IMPACT OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN DELHI

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Disclaimer

List of Abbreviations

Executive Summary

Executive Recommendations

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List of Abbreviations

ASER: Annual Status of Education Report

BPL: Below Poverty Line

CBSE: Central Board of Secondary Education

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

CWSN: Children with Special Needs

DIKSHA: Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing

DTH: Direct to Home

EWS: Economically Weaker Sections

GOI: Government of India

GSAT: Geosynchronous Satellite

ICT: Information Communication Technology

IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IGNOU: Indira Gandhi National Open University

IIT: Indian Institute of Technology

ILO: International Labour Organisation

ISL: Indian Sign Language

JJ: Jhuggi-Jhopdi

MCD: Municipal Corporation of Delhi

MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

MHRD: Ministry of Human Resource Development

MVV: Mukta Vidya Vani

NCERT: National Council of Educational Research and Training

NCT: National Capital Territory

NFHS: National Family Health Survey

NFSA: National Food Security Act

NGO: Non- Government Organisation

NISHTHA: National Initiatives for School Heads and Teacher's Holistic Advancement

NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council

NSSO: National Sample Survey Office

OBC: Other Backward Class

PCP: Personal Contact Programmes

PDS: Public Distribution System

PRAGYATA: Plan- Review- Arrange- Guide- Yak (talk)- Assign- Track- Appreciate

RTE: Right to Education

SC: Schedule Caste

SCERT: State Council of Educational Research and Training

SMC: School Management Committee

ST: Schedule Tribe

UGC: University Grant Commission

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UT: Union Territories

Executive Summary

The National Policy for Education (1986) was a steppingstone towards the universalization of elementary education in India. The right to quality education is deeply embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is at the core of Sustainable Development Goal- 4 adopted by the international community. Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution declared free and compulsory education for all the children in the age group of six to fourteen years as basic human right in 2002 through the eighty- sixth amendment.

Emergencies caused by armed conflict, instability, hazards, pandemics, and other natural and manmade disasters not only result in loss of life and livelihood but also result in loss of education. The importance of education is often neglected during emergencies as the authorities and people focus on life saving initiatives. The emergency situations also often result in displacement and subsequent migration around the world. However, people migrating for work face key challenges including: i) lack of social security and health benefits and poor implementation of minimum safety standards law, ii) lack of portability of state-provided benefits especially food provided through the public distribution system (PDS) and iii) lack of access to affordable housing and basic amenities in urban areas.

Migrant and displaced children are among the most vulnerable populations on the globe. COVID-19 threatens to bring even more uncertainty and harm to migrant workers' children's and their lives. The pandemic has affected the schools of 1.5 billion students worldwide and is likely to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the millions of migrant and displaced learners around the world (UNESCO 2020). In many cases, these marginalized children have already missed critical time in the classroom and are at risk of falling even further behind. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, refugee children were twice as likely to be out of school as other children. Migrant and displaced

children face numerous obstacles accessing classrooms, ranging from enrolment issues to lack of available instruction to language barriers (RTE 2020). Many children from poor communities depend on schools for meals and key health services and information.

In India, 1.4 million schools have been closed since the third week of March 2020 for almost 19 months. COVID has augmented the education divide. While students in private schools seamlessly moved to virtual classrooms, students in the public education system (over 65 per cent of our students are enrolled in public sector schools) have no means to access content online. Majority of the students in our public/government educational institutions would neither have the technology for this transition, nor the economic or social capacity to bridge its inequity. It has put a "pause" on learning of the segment that had been struggling with the learning crisis. Only 8 percent of households in India have a computer with an internet connection. The major challenge of remote learning is disparity in access – from electricity and internet connections to devices like computers or smart phones. This makes migrant children most vulnerable as they do not have enough resources to catch up with the changed style of learning during the pandemic and can easily fall out of the education system. Factors such as inadequate home environment, attention span of children, low digital literacy of teachers, parents, and students, and lack of skills resulted in low participation in remote learning programs. (Muñoz-Najar et al., 2021)

The present study seeks to investigate the life situation and choices of the children of migrants and how the pandemic affected not only their education, but also how they suffered a double whammy due to their disadvantaged life situation. It is also important to understand the impact of virtual learning for migrant school children who are having limited or no resources to access online education. Given the thrust of RTE on the education as a right, it raised a pertinent question as to how the children

of migrant workers were able to access education during COVID 19 lockdown and examine the challenges faced by them during this process.

The present study was conducted in the NCT of Delhi. In total 639 migrant households were covered in the present study. One of the parents from each house was interviewed along with the eldest school going child in between the age group of 6-14 years.

It was found that employment opportunities in big cities are is one of the leading reasons which forces the people to migrate. The maximum numbers of respondents included in the study were living in Delhi for a period of more than 8 years. Close to 42 percent respondents belonged to the Scheduled Castes and another 22 percent to the OBC category, demonstrating the lower socio-economic class character of the migrant population. A large portion of the respondents were engaged as casual workers and daily wage earners and were living in JJ Colonies across Delhi. Majority of them had access to electricity and drinking water supplied either by government or by private entities.

A typical migrant family would be one belonging to the Scheduled Castes, hailing either from Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, migrating to Delhi in search of work, been educated below elementary level and working as a casual worker or daily wage earners such as labours, carpenters, majority earning between Rs 10000 to Rs 15000 per month, living in a JJ cluster.

The study found out that 21.4 percent of the respondents reverse migrated during the lockdown. The reverse migration was higher during the first lockdown (58.4 percent) as there was very limited knowledge about the spread of virus and there was uncertainty during that time.

As an impact of lockdown and school closure 6.3 percent of children of migrant families dropped out of school. The dropout rate was higher in the families who reverse migrated during the lockdown. By the time alternative arrangements were made by the school, 35.2 percent of the children did not study by any means, 50.8 percent children relied on home-

schooling while the rest of them went to the tuition centres either run by NGOs (7.1 percent) or private individuals (14.2 percent). Out of those who reverse migrated, 40.8 percent of the respondents said that their children didn't study until the formal resumption of classes whereas among those who stayed back in Delhi, 36.7 percent of the children didn't study until the formal resumption of classes. The gap in education for the children who reverse migrated was more as compared to those who stayed back in Delhi.

The shift in the online mode of education posed a challenge for children belonging to the migrant groups mainly due to lack of resources to access the online education. It was found that the ICT devices available for the education of children in the online mode were approximately half of that was required. As a result, only 40.23 percent of the children were able to attend online classes while the rest were dependent on either online worksheets or offline worksheet which they had to collect from schools. Only 28.3 percent of the children among those who reverse migrated were able to attend online classes.

Different mode of assessment was adopted by the school during the lockdown which included assignment, oral exam, uploading answer sheets on portal and in very few cases physical exam. There were instances where children were promoted without any exam. The academic performance of children was affected due to the lockdown. 83 percent of the respondent believes that their children had started scoring fewer marks in comparison to the times before the lockdown. 26.2 percent of the respondents believed that school closure resulted in lack of social interaction, 32 percent of the respondents believed that child's self-esteem were affected due to school closure and 13.3 percent of the respondents believed that school closure affected the nutrition of children as they were not getting the mid-day meal during the lockdown.

The impact of school closure was more significant in those children who reverse migrated during the lockdown in comparison to those who stayed

back in Delhi. Among those who reverse migrated, 78.3 percent of the respondent said that their child's academic performance deteriorated.32.5 percent of the respondent believed that their child's ability to socially interact with others was affected and 35 percent of the respondent said that their children lacked self-esteem.

The health of children was also affected due to the school closure mainly due to prolonged lockdown. 81.4 percent of the children either gained or lost weight after the lockdown, 73.1 percent of the parents reported the change in concentration level of their children, 14.3 percent of the parents said that children's sleeping pattern has been disturbed and 9.2 percent of the parents believed that the physical activity of their child has reduced in comparison to the time before the lockdown. There was immense effect on the behaviour and health of those children who dropped out of school. 25 percent of the children became lethargic, 15 percent of the children depicted aggressive behaviour after dropping out and 42.5 percent of the children worsened their ability to socially interact with others.

With the shift to online mode of education expenditure of families also increased. They had to spend more resources for ensuring the continuation of education during the pandemic in comparison to the time before the lockdown. 39.4 percent of the family spent less than 500 per month on child's education, 25 percent of the family spent between 500 to 1000 rupees on child's education and 35.5 percent of family spent more than 1000 rupees monthly on child's education. Out of these expenditures a huge proportion of money went on data recharge (94.7 percent) followed by purchase of ICT devices (42.6 percent) and on tuition fees (38 percent). 94.3 percent of the households had to reduce their daily expenditure to ensure the continuation of education of their children.19.3 percent of the families had to reduce the expenditure on health while 97.4 percent of the families had to reduce the expenditure on food.

Some of the children who were burdened with the additional responsibilities such as helping their family in economic activities and taking care of household in the absence of their mother feared that they will have to drop out from school if the school shifts back to the offline mode of education as they are comfortable in the routine of online education.

The teachers also faced various problems in e-learning methods. First, e-learning methods were new to them and only handful of teachers received training for conducting classes in online mode. Teachers often faced difficulties in teaching due to low bandwidth and unstable internet connection. Some of the teachers didn't have proper access to ICT devices because their own children had to attend online classes. Lack of ICT devices and awareness restricted the accessibility of initiatives by the government.

Executive Recommendations

1. **Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India**

- Problem faced by the families during the reverse migration had put the children of migrant families at a great risk. They were subjected to harassment by the administration and were forced to quarantine without appropriate facilities.

   a. *Thus, there is a need to develop and strengthen child protection policies to safeguard the children in case of any emergency situations.*

   b. *Also, there is a need to sensitise various officials of the State Governments on child protection issues.*

- Many children dropped out of school to help their family financially. A large number of them have not come back to school.

   a. *Financial assistance could be given to these children to ensure that they do not fall out of the safety net and are able to resume their education.*

   b. *Section 2 (58) of the JJ ACT provides for "sponsorship" and defines it as 'provision of supplementary support, financial or otherwise, to the families to meet the medical, educational and developmental needs of the child'. There is a need to invigorate this provision and apply it to those cases where the children have not come back to school due to financial or other constraints.*

   c. *Scope of Sponsorship under the PM CARE can be extended to children who are not able to continue their education due to financial constraints.*

   d. *The NCPCR and State CPCRs are tasked with the monitoring of the implementation of the RTE Act. These bodies need to work out specific provisions and provide for the*

continuation of education during emergencies within the framework of the RTE.

e. *The NCPCR webpage has two major sections – Baal Swaraj for rescue and rehabilitation of CNCP, particularly those on streets; and Out of School children Tracking Portal*

f. *[The Supreme Court](#) had directed the NCPCR (May 2022) to initiate a portal where the action taken by all the states and UTs for the children who dropped out of school due to pandemic is uploaded. The portal has been set up by [NCPCR](#).*

g. *Currently, the portal on OOSC shares four metrics.*

- *The portal does not allow public / NGOs to upload or access information only nodal officers can use this page.*
- *It is crucial that the portal displays additional parameters relating to protection and rehabilitation in detail, enabling the stakeholders to access a broader range of information*

The NCPCR is the apex body for the implementation of the RTE Act with powers to:

a. *Examine and review the safeguards for rights provided by or under this act and recommend measure for their effective implementation ;*

b. *Inquire into complaints relating to child's right to free and compulsory education*

During the pandemic, not much action could be seen from the NCPCR vis a vis RTE. There has been some initiative on school safety but it is more about infrastructure and safe buildings etc.

The RTE Act also does not specify in explicit terms about emergencies. It needs to take into account 'education in emergencies' within its fold.

- Shift in online mode of education resulted in increase in monthly expenses. To meet these expenses migrant family had to cut down their expenses on food and health.

    a. *Continued financial assistance could be given to the families to ensure that they do not have to cut down on their critical daily expenses.*

    b. *Bridge the digital divide by providing necessary infrastructure, such as devices and internet connectivity, to disadvantaged students.*

- During the school closure children also suffered because mid-day meals were discontinued. Many children belonging to vulnerable communities are dependent on mid- day meal from school for meeting their nutritional requirements.

    a. *Smooth mechanism should be developed to ensure continuous supply of mid-day meal.*

    b. *The nutrition gap that the pandemic has led to needs to be handled early. <u>The National Institute of Nutrition, ICMR could be asked to examine ways and means to fill this nutritional gap in conjunction with the Poshan Abhiyan.</u>*

- Children's physical and mental health was affected due to prolonged confinement in house and lack of mobility.

    a. *Regular check-up and follow ups need to be done to ensure their physical and mental wellbeing. The school health programme needs to be upscaled and reach out to the most vulnerable children.*

2. **Ministry of Consumer Affairs / PDS**

- Migrant families which reversely migrated during the lockdown were not given any ration at the place they migrated.
  a. *To facilitate smooth distribution of foodgrains, one nation one ration card program under the NFSA, 2013 should be implemented.*

3. **NDMA / DDMA / MHA**

- The National Disaster Management Plan along with State plans do not have specific thrust on the impact of disasters on children and how to mitigate them.
  a) *Disaster risk management plans (Central and State) should set out the goals and specific objectives for reducing disaster risks together with related actions to accomplish these objectives.*

The Prime Minister's 10-point agenda emerged as recommendations of 2nd NPDRR, 2017. The 10 point agenda should serve as a starting point for the DM Plans. However, the 10-point agenda does not have any specifics for children / education. It however deliberates on the directions like:

- o *The need to include women in NDRF and SDRF, and to train elected women representatives at the local level under development*
- o *Developing a network of universities and academic institutions to work on disaster-related aspects.*
- o *Ensure that the opportunity to learn from a disaster is not wasted. After every disaster there is a need to undertake research studies to understand the best practices and learn lessons to improve the policy and disaster governance*

a. *The NDMA and State DMAs should be asked to relook at their plans and recalibrate them to integrate children's issues, particularly safety, education and nutrition in emergencies in these plans.*
b. *The NDMA and State DMAs need to commit themselves to the Prime Minister's 10-point agenda and work out a plan of action.*

4. **Ministry of Education, Government of India & Department of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi.**

- There were children who had to drop out of education because they didn't have documents. This clearly violates the provision of RTE and thus

    a. *MoE should ensure that these children should be brought back in the education system.*

- Some of the children's name were struck off due to their non-availability in Delhi for longer period.

    a. The DoE should ensure the re admission of these children in schools.

- There was a large gap in the education of children during the pandemic. The government put out its advisory for online education in July, 3 months after the 1st lockdown.

    a. *Thus, there is an urgent need for drafting policies to make sure that there is continuation in education in the event of any future emergencies.*

- Children of Migrant families were not able to attend classes on video conferencing apps due to lack of ICT devices and expensive internet connections. As per ASER 2021, availability of smartphones at home rose to 67.6% in 2021, from 36.5% in 2018, but at least a quarter of schoolchildren did not have access to the devices. Initiatives such as PM E-vidya, Diksha, SWAYAM PRABHA and Mukta Vidya Vani were launched by the government but none of the study respondents had heard about these initiatives. There were also few initiatives taken by the NCERT and SCERT for ensuring e-learning.

    a) *Increase in the Budgetary allocation for e-learning initiatives.*

    b) *Partnering with Tele communication partners to ensure affordable data plans.*

    c) *Digital literacy training for teachers.*

    d) *Ensure the availability of internet enabled device for children belonging to marginalised community.*

> e) *Community Space for facilitation of shared e-learning with all the necessary infrastructure [E-Learning Centres to supplement school in normal days]*
>
> f) *Awareness programs in order to inform the children belonging to the marginalised community about different initiatives of e-learning by the government.*

- One of the major problems in online education for the children of migrant workers was lack of space to attend classes.

  a. *Thus, there is a need to create a community space with facilities for online learning in the areas inhabited by the marginalised communities to ensure that their education is not disrupted.*

- Many children were dependent on worksheets for education during the lockdown. The worksheets were both in online mode and offline mode. However, children faced problems as they didn't have the opportunity for clearing their doubt in this mode. There was only one way learning which led to learning loss.

  a. *There is a need to develop proper guides for the use of worksheets and refresher course needs to be introduced to bridge the gap which was created due to disruption in education.*

- As a result of prolonged school closure, academic performance of children was severely affected. They became weak in studies and thus

- *The ASER survey (46,021 children, 3-16 years, 33,432 households, 28 districts of Chhattisgarh in October-November 2021), revealed that the current foundational reading level among students in classes I-VII is "lower than at any time in the last decade" (January 2022).*

- *"The proportion of children at 'beginner' level (unable to recognise even letters) in Std II, Std III and Std VI is roughly double the corresponding level in 2018".*
- *Azim Premji University Study (Jan. 2021), 92 percent of the children lost at least one specific language ability from the previous year across all classes and 82% of children on an average have lost at least one specific mathematical ability from the previous year across all classes*

    a. *Put in place learning recovery programs with the objective of assuring that students attain at least the same competencies of the previous generation*
    b. *Improving the efficiency of learning: techniques like targeted instruction can help learning recovery, which means that teachers align instruction to the learning level of students, rather than an assumed starting point or curricular expectation.*
    c. *Diagnostic Assessment in order to know the current status of children.*
    d. *Bridge courses in order to strengthen the foundation skills.*
    e. *Teachers should be trained to educate students who are slow learners along with other students.*

- Children's ability of interact with their peers, take part in co-curricular activities and communicating was affected because of school closure.
    a. *Personality development programs could be introduced to cater then need of such children.*
- Children and teacher were not able to interact properly with each other in the online mode of education and thus
    a. *there is a need to give training to teachers on how to interact and make class more interactive in online learning.*

- The migrant families were unaware about the initiative of online learning by the government.

    a. *Thus, there is a need to create proper awareness about these initiatives.*

- Emergency has not got as much attention as needed. Consequently, capacities in this area amongst practitioners at various levels are limited. Implementing and sustaining quality education interventions during and after emergencies requires specific skills.

    a. *There is an urgent need to map the critical capacities for education in Emergencies, develop multi-pronged capacity building programs and build a cadre of professionals at various levels in relevant sectors/departments.*

    b. *UNICEF has developed a course designed to provide education staff and practitioners with foundational knowledge and skills relating to Education in Emergencies. The Government of India can engage with UNICEF to upscale this course through the Ministry of Education for its agencies and staff.*

- *While online education has emerged as a go-to for all governments during the pandemic, it needs to be used with not only caution but also preparation*

    a) *Promote flexible and adaptive learning methods that can accommodate different circumstances during emergencies.*

    b) *This could include a combination of online learning, radio/television broadcasts, take-home assignments, and other creative alternatives to traditional in-person schooling.*

    c) *The curricula and text books etc need to be designed for the hybrid mode. Also, teachers need to be trained to use the hybrid mode of education. NCERT / SCERTs can start the process of looking into the possibilities of preparedness for hybrid mode of education.*

d) *One of the principles of education in emergencies is 'build back better'. This implies that an emergency provides an opportunity to relook at the existing provisions and systems to build back a renewed better, more responsive system.*

e) *E-learning should be promoted to ensure the continuation of education in emergency situation and thus more money need to be allocated for it. [There is decrease in the budget allocation for e-learning from 645.61 crore in the year 2021-22 to 421.01 crore in the year 2022-23.]*

5. **National Human Rights Commission**

   - NHRC should ensure that the initiatives by the government should reach the migrant population.

   - NHRC should ensure that in case of any further crisis and emergency situations, the Right to Education of children of migrant workers is upheld.

   - NHRC should ensure that all the government agencies work in close collaboration to reach out the migrant children.

   - NHRC should also work on creating awareness about various initiatives by the state and central government.

6. **Other Issues**

   - **The Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) is an open global network of practitioners and policymakers working together to ensure all persons the right to quality education and a safe learning environment in emergencies through to recovery.**

   - **The INEE has developed the 'Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery' that provides governments and agencies with a roadmap for Education in Emergencies.**

   - **The focus of the INEE Minimum Standards Handbook is on ensuring quality, coordinated humanitarian response: meeting the educational rights and needs of people affected by disaster through processes that assert their dignity.**

   - **In line with the Framework for Reopening Schools, UNICEF has developed a checklist of key considerations and enablers for Ministries of Education to reach those who have been left behind.**

- It provides practical examples on how to identify those who have been left behind; focuses on learning recovery to catch up on learning and how to provide tailored and comprehensive support to support well-being and protection needs are being met.

7. Additional Recommendations

   Engage with NGOs / CSOs for :

- Engaging and supporting children and influential youth networks and young influencers to support their peers to identify/reach those left behind
- Understand and address the barriers
  - Provide additional teaching assistance/tutors
  - Capacitate teachers with high quality regular professional development on remote learning and digital skills
  - Provide scholarships or cash transfers
- Two guiding principles should be *to meet students where they are* – so that at any time, *they are studying material adjusted to their level* – and to cover what they need to know to successfully enter the next grade, as in Sri Lanka.
- Assess level of learning when they return and on an ongoing basis providing differentiated support for learners as needed. In Uzbekistan, instruction tailored to students needs is breaking with the "one size fits all tradition."
- Tailor catch-up learning programmes (structured pedagogy, small group tutoring and targeted instruction etc.) to bring children back on track
- Provide tailored services needed to meet their learning, health, nutrition, psychosocial wellbeing, and other needs through cross-sectoral collaboration across Ministries.
- Innovation can be beneficial as schools reopen by providing new resources and pedagogies for teachers, different modalities to reach the most marginalised and reimaging education for children and adolescents.
- Support teachers to address learning losses among their students and to incorporate digital technology into their teaching. This includes targeted skills training in structured pedagogy and how to cope with lower levels of learning.

DISCLAIMER

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Right to Education

Right to education is the basic human right which aims to pull out the humans from the web of disadvantages. The right to quality education is deeply embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is at the core of Sustainable Development Goal 4 adopted by the international community (UNESCO, 2018). There are around 258 million children and youth who are out of schools due to social, economic, or cultural reasons. (UNESCO, 2018[1]). India with the population of 430 million children (GOI, 2011) has the highest number of children in the world and education can act as a catalyst to tap the energy of this young population. Right to education is governed by various national and International Covenants. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 envisages for free and compulsory education at least up to the elementary level. Since the adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Right to Education has been reaffirmed by various treaties such as UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families (1990), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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[1]http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/new-methodology-shows-258-million-children-adolescents-and-youth-are-out-school.pdf

(2006). All these instrument talks about the free, compulsory, and inclusive education making education a basic human right.

Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution declared free and compulsory education for all the children in the age group of six to fourteen years as basic human right in 2002 through the eighty sixth amendment. The Right to Education Act[2] was passed in the year 2009 on the lines of article 21-A of the Indian Constitution which states that is the duty of the state to provide free and compulsory education to all the children in the age group of 6-14years. India became one of the 132 countries to declare education as a fundamental right with the enactment of RTE Act on 1st April 2010.

Main features of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of Right to Education (RTE) Act.

- Free and Compulsory education of children in the age group of 6-14years till the completion of elementary education in the neighbourhood school.
- Admission of non-admitted child in the age-appropriate class.
- Specifying the duty of the centre and state in providing free and compulsory education to the children and clearly demarcating the financial structure and other responsibilities between centre and state.
- It specifies the norms and standards related teacher pupil ratio, infrastructure, working hours and working days of school.
- Provides for the appointment of qualified and trained teachers.
- Prohibits physical punishment, mental harassment, screening procedure for admission, capitation fee, private tuition by teachers and running of school without recognition.
- Development of a curricular in a way which promotes child friendly and child centric learning.

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[2]https://www.education.gov.in/en/rte

- Prohibits holding back or expelling students before the completion of elementary education.
- Reservation of twenty-five percent of the seats in class 1 in all the private schools for the children belonging to economically weaker section.

Entitlement to education as per the RTE for all children

As per the RTE Act, 2009, all the children from age six years to fourteen years including children from disadvantaged group, children belonging to weaker section and children with special needs are entitled to free and compulsory education in the neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education. Children shall not be liable to pay any kind of fees or charges or expenses which may prevent them from completing their elementary education.

Children who are above six years of age and have not been admitted to any school or have not completed their elementary education shall be admitted to age-appropriate class and special assistance to get in par with the education. These children also have the entitlement to free and compulsory education until they complete their elementary education. Children also have the rights to seek transfer for whatsoever reason for completing their elementary education[3].

Responsibility and accountability of the State vis a vis RTE

Government and local authority shall take the charge for the implementation of the provisions of the Act and were to establish schools in the areas where there were no schools within three years from the date of enactment of the Act. It is the responsibility of the central and state government to provide funds for carrying the provision of the act. The Central government has the responsibility of providing financial support to the state along with the technical support such as developing framework

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[3]https://www.education.gov.in/en/rte

of national curriculum, developing, and enforcing standards for teachers training and provide support for promoting innovations, research, planning and capacity building.

It is the duty of the state to provide free and compulsory education to all the children from six years to fourteen years of age and ensure compulsory admission, attendance, and completion of elementary education by every child of the age of six to fourteen years. The duty of the state also includes to ensure the availability of neighbourhood school, ensuring non-discrimination of children belonging to marginalised groups, providing infrastructure and training to teachers for quality education. It is the role of the local authority to ensure the admission of migrant children and deciding the academic calendar- Section 9(k) of the RTE Act, 2009.(Government of India, 2009)

Emergencies and Education

Emergencies caused by armed conflict, instability, hazards, pandemics, and other natural and manmade disasters not only results in loss of life and livelihood but alsoresults in loss of education.In countries affected by emergencies and crisis, peoplealong with theloss of homes and loved ones also face problem in accessing education and a safe learning environment, impacting their futures (Education in Emergencies, 2022) . As per UNESCO, 127 million out of school children live in crisis affected countries, 25 percent of the world's children resides in conflict or disaster zones (UNICEF, 2016). Between 2015 and 2019, there were more than 11,000 reported attacks, harming more than 22,000 students and educators in at least 93 countries(Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, n.d.) 75 million children aged 3- 18 years lives in a crisis affected area.

Children in emergencies:

The importance of education is often neglected during emergencies as the authorities and people focus on life saving initiatives. It is estimated that nearly 175 million children are likely to experience some level of disruption to their schooling(Save the Children, 2012), including drop out,

slowed development and other psychosocial and protection concerns in the coming decade (Nicolai et. Al., 2015).

Lack of access to education directly impacts children's safety and wellbeing. All children are exposed to threats during and after emergencies; however, girls and boys who are out of school are at much higher risk of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. This includes sexual violence and exploitation; recruitment or use by armed forces or groups; hazardous child labour and becoming involved in criminal activities. Additionally, child protection concerns can prevent children from accessing education or diminish educational outcomes. In conflict zones, access to education is barred not only by general insecurity but also by targeted attacks against students, teachers, and educational facilities, as well as the use of those facilities for military purposes by parties to conflict. Armed conflict diverts public funds from education into military spending, making access to quality education difficult or impossible[4]

Education can play active role in disaster relief, post conflict and peacebuilding efforts. It can help the deviants to get back into the society. Schools can provide safe spaces for children to build friendships, play and learn. In addition, education empowers students by giving them a voice, and a safe space to communicate their feelings and concerns(Education in Emergencies, n.d.).Education is an important tool to provide children and communities with a sense of normalcy following a disaster, instilling hope, and mitigating the psychosocial impact of violence and displacement (Education in Emergencies, n.d.-b).

Migration due to emergencies

Emergencies caused by manmade disasters or natural cause leads to displacement. Forced migration (also known as forced displacement) has caused millions of people around the world to be uprooted, including refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants. 1 person is uprooted

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[4]https://www.educationcluster.net/content-page/education-emergencies-child-protection-collaboration-framework

every 2 seconds, and the global total of forcibly displaced people currently stands at over 68.5 million (Giovetti, 2018).

