



## **INEVITABILITY OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION WITH RESPECT TO THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANT LABOURERS IN COIMBATORE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study focuses on the inevitability of the right to education for the children of migrant laborers in Coimbatore. It highlights the importance of education in fostering effective citizenship, promoting social justice, and improving individual and national well-being. Despite the recognition of education as a human right, there are challenges in providing quality education to children from migrant laborer backgrounds. The objectives of the study include identifying current education practices, examining awareness of education among migrant laborers, investigating available opportunities for education, and reviewing the merits and shortcomings of government programs and policies related to education. The demographic analysis reveals that the majority of respondents are male, aged between 31-40 years, and have low levels of education. The most common occupations are factory worker, construction worker, and roadside vendor. The majority belong to nuclear families, with three members, and have two earning members in the family. The monthly income is primarily between INR 5,001 to 10,000. The association between the current education practice and socio-economic background variables shows significant relationships with gender, age, occupation, type of family, number of earning members, and monthly spending. The awareness about opportunities available for children in school is generally high, with most respondents acknowledging free education, provision of books, food, dress, and diet meals. However, there are still shortcomings and challenges, such as limited infrastructure, poor teaching quality, economic disparity, and low access to technology. The outcomes of focus group discussions with the children of migrant laborers highlight various issues, including difficulties in obtaining textbooks, involvement in household activities, illness,

and the need for better teacher support and encouragement. Based on the findings, the study suggests several measures to improve the education of children from migrant laborer backgrounds. These include literacy campaigns, parental awareness programs, initiatives to involve parents in monitoring their children's education, inspirational programs, awareness about the Right to Education Act, and teacher training to foster a better understanding of the challenges faced by these children. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for ensuring the right to education for children of migrant laborers. It calls for collective efforts from the government, society, and educational institutions to address the barriers and provide equal educational opportunities for these children, thereby contributing to the overall development of society.

**Keywords:** Inevitability of Right, Education and Children of migrant labourers

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The distinction between animate and inanimate objects in the world is in their ability to sustain themselves. Animated things preserve themselves as individuals and as populations by managing their surroundings and reproduction. Humans perpetuate themselves through upholding their principles and regenerating themselves. Education is the means for achieving this goal. Education is the best way to attain effective citizenship. Citizenship transcends the execution of fundamental political duties. It requires empathy, social awareness, and social justice. The essential purpose of education is the promotion of peace. Those components of education that foster national mistrust and glorify chauvinism and the military must be condemned. Education is essential in the early phases of life; therefore, no nation should disregard its significance. Because educated people may improve the structure of capital, the level of education in a country influence whether or not a nation is formed. Education equips individuals with the skills necessary to assist themselves in escaping poverty. It decreases injustice and social inequality, promotes individual freedom, empowers women, and enables each person to fulfil his full potential. Additionally, it provides the nation with substantial economic benefits and contributes to the nation's continued peace and prosperity. Today, education is a human right that relates to all other human rights.

On the national and international levels, efforts are being made to educate an increasing number of individuals so that they can contribute to the growth of society and maintain their human dignity. The right to education is a core fundamental right and a fundamental freedom. Worldwide, the right to education has been fulfilled. Despite the fact that the majority of nations

have signed and ratified the conventions, few nations have incorporated this right into their national constitutions. India has ratified the "UDHR 1948, the ICESCR 1966, and the CRC 1989." By becoming a party to these international treaties, India accepted the obligations and responsibilities of respecting, protecting, and implementing these terms. Education was considered a means of achieving equality in the social, economic, and political spheres and crucial to the prosperity and growth of the entire nation. Our Founding Fathers understood the significance of the right to education. Educational rights were enshrined in chapter IV of the Directive Principles of State Policy under Article 45, which imposed "an obligation on state governments to promote people's welfare, safety, and security and to provide them with social, economic, and political justice." This duty and the significance of education are also emphasized in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. The purpose of Article 45 was to require state governments "to provide free and compulsory education to all children within 10 years until the child reaches 14 years of age," but despite the government's initiatives, programmes, and schemes, we were unable to meet the requirements of Article 45, with the system and its sluggish authorities being the primary cause.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The right of a child to a quality education should be offered without regard to the child's economic, social, or cultural background. Without educating the public, the goal of the Constitution, namely democracy, would remain an illusion and cannot be achieved. Without acknowledging the right to education, a state cannot fulfill the human right to development. All agree that an educated populace is essential for the prosperity of any nation. Herein lays the necessity to raise awareness so that everyone recognizes the significance of education. The reality, however, is that education is for all members of society and not just a select few. There may be minorities, the destitute, refugees, and intra-country migrants, and they should all be treated equally, according to the "Right to Education" credo. Understanding the significance of the right to education as a fundamental right and basic human right among the children of migrant labourers will be aided by the topic's research. In most situations, migrant workers are disadvantaged individuals who migrate to areas where they may find employment and food. The research is conducted because, without the right to education, all other rights are meaningless. Education is more important than any other right and is the way for people to get their basic

freedom. With the above setting the present study is intended to identify the answers for the following research questions.

