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Educational Challenges Faced by Migrants Labourers Having Children with Intellectual Disability: A Case Study

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Abstract

In UP significant migrant labour from the states of Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal, faces various socio economic hardship affecting disabled child's education, health and rehabilitation. Such children face a variety of scholastic obstacles when trying to get a basic education. Even if they are enrolled, it might be difficult to retain them. Thus, the study explores the academic challenges faced by migrant parents having children with Intellectual disability. The participant of the case study were parents of child with intellectual disability. The study employed qualitative approach to explore the academic challenges. Non-structural parental interviews and direct observation methods were used to collect data Themes identified (lack of access to formal education, discrimination and social stigma, economic constraints and inadequate infrastructure and facilities) were analyzed and possible solution was discussed.

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Introduction

A significant number of families are moving to developing countries in quest of employment and stability. Growing economic opportunities and rapid urbanization are driving this trend. As to the 2011 census, there are 400 million migrants in India. Various numerous barriers that migrant children face are social prejudice, restricted access to formal education, language problems, and financial limitations. These obstacles further hamper their educational and practical skills.

Right to education is one of the fundamental right of all children in the group of six to fourteen years. The Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 that came into effect on 1 April 2010 ensure that every child including children with disabilities has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in formal school. However even after fourteen years of this Act coming into existence, gaps exist and considerable section of children with or without disability is yet to access education in both rural and urban areas. The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 also provides educational rights for children with disabilities in India. Children with benchmark disabilities have the right to free education until the age of eighteen years.

According to UNESCO (2012), migration is the act of relocating, often requiring a change of home and crossing administrative boundaries set during the migration period. Relocating within a country's boundaries is referred to as internal migration. When migrants have children with intellectual disabilities, their lives become more precarious and challenging. It results in a situation where there are double disadvantages.

Children with special needs and their families may face more prejudice and social isolation because of this twofold disadvantage (Friso & Pileri, 2019). In a study made by, Roy *et al* (2015) investigated how parental labour mobility affected the attendance of children aged 6 to 14 in school and their likelihood of dropping out. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather data from several Varanasi construction spots and Bihar villages. The study concluded that children's education deteriorates when they move for oscillating type of jobs.

The phenomenon of migration has spread throughout the world in recent years. People are moving in huge numbers from villages to towns and from towns to large cities because of improvements in communication and transportation infrastructure (Ansari, 2016). Over the last three decades,

India has seen rising patterns in internal migration. According to Singh and Biradar (2022), the total number of internal migrants rose from 232.11 million in the 1991 census to 314.5 million in 2001 and 455.78 million in 2011. Of the 92.95 million migrant children, 45.9 million are male. This includes children with disabilities, as there are no such data exists (Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2011).

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is both a source and destination state for migrants. According to data from the 2011 Census, over 2.8 million people who were born in other states relocated to Uttar Pradesh, while roughly 13 million migrants left the state. Employment is the main driver of migration to Uttar Pradesh; the majority of migrants come to work in the manufacturing, service industries, and construction sectors. Most of the migrants settle in Lucknow, Kanpur and Ghaziabad (Singh, D., & Biradar, R. 2021).

The Government of India's Ministry of Education started the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001–2002. In 2018, it merged with the former SSA and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) to become the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. Its goal was to provide students between the ages of 6 and 14 free, mandatory primary education in a time bound way.

SSA has a scheme that supports migrant children's education by offering free textbooks, uniforms, mid-day meals, as well as residential and non-residential special training facilities, seasonal hostels, and residential camps during migration periods. Enrolment rates in schools have grown because of government initiatives in India but it is widely believed that children from migrant's family remained deprived off from schooling (Kumar *et al* 2018). Even after many years of implementation, certain aspects of the Right to Education Act pertaining to the education of migrant children remain unfulfilled (Barik & Paltasingh 2024).

When a migrant family member has a disability, their situations worsen. These migrant worker children face a variety of scholastic obstacles when trying to get a basic education. Even if they are enrolled, it might be difficult to retain them. As per the limited knowledge and information of the researcher, there are no research related to the challenges faced by the migrant parents having children with intellectual disability.

There are lack of concern among general public to discuss about this particular issue due to lack of knowledge and interest Hence researcher finds it of an utmost important to deal with the issue that have affected migrant parents with intellectual disability. This paper will delve into the educational challenges and barriers faced by migrants labourers having children with Intellectual Disability and will search for its solution

Research Questions

- What are various educational challenges faced by migrants parents with intellectual disability?
- What are the facilities provided by the government and non-government agencies to such children?