There are more than 280 million international migrants (UNDESA Migration Data Porta 2020). At the end of 2021, 89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced because of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order. Of these people, 27.1 million are refugees and 4.6 million are asylum seekers (UNHCR, Global Trends Report 2021). 24 million people displaced by disasters every year. Extreme weather events such as floods, storms and earthquakes devastate communities and often lead to long-term displacement (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) / Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) 2019).

Migration in India

Migration is a global phenomenon caused by the various factors. Migration is the movement of people away from their usual place of residence, across either internal (within country) or international (across countries) borders. Migration can be short term migration which include frequent movement between the source and destination or long-term migration which results in relocation of the individual or household. As per the Census of India, 2011, Maximum number of migrants are from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. Around 83 lakh residents of Uttar Pradesh and 63 lakh residents of Bihar had moved either temporarily or permanently to other states. The influx of migrants is mostly in big cities such as Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, and Karnataka. Around 60 lakh people from across India had migrated to Maharashtra by 2011. 30 percent of the Indian population constitutes of Internal migrants. Internal migration can be classified based on source and destination. This migration can be from rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to rural or urban to urban. As per the 2011 census, there were 21 crore rural-rural migrants which formed 54% of classifiable internal migration. Rural-urban and

urban-urban movement accounted for around 8 crore migrants each. There were around 3 crore urban-rural migrants.

Out of all the internal migrants in India, 70.7 percent are women. The primary reason for migration among women is marriage (68 percent). Male population migrates mainly in search of employment (21 percent). Migrants are mostly employed in subsectors like construction, domestic work, textile, brick-kilns, transportation, mines, quarries, and agriculture.

Article 19 of the Constitution of India gives the right to all citizens "to move freely throughout the territory of India and to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India. However, people migrating for work face key challenges including: i) lack of social security and health benefits and poor implementation of minimum safety standards law, ii) lack of portability of state-provided benefits especially food provided through the public distribution system (PDS) and iii) lack of access to affordable housing and basic amenities in urban areas[5].

Impact of Migration on children

Migrant and displaced children are among the most vulnerable populations on the globe. In 2019, around 33 million children were living outside of their country of birth, including many who were forcibly displaced across borders. At the end of 2018, a total of over 31 million children were living in forced displacement in their own country or abroad due to violence and conflict. This includes some 13 million child refugees, around 1 million asylum-seeking children, and an estimated 17 million children displaced within their own countries. It is estimated that 3.7 million children live in refugee camps or collective centres (UNICEF 2018).

COVID-19 threatens to bring even more uncertainty and harm to migrant workers' children's and their lives. For instance, many unaccompanied

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[5]http://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/1566.pdf

minors had been left unprotected before the pandemic as authorities failed to provide care and shelter. In many countries, border closures have left migrants stranded, placing children and their families at risk of further harm and potentially separating families for longer stretches. As of 22 April 2020, of the 167 countries that have fully or partially closed their borders to contain the spread of the virus, some 57 States have made no exception for access for asylum seekers (UNHCR 2020).

Indian scenario – lockdown as a deterrent to migration?

At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic threatens to increase the global child labour situation which was on decline. According to the ILO, as many as 60 million people are expected to fall into poverty this year alone, and that inevitably drives families to send children out to work. A joint report by the ILO and United Nations Children's Fund estimates that a 1 percentage point rise in poverty leads to at least a 0.7 percentage point increase in child labour[6]. Coronavirus pandemic is forcing India's children out of school into the farms and factories and are also compelled to work in the cities due to the shortage of migrant labour in the cities. UNESCO"s report (2019) predicted that up to 40 per cent of children of migrants are likely to end up at work rather than in schools – the pandemic may push many more to child labour.

COVID 19 and impacts on education: Global Scenario

The pandemic has affected the schools of 1.5 billion students worldwide and is likely to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the millions of migrant and displaced learners around the world (UNESCO 2020). In many cases, these marginalized children have already missed critical time in the classroom and are at risk of falling even further behind. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, refugee children were twice as likely to be out of school as other children. Migrant and displaced children face numerous obstacles accessing classrooms, ranging from enrolment issues to lack of available

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[6]https://theprint.in/india/india-faces-lost-generation-as-covid-pushes-children-out-of-school-and-into-jobs/478424/

instruction to language barriers (RTE 2020). Many children from poor communities depend on schools for meals and key health services and information. Nearly half of the world's schoolchildren, some 310 million, have relied on their school for a daily meal, including 100 million children in India, 48 million in Brazil, and 9 million each in Nigeria and South Africa(World Food Program 2019).A research study conducted by UNHCR titled "Covid-19 And The Human Rights Of Migrants: Guidance " clearly shows that migrant children may face additional barriers in accessing education as schools or the organisations providing special educational programmes have been forced to close. This may include situations where migrant children have no access to the technological means or other support structures to continue their education from home. a further research study recommended that states should take measures to ensure that migrant children are not left behind, exploring partnerships and innovative ways to provide education remotely and reintegration of all migrant children once in-person schooling resumes (UNHCR 2020). Furthermore, the UN Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) strictly advisesstates to Facilitate virtual channels to ensure access to education for children of migrants, irrespective of their migration status or of their parents (CMW 2020). For many learners living in displacement, their education will now be more limited or disappear completely. Where learning has switched to online delivery, access to online resources and reliable electricity is out of reach for many, especially those living in remote locations, refugee camps or informal settings. In sub-Saharan Africa, where more than a quarter of the world's refugees reside, 89 per cent of learners do not have household computers and 82 percent lack Internet access (UNESCO 2020). A research study conducted by researchers of UNHCR named Charlie Dunmore and Rima Cherri indicates the education status of migrants living in refugee camps of Syria that Nearly 120,000 Syrians live in Jordan's two largest refugee camps, where a large portion of residents are children – many of whom have seen war deprive them of years in the classroom. As the nation came under lockdown, 32 schools in the camps were closed, impacting

18,000 students who now rely on a national television broadcast to learn (Charlie. D, &Cherri.R 2020). The studies mentioned above clearly shows that as access to school is curtailed, more children may drop out; some will be called to work to offset economic strains, potentially making a return to school after the pandemic subsides even more difficult.

Indian Scenario

In India, 1.4 million schools have been closed since the third week of March 2020. Covid has augmented the education divide. While students in private schools seamlessly moved to virtual classrooms, students in the public education system (over 65 per cent of our students are enrolled in public sector schools) have no means to access content online. Majority of the students in our public/government educational institutions would neither have the technology for this transition, nor the economic or social capacity to bridge its inequity[7]. It has put a "pause" on learning of the segment that had been struggling with the learning crisis. Only 8 percent of households in India have a computer with an internet connection. The major challenge of remote learning is disparity in access – from electricity and internet connections to devices like computers or smartphones. This makes migrant children most vulnerable as they do not have enough resources to catch up with the changed style of learning during the pandemic and can easily fall out of the education system.

Alternative Modes of Education during the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education in over 150 countries and affected 1.6 billion children. At the peak of the pandemic, in April 2020, about 1.6 billion K-12 learners in over 190 countries were deprived of in-person schooling. As of October 2021, 32 percent of countries worldwide either fully (14 countries) or partially (50 countries) closed schools. The longest closures have been in South Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, with an average of 429 and 387 days, respectively, in which

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[7]https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/will-migrants-child-learn-again-1502903874.html

schools were fully or partially closed, in both cases equivalent to more than the 75 percent of their total instruction time since the pandemic began. To tackle the school closure and deliver education effectively, majority of the countries shifted to remote learning. There was pre-existing education technology infrastructure such as paper-based take-home packages to radio, TV, phone, and internet-based solutions in some countries which helped them in effectively delivering education through remote learning while other countries faced difficulties in implementing remote learning. Government across the world took various initiative to facilitate online learning. Some of them partnered with private entities to deliver online education, some of them reduced the school syllabus and some of them helped the students and teachers in getting access and used to technologies. However, remote learning led to poor learning outcome as compared to in person learning prior of COVID-19. Remote learning can be affective when the teachers, students and technologies are well assigned.

Though efforts were made by the government across the world to deliver education through online mode, digital divide created hindrance for majority of students. Government provided online learning solution, however due to lack of access to ICT devices and connectivity constraints, majority of children could not effectively learn through remote learning. Factors such as inadequate home environment, attention span of children, low digital literacy of teachers, parents, and students, and lack of skills resulted in low participation in remote learning programs. (Muñoz-Najar et al., 2021)

Digital Divide

The digital divide is a term that refers to the gap between demographics and regions that have access to modern information and communications technology (ICT), and those that don't or have restricted access. This technology can include the telephone, television, personal computers, and internet connectivity. The digital divide exists between different section

of the society such as rural and urban population, rich and poor, educated, and uneducated population and in some cases between male and female. The digital divide includes lack of access to technology and internet services in the developing countries (Hanna, 2021).

Digital Divide in India/ Penetration / accessibility and affordability of internet

As per ITU's World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database, 99 percent of the households are covered with cellular network and 98 percent of the houses are covered with 4G mobile network. Only 24 percent of the houses have access to internet and 11 percent had computer at their home. 43 percent of the population in India use Internet. There is 58 percent male and 42 percent female internet users in India (Internet Adoption in India: ICUBE 2020, 2021).)

The National Family Health Survey 2019–21 ("NFHS"), however, shows a significantly larger gender gap in internet usage. The NFHS Report suggests that only 57.1 percent of the male population and 33.3 percent of the female population had ever used the internet. There is also a gap between the rural and urban internet users. 72.5 percent of the urban males and 51.8 percent of the urban females have ever used the internet, only 48.7 percent of rural males and 24.6 percent of the rural females qualify for this condition. (Ministry of Health & Family welfare, Government of India, 2022).

Major issues of online education:

Children's safety and privacy

The rush to access online learning also highlights data privacy considerations for children. Children's education data is far less protected than health data. Many countries have regulations that govern the appropriate uses and disclosures of personally identifiable health data, even during emergencies. But while children's school data may be just as

sensitive – revealing names, home addresses, behaviours, and other highly personal details that can harm children and families when misused – most countries don't have data privacy laws that protect children. This means that governments will struggle to hold providers of internet education technologies – EdTech – accountable for how they handle children's data.

Internet issues

Without exception, education policies focused on online learning in the wake of COVID-19 have highlighted long standing inequities. Children living in the most disconnected places in the world also face the least dependable and slowest internet at the least affordable prices – if they are connected at all. Children living in countries that have imposed internet shutdowns in some regions – including Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar – have no hope of accessing online learning (Woodhouse, T., and Thakur, D. 2018).

Difficulty in imparting inclusive education

Governments should also enact measures to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities, who face barriers to accessing quality inclusive education even in normal circumstances and who, when they do enrol, often drop out before completing school. The adolescent girls who are most at risk of child marriage, and those at risk of child labour must be included in online education strategies (Human Rights Watch 2020).

Origin of the research problem:

Literature survey/review of research and development on the subject

In a developing country like India, as an immediate measure to curb the spread of Covid-19, most educational institutions have been shut since the end of March (Kundu, 2020). The lockdown that was imposed in full force has restricted around 1.3 billion people from leaving their homes. Transport services were suspended, educational institutions closed (Ray et al. 2020). It does not stop here, and this pandemic has also exposed even in the digital world how rooted are the structural imbalances

between rural and urban India, male and female, rich and poor (Kundu, 2020). Worldwide several studies have found that online e-learning has not met the expected outcomes; at every school, students were disappointed to shift to remote learning (Boggiano et al., n.d.).

World Economic Forum (2020) reported that some students without reliable internet access and technology struggle to participate in digital learning; this gap is seen across countries and between income brackets within countries. About 95 per cent of students in Switzerland, Norway, and Austria have a computer to use for their schoolwork, contrary to there are only 34 per cent in Indonesia who have a computer (OECD 2000). Even this gap is considerably high in developed countries like the US, where the gap between privileged and disadvantaged backgrounds is hardly visible. In the US, all 15-year children from a privileged background had a computer to work while 25 per cent of those from disadvantaged backgrounds had no computers (Li and Lalani, 2020). The disadvantages faced by students whose parents have low educational or occupational status are likely to be exacerbated, where they also do not have access to computers (PICA 2005).

Many students from disadvantaged groups are still concerned that the pandemic will widen the digital divide (Li and Lalani, 2020). Therefore, the education system in many low and middle-income countries like India is far away to carry out; often declared and advertised internet-based distance learning with optimal efficiency and much work is needed to be done to switch to high-quality distance education (Doghonadze et al. 2020).

On the other hand, in India, Right to Education Act 2009 ensures that every child has the right to free and compulsory education between age of 6-14 years irrespective of caste, religion, gender or any disability. In large metropolitan cities like Delhi, majority of children going to government run schools belong to low-income group households – a large chunk of them is the migrant population who have come in search of better opportunities

and want a better future for their children. Under RTE, no school may hold back or expel a child before their completion of elementary education. Hence it becomes the responsibility of the school to ensure that the child completes the elementary education. What would be the situation during pandemic lockdown when accessibility and mobility were big issues. Under RTE, there is a special component of the school management committee, which comprises principal, teachers as well as parents who need to make a drill in the radius of 1km of school for the enrolment of the children out of school and ensure that there is no drop out child from their locality. What was the situation of SMC during the lockdown? Keeping in view the challenges faced by migrant population during Covid 19 pandemic and mandate of RTE to ensure elementary education to children till the age of 14 years, it is significant to investigate the issue of Right to education of migrant children during covid 19 pandemic.

Save the Children, an International NGO considers Covid-19 has not just been a health emergency but also an education disaster[8]. Studies suggest that on an average 20 per cent children dropout post emergencies, and the last 90 days lockdown has resulted in complete loss of education for these children who are moving with their migrant families[9]. Education facilities are anyway hindered by pre-existing inequalities, lack of learning opportunities, homelessness, unemployed parents and sibling care when parents are exploring work opportunities and now ICT based education has made it nearly impossible for migrant children to access education although RTE ensures education to all in all kinds of circumstances.

Ambarish Rai, National Convener of RTE Forum opined that in online education, most students will be left outside the education system. Students from poor economic backgrounds, Dalits, backward sections, and

[8]https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/migrant-children-at-risk-of-dropping-out-of-school-after-moving-back-to-hometowns-experts/story-nzx5STywMTqPEwfHDjjhUJ.html
[9]https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/migrant-children-at-risk-of-dropping-out-of-school-after-moving-back-to-hometowns-experts/story-nzx5STywMTqPEwfHDjjhUJ.html

other religious minorities will all drop out of the education system[10]. Because the 2017-18 NSSO data reveal that only 10.7 percent Indians have laptops and computers. Only 23.4 percent have internet access. In rural areas, only 4 percent of the population have laptops, computers, and internet access[11] . In the given pandemic situation, the government must make special efforts to protect the rights of children, especially those hailing from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds and guarantee education to those who are on the margins.

With the Right to Education Act, 2009 in place, authorities are obliged to guarantee the schooling of children from migrant families. The unintended consequence of the current pandemic is that due to the lockdown, over 40 million internal migrants have been impacted. A survey across 18 states reveals 46.2% of migrant children have discontinued their education[12]. Exacerbated by the digital divide and loss in regular incomes, Covid-19 is expected to cause a massive spike in child labour (ILO, 2020). In such a situation, some innovative and extra efforts must be made to retain the migrant children in the education system.

Pandemic lockdown has witnessed many panic-stricken migrants and their families including children and elderly walking hundreds of miles to go back to their villages. In such a situation, the education of the children was bound to suffer unless special efforts are made to restore it[13]. Given this situation, Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI took an empathetic view of this situation and issued detailed guidelines to all states and union territories to ensure that the education of the children of migrant workers is not suffered due to the constraints of the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown. The HRD Ministry asserted that the names of

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[10]https://www.thequint.com/news/education/coronavirus-how-india-can-send-children-of-migrant-workers-back-to-school#read-more
[11]https://www.thequint.com/news/education/coronavirus-how-india-can-send-children-of-migrant-workers-back-to-school#read-more
[12]https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/2020/jul/22/ensuring-education-for-migrant-children-2173081.html
[13]https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/migrant-children-at-risk-of-dropping-out-of-school-after-moving-back-to-hometowns-experts/story-nzx5STywMTqPEwfHDjjhUJ.html

these children should not be struck off the school rolls[14]. The Ministry has also advised the state government to direct all schools to give admission to any child who has recently returned to the village without asking documents like "transfer certificates or proof of class attended earlier", except for an identity proof. The information provided by the child's parents is to be assumed correct for giving admission to the child in the relevant class in his or her neighbourhood government or government-aided school

Rationale of the Study:

India, along with the world, is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the fight seems to be a long one, the government is ensuring that education in schools does not suffer. The way we are imparting education to our next generation has undoubtedly changed – increase in e-learning, teaching undertaken remotely and use of digital platforms.

The pandemic has affected almost all sections of the population, more so the marginalised. Children of migrant workers already marginalised in the city, faced an uphill task in continuing their education. Although, several measures were out in place, yet the disadvantaged position that the children of migrants are, they struggled to keep pace with the others.

With this sudden shift away from the classroom in many parts of India, some are wondering whether the adoption of online learning will continue to persist post-pandemic, and how such a shift would impact the worldwide education scenario.

Given this, there is a need to investigate the life situation and choices of the children of migrants and how the pandemic affected not only their education, but also how they suffered a double whammy due to their disadvantaged life situation. It is also important to understand the impact

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[14]https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Migrant%20labour%20guideline.pdf

of virtual learning for migrant school children who are having limited or no resources to access online education. Given the thrust of RTE on the education as a right, it raised a pertinent question as to how the children of migrant workers were able to access education during COVID 19 lockdown and examine the challenges faced by them during this process.Given the thrust of RTE on education as a right, it raised a pertinent question as to how the children of migrant workers were able to access education during COVID 19 lockdown and examine the challenges faced by them during this process.

The main objectives of the research study included:

1. To study the impact of the pandemic and school closure on the educational status of migrant children
2. To understand the challenges faced by migrant children in accessing and continuing their education during COVID-19 and aftermath situation
3. To understand the measures taken by the Government and schoolsto address the educational needs of migrant children during COVID 19 in the light of RTE
4. To assess the viability of virtual education in fulfilling the educational needs of the child and overall personality development

Research Design & Methodology:

The study was conducted in NCT of Delhi. Delhi being a commercial Centre attracts many migrants from all over India [63 lakhs migrants] (GOI, 2011). Delhi has the second highest population, 63 lakhs of inter-state migrants in India, according to 2011 census data on migration released recently, which shows that marriage, education of children and work drive the influx. Forty percent of Delhi's population is inter-state migrants who contribute to the economy of the city. Out of 63 lakhs migrants, nearly one fourth of them move into the city with their families. Hence children being part of the family get enrolled in public/ government run schools.

This makes a large population of children seeking education from the underprivileged section of the society.

Migrant unskilled workers generally get absorbed in the unorganized sector and make their settlements in slum, encroached land, and resettlement colonies of Delhi. The present study was conducted in the slum and resettlement colonies of Delhi in which the migrant population inhabits.

This study is a diagnostic and descriptive research design. The study diagnoses the educational status of migrant children during COVID 19 pandemic, challenges faced and describes the schools' efforts to reach out to these children through the virtual mode. A mixed method approach has been used in this study.

Universe and Sampling

The data has been collected from across all the Districts of Delhi. Delhi was divided into 5 zones namely North, South, East, West, and Central Zone consisting of the 9 districts of Delhi. The migrant workers reside mostly in slums, resettlement colonies and encroached areas therefore most data were collected from these areas. Some of the migrants also live in the unauthorised colonies of Delhi and thus data was collected from there as well.

Table 1.1: Proposed Sample from Each District

Zone	Districts	Total population of the district	Total no of Migrants residing in the District	Percent age of Migrant residing in the district	Proposed Sample from the District
South Zone	South	2731929	1150142	22	132
	Southwest	2292958	1063932	21	126
North Zone	North	887978	265505	5	30
	Northeast	2241624	813709	16	96

	Northwest	3656539	134606	3	18
East Zone	East	1709346	620492	12	72
West Zone	West	2543243	907938	18	108
Central Zone	Central	582320	98412	2	12
	New Delhi	142004	63475	1	6
	Total	**16787941**	**5118211**	**100**	**600**

As per the Census, 2011[15]

A sample of 639 households was selected from all the Districts of Delhi through Systematic Random Sampling. The respondents from each zone were determined as per the percentage of migrant living there. From each household, two respondents were selected- one oldest school going child between the age of 6- 14 years and any one parent / caregiver. Interview schedule was prepared for both data sets which consisted of both closed and open-ended questions.

Table 1. 2: Sample covered: Zone and District Wise

Zone	District	Proposed Sample	Sample Covered Households Parent/ Caregiver
South	South	132	148
	Southwest	126	117
North	North	30	31
	Northeast	96	107

	Northwest	18	18
East	East	72	74
West	West	108	115
Central	Central Delhi	12	15
	New Delhi	6	14
		600	**639**

Table 1. 3: List of Areas covered in the sample

Zone	District	Slums/Resettlement Colony
East Zone	East Delhi	1. Yamuna Khadar Jhuggi Camp, Mayoor Vihar Phase 1 2. Chilla Village 3.Shakarpur Khadar Camp, Patparganj 4. Samaspur Village, Patparganj 5. Shashi Garden Jhuggi
Central Zone	Central Delhi	1. Kidwai Nagar Nala Camp
	New Delhi	1. Punjabi Academy, Paharganj 2. Paharganj
West Zone	West Delhi	1. Chuna Bhatti, Kirti Nagar 2. Jawahar Camp, Mayapuri
South Zone	South Delhi	1. Madanpur Khadar JJ Camp 2.

		BhoomiheenCamp,Kalkaji
		3. Navjeevan Camp, Kalkaji
		4. Okhla Phase 1
		5. Deshbandhucamp,Masood pur
	Southwest Delhi	1. Israel Camp, vasant Vihar
		2. Sri Ram JJ Camp, South Campus
		3. KusumpurPahadi, Vasant Vihar
		4. RangpuriPahadi, Vasant Kunj
North Zone	North Delhi	1. Shakur Basti JJ Camp
		2. Mansarovar Park JJ Camp
	Northeast Delhi	1. Tahirpurgaon
		2. Nandnagri JJ camp
		3. Mandoli Gaon
		4. E- block, New Seemapuri
	Northwest Delhi	1. Bhalsawa Dairy landwill

Tools and Instruments: Interview schedules with a mix of closed and open-ended questions were prepared for the two main data sets, that are the child as well as the parent/ caregiver. The tools were pretested, and changes made according to the feedback. Additionally, Interviews with key government and non-government functionaries engaged in elementary education in Delhi were conducted to understand the complexities etc. A tool to measure the psychological distress was also prepared, yet it was difficult to administer it and was therefore dropped.

Analysis and interpretation: Data has been analysed both quantitatively as well as qualitatively using descriptive statistics.

Challenges:

The researchers have not been able to get official access to principals and teachers of Delhi Government schools as permission to collect data was not processed. Collecting data from children was difficult as the children were at home, there was too much prompting by adults, and it was difficult to get genuine responses.

Chapter 2

PROFILE OF MIGRANT WORKERS& THEIR SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN

This chapter presents the general profile of the six hundred and thirty-nine migrant workers and their families that were interviewed as part of the study. This profile reveals their socio-economic status, living conditions and what happened to their lives during the two lockdowns that were imposed during the COVID-19 outbreak.

As illustrated in the previous chapter table 1.3, data was collected from several locations of Delhi that had predominance of migrant workers. The locations were selected from all across Delhi. Some of these areas included Yamuna Khadar, Kidwai Nagar Nalla, Paharganj, Kirti Nagar, Mayapuri, Madanpur Khadar, Masoodpur, Kusumpur& Rangpur Pahadi, Shakurbasti, Nand Nagri, and Bhalaswa Dairy, etc.

Sex of the Respondents

Figure 2.1
Sex of the Respondents
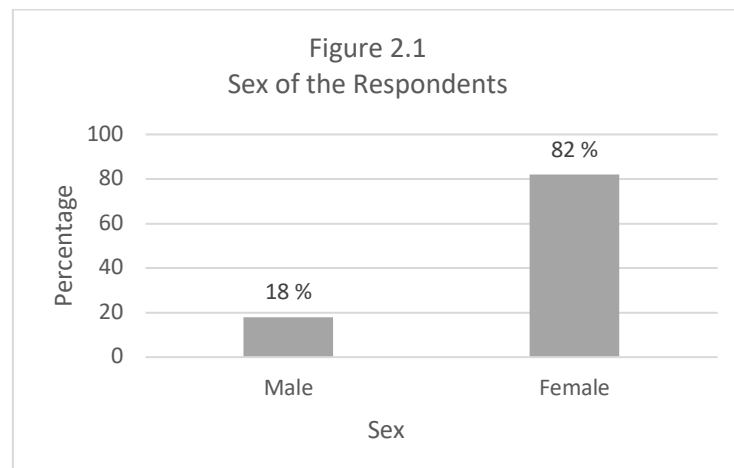
A total of 639 migrant families were interviewed during the data collection out of which 82 percent of them were female and 18 percent were male (fig 2.1). The male population was mostly out for work and thus majority of the respondents were female. Three-fourth of the family had only a single earning member in the household (fig 2.2), and women folk were

majorly home makers. 24.4 percent of the households had 2 earning members and only 0.5 percent of the households had 3 earning members.

Figure 2.2:
Proportion of Earning Members in the Household
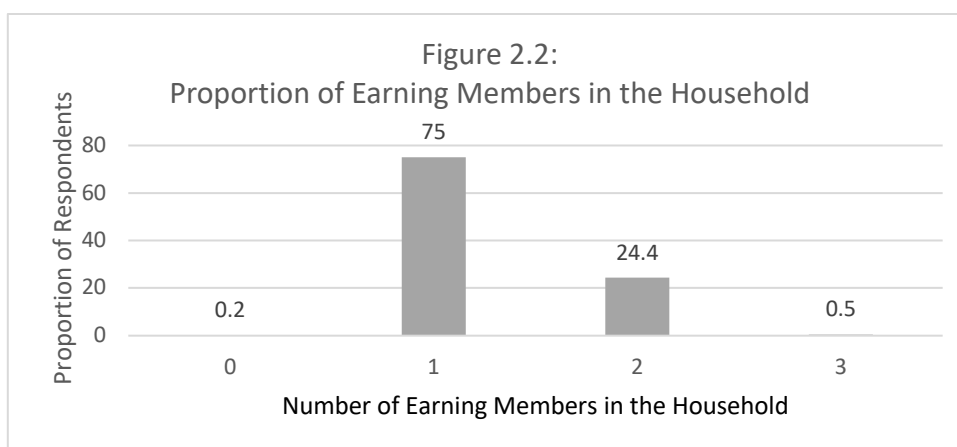
Religion and Caste of the Respondents
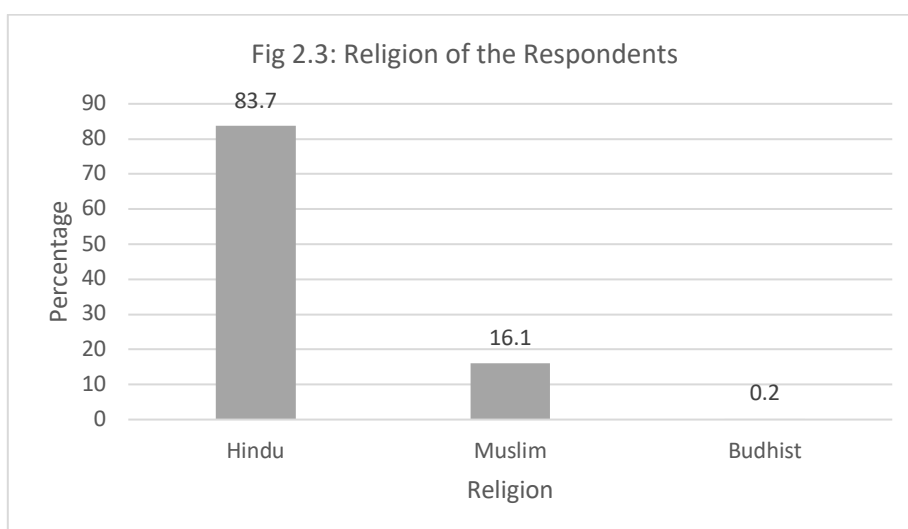
83.7 percent of the population followed the Hindu religion, 16.1 percent were Muslims and 0.2 percent were from the Buddhist community (fig 2.3). Majority of the respondents were from Scheduled Castes community (41.9 percent) followed by Other Backward Class (21.3 percent), General (19.2 percent) and Scheduled Tribes (0.3 percent). There were few respondents (17.2 percent) who were unaware or did not wish to identify their social category (fig 2.4). The caste composition of the migrants is very

instructive and reflective of the lower socio-economic category to which these migrants belong to.

