

# Seasonal Migration and Its Influence on Children's Education: A Study from the Select Village from the Santhal Pargana of Jharkhand

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## ABSTRACT

Migration, seasonal or permanent, from one area to another in search of improved livelihoods is a crucial feature of human history (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003).

Talking about seasonal Migration has long been a practice for improving livelihood and risk-coping in rural areas, especially in developing Countries. Shortage of farmland, indebtedness, food insecurity, lack of viable nonfarm activities locally, and the desire to earn additional income are significant reasons for seasonal Migration from the Santhal Pargana region. The lack of availability of resources and livelihood options in the areas of Santhal Parganas has led to the entry of Santhals into the labour market as migrants. The rural migrants, unaware of the fact that seasonal Migration has brought severe negative impacts on the schooling of their children, health care, poor living and working conditions, and also a constant fear of sexual abuse, have chosen seasonal Migration to the districts of west Bengal and another place to be the best option for their earnings and survival. The entry of Santhal women, in particular, is nothing but a survival strategy since staying at home could mean starvation. Women being part of such Migration, it could be said that the whole family is on the move, and since there is no one behind to look after the children, children cannot be held back in the absence of the family members.

Though Migration is a coping mechanism, the situation in rural areas does not seem very upgrading. With temporary or seasonal

Migration, the moving populations remain undercounted during census count and are often deprived of several fundamental rights meant for them and their development. Children moving out with their parents are deprived of their educational rights. Educational attainment being one of the essential indicators of socio-economic development and a significant drive to economic growth, seasonal family migration from the part of Santhal Parganas division to nearby states has resulted in many children being deprived of School education.

**Keywords:** Migration, Seasonal Migration, Migrating parents, Children's education, Santhal

## INTRODUCTION

Seasonal Migration from the areas of Santhal Parganas is not new. It has always been seen as a coping mechanism for rural livelihood. It occurs due to the lack of livelihood options at the source place. People tend to move out of their native homes to support their income. This seasonal migrant face numerous constraints, such as a lack of political representatives, which makes them an unvoiced population. They are deprived of different entitlements due to their constant move due to seasonal Migration. They remain unrecorded and uncounted many times. In this process of seasonal migration, children either accompanied or left behind become the sufferers.

It is known that migrant children are among the most educationally marginalised in a country like India. And the right to education (Under the RTE act, 2009) of migrant children remain compromised, since seasonal Migration results in the disruption of regular and continued schooling of children, adversely affecting their human capital formation and contributing to the inter-generational transmission of Poverty (UNESCO& UNICEF, 2012). The objective of child rights related to education, and especially the universalisation of education, is yet to be achieved in the rural part of the state Jharkhand, where numbers of children are on the move with their parents every year seasonally, which has drastically affected their education and has caused them to remain out of school and ultimately become a dropout. The problem severely affects the lives of rural children, keeping them from mainstreaming and becoming unvoiced. The children left behind in the source area, in this course of seasonal Migration too, experience the same since there is a nonexistence of duties and responsibilities toward child's care and protection. The effect of poverty, constant Migration to the workplace and the lack of development is the most extreme on children, causing damage to their minds and bodies. It restricts their human capabilities as well as their opportunities. Though the school enrolment rate is often higher, do these children get educated and enjoy their rights? This need to be pondered because, despite the Government's effort to promote education among all sections of society, the accompanied and left behind children of the migrating parents remain deprived of realising it. The Right of children to free and compulsory education (RTE Act) was adopted by Jharkhand in 2011 by specifying its rules and regulations extracted from the original version of the act passed by the parliament. And as RTE is on the verge of celebrating seven years of completion, its performance and implementation have been poor. There may be various other reasons

for the poor performance of the act at the school level. Still, seasonal Migration from the rural areas seems to be one of the drastic reasons for the failure of the action, where children either willingly or unwillingly move out to different places for work, dropping out of school.