1. What is the current education practice undertaken by children of migrant labourers?
2. Are there opportunities available for the children of migrant labourers to undergo proper education?
3. What are the merits and shortcomings of Government programmes and policies relating to education?

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To identify the current education practices undertaken by children of migrant labourers.
2. To examine the awareness of children's education among the migrant labourers.
3. To investigate the opportunities available for the children of migrant labourers to undergo proper education in school.
4. To review the merits and shortcomings of Government programmes and policies relating to education.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Study Area:** The study covers the areas of all the administrative zones (South, North, central, East and West) of Coimbatore city where migrant labourers are found distributed.

**Sampling Procedure:** The population targeted for the study is the migrant labourers having children in the Coimbatore district. The classification of migrant labourers includes the intra country migrants and their job in the study area can be of any nature i.e., they may be working in a company or may be a street vendor.  $\text{Sample Size} = (2.58)^2 \times 0.05 \times (1-0.05) / 0.012 = 316$ . Along with laborers the children of the laborers were also put to focus group discussion to collect data on their opinion about their current education practice and their expectation as a requirement in their future educational life. For this purpose, a sample of 100 children using simple random sampling technique is selected and the discussion was carried on.

**Data Collection:** The study is analytical and descriptive in nature and the study uses primary data for its analyses. The primary data from the sample respondents will be collected through Interview Schedule.

**Statistical Analysis:** Simple Percentage Analysis, Chi-Square Test, Analysis of Variance and Regression

**Pilot Study:** The pilot study is being conducted among 30 respondents to test the reliability of the interview schedule. The Cronbach alpha value attained is 0.835 is better than the accepted criterion of 0.700 and hence the consistency is attained and the interview schedule is modified slightly according to the needs of the study.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. This study was restricted to Coimbatore in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and as a result, the outcomes of this study might not be applicable to other parts of the world.
2. Because the study was limited to migrant labourers having children, the findings are not transferable to other forms of labourers.
3. The study used convenience sampling, which is one method of non-probability sampling. Because of this, the drawbacks of the method are important.
4. The study has all of the subjectivity and personal bias drawbacks associated with qualitative research.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### Demographic variables of the respondents

Demographic variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	191	60.6
	Female	124	39.4
	Total	316	100
Age	Below 30 years	87	27.4
	31-40 years	162	51.2
	41 – 50 years	55	17.3
	Above 50 years	13	4.2
	Total	316	100
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	217	68.67
	School level	96	30.38
	Graduate	3	0.95
	Total	316	100
Occupation	Factory worker	94	29.7
	Construction worker	69	21.9

	Roadside vendor	90	28.5
	Others	63	19.9
	Total	316	100
Type of family	Nuclear family	173	54.6
	Joint family	143	45.4
	Total	316	100
Number of members in the family	Two	75	23.7
	Three	134	42.3
	Four	61	19.4
	More than four	46	14.7
	Total	316	100
Number of earning members in the family	One	95	30.2
	Two	134	42.3
	Three	49	15.6
	More than three	38	11.9
	Total	316	100
Monthly income (INR)	Less than 5,000	36	11.39
	5001 to 10,000	126	39.87
	10,001 to 15,000	118	37.34
	More than 15,000	36	11.39
	Total	316	100

**Gender:**

Out of the total 316 respondents, 60.6% (191) identified as male, while 39.4% (124) identified as female.

**Age:**

The majority of respondents (51.2%) fell in the age group of 31-40 years, followed by 27.4% below 30 years, 17.3% in the age group of 41-50 years, and only 4.2% above 50 years.

**Educational Qualification:**

The largest proportion of respondents (68.67%) were classified as illiterate, followed by 30.38% with a school level education. Only a small percentage (0.95%) were graduates.

**Occupation:**

The most common occupation among the respondents was factory worker, accounting for 29.7%. Construction workers represented 21.9% of the respondents, roadside vendors comprised 28.5%, and the remaining 19.9% belonged to other occupations.

**Type of Family:**

54.6% of the respondents belonged to nuclear families, while 45.4% belonged to joint families.

**Number of Members in the Family:**

Among the respondents, 42.3% had three members in their families, 23.7% had two members, 19.4% had four members, and 14.7% had more than four members.

**Number of Earning Members in the Family:**

42.3% of the respondents reported having two earning members in their families, 30.2% had one earning member, 15.6% had three earning members, and 11.9% had more than three earning members.