Fig 2.4: Caste of the Respondents
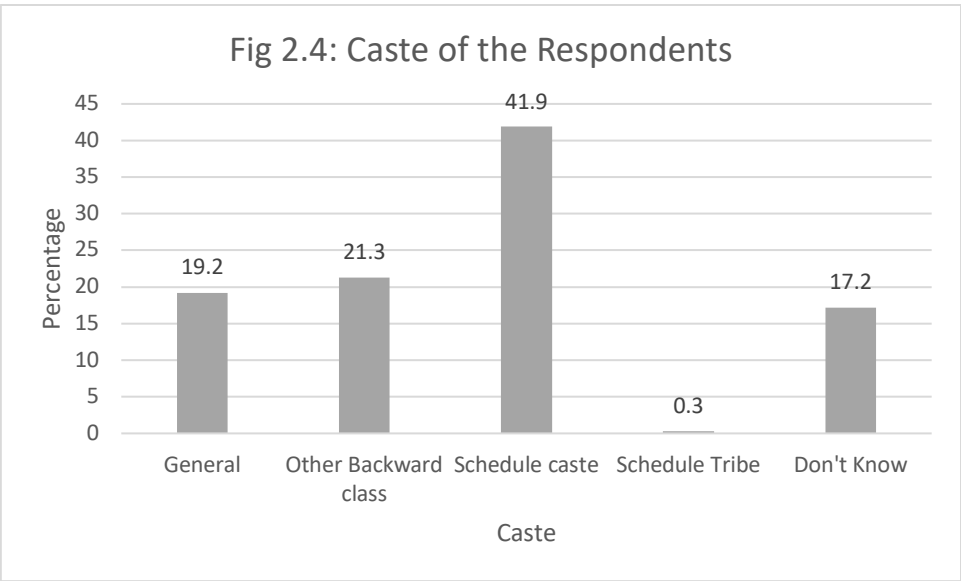
Native State of the Respondents and Reasons for Migration

Fig 2.5: Native State of the Respondents
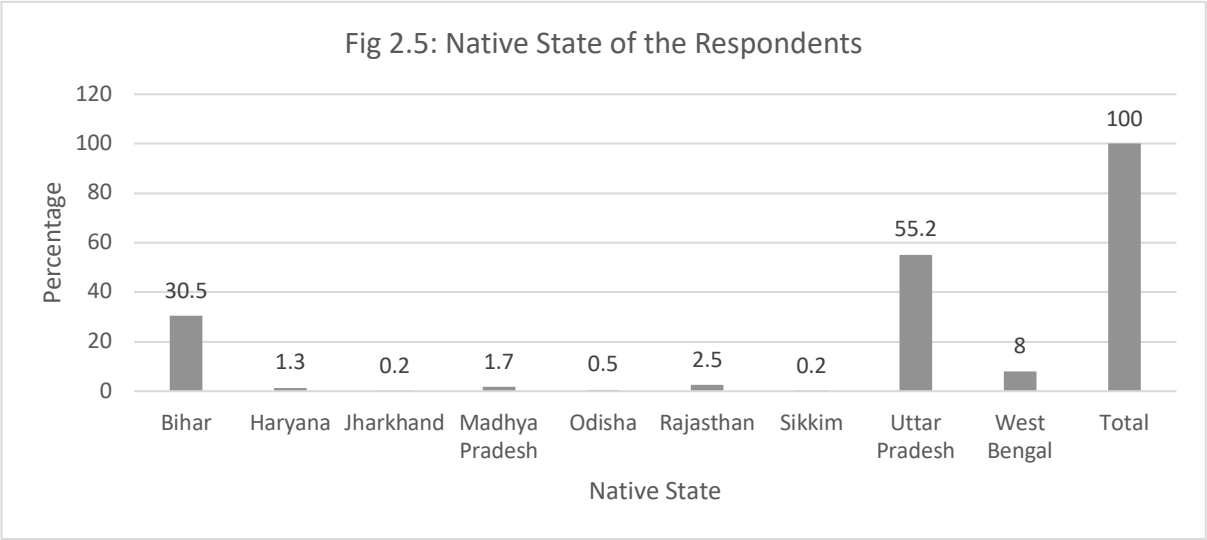
As can be seen from the figure 2.5, large majority of workers hailed from Uttar Pradesh (55.2 percent) followed by Bihar (30.5 percent). Rest of the migrant respondents hailed from West Bengal (8 percent), Rajasthan (2.5 percent), Madhya Pradesh (1.7 percent), Haryana (1.3 percent), Odisha (0.5 percent), Jharkhand (0.2 percent), and Sikkim (0.2 percent).

Fig 2.6: Reason for Migration
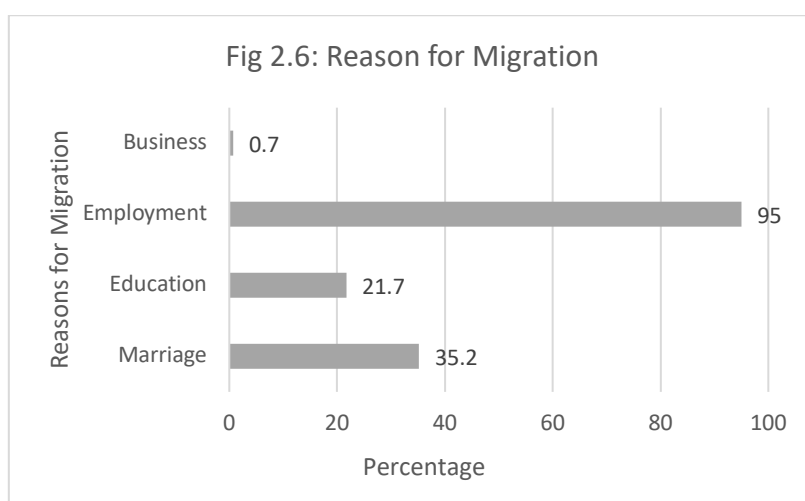
Most of the respondents migrated from their native place for getting employment (95 percent). Marriage and education were also the other major reasons for migration. They chose Delhi as a place of migration because being the capital of India, Delhi has more employment opportunities than their native place. Half of the sample also reported that they came here to join their family members (fig 2.7). 17.5 percent of the migrant workers moved to Delhi for the education of their children.

Fig 2.7: Reason for Choosing Delhi for Migrating
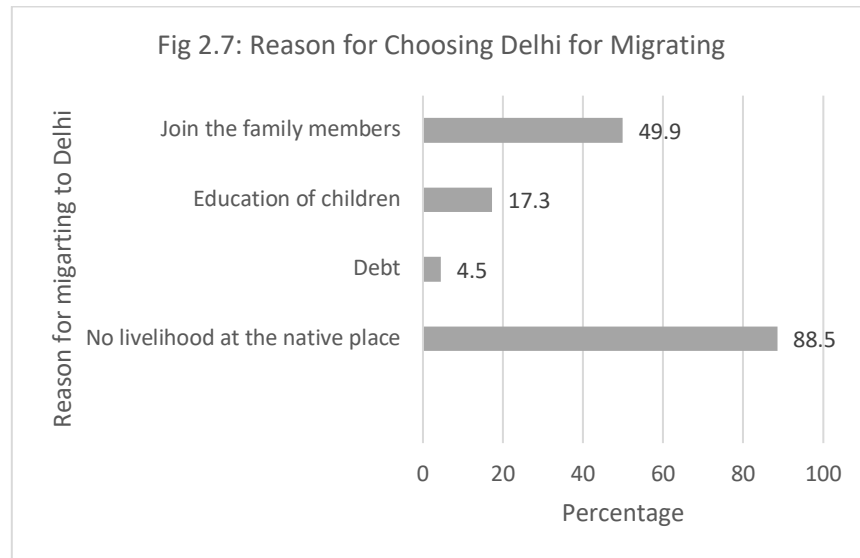
Duration of Stay in Delhi

Fig 2.8: Duration for which respondent is staying in Delhi
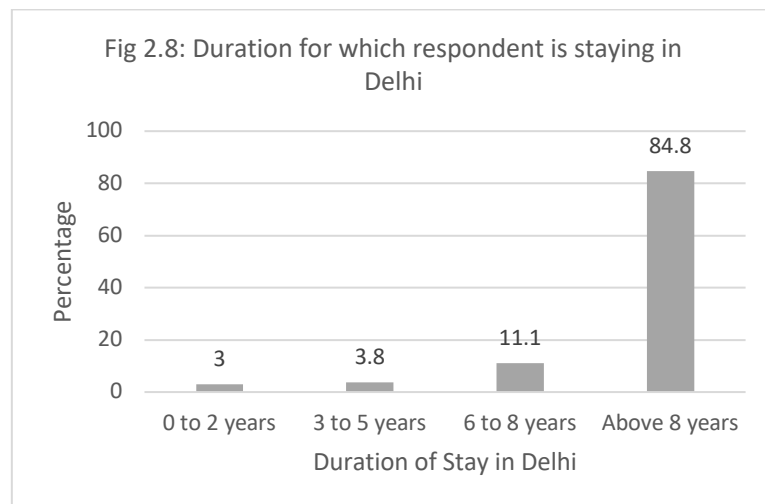
Figure 2.8 illustrate that 84.8 percent of the migrant workers have been living in Delhi for more than 8 years, 11.1 percent in between 6 to 8 years, 3.8 percent in between 3 to 5 years and only 0.3 percent of them were living in Delhi for less than 2 years.

Education, Occupation, and Income of the Respondents

Fig 2.9: Highest Qualification in the family
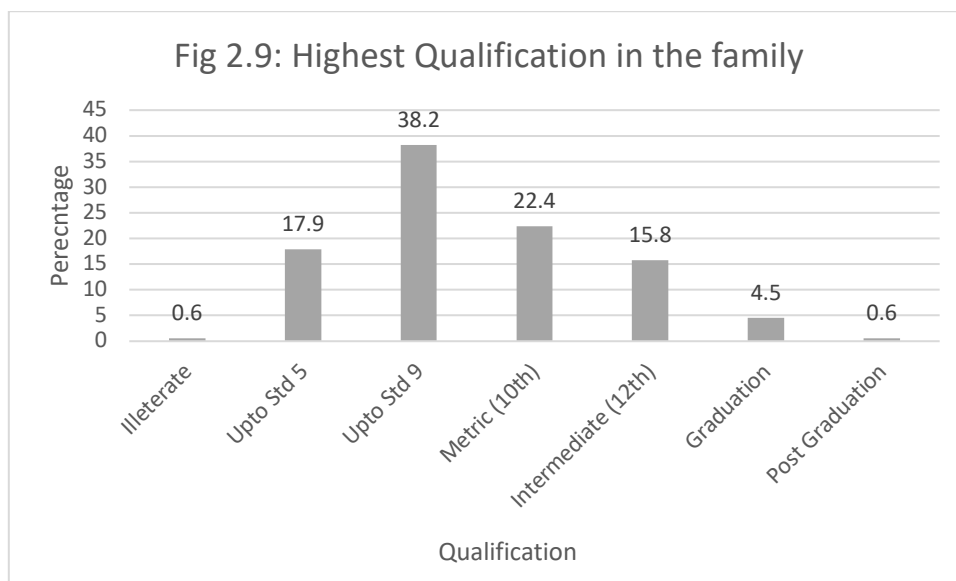
Figure 2.9 illustrate that only 38.2 percent of the migrant workers completed their elementary education. Less than 5 percent of them have completed graduation and post-graduation. 22.4 percent of the migrant workers completed their secondary education and 15.8 percent of them completed their Sr. secondary education. 17.8 percent of the population dropped out of their education before std 5th and 0.6 percent of them were illiterate.

Fig 2.10: Highest paying occupation in the family
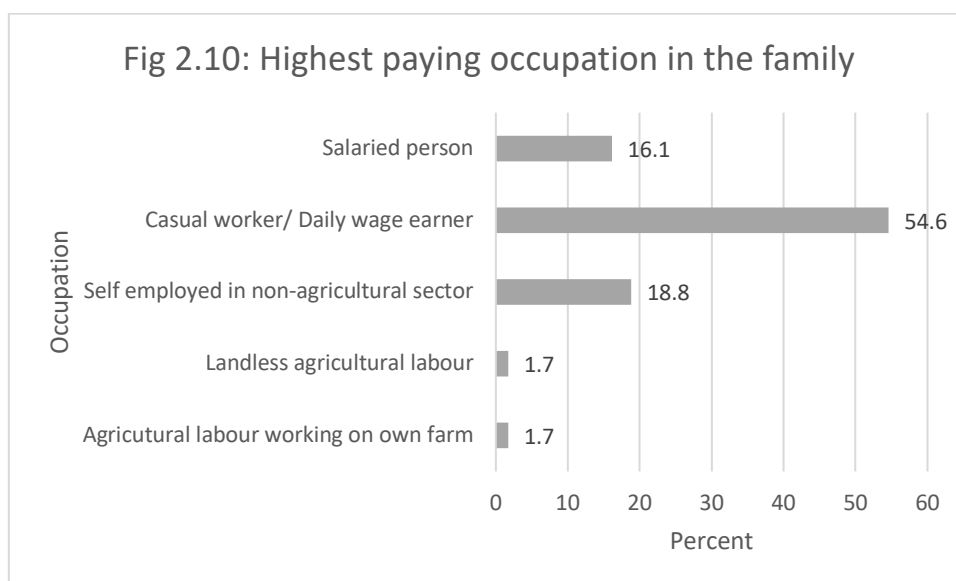
More than half of the respondent's (54.6 percent) were engaged in the informal sector (fig 2.10). They were working as a casual worker or daily wage earners such as labours, carpenters etc. 18.8 percent of them are self-employed in non-agricultural activities such as vegetable vendors and 1.7 percent each are agricultural labours working on their own farm and landless agricultural labourers. Only 16.1 percent of them are involved in the formal sector working on a salary like driver, hotel staff and house maid.

Fig 2.11: Monthly income of the household
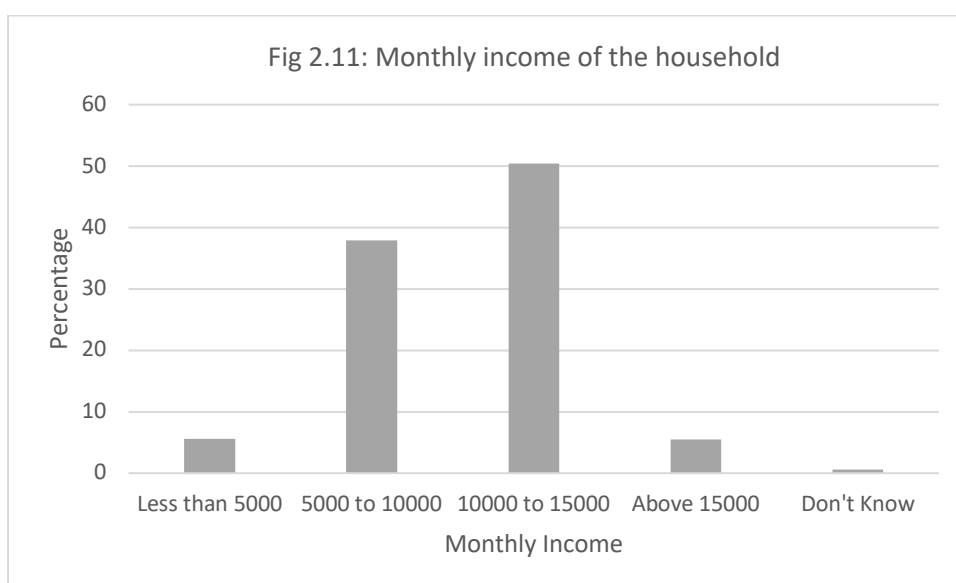
In terms of monthly income of the households, half of the households had income of Rs 10000 to 15000, 37.9 percent of the households had income in between Rs 5000 to 10000, 5.6 percent had income less than Rs 5000 and 5.5 percent had income above 15000. 0.6 percent of the respondents didn't know about the household income (fig 2.11). The income range falling below Rs. 11, 850 per month in urban areas falls into the Below Poverty Line Category. Approximately half of the respondents covered under this study falls in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category. The minimum of wage of Delhi for unskilled worker is Rs. 16,506 and semi-skilled worker is Rs. 18, 187 however more than 90 percent of the respondent falls below this income band.

Living Conditions of the Migrant families

Fig 2.12: Type of colony
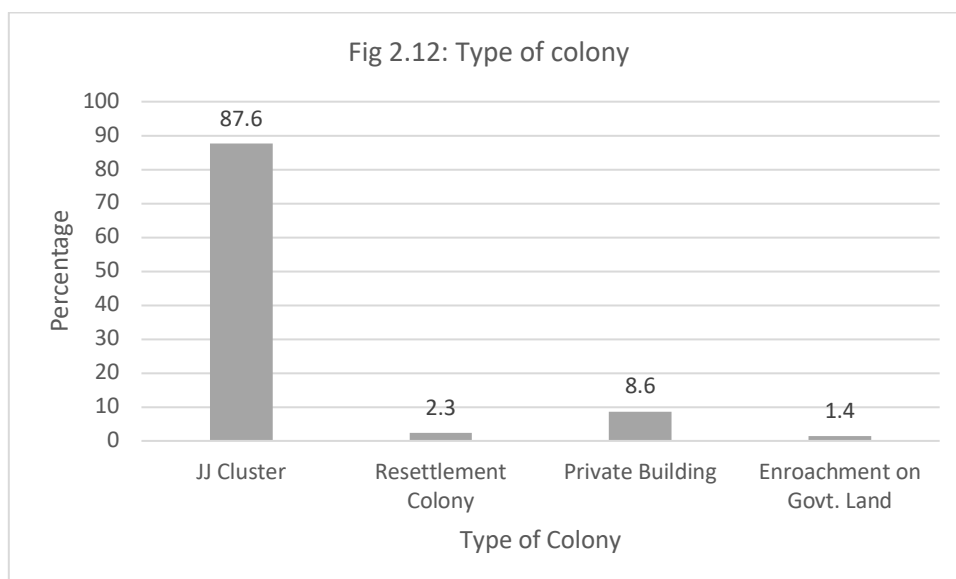
Majority of the migrant workers (87.6 percent) live in the JJ Clusters of Delhi, 8.6 percent in private buildings, 2.3 percent in resettlement colonies and 1.4 percent on encroached government land (fig 2.12).

Fig 2.13: Type of House
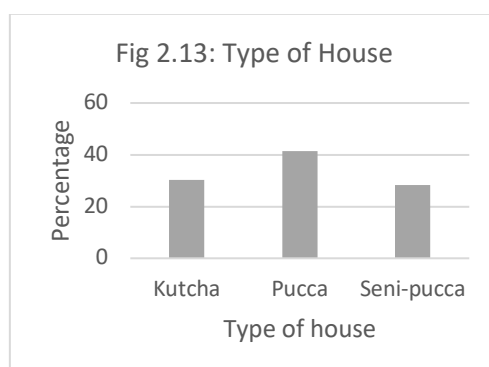
41.3 percent of them have pucca house (fig 2.13). 86.9 percent of the households have less than 2 rooms in their house (fig 2.14). 50.2 percent of them live in rented house whereas 49.2 percent of them have their own house (fig 2.15). Figure 2.16 shows that 60.3 percent of the households have government electric meter and 27.4 percent have private electric

meter. There was no electricity in 3.4 percent of the households and 6.3 percent of the households were dependent on the solar panel for meeting the electricity. 2.7 percent of the sample also said that they steal electricity from poles.

Fig 2.14: Number of room in the households


Fig 2.15: Ownership of the House

Fig 2.16: Source of electricity in Households
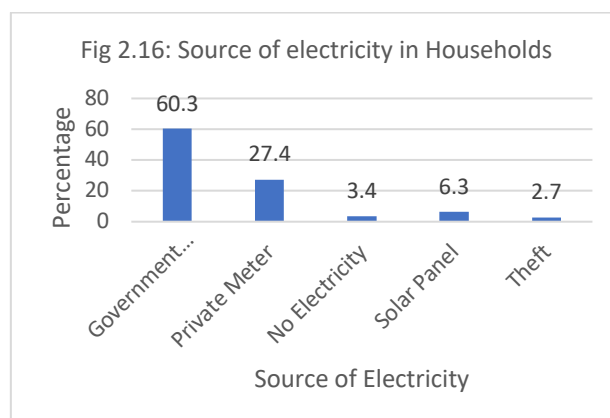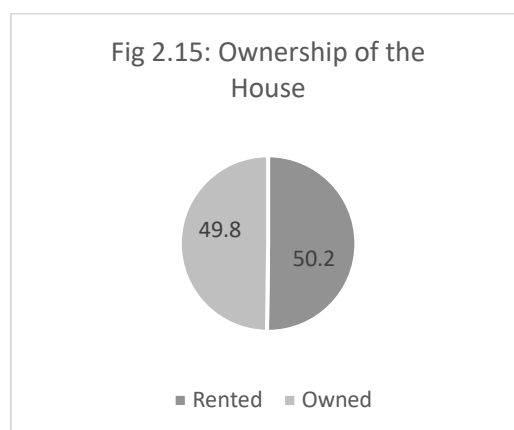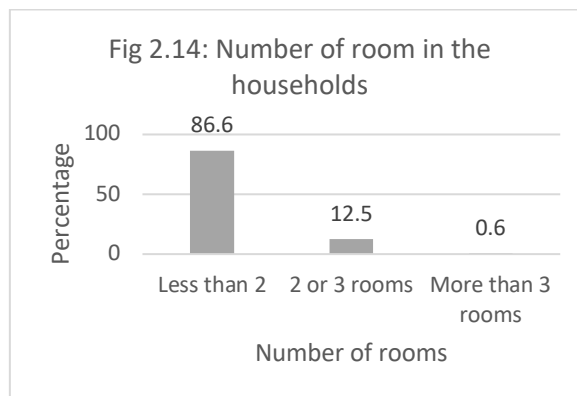
Figure 2.17 depicts the source of water in the households. More than half of the households are dependent on the water supply by the government either through the community tap (53.9 percent) or tanker supply (28 percent). Hand pump in the house premise was available only in 15.1

percent of the houses. Rest of the population are dependent on community pump (10.4 percent) and buying water from the supplier (13.6 percent).
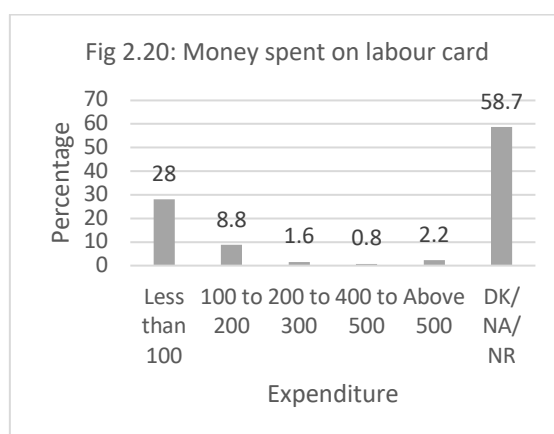

Fig 2.17: Water Connection
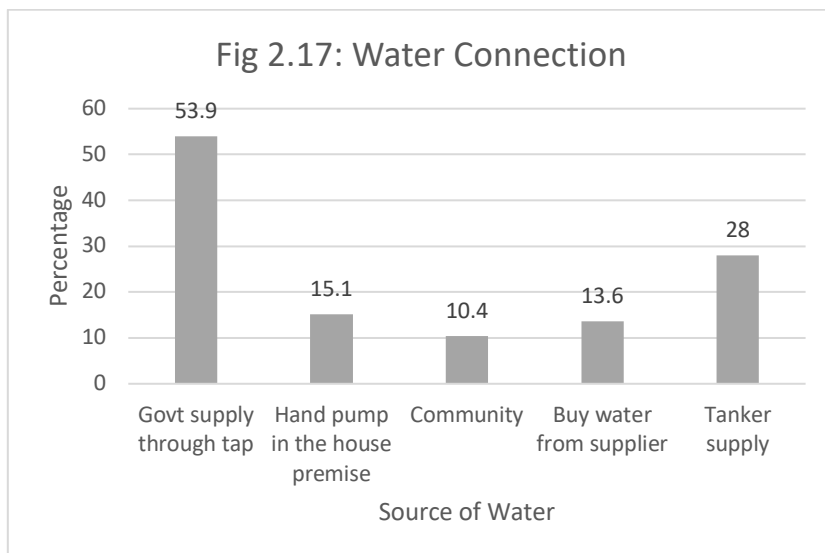
In terms of availability of different implements in household (Figure 2.18), 72.3 percent of the population had gas connections in their home. Refrigerator is available only in 23 percent of the households. Television was available in almost half of the households and cooler was available in around one-fourth of the households. 6.1 percent of the households had 2-wheelers and 0.4 percent of the households had 4- wheelers. 0.9 percent of the households had Wi-fi connection.
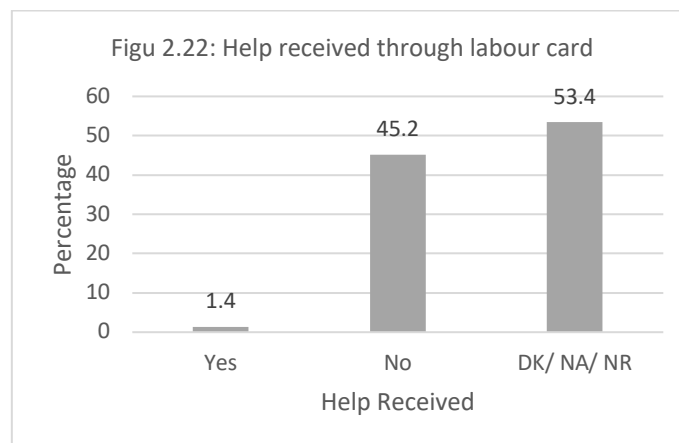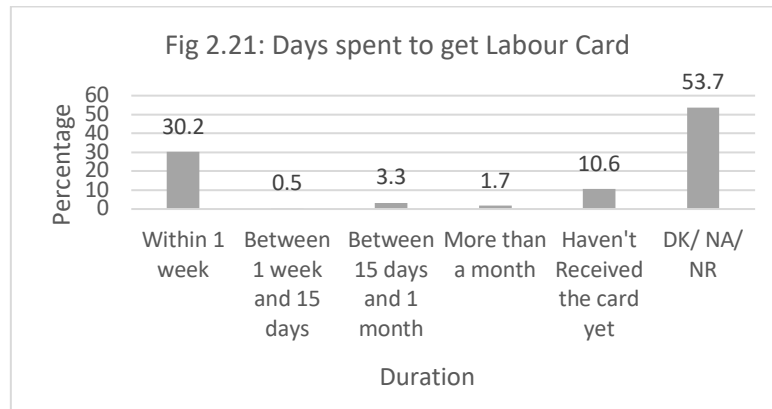

Fig 2.18: Household Implements
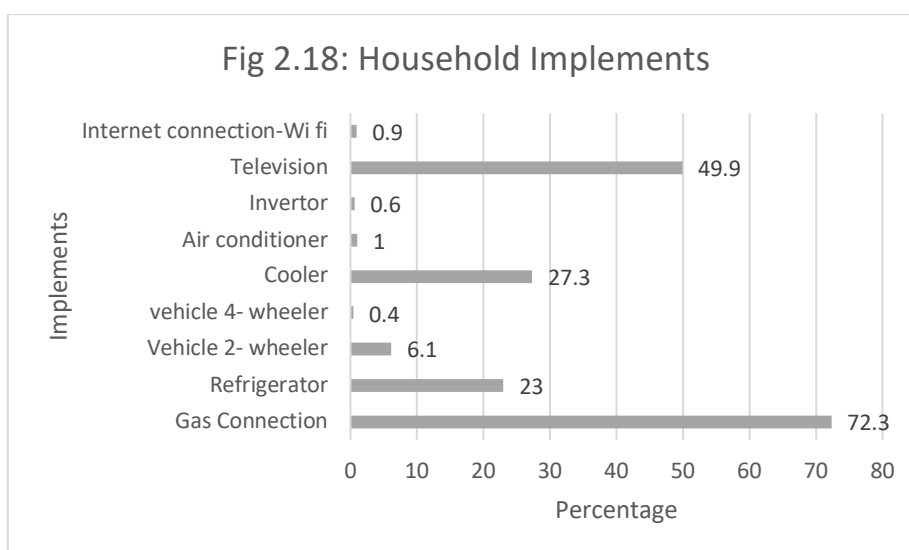
Access to Government Schemes

Fig 2.19: Possession of cards
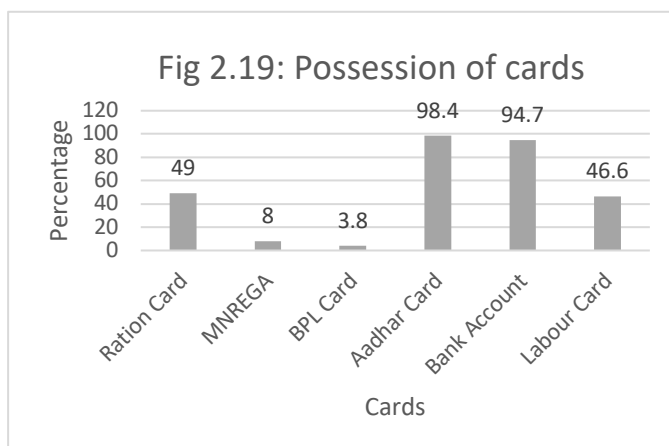
In terms of possession of different cards which provides the access to various government schemes (fig2.19), 49 percent of the migrant workers had Ration card and only 8 percent had MGNREGA card. Only 3.8 percent of the population covered under the study had BPL Card. Majority of the population had Aadhar card (98.4 percent) and Bank Account (94.7 percent).

