

UNACCOUNTED, INVISIBLE MIGRANT CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF THEIR RIGHTS

A Study on the Conditions of
Migrant Children in Tamil Nadu

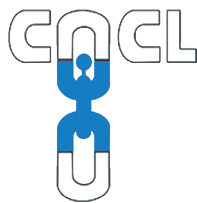
Dr. R. Vidhyasagar
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Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL)

Tamil Nadu & Puducherry

Rights Education And Development Centre (READ)

Erode District, Tamil Nadu

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Forward

Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) is the national level democratic forum of like-minded people who wish to eradicate the practice of child labour. Child labour results with the following factors viz., poverty, social norms, lack of decent work opportunities for adults and adolescents, migration and emergencies. Thus, Migration is the major push factor for child labour. Interstate Migration of parents makes the children to involuntary migration which makes them vulnerable to different culture, society, language etc. Migrated children face number of challenges in adaptations, continuing education. Their childhood becomes questionable and there is high risk for Child Labour. Therefore, CACL of Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry endorse the research work of READ among the children of Interstate Migrant Workers in Erode, Coimbatore and Tirupur Districts of Tamil Nadu as 'Safe Interstate Migration' is the important matter of discussion at nationwide.

Rights Education And Development Centre (READ) has been working since 2001, with the objective to create a society where every person has the Right to Life and Dignity. We have been working on Children to better access to quality education, Textile Industry Workers to promote decent workplace, Interstate Migrant Workers for safe migration, Bonded labor to abolish Human Trafficking, Gender Based Violence among vulnerable and marginalized communities, Sanitary workers to promote decent work and dignified life.

About 30% of the Textile Workers in the Textile Hub of the Tamil Nadu are occupied with Interstate Migrant Workers. These Interstate Migrant Textile Workers are living in the hostels/compounds provided by industries and also in private housings on their own. People from the North and North eastern states of India migrate alone/along with family to the textile hub of Tamil Nadu in order to seek employment. Thus, the data of the children in migration are not calculated by any of the survey or study. Migrant Children i.e. the children of migrant workers are forced to travel with their families when their parents are migrating. They are tending to live in a vulnerable condition. Huge population of infants, children and adolescents too migrate along with their parents and live in most exploitative conditions and also tend to work in hazardous worksites. They are losing their benefits from key welfare programs, social security, services etc.

The major challenge of the migrant children in Tamil Nadu is discontinuing education and the migrant children faces challenges like lack of access to ICDS, nutrition and health care

services. The living area is not nurturing and hygienic in most of the cases. In change, they are highly exploited to child trafficking, child abuse, substance abuse, juvenile delinquencies. They are left independent to wander as their parents are involving in the work for more than 12 hours a day. They are not getting proper parental care. The child rights become questionable for migrant children. Thus, READ has realized that there is an urgent need to study the situation of migrant children. Therefore the study has been conducted in Erode, Coimbatore and Tirupur among the interstate migrant children in the settlements of Migrant Population. The study findings indicate that the migrant children lack the access to ICDS, Early Child Health Care and proper continuing School Education. Therefore this study would help in advocacy and lobbying with the government to ensure the child rights to Migrant Children.

READ would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the READ staff Team – Ms. Shyamalanachiyar, Research & Development Coordinator; Field Workers – Ms. Yasodha & Mr. Sampath who had involved in the data collection, also to Dr. Jeyakumar who had done Data Analysis and Dr. Vidyasagar who prepared the thesis.

R. Karuppusamy

Director, Rights Education And Development Centre - READ

State Convenor

Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL)

Tamil Nadu & Puducherry

Message from the National Convener of CACL

I am happy to note that the study on Inter-state Migrant children, done by READ in Erode will be released by CACL - TN & PY on 20th Nov 2020. I appreciate this effort made under the difficult circumstances caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. I understand that those who have collected the data from the field have taken risk of exposure to the pandemic and also due to the restrictions of movement.

The virus has created havoc all over the world, in the economic and social lives of people. Human Rights generally have faced a setback. India is one of the most affected countries. The lock down has brought out the pathetic situation of our social security systems. The plight of migrant labourers was the most revealing and it is not easy to forget the long exodus of migrant labourers from their place of work to their native place due to loss of work and the ensued starvation. The tragedy of JameelaMaghdom, the 12 year old girl child migrant worker, who died during her long walk is still vivid in our minds. This may not be an odd case.

It is in this context that this study by READ becomes relevant. Many findings of the study are dismal. It covers most of the important issues of child rights violations such as denial of literacy and education, denial of health services such as immunization for preventable diseases, neglect of early childhood care, proper housing and shelter, economic exploitation and protection from abuses, etc.

The study also comes out with many recommendations for policy framework for identification and registration of migrant labour, enforcement of Labour laws, enforcement of child labour prohibition laws and other laws for protection of children. It also comes out with a need for more social mobilisation and capacity building of all stake holders.

Replicating this study in all States can contribute a lot towards our efforts to eradicate child labour and also help us to address the issues concerning migrant labourers with a focus on children.

Mathews Philip
National Convener, CACL

Section - 1

Unaccounted, Invisible Migrant Children

“In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace.”

From Article 2, UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001 (quoted in “Social Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India” UNESCO, June 2013¹)

1. Introduction:

Article 2.1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that “Every child without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his/her parents or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status is born with the same rights”. However, in India, the most “at risk” are the children, who are accompanying their migrant parents for employment, in terms of educational vulnerability and developing their capability. As many of them are deprived of their basic education they are trapped into the vicious cycle of low-skill–low-wage trap as the situation faced by their parents, which force them to migrate. It is also important to note that the situation of migrants in their working localities has direct impact on their children who accompany them. Number of studies has indicated that the movement of children along with their parents when they migrate for employment is very significant in India. Despite this, mainstream debates on child protection, child labour and migration lack necessary policy discussions on the needs and interests of migrant children as one of the most vulnerable category. There is complete lack of policy perspectives on the rights of children of internal migrants in India as it is lacking for the internal migrants as a whole. Most governments have failed to develop effective policy responses to assist and protect migrant children.

There is an unprecedented pandemic situation in the country caused by the Covid19 at present. There have been lockdowns and extended lock downs since March 2020. This

¹ UNESCO, 2013, *Social Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India*, June 2013

is a period of increasing uncertainty. However, for the first time in the post independent India, the issue of migration is brought to the centre stage because of public health and disaster response. Exodus of migrants in the wake of sudden lockdowns across states and the immense hardships that the migrants were subjected to when they attempted to go back home have been heart rending. The images and the reports on their travails have seared the conscience of the country. For the first time the significance of internal migration in India has entered the public discourse, as well the complete lack of policies and programmes for facilitating the integration of migrant workers at the destination that remain weak or at best non-existent. This study was undertaken prior to the Covid19 pandemic during the months of January to March 2020 on the conditions of children of migrant families in three districts namely, Coimbatore, Erode and Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu. The scenario followed after March 2020 only has vindicated the findings of this study.

1.1. Significance of internal migration in India:

It is brought out by many studies that the trend of internal migration has increased tremendously in the economic liberalisation era, especially from the beginning of the new millennia, in India. In India, migration has been a strategy for survival and livelihood for millions of people. The findings of many studies point to a decade of rural distress as the major reason for migration. Landless farmers, agricultural labourers and marginal farmers who lost their livelihood account for the bulk of distress migrants. Many studies have shown that in today's context migrant workers form the backbone of Indian economy. But there is no reliable data on either their number or their contribution to the economy. Priya Deshingkar² (2009), by collating many empirical studies on migrant workers has mentioned that the major sectors using migrant workers are textiles, construction, stone quarries and mines, brick kilns, small scale industry (diamond, leather accessories, etc), cultivation, sugar cane cutting, salt pans, rickshaw pulling, fish and prawn processing, salt pans, domestic work, security services, sex work, small hotels and roadside restaurants, and street vending. Quoting many other studies, Nandita Huksar (2020)³ has stated that the major migration corridors in India with large scale movement of workers have been from regions like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odhisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and recently the North East have become major sending regions of manual labour. Priya Deshingkar (2009), based on the information collated and estimation, has mentioned that the economic contribution of migrant workers was around 10 per cent of India's gross domestic product (GDP). The first ever working group on migration set up in 2015 by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty⁴, Chaired by Partha Mukhopadhyay, stated that the migrant

2 Priya Deshingkar and Saheen Akter, 2009, "Migration and Human Development in India", April 2009, UNDP, Human Development Research Paper 13, 2009.

3 Nandita Haksar , 2020, *Migrant as Citizen*, The news click, 06 July 2020 <https://www.newslick.in/Migrant-Citizen-Workers-Covid-19>

4 Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, *REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON MIGRATION under the Chair of Partha Mukhopadhyay, January 2017*

population contributed substantially to economic growth and it was necessary to secure their constitutional rights.

According to Census 2011, there are 455.78 million migrants in India, resulting in 223.67 million additional migrants since Census 1991. The percentage of internal migrants has been increasing steadily from 27.7 per cent (Census 1991) to 30.6 per cent (Census 2001) and to 37.6 per cent (Census 2011) over the last two decades. The data shows that there is a significant increase in the growth of internal migration when compared to the growth of population in India, between 1991 and 2011. Though there is no official census data after that, a more increasing trend is seen after 2011.

As per NSSO-64th round (2007-08) out of the total migrant households, 62.7 percent of migrant households have at least one child aged between 0-18 years. Amongst migrant households, 56.6 per cent are from rural areas compared to 43.4 per cent households are from urban areas.

With regard to children who are migrating alone or with their parents, 2011 census data shows that 18.9 per cent of internal migrants (92.95 million) were children. This was at 13 per cent during 2001 census with 60.25 million children. It shows increasing trends compared to previous census reports. It implies that there is an increasing trend in children moving along with their parents or alone in India. The census data also shows that the growth of migrant boys is much higher compared to girls⁵. Census 2011 data shows that Tamil Nadu state is one among the top six states receiving migrant children, ranking 4th with nearly 8 million child migrants into the state (About one third of the total migrants). As per Census 2011, 0.26 per cent of all migrant children in the age group of 0-14 years are engaged in work/ employment while an additional 0.05 per cent is engaged in business.

1.2. Conditions of children of migrants:

Children of migrant families are affected in various ways, whether they migrate with their parents, migrate alone or stay back when their parents migrate. The marginalisation of migrant workers due to violations of their basic rights and working conditions in turn deprives their children from their basic rights.

An Aide et Action & Bernard van Leer Foundation study⁶ on the status of and condition of young migrants living at worksites located in Delhi, Chennai, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Patna, Hyderabad and Guwahati portrays very grim picture of the children and their

5 UNICEF, Young Lives Research to Policy Centre, 2020 “Understanding Child Migration in India” Research Brief, March 2020.

6 Aide et Action & Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2013, “Young Migrants at worksites” study in 7 cities of India , 2013 and Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2013, “Children of seasonal migrant workers”, 2013, https://bernardvanleer.org/app/uploads/2015/12/ECM121_Children-of-seasonal-migrant-workers.pdf

conditions. The assessment indicates 90% seasonal migrant children are excluded from accessing the ICDS services whereas 80% school going children do not access education near worksites. While 65% of the children suffer from ill health, 40% work as child labour and experience various kinds of abuse and exploitation. Needless to say, “girl children endure many more deprivations than boys”, “receive less nutrition and less care than boys, and often have to do double work, at worksites as well as at home.” The adolescent girls living at the worksite are more vulnerable to abuse and sexual violence. Almost all children were found to be living in hazardous, unhygienic conditions that are typical of informal worksites and labour colonies. Pending wages for previous work, as well as job losses encountered by migrant households, are only likely to exacerbate children’s experiences. According to Diane Coffey⁷ (2010), incidences of children migrating increase when mothers also migrate in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. This shows that when women migrate they are forced to take along their children to play the gendered role of child caring.

Ravindranath and Daniel⁸ have said that “a large majority of migrant families hail from arid regions of the country, where agriculture is unviable, especially in summer. Under such circumstances, nutritional insecurity is likely to be the immediate risk in the villages for migrants and their families. Nutritional insecurity is known to cause negative health impacts in the short as well as long term” They further stated that people who migrate in such circumstances is most common among STs and SC community people.

A survey conducted in Punjab said of the 3,000 brick kiln workers in 2015-16, 60 per cent were inter-state migrants. Between 65 per cent and 80 per cent of all children aged 5 to 14 living at the kilns, worked there seven to nine hours per day. About 77 per cent of kiln workers reported lack of access to early childhood or primary education for their children⁹.