Thus, the education issue among the children of migrating parents needs more attention. This should be taken central, and proper educational models and infrastructure should be endowed to address the problem related to their education because their right to education cannot be denied.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

From numerous studies and literature reviews, it has been well understood that the Santhal Migration, like any other study, has been the most studied topic. While going through the literature collected from all the possible sources, including scholarly publications (Journals), news and Magazines, Professional/Trade sources, books /Book Chapters, conference proceedings, Government Documents, Theses & Dissertations, it was found that immense study on tribal Migration has been done encompassing different aspects of problem and situations. That was brought into the light. Every study has a specific objective that has brought justification over the period. Each study provides a different perspective on migration, especially tribal Migration, cause and effect and many other areas, and opinion varies from person to person. Hence, a review of available literature on the subject has been made to have insight into the problem and situations to fill the research gap through the present study.

According to a study by Kalpagam (2006), an exodus of the population from rural to urban centres due to deforestation, heavy pressure on land, lack of irrigation, recurring drought, poverty and unemployment forces labour to move out. India is an agricultural economy, and the labour force depends on agriculture.

Moreover, the rapid growth of the population and their over-dependence on land due to the absence of alternative employment avenues caused deterioration in the available land-man ratio (Kalpagam, 2006). The general causes of Migration in the Indian context are mainly due to the presence of push and pull factors in places of origin to destination. In this process of 'push' and 'pull' in migration, People are largely at stake without their realisation. Rural migrant families are adversely affected, which went on unnoticed for a more extended period, as the study on Migration earlier comprised the observation of the Researchers and the male member's participation only. The researcher later realised this, and later, Arjan De Haan (2006), in his article on Migration, Gender and Poverty: Family as the Missing link?, found Family to be the essential element in the process of Migration. He mentions, "The family dynamics of migration seem to have received less attention". This is surprising as the household or family seems vital to the decision-making process around migration. Family dynamics are essential to how different individuals benefit or suffer from engagement in labour markets and employment."

Regarding the children affected by the seasonal migration process, Smita, 2006, stated that "Migrating children from rural areas face a life of adversity and rootlessness right from infancy". Many are born at worksites, to overworked, undernourished mothers, in dingy, unhygienic dwellings with zero medical assistance. The mother is forced back to work soon after childbirth and has no opportunity to rest and care for her infant.

Goyal, M. 2011, observed that about one-fourth of the child labour working in agriculture and allied activities in Punjab are migrants from the states, viz. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and most of the migrant child workers found were 12-14 years old.

Migrant children are among the most educationally marginalised in India. The

right to education (under the RTE Act, 2009) of migrant children remains compromised, since seasonal migration results in the disruption of regular and continued schooling of Children, adversely affecting their human capital formation and contributing to the inter-generational transmission of poverty (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012)

During the literature review, the researcher could gather information related to research work on seasonal Migration from different parts of the country and west Bengal. Only a few have been done from Jharkhand and the districts of the Chotanagpur Region. Thus, it could be said that significantly less initiative has been taken to research from the Santal Pargana region of Jharkhand. Very few attempts have been made to discover the Migration-related problem affecting the educational development of tribal children. Though many research works have been done, very few have been done on Migration and children, concerning children working in brick kilns and others. Children of agricultural migrants have not been in much focus.

Though many studies have been done in the context of seasonal Migration with different perspectives by different expertise, few studies only focused on seasonal Migration. Very few studies have tried to address the educational issues of affected children. The study's findings may help policymakers formulate more effective policies to deal with the problem of academic vulnerability of affected children.

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The area is selected based on its preponderance of the tribal population. The area is dominated by the tribal, mainly Santal, and massive seasonal migrations have been witnessed for a longer time. As stated earlier, Santals' social and economic development is interlinked with their educational status. It has proved to be the best means for their development but is not reached by the majority of the scheduled tribe for various reasons, and seasonal

Migration is among them. It is essential to identify different barriers to education affecting their educational status.