Fig 2.20: Money spent on labour card

Fig 2.21: Days spent to get Labour Card


Figu 2.22: Help received through labour card

Labour Card was available with 46.6 percent of the respondents. Labour card is issued by the Government of India for the people who are engaged in non-formal sector. The card holders are entitled to various government schemes including insurance, employment benefits and education of children. The card got more prevalence during the pandemic as the state governments distributed various benefits such as cash transfer through this card. Labour card was used to provide employment to people who had lost their means of livelihood due to the pandemic. The cost incurred by maximum number of respondents for getting the labour card was less than Rs100 and it took almost a week for maximum number of participants to get the labour card. 45.2 percent of the respondents didn't receive any kind of benefits through the labour card.

Reverse Migration

The enforcement of National lockdown in view of the COVID-19 situation resulted in fear and anxiety among the common masses. They were unsure of the events which would be unfolding further and due to the uncertainty migrant workers started moving towards their native place. This phenomenon of moving back to their native place was termed as reverse migration.

Fig 2.23: Reverse migration during the Pandemic
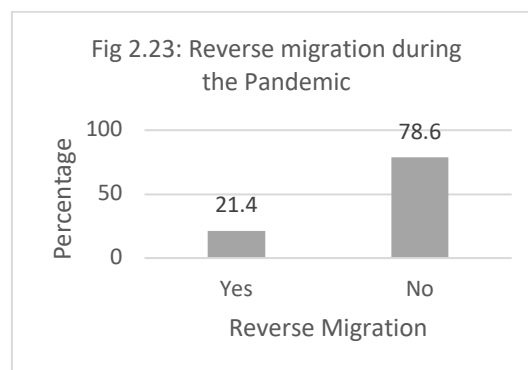
Out of all the respondents covered in the study, three fourth of the respondents went back to their hometowns from Delhi after the imposition of the lockdown. 58.4 percent of them migrated during the first lockdown, 15.3 percent of the respondents migrated during the second lockdown and 26.3 percent of the respondents migrated during both the lockdowns. 98.5 percent of the respondents from those who migrated, went back to their native place and only 1.5 percent of them went to some other state in search of livelihood.

Fig 2.24: Lockdown during which reverse migration happened

Fig 2.25: Place of reverse migration
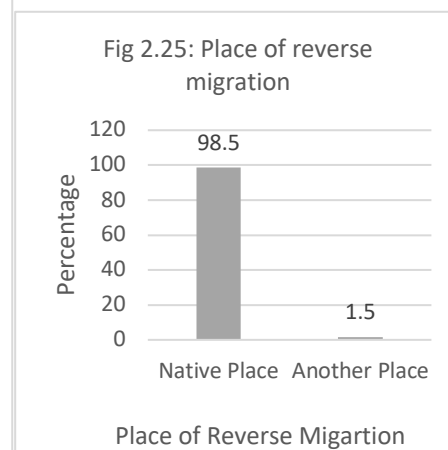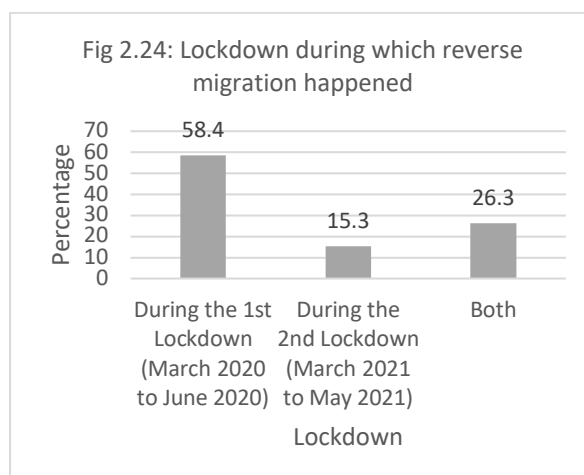
Maximum number of respondents who reverse migrated during the lockdown belonged to SC community (38 percent) followed by OBC (24.1 percent). Within the Social Category, 24.3 percent of the respondents belonging to OBC community reverse migrated during the lockdown followed by the respondents from General community 23.6 percent.

Table 2.1 Social Category * Reverse Migration Crosstabulation			Reverse Migration		Total
			1- Yes	2-No	
Social Category	1- General	Count	29	94	123
		% within Social Category	23.6%	76.4%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	21.2%	18.7%	19.2%
	2- OBC	Count	33	103	136
		% within Social Category	24.3%	75.7%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	24.1%	20.5%	21.3%
	3- SC	Count	52	216	268
		% within Social Category	19.4%	80.6%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	38.0%	43.0%	41.9%
	4- ST	Count	0	2	2
		% within Social Category	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%
	5- Don't know	Count	23	87	110
		% within Social Category	20.9%	79.1%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	16.8%	17.3%	17.2%
Total		Count	137	502	639
		% within Social Category	21.4%	78.6%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The higher the duration for which respondents were staying in Delhi, the lesser the number of reverse migrations was observed (Table2.2). All the respondents who were living in Delhi for less than 2 years migrated back, 37.5 percent of the respondents from those who were staying in Delhi between 3 to 5 years migrated back, 29.5 percent of the respondent from those who were staying in Delhi from 6 to 8 years migrated back and only 19.3 percent of the respondents from those who were staying in Delhi for more than 8years migrated back during the pandemic. Those who were

living in Delhi for long time had perhaps built a good support system and thus they were confident of being able to sustain themselves in Delhi during the pandemic.

Table 2.2 Duration for which respondent is staying in Delhi * Reverse Migration Crosstabulation					
			Reverse Migration		Total
			1- Yes	2-No	
Duration for which respondent is staying in Delhi	1- 0 to 2 years	% Within Duration for which respondent is staying in Delhi	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% Within Reverse Migration	1.5%	0.0%	0.3%
		% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%
	2- 3 to 5 years	% within Duration for which respondent is staying in Delhi	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	6.6%	3.0%	3.8%
		% of Total	1.4%	2.3%	3.8%
	3- 6 to 8 years	% within Duration for which respondent is staying in Delhi	29.6%	70.4%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	15.3%	10.0%	11.1%
		% of Total	3.3%	7.8%	11.1%
	4- Above 8 years	% Within Duration for which respondent is staying in Delhi	19.4%	80.6%	100.0%
		% Within Reverse Migration	76.6%	87.1%	84.8%
		% of Total	16.4%	68.4%	84.8%

Also, 25.2 percent of the respondents who were living on rent reverse migrated (Table 2.3) and only 17.6 percent respondents who owned the house went back from Delhi during the pandemic. Majority of the respondents who were reversely migrated belonged to the group who were

living in private buildings (32.3 percent) or those who had encroached on government land (33.3 percent). The maximum number of reverse migrations was from JJ Clusters (83.9 percent)

Table 2.3 Type of colony * Reverse Migration Crosstabulation			Reverse Migration		Total
			1- Yes	2-No	
Type of colony	1- JJ Cluster				
		% within Type of colony	20.5%	79.5%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	83.9%	88.6%	87.6%
		% of Total	18.0%	69.6%	87.6%
	2- Resettlement Colony				
		% within Type of colony	6.7%	93.3%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	0.7%	2.8%	2.3%
		% of Total	0.2%	2.2%	2.3%
	3- Private				
		% within Type of colony	32.7%	67.3%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	13.1%	7.4%	8.6%
		% of Total	2.8%	5.8%	8.6%
	4- Encroachment of government land				
		% within Type of colony	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	2.2%	1.2%	1.4%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.9%	1.4%

Among those who were reversely migrated during the lockdown (Table 2.4), 38.7 percent of the respondents were living in Pucca house, 32.8 percent of the respondents were living in Kutcha house and 28.5 percent of them were living in semi pucca house. Within group, maximum number of migrations happened from the respondents who were living in the kutcha houses. These respondents were majorly from group who recently move to Delhi and thus they didn't have a permanent structure to live. Thus, during the lockdown they wrapped up their things and went back to their native place.

Table 2.4 Type of House * Reverse Migration Crosstabulation					
			Reverse Migration		Total
			1- Yes	2-No	
Type of House	1- Kutcha				
		% within Type of House	23.2%	76.8%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	32.8%	29.7%	30.4%
		% of Total	7.0%	23.3%	30.4%
	2- Pucca				
		% within Type of House	20.1%	79.9%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	38.7%	42.0%	41.3%
		% of Total	8.3%	33.0%	41.3%
	3- Semi pucca				
		% within Type of House	21.5%	78.5%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	28.5%	28.3%	28.3%
		% of Total	6.1%	22.2%	28.3%

59.1 percent of the respondent who were staying on rent migrated during the lockdown. 25.2 percent of the respondents among those who were living on rent migrated during the lockdown (Table 2.5).

| Table 2.5 Ownership of the house * Reverse Migration Crosstabulation					
			Reverse Migration		Total
			1- Yes	2-No	
Ownership of the house	1- Rented	Count	81	240	321
		% Within Ownership of the house	25.2%	74.8%	100.0%
		% Within Reverse Migration	59.1%	47.8%	50.2%
	2- Owned	Count	56	262	318
		% Within Ownership of the house	17.6%	82.4%	100.0%
		% Within Reverse Migration	40.9%	52.2%	49.8%
Total		Count	137	502	639
		% Within Ownership of the house	21.4%	78.6%	100.0%
		% Within Reverse Migration	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In terms of monthly income of those who reverse migrated, 23.3 percent of the respondents had monthly income between Rs 10000 to Rs 15000

followed by the group having monthly income in between Rs.5000 to Rs. 10000 (20.7 percent).

Table 2.6 Monthly income of the household * Reverse Migration Crosstabulation					
			Reverse Migration		Total
			1- Yes	2-No	
Monthly income of the household	1- Less than 5000	Count	6	30	36
		% Within Monthly income of the household	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
		% Within Reverse Migration	4.4%	6.0%	5.6%
		% of Total	0.9%	4.7%	5.6%
	2- 5000 to 10000	Count	50	192	242
		% within Monthly income of the household	20.7%	79.3%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	36.5%	38.2%	37.9%
		% of Total	7.8%	30.0%	37.9%
	3- 10000 to 15000	Count	75	247	322
		% within Monthly income of the household	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	54.7%	49.2%	50.4%
		% of Total	11.7%	38.7%	50.4%
	4- above 15000	Count	4	31	35
		% within Monthly income of the household	11.4%	88.6%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	2.9%	6.2%	5.5%
		% of Total	0.6%	4.9%	5.5%
	5- Don't Know	Count	2	2	4
		% Within Monthly income of the household	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Reverse Migration	1.5%	0.4%	0.6%
		% of Total	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%

Maximum number of the respondents migrated back (Figure 2.26) due to lack of work in Delhi (78.1 percent) and having no means to survive in

Delhi (67.8 percent). 27.7 percent of the respondents migrated back due to fear of COVID-19 in Delhi, 24.8 percent of them had to move because they had to vacate their home on the instruction of the landlords as they were not able to pay their rent and 8 percent of the respondents went back as a part of seasonal migration.
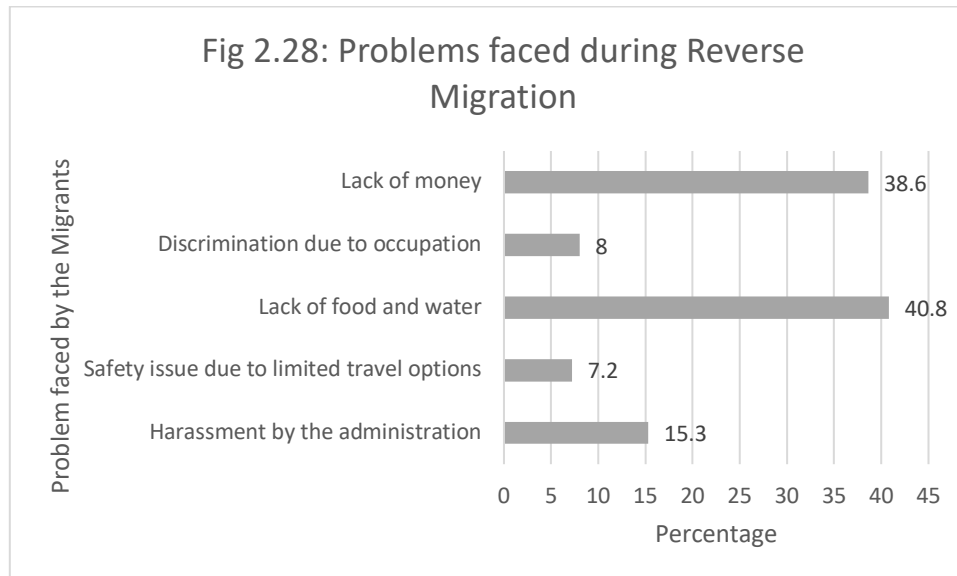

Fig 2.26: Reason for Reverse Migration
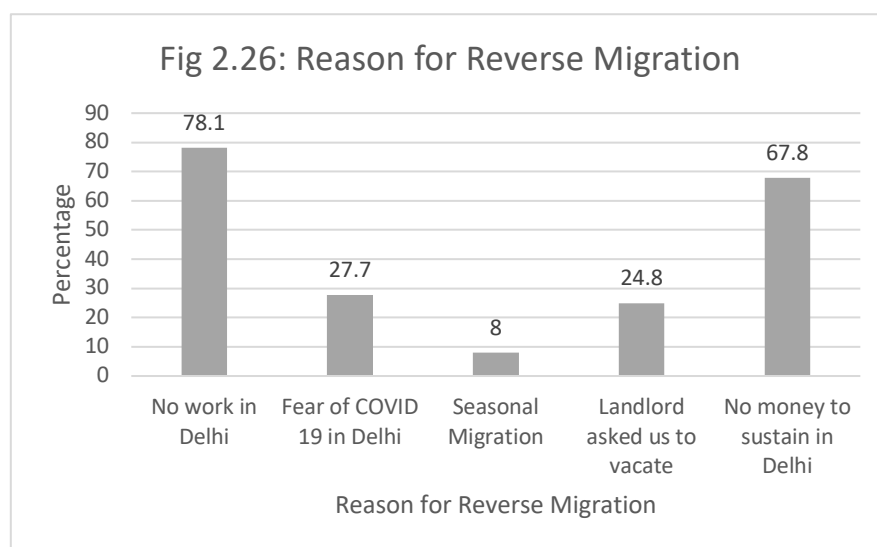
The respondent used various means to travel during the lockdown (Figure 2.27) such as Shramik train (9.5 percent) which was a special train started by the Govt of India for the ease of those people who were stuck in various parts of the country due to national lockdown. Many respondents (85.4 percent) travelled through bus and cabs for which they paid themselves. There were 5.1 percent of the respondents who travelled on bikes, tankers, cycles, and by walking.

Fig 2.27: Mode of Travel during Reverse Migration
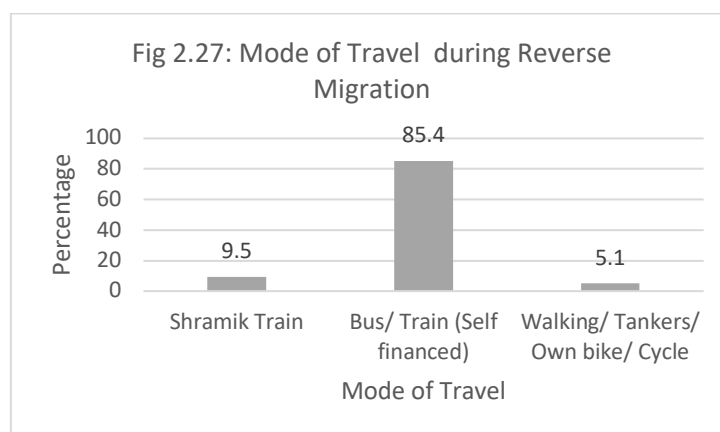
They faced various problems during the migration (Figure 2.28) such as safety issues of their family due to limited or no travel options during the lockdown (7.2 percent), No food and water (40.8 percent) and lack of money (38.6 percent) as the travel cost was very high due to limited options, and harassment by the administration (15.3 percent) as well as the discrimination associated with their occupation (8 percent). They were stopped by the police and were subjected to humiliation in the form of verbal abuse, lathi charge and sanitised on the road[16]. They also had to pay money to cross the checkpoints set up by the government to stop the people from coming out. They were seen as a carrier of COVID-19 by the administration of the states where they have reached and thus were put in Quarantine facilities which were mostly set up in the government schools and offices. These facilities lacked necessities such as washrooms, adequate space to sleep and safe environment for their children. They were also cornered by the villagers once they were out of the quarantine facility. There was lot of stigma and misinformation associated with COVID-19 during the early phase of the pandemic and these people who migrated from big cities were seen as carrier of the disease[17]. They were subjected to harassment and abuse by the villagers. There were instances where shopkeepers refused to sell to these people because of reverse migration.

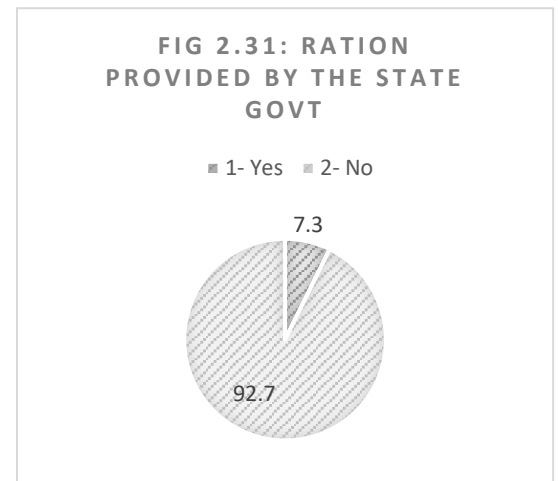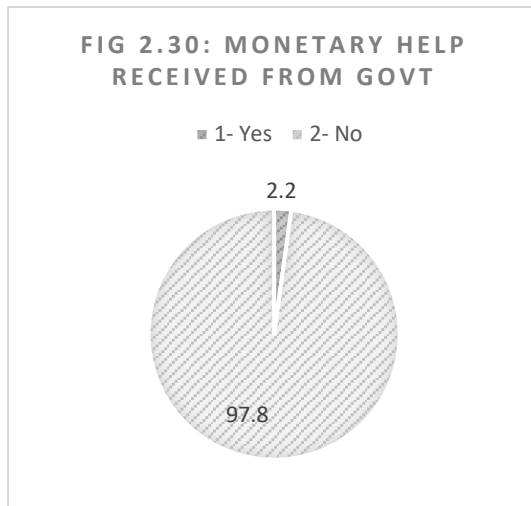[16]https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/30/india/india-migrant-workers-sprayed-intl/index.html

[17]https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/migrant-workers-battle-stigma-bias-back-home/story-0uuRSEZfoickVOrPU2agGL.html

Fig 2.28: Problems faced during Reverse Migration

Problem	Percentage
Lack of money	38.6
Discrimination due to occupation	8
Lack of food and water	40.8
Safety issue due to limited travel options	7.2
Harassment by the administration	15.3

Half of the sample went through screening and Covid test at their destination (48.9 percent) while 41.6 percent of them went without any test or screening (Figure 2.29). A significant proportion (17.5%) were kept in the quarantine facilities upon their arrival.

Fig 2.29: Steps taken by the state government

Steps taken	Percentage
Were put in the Quarantine facility	17.5
Screening and test	48.9
No steps	41.6
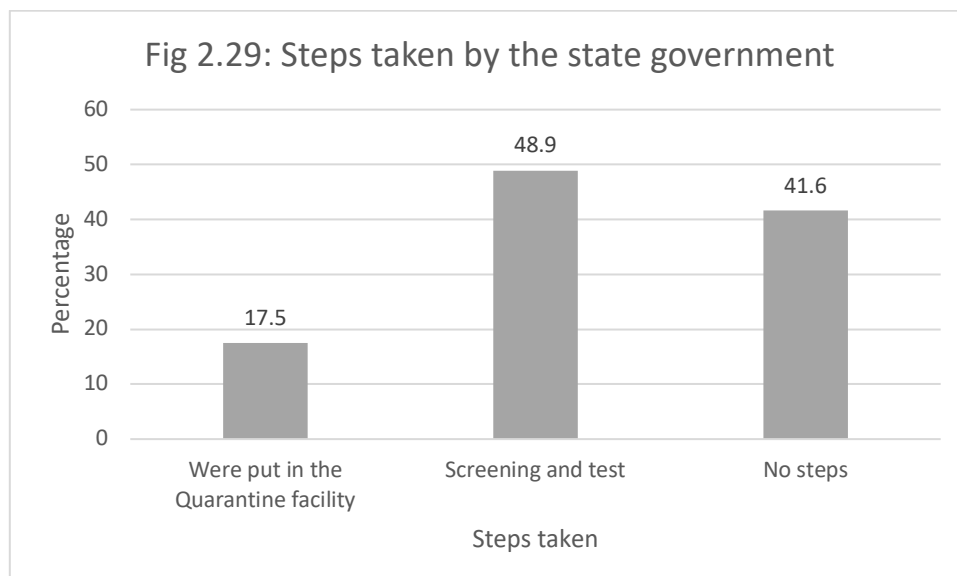
Only 2.2 percent of the respondents received monetary help from their state government (Figure 2.30). Those who received the monetary compensation were from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. 7.3 percent of the respondents received ration by the state government (Figure 2.31) of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

FIG 2.30: MONETARY HELP RECEIVED FROM GOVT

■ 1- Yes ■ 2- No

2.2

97.8

FIG 2.31: RATION PROVIDED BY THE STATE GOVT

■ 1- Yes ■ 2- No

7.3

92.7

Profile of the children

As the part of the study, the eldest school going child in the migrant family was also included in the sample. Out of the entire household covered under the study, 600 children were available for the study. 132 children belonged to those families who reverse migrated during the lockdown and 468 children were from the families who did not migrate during the lockdown (Figure 2.32).

Fig 2.32: Distribution of Children as per their migrant status

Migrated: 132

Did Not migrate: 469

■ No

■ Yes
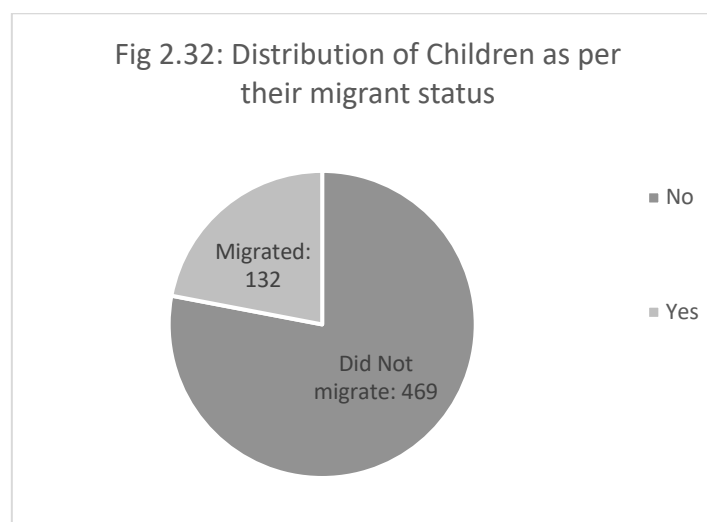
Age of the Children

Figure 2.33 gives the details of the children who were interviewed during the survey. Out of all the children who were part of the study, 1.8 percent of children were of 6years of age, 5 percent were aged 7 years, 9.7 percent were of 8 years, 9.3 percent of them aged 9 years, 14 percent of them aged 10 years, 10.8 percent of them aged 11 years, 16.5 percent of children belonged to age 12 years, 16.2 percent belonged to age of 13 years and 16.7 percent of the children were of 14 years of age.