According to the working group on migrants¹⁰ (Government of India, 2017), migration places hurdles on accessing education for children. There are issues of schooling/child care in addition to accommodation. Seasonal migration negatively impacts on the regular and continued schooling of children. In the places where they migrate, children even if they are admitted in school face learning difficulties due to language problem. It is categorically stated that the “Poor literacy levels also resultantly act as an impediment in claiming rights

7 Diane Coffey, 2010, “Children’s Welfare and Short-term Migration from Rural India” *The Journal of Development Studies*, Volume 49, 2013 - Issue 8 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220388.2013.794934>

8 Divya Ravindranath and Umi Daniel, 2020, *Understanding the Implications of the COVID-19 Lockdown on Migrant Workers’ Children*, *The Wire*. <https://thewire.in/rights/covid-19-lockdown-migrant-workers-children-implications>

9 Quoted in *Business Line*, November 23, 2018, “Access to Education still a distant dream to migrant children”, <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/education/40-of-children-from-seasonal-migrant-households-likely-to-end-up-in-work-than-school-report/article25577825.ece>

10 Government of India, 2017, *op.cit*

and entitlements for internal migrants who remain unaware of their legal rights and are unable to access an impartial forum to register their grievances”.

UNICEF (2020)¹¹ report has mentioned that migrant children aged 6-14 years and 15-18 years were more likely to be engaged in paid work as compared to non-migrant children based on the NSSO-64th round data.

A report on the conditions of children of migrants by the “India Migration Now” has used the Migrants policy Index, 2019 (IMPEX)¹² on Children’s rights in seven major destination states in India namely Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. While the average score for the policy area of Children’s Rights is 32, states such as Kerala and Maharashtra scored 75 and 61 respectively because both states have specific Child Friendly Policy documents which compel the state to make special provisions for migrant children. The other five states have scored much less. While Punjab and Delhi has scored 14, for Haryana it is 31, Gujarat, 17 and Tamil Nadu, 11. Tamil Nadu is at the bottom of the index in terms of child rights for migrant children, indicating that there is lack of policies for migrant children.

1.3. The Current Study

Available few studies on migrant children quoted above bring out the conditions of migrant children in different parts of the country and in different sectors of production. Migrants for semi-skilled and unskilled work remain socially excluded in their respective destinations and the conditions of the parents affect the wellbeing of their children also. There is a general tendency to portray migrants as a burden to society and they are not included in any policy or planning. It is seen that children are deprived of their rights and there is complete lack of adequate policies to address the rights violations of the rights of the migrant children. The situation of interstate migrant workers in the Covid 19 pandemic shows that they get a very low priority in the policy planning. This is also due to lack of information on their magnitude and nature. Migration and urban growth are essential part of economic development and experiences in many countries shows that migration cannot be stopped.

11 UNICEF, 2020, *op.cit.*

12 India Migration Now, 2019, “Children on the Move : 63 million migrants in India are children” [https://medium.com/@indiamigration/children-on-the-move-63-million-of-migrants-in-india-are-children-df9d770f2493#:~:text=According%20to%20the%202011%20Census,Tamil%20Nadu%2C%20and%20Uttar%20Pradesh. Using a variation of the Migrant Integration Policy Index \(MIPEX\) created by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs \(CIDOB\) and the Migration Policy Group \(MPG\), state level policies to integrate migrants is measured using a large basket of indicators. The policy indicators have been selected to create an accurate representation of the ease and opportunities for internal migrants to participate in their destination societies. Eight policy indicators for integration of migrants such as education, labour market, children’s rights, political participation, identify and registration, social benefits, housing and health and sanitation. Scoring is based on indicators developed for each policy area. https://indiamigrationnow.org/impex-2019/](https://medium.com/@indiamigration/children-on-the-move-63-million-of-migrants-in-india-are-children-df9d770f2493#:~:text=According%20to%20the%202011%20Census,Tamil%20Nadu%2C%20and%20Uttar%20Pradesh. Using a variation of the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) created by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) and the Migration Policy Group (MPG), state level policies to integrate migrants is measured using a large basket of indicators. The policy indicators have been selected to create an accurate representation of the ease and opportunities for internal migrants to participate in their destination societies. Eight policy indicators for integration of migrants such as education, labour market, children’s rights, political participation, identify and registration, social benefits, housing and health and sanitation. Scoring is based on indicators developed for each policy area. https://indiamigrationnow.org/impex-2019/)

When such is the situation it is all the more important that there needs to be proper policy for inclusive development of migrant workers and their children.

As per the background note prepared by the Aide et Action, UNESCO, Bernard Van Leer Foundation for a National Consultation on “Children and Internal Migration in India”¹³ there has been some progressive government intervention targeting internal migrants and children in India. Education department has been involved (though in an ad hoc way) in setting of seasonal hostels, special education centres for the migrant children both at source and destination. There have also been some efforts by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, ICDS, NCPCR to address the issues of migrant children in some ways. This study is undertaken to look at the actual conditions of the children of migrant workers and to suggest required policies for addressing the fulfilment of rights of the children as per the UN CRC.

It is understood from many studies on migrant workers that mostly they are working in the informal sector. However, significant migrant workers are also into organised sector industry such as textiles. Western Tamil Nadu comprising of Erode, Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts is one of the important textile hub in India. During 2015, of the 1757 spinning and textile mills (composite mills including spinning) under organised sector in the country, Tamil Nadu alone has 918 (52%) and out of 1313 spinning mills under small scale sector, Tamil Nadu has 1005 (76.5%) of all the mills¹⁴. According to Government of Tamil Nadu (2019)¹⁵ out of 3376 spinning mills in India, 2013 are located in Tamil Nadu (60%), providing employment to 2.80 lakh work force. Of the 53.05 million spindles in India, 24.10 million spindles are installed in Tamil Nadu State. Tamil Nadu is the number one producer of cotton yarn and leading state in export of cotton yarn. Though the spinning is spread in 18 districts of Tamil Nadu, high concentration is in the western region of the State.

The Knitting, Apparel and Garmenting sector is the final stage of the textile value chain and maximum value-addition takes place at this stage. This industry has made tremendous stride in Tamil Nadu State. This is an export intensive sector, besides; there is also significant growth in organized retailing in the domestic market. Tamil Nadu is home to the largest knitting industry and has the biggest knitting cluster in India – Tiruppur, which is the major hub of knitwear exports in India, contributing 45% of total knitwear exports of the country. Tiruppur cluster generates employment to 6 lakh persons directly with large number of rural hands. It houses more than 6000 units which predominantly consist of Knitting and

¹³ http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New_Delhi/images/backgroundnote_03.pdf

¹⁴ Government of Tamil Nadu (2015) “Tamil Nadu Statistical Handbook 2015,” Chennai: Government of Tamil Nadu. Available at: <http://www.tn.gov.in/deptst/industries.pdf>

¹⁵ Government of Tamil Nadu, 2019, TAMILNADU, NEW INTEGRATED TEXTILE POLICY, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Textiles & Khadi Department http://cms.tn.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/TN_Textile_Policy_2019.pdf



Garmenting. Besides domestic turnover of Rs.10,000 crore per annum, Tiruppur currently undertakes exports of over Rs.25,000 crore per annum.¹⁶ Totally there are about 7000 garment making units in the state.

In this backdrop, it is not surprising that so many workers migrate from various parts of the country to this textile hub. The textile industry being an organised industry, it is expected that the conditions of migrant children should be better. This is one of the reasons to consider this region for the study on the conditions of children of migrants. Secondly the organisation responsible for this study, READ is headquartered at Erode district and works in all the three districts, especially working among them on the issues of workers in textile units. This study is motivated by a preliminary understanding of the conditions of migrant workers and their children who are facing various forms of deprivations. It is seen that the interstate Migrant Workers are particularly vulnerable to deprivations both in their workplace as well as in their residential places. In the work place they don't get their legal entitlements in terms of wages for long working hours, PF, ESI, freedom of movement and so on. Women workers face gender based violence in addition to the above. In their living areas they face problems in their accommodation, water, sanitation and so on. Their children are seems to be not having access to schooling, health, hygiene.

¹⁶ Government of Tamil Nadu, 2019, *op.cit.*

These interstate migrant workers are mostly working for piece rate rather than for time rated wages. Thus, they do not have access to social security measures like PF, ESI and other welfare benefits from the management. Consequently due to poor income of the parents, children of the migrant workers remain vulnerable. Thus, this study is undertaken in order to have an in-depth understanding of the conditions of children and to come out with effective policy interventions.

1.4. Objectives of the study:

- Understanding the conditions of the children of migrant workers in the context of the conditions of the adults in the migrant worker households.
- Assessing the status of migrant children's access to health, hygiene, early childhood care, education and nutrition.
- Review of existing policies on migrant children in relation to their existing conditions and working out the policy needs
- To come out with a policy advocacy document to suggest policy measures to the Government.

1.5. Methodology:

- Desk review of literature and existing policy documents
- Field survey of migrant workers families to understand the conditions of their children through a structured questionnaire.
- Data analysis and identifying the gaps in the policy.

1.6. Sampling:

Since READ has been working in the region, in all the three districts, for more than two decades, the areas where migrant workers reside is very familiar. However there is no data on the number of such migrant workers in the region as there is no government agency registering them or accounting for them. Thus, there is no clue about the universe of the study. However, from the residential localities of the migrant workers, we have selected migrant workers' families with children by snowballing method (over 50 per cent of the migrant workers are single migrants without families) and interviewed them. We have covered 304 migrant families (81 in Coimbatore, 74 in Erode and 149 in Tiruppur district). This could be considered only as a type study, but as the conditions of most of the workers are similar, the findings may be generalised for all the migrant families. The data is processed using SPSS software and report prepared.



1.7. Limitations of the study:

Language was one of the main limitations as migrant workers were from different states. We had a team of people who are proficient in Hindi and it was not difficult to talk to people from Hindi speaking states. For other languages we need to get someone locally who speaks Hindi as well as the language of the respondents. Secondly some of the respondents, especially women were afraid of talking out of fear that revealing their condition may affect them in their work place. Such people were interviewed only after persuasion.

The following section 2 discusses about the socio economic conditions of the migrant families, followed by section 3 on the conditions of children in the migrant families. Section 4 is devoted to conclusions and policy recommendations.

Section - 2

Socio economic conditions of the migrants and their families

“Santhosh (38) lives with his family in Coimbatore and he has migrated along with his family from Bihar state, 15 years ago. He has been working in Vasanthi Foundries as a Burner Operator. His family consist of his Wife – Niki Devi (30) and 3 children; Shyam (15), Sanikumar (11), Manikumar (9). Santhosh had completed 10th standard and Nikia devi studied up to 8th standard. Being a landless labourer at home and lack of employment in his native, Santosh is driven by poverty to migrate to a place where he can find a job and feed his family. He migrated before his marriage and now he has his family here. He earns about Rs. 400 a day at present. He was forced to submit his Aadhar card and PAN card to his employer. He is informally employed without any appointment order, ID card or Salary slip. He is paid wages in cash. His wages were very low when he first joined and it took almost 15 years to come to the stage of earning Rs. 400 per day. Unaware of his rights and entitlements he has been working. He left his wife in his native after marriage. Because of the poverty levels at home he brought his wife and the first child they had at that time to this place and now he has three children. His wife was also working in a garment unit as a checker. But due to ill health now she stopped working and his first son, Shyam, who is 15 years is working in a garment factory as a helper. He stopped going to school after 5 years of schooling. Initially he was taking care of the siblings when the parents were out for working. Now he is a fulltime worker. His other two sons are studying in a local government primary school in 5th standard and 3rd standard respectively. Only primary school is available near their residence and for upper primary and secondary the children have to travel quite a distance. That is one of the concerns of Santosh. He wants to educate his children and sent them to high school. But, with his low income whether he will be able to feed the whole family is a big question mark? Santosh and his family live in a small house which is part of 10 houses in a row, for a rent of Rs. 3000 per month. 10 migrant families are staying in the row with only two toilets and two bathrooms.

Case study done during the field survey

The case of Santosh is not an isolated one. There are tens of thousands of Santosh and the likes who migrate to Tamil Nadu from various parts of the country where survival still continue to be an issue. The worst affected are the children, who are culturally uprooted from their native soil and forced to live in a strange land where social inclusion and integration remains to be an unresolved issue.

The National Policy for Children (NPC) in India, 2013. **recognises that a child is any person below the age of eighteen years**; childhood is an integral part of life with a value of its own; children are not a homogenous group and their different needs, need different responses, especially the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities experienced by children in different circumstances; and a long term, sustainable, multi-sectoral, integrated and inclusive approach is necessary for the overall and harmonious development and protection of children. NPC also states that all children have the right to grow in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding and families are to be supported by a strong social safety net in caring for and nurturing their children. With regard to child protection the NPC states that “*Children have the right to be protected wherever they are. The State shall create a caring, protective and safe environment for all children, to reduce their vulnerability in all situations and to keep them safe at all places, especially public spaces. A safe, secure and protective environment is a precondition for the realization of all other rights of children. The State shall protect all children from all forms of violence and abuse, harm, neglect, stigma, discrimination, deprivation or any other activity that takes undue advantage of them, harms their personhood or affects their development*”. Thus, India has a very favourable legislative framework for protecting the children. However, a review of the policy implementation shows that the budgetary outlays are not sufficient to take care of children’s health, education, protection and development (Manzoor Ali, 2013¹). Manzoor has also concluded that the NPC 2013 has promised a lot for children’s survival, protection, education and health and it has at times used lofty, but vague, terminology, whose effects are beyond the control of any agency and the state’s institutions. The children and their issues cannot be treated in isolation. “Any macro level policy cannot succeed without keeping in mind the disadvantaged sections of society... although different constituents require different spending; there should not be wide gaps between the allocations across health, development, protection and education”. Tamil Nadu is one of the highly developed state in terms of Human Development Indicators and economic growth² and it attracts labour

1 Manzoor Ali, 2015, *High on Promises, Low on Budget - National Policy for Children 2013*, EPW, Vol. 48, Issue No. 52, 28 Dec, 2013

2 *Human development achievements in Tamil Nadu have largely been a result of its long tradition of formal schooling. Tamil Nadu is way ahead in the education field compared to many other major states of Indian Union. Tamil Nadu’s Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.708 as compared to 0.647 for India as a whole (UNDP report on HDR 2018). Increasing literacy levels in the state has also contributed to a positive demographic transformation in the state. Tamil Nadu has been ranked No 1 by the Economic Freedom Rankings for the States of India. Possessing the fourth largest economy of \$ 98 billion among states in India, Tamil Nadu is also the second most*

force from various other states into its fold. However, there is lack of policy for making the migrant workers and their children inclusive into the local communities as revealed by this study.