As per the current update of 2015, Pakur district has a literacy rate of 48.82% respectively, which is less than the average literacy rate of 66.41% of Jharkhand and also the lowest in Jharkhand. So, the basic purpose behind taking this study is to study and understand the socio-economic condition of the seasonal migrants and how seasonal Migration affects children's education. And later, what sort of necessary steps could be taken to deal with the problem of seasonal Migration affecting children's education?

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are to understand the socio-economic condition of the Seasonal migrants from the select village of Santhal Parganas division: to understand the issue of seasonal Migration affecting children's education: and to analyse what necessary steps could be taken to combat the problem of seasonal Migration affecting children's education.

### **METHODOLOGY ADOPTED**

As per the locale of the study, the study has been conducted in the villages of Littipara block of Pakur district of Jharkhand. The Block contains the largest population of seasonal migrants, as recorded by the department of Labour, Pakur, in comparison to any other blocks in Pakur. The study is based on both primary and secondary information. Six villages were taken from three Panchayats (two from each panchayat) for the study purpose. The panchayats were Bandu Panchayat, Fulpahari Panchayat and Surajbeda Panchayat. The villages are Mahulbona and Raghunathpur from Bandu Panchayat, Dho Pahari and Ful Pahari from Fulpahari Panchayat, Baijnathpur and Mohanpur Village from Surajbera Panchayat. The villages in the Littipara blocks have an average population of 400 as per the last census of 2011. These villages

consisted of 20 respondents each. (ten either parents and ten children). So, the number of respondents from the study area was 120. A total of 120 respondents were interviewed with the scheduled questionnaire. The study included three Case studies of children in to have an in-depth understanding of the issues. Their parents' responses were also considered to substantiate the information and comprehend it holistically.

A mixed-method research design was used for the study wherein the Purposive Sampling is used to select the villages, and the respondents were selected randomly.

### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The study "Seasonal migration and its influence on Children's education: A study from the select village from the Santhal Pargana of Jharkhand" conducted in the areas of Littipara block of Jharkhand gave a brief understanding of how seasonal Migration has influenced the education of children at large. The study was based on both primary and secondary data. The data collected from the field have been analysed and tried to understand.

### **Socio-Economic Condition of The Seasonal Migrants**

The socio-economic indicators are important elements in understanding the effect of Migration on rural migrating populations. It helps us know about the prevailing situation due to the occurrence of seasonal Migration as it has an influence on the socio-economic development of both the source as well as in the destination area. Internal Migration is an important factor in influencing social and economic development in India (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2005). The study conducted to know about the socio-economic condition of the seasonally migrating families encompasses most of the important factors such as age, gender, income, education, family pattern, types of occupation and working hours etc. The study included both children as well as their either parents, which was purposive.

The findings from the study have been presented below:

**Table no. 1: Age of the children**

Sl. No.	Age group	Boys	Girls	Percentage
1.	6-8yrs	10	14	40
2.	9-11yrs	12	10	36.67
3.	12-14yrs	4	10	23.33
	Total	26 +	34 = 60	100

Table no. 1 displays the variabilities in the age of both the Migrating children and their either Parents. It can be seen that the age group between 6-8yrs and 9-11 years have the maximum number of migrants, i.e., 40% and 36.67 %, respectively, from the studied respondents.

The age when education, learning and development are the most crucial part of any child's life. It is the base of one's life's formation. These children from the Santhal Parganas region are bounded to migrate along with their parents or are left behind with their immediate relatives or no one. There are several reasons behind this.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is the duty of any country to ensure that all children enjoy their rights, irrespective of their migration status or that of their parent. 'Children and young people move within and between countries in varying circumstances, both voluntarily and involuntarily (UNICEF,2007) . It adds, despite significant data on Migration in general, little exists on the movement of children and young people especially. So, child-centric research is essential, not only to learn how a community could protect the rights and well-being of children but also to learn about the migration journey from children themselves. This paper tries to understand seasonal Migration from a children's perspective. The study area chosen has been purposive, having known the availability of seasonal migrants. The respondents were chosen randomly. The source of information is fieldwork.