Fig 2.33: Age of the Children
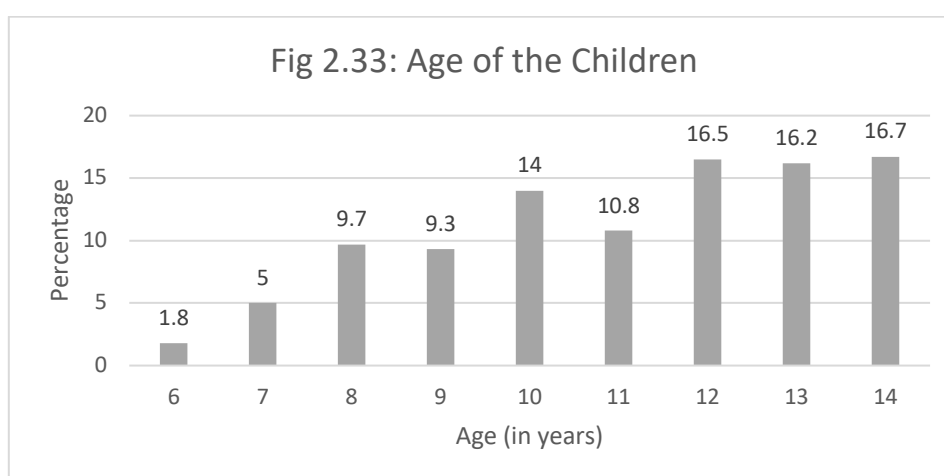
Sex of the Children

Figure 2.34 shows the sex of the children who were part of the study. Slightly more than half of the children who participated in the study were female (54 percent).

Fig 2.34: Percentage of Child Respondents according to Sex

■ 1- Male ■ 2- Female
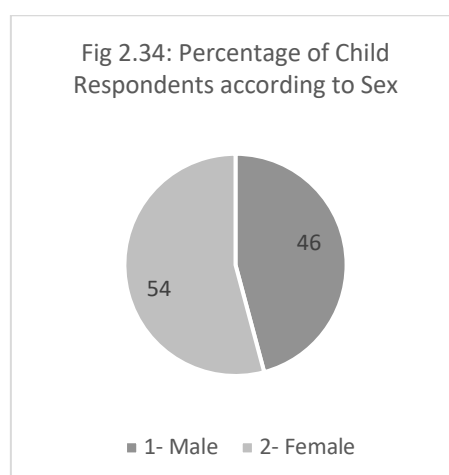
Type of Schools in which they were studying

Of all the children who participated in the study, 57.8 percent were studying in the government school, 31.3 percent of the children were studying in MCD run schools, 7.7 percent of the children were studying in private schools through EWS Quota and 3.2 percent of the children were not going to school (Figure 2.35).

Fig 2.35: Type of School
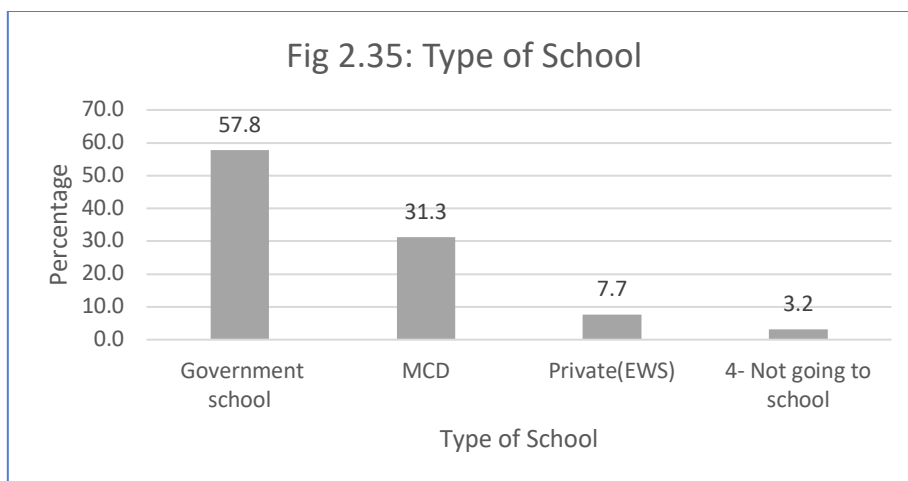
The present chapter highlights the condition of the respondents covered under the study. It gives a brief account of the social and economic status of the respondents and tries to understand the reasons of migration and subsequent reverse migration during the lockdown. Employment opportunities in big cities are one of the leading reasons which force the people to migrate. The migrant population mostly come and join other migrants from their village who are already living in Delhi. These people help the new migrants to get job and start their life. They act as a support system for the migrant families. The maximum number of respondents included in the study were living in Delhi for a period of more than 8 years as one of the inclusion criteria in the study was having a school going children between the age group of 6 to 14 years in the family. This condition was fulfilled by the families who were living in Delhi for longer duration. Also, the migrant population do not bring their family during the initial years as they themselves do not have proper means of survival. A large portion of the respondents were engaged as casual workers and daily

wage earners and were living in JJ Colonies across Delhi. Majority of them had access to electricity and drinking water supplied either by government or by private entities.

The study found out that maximum number of reverse migrations happened during the first lockdown as there was uncertainty about the virus among the people and for these reasons maximum number of respondents chose to go back to their native place rather than some other place in search of work. During the harvest season, many migrant populations go back to their native place to help the family in the field every year. This seasonal migration helps them maintain their relationship with their roots and thus they do not have to face much hardship during the time they had to stay in their native place.

The reverse migration was higher in the group who were living in Delhi for shorter period. Those who were staying here for longer period had already established their support system in Delhi and thus they were able to sustain themselves sin Delhi. The primary reason for the reverse migration was lack of work and subsequently lack of resources to sustain in Delhi. Most respondents who reverse migrated went by the time there were some relaxations in terms of travelling. They either used special train ran by the Govt of India for the migrant population or by the bus. It was also found out that those who reverse migrated during first few days of the lockdown went walking or by rickshaw or cycles. This was the most vulnerable group who didn't have any means to sustain in Delhi. The uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic cause anxiety and panic among them and thus they in the absence of any other means of travelling started walking towards their native place.

The chapter also highlights challenges associated with reverse migration faced by the migrant populations and the steps taken by the government to reduce the vulnerabilities of the migrant population during the lockdown.

Chapter Three

Impact of the Pandemic on Children of Migrant Workers and their Education

The COVID 19 pandemic had far reaching consequences for almost all sections of the population across the world. In the absence of adequate social protection mechanisms, children were seen to suffer much more than other sections of the population.

Status of Migrant Children pre pandemic

As per the Census 2011, every fifth migrant in India is a child (GOI, 2011). The total migrant child population of India is 92.95 million (GOI, 2011. Migrant children are more vulnerable and are always on the verge of falling into the category of child labour and dropping out of education. They can be forced in early marriages and exposed to child trafficking, smuggling, exploitation, and violence. They often tend to miss out on education, medical care and it can be difficult for them to fit into the new environment of the place where they arrive after migration. The physical and psychological effects caused by these factors can hinder the growth and development of the child. It is estimated that 36.5 million children around the world were displaced from their home by the end of years 2021. There is 1 in 8 international migrants as child. (UNICEF, n.d.)

As per the study conducted by the ILO in the year 2013, it was found out that 47 percent of the children between the age group of 6 to 14 years and 68 percent of the children between 15-17 years of age worked as bonded labour (International Labour Organization, 2013).

90 percent of the young migrants on work sites had no access to ICDS. While 80% of those in the school-going age did not have access to education. Additionally, 40% were engaged in some form of child labour[18]

"Eight out of 10 migrant children in work sites across seven Indian cities do not have access to education. Among young people who have grown up in a rural household with a seasonal migrant, 28 per cent identified as illiterate or had an incomplete primary education. Up to 40 per cent of children from seasonal migrant households are likely to end up in work rather than school." — UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 (UNESCO, 2022)

Right to Education of Children of Migrant Workers

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), ensures that children from disadvantaged groups or weaker sections should not be discriminated against or prevented in any manner in schools (section 9) and the local authorities should ensure the admission of children belonging to migrant families in the neighbourhood school (section 9(k)). Children also have the right to seek transfer to any school and shall be immediately issued a transfer certificate by the head and in charge of school (section 5).

As per the Times of India, "The Ministry of Education in its written reply to Rajya Sabha in 2019 clarified RTEs role with respect to migrant children. RTE, 2009 provides for free and compulsory education of equitable quality to all children, including the children from migrant families between the age group of 6-14 years. Section 6 of RTE Act ensures this by establishing sufficient schools in neighbourhood areas. The Ministry of Education also mentioned to have approved the establishment of over 2.04 lakhs primary schools and 1.59 lakhs upper primary schools, 1021 residentials schools

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[18]https://bernardvanleer.org/app/uploads/2015/12/ECM121_Children-of-seasonal-migrant-workers.pdf

with the accommodation capacity of 1, 08,275 children. The government also claims to be addressing the issue of seasonal migration by using strategies such as conducting household surveys to identify out of school children. Samagra Sikhsa Abhiyaan, ensures provision of elementary education to migrant children through provision like seasonal hostels/residential camps in villages during migration periods, special residential/non-residential training centres for out of school children/dropout/migrant children[19].

The RTE Act and the Samagra Siksha Abhiyaan, even though robust, fail to address the complexities and nuances of the unique issues of migrant children in India adequately. Despite the RTE Act's mandate and implementation, the ground reality seems to be very different. Due to varied reasons and trends of interstate migration, migrant children often experience disruption in education and frequently drop out of education. Another pertinent issue is loss and gaps in learning/education for migrant children and it is often difficult for them to cope up with varying academic curriculum, language of instruction, peer-support, difficulty of re-enrolling in another school etc. In many cases, low-income parents are also leaving low-budget private schools and opting for government schools. All of this has further exacerbated during the pandemic"[20]

The foregoing sections were an introduction to the issue of education of children of migrant workers. In this study, 600 children were contacted to understand the problems they faced in continuing their education during the COVID 19 pandemic. The following section presents the scenario in detail.

Government of Delhi instructed its school to suspend offline learning on 19th March 20202 till 31st Match 2020 in the first phase of the

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[19]https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/always-on-the-move-the-troubling-landscape-of-the-right-to-education-for-migrant-children-in-india/?source=app&frmapp=yes
[20]https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/always-on-the-move-the-troubling-landscape-of-the-right-to-education-for-migrant-children-in-india/

lockdown[21]which was announced on 23rd March 2020. Further, as per the extension of national lockdown in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, offline teaching in schools remained suspended. Delhi government in its order dated 6th May 2020, ordered all the government and government aided school to observe summer vacation from 11th May 2020 to 30th June 2020[22] and instructed to not call students to schools for any teaching learning activities during the vacation in view of the COVID-19 situation. Further, Delhi Government in its order dated 30.06.2020 suggested the schools to make provision for online learning[23]. The school were running in hybrid mode for the elementary classes until November 2021. Delhi government allowed the schools to reopen for all the classes from 29th November 2021 in its order dated 27th November 2021, approximately 19Months after the initial shutting down of schools. Although schools were opening in phase manner for the higher classes, various emergency situations such as rise in COVID cases, pollution level forced the school to shut in between the session[24].

There was a break of 4 months before the formal resumption of education of children after the first lockdown was announced which has impacted the overall growth of children. There has been a learning gap in children due to the prolonged school closure. As per the study conducted by the Azim Premji University in January 2021, 92 percent of the children lost at least one specific language ability from the previous year across all classes and 82% of children on an average have lost at least one specific mathematical ability from the previous year across all classes (Azim Premji University, 2021). Despite the efforts for continuation of online education

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[21]http://it.delhigovt.nic.in/writereaddata/Cir2020524467.PDF
[22]https://lexcomply.com/rsjadmin/news/202005152222Circ.%20DE.23(03)-Sch.Br.2019-20-352-%20Declaration%20of%20Summer%20Vacation%20for%20Academic%20Session%202020-21.pdf
[23]http://it.delhigovt.nic.in/writereaddata/Cir2020524475.PDF
[24]https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/hardlook-schools-out-education-covid-restrictions-7738537/#:~:text=From%20March%201%2C%202020%2C%20to,weeks%2C%20partially%20for%202020%20weeks.
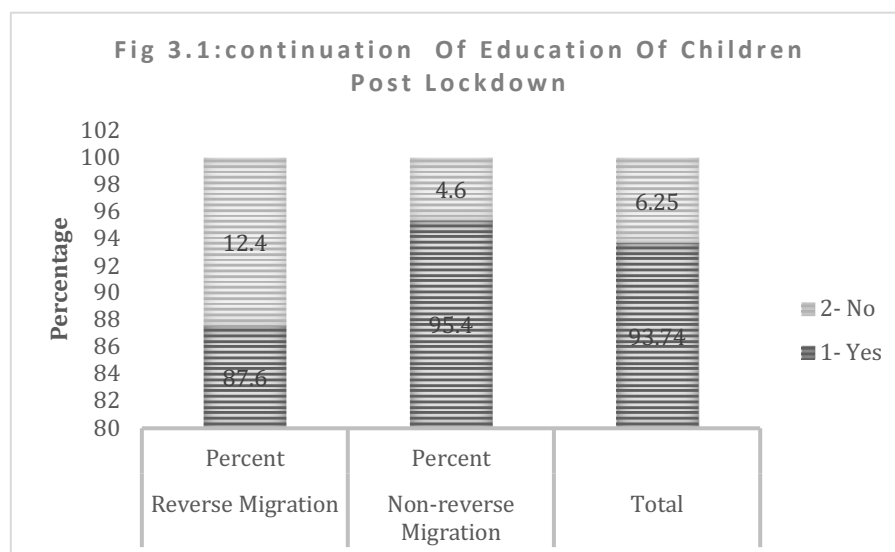
by the government during the lockdown, there has been a huge gap due to the unavailability of ICT devices. A Parliamentary Standing Committee report in August 2021 quoted UNICEF as saying that 40% of students had not accessed any remote learning. The Standing Committee report said, "About 70% of the country does not have access to Internet connectivity and available quality of connectivity is poor". According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2021, facilitated by educational NGO Pratham, availability of smartphones at home rose to 67.6% in 2021, from 36.5% in 2018, but at least a quarter of schoolchildren did not have access to the devices (Pratham Education Foundation, 2021).

During 2020 and 2021, child rights activists across the country have pointed to another disturbing trend brought about partly due to school closures: children joining the workforce, the rise in child marriages, and the lack of nutritious food that thousands of children received through school meals[25].

The ASER report found that in 2018, pre-pandemic, only 2.5% of children aged 6-14 were not enrolled in school. In both the 2020 and 2021 surveys, that figure nearly doubled to 4.6%. A study released by Campaign Against Child Labour in March last year revealed that the proportion of working children among vulnerable communities increased by nearly 280% in Tamil Nadu compared to the pre-COVID-19 years. Childline, the country's national helpline for children in distress, reported a spike in the number of calls it received about child marriage (Pratham Education Foundation, 2021).

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[25]https://www.thehindu.com/education/indias-prolonged-school-closure-has-set-children-back-by-years-academically-and-taken-a-toll-on-their-wellbeing-emotionally/article65048342.ece

Status of Migrant Children during the lockdown

Fig 3.1:continuation Of Education Of Children Post Lockdown

As the restrictions were in place for a longer duration, the government asked the school to ensure the continuation of education of children. Delhi Government ordered its school to make alternative arrangements for education in the first week of July, approximately 3 months after the announcement of lockdown[26] . During the initial phase of the first lockdown, children were already free from their examinations and the schools were closed. Parents mostly became aware of the school closure through media. In addition, schools also informed the parents about the closure through school management committee, text messages and through messages on WhatsApp groups. The Department of Education instructed the schools to plan for alternative mode of education during the first week of July. Schools began planning for alternate mode of education soon after the order received from Department of Education. Schools started alternative mode of education through various methods like Online education through video conferencing on apps like Google meet, Zoom etc, through online and offline worksheets.

As the physical classes were shut during the lockdown, schools used different methods for providing education to the children. The data

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[26]http://it.delhigovt.nic.in/writereaddata/Cir2020524475.PDF

collected from schools during the survey reveals that most of the schools shifted to online mode of education but due to the digital divide it was not possible for all the children to attend online classes seamlessly and thus schools made provisions for worksheets in both online and offline mode. Approximately half of the children attended online class on video conferencing app and rest of them were connected either through online worksheet or offline worksheet. Few of the children who reverse migrated with their families during the lockdown also attended the classes through video conferencing or online worksheets. Despite all the efforts were made by the government to ensure that the children continue their education during the pandemic it was found out that 6.25 percent (fig 3.1) of the migrant children dropped out from school. The dropout rate is higher among those families who migrated back to their native place during the lockdown (12.4 percent). Among those who dropped out of school, more than half belonged to the Schedule Caste and Other Backward Classes. Majority of them were residing in the house with less than 2 rooms and were staying Kutcha houses. There was a gap in the resumption of education after the imposition of lockdown. 74.4 percent (fig 3.2) of the families responded that there was a gap of more than one month in their child's education. 14.2 percent of the respondents said that the education resumed within 15 to 30 days and only 5 percent of the respondents said that the education resumed within 15days. This gap was similar across the population who reverse migrated during the pandemic and those who stayed back in Delhi during the pandemic.

Fig 3.2: Duration of Resumption of Classes after the 1st lockdown
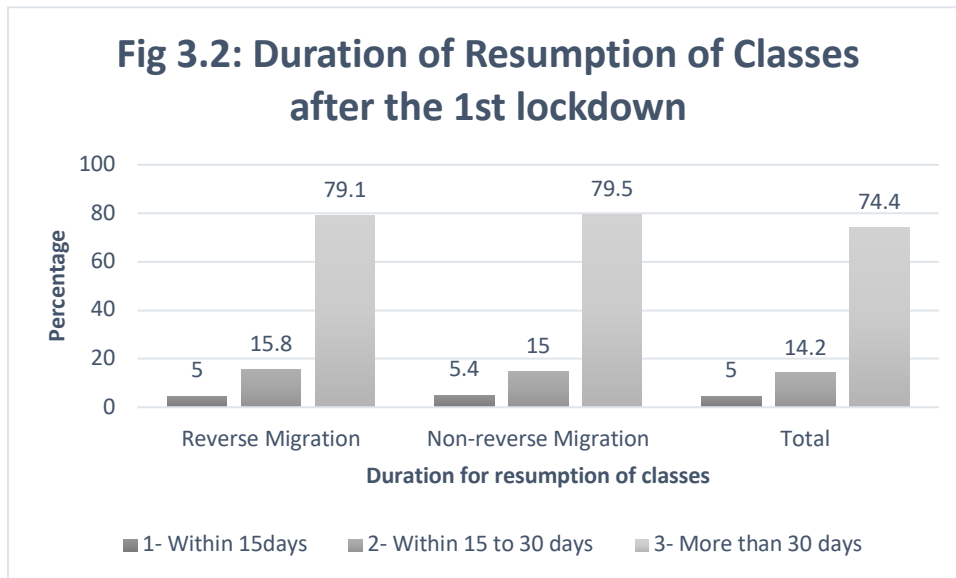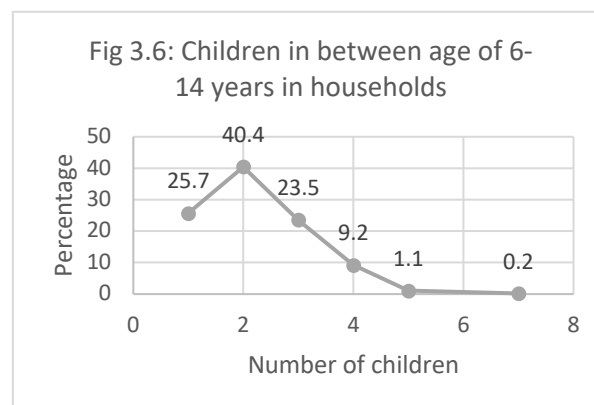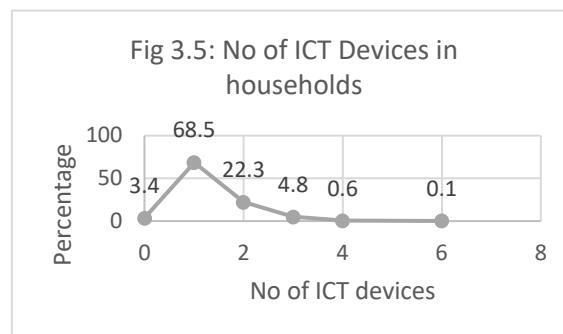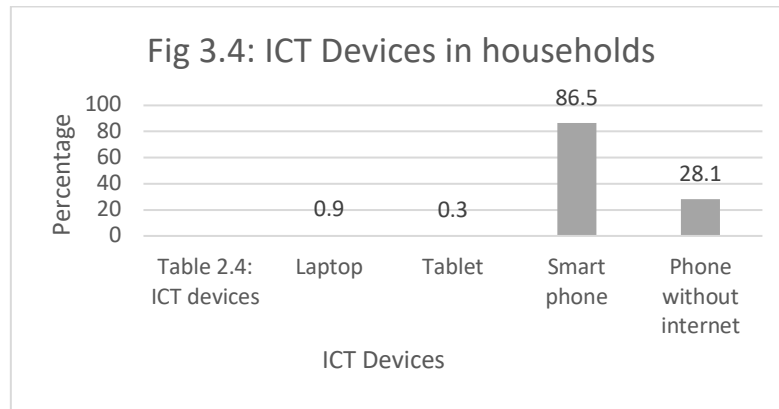
By the time alternative arrangements were made by the school, 35.2 percent (fig 3.3) of the children did not study by any means, 50.8 percent children relied on home-schooling while the rest of them went to the tuition centres either run by NGOs (7.1 percent) or private individuals (14.2 percent). Out of those who reverse migrated, 40.8 percent of the respondents said that their children didn't study until the formal resumption of classes whereas among those who stayed back in Delhi, 36.7 percent of the children didn't study until the formal resumption of classes. Only 3.3 percent of the children who reverse migrated were able to take private tuition, 6.6 percent attended classes run by NGOs and 51.6 percent of the children were studying. It is evident from the figure that the gap in education for the children who reverse migrated was more as compared to those who stayed back in Delhi.

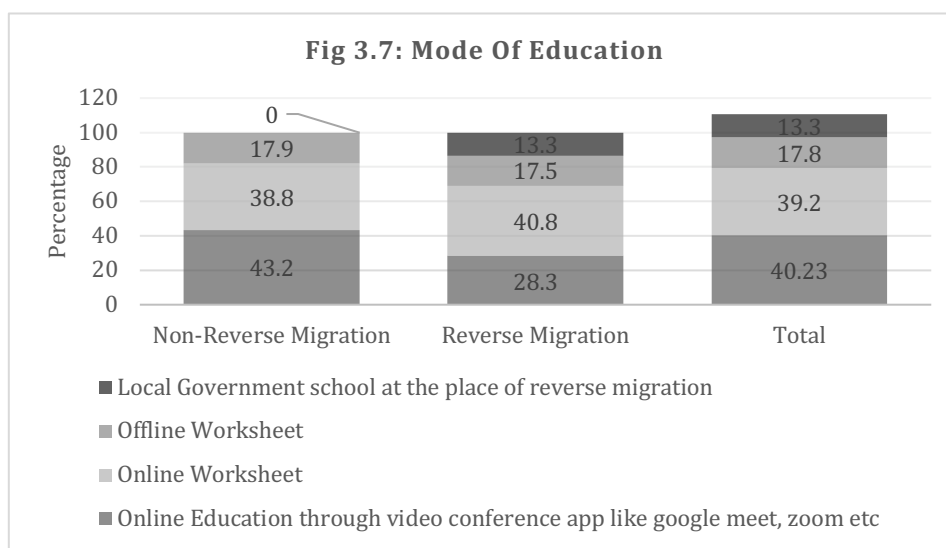Fig 3.3: Mode of education till the resumption of classes after the 1st lockdown
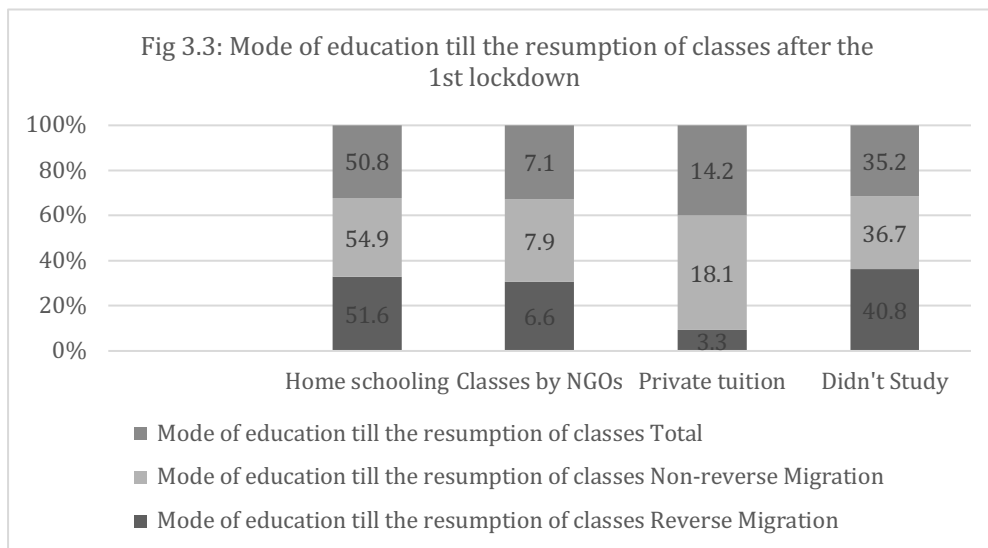
As the physical classes were shut during the lockdown, schools used different methods for providing education to the children. Most of the schools shifted to online mode of education but due to the digital divide it was not possible for all the children to attend online classes seamlessly and thus schools made provisions for worksheets in both online and offline mode. In terms of ownership of ICT devices 86.5 percent of the respondents had smart phone, 28.1 percent had phones without internet and around 1 percent of the respondents had laptop or tablet (fig 3.4). Majority of the respondents (fig 3.5) had just one ICT device (68.5 percent) whereas three fourth of the migrant families had more than one child in the age group of 6 to 14 years in the households (fig 3.6). Average number of ICT devices available per family was 1.3 and the average number of children between the age group of 6 to 14 years per households was 2.2. This clearly depicts that the ICT devices available for the education of children in the online mode was approximately half of that was required.