2.1. Socio economic and demographic profile of the sample households

Children's situation cannot be viewed in isolation from the conditions of their households. Thus in order to set the background, this section discusses the socio economic character of the sample households and draws some inferences from that. This has taken into account the social characters of the households such as their community background, demography, age group, marital status, education levels, and their origin and so on. Economic characteristics like their occupation, years in service, their entitlements and working conditions are taken into account.

2.2. Sample Households and their population

As already mentioned 304 migrant households have been interviewed (we have contacted about 500 households but we could not pursue all of them to respond to us. Many of them also had apprehensions about talking to strangers as that may earn the wrath of the employer). These 304 households are distributed in Coimbatore (81), Erode (74) and Tiruppur (149) districts. We have spent similar human resources and time in all the three districts, but we could contact more households in Tiruppur district indicating that the migrant workers are more in this district. These households have a population of 1090, with an average household size of 3.6. This is less than the Tamil Nadu state average of 3.9 which is lowest in the country. The average size of the household is less probably because majority of the migrant families have 3 members (newly married with one child). Some of the migrant households have left their children behind in their home states. It is estimated that only 40 % of the migrants are migrating along with their families and the rest are single migrants. Number of households and population figures are presented in **Table 1**.

industrialised state next to Maharashtra State. Unlike many other states, the economic resources are quite spread out, rather than concentrated in a small industrialised area (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Tamil_Nadu). Manufacturing and urban service sector growth is more diffused, drawing upon labour from adjoining rural areas. More people in Tamil Nadu have moved from rural to urban areas the last 10 years compared to other states, according to the 2011 Census data. Tamil Nadu tops the list of urbanised states with 48.45% of its population living in urban areas, followed by Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Table 1: Sample households by districts, population and average size of households					
District	Number of Households	Population			Average size of households
		Male	Female	Total	
Coimbatore	81	165	140	305	3.8
Erode	74	142	127	269	3.6
Tiruppur	149	276	240	516	3.5
Total	304	583	507	1090	3.6
% of male and female		53.5	46.5	100	

2.3. Origin of Migrant families interviewed in the sample

Sample survey reveals that nearly half of the migrants (48.4%) of them belong to Bihar State and from among the remaining sizeable sections of them belong to Odisha, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh as mentioned in **Table 2**. The importance of origin states are in the same order. It is surprising to see that 12.5% of the migrants are from Maharashtra state, which is one of the destination states for migrant labour from different North Indian states. The migrants from Maharashtra are mostly from the arid regions of the State, where the agricultural base is poor and unemployment high.

2.4. Demographic features of the sample households

2.4.1. Heads of migrant households

Our sample survey reveals that all the migrant families are nuclear families. Out of 304 migrant families 299 are headed by males and only in the case of 5 families, the heads are females. In Coimbatore three women headed families are headed by widowed women and in Tiruppur two families are headed by women who are married but not living with their husbands. However, the preponderant trend is that about 98.4% of the migrant families are headed by male members (see **table 3**).

Table 2: Distribution of Migrant Households by State of Origin					
State of Origin	Number of Migrant Households				% of Households
	Tiruppur	Erode	Coimbatore	Total	
Migrated to					
Bihar	91	25	31	147	48.4
Odisha	21	20	3	44	14.5
Maharashtra	0	0	38	38	12.5
West Bengal	21	14	1	36	11.8
Uttar Pradesh	8	8	4	20	6.6

Rajasthan	3	0	3	6	2.0
Assam	1	2	0	3	1.0
Nepal	2	1	0	3	1.0
Jharkhand	2	0	0	2	0.7
Karnataka	0	2	0	2	0.7
Chhattisgarh	0	1	0	1	0.3
Delhi	0	1	0	1	0.3
Madhya Pradesh	0	0	1	1	0.3
Total	149	74	81	304	100

See figure 1 for graphic presentation of the importance of different state of origin of migrant workers.

Fig 1: % of Migrant families by State of Origin

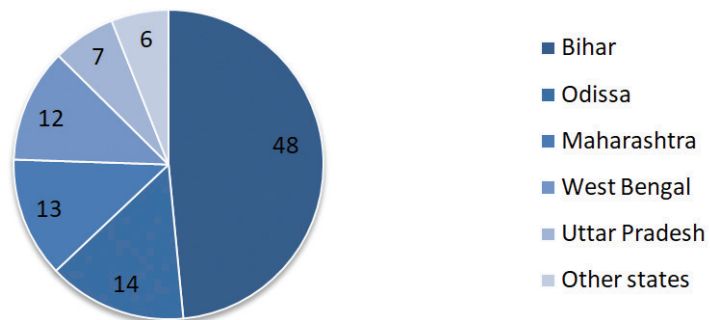


Table 3: Distribution of sample households by heads of households					
Gender of Head of Households	District Name			Total	%
	Tirupur	Erode	Coimbatore		
Male	147	74	78	299	98.4
Female	2	0	3	5	1.6
Total	149	74	81	304	100

2.4.2. Household size

Majority of the migrant households have three members across the three districts. However, about 39% of the households have four to five members and 2% of households have more than 5 members. All households being nuclear families, parents and their biological children

constitute the migrant families. Size wise distribution of migrant families is presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Distribution of sample migrant households by size								
Size of households	Coimbatore		Erode		Tiruppur		Total	
	No.of hhs	%	No.of hhs	%	No.of hhs	%	No.of hhs	%
2 members	3	3.7	0	0	3	2	6	2
Three members	42	51.9	44	60	87	58	173	57
Four members	17	21.0	17	23	49	33	83	27
Five members	17	21.0	9	12	10	7	36	12
Above 5 members	2	2.5	4	5	0	0	6	2
Total	81	100	74	100	149	100	304	100

2.4.3. Age structure of the population in migrant families

It is important to mention here that majority of the migrant members are young people who are less than 40 years. Most of them are married (of the total households only 4.6% of the household heads are not married) and having children. However, the children below 14 years constitute 40 to 45% of the population of migrant families in the three districts, indicating high fertility rate. Overall it is 43%. Late adolescents in the population constitute only 1% of all the households and in Coimbatore district there is no one in that age group. In other two districts they constitute only 1% of the population. This is because most of the adult population is below the age of 30 with 45% of the total population. There is only one person who is above 50 years in the adult population. This trend is same in all the three districts. Most of them are not in the age group of adults to have children in the late adolescent age (see **table 5 and Fig. 2**). However, high proportion of children below 14 years indicates high Total Fertility Rate³ (TFR) among the migrant workers. For example the Tamil Nadu state with a TFR of 2.1 and replacement level fertility, and the children below 14 years constitute only about 24% of the population. Comparative population structure of migrant households and Tamil Nadu state is given in **Table 6**.

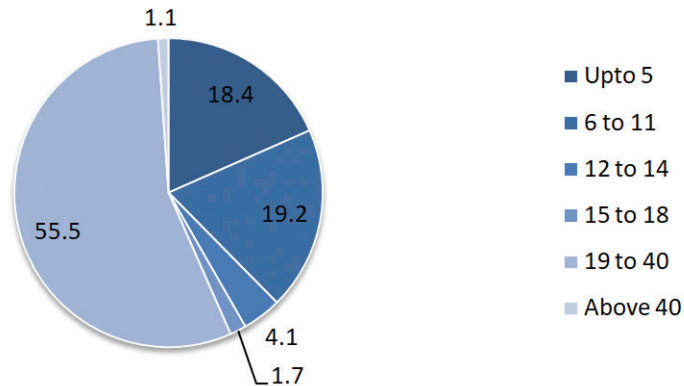
³ The total fertility rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of children that would be borne by a woman of a child-bearing age. The four southern states accounting for 21% of India's population—Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka—have a TFR below 2.1. States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have a TFR of above 3, which is also reflected in their young population

Table 5: Age structure of the migrant population								
Age group	Coimbatore		Erode		Tiruppur		Total	% to total
	Population	% total	Population	% to total	Population	% to total	Population	
Up to 5	45	15	64	24	92	18	201	18.4
6 - 11	76	25	40	15	93	18	209	19.2
12 - 14	16	5	10	4	19	4	45	4.1
15 - 18	5	1	4	1	9	1	18	1.7
18 - 25	90	30	63	24	124	24	277	25.4
26 - 30	23	8	57	20	126	24	206	18.9
31 - 35	29	9	17	6	29	6	75	6.9
36 - 40	17	6	10	4	20	4	47	4.3
41 - 50	4	1	4	2	3	1	11	1.0
50 - 60	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.1
Total	305	100	269	100	516	100	1090	100.0

Mean and median age of the population of migrants in the sample indicate that the most of the migrants are young people. The mean age of the migrant population is 18.8 and the median age⁴ is 24. The mean and median age of migrant population are 18.3 and 23, 18.4 and 24 and 19.3 and 24 respectively for Coimbatore, Erode and Tiruppur districts. The median age is broadly correlated with the level of development within the state in India. Southern states with a higher per-capita income such as Andhra Pradesh (27), Tamil Nadu (29), Karnataka (26) and Kerala (31) and the western states of Maharashtra (26) and Gujarat (25) have higher median ages.

⁴ Median age is the age that divides a population into two numerically equally sized groups - that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older. It is a single index that summarizes the age distribution of a population.

Fig 2: Age structure of the migrant (sample) population



Less developed states in the North including Uttar Pradesh (20), Bihar (20), Jharkhand (22), Madhya Pradesh (23) and Rajasthan (22) have lower median ages. Low mean and median age for migrant population indicate that most of the workers are in their prime life time where the productivity is more. Obviously migration of old people above 40 years is negligible.

Table 6: Age structure of population of migrants compared to Tamil Nadu State		
Age Group	Sample Population	Tamil Nadu State
Upto 14 years	42%	24%
15 - 18 years	2%	9%
19 - 40 years	55%	34%
Above 40 years	1%	33 %
Total	100%	100%

2.4.4. Social background of the migrant households

When we look at the community wise distribution of households, majority of the sample households, nearly 77% are from other backward caste (OBC) communities. The proportion of sample households among SC and ST population is 1 per cent and 1.4 per cent respectively. (see Table 7). This trend is same across the three districts. (There is no information for 56 cases of samples). However, most other studies on migrant labour, including the ones on the intra-state migrants, show that most of the migrants are drawn from SC/ST communities. In the current study, most respondents do not want to reveal their caste identity, if they are drawn from SC/ST communities, as that will affect their chances of renting a house and getting into more social exclusion in the local communities. Thus the social background mentioned by the respondents in the survey cannot be taken in its face value.

Table 7: Community wise Distribution of Sample households						
Name of District	Community					Total
	ST	SC	OBC	General	Not Known	
Tirupur	1	1	113	8	26	149
Erode	2	1	67	0	4	74
Coimbatore	1	1	53	0	26	81
Total	4	3	233	8	56	304
%	1.4	1.0	76.6	2.6	18.4	100.0

2.4.5. Literacy levels of the sample population

Literacy rate of population above 5 years among the migrant population is just 52.6% and it is relatively better among males with 57.6% and it is only 46.4% among females. These rates are very poor compared to the **literacy rate** in the country with 74.04 per cent, 82.14 for males and 65.46 for females and Tamil Nadu state where the literacy rate is 80.1 per cent of the population⁵ with male literacy rate of 86.8 per cent and female literacy rate of 73.4 per cent, as per the 2011 Census. Though the population below 14 years is high among migrants, there are many children in the school. However, if we add primary level and upper primary levels of education it is nearly 49% for males and 37% for females. Primary and upper primary levels alone will not be effective in livelihood skills. Thus, effective literacy rate is very poor with just 7% and 9% for migrant males and females in the sample households. However, the nature of their occupation does not differ whether they are literates or illiterates. (see table 8 and figures 3 and 4).