Objectives

- To find out challenges migrants parents facing in education and training of their children with intellectual disability.
- To identify the facilities provided by the government and non-government agencies.
- To find solution to the academic problems faced by the migrant children having Intellectual disability.

Operational Definitions

Challenges: academic obstacles caused to the parents.

Intellectual Disability: it referred to children having IQ less than 70 with deficits in adaptive behavior.

Migrant parents: the parent who migrated from native place to other places in search of job.

Methodology

Research Design

A single subject research design was used to explore about the challenges faced by migrant parents having intellectual disability.

Sampling Method

This study employed purposive sampling method for the study

Participants

The participant of the case study were parents of child with intellectual disability. The father was class 3rd pass from his village in Jharkhand and mother was illiterate. The family selected for study was nuclear in nature with both parent, two elder daughters and their son with ID living together. Thus, there were five members in the family. The father, mother and eldest two sister work as construction labourer at Lucknow. They are living in temporary shed with mud floor. Family had access to electricity and drinking water as they were staying in the premises of construction site. The participating family were originally from Godda, Jharkhand. Although they had 6 acres of land at their native village but the land remains barren due to lack of proper irrigation. Their eldest daughter was sixth pass and younger sister is 4th pass was regular to school in Godda before migration. His son is 6 year old, had delayed developmental milestone, and had history of fits. Parents got him treated by Medical University doctors giving outreach services nearby to his construction site in Lucknow. Medical prescription of the child revealed the details of his diagnosis and medication. His son was diagnosed as severe intellectual disability with epilepsy. Parents got him admitted to nearby primary school in class one but teachers of the school has advised them not to send his child to school due to epileptic problem. They have suggested getting him enrolled in special schools, which cater to special needs of severe disability.

Instruments and Procedure

For the case study, a variety of data gathering techniques was employed, including non-structural parental interviews and direct observation. Similarly, observable data were taken using notes of what was seen during home visits. Thematic analysis was done to identify pattern or themes

Data Collection & Analysis

While the data from the interview's voice tape were verbatim transcribed, the data from the observational notes were carefully reviewed. Transcribed recordings and observational data were combined to provide a clear picture of academic challenges family faces. The following steps were followed for thematic analysis as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006)

Step 1: The data has been analyzed by reading or listening to the recordings that was recorded during interview and transcripts it into verbatim.

Step 2: The researcher analyzed the data by generating the initial codes after reading the transcripts

Step 3: After generating the initial codes, the researcher categorized the words that had been used mostly

Step 4: The researcher analyzed the data by reviewing, modifying and developing for themes.

Step 5: After reviewing, the data researcher then got it refined so that clear definitions for each theme could be generated.

Step 6: After researcher defining the each theme, then connecting the analysis back to the questions and objectives

Ethical Consideration

Informed consent was obtained for the purposes of this study. It contained details about the study's goal, methodology, and confidentiality declaration, which made clear that participants' identities would stay anonymous. Additionally, it stated that participation is optional and subject to withdrawal at any moment.

Findings & Discussion

The objective of the study was to explore the academic challenges faced by migrant parents of children with Intellectual disability. Thematic analysis provided themes which can be primarily categorized into lack of access to formal education, discrimination and social stigma, economic constraints and inadequate infrastructure and facilities. The challenges faced by the migrant's family having intellectual disability are discussed below:

A. Lack of Access to Formal Education

Ensuring equitable access to quality education and appropriate quality education remains a big challenge for children of migrant workers. Families having disability may encounter barriers in accessing specialized educational services.

Class teacher advised the parents to transfer their son to a special school, leaving them confused and feeling helpless. Mother reacted

"If he can't study here, where will he go? We cannot afford special schools. More over special school is nearly 13 kilometer away from here and there are no direct transportation facility to reach there. I don't know what to do now."

Families of migrant workers have several difficulties in this area, many of which are closely related to traditional educational paradigms, such as excessive academic expectations. In order to provide male children better education, the majority of rural migrant workers put in long hours in low-paying jobs (Zhang, 2018). They work hard to give better quality special education and therapeutic services to their male child with disabilities (Safavi & Kumari2022).

B. Discrimination and Social Stigma

Parents of children with intellectual disabilities often face discrimination and social stigma, experiencing exclusion from social activities, encountering negative attitudes or insensitive remarks. Mother further reacted that

"My neighbor do not allow his children to play with my son. They think by playing and mixing with him, their children will be like him."