**Table No. 2: Age of the Parents**

Sl. No.	Age group	Either Parent (Male)	Either parent (female)	Percentage (%)
1.	16-25yrs	2	8	16.67%
2.	26- 35yrs	14	18	53.33%
3.	36-45yrs	4	14	30%
	Total	20 +	40 = 60	100%

Source: Primary data

### **Education of the respondents**

The socio-economic study includes the status of education among the respondents from the field. Education has a vital role in shaping any community. It gives particular

direction towards the upliftment of mankind. Education among the respondents represents an important factor in the study, as can be seen from the table below:

**Table no.3: Education of the respondents**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of children	No. of Either parent of the children.
1	Illiterate	-	17
2	Primary	60	31
3	Secondary		12
	Total	60	60

Source: Primary data

Table no. 3 represents the information about the education of the respondents (both children and either parent of the children). Most of the respondents have attained primary education. It was seen that even if the children do not go to school or are absent during their seasonal Migration to different workplaces, they have enrolled in

the village primary school. Of the parents, only 17 were found illiterate, who had never visited the school or could not write their names.

As the data were collected directly from the field, it was surprising to see that most of the respondents were female and were found to be illiterate. It was also found that the

larger group have attended primary education and have dropped out due to several reasons, as responded by them. One of the biggest reasons is seasonal Migration to districts of Bardhman for agricultural work because they have been doing this for years. The districts of west Bengal, such as Bardhman and Birbhum, to which these

people from the Santhal Pargana division have been going for ages, are called *Bangla*. So, whenever there is a question of migrating to different workplaces. They prefer migrating to *Bangla*. Besides these, only a few of the respondents were found to have attended secondary education.

Table no. 4: Family Pattern

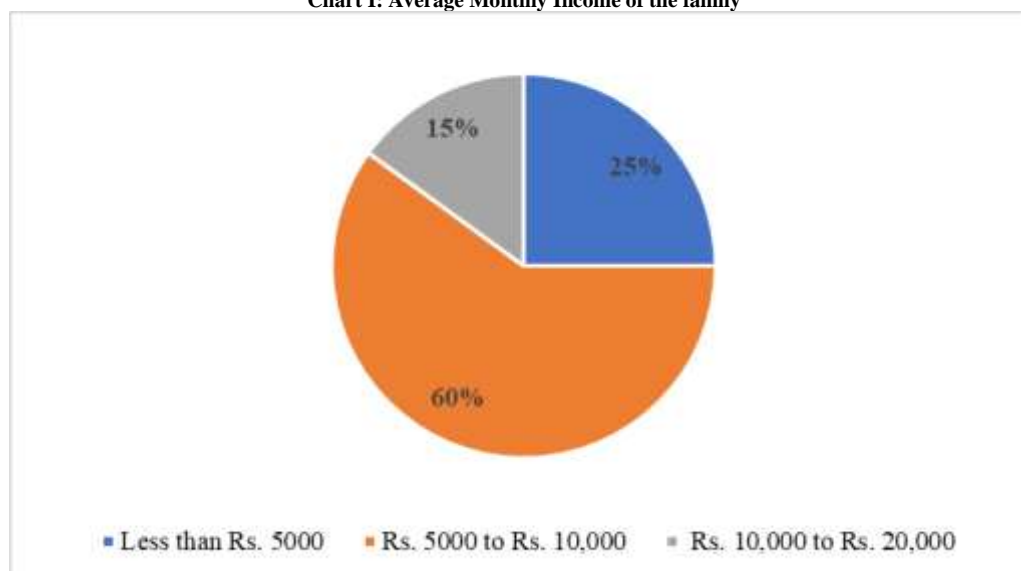
Sl. No.	Particular	No. of respondents (Including both children and either parent)	Percentage (%)
1	Joint family	34	28.33
2	Nuclear Family	86	71.67
Total		120	100%