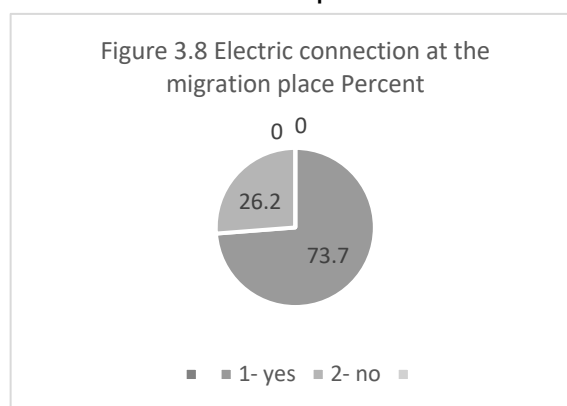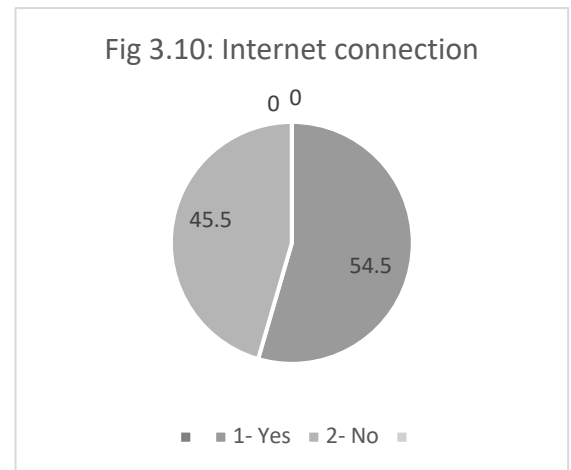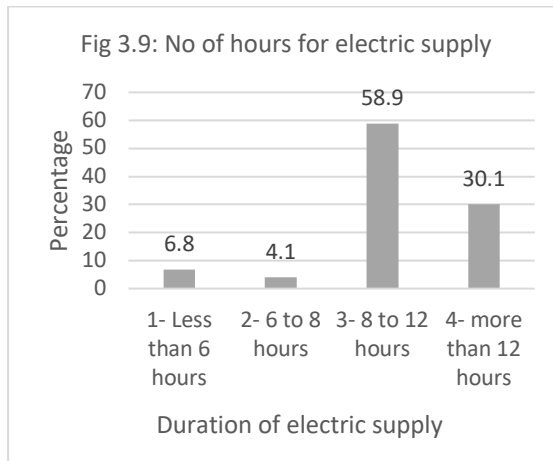| Average ICT devices per household | 1.3 |
| Average no of children between 6 to 14 years in a household | 2.2 |

Fig 3.4: ICT Devices in households

ICT Devices	Percentage
Table 2.4: ICT devices	
Laptop	0.9
Tablet	0.3
Smart phone	86.5
Phone without internet	28.1

Fig 3.5: No of ICT Devices in households

No of ICT devices	Percentage
0	3.4
1	68.5
2	22.3
3	4.8
4	0.6
6	0.1

Fig 3.6: Children in between age of 6-14 years in households

Number of children	Percentage
1	25.7
2	40.4
3	23.5
4	9.2
5	1.1
7	0.2

During the survey it was found out that 40.23 percent (fig 3.7) of the children attended online classes through video conferencing applications such as Zoom, Google Meet and Webex. 39.2 percent of the children continued their education through Online worksheets. These worksheets were sent by the school on WhatsApp and children were supposed to fill the worksheet and send it back to their teachers. 17.8 percent of the children continued their education through physical worksheets. These worksheets were for those children who didn't have access to smartphones

or any other ICT devices. It was handed over to the children in school every week and it had to be submitted back next week while taking other sheets. Also, out of those children who migrated back to their native place with their families, 13.3 percent of children enrolled themselves in local government school. Although the mode of education of these schools was online. Only 28.3 percent of the children among those who reverse migrated were able to attend online classes. This proportion was too less in comparison to those children who stayed back in Delhi (43.2 percent).

Fig 3.7: Mode Of Education

Legend:
- Local Government school at the place of reverse migration
- Offline Worksheet
- Online Worksheet
- Online Education through video conference app like google meet, zoom etc

A lot of families who migrated back to their native place had to face additional problems than just the lack of ICT devices. 26.2 percent of the households reported that there was no electricity at the place they migrated (fig 3.8). Even at the places which had access to electricity, there were frequent power cuts. 69.8 percent (fig 3.9) of households had electricity supply for less than 12 hours a day. There was also a

Figure 3.8 Electric connection at the migration place Percent

1- yes   2- no

Fig 3.9: No of hours for electric supply
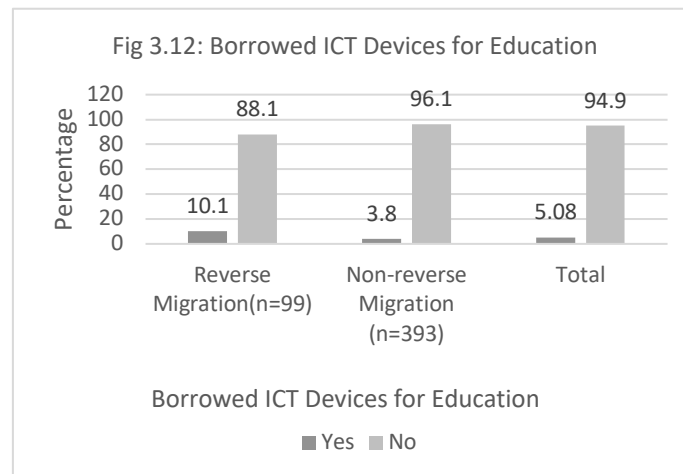

Fig 3.10: Internet connection

problem of connectivity in a few households. 45.5 percent (fig 3.10) of the households didn't have access to the internet and thus it was very difficult for the children to continue their education smoothly in online mode. 49.4 percent (fig 3.11) of the households among those who migrated bought new ICT devices while 33.5 percent of those who stayed back in Delhi had to buy new ICT devices. There were few households (5 percent) who borrowed devices from others (fig 3.12). The number of

Fig 3.11: Bought ICT Devices for Education
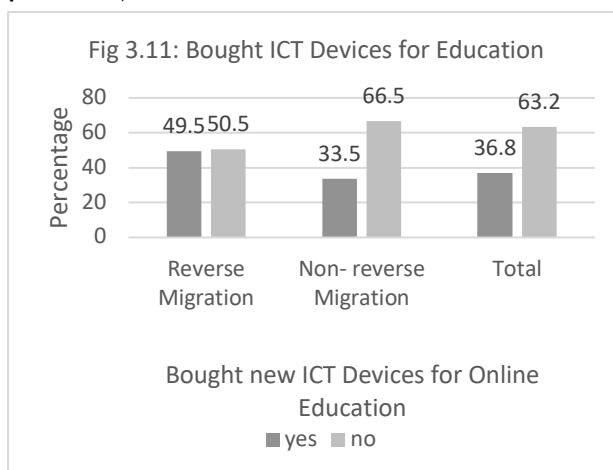
families who had to borrow ICT devices for facilitating the education of the children was more among those who reverse migrated in comparison to those who stayed back in Delhi.

Fig 3.12: Borrowed ICT Devices for Education

Apart from issues such as lack of ICT devices, poor electricity and internet connection, the biggest challenge faced by children was lack of space in the house for attending classes as approx. 90 percent (fig 3.13) of the households had less than 2 rooms. Out of those households who migrated back only 17.1 percent of the children had separate rooms for attending online classes while among those who stayed back in Delhi during the lockdown, only 8.3 percent children had separate rooms for attending classes.

Fig 3.13: Separate room for attending online classes
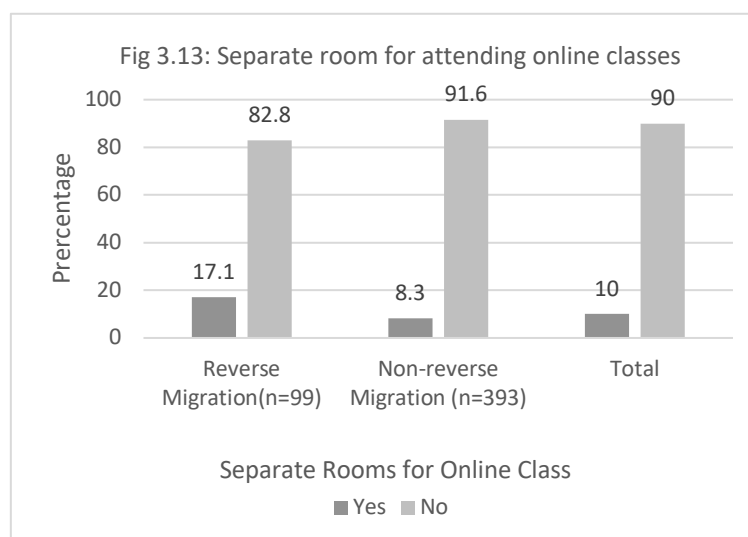
During the lockdown and the time when social distancing norms were in place, schools used different methods of assessment (fig 3.14) such as offline assignment (39 percent), Oral through online mode (18.3 percent) and uploading answers on online portals (28.2 percent). 3.6 percent of the

children appeared for the offline exams and 10.6 percent of the children were promoted without any exam or assessment.

Fig 3.14: Medium of Assessment
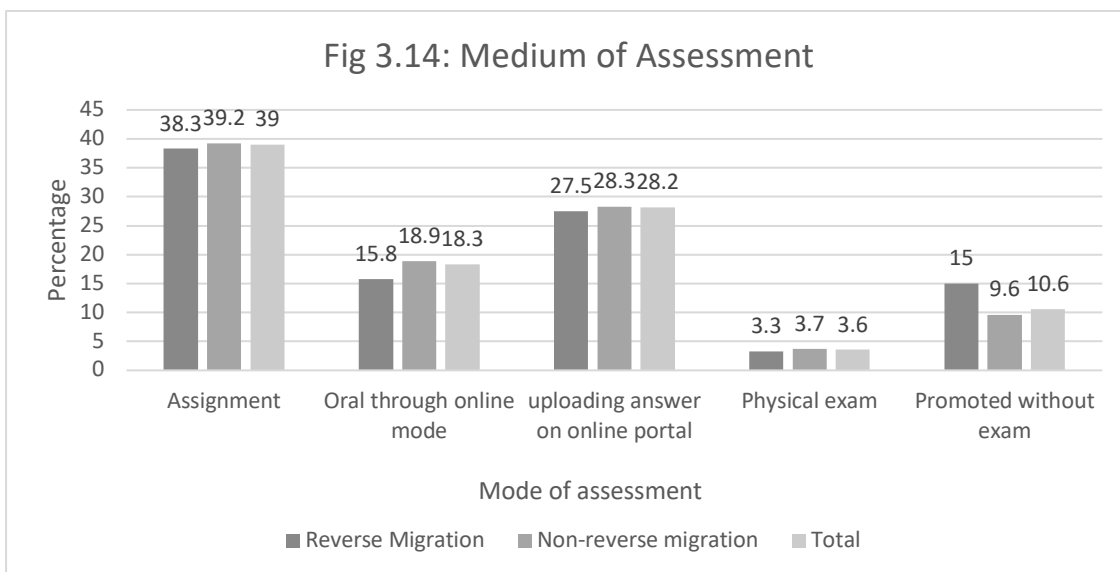
There was huge dissatisfaction with respect to the method of assessment used by the school among parents. 92.1 percent (fig 3.15) of the parents were not satisfied with the way assessment was done by the school during the lockdown.
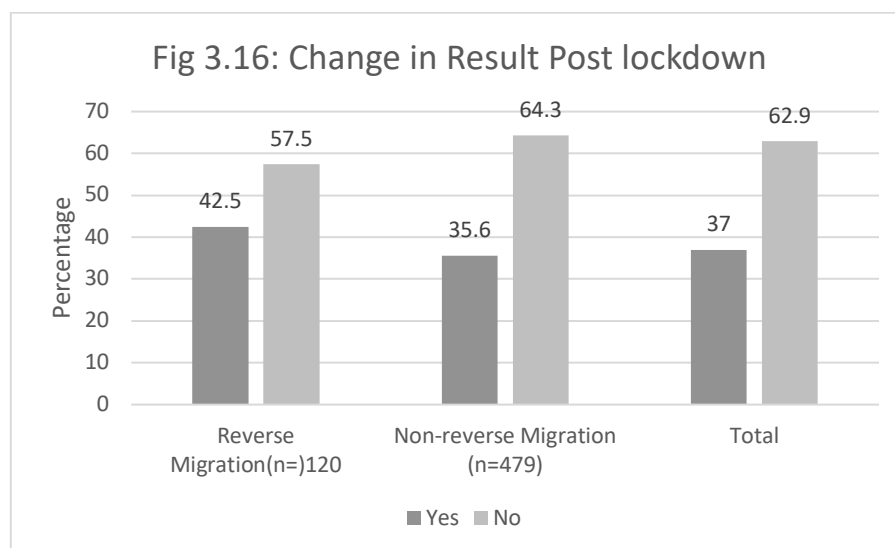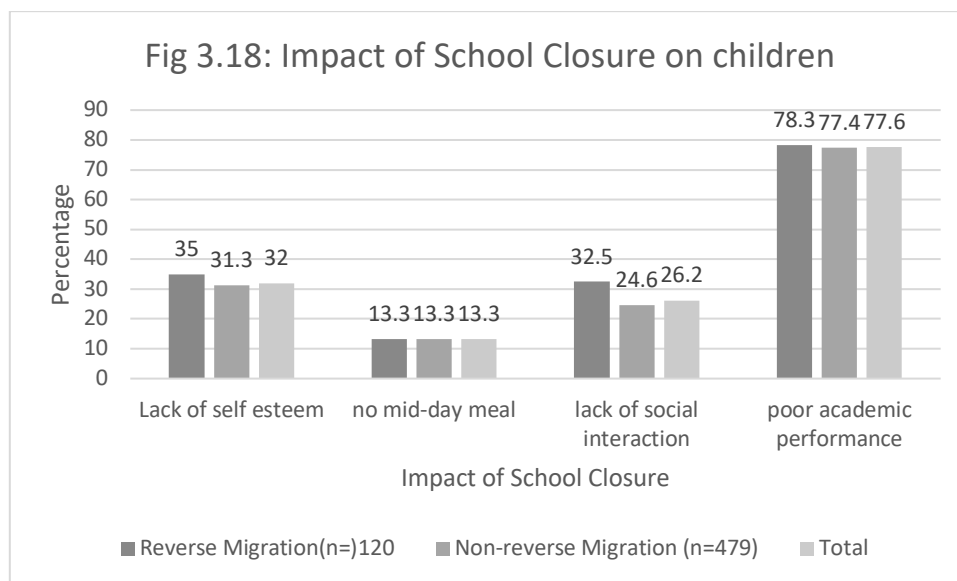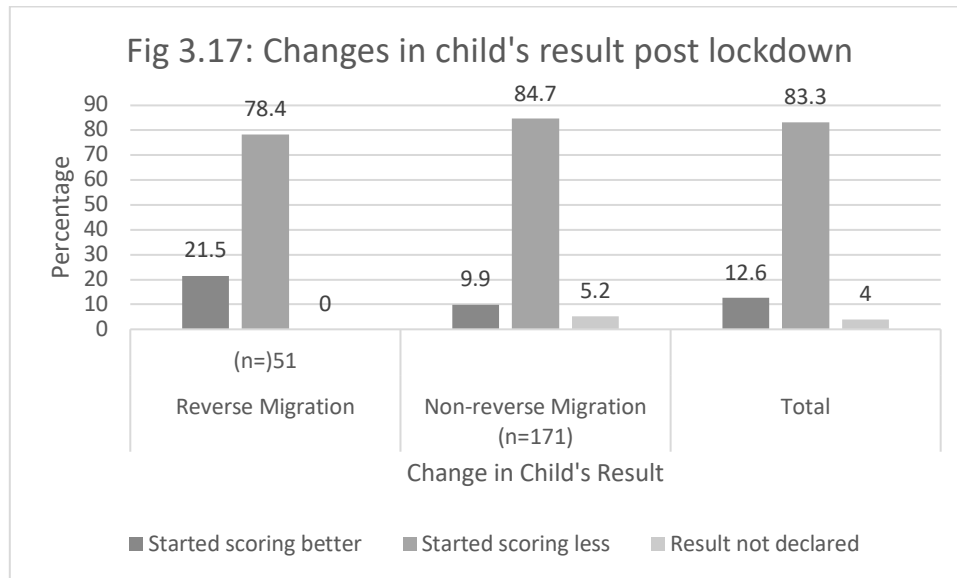

Fig 3.15: Satisfaction among parents w.r.t assessment
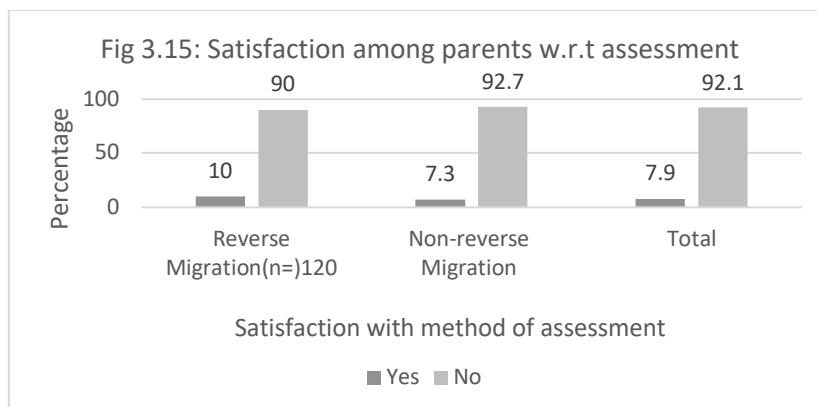
78.8 percent of the children were also not satisfied with the method of assessment done by the school (fig 3.15.1)

Fig 3.15.1Satisfaction among childeren w.r.t method of assessment
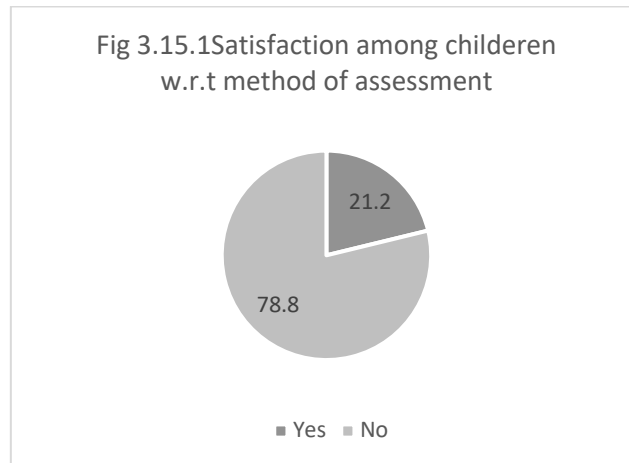
37 percent (fig 3.16) of the parents believed that there was change in child's academic performance due to lockdown while 62.9 percent believed that there was no effect on child's performance due to lockdown. The changes in academic performance of the children were more in those children who reverse migrated during the lockdown.

Figure 3.17 depicts that among those who believed that there was a change on the child's academic performance, a majority (83%) scored less as compared to pre-COIVD times.

Fig 3.16: Change in Result Post lockdown

Fig 3.17: Changes in child's result post lockdown

Fig 3.18: Impact of School Closure on children

The children were significantly affected due to school closure. 77.6 percent (fig 3.18) of the respondents said their child's academic performance was affected due to school closure, 26.2 percent of the respondents believed that school closure resulted in lack of social interaction, 32 percent of the respondents believed that child's self-esteem was affected due to school closure and 13.3 percent of the respondents believed that school closure affected the nutrition of children as they were not getting the mid-day meal during the lockdown. The impact of school closure was more significant in those children who

reverse migrated during the lockdown in comparison to those who stayed back in Delhi. Among those who reverse migrated, 78.4 percent of the respondent said that their child's academic performance deteriorated 32.5 percent of the respondent believed that their child's ability to socially interact with others was affected and 35 percent of the respondent said that their children lacked self-esteem.

Fig 3.19: Effects of lockdown on Child Healh
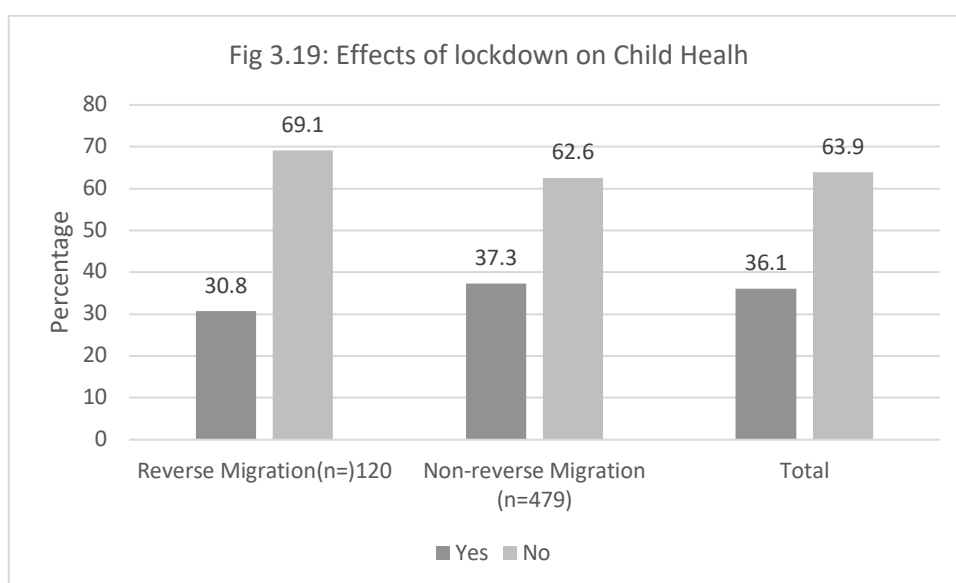
Child's health was also affected due to the lockdown. 36.1 percent (fig 3.19) of the families believed that child' health was affected due to the lockdown. 81.4 percent (fig 3.20) of the children either gained or lost weight after the lockdown, 73.1 percent of the parents reported the change in concentration level of their children, 14.3 percent of the parents said that children's sleeping pattern has been disturbed and 9.2 percent of the parents believed that the physical activity of their child has reduced in comparison to the time before the lockdown.

Fig 3.20:Effects on Child's Health Post Lockdown
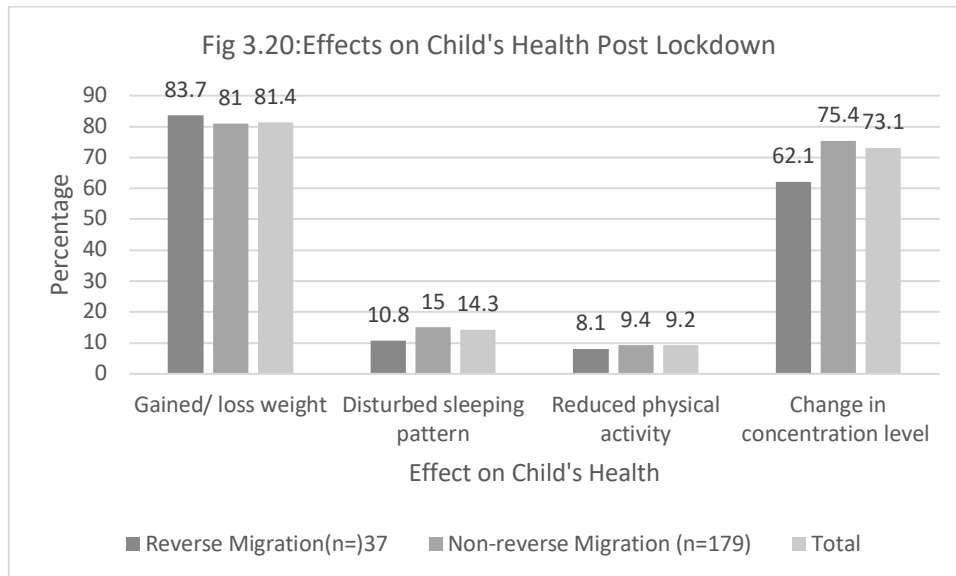
Apart from academic impact, children's personality was affected up to some extent. 55.2 percent (fig 3.21) of children interact regularly with their peers while 44.7 percent of the children did not interact with their peers at all. 80 percent of the children who dropped out of school interacted with their peers (fig 3.22). Only 23.5 percent (fig 2.23) of the children participated in co-curricular activities in school in the era after COVID-19. There was immense effect on the behaviour and health of those children who dropped out of school (fig 3.24). 25 percent of the children became lethargic, 15 percent of the children depicted aggressive behaviour after dropping out and 42.5 percent of the children worsened their ability to socially interact with others.

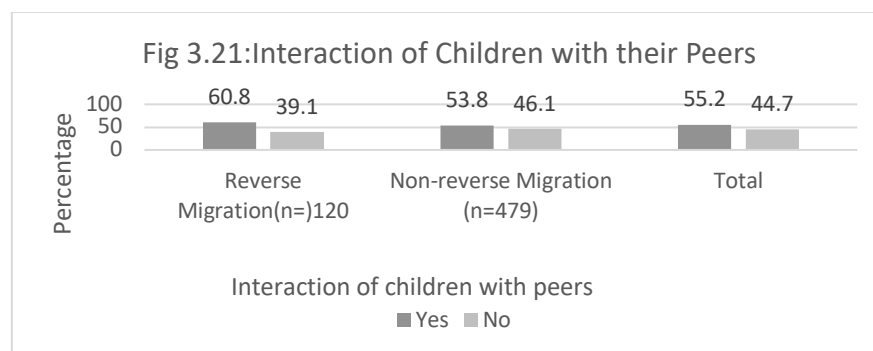Fig 3.21:Interaction of Children with their Peers

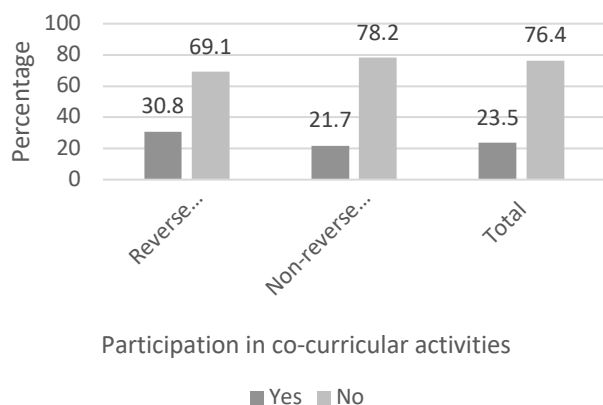Fig 3.22: Child's Participation in Co-curricular Activities

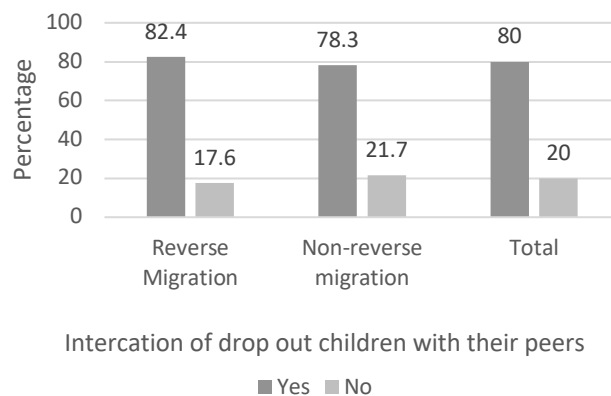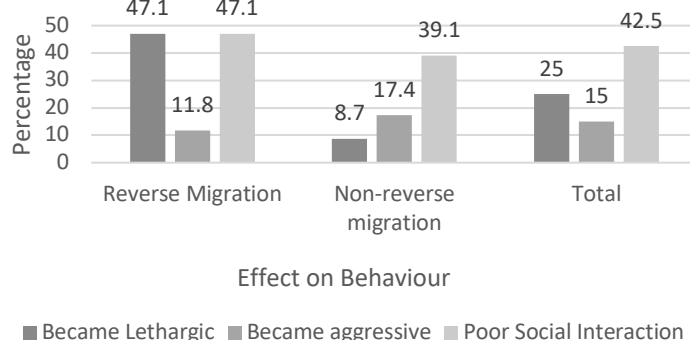Fig 3.23: Interaction of Drop out children with their Peers

Fig 3.24: Effect of Dropping out on Child's Behaviour

Reason for Dropping out of School

Out of the families covered under the study, only 6.25 percent of the reported that at least one of their children in between the age group of 6 to 14 years dropped out of school during the lockdown. The children dropped out of school for various reasons (fig 3.25). 20 percent of the children dropped out of school to help their family financially. 47.5 percent of the children couldn't continue their education due to lack of resources for e-learning such as smart phones and laptops. 22.5 percent of the children couldn't be admitted in the schools as they came back with

their family only after the lockdown and they do not have the required documents for taking admission in Delhi's school. 4.4 percent of the children had to drop out because their names were scrapped out from schools when they were in their native place and 4.4 percent of the children dropped out after class 5th when they had to make transition from MCD schools to Delhi Government's school. The dropout rate was higher in the families who migrated back during the lockdown. These families had to face additional hardship in comparison to those families who stayed in Delhi. It was seen during the study that the families who reverse migrated had less resource to continue the education in online mode as compared to the families who stayed back during the lockdown.