Table 8: Literacy rate and Literacy levels of the sample population above 5 years			
Literacy levels	Male	Female	total
Illiterate	42.4	53.6	47.4
Primary (up to 5 classes)	25.8	22.3	24.3
Upper Primary (6 to 8th class)	23.4	14.9	19.6
Secondary (9th and 10th)	5.9	8.5	7.1
HSC (11th and 12th)	1.0	0.5	0.8
Degree	0.4	0.3	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

5 The working **definition of literacy** in the **Indian** census since 1991 is as follows: **Literacy rate:** The total percentage of the population of an area at a particular time aged seven years or above who can read and write with understanding. Here the denominator is the population aged seven years or more.

Fig 3: Literacy Levels among migrant males (%)

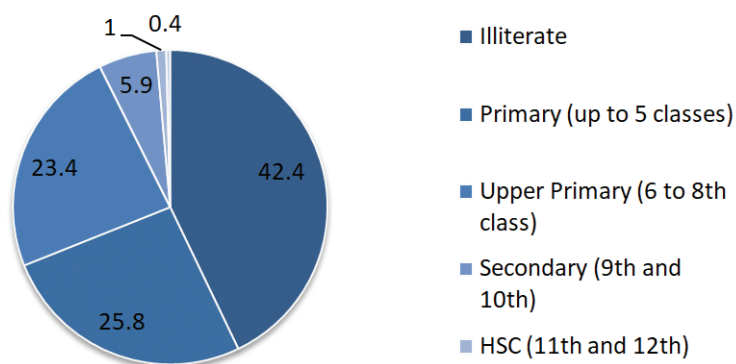
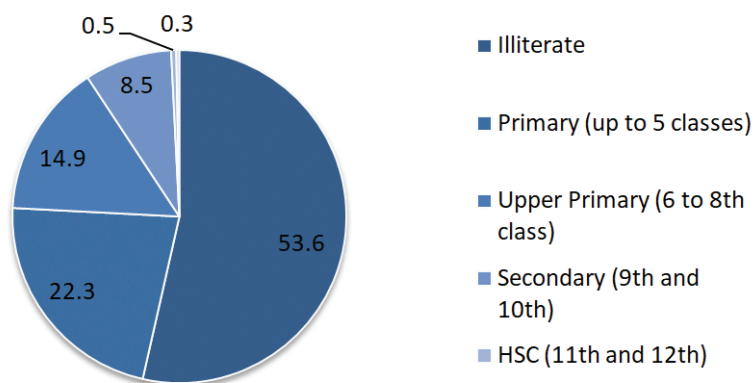


Fig 4: Literacy levels among migrant Females (%)



2.5. Economic situation of the migrant population

2.5.1. Distress migration

Most studies on internal migrant labour movement in India have highlighted the fact that the migration has been a strategy for survival and livelihood for millions of people and the findings of Census 2011 point to a decade of rural distress as the major reason for migration⁶. In the case of our sample migrant households, the reasons for their migration confirm the findings of the earlier studies. Almost all the sample migrant households have said that they

⁶ Martin Puthussery, 2020, *Migrants in India: Strategies for Justice*, Indian Social Institute; Chetan Choitani & Reshma Roshania, 2020, "Why Do We Treat Internal Migrants Differently From International Migrants?" *The Wire*, May 28th, 2020; Anju Bala, 2017, "Migration in India: Causes and consequences", *International Journal of Advanced Educational Research* Volume 2; Issue 4; July 2017; www.educationjournal.org; Skeldon, Ronald (1997): 'Rural-Urban Migration and Its Implications for Poverty Alleviation', *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, 12(1). – (2002): 'Migration and Poverty', *Asia Pacific Population Journal*, Vol 17,

are forced to migrate because of lack of employment, low wages and poverty in their native places. Many of them have mentioned that the combination of above reasons forced them to migrate to a place where they can get employment and relatively better wages so that they can survive. Primary reason for their migration is presented in **Table 9**.

Table 9: Factors behind migration		
Reasons for migration	Number of Households	% to total
Unemployment at home	113	37.2
Low wages at home	34	11.2
Poverty at home	157	51.6
Total	304	100

2.5.2. How did they migrate?

At the initial stages, migrant labourers were brought by contractors and in some cases spinning mills had their own mechanism to bring labourers from other states. An earlier study done by Rights Education and Development Centre (READ) in association with Partners in Change (PiC), 2019, revealed that 78% of the migrants came to the destination area through their friends and relatives. Rest of them were recruited through skill development centres set up by the source states⁷. Current study also revealed that over 98% of the migrants have come to the destination through their friends and relatives. Only 1.3% of them have said that they migrated through contractors (in 2 cases there is no information on this) (See **Table 10**). The trend is similar among the migrants in all the three districts.

Table 10: Distribution of sample migrants by their source through which they migrated					
District Name	Migrated through				Total
	Friends	Relatives	Contractor	No Information	
Tirupur	73	75	1	0	149
Erode	45	28	1	0	74
Coimbatore	21	57	2	1	81
Total	139	160	4	1	304
% of households migrated	45.7	52.6	1.3	0.3	100.0

2.5.3. When did they migrate?

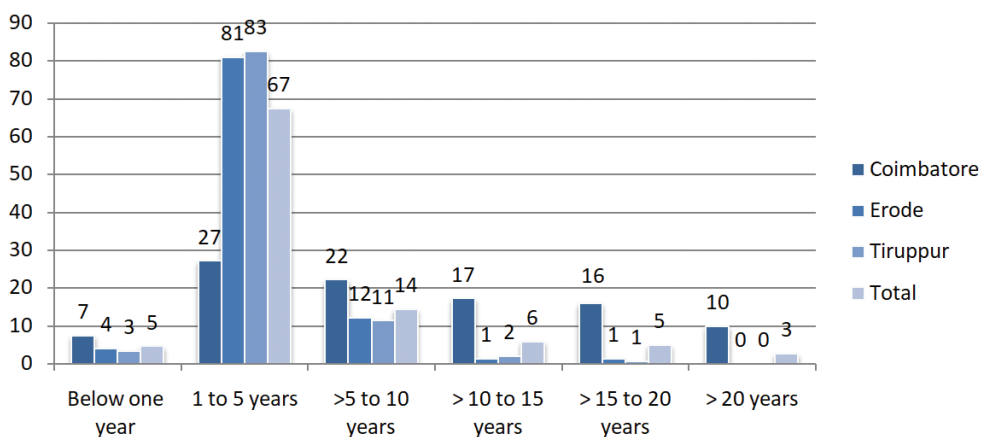
While there is up to 5 per cent of migrants who have migrated into the sample districts less than one year, a majority of them, 67.4 per cent, have moved here in last 1 to 5 years. Another 14.5 per cent of them have moved here between five and ten years before. The remaining 13.4 per cent have been here for more than 10 years. Within this 2.6 per cent

⁷ *Rights Education and Development Centre (READ) & Partners in Change (PiC), 2019 'Businesses reinvent servitude' 2019.*

of them have been here for more than 20 years. The trend shows that earliest migration of workers into this region started in Coimbatore district. (Tiruppur district was bifurcated from Coimbatore district during 2009). The trend in the period of migration reveals that most of the migrants have come here only 5 to 10 years before. Though the textile industry sectors such as garmets, spinning mills and knit wear have been rapidly growing during last three decades, the trend in migration of labour here show that majority of them have been coming here since last 5 to 10 years. This shows that the labour demand has been met with intra state migrants with in Tamil Nadu till about one and a half decade ago. Once that is exhausted interstate migrants started coming into the region. The myth about the “interstate migrants depriving the local population their employment opportunity” is exploded by this. In fact the majority of the workers in the textile industry are local workers even at present. (See Table 11 and Fig. 5)

Table 11: Distribution of migrant families by years in migration								
	Coimbatore		Erode		Tiruppur		Total	
	No. of HHs	% to total	No. of HHs	% to total	No. of HHs	% to total	No. of HHs	% to total
Below one year	6	7.4	3	4.1	5	3.4	14	4.6
1 to 5 years	22	27.2	60	81.1	123	82.6	205	67.4
>5 to 10 years	18	22.2	9	12.2	17	11.4	44	14.5
> 10 to 15 years	14	17.3	1	1.4	3	2.0	18	5.9
> 15 to 20 years	13	16.0	1	1.4	1	0.7	15	4.9
> 20 years	8	9.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	2.6
Total	81	100.0	74	100.0	149	100.0	304	100.0

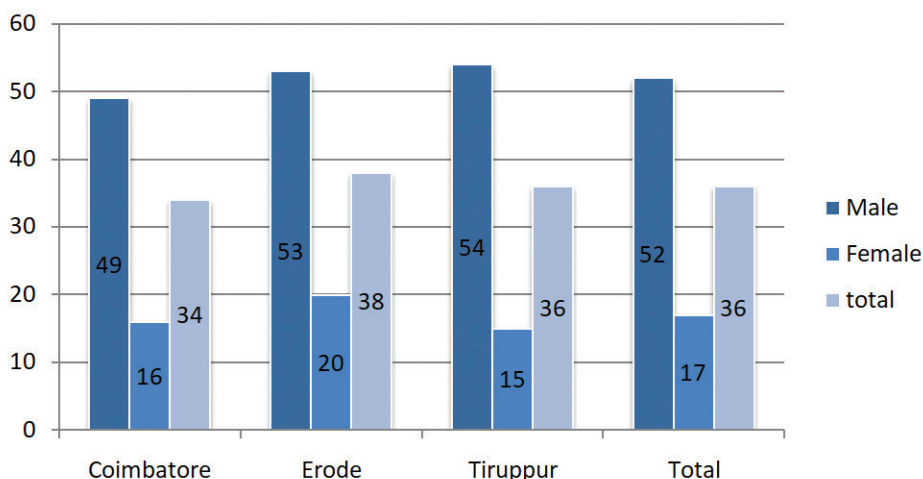
Fig 5: % Distribution of migrant families by years in migration



2.5.5. Work Force Participation Rate (WPR) among the migrant families

WPR⁸ is an important measure indicating the proportion of productive population in an economy. Among the migrant population in the sample, Male WPR is 52%, female 17% and total population 36%. Female WPR seems to be very low among migrant families compared to All India and Tamil Nadu. This could be because most of the females in the migrant families are young mothers busy caring for children (See fig. 6). As a result this has also depressed the WPR for total population, though the Male WPR is comparable with all India figures and Tamil Nadu State. Workforce participation in India as per 2011 census is 51.7% for males 25.6% for females and 39.1% total population. The WPR for Tamil Nadu state (2011 census) is 59.3%, 31.8%, 45.6% respectively for males, females and total population. Many workers have reported that they are working for more than 10 to 12 hours a day and this shows that the working intensity is higher.

Fig 6: Work participation rate among the migrant population (%)



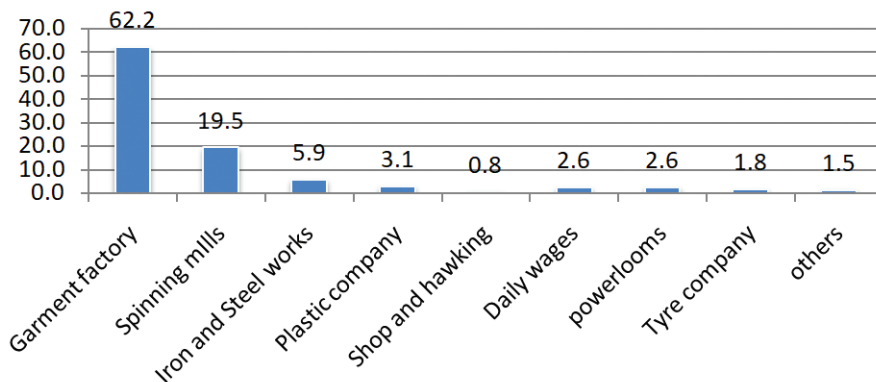
2.5.6. Occupation of the migrant workers

Migrant workers are mainly working in textile industry sectors of garments and spinning mills. To a small extent they are also into other industries like, iron & Steel, power looms, plastic manufacturing, tyre industry and so on. An insignificant proportion of them are into brick kilns and lime kilns (Erode) and trading (petty shop, pani puri selling and dry nuts selling (Coimbatore), Textile industry is the mainstay for both male and female workers.

⁸ The Work Participation Rate (WPR), is defined as the percentage of total workers to the total population

Table 12: Distribution of workers among migrant population by occupation								
	Coimbatore		Erode		Tiruppur		Total	% to Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Garment factory	27	8	12	12	147	36	242	62.2
Spinning mills	25	6	33	12			76	19.5
Iron and Steel works	13		10				23	5.9
Plastic company	8	4					12	3.1
Shop and hawking	2	1					3	0.8
Daily wages	6	4					10	2.6
powerlooms			9	1			10	2.6
Tyre company			7				7	1.8
others			4	1	1		6	1.5
Total	81	23	75	26	148	36	389	100.0

Fig 7: % distribution of migrant workers by industry



2.5.7. Earnings of the migrant workers

In this study we have not asked questions on their earnings as there are many other studies including the recent one done by READ & PiC (2019), on this aspect in this region.