Mother further added

"I do not go to any one houses here nor attend any social functions mainly because people feel pity about my fate and would talk among themselves that I am paying for the sins done in previous life."

Migrants parents frequently encounter severe social stigma and discrimination, including being viewed as outsiders, accused of taking employment from natives, and subjected to prejudice based on caste, language, and regional identity.

Depending on the nature and degree of their disability, migrant families may experience further prejudice. Mothers with children with impairments face significant social stigma, claim Greeshma & Mnikandan (2021). Most of them expressed dissatisfaction about being excluded from social events or not being allowed to join them.

C. Economic Constraints

Migrant workers face economic constraints like low wages, insecure employment, poor working conditions, and working for long working hours. Migrant parents having intellectual disability often faces significant economic constraints due to high cost of specialized therapies, medical treatment, and special educational needs especially in situation where they are facing multiple hardships.

In Lucknow, there are over ten special schools working for education and training of children with intellectual disabilities. Most of the schools are privately run non-aided schools. The father added

"These special schools are very costly. They charge money for all different therapies and specialized training in addition to tuition fees. They asked for around 1000 rupees a month. So we are forced to keep my child in my home."

Poverty is big problem for schooling of such children. Many children with such issues are not attending schooling because parents cannot afford to send those ((Safavi& Kumari 2021.

D. Inadequate Infrastructure and Facilities

Another major challenges faced by such children is the fact that they may not have access to intellectual disability related support services. It includes therapeutic, medical services. Father added

"My child is having fits in every two or three months and he is in regular course of medication. However, I get medication at subsidized rate but still it cost which is painful."

He further added

"Due to epilepsy, he is not able to speak and understand others instruction properly. Doctor has advised for speech training each day. Speech training for such children are available in clinics and private hospitals but is very costly."

Migrant's settlements and labour camps lack access to basic infrastructure and facilities necessary for schooling and therapy for children with intellectual disability.

Solutions to Educational Challenges of Migrant's Parents having Children with Intellectual Disability

With the passage of the RTE Act 2010, India made great strides toward achieving universal primary education. The nationwide enrolment list has increased as a result of it. The 2020 National Education Policy discusses the requirements of migrant children and incorporates "migrant communities" within its larger framework of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). However, disabled children from migrant families struggle to avail the benefit primary education. Education for children with severe disabilities is covered under the RTE Act. For those who choose it, home-based education is part of it. However, such kids didn't have access to it. These challenges are complex and frequently result from a lack of resources or knowledge. Below are few solutions tailored to address these challenges.

Access to formal Education

- Rights to Education Act and Right to persons with Disability Act should be implemented more efficiently and thoroughly.

- Promote community based rehabilitation model to encourage community ownership, participation of people in education, training and rehabilitation for migrant children as well as to children with disabilities.

Discrimination and Social Stigma

- The issues and academic challenges of migrant children is not a problem of migrant families alone but it is a social problem. A collaborative action from government, non-government and family is essential. Awareness programs for parents and family members should be conducted for their rights, & advocacy.
- Parental training program should be conducted to expose them for better parenting and for promoting education of all their children including children with disability.
- At family level, migrant parents should be provided more psychological support and assistance to help migrant children build up self-confidence and smoothly integrate with other children.

Economic Constraint

Provide financial aid to parents for therapies, treatment and for purchasing of educational materials for children with intellectual disability.

- Help migrant parents find stable jobs to reduce financial stress, enabling better focus for their child education
- Provision for regular health checkup should be made to the migrant's children and their families due to unhealthy living environment in concessional rates.

Inadequate Infrastructure & Facilities

- Government of India should build adequate number of residential schools, mobile schools for migrant's children.
- A bridge school at the worksite or in government school premises may be started by government to provide crèche facility to toddlers, pre-schooling, primary education, health and nutritional services to migrant children. Such schools should promote inclusive education model where children with ID and other disability learn and grow.
- Provide accessible, affordable online resources for parents and children. Children with Intellectual disability may be provided with kits appropriate to their age level as given under ADIP scheme.
- Engage industry houses to sponsor educational programs, residential schools under CSR.
- Collaborate with non-government organizations working in the field of special education and rehabilitation

Conclusion

Overall, the research offers a thorough and comprehensive grasp of the academic challenges encountered by migrant children with intellectual disabilities. The findings highlight how urgently these problems must be addressed by systematic reforms. Such measures are essential for academic integration and success of migrant children and in particular children with intellectual disabilities for their mainstreaming and inclusion.

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