Fig 3.25: Reason for Droppoing out
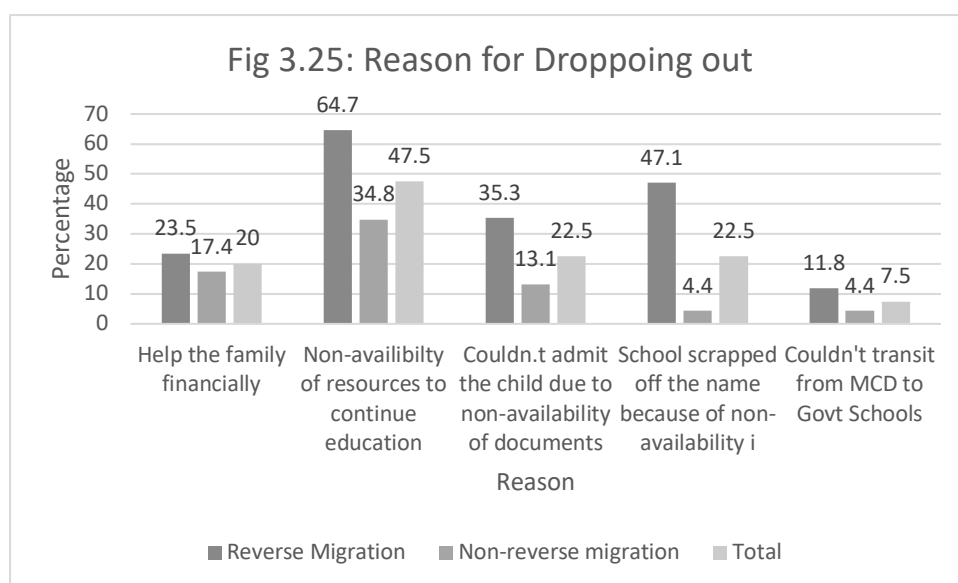
Majority of the respondents want their children to continue their education. 94.1 percent of the respondents from those who reverse migrated and 69.6 percent of the respondents from those who stayed back in Delhi during the lockdown want to readmit their children into schools (fig 3.26).

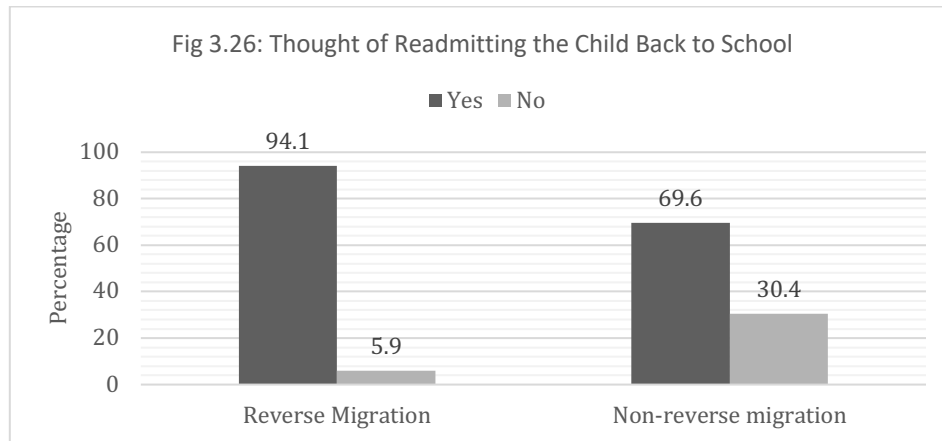Fig 3.26: Thought of Readmitting the Child Back to School

Figure 3.27 depicts that majority of the respondents from those who wanted to readmit their children back to the school plan to readmit their children as soon as the things came back to normal, or the school starts running in the offline mode. Few of the respondent plan to readmit their child back to the school once the financial condition of the family improves.

Fig 3.27: Plan of readmitting the child
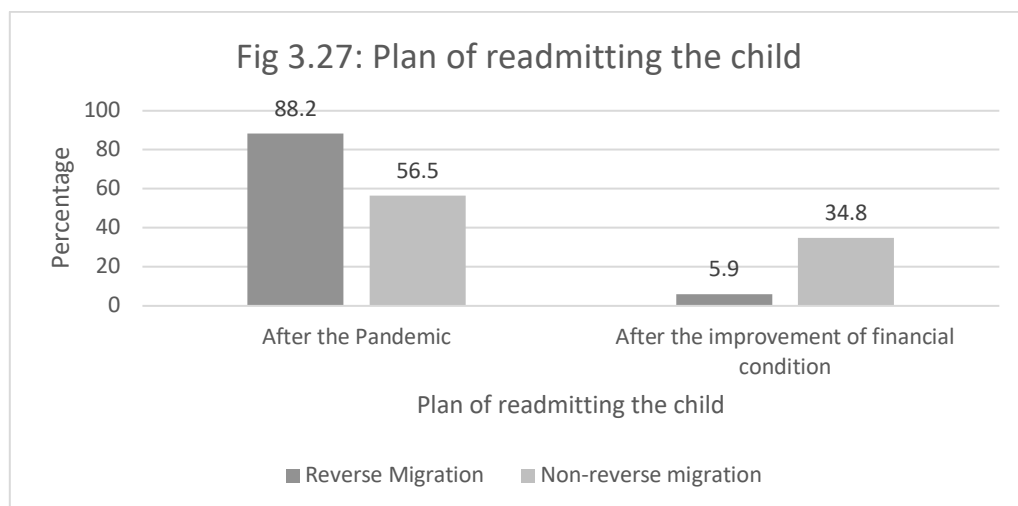
77.5 percent of the respondents who wants to readmit their child back to the school have already approached the school administration for readmission (fig 3.28).

Fig 3.28: Reached out to School for readmission
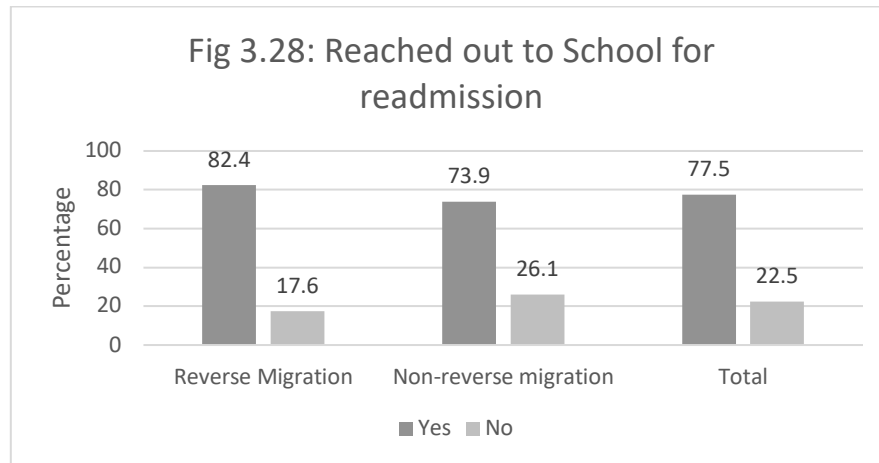
Figure 3.29 shows that out of all the children who dropped out of school, 32.5 percent have been enrolled in various places such as Madrasa, NGO school or private tuition whereas 67.5 percent of the children are idle.

Figure 3.30 depicts that most of the children spent their time playing (77.5 percent). 12.5 percent of the children help their family in household chores and 10 percent of the respondents said that their children do nothing.

Fig 3.29:Enrollment of Child anywhere for the time being

Fig 3.30: Engagement of Child
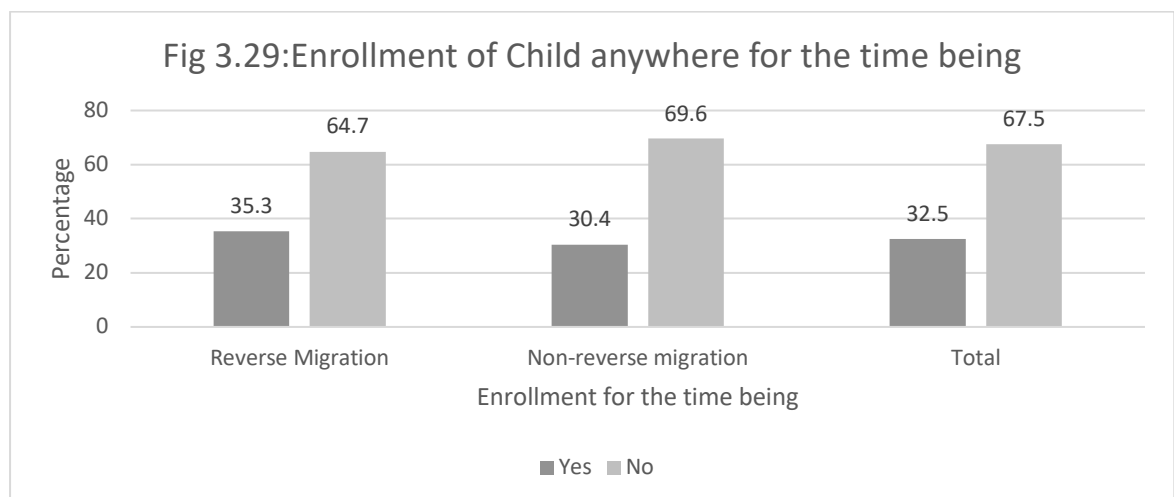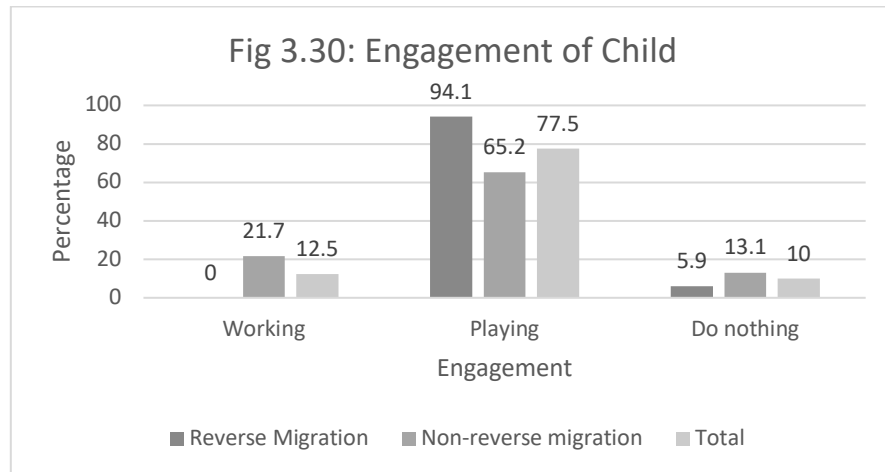
Half of the respondents said that they were not able provide nutritious food to their children (fig 3.31).

Fig 3.31: Nutritious Food to Child
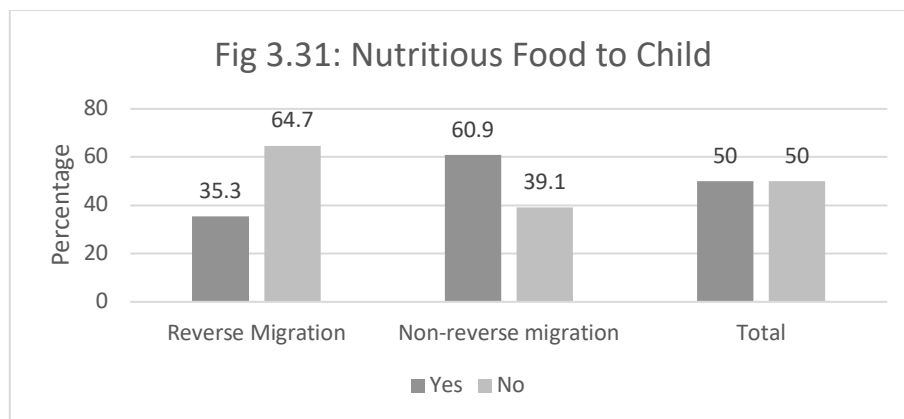
They also said that their child lost weight due to lack of nutritious food, 30 percent of the respondents said that the child became lethargic, 15 percent of the children lost their appetite and 5 percent of the children suffered from sickness (fig 3.32)

Fig 3.32: Effects on Child's Health in the Absence of Nutritious Food
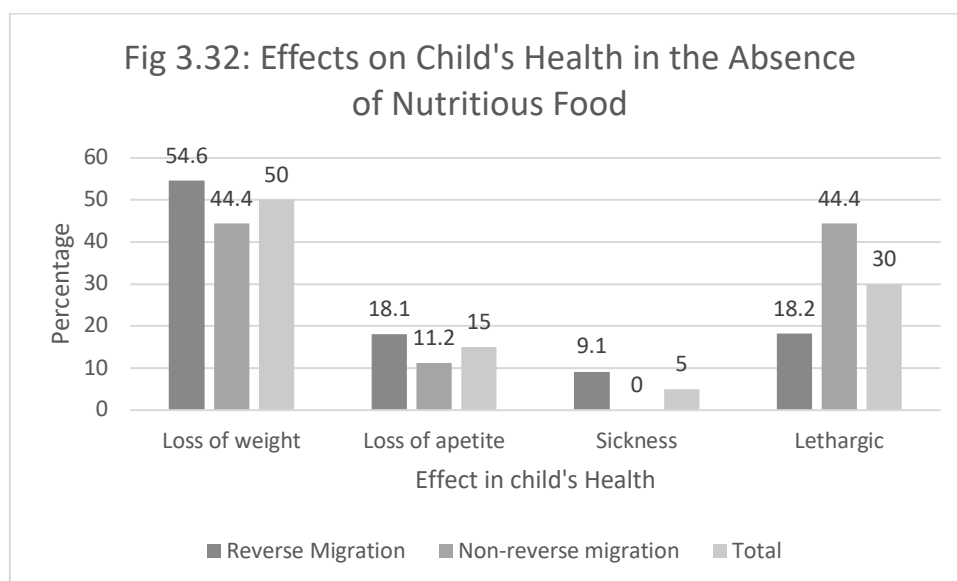
Findings from the interview of Children

Children believed that they were not able to interact with their peers as the education was going on in online mode. Children were not able to interact with their peers in online mode as they have very limited access of the devices. Most of the households had single devices for more than one child and thus children had very limited access to the devices. The quality of education was also affected mainly due to limited ICT devices. Most of the migrant families did not have adequate space in their house and thus children often experienced interruption in their education. This also resulted in poor academic performance of children. Children were not able to follow the instruction that were given to them in the online mode. Mid-day meal was absent throughout the lockdown which resulted in bad health of children as the families were not able to provide nutritious meal to their children. During the lockdown children were also bestowed with additional responsibilities as the education was going on e-mode. The education department issued a guideline for online education which suggested that online class should not exceed from 1hr 30 mins in a day. This gave children a lot of free time and in turn they were given responsibilities at home such as taking care of younger siblings when parents went out for work. Some of the children started working with their

father in their free time while others started helping their family in the household chores like bringing things from market and cleaning.

Findings from the interview of Head/ teachers at the schools

Head/ Principal/ in charge from 15 schools belonging to MCDs and Delhi Government were reached out during the survey in order to understand their perspective on the impact of school closure on children of migrant workers. Head of the schools in their interview during the survey opined that e-learning significantly affected the children. Their academic performance deteriorated in comparison to that of the time before the lockdown. The children forgot what was taught to them before the lockdown. The grade expected norm was highly affected. They do not know much of what they are expected to know in a particular class. The assessment of children was carried out in online mode during the lockdown through online worksheets or through Google link. The assessment didn't give the true picture of the academic performance as it was like an open book test and children took help of their parents and siblings to complete the assessment. The exposure to practical learning of children also reduced due to e-learning mode.

Apart from the academic performance, children's habits of adhering to fixed routine and follow instructions were also affected due to COVID-19. The parents of the children who mainly belonged to migrant families were not well equipped in handling ICT devices and thus children rather than using the devices for learning used it for playing games and watching online contents. Social skills were also affected among children due to school closure as the schools teach them to interact with their peers and built relationships with others.

Different schools had different proportion of migrant children. The proportion of migrant children in a school depended upon the locality in which the school was situated. There were as much as 60 percent migrant students in a school which was situated in a proximity of the locality

mainly inhabited by the migrant families while the schools which were in areas which were far away from the localities of migrant families had only approx. 10 percent of the migrant children. Very few of the migrant children reverse migrated with their families during the lockdown. Majority children who migrated with their families continued their education either through online class or through online worksheets. Those children who didn't have access to ICT devices were in touch with the teachers through mobile phones and when they came back to Delhi, continued their education through offline worksheets. Very few of the children are untraceable however their names have not been struck off from schools as the orders from Ministry of Education restricts it (Government of India, 2020) The migrant children who were attending online classes were able to attend online activities normally.

The present chapter highlights the overall impact of pandemic and school closure on children of migrant workers. The physical teaching was suspended for approximately 19 months starting from the imposition of first lockdown in March 2020. The formal order by the state for planning for online education came after 4 months of the first lockdown. During this period, children were either totally disconnected from studies or relied on private tuition and self-studies.

The study revealed that because of the lockdown, children dropped out from school during the COVID-19 pandemic. The dropout rate was higher in children those who reverse migrated with their parents during the lockdown. They were not able to continue their education due to various reasons such as lack of resources to continue online education, helping family members financially, due to absence of required documents and so on. There was a gap in the education of children for more than a month during the lockdown as there was lack of infrastructure for the education in online mode. During this gap, a large proportion of children were totally disconnected from the studies. The education during the lockdown was going on in hybrid mode as it was very difficult for the children from

migrant families to attend class through video conferencing apps due reasons such as lack of ICT devices in house, expensive data packs etc. Some families had to either buy or borrow the ICT devices to ensure the continuation of education of their children. Thus, worksheets came handy in promoting education. Provision for online and offline worksheet was made for the children. However, education through worksheet was not a viable option for children as they could not ask the doubts or interact with their teachers.

The academic performance of children was significantly affected because of school closure and lockdown. Many children started scoring less in comparison to the times before the lockdown. There has been impact on child's physical health, ability of social interaction, academic performance, and behaviour due to the school closure and prolonged confinement in their home due to the lockdown. Children had gained weight or loss weight; they have problem in concentrating and their physical activity have been reduced.

Chapter Four

Mechanism and Measures used by the Government and Schools to Address the Educational Needs of Children of Migrant Workers during the Pandemic

Efforts were made to promote digital learning in the country by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (GoI). 'Pragyata: Guidelines for digital education' was one of the initiatives launched to assist schools, teachers, parents, and students for e-learning. (GoI, 2020). The guidelineswere prepared by NCERT and rolled out on 13th July 2020 by Union Minister Ramesh PokhriyalNishank. The Pragyata Guidelines acknowledged that over 25 crore children across the country have been out of school since March 2020 due to the lockdown and acknowledged the digital divide that exist across the households. It suggested the schools to conduct surveys of digital infrastructure available with the teachers and students and to plan for reaching out the children who do not have access to any digital infrastructure. The guidelines recommended the screen time for the students from class 1 to class 8 for not more than two online sessions of up to 45 minutes each in a day. It focuses both on synchronous learning where learning can happen collaboratively at the same time with a group of online learners or individuals, and teachers, allowing instant feedback and asynchronous learning which allows students to download lessons or listen to radio and TV programmes, communicate through WhatsApp and SMS, study on their own and undertake creative projects. The guidelines also talked about the health issues due to prolonged screen hour and cyber safety.

The PRAGYATA guidelines include eight steps of digital learning that is, Plan- Review- Arrange- Guide- Yak (talk)- Assign- Track- Appreciate. The Guidelines also emphasize the need to unify all efforts related to digital, online education, benefitting school going children across the country. The

initiative includes DIKSHA, SWAYAM Prabha, Radio Vahini and Shiksha Vaani. (Government of India, 2020)

DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) is a national platform for school education, an initiative of National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. DIKSHA supports 36 Indian regional languages and can be accessed by learners and teachers throughout the country. DIKSHA policies and tools make it possible for the education ecosystem (educationist, experts, organisations, institutions - government, autonomous institutions, non-govt and private organisations) to participate, contribute and leverage a common platform to achieve learning goals for the country. Under the PM e-Vidya initiative of the Government of India, which was declared as part of the AtmNirbhar Bharat, DIKSHA has been declared as 'One Nation, One Digital Platform'. The Honourable Prime Minister of India launched NDEAR (National Digital Education Architecture) on 29th July 2021 which provides building blocks for development of federated and interoperable systems by States/UTs. The core building blocks of DIKSHA comprise majority of NDEAR building blocks, having enabled some successful use-cases of NDEAR such as: energized textbooks, online courses, content authoring, content sourcing, interactive quizzes, question banks, chatbot, analytics and dashboard. In the times of COVID-19 pandemic, the platform has experienced unprecedented rise in access by learners and teachers across the country.

For digital content to aid in the teaching and learning processes, a rich repository of varied resources was contributed by schools/individual teachers, content partners, NGOs, corporates under CSR under VidyaDaan against the various content requirements of NCERT/CBSE/States. To aid teaching and learning for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), many audio books, ISL (Indian Sign Language) Videos and Dictionary were made available on DIKSHA for CWSN.

During the pandemic, the massive teacher's professional development programme NISHTHA 1.0 (National Initiatives for School Heads and Teacher's Holistic Advancement) for Elementary grades was launched online through DIKSHA. NISHTHA 2.0 & 3.0 focussed on Secondary and Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. Apart from NISHTHA, several States/UTs designed their own capacity building programs.

NCERT also delivered content for students on a 24x7 basis through PM eVIDYA DTH-TV channels (One Class, One Channel from classes I to XII). These channels delivered class-wise contents that were linked to DIKSHA through QR codes. To enable coherence, the broadcast content was also made available on DIKSHA, where this content was accessible anytime, anywhere (Department of School Education and Literacy, 2017).

The **SWAYAM PRABHA** is a group of 34 DTH channels devoted to telecasting of high-quality educational programmes on 24X7 basis using the GSAT-15 satellite. There were new content for at least (4) hours which were being repeated 5 more times in a day, allowing the students to choose the time of their convenience. The channels are uplinkeded from BISAG, Gandhinagar. The contents are provided by NPTEL, IITs, UGC, CEC,and IGNOU. The INFLIBNET Centre maintains the web portal (Ministry of Education, Government of India, n.d.).

Mukta Vidya Vani is the unique Educational Web Radio, Streaming Audio for educational purposes and part of the largest Open Schooling in the world. It enables a two-way communication with any audience that has access to an internet connection from its studio. Mukta Vidya Vani has completed fifth glorious years of its achievement driven existence in the field of using Streaming Audio for educational purpose which has now become an effective and popular platform for the learner's pursuing education. The main objective of Mukta Vidya Vani programmes is to empower the learners of Secondary, Senior Secondary and Vocational streams of NIOS studying various course materials through web streaming.

NIOS organises live interactive web-streaming of Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs) on various subjects of Secondary, Senior Secondary and Vocational courses for its enrolled learners through Mukta Vidya Vani (MVV). Radio Vahini also broadcast these PCPs to maximize its reach not only among the learners but to the masses in general. (Ministry of Education, Government of India, n.d.-a)

Podcast called **Shiksha Vani** of CBSE disseminates audio content for various subjects of grades 9 to 12, in a timely, educative, lucid, and seamless manner. CBSE-Shiksha Vani is available on Play Store for Android phone users. So far Shikshavani contains approximately 400 pieces of content in the form of audio files on topics in accordance with NCERT curriculum.

Considering the role of parents and care givers in the education of children the MHRD also launched guidelines for parents' participation in home-based learning during school closure. It dealt with why, what, and how to participate in supporting children during school closure, irrespective of literacy levels. The Centre's guidelines on home-based learning emphasize the need for parents to create a safe and engaging environment and a positive learning environment. The Centre also guides parents to keep realistic expectations from their child and take out time to have fun with their kids as well. "These guidelines are meant not only for parents but also for caregivers, other family members, grandparents, community members, older siblings who all are engaged in promoting the welfare of children. (Ministry of Education, Government of India, n.d.-a)

MHRD, Government of India on 13th July 2020 released guidelines for States and UTs for continuing education of children of Migrant labourers for ensuring that there is no gap in the learning for the children who have reverse migrated along with their parents during the pandemic. It suggested to the States and UTs where there was reverse migration to prepare a database of children who have left for their homes. The data base should be prepared by each school by contacting parents of all

children studying in their school through different media such as WhatsApp, calls, peer groups and neighbours. Those children who have left may be shown as temporarily unavailable and their names must not be struck off (Government of India, 2020a).

For those States who have more influx of in-migration, the state government may direct the local schools to give admission to the students who came back without asking for any documents other than the identity proof. States/ UTs should facilitate this by doing adequate publicity and involving local administration. The data base of the children who have enrolled themselves in the local school must also be prepared and shared with the states from where they came from. These children should be given remedial learning support through the school along with textbooks and mid-day meal. (Government of India, 2020a)

The schools were instructed to suspend the offline classes on 19th March 2020 by the Government of India and thus complying by this order all the schools suspended their teaching. The families were informed about the school closure through School Management Committees and through media. Schools were asked to make alternative arrangement for education in the first week of July by the Department of Education, Government of Delhi. Teachers were trained on how to deliver online learning effectively and use software of e learning.

Although various efforts were made by the Central and State government to ensure the continuation of quality education during the lockdown, it was found out that none of the respondents covered under the survey had heard about the initiatives by the MHRD for promoting online education. The ICT devices were merely used for synchronous learning. Majority of the households had only one ICT device whereas they had more than one child who are going to school and thus it was very difficult for them to get time for learning through different medium. Most of the time devices were with the father and thus this also created hindrance in learning.

As per the data collated by Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, In the NCT of Delhi 163 textbooks were QR Coded, 3535 number of e-contents were contributed and uploaded in 4 languages like English, Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit. In the academic year 2020-21, 3,92,81,097 learning sessions were taken on DIKSHA and 7,86,369 training sessions were done on NISTHA.

Various efforts were made by different stakeholders in Delhi for students who do not have access to digital devices. SCERT discussed the ways to reach out to those students in teacher capacity building programmes. It was decided that the worksheets should be provided to these children. SCERT proposed that the socio – emotional support should be given to the children as a support to academic achievements. An alternative academic calendar was suggested to teachers. Online and offline timetables were made and more emphasis on building connectivity with students and reaching out to them was implemented. TGT- special education teachers implemented a Home-based Intervention Plan (HBIP) for the Children with Special Needs (CWSN) studying in schools of DoE. To facilitate the education of CWSN during the time when face to face interaction was prohibited, a booklet named SAMARTH containing list of activities to be carried out at home was prepared and distributed to the parents.