An ILO report based on the literature review of studies on migrant garment workers published in 2017 shows that India has one of the lowest minimum wages amongst the group of top garment exporting companies in the world. Compensation in the Indian garment industry was INR 4,268.26 as compared to the required living wage of INR 16,123.4 per month. For example, the average monthly wage of a skilled worker like a tailor was INR 7,310 in Tirupur, though it is comparatively higher than other states such as Bengaluru, it is not commensurate with the living wages.

The recent study done by READ and PiC (2019) with 200 migrant workers in this region has collected information on the wage levels and working conditions of the migrant workers, has revealed the following issues:

- About 78% of the migrant workers have reported of not receiving any written appointment order
- In Tiruppur, most of the companies recruit the migrant workers as daily wages or contract workers, as they can be paid lesser wages for the same working days and it is relatively easier to hire and fire them since recruitment of daily wages are not properly regulated. Migrant Workers do not insist on contract letters due to lack of awareness or because of the desperation to get some livelihood opportunity.
- Around two-thirds of respondents stated that they are working 12 hours, while others work between 11-12 hours, which is longer than prescribed working hours
- More than 90% of Respondents stated that they work 6 days a week. Except weekly off, none of the leave system is maintained in the industries and the workers are unaware of taking such leaves.
- Most of the workers work for 60 to 72 hours a week
- The wages paid to Packers/ Helpers, Quality Control/ Checker range from Rs. 7000 to Rs. 10,500 a month according to the working hours. But if wages are calculated based on 8 hr working day, none of these workers are paid the statutory minimum wage.
- Though two thirds of them were working for 12 hours a day, they were earning somewhere between Rs.7000 and Rs.10500 a month, while the average minimum wages is fixed at Rs.7957 in the industry. Minimum wage is only for an 8 hours working day. But the earnings of the workers include overtime payment. (Our study reveals that those who have more than 5 to 6 years of service with the same employer and a skilled worker like a tailor gets around Rs.12000 to Rs.15000 per month. But as many workers keep on shifting their employers the wages remain lower than the living wages)

Pinta Kumar is a 31 years old Interstate Migrant worker from Bihar, living in Erode along with his family consisting his wife - Sonia Devi (25) and children - Prince Kumar (9), Jaya Kumar (5), SonaliKumari (3). He is working in United Casting. He studied 10th standard and his wife studied 8th standard. He was an agricultural labour in Bihar and then migrated to Erode as he was unemployed for most of the time at his home and in order to earn more and regular employment he migrated. United casting is an exporting metal casting factory where he is working and earns 13000 per month. He has been working in Erode for more than 8 years; he doesn't have any appointment letter, Identity Card, salary slips with him. Pinta Kumar is not getting any of the labour entitlements like PF, ESI etc.

- To be eligible for bonus one has to work for more than six months, and not 3 months as the norms have it. The study found that only 40% of them received bonuses. This is when majority of the respondents were working for more than a year. The workers were told that they would get 6% - 10% of cumulative wage as bonus, but they were given only a consolidated bonus of Rs.2000 to Rs. 4000.
- Approximately, more than one-third of respondents (35%) said that employers have enrolled their name for EPF scheme, while 25% said that they are not sure about it. However, no one among those who mentioned EPF were able to specify how much money is deducted towards EPF or their EPF account number or new Universal Account Number (UAN).
- In case of ESI, 30% of them said that their name is registered for ESI scheme. Again, none of them were able to mention either the amount deducted from their wage for ESI or their ESI account number.

Kishore is a 27 years Interstate Migrant from Bihar and is living with his family in Tirupur. He is working in a Garment factory which produces for exports, as a Tailor. He is working on a piece rate basis and earns up to Rs. 3000 to 4000 per week. He has been working in Tirupur for more than 3 years with the current factory; he doesn't have any appointment letter, Identity Card, salary slips with him. He says that he is working on a piece rate under a contractor, the contractor may change the company of his labour supply if needed and the company pays the wages to the contractor and then the contractor provides the wages to him in cash. Kishore doesn't have any kind of savings bank account in Tamil Nadu. Kishore is not aware of the labour entitlements like PF, ESI etc.

It is said that “Migrant workers do not protest even though they are not being paid as per the wage agreement as they compare the salaries they get in Tirupur with what they got in their native places,” Though most of the migrant workers are working in the organised textile sector, their work relations remain very informal.

2.5.8. Housing conditions of the sample households

A living space with basic amenities is an important basic right of every one. But housing is a big issue for the migrant workers in this region. John Samuel Raja D⁹, has mentioned during 2007 that Slums are mushrooming in ‘dollar town’ of Tiruppur is just not because of migration alone but the low wages paid by exporters. As Tiruppur thrives on migrant labour, slums are increasing as the migrant workers cannot afford decent housing with the low levels of wages they receive. If they have to live in a proper house in a well-planned area, there will be nothing left after paying the rent. It is found out in the current study that only 6.5% of the migrant families are living in the accommodation provided by the employer (in

⁹ <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/wByqZmWQoOXpC04PbcMKIM/Slums-mushrooming-in-8216dollar-town8217-Tirupur.html>

CASE STUDIES

Kishore (27) who is working as a tailor in a garment factory at Tiruppur is living with his wife and a child of three years old. His house is a hut in a private compound, and he pays a monthly rent of Rs. 2500. There are totally 13 houses in a row in which 6 huts are occupied by Interstate Migrant Families. Every 4 families have to share one bathroom and one toilet.

42 year old Kumar is a migrant from Bihar and works in Prema Spinning Mill at Coimbatore. He has a family of six members including his wife and four daughters. He is residing in a hut type of house made of Asbestos sheets in a private compound, for which he pays a rent of Rs. 3000 per month. There are totally 8 houses in the row and six are occupied by interstate migrant workers' family. There is only one toilet and a bathroom for four families.

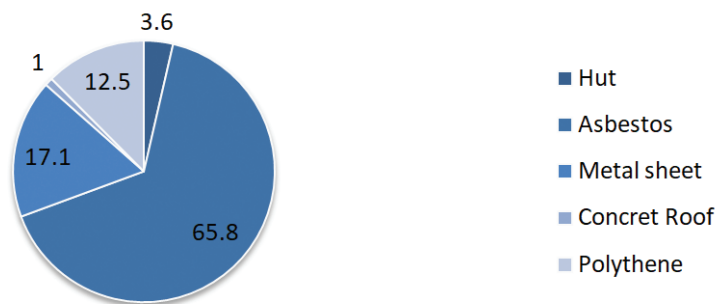
line housing). In Tiruppur district none of our sample households are living in company accommodation. 81 % of them were living in rented accommodation in slums (unplanned areas). It is surprising to note that about 12.5% of the migrants are living in open spaces with something called a house (See Table 13)

Table 13: Nature of housing of migrant families		
Nature of house	No. of Households	% to total
Rented House	246	81
Open Land (Coimbatore district)	38	12.5
Company Accommodation	20	6.5
Total	304	100

Rented house ranges from thatched hut to houses with roofs made of metal sheet, asbestos, polythene and so on. Tin and asbestos roofed houses are in rows in an unplanned area where most of the migrant workers rent houses as these are cheaper in rent compared to a proper housing. The worst case is that nearly 12.5 % of our sample migrant households, all in Coimbatore district live in open spaces with temporary tent like structures with tarpaulin sheets/plastic sheets as roof. All these people live in one area called Kamaraj Nagar in Saravanampatti panchayat in Coimbatore South. There are many more migrant families living in the same area with similar predicament. Many of them are working in the textile industry. Only one per cent of the migrant households were found to be having concrete roofing over their living spaces. (See fig 8). The situation of housing is similar in all the three districts surveyed. Most of the migrant families are living in accommodations without adequate/proper toilet and bath facilities as well water supply.



Fig 8: Distribution of migrant houses by the roof material (%)



Even for such poor housing the migrant families have to shell out Rs.2000 to 5000 per month. Of the 246 families living in rented accommodation, 93% of them were paying a rent up to Rs.3000 per month. Another 6% of them are paying a rent up to Rs.4000 per month. Only 2 households (less than one per cent of all the households) are paying a rent over Rs.4000 per month. (See Table 14)

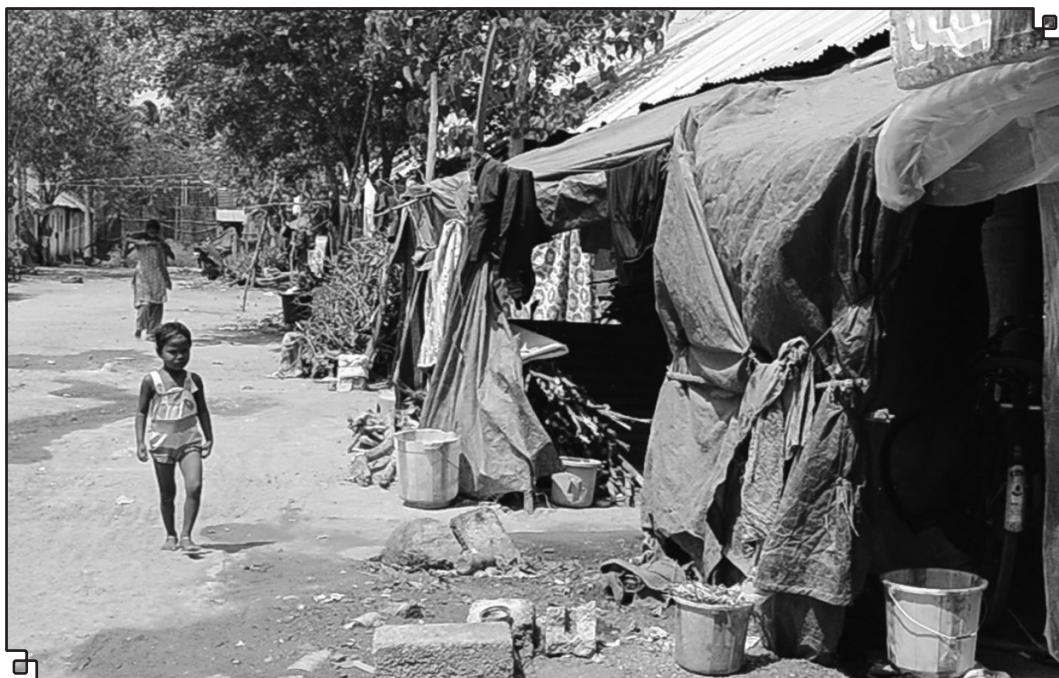


Table 14: Distribution of migrant households by range of house rent

District Name	Range of rent per month (in Rs.)			Total
	2-3 Thousand	3-4 Thousand	4-5 Thousand	
Tirupur	132	15	2	149
Erode	65	0	0	65
Coimbatore	32	0	0	32
Total	229	15	2	246
	93.1	6.1	0.8	100

By spending 30 to 40 per cent on house rent they are not able to save enough for visiting their home frequently. Over 85% of the sample migrant households said that they have visited their native place. However, only one third of the migrant families could save enough to visit their home once a year. Others visit once in two to 5 years. Nearly 13 % of them reported that they could not visit their native places at all.

While many migrants stayed backed during Covid 19 lock down, many others have left for their natives with huge sufferings. In spite of such sufferings now migrants are returning to their work places, showing their distress conditions at their natives. Not that the lives here are much better, but the destination allows them to survive. In such backdrop we have to look at the conditions of their children in the destinations. Next section is devoted to that.

Section - 3

Situation of children in the sample migrant households

“Dharmeshwar Modi (13) a tribal boy from Assam was initially left with his uncle at home when the parents decided to settle down at Tamil Nadu for work and survival. When they arrived at Erode Junction, they were surprised to notice that Dharmeshwar also travelled in the same Coach along with them without their knowledge, because he don't want to live without his parents at home. He was regularly going to school up to 7th Standard in their home at Nagaon district in Assam. When he landed in Erode, he found that the life is strange to him and felt difficult mainly with the language. His parents have joined in a spinning mill at SIPCOT Area in Erode leaving him in their place of stay. For his parents too it was difficult to cope up the new environment and failed to consider continuing his education. He was just wasting his time in chatting with peers, playing and sleeping”

“Later, his parents considered that Dharmeshwar can work and earn to supplement the family income and he was sent for work at a Bakery for Rs. 2000 as wages per month. But this was never paid to him except food. Therefore he stopped going to work. He is interested to continue his studies if the medium of teaching is in Hindi. There is no such facility around his living area and hence he still remains out of school. During the lock down time, the family starved and used to have only one or two meal in a day, that too borrowing from a provision shop nearby. They managed to live with the support of relief material supplied by NGOs and Volunteers occasionally. Expecting the ordeal to be over soon, they did not leave for their home during the lock down period. Thus because of migration Dharmeshwar lost the opportunity for education and this terribly cripples his future”.

While interstate and intra state migration is growing and the number of migrants is very significant as quoted in the introduction chapter of this report, migrant children remain highly neglected, and official data about them are scanty and negligible. These children exist, almost invisible, in all cities. This study attempts to understand the situation of children of migrant workers in the study area.