**Monthly Income (INR):**

The income distribution of the respondents shows that 39.87% had a monthly income between 5,001 and 10,000 INR. 37.34% had an income between 10,001 and 15,000 INR, 11.39% had less than 5,000 INR, and another 11.39% had more than 15,000 INR as their monthly income.

**Analysis of association between the current education practice and the socio-economic background of the respondents**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The association between the current education practice and the socio-economic background of the respondents is insignificant

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	x <sup>2</sup>	p
Current educational Practice	Gender	11.26	.001**
	Age	1.07	.025*
	Educational qualification	16.98	0.088
	Occupation	52.33	.015*
	Type of family	0.26	.001**
	Number of members	16.04	0.066

	Number of earning members	9.47	.014*
	Monthly income	0.45	0.074
	Monthly spending	0.99	.014*

Chi square analysis to check the association between the current education practice and the socio-economic background of the respondents. It is clear from the table that the demographic variables gender, age, occupation, type of family, number of earning members and monthly spending are significant with the current education practice at 1 percent and 5 percent levels respectively. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that the association between the current education practice and the socio-economic background of the respondents.

#### Awareness about opportunities

Sl. No.	Constructs	Yes	No	Cannot Say	Total
1	Do you know that free education is provided to all the children in school?	250	54	13	316
2	Do you aware that the books, food and dress provided to the students?	294	16	6	316
3	Is diet food provided to the students?	231	66	19	316
4	Does not your child get any opportunity like other children in school?	303	6	6	316
5	Are vitamin medicines provided to your children in need?	269	22	25	316

Source: Primary data

The table 4.20 defines the frequency distribution of Awareness about opportunities available for children in school. It is clear from the table that 250 respondents yes for the construct Do you know that free education is provided to all the children in school?, 294 respondents yes for the construct Do you aware that the books, food and dress provided to the students?, 231 respondents yes for the construct Is diet food provided to the students?, 303 respondents yes for the construct Does not your child get any opportunity like other children in school? And, 269 respondents yes for the construct Are vitamin medicines provided to your children in need?



**Opinions on merits and shortcoming of government policies**

Sl. No.	Constructs	A	N	DA	Total
<b>Merits</b>					
1	Integrated/Holistic education	199	38	79	316
2	Compulsory education upto 14 years	246	32	38	316
3	Free education	256	25	35	316
4	Job opportunities	218	41	57	316
5	Technological input/ICT	177	88	51	316
<b>Shortcomings</b>					
1	Limited infrastructure	205	57	54	316
2	Poor teaching quality	278	22	16	316
3	Economic disparity	250	51	16	316
4	Low access to technology	209	70	38	316

Source: Primary data

The table 4.33 infers the opinion on merits of government policies on education. It is clear from the table that 199 respondents agreed for the construct integrated/holistic education, 246 respondents agreed for the construct compulsory education up to 14 years, 256 respondents agreed for the construct free education, 218 respondents agreed for the construct job opportunities, 177 respondents agreed for the construct technological input/ICT.

the table 4.33 highlights the opinion on shortcomings of government policies on education. it is clear from the table that 205 respondents agreed for the construct limited infrastructure, 278 respondents agreed for the construct poor teaching quality, 250 respondents agreed for the construct economic disparity, 209 respondents agreed for the construct Low access to technology.

**Outcomes of Focus Group discussion with the children of migrant labourers**

The major outcomes of the FGDs are listed below:

1. Almost all schools provide school uniform, textbooks, MDM and shoe in free of cost to the elementary students.

2. The children are facing problems, while getting the textbooks. They get old books instead of new books when the session begins. Because the new books always come to the school at the mid-period of the academic session.
3. Most of the children said that they are absent from school because they take care of their younger brother or sister in their home.
4. Some of the respondents did not go to school, because of their illness.
5. Some students were working for money as per their view and absent from school.
6. Some teachers were helped these children by buying their notebooks, pens, school bag etc.
7. Most of the respondents said that some front-line students were not talking to them.
8. Very few students said that some of their classmates scold them because of their dirtiness.
9. Majority of the respondents said that teachers encouraged them in study. But some of the respondents said that instead of encouragement, some teachers scold them, saying harsh words which hurt them and discouraged them to study.
10. Some of the respondents said that some teachers neglect them when they asked them some questions about their study and gave priorities to the other students.
11. It was revealed that children are absent from the school as they do household activities in the absence of their parents.
12. It was found that due to fear of teachers, some children do not want to go to school.
13. As per the view of the respondents it is said that the children like the mid-day meals served to them in lunch break.
14. It was also revealed that slum children are attending school regularly because of the mid-day meal provided to them.
15. It was found that unhygienic conditions of the home do not allow them to study.
16. It was revealed that due to lack of co-operation of the parents, some children are not interested in their study.
17. Some of the respondents helped their father in his work.
18. Some children were facing the problems of inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions.
19. Majority of the respondents said that they were forced to accept slum tenancy because no other accommodation they found which they could afford.