Source: Primary data

A lot of change has been seen in the family system in the villages in recent times. The Santhal villages of the Santhal Parganas have also undergone changes in the contemporary period. However, the Santhals have been identified to have lived in isolation for a long time that is away from mainstream living. But with the change of time, these people have tried to mix up with the other communities. A change has been seen in their lives. During the fieldwork, it was found that people in villages prefer living in a nuclear family system once they are married. Though in the same house, two

or three households can be seen easily as per the number of boys (male members) in the house. It is not that the family have gotten separated, but the families prefer to earn separately and cook separately. But in times of need, such as during the seasonal Migration or any other activities, they are together with each other. Table no. 4 represents the same. It can be seen that 71.67% of the respondents (the respondents include both the children and their either parents) live in the nuclear family pattern, whereas 28.33% are only in the joint family.

Chart I: Average Monthly Income of the family



Source: Primary data

There are several reasons behind the low income of families. The table above shows the variation in the monthly income of the

family interviewed. It can be seen that 60% of the families have an income between Rs. 5000 to 10000, which is way lesser than the

average income that should be earned in order to have a subsistence living. The wages earned by the families through different sources do not fulfil the minimum wage required to run a family smoothly. It could be seen from the chart that 25% of the respondents have to earn less than Rs. 5000 monthly. And only 15% of the respondents have earned between Rs. 10000- 20000. These 15% are the people who work as contractors, construction workers if available or any other source.

### Reasons for Seasonal Migration

Seasonal and circular Migration of labour for employment has become one of the most durable components of the livelihood strategies of people living in rural areas (Deshingkar, P., 2003). However, a lot of other reasons have been discussed by the villagers during the fieldwork. These reasons are not unheard of or unknown by all, but it has a huge effect on the seasonal Migration of families from the village. Below are given the reasons behind the Migration of families to different workplaces in the districts of Bardhman and Birbhum.

Table No. 5: Reasons for Seasonal Migration \*Multiple responses

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents (Out of 60 respondents)	Percentage (%)	Ranking
1	Low family Income	56	93%	I
2	Unemployment	34	56%	III
3	Agricultural work is not available all the time	49	81.66%	II
4	Family trend	16	26.66%	IV
5	Others (Such as drought, etc.)	15	25%	V

Source: Primary data

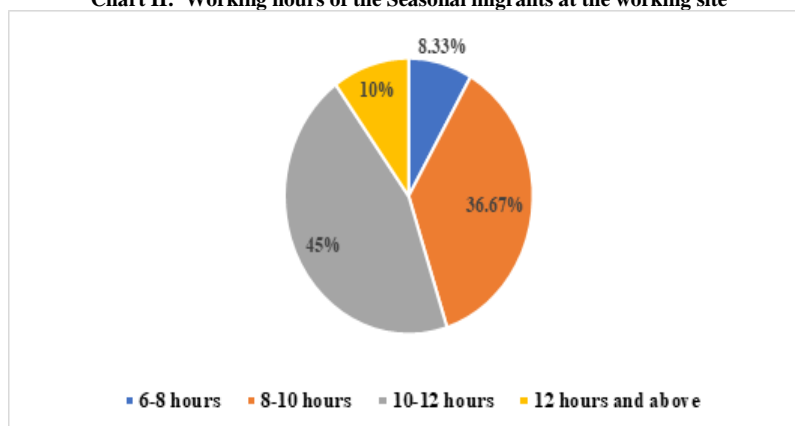
The table shows that low family income and lack of agricultural work during the lean season has been the main force leading to Migration, Unemployment in the local area also is found to be the main reason for people's Migration from the villages, and it has been distinctly comprehended from the case studies as well.

### Types of work at the workplace:

The Seasonal migrants from the districts of the Santhal Pargana region are involved in

multiple agricultural activities. These agricultural activities include all the activities from the beginning, such as *preparation of soil by ploughing, levelling of the land or manuring, sowing of seeds, transplanting, weeding, fertilizing, harvesting, threshing, and accumulating.* Etc. All these activities require a labour force. And the Santhal Pargana becomes the main source of the labour force for these agricultural works since these workers are well adequate in the agricultural works.

