried out in Haiti (Amuedo-Dorantes et al., 2008) finds that the effect of remittances on education depends upon the community and services. In a community with access to schools (surveyed in 2000, before the 2000–2001 economic and political crisis), remittances increased school attendance, while in communities with poorer access to education (surveyed in 2002), school attendance only improved when there was no out-migration from the household, thereby, implying a negative effect of migration on the education of children. On the other hand, in the absence of (quality) educational facilities at destination, it is extremely difficult for seasonal migrant children to re-join the formal education system back at home. This potentially jeopardises individual skill acquisition and human capital formation, and increases the risk of child labour.

According to Smita (2008), seasonal drought and lack of work in villages in India force entire families to migrate for several months every year in search of work merely to survive. Children accompany their parents, and, as a result, dropout rates from school go up. Similarly, there have been situations in Moldova when children leaving the country with their parents have dropped out of school to work in the host country (Vladicescu et al., 2008). A study conducted on the Tripuri tribe of Tripura finds that though educational status of children improves after migration but they do not get adequate facilities to enrol themselves in good schools as the cost of living in the urban areas is very high (Das and Das, 2014).

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of this Research paper are drawn as follows:

- 1) To understand the problems of Migrant children
- 2) To study about the Impact of urbanization on Migrant children.

- 3) To evaluate the social security of Migrant Children etc.

Methodology

For the present study, Mahabubnagar district has been selected to collect information pertain to research by using simple random sampling method. The researcher has taken only the migrant children who are situated in different localities of the Mahabubnagar District. From each locality the head of the family was taken and later it was added up for all localities.

Conclusion:

The seasonal labour migrants, whether they move alone leaving their families behind or move with families, all belong to vulnerable sections of the society. Their jobs are not permanent and they are bound to oscillate from the one place of origin to different destinations. In case of left behind families, remittances are additional source of income for them; while at the place of destinations, whole family of the migrant are engaged to work for survival. They earn lower wages. The case studies of 60-year-old man and a tribal widow unearth many aspects of distress labour migration and its linkage to poverty, indebtedness, migration and exploitation at various levels.

Remittances received by the left behind families have a positive impact on the education of children. It reduces the gender gap in school enrolment and lowers the school dropout rate. Thus, migration contributes to the checking of child labour. This finding is similar to the findings of World Bank (2007) and IOM studies (2006). In addition, education of children becomes dismal when they migrate along with their parents in oscillating type of jobs.

In both case studies (left behind and migrant children), the common cause of concern is the situation of poverty prevailing in both of them equally. When both parents at the place of destination and origin take the role of bread earners, then the hearth is looked after by the young kids, particularly the girls of the family. Children's involvement in household activities becomes a practical necessity. They work as little parents and 'deputy home managers' in the absence of their parents and thus remain out of school. They are always on the verge of dropping out whenever the parents change their work site or children get distracted from education in the absence of their parents.

Concisely, migration can provide a temporary relief from poverty but it does not give a permanent solution. It raises many questions like how the needs of these distressed people can be addressed and how these children can be connected and mainstreamed into the education system. There is an urgent need to mainstream migrants' children through formal or non-formal educational systems encompassing their right to education.

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