## **Findings**

- 191 respondents are male.
- 162 respondents are between 31-40 years of age.
- 217 respondents are Illiterate.
- 94 respondents are serving as Factory worker.
- 173 respondents are in Nuclear family.
- 134 respondents have three members in their family.
- 134 respondents have two earning members in their family.
- 126 respondents earn between Rs 5001 to 10,000 as their monthly income.
- 114 respondents spend between Rs 3001 to 6000.
- The  $R^2$  value is .057, that denotes the fact that 57 per cent of changes in opinion is caused by the awareness.
- The Durbin Watson value 1.035 shows that the variables are not suffering from multi collinearity.
- The F value 43.594 ( $p=0.000$ ) is significant at 1 per cent level.
- The null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is a significant impact by the awareness of education on their opinion of government programmes and policies relating to education.
- Almost all schools provide school uniform, textbooks, MDM and shoe in free of cost to the elementary students.
- The children are facing problems, while getting the textbooks. They get old books instead of new books when the session begins. Because the new books always come to the school at the mid-period of the academic session.
- Most of the children said that they are absent from school because they take care of their younger brother or sister in their home.
- Some of the respondents did not go to school, because of their illness.
- Some students were working for money as per their view and absent from school.
- Some teachers were helped these children by buying their notebooks, pens, school bag etc.
- Most of the respondents said that some front-line students were not talking to them.
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- Majority of the respondents said that teachers encouraged them in study. But some of the respondents said that instead of encouragement, some teachers scold them, saying harsh words which hurt them and discouraged them to study.
- Some of the respondents said that some teachers neglect them when they asked them some questions about their study and gave priorities to the other students.
- It was revealed that children are absent from the school as they do household activities in the absence of their parents.
- It was found that due to fear of teachers, some children do not want to go to school.
- As per the view of the respondents it is said that the children like the mid-day meals served to them in lunch break.
- It was also revealed that slum children are attending school regularly because of the mid-day meal provided to them.
- It was found that unhygienic conditions of the home do not allow them to study.
- It was revealed that due to lack of co-operation of the parents, some children are not interested in their study.
- Some of the respondents helped their father in his work.
- Some children were facing the problems of inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions.
- Majority of the respondents said that they were forced to accept slum tenancy because no other accommodation they found which they could afford.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

- It is found that illiteracy of parents affects their children's education. Hence, efforts should be made for literacy campaign in these areas and efforts should be made by the authorities to make different awareness programs about the problems and progress of the children.
- It is revealed from the study that still one fourth of the parents do not care for their child's study. So, steps should be taken by the teachers to make them aware about the importance of children's education.
- It is found that majority of parents do not know about their children's performance. So, the teachers should take initiatives to make the parents aware about their child's performance.
- Most of the children are involved themselves in cooking or takes care of younger sibling or

elder sister's kids. So, they could not go to the school regularly. Hence, awareness should be created among the parents about the importance of education.

- Some slum parents unable to inspire their children to go to the school. Hence the teachers should organize different inspirational programmes such as drama, dance and song to inspire these children to go to the school and the awareness programmes for the slum parents.
- Some parents do not know that the education is the right of all children. Hence, they should focus on how to implement the act in terms of creating awareness among the parents about the RTE Act.
- It is found that the teacher's attitude is not so encouraging towards the children of migrant laborers. Hence, trainings and workshops should be organized for the teachers to create awareness about the causes of poverty, deprivation, urban slums etc. Frequent visit to slum areas, conducting action research in slum areas should be part of content of workshops.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study deals with the inevitability of right to Education of children of migrant laborers. The main purpose was to find out whether the parents are aware about their children's opportunities of having proper education at school and the problems faced by children in the school. Illiteracy is one of the major factors which stands as a hurdle in bringing any positive change in the society. It also includes within its fold the children of migrant laborers of the country in respect of educating them. Even though the Indian Government has launched various programs to meet the basic needs of children, the reality is far short of expectations. The reason is that these policies and plans are not able to encourage the targeted children, due to their below poverty line and illiteracy. The migrant parents are still not aware of the fact that education is their birth right. Although the government had launched various schemes and programmes to make primary education accessible to all children, still the targeted groups are not totally benefitted by such plans and programmes. Thus, it is the responsibility of the government as well as the responsible citizens of the society to bring these slum children on to the mainstream of the system for the progressive development of the society.

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