Chart II: Working hours of the Seasonal migrants at the working site



Source: Primary data

In order to know about the working hours of the seasonal migrants at the working sites in different places for agricultural work, the parent of the children was interviewed. The above table represents the different working hours of the respondents. It could be clearly seen that 45% of the respondents work 10-12 hours a day. They stated that they start their work from 6 am in the morning to 5-6 pm in the evening. 36.67% of the respondents said they work for 8-9 hours a day. Only a few, which is 8.33%, have started working for below 8 hours, whereas 10% of the respondents are also involved in working at night. Working at night includes work such as protecting the rice fields from the animals who destroy the paddy or crops, threshing harvested crops, etc.

#### ***Problems faced by the seasonal migrants***

There are several problems that are faced by seasonal migrants. Problems related to health, nature of work, working hour, basic facilities, wage discrimination, and many more. Since these seasonal migrant workers are always on the move, they remain deprived of many things. They often remain uncounted and unrecorded. They lack social security and job security and have no insurance cover or accident cover. They lack basic facilities at the workplace as they are labourers with no registration or no contract letter stating the terms of their

work. They remain voiceless and are subject to exploitation at the workplace.

#### **Seasonal Migration Affecting Children's Education**

Seasonal Migration has been drastically affecting children both migrating and children left behind. In this process of Migration, both the children left behind and the children taken along with them are at stake. (Smita, 2008) states that Migration prevents children from going to school. The migrating children face a life of adversity and rootlessness right from the very beginning stage of their life. They are bounded and left with no option other than following their parents and work. Since these children are always on the move, they get accustomed to the process of Migration with no choice left. The education of these children is severely affected by their constant motion. And the left-behind children nonetheless benefit because, in the absence of parents, children in the villages are not much cared for. As because they are either left behind with their old grandparents or their immediate relatives, where children lack attention and obligation leading to their not going to school and dropping out of school or the girl child being busy with household chores. Below is the table given that represents the status of their school attendance and enrolment.

**Table no.6: Education of Children**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of children (Out of 60 children/respondents)	Percentage (%)
1.	Children currently enrolled	54	90
2.	Children attending school	48	80
3.	Children not attending school	12	20
4.	Children dropped out	06	10

Source: Primary data

During the field survey, the children of the migrating parents were interviewed with regard to the issue of seasonal Migration affecting their education. It was found that out of 60 children, 54 children, i.e., 90 % of the total children, are still enrolled or have their name enrolled in the village primary school. Among those 60 children, 48 children, i.e., 80 % of them, still go to school but not on a regular basis. Whereas

12 out of 60 children are not attending the school though they are enrolled and have names in the school register. And 6 children out of 60 children, i.e., 10% of the total children, have completely dropped out of school.

#### ***Difficulties in reaching the learning milestones by the children of seasonally migrating Parents***



Since these children are constantly on the move, they get drastically affected by the process of seasonal Migration. They are often out of school. They do not have any other medium of education. Due to this, they remain deprived of what should have been learnt by them at their age.

During Case study (1), Sabina Marandi (Name Changed), one of the migrant children, she shares that:

*I have often been migrating with my parents. I was once taken to Bangla to a place which I did not know. There were many other children of my age. My parents used to work in the rice field, whereas I used to cook and look after my younger brother, age 5. Sometimes I would also go along with my parents to work in the rice field, keeping my brother engaged in playing with the other children in the nearby unoccupied field. After returning from the workplace to my native place, I went to school for some days but could not understand what was taught in school. Then I stopped going to school and helped my parents with household activities.*

The above statement by the ten years old girl child reflects that these children have to struggle a lot to adjust to the environment. They feel detached from their studies and education as they remain absent for a longer period of time. This detachment from the studies has a severe effect on their learning and ultimately affects them in reaching their learning milestones.

Sabina's Mother, Sonamuni Tudu (Name changed), states that *no one is there to look after the smaller children at the workplace. So, it becomes necessary for us to take the elder children to look after the younger ones while we are working in the field.*

It is understood from the case study that the phenomenon of seasonal Migration involves the whole family in the process where the adult members become the ones involved in earning, and children become the support to look after the household work and the younger siblings. It could be assumed that the already established system of seasonal Migration, where children are involved at

large, has led to a lot of dropping out of school.