Efforts were also made for the students who had access to digital devices. Webinars and workshops were conducted for teachers and students by SCERT, and teachers were trained to use various online tools to facilitate online learning. Sessions were conducted for the teachers by the DoE on social- emotional learning to build their confidence and train them in sailing through these difficult times first so that they can deal with students with compassion as the pandemic has hit everyone. Primary Education Cell, Samagra Shiksha and SCERT took initiative for the development and dissemination of Common e-Learning material for uniform learning in primary schools and all the managements of Delhi under the guidance of the Secretary, DoE

Directorate of Education, GNCT of Delhi constituted a cohort of teachers to plan online classes and semi online learning material/worksheets for students of KG to class XII. A mechanism was developed wherein students were kept in direct contact with their school through WhatsApp group/SMS/telephonic message so that the learning material /worksheets and assignment reached them regularly and the same was duly monitored & checked by their subject teachers. A timetable was prepared for the class-wise and subject specific worksheets based on the prescribed syllabus and learning outcomes. A separate mechanism was developed for the online classes conducted centrally for classes XI and XII as per NCERT guidelines. (Government of India, 2021)

Live online classes were facilitated and monitored by a team of subject experts so that students benefit through their active involvement and participation by raising their doubts and giving responses to the quizzes and MCQs. These classes were highly appreciated by all for their innovative methods of teaching and interaction with the students. All the online classes, related Google forms, assignments and sample papers have been uploaded on the website of the Directorate of Education, which is available and can be accessed by teachers & students at any time (Government of India, 2021)

The present chapter highlights the efforts made by the central and state governments for ensuring the continuation of education during the lockdown. Various efforts were made to reach out the children and ensure the continuity of education through Television, Mobile applications, Radio Programs, and video conferencing. Efforts were made to cater the educational need of the migrant children by firstly creating the data base and then disseminating education to them through different medium and supporting them.

Chapter Five

Challenges Faced by Migrant Children in Accessing and Continuing their Education during the Pandemic

The present chapter highlights the problem faced by migrant families and migrant children in accessing and continuing their education during the pandemic. Shift in online mode of education resulted in various problems because the children particularly of migrant families were not well equipped with the resources required for online education.
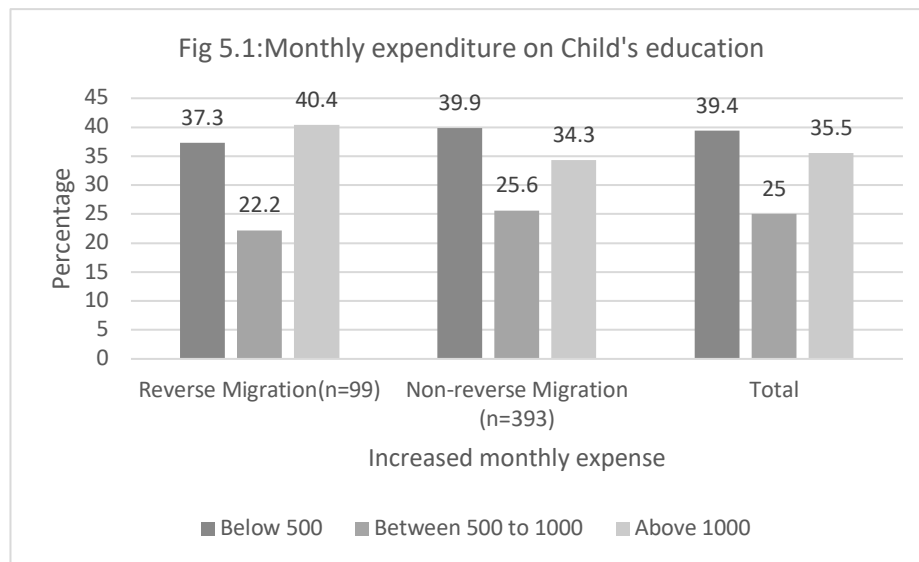
Fig 5.1:Monthly expenditure on Child's education

With the shift to online mode of education expenditure of families also increased. They had to spend more resources for ensuring the continuation of education during the pandemic in comparison to the time before the lockdown. 39.4 percent (fig 5.1) of the family spent less than 500 per month on child's education, 25 percent of the family spent between 500 to 1000 rupees on child's education and 35.5 percent of family spent more than 1000 rupees monthly on child's education   .

Fig 5.2: Expenditures on child;s education
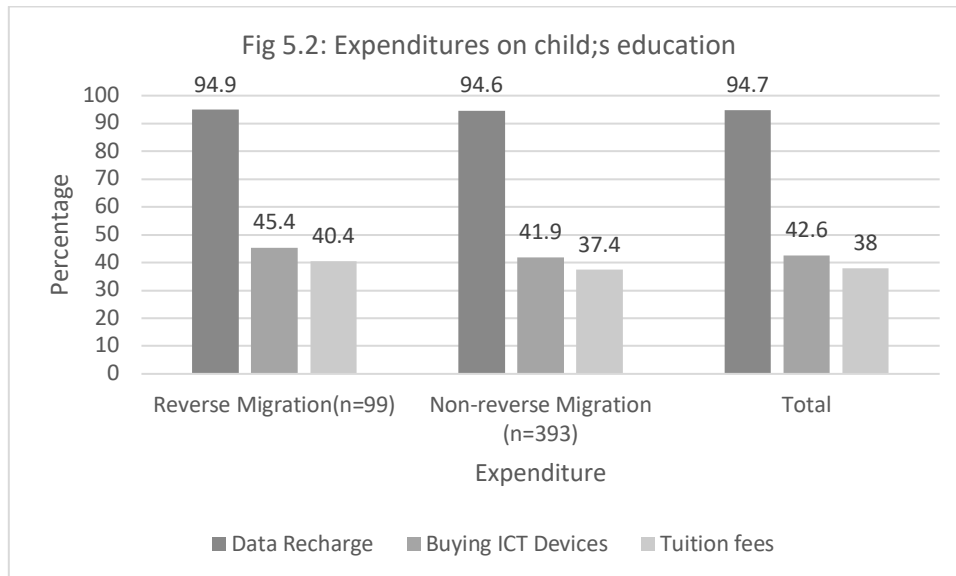
Out of these expenditures a huge proportion of money (fig 5.2) went on data recharge (94.7 percent) followed by purchase of ICT devices (42.6 percent) and on tuition fees (38 percent). 94.3 percent (fig 5.3) of the households had to reduce their daily expenditure to ensure the continuation of education of their children.

Fig 5.3: Reduction in Daily expenses for continuing online education

19.3 percent of the families had to reduce the expenditure on health while 97.4 percent of the families had to reduce the expenditure on food (fig 5.4).

Fig 5.4: Reduction of expenses on
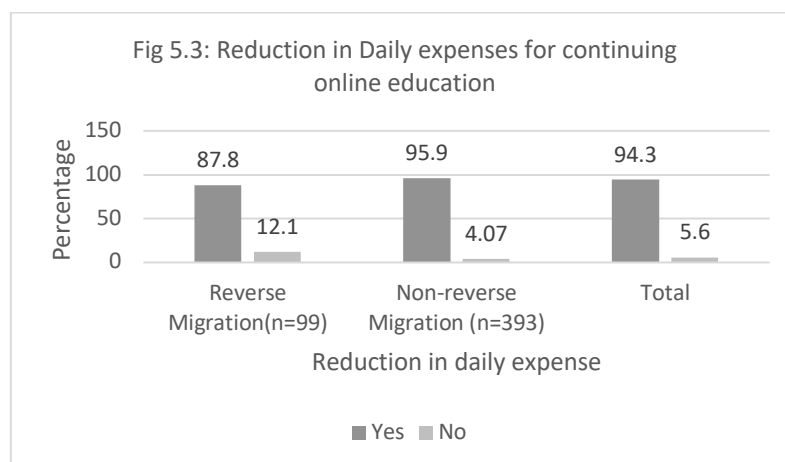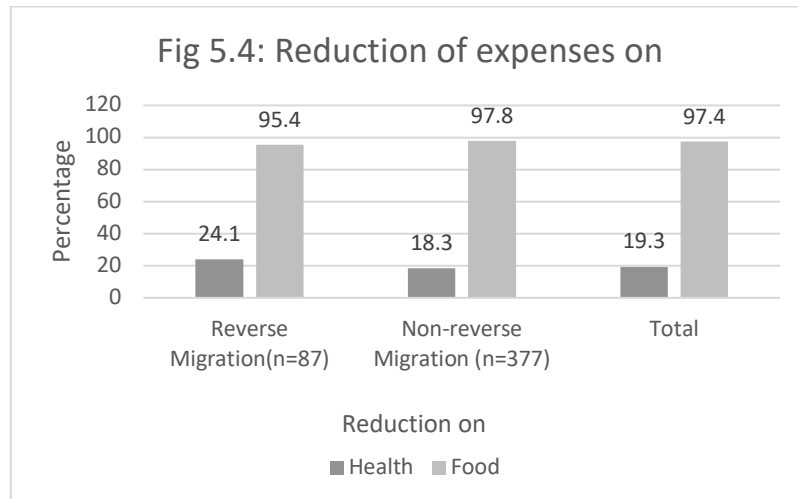
The shift to online education affected the migrant population severely. Some of the problem in accessing online education (fig 5.5) as per the respondent were, expensive internet connection (67.07 percent), limited data on phone (53.04 percent), problem in handling devices (20.1 percent), prolonged screen time of children (11.9 percent), security issues (5.08 percent), lack of space in the house to attend classes (26.4 percent) and lack of ICT devices in the house (14.4 percent). Data revealed that problem in handling devices was more prevalent in household with low level of education.

Fig 5.5: Problem In Acessing Online Education
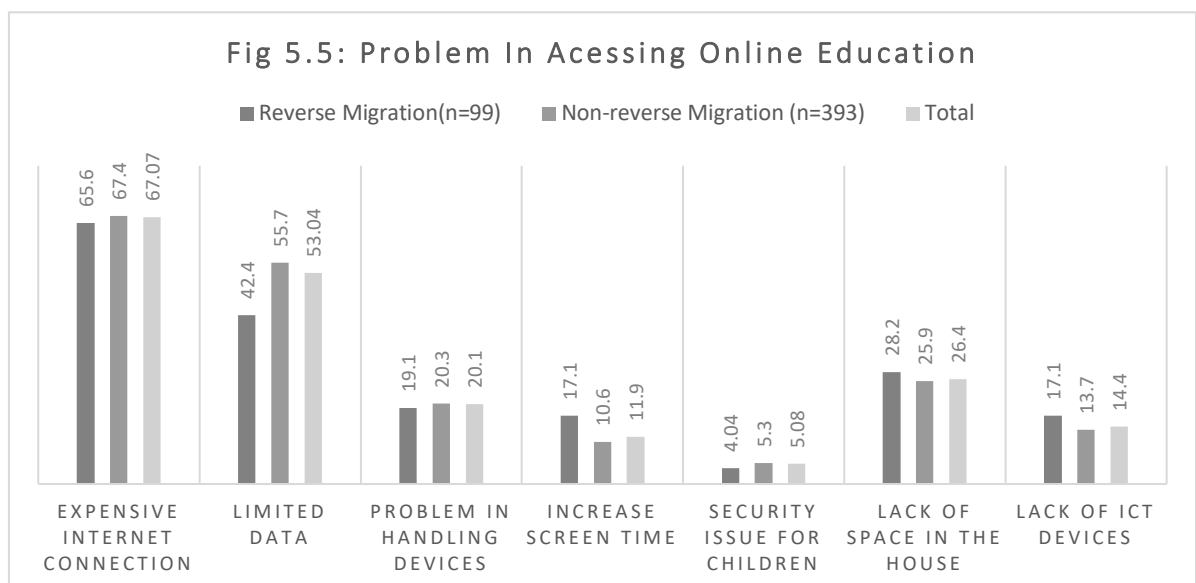
Due to these difficulties majority of the respondents (fig 5.6) want shift back to offline mode of education. Figure 5.7 shows that 94.2 percent of the children also prefer offline education. One of the major challenges associated with online mode was lack of communication or interaction with the teachers. Only 36.3 percent of the children were a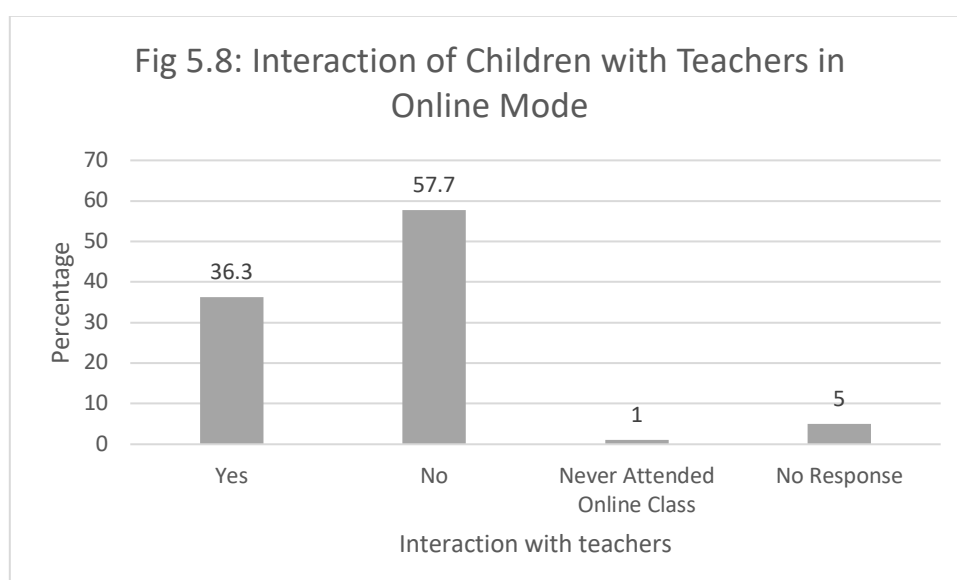ble to interact with their teachers during the online classes (fig 5.8). 57.7 percent of the children said that it was difficult for them to interact with the teachers in the online mode.

Fig 5.6: Preferred mode of Education
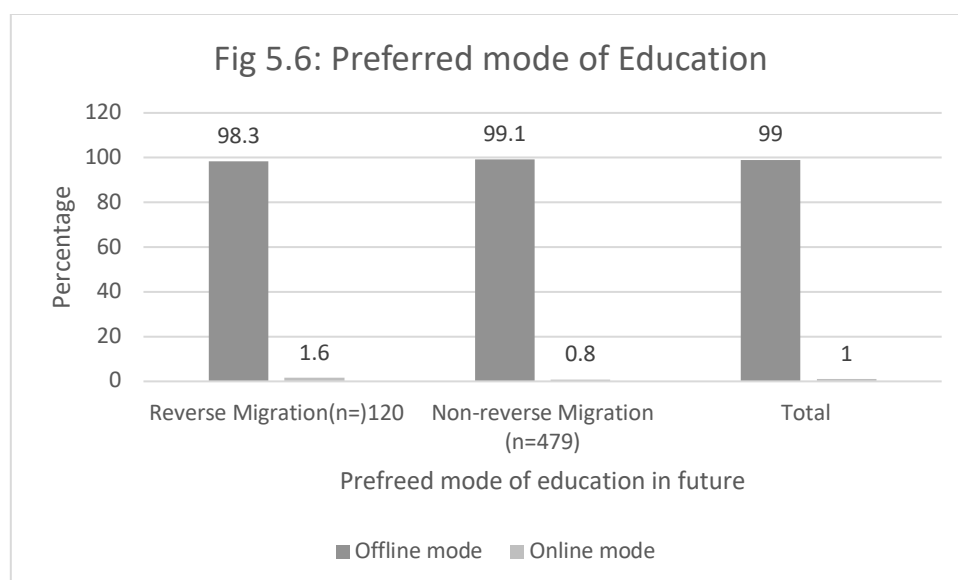
Most of the children also preferred offline mode of education as they believe that there is no two-way communication in the online mode of education as they were not able to interact with their teachers in the online mode. They were not able to doubts from their teachers. Children also were not able to interact with their peers in online mode and this interaction is very necessary for the holistic growth and development of the child. Offline mode of education follows fixed routine and thus children would be able to do everything systematically in offline mode of education. Lack of proper infrastructure such as adequate space in the house and ICT devices was also responsible for most of the children to opt offline mode of education.

Some of the children wanted that the online mode of education should continue as it was easy for them to attend classes from comfort of their home. They were able to attend classes without worrying about dress and spending time and money on travelling to and from school. They can utilise this time in other things. Some of the children also said that if the education system shifted back to the offline mode, their parents would not allow them to use phones and thus they want to continue in the online mode of education.
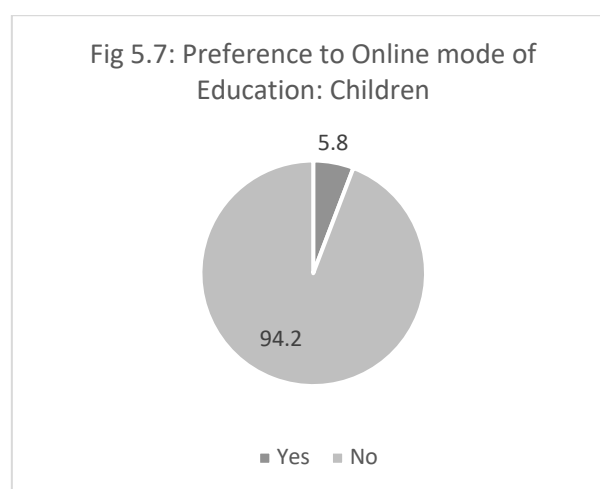
Fig 5.7: Preference to Online mode of Education: Children

Fig 5.8: Interaction of Children with Teachers in Online Mode

Data collected from Children during the survey revealed that they faced additional problem in comparison to the problem faced by the parents during the lockdown. Migrant children who were residing in standalone houses and resettlement colonies were confined to their homes. They were mostly living in single room houses and thus they couldn't study. Children were not able to concentrate in online mode. Lack of ICT devices, poor mobile network, and lack of skills to handle the devices created extra burden on students. Many children who had no means to attend online classes were studying through worksheets. Children opined that since there is no interaction with the teachers the learning was of little use. Their parents were not educated enough to clear the doubts and thus children were not able to grasp anything.

Children said that they have not been in touch with anyone other than their immediate family members since the beginning of the lockdown and thus they would face difficulties in interacting with their peers when the school shifts back to offline mode. Students who were enrolled in the lockdown also said that they are used to the online mode of education and thus it would be very difficult for them to go and settle in the school atmosphere. Some of the children who have been bestowed with the additional responsibilities such as helping their family in economic activities and taking care of household in the absence of their mother feared that they will have to drop out from school if the school shifts back to the offline mode of education as they are comfortable in the routine of online education. Lack of resources such as dress and stationary items would also cause difficulty in going back to offline mode of education.

Data collected from schools revealed that the teachers also faced various problems in e-learning methods. First, e- learning methods were new to them and only handful of teachers received training for conducting classes in online mode. Teachers often faced difficulties in teaching due to low bandwidth and unstable internet connection. Some of the teachers didn't have proper access to ICT devices because their own children had to

attend online classes. Many children couldn't attend regular classes due to shortage of ICT devices and thus teachers faced problem in maintaining the classroom environment conducive for learning. In online mode of education, most of the communication was one way rather than a dialogue between students and teachers and thus teachers were not able to communicate with students in proper ways. Children were also distracted due to fear of COVID-19 and thus they couldn't pay much attention to classroom learnings. There were few instances where the online class link was shared among the outsiders, and they entered the classroom and disturbed the teachers.

The present chapter highlights the problem faced by the Migrant children and their families in accessing and continuing their education during the pandemic. As most of the education was going on in online mode, the monthly expenditure of family increased as they had to procure ICT devices and ensure the availability of data packs in their phone. To meet this increased expense, migrant families had to cut down upon other expenses such as expenditure of food and health. The families faced problem in providing online education to the children as the data was expensive and there was limited availability and accessibility of ICT devices. Parents were also worried about the increased screen time and security of their children. Children were not able to interact with their teachers in the online mode of education and couldn't concentrate for very long in the online mode. As a result, most of the parents and teacher preferred offline mode of education for future education.

In addition to the migrant families and their children, teachers also faced problem in teaching during the lockdown. With their own children studying through online medium, they faced shortage of ICT devices themselves. They were not well versed in teaching through online medium and thus it was difficult for them to keep engaging the children in the classroom learnings. There was frequent disconnection during the class which also

created hindrance for the teachers in imparting quality education to the children.

Chapter Six

Major Findings and Conclusion

Major Findings

- Employment opportunities in big cities are is one of the leading reasons which forces the people to migrate.
- The maximum numbers of respondents included in the study were living in Delhi for a period of more than 8 years.
- Close to 42 percent respondents belonged to the Scheduled Castes and another 22 percent to the OBC category, demonstrating the lower socio-economic class character of the migrant population.
- A large portion of the respondents were engaged as casual workers and daily wage earners and were living in JJ Colonies across Delhi.
- Majority of them had access to electricity and drinking water supplied either by government or by private entities.
- Avgerage income of the Migrant families ranged between Rs 10000-Rs 15000 per month.
- Majority of the respondnets were staying in the JJ Clusters.
- The study found out that 21.4 percent of the respondents reverse migrated during the lockdown. The reverse migration was higher during the first lockdown (58.4 percent) as there was very limited knowledge about the spread of virus and there was uncertainty during that time.
- As an impact of lockdown and school closure 6.3 percent of children of migrant families dropped out of school. The dropout rate was higher in the families who reverse migrated during the lockdown.
- By the time alternative arrangements were made by the school, 35.2 percent of the children did not study by any means, 50.8 percent children relied on home-schooling while the rest of them went to the tuition centres either run by NGOs (7.1 percent) or private individuals (14.2 percent).

- Out of those who reverse migrated, 40.8 percent of the respondents said that their children didn't study until the formal resumption of classes whereas among those who stayed back in Delhi, 36.7 percent of the children didn't study until the formal resumption of classes.

- The gap in education for the children who reverse migrated was more as compared to those who stayed back in Delhi.

- The shift in the online mode of education posed a challenge for children belonging to the migrant groups mainly due to lack of resources to access the online education.

- It was found that the ICT devices available for the education of children in the online mode were approximately half of that was required. As a result, only 40.23 percent of the children were able to attend online classes while the rest were dependent on either online worksheets or offline worksheet which they had to collect from schools. Only 28.3 percent of the children among those who reverse migrated were able to attend online classes.

- Different mode of assessment was adopted by the school during the lockdown which included assignment, oral exam, uploading answer sheets on portal and in very few cases physical exam. There were instances where children were promoted without any exam.

- The academic performance of children was affected due to the lockdown. 83 percent of the respondent believes that their children had started scoring fewer marks in comparison to the times before the lockdown.

- 26.2 percent of the respondents believed that school closure resulted in lack of social interaction, 32 percent of the respondents believed that child's self-esteem were affected due to school closure and 13.3 percent of the respondents believed that school closure affected the nutrition of children as they were not getting the mid-day meal during the lockdown.

- The impact of school closure was more significant in those children who reverse migrated during the lockdown in comparison to those who stayed back in Delhi.

- Among those who reverse migrated, 78.3 percent of the respondent said that their child's academic performance deteriorated.32.5 percent of the respondent believed that their child's ability to socially interact with others was affected and 35 percent of the respondent said that their children lacked self-esteem.

- The health of children was also affected due to the school closure mainly due to prolonged lockdown.

- 81.4 percent of the children either gained or lost weight after the lockdown, 73.1 percent of the parents reported the change in concentration level of their children, 14.3 percent of the parents said that children's sleeping pattern has been disturbed and 9.2 percent of the parents believed that the physical activity of their child has reduced in comparison to the time before the lockdown.

- There was immense effect on the behaviour and health of those children who dropped out of school. 25 percent of the children became lethargic, 15 percent of the children depicted aggressive behaviour after dropping out and 42.5 percent of the children worsened their ability to socially interact with others.

- With the shift to online mode of education expenditure of families also increased. They had to spend more resources for ensuring the continuation of education during the pandemic in comparison to the time before the lockdown.

- 39.4 percent of the family spent less than 500 per month on child's education, 25 percent of the family spent between 500 to 1000 rupees on child's education and 35.5 percent of family spent more than 1000 rupees monthly on child's education.

- Out of these expenditures a huge proportion of money went on data recharge (94.7 percent) followed by purchase of ICT devices (42.6 percent) and on tuition fees (38 percent).

- 94.3 percent of the households had to reduce their daily expenditure to ensure the continuation of education of their children.19.3 percent of the families had to reduce the expenditure on health while 97.4 percent of the families had to reduce the expenditure on food.

- Some of the children who were burdened with the additional responsibilities such as helping their family in economic activities and taking care of household in the absence of their mother feared that they will have to drop out from school if the school shifts back to the offline mode of education as they are comfortable in the routine of online education.

- The teachers also faced various problems in e-learning methods. First, e- learning methods were new to them and only handful of teachers received training for conducting classes in online mode.

- Teachers often faced difficulties in teaching due to low bandwidth and unstable internet connection. Some of the teachers didn't have proper access to ICT devices because their own children had to attend online classes.

- Lack of ICT devices and awareness restricted the accessibility of initiatives by the government.

Conclusion

Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution declared free and compulsory education for all the children in the age group of six to fourteen years as basic human right in 2002 through the eighty sixth amendment. The Right to Education Act[27] was passed in the year 2009 on the lines of article 21-A of the Indian Constitution which states that is the duty of the state to provide free and compulsory education to all the children in the age group of 6-14years. India became one of the 132 countries to declare education as a fundamental right with the enactment of RTE Act on 1st April 2010.

It is the duty of the state to provide free and compulsory education to all the children from six years to fourteen years of age and ensure compulsory admission, attendance, and completion of elementary education by every child of the age of six to fourteen years. The duty of the state also includes to ensure the availability of neighbourhood school, ensuring non-discrimination of children belonging to marginalised groups, providing infrastructure and training to teachers for quality education. It is the role of the local authority to ensure the admission of migrant children and deciding the academic calendar- Section 9(k) of the RTE Act, 2009. (Government of India, 2009)

The pandemic has affected the schools of 1.5 billion students worldwide and is likely to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the millions of migrant and displaced learners around the world (UNESCO 2020). In many cases, these marginalized children have already missed critical time in the classroom and are at risk of falling even further behind. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, refugee children were twice as likely to be out of school as other children. Migrant and displaced children face numerous obstacles accessing classrooms, ranging from enrolment issues to lack of available instruction to language barriers (RTE 2020).

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[27]https://www.education.gov.in/en/rte

In India, 1.4 million schools have been closed since the third week of March 2020. Covid has augmented the education divide. While students in private schools seamlessly moved to virtual classrooms, students in the public education system (over 65 per cent of our students are enrolled in public sector schools) have no means to access content online. Majority of the students in our public/government educational institutions would neither have the technology for this transition, nor the economic or social capacity to bridge its inequity (Statesman, 26 June 2020). It has put a "pause" on learning of the segment that had been struggling with the learning crisis.

India, along with the world, is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the fight seems to be a long one, the government is ensuring that education in schools does not suffer. The way we are imparting education to our next generation has undoubtedly changed – increase in e-learning, teaching undertaken remotely and use of digital platforms. The pandemic has affected almost all sections of the population, more so the marginalised. Children of migrant workers already marