



UNESCO Report: Migration and Literacy Level

What is the issue?

An UNESCO study found that the literacy levels in rural India suffer due to migration.

What are the findings of the report?

- UNESCO global education monitoring report 2019 has observed that literacy levels in rural households of India dipped with seasonal migration.
- The report brings out the educational challenges thrown up by migration.
- In India, 10.7 million children aged 6 to 14 lived in rural households with a seasonal migrant in 2013.
- Inter-State migration rates have doubled between 2001 and 2011.
- An estimated 9 million migrated between States annually from 2011 to 2016.
- About 28% of youth aged 15 to 19 in these households were illiterate or had not completed primary school.
- About 80% of seasonal migrant children in seven cities lacked access to education near work sites.
- Also 40% are likely to end up in work rather than education, experiencing abuse and exploitation.
- It also warns of the negative impact on education for children who are left behind as their parents migrate.

Does construction sector play a major role in migration?

- The report says that the construction sector absorbs the majority of short-term migrants.
- A survey in Punjab state of 3,000 brick kiln workers in 2015-16 found that 60% were inter-State migrants.
- The migration determines the literacy level and the education received by the migrant's Children.
- Between 65% and 80% of all children aged five to 14 living at the kilns worked there seven to nine hours per day.

- About 77% of kiln workers reported lack of access to early childhood or primary education for their children.

What are the steps taken to address the issue?

- The Right to Education Act in 2009 made it mandatory for local authorities to admit migrant children.
- National-level guidelines were issued, allowing for flexible admission of children.
- Other steps such as providing transport and volunteers to support with mobile education, create seasonal hostels are also taken.
- Further steps to improve coordination between sending and receiving districts and states are taken.

What are the other challenges?

- The report sees the growth of slums and informal settlements — where schools are often scarce — due to migration as a challenge.
- For instance 18% of the students displaced by a riverfront project in Ahmedabad dropped out and an additional 11% had lower attendance
- The report shows there is only one urban planner for every 1,00,000 people in India, while there are 38 for every 1, 00,000 in the United Kingdom.

What can be done further?

- Some of the states in India has devised and implemented particular policies to address the issue arising out of migration.

Some relief

Some States in India have begun initiatives for the welfare of children of migrant parents

- **T.N.:** The govt. provides text-books in other languages to migrant children
- **Gujarat:** It has introduced seasonal boarding schools to provide education to migrant children
- **Gujarat:** It is also collaborating with NGOs to begin online tracking of the children on the move

- **Maharashtra:** Authorities have enrolled volunteers to provide after-school psycho-social support to children left behind by migrating parents
- **Odisha:** It has taken up the responsibility of seasonal hostels run by NGOs
- **Odisha:** It also works with Andhra Pradesh to improve migrant well-being

- These policies can be analyzed and studied by NITI Aayog to be implemented throughout the country.

Source: The Hindu



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