### ***Seasonal Migration leads to the dropping out of Children***

Dropping out of schools has become the worst result of seasonal Migration. Children, during seasonal migration with their parents, are away from schools for longer periods of time. Though the names are there in the school register, they remain absent 6- 7 times a year for almost 20- 25 days or even more during the cropping season at the workplace.

Since these are agricultural migrants, they often visit Bangla for agricultural work. And the districts of Birbhum and Bardhaman witness the cropping (agricultural work) twice a year. These people often get work in the place of their destination. Where they are always accompanied by their children, they are subjected to hazardous travel between the village and the workplace. The children, those accompanying their parents when they return to their villages, find no acceptance there and are constantly viewed as outsiders by the teachers and children alike. Their school attendance is also hardly found. The school authorities also do not keep track of these children. When on return to the schools, they find it difficult to integrate with the teachings and school academics. And as a result, these children drop out of school.

During Case study (2) of a migrating family from Pakur District, A migrating child Raju Soren (name changed) of 7 years shares:

*I have been migrating with my family right after my birth, and I have grown in the fields of Bangla. There are other children from different villages who come with their parents, also grew up with me. We have become good friends. I went to school until last year, but due to always being absent from school, I have left going. Now I don't find interest in going to school anymore, and children also do not get along with me as I am always away from school.*

His father, Rasik Soren (Name Changed), stated that *Our livelihood depends on*

agriculture, and we have got a very less portion of land after getting separated from the family. We do not know any work other than agriculture. And so, we have always migrated during the cropping season. Before we used to go with our parents, now we are taking our children along with us. This will go on as we do not have a source of income in our local area.

The case study reflects the intensive Migration of the family, which depends entirely on seasonal Migration and agricultural work. In the process of Migration, the life of the child seems to begin in the agricultural field and goes on to work in the field. Meanwhile, education remains totally neglected in the scenario. Though the child is enrolled in the school with the initiative under education to all, education remains out of concern for the migrating parents and the child.

#### ***Children involved in agricultural work with their parents***

The process of Migration has led to making full-fledged child labour (Smita, 2006). From various studies and literature reviews, it has been known that the children accompanying their parents during Migration or seasonal Migration to different workplaces have helped create child labour at mass. It could be easily seen in the working sites that children above six years of age are either involved in cooking, washing utensils or doing other household chores. Children between 10-14 years of age are seen as prepared, and all ready to do agricultural work. They are engaged in preparing the field, planting the crops, harvesting, threshing, etc.

Case study (3), another migrating child Manoj Baskey (Name Changed), aged 11, shares:

*I like working with my father in the field. I have started working since the last time we came to work. Earlier I used to stay back at the house given for us to stay with other smaller children of my age. Now that I am able to work a little bit, my parents take me to the field so that I learn the work properly*

*and earn with them. I do not get money from the employer because only those who are able to plant ten handful bunch of paddies get the daily wage, but very soon, I will be working and getting the wage like my parents.*

The above statement of the child shows that the prolonged process of seasonal Migration among the children from the areas has somehow helped them develop a mindset of early wage earning. The constant movement has let them enter the labour market at an early age and become child labour and, later, a full-fledged labourer.

Manoj's Father, Sonatan Baskey (Name Changed), says that *Education is important, but for us earning is also important. I studied till class seven but dropped out. I did not continue my education as I was always on Migration to different workplaces with other youths of the village. My parents also migrated, and if a family has more members, they will have more earnings. Nowadays, there is no job even after studying, so we prefer to migrate and earn.*

The necessity of earning and the urge to have additional income have made the youth move out of their homes, putting education at stake. In both the scenario of seasonal Migration, where children are either taken along or left behind, there is a high probability that children of seasonal migrants drop out of the formal education system at an early stage and start working for low-paying jobs in the informal economy (Dubey, D et al.,2019) These children not only are deprived of their educational rights and entitlements but are forced to several exploitations at the workplace.