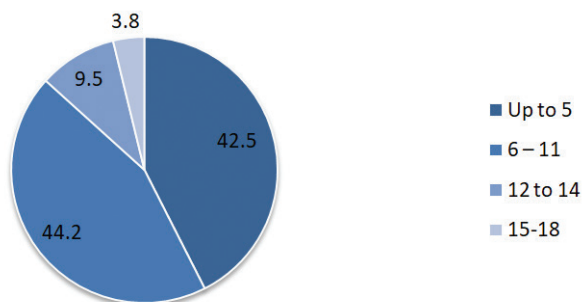
As already mentioned this study has covered 304 migrant families (81 in Coimbatore, 74 in Erode and 149 in Tiruppur districts). The total population covered is 1090 of which children below 14 constitute 42% and children below 18 years consist of 43.4 % of the total population covered. Table 15 shows the number and proportion of children in different age groups across the sample households in the three districts.

Table 15 District wise distribution of children by age group								
Age group	Coimbatore		Erode		Tiruppur		Total	% to total
	Pop.	% to total	Pop.	% to total	Pop.	% to total		
Up to 5	45	14.8	64	23.8	92	17.8	201	18.4
6 – 11	76	24.9	40	14.9	93	18.0	209	19.2
12 - 14	16	5.2	10	3.7	19	3.7	45	4.1
15-18	5	1.6	4	1.5	9	1.7	18	1.7
Total Pop. of all ages	305	100.0	269	100.0	516	100.0	1090	100.0

As already mentioned, most of the migrant workers being very young (very low median age of population as mentioned in section 2), the sample households are children intensive. Table 15 shows that nearly 42 % of the sample population consists of children below 14 years. The trend is almost similar in all the three districts. For the same reason of low median age, the population of children in the age group 15 to 18 is only 1.7%. (It ranges from 1.5 to 1.7% in the three sample districts).

If we just take the children below 18 alone (473) children below 5 years alone constitute 42.5% and another 44% are in the age group of 6-11. Of the total children, children in the age group of 15-18 constitute only 3.8% (see Fig.9). About 13% of all children are above 12 years range.

Fig 9: Distribution of children in various age groups (%)



High proportion of children being in the age group of up to 14 years, it brings to the focus about the rights of the children to health care, survival, development and protection. Thus,

this section is presenting the actual situation of children in terms of their access to survival, development and protection.

3.1. Access to immunisation for the children of Migrants:

As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) - 4 (2015-16), the total coverage of BCG vaccination was 91.7% and the coverage of full immunization was 61.7% in India and in Tamil Nadu state it has been 94.9% and 69.7% respectively. While Tamil Nadu is far ahead of many other states in immunisation coverage, we need to see whether the Children of migrant workers get the same access.

Earlier studies on access to immunisation for children of migrant population have revealed that the access to immunisation is less to migrants compared to settled local population. Yadlapalli S. Kusuma¹ et. al. 2010, have studied the access of migrant population to immunisation coverage in Delhi with a sample of 746 mothers scientifically selected from different locations, The study found out that disparities in health conditions and health care utilization are evident between natives and migrants, as well as between recent and long-term residents, who are marginalized and vulnerable.

According to Kusuma, “the children of recent rural–urban migrants are at risk of not being fully immunized because of the livelihood insecurity and alienation of their families. Hence, making the system responsive particularly to vulnerable, socio-economically disadvantaged migrants would help in achieving full immunization coverage. Investing in education and socio-economic development, providing secure livelihoods and equitable services are also important for improving and sustaining full utilization of immunization services”. “Along with migrant status, several individual-, household- and system-level factors are important in explaining the differences in immunization status. Despite availability of services (maternal and immunization services) and better coverage of immunization in Delhi, recent migrants’ children were not adequately immunized. The newly migrated are faced with the challenge to survive in an environment with a high cost of living and the difficulty of adapting to a new sociocultural environment”.

Abiyemi Benita Awoh & Emma Plugge (2016)², based on a systematic review of studies done on immunisation coverage of migrant children including in India, concluded that Rural Urban Migrants (RUM) were significantly less likely to be fully immunised compared

1 Yadlapalli S. Kusuma Rita Kumari Chandrakant S. Pandav Sanjeev K. Gupta, 2010, “Migration and immunization: determinants of childhood immunization uptake among socioeconomically disadvantaged migrants in Delhi, India” Yadlapalli S. Kusuma Rita Kumari Chandrakant S. Pandav Sanjeev K. Gupta first published: 19 October 2010, November 2010, *Tropical Medicine and International Journal – An European Journal*, Volume 15, Issue no. 15, Pages 1326-1332 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-3156.2010.02628.x>

2 Abiyemi Benita Awoh & Emma Plugge, 2016, “Immunisation coverage in rural–urban migrant children in low and middle-income countries (LMICs): a systematic review and meta-analysis”



with urban non-migrants in all studies. Migration is an issue of growing global health importance and the majority of migrants come from and remain in Lower Middle Income Countries. This highlights the urgent need to address inadequacies in the effective delivery of vaccinations to rural urban migrants. Failure to ensure adequate immunisation coverage in RUMs could have far-reaching adverse consequences.

Other studies conducted by Pragya Kumar, et.al. (2020)³, among migrant brick kiln workers in Bihar and Latika Nath, et.al. (2015)⁴ among 1170 children in 101 migrant sites in Hardwar(Uttarakhand State), have also concluded that the immunisation coverage

, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, Volume 70, Issue 3 March 2016. <https://jech.bmj.com/content/70/3/305>

3 Pragya Kumar, Alok Ranjan, Dhananjay Kumar and Sanjay Pandey (2020), “Factors associated with Immunisation coverage in children of migrant brick kiln workers in selected districts of Bihar, India”, *Indian Journal of Community Health*, March 2020.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342347800_Factors_associated_with_Immunisation_coverage_in_children_of_migrant_brick_kiln_workers_in_selected_districts_of_Bihar_India_Corresponding_Author_Citation_Article_Cycle

4 Latika Nath, Prabhdeep Kaur, Saurabh Tripathi, 2015, “Evaluation of the universal immunization program and challenges in coverage of migrant children in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India” *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 2015, Volume : 40, Issue : 4, Page : 239-245 . <http://www.ijcm.org.in/article.asp?issn=0970-0218;year=2015;volume=40;issue=4;spage=239;epage=245;aulast=Nath>

among the migrant children are low. Pragyakumar, et.al., have stated that while routine immunisation coverage increased it is low among migrant brick kiln workers. Poor reach of the immunisation system is said to be one of the important reasons. They recommended specialized efforts to reach out health care delivery services for marginalized population. Latika Nath et.al., have cited the reasons for poor immunisation coverage among migrant children as lack of awareness, belief among the migrants that the children should only be vaccinated in their home districts, inadequate supervision of immunisation, improper tracking of dropouts, lack of prelisting of migrant children, lack of incentives for ASHA workers and poor cold chain maintenance.

In our sample households 43% children are below the age of five, but majority of the households have said that they don't have access to immunisation. Out of 304 households, 171 households (about 56%) have said that they don't have access to full immunisation of their children. Tamil Nadu being in the forefront of full immunisation coverage, the issue of full immunisation for children of migrant workers is to be tackled on an urgent basis to prevent preventable diseases. (See fig.10).

Fig 10: Migrant children having access to full immunisation (% of households)



3.2. Access to Early Childhood Care and Development Services

“Kishore is a 27 years Interstate Migrant living with his family in Tirupur. He has a 3 years old girl child. He is residing in a hut type of house in a private compound. There are totally 13 houses in in this compound with 5 another Interstate Migrant families. There are around 7 to 8 children who are at the age of going to pre-school (Anganwadi), but no one is actually attending. Kishore feels that Anganwadi is too long from his house and feel unsafe to send his child to anganwadi. Both parents among his neighbours are working and they all feel it is unsafe to send their children to anganwadi and school in long distance. They will not be able to bring them back to home after the centre closes, so they don't want to child to move out”.

Quoting worldwide evidence UNICEF has said that “What happens during the early years is of crucial importance for every child’s development. It is a period of great opportunity, but also of vulnerability to negative influences. Many children do not reach their full human potential because of their families’ income status, geographic location, ethnicity,

disability, religion or sexual orientation. They do not receive adequate nutrition, care and opportunities to learn...It is their right to develop as well as to survive. Good nutrition and health and consistent loving care and encouragement to learn in the early years of life help children to do better at school, be healthier, have higher earnings and participate more in society. This is especially important for children in poverty. A good foundation in the early years makes a difference through adulthood and even gives the next generation a better start. Early years of childhood form the basis of intelligence, personality, social behaviour, and capacity to learn and nurture oneself as an adult⁵.

Most studies on early childhood development show that the brain development is most rapid in the early years of life. If the quality of stimulation, support and nurturance are not adequate, child development is seriously affected. If these services are adequately provided to children, especially for the disadvantaged children, that leads to improvements in children's survival, health, growth, and cognitive and social development. This also makes the children more successful in schools.

From the materials presented in section 2, the lives of migrant workers are so precarious, characterized by low wages, insecure jobs, harsh recruitment regimes and economic vulnerability. With this background children of migrant workers also remain vulnerable and this study has realised the poor extent of access to early childhood development services for the migrant children. A study undertaken between May 2017 and January 2018 at five construction sites in the city of Ahmedabad with 131 children of migrants below the age of 5 by Divya et.al.,⁶ concluded that under nutrition was highly prevalent among the children: stunted (40.5%); wasted (22.1%); and underweight (50.4%). Common factors across parents are long hours of work and lack of childcare provision at the worksite, inability to take breaks or lack of space impairing infant feeding practices, lack of dietary diversity at home, poor hygiene and sanitation, and economic inability to seek healthcare. It is further said that the policies and programs seeking to address under nutrition, a critical challenge in India, must pay ---attention to the specific needs of migrant children.

CMS Social (2015)⁷ has undertaken an empirical study in six states namely, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Punjab and Karnataka and reported that, while 75 per cent households used to send their children to Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) at native place, only

5 UNICEF, 2013, "Why Early Childhood development" https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index_40748.html

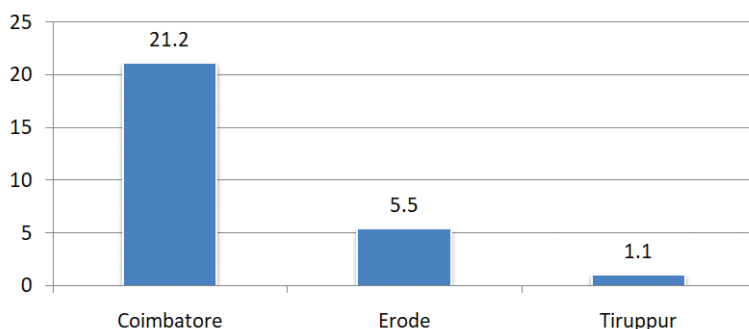
6 Divya Ravindranath, Jean-Francois Trani & Lora Iannotti, 2019, Nutrition among children of migrant construction workers in Ahmedabad, India, *International Journal for Equity in Health* volume 18, Article number: 143 (2019) <https://equityhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12939-019-1034-y>

7 CMS Social – Mapping Progress in Development Sector, 2015, "Status report on School participation and availing of health and nutrition services for children of migrant labourers," Study done on behalf of NCPCR, Saket, New Delhi 110017 Jan 2015. <https://nipccd-earchive.wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Status%20Report%20on%20School%20Participation%20>

a little more than one-fourth sends at destination. The AWCs takes care of the children below 6 years without burdening parents for additional expenses. While the AWC coverage of children was better in Gujarat with 52% of the children, it was only 15% in Delhi, 18% in West Bengal. In Delhi the coverage was only 12% among the children of short term migrants. Although the average distance of Anganwadi Centre is about one kilometer from the place of residence but two-third of the migrant population is not availing the services at AWC at the destination. It is mentioned that the absence of domicile documents deprives young children from migrant families of early child care services such as vaccinations and essential nutrition that is available to the local population through Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

Current study has shown that out of 176 children in the age group of below six years only 11 children have access to AWCs. Overall only 6.3% of the children in our sample migrant families have access to AWCs. Of the three districts Coimbatore district has a relatively better situation with 21.2% migrant children having access to AWCs. Other two districts the coverage is very poor (see Fig. 11).

Fig 11: Children in the early years having access to AWCs (%)



Most of the parents felt that it is not safe for young children to be sent to long distances for AWC and there is no one near their residence. Moreover when the parents are at work there will be no one to bring the children back home from the AWCs.

3.3. Education Status of children of the migrants

“Kumar is a 42 years old Interstate Migrant from Bihar, living with his family in Coimbatore. He is working in Prema Spinning Mill as Checker. He is now living with his Wife – Rani (39) and 4 daughters viz., Sarojini (20), Madhumita (17), Subasmita (15), Monalisa (14). There are around 8 to 12 children who are at the age of going to school in his vicinity, but no one is enrolled. Kumar says “we are suffering from poverty, we are filling our stomach only because our children also working along with us”. And he also added that his children studied in Bihar and cannot continue here due to

and%20Availing%20of%20Health%20&%20Nutrition%20Services%20for%20Children%20of%20Migrant%20labourers.pdf

language difficulty. Kumar's 3 daughters are now working in spinning mill along with her mother and father. Kumar says "We have no access to Public Distribution System. We have to buy our provisions from private shops which costs us much more and my children help us to run a family by working. I have 4 girl children and I have to get them married to good men, I need to save money for them."

Right to Education Act, 2009, has provided free and compulsory education for all children from 6 to 14 years, with the necessary improvement in the infrastructure to achieve this. However, it still remains a distant dream to many vulnerable sections of the population including migrant workers. Though inter-state migration has become a phenomenon in the context of India, there is no adequate arrangement to provide basic education to the children of migrant workers in their destinations. UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report 2019 points out that most countries including India are a long way from guaranteeing education for migrant children. A 2013 Survey by the NGO Aide et Action and Bernard van Lee Foundation⁸, had found that 80% among migrant children living in worksites don't go to school. The survey was held among 3500 migrant households across seven cities – Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Guwahati, Patna and Bhopal. The study also found 40% of the children working in hazardous occupations like construction and stone crushing, 90% were excluded from benefits available under the government's Integrated Child Development Services scheme (ICDS). As per the 2013⁹ UNESCO report, migrant children drop out because the academic year overlaps with the seasonal migration cycle from November to June. Because of this, children who enrol in school in their hometowns in June, tend to drop out by start of the migration season in November. If the child enrolls in a different school in her/his host city, she may have learning difficulties because of differences in curriculum and language.

A case study done by Archana K Roy, et.al.(2015),¹⁰ based on data collected from thirteen construction sites of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh and nine villages in Bihar revealed that among the children accompanying their migrant parents to the construction sites, 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.

CMS Social (2015)¹¹ study has stated that "the Enrolment & retention of children in the age group of 6-14 years in schools is the major challenge. There is a huge expansion of formal

8 *Aide et Action & Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2013, "Young Migrants at worksites" study in 7 cities of India, 2013 https://bernardvanleer.org/app/uploads/2015/12/ECM121_Children-of-seasonal-migrant-workers.pdf*

9 *UNESCO, 2013, op.cit.*

10 *Dr Archana K Roy, Pappu Singh and Prof. UN Roy, 2015, "Impact of Rural-Urban Labour Migration on Education of Children: A Case Study of Left Behind and Accompanied Migrant Children in India", Space and Culture, India 2015,2:4. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294121027_*

11 *CM Social (2015) op.cit.*

and non-formal systems of schooling have taken place, but still a good number of children in the age group of 6-14 years are still out of school in different states and especially among vulnerable groups like the migrant population”. Though there are schools available as per the RTE Act (Primary school within 1 km and upper primary school within a distance of 3 kms., due to place of stay/work being on the outskirts or yet to develop areas, families of construction Workers reported ‘no school in the vicinity’. Their study covered 2560 migrant families in five states working in different sectors; there were 565 migrant households with school going age children. Of these 565 households, around 41 per cent did not send their children to school at the native place. After migration, still around 72 per cent of these households have not enrolled their children in any school at the destination. On the one hand there is lack of initiative among parents due to various reasons (including child taking care of younger siblings or children help their parents in their work) and there is reluctance among the schools to enrol them citing lack of supporting documents at the place of destination. Around two-third of the respondents are not aware of RTE Act and its provisions.

The trends mentioned above is also observed in the current study done during 2019- 20. In our sample there were 209 children in the age group of 6 – 11. Of these children only 110 children are enrolled in local schools. This amounts just to 53% of all children. 47% of children in this age group are losing their right to education because of various reasons. There are also a few positive cases like Himanshu Shardhar (16) who belongs West Bengal. He too migrated with his parents to Tamil Nadu for survival. Though he has studied up to 6th standard in Kolkata in Bengali medium, because of determination to continue his studies, he is now studying in 9th standard in Tamil Medium School here. Enrolment of children in the age group of 6-11 is relatively better in Coimbatore district with about 60% and in Erode and Tiruppur districts it is lower than 50%. Those children who are admitted in school belong to migrant families that have been here for quite some time, in most cases. Enrolment of children is poor among the recent migrants. (See table 16 for the enrolment status of migrant children in different age groups).

Table 16 Number of Children of migrant families enrolled in school and proportion of them						
	6 - 11 years			12 to 14 years		
	Total Children	Children Enrolled in school	% of enrolment	Total Children	Children Enrolled in school	% of enrolment
Coimbatore	76	46	60.5	16	6	37.5
Erode	40	19	47.5	10	4	40.0
Tiruppur	93	45	48.4	19	15	78.9
Total	209	110	52.6	45	25	55.6



There are 45 children in the age group of 12-14 in our sample households and out of this only 56% are in school. This proportion is much lower in Coimbatore district with just 37.5%. While it is 40% in Erode district, the enrolment of these age group children is better in Tiruppur district with nearly 79%. (See Table 16)

There are households among the migrants who retain children at home for sibling care and not enrolling children if the school is at a distance that cannot be safely covered by the children. There is reluctance of schools to admit migrant children without necessary documents. Children of migrant families are also afraid of bullying by the local older children. Language is another major problem for reluctance in admitting the children in schools. Though there are some ad-hoc efforts by the government is providing education to migrant children, there is no systematic policy and efforts on this.

3.4. Children in Labour

As per Census 2011¹², there were 39.8 million children in the age group of 0-14 and another 20.4 million children in the age group of 15 -19 among migrants. About 0.45% of the children among 0-14 age group (1.78 lakhs) and among 15-19 nearly 5.4% (11 million) were in work/ employment while a negligible percentage among them (less than 0.1%) per cent is engaged in business. Thus adolescents migrating for work are significant in India. In Tamil

¹² Census of India, 2011, D- series tables, Table 11. https://censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/D-series/Tables_on_Migration_Census_of_India_2001.aspx

Nadu, Textile industry is known for employment of adolescent children. This sector is the important source of employment for over 90% of the migrants in the study area of Tamil Nadu.

There have been a number of studies carried out in the recent past to bring out the exploitative conditions of adolescent workers, especially girls working in the textile industry in Tamil Nadu, in our study area¹³. Freedom Fund report¹⁴ quoting a survey conducted among 1,574 spinning mills in Tamil Nadu mentioned there were approximately about 224,000 women workers. The survey found that an estimated 80% of the women workers were under 18, and 14% - 20% were less than 14 years of age. As per Deccan Chronicle (2016), 75 per cent of the workers are below 18 years and 90 per cent of them are migrant workers in the textile industry in the Coimbatore-Erode-tiruppur belt in Tamil Nadu, the majority are girls in the 15-18-year age group¹⁵. Other studies have also shown that 10 - 20% of the workers on the 'schemes labourers' are children. Freedom Fund Report has stated that, "given the conditions described above, and that all the studies reviewed found that the majority of workers are under 18 and that a high proportion of mills have their workers in closed hostels, then a very rough estimate of 100,000 workers in conditions of modern slavery would be conservative.

13 *Indian Workers in Domestic Textile Production and Middle East based manufacturing , infrastructure and construction – Averite Research and Advocacy initiative, A Regional report June, 2010; Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women, Public Hearing on Sumangali Thittam in industries, 2009; CEC, Slavery and Production Markets of India, 201, New Delhi; Mr. K. Narayanaswamy & Mr. M. Sachithanandam, Study to understand the situation of Arunthathiyars girls employed under the “SumangaliThittam” Scheme in Erode, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Viruthunagar & Dindigul districts of Tamil Nadu, India, Prepared by Centre for Social Research, Coimbatore & Sathyamangalam, For Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum (AHRF), Tamil Nadu, India, Supported by India, 2009-2010; SOMO - Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations, ICN - India Committee of the Netherlands, Captured by Cotton, Exploited Dalit girls produce garments in India for European and US markets, May 2011; European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ), TRAPPED IN CHAINS, Exploitative working conditions in European fashion retailers’ supply chain; Serene Secular Social Service Society, 2011, Study on the conditions of adolescent girls in spinning mills of Dindigul district; Solidaridad, RESEARCH REPORT: Understanding the Characteristics of the Sumangali Scheme in Tamil Nadu Textile & Garment Industry and Supply Chain Linkages Prepared by Solidaridad-South & South East Asia (nodate); SOMO 2014, Small Steps, Big challenges, Update on (tackling) exploitation of girls and young women in the garment industry of South India, FNV Mondiaal & ICN Paper - March 2014, <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/SmallStepsBigChallenges.pdf>; Annie Delaney& Tim Connor, “Forced Labour in the Textile and Garment Sector in Tamil Nadu, South India strategies for Redress”2016*

14 *Freedom Fund, 2014, Addressing Modern Slavery in Tamil Nadu Textile Industry - Feasibility Study Report Prepared for the Association for Stimulating Know How (ASK) December*

15 *DECCAN CHRONICLE, 2016, ‘75 per cent of textile industry workers are adolescents’ Published Feb 23, 2016.*

In our study no children in the age group of 6-14 are reported to be working. However, only 53% of the children in 6-11 and 56% in 12-14 are enrolled in schools. It is also observed that the parents are afraid of revealing the details of children who are working. It could be because of extra vigil by government agencies as well as civil society organisations against employment of children up to 14 years due to the CLPRA and RTE Acts. However such children are used at home in sibling care and so on, especially the girl children. With regard to late adolescent children in our sample, there were only 18 children in the age group of 15-18 out of 1090 population. As already mentioned most migrant families have young couples and most of their children are also young as seen in Fig. 9 above. Proportion of these children in work indicate that significant proportion of late adolescents are in work (most of the late adolescent children migrate alone and work in textiles staying in hostels and hence there are very few in our sample population of migrant families).

Table 17 Number of children in 15-18 age group and those who are working									
	Total children			In work			% of workers among 15 - 18		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Coimbaote	1	4	5	1	3	4	100	75	80
Erode	1	3	4	0	3	3	0	100	75
Tiruppur	5	4	9	3	1	4	60	25	44
Total	7	11	18	4	7	11	57	64	61

Though the sample is too small to project any percentages of working members in 15-18 category, given the high proportion of late adolescent workers in the textile industry in general, our projections of percentages seems to be near reality. It is seen that 61 per cent of all children in 15-18 age group are in work (Table 17). It is highest in Coimbatore and Erode districts with 80 & 75 per cent respectively. It is showing 44% for Tiruppur district. Among females in the households, there is a tendency to mention that they are above 18. But in many cases it is observed that they look below 18. Early marriage is rampant in those source states from where they migrate. Thus, though they are married many are still below 18 and reported to be working.

3.5. Emerging issues of children of migrants

Only 56% of the migrant households have access to full immunisation for their children. Tamil Nadu being in the forefront of full immunisation coverage, the issue of full immunisation for children of migrant workers is to be tackled on an urgent basis to prevent preventable diseases.

Out of 176 children in the age group of below six years among the migrant families, only 11 children have access to AWCs. Overall only 6.3% of the children in our sample migrant families have access to AWCs. There is a need for policy intervention to provide access to all eligible migrant children access to early childhood services.

Suleka (17) is another Tribal from Assam. Education was a dream to her. Ever since her 11th age, after five years of schooling, she used to work in a brick kiln and earn Rs.130/- per day. Later, with her parents she migrated and settled at Erode, 2 years ago when she was 15 years old. After arrival she joined a Spinning Mill at Erode SIPCOT as a machine operator. Her resolution is to support her family to clear the outstanding debt of Rs. 25000/-. She has no interest towards studies. At the spinning mill, she earned Rs. 7000/- per month. When she was working in the mill she fell in love with one of her coworker, Raju (21) who belong to her native place and married him while she was just 16 years old. She is already carrying a child and became one of the teen mothers in the country, in spite of being ignorant of Sexuality and reproductive Rights, Child Rights or health issues. As of now her dream is to build her own house. During the lock down period, it was very difficult for her to access periodical medical checkups. Besides her husband was abandoned of work for 2 months and become to suffer more. They used to borrow money and provision from the neighbors and the provision shop as well.

Only 53% of all children of migrants in the age group of 6-11 were enrolled in schools during the survey. Among children in the age group of 12-14 only 56% of them were enrolled in schools. Worst affected are the recent migrants. This problem is aggravated because of the pandemic situation and children were leaving back home along with their parents. Once they return their schooling is to be ensured and those who are out of school there is a need for policy intervention to bring them into schools.

Though no one has reported among the children below 14 years of the migrants, 61 per cent of all children in 15-18 age group are in work It is highest in Coimbatore and Erode districts with 80 & 75 per cent respectively.

There is a need for policy decisions and action plan for correcting the above anomalies for children to make them realise their rights. Next section is devoted to the suggestions for policy advocacy.

Section 4

Summary of findings and policy recommendations

4.1. Summary of findings

In this study we have looked at the general conditions of migrant workers in the three districts and the conditions of children in terms of their access to basic rights. The following are the summary of what we have found out from the study.