#### ***Problems faced by children at the workplace and also at the place of origin***

Children grow up in such a disorganised condition that their development is affected. Their psycho-social well-being gets affected due to their constant movement. They learn differently and unstably. They are neither looked up to by their parents at the place of origin nor at the place of destination. They

remain unattached. They are forced to take up work at a very early age so as to help their parents earn later on their own earning. These children also have health problems as they do not get an adequate amount of nutritional food at the age required, there are no safe drinking water facilities at the workplace, and their living environment remains unhygienic, which causes several diseases. Besides these, girl child remains unsafe in the working sites as well as at the place of origin. They are often the victims of abuse, physical violence and mishappenings. Since these children have no one to look after from a very young age, they grow up unattended, voiceless, uneducated, unaware, fearful and with low self-esteem.

#### **Suggestions to improve Children's Education affected by Seasonal Migration**

Seasonal Migration is a very complex phenomenon. While planning the intervention related to combating the problems of seasonal Migration affecting children's education, it is very necessary to take into account the various factors of seasonal Migration. The widespread area of Migration, the place of origin, the nature of work sites, and the mobility of seasonal migrants have to be checked upon in order to bring up the appropriate formula to tackle the problem. It is not that the Government have not tried in this direction, but due to the unorganised nature of the sector, it has failed to accomplish the said task. The Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan has been an effort in this regard that no children remain out of school. Below are a few proposed suggestions which could be taken up to improve children's education affected by seasonal Migration.

It should be ensured that no children below 14 years of age should be found at working sites.

Every child should complete their elementary education.

Government with non-government organisations to keep track of the children moving along with their parents.

Strengthening of the village schools should be done.

Seasonal hostels should be set up in the villages by the Government and should be handed over to Non-Government Organisations to retain children to go to school while their parents migrate. (The reason behind handing the seasonal hostels to the non-Government organisation is because the condition of Government infrastructure in the rural areas turns out to be very drastic due to the lack of management and maintenance. The NGOs would do better in this regard.)

Seasonal Migration should be taken up as a separate unit for intervention by the Government. And all the stakeholders should be made responsible for problem-solving.

Advocacy at a different level should be done: advocacy with the Government, advocacy with the community, and advocacy with the employers.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Seasonal Migration has always been understood as a coping mechanism for rural livelihood. This cannot be denied, but as stated earlier, seasonal Migration is a complex phenomenon. It has been least researched, least attended, and more or less ignored, be it by the Government, researchers, development sectors or media. Due to this, these unorganised sectors of work are full of loopholes, where the employers get the opportunity to exploit the workers, as there are no written records of these workers mentioned anywhere. The worst situation is when the children accompanying their parents to the workplace become the victims of such exploitations and all sorts of deprivation. These travelling children get deprived of their entitlements, rights, government programmes and schemes and somewhat deprived of different aspects of life that would help in their growth and development. From this study, it is reflected that the reasons like poverty, low income, indebtedness, unemployment, and lack of

agricultural activities during leap season are the main force that led to seasonal Migration of the villagers, wherein children get accompanied by their parents. Those not accompanied are left behind at the place of origin. In both situations, the children are at risk. Further, the study helped us know about the socio-economic condition of the seasonally migrating families and the influence of seasonal Migration on children. Due to the frequent relocation of migrating families, the migrating children undergo severe physical and mental agony. And most importantly, they are deprived of education. Due to the lack of an authentic database of seasonal migrants, information about children and their families remains unknown. The lack of honest effort by the responsible authorised departments (such as the Labour welfare department) in recording and maintaining information about the migrating population and due to the absence of coordination between the source and the receiving districts, the migrants are distressfully suffering.

Therefore, it is important for the state and all the important stakeholders, such as local self-government, political leaders, community leaders, CBOs, NGOs and others, to look into the problem and strategize solutions to streamline the children's education affected by seasonal Migration.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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