- Majority of the migrants working in the study area are from Bihar, Odhisha and West Bengal and over 75% of them belong to OBC categories. However, most other studies on migrant labour, including the ones on the intra-state migrants, show that most of the migrants are drawn from SC/ST communities. In the current study, most respondents do not want to reveal their caste identity, if they are drawn from SC/ST communities, as that will affect their chances of renting a house and getting into more social exclusion in the local communities. Thus the social background mentioned by the respondents in the survey cannot be taken in its face value.
- There are many young children among the migrants who are migrating with their families (About 42% of their population of them consists of children below 14 years). Children below 5 years alone constitute about 18% of their population. Thus, health services in terms of immunisation for preventing preventable disease, early childhood care and education services and access to basic education assumes greater importance for these children. In addition to this, are the issues of child protection to be tackled.
- Literacy rate of population above 5 years among the migrant population is just 52.6% and it is relatively better among males with 57.6% and it is only 46.4% among females. Another about 50% has only 5 to 8 years of schooling. These rates are very poor compared to the literacy rate in the country and in Tamil Nadu state where the literacy rate is 80 per cent of the population as per the 2011 Census. Low literacy rate is one of the reasons for low work participation rate among women.
- Almost all the sample migrant households have said that they are forced to migrate because of lack of employment, low wages and poverty in their native places. Many of them have mentioned that the combination of above reasons forced them to migrate



to a place where they can get employment and relatively better wages so that they can survive.

- Current study also revealed that over 98% of the migrants have come to the destination through their friends and relatives. Only 1.3% of them have said that they migrated through contractors.
- Five per cent of migrants have migrated into the sample districts in less than one year and a majority of them, 67.4 per cent, have moved here in last 1 to 5 years. Another 14.5 per cent of them have moved here between five and ten years before. The remaining 13.4 per cent have been here for more than 10 years. There are also migrant families who have been here for more than 20 years (2.6% of the sample). The trend shows that earliest migration of workers into this region started in Coimbatore district.
- Among the migrant population in the sample, Male WPR is 52%, female 17% and total population 36%. Female WPR seems to be very low among migrant families compared to All India and Tamil Nadu. This could be because most of the females in the migrant families are young mothers busy caring for children. (However, most of the girl workers who migrated alone to work in textile sector, are in the hostels inside the industrial premises)

- Migrant workers are mainly working in textile industry sectors of garments and spinning mills. To a small extent they are also into other industries like, iron & Steel, power looms, plastic manufacturing, tyre industry and so on. An insignificant proportion of them are into brick kilns and lime kilns (Erode) and trading (petty shop, pani puri selling and dry nuts selling (Coimbatore), Textile industry is the mainstay for both male and female workers.
- Housing is a major problem for the migrant workers. It is found out in the current study that only 6.5% of the migrant families are living in the accommodation provided by the employer (in line housing). In Tiruppur district only few of the migrant households are living in company accommodation. 81 % of them were living in rented accommodation in slums (unplanned areas). It is surprising to note that about 12.5% of the migrants are living in open spaces with something called a house with plastic and tarpaulin roofs. The situation of housing is similar in all the three districts surveyed. Most of the migrant families are living in accommodations without adequate/proper toilet, bath facilities and water supply. By spending 30 to 40 per cent on house rent they are not able to save enough for visiting their home frequently.
- While many migrants stayed backed during Covid 19 lock down, many others have left for their natives with huge sufferings. In spite of such sufferings now migrants are returning to their work places, showing their distress conditions at their natives. Not that the lives here are much better, but the destination allows them to survive.
- Only 56% of the migrant households have access to full immunisation for their children. Tamil Nadu being in the forefront of full immunisation coverage, the issue of full immunisation for children of migrant workers is to be tackled on an urgent basis to prevent preventable diseases.
- Out of 176 children in the age group of below six years among the migrant families, only 11 children have access to AWCs. Overall only 6.3% of the children in our sample migrant families have access to AWCs. There is a need for policy intervention to provide access to all eligible migrant children access to early childhood services.
- Only 53% of all children of migrants in the age group of 6-11 were enrolled in schools during the survey. Among children in the age group of 12-14 only 56% of them were enrolled in schools. Worst affected are the recent migrants. This problem is aggravated because of the pandemic situation and children were leaving back home along with their parents. Once they return their schooling is to be ensured and those who are out of school there is a need for policy intervention to bring them into schools.
- Though no one has reported among the children below 14 years of the migrants, 61 per cent of all children in 15-18 age group are reported to working. Proportion of working children among 15-18 is highest in Coimbatore and Erode districts with 80 & 75 per cent respectively.



- There is a need for policy decisions and action plan for correcting the above anomalies for children to make them realise their rights. Next section is devoted to the suggestions for policy advocacy.

4.2. Policy framework for reaching entitlements to the children of migrants

Most of the categories of migrants, whether seasonal, short term or long term, suffer from vulnerabilities due to their status as migrants. As seen in the introduction section, their numbers are very large. But their invisibility is exposed by the absence of data on them. It is imperative that social protection programmes are designed and implemented to deal with the specific vulnerabilities of the migrants, including their children. It is essential for the governments to reach its development goals and commitments to the international community, especially on the latest SD Goals. Without addressing the issues of migrants which is a significant and huge section of the population in India, it is not possible to achieve the SDGs. Though many social protection programmes that are currently announced are based on the rights and entitlements of the people (e.g. food security act, right to employment and so on), with varying degrees of implementation, migrants being vulnerable, weak and dispersed, are not able to access these benefits or exercise pressure on policy making in the context where there is no coherent policy for the internal migrants in India. One main reason for this is that the migrants are not recognised as local citizens.

Thus, the rights based legislations must provide strong responsibilities to governments to reach out their entitlements to the migrants.

It is also seen at present because of the pandemic situation, there is no information or data on the internal migrants in India, though the census of India 2011 revealed the magnitude of this. No state government maintain any registration process of all migrants coming into the state and record of intra-state migrants, especially the labouring people. So is the situation of their children and as a result these children are deprived of their rights and entitlements. A system should emerge in such a way to ensure that the most vulnerable migrant workers are not excluded from identification, and access in all entitlements. This requires an action plan for each programme based on ground level information from local teams and partners. It requires developing a Multi-Pronged strategy to address diverse needs of migrants and their children. Any policy for the migrant workers should start with making them visible with some identity. Following is the policy framework suggested to protect the rights of children of migrants.

4.3. Policy recommendations

1. Identification. Registration of Migrant Labour Families

- Creation of a Data base on the number of migrant families including children and their profile at every district by making the district administration, employers responsible for this.
- Registration of migrants to be made mandatory both at the home state and the host state.
- All the employers should furnish the details of the migrant Labour families to the District Administration in a prescribed format as a pre-condition to the issue/renewal of license.
- Identity card or a smart card should be given to all the head of the migrant Labour family, recognise the multi-locational nature of the citizenry, to enable the family to access the benefits of the Public distribution system, Health Care, early childhood care and education and school education.
- Consensus between states on the basic principles of portability of social Protection entitlements to migrant workers should be made mandatory by the government of India.
- Identity Cards may be issued to the children of migrants (below the age of 14 years) to enable the child to access education both at the destination and in the Home State

2. Early Childhood Care Services

- Based on the registration details of migrants and prelisting of children eligible for, provision and enrolment in Anganwadi for all the children need to be ensured. If necessary sub centres are to be provided near the migrant locations (In its orders of 2001, 2002 and 2003, the Supreme Court directed all the agencies involved to strengthen the ICDS and to universalize its access. In its Order of December 2006, the Supreme Court gave clear directive for the 'universalization of ICDS' and for setting up 'Anganwadi on demand').
- Provisions to be made for full Immunization of all the migrant children age group 0-5 years
- It should be made mandatory for the employers to provide Crèches to care for children in the age group 0-3 years, when the migrant mothers are out for work.

3. Education

- Education should be provided for the migrant children up to 14 years as mandated by the RTE and necessary provisions including arrangement for teachers to teach in their mother tongues. SSA to ensure this as per the RTE.
- Education should be provided for the migrant child labour in the age group 9-14 years enrolling them in special schools and mainstreaming them in formal schools. NCLP special schools may be formed wherever there is concentration of out of school migrant children in order to provide them the bridge course enabling them to go to formal schools. **For older children, hostel facilities** should be provided to pursue education in their home districts / state.
- Mobile schools may be arranged for the migrant children in the construction industry.
- SSA should co-ordinate with the source states which send the migrant families here to provide the teachers and teaching and learning materials.
- Transfer certificate should be issued to children to enable them to re-join the school when they returned back to their native state.
- School Councillors may be appointed, one for every hundred children, so that they council the parents and children
- Summer camps, workshops on different themes may be conducted for them

4. Vocational training and continuing education

Vocational Training and continuing education may be imparted to children who cannot be mainstreamed into regular Schools, owing to age factor, so that they could find alternate employment for them. This is essential for late adolescent children who are in the age group of 15 to 18. It is necessary to develop services (reach of iron folic, sanitary

napkins, life skills, counselling and so on) to address the specific needs of adolescents with sensitivity.

5. Enforcement

- Enforcement of labour laws like Minimum Wages Act, Payment Wages Act, Interstate Migrant Workers Act, Contract Labour Act, and compliance of ESI, PF and other social security measures to enhance the living conditions of the migrant families should be carried out periodically and action to be taken on erring employers.
- Enforcement of child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, Juvenile Justice Act, Bonded Labour Act, to prohibit child labour in the working sites.
- The existing District Level Special Task Force should conduct periodical raids and effective punitive action.

6. Social Mobilization

- Widespread awareness should be generated to create a positive climate among the migrants and the community in general. Government officials should be sensitized on child right issues.
- The various target groups such as teachers, parents, public, employers, contractors be sensitized on the issue.
- Village level child protection committees mandated under Integrated Child Protection Scheme should be constituted, activated and make these committees work for realising the rights of migrant children along with other children in all the villages.

7. Capacity Building

- Local bodies should be sensitized to the needs of migrant children
- Labour, Factories, Education, Revenue, Social Welfare, Social Defence, Police, need to be sensitized on the issue of migrant children.
- NGOs, Trade Unions sensitized to address the issue of migrant child labour.
- NCLP and SSA personal need to be sensitized on the issue of migrant children out of school.

8. Social Security for the Migrant Child Labour families.

- All the workers of the migrant labour families may be registered in the Welfare Boards so as to avail the benefits of the board by easing the norms for enrollment.



- Health Services may be extended to all the migrant labour families by the District Administration.
- Proper housing facilities with water and sanitation provided to the migrant workers.

9. Involvement of employer/ Trade Union/ Civil Societies/ NGO

A. Trade Union

- Identify pockets of concentration of migrant working children and report the same to the labour department in the concerned District.
- The Trade Unions may enhance the awareness among the migrant labour families the need to protect the rights of the children.

B. Employers' Associations:

- The Employers' Associations may influence their members not to employ child labour in any of the activities and encourage migrant workers to fully immunise their eligible children and enrol eligible children in early childhood services and educational institutions.
- Provide crèches for the working migrant women to take care of their young children.

- They should also sponsor schemes / programmes to help in rehabilitation of released child labour.

C. Non-Governmental Organization:

- To assist the State / District authorities for successful implementation of Action Plan and to act as a resource base in the district.
- To counsel and motivate parents to send their children to schools.
- To inform authorities about the areas of concentration of children of migrant families and child labour and to assist the Government machinery to identify, withdraw, enrol them in schools and rehabilitate child labourers.
- To liaise with the Government machinery to rehabilitate the released child labour through special schools/SSA schools.
- To create awareness on importance of child rights and to create an enabling atmosphere for exercise of such rights by the children themselves by forming children clubs.

10. Convergence:

In addition to the specific measures under the Action Plan, convergence of the existing services of the following departments, on Government Organizations and other bodies is necessary to implement the Action Plan. These departments are: Education, Labour and employment, Factories department, Social Welfare & ICDS, Social Defence, Municipal Administration, Rural Development, Police, Health, Information and public relations, AD and Tribal Welfare, Revenue, Civil Supplies and consumer Protection, NGOs and CSOs.

An Inter State Committee on Migrant Labour may be formed under the Chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to Government, Labour and Employment, with representation from other relevant departments.

A Migrant Labour Cell may be constituted in the Office of the Commissioner of Labour. This cell may monitor the activities relating to the Migrant Labour including registration of migrant workers.



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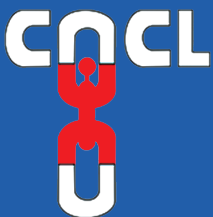
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CACL – Campaign Against Child Labour is launched in 1992 which is the largest network of child rights organizations & individuals, having its chapters in 15 states. CACL is the democratic forum of anti-child labour groups who are committed to the eradication of child labour system through progressive social change by building public opinion, investigation of abuse/exploitation, advocacy, lobbying and monitoring of national and international developments. The Campaign has more than 3000 members. CACL has the network of leadership at National Level, State Levels, and District Levels. The National Conveners can hold the seat for 5 years and the state and district conveners can hold the seat for 3 years.

CACL says that a child is a person who is under 18 years. It says that all children under 18 years should get quality education in their locality; in their mother tongue and it works for total eradication of child labour up to the age of 18 years and making India a Child Labour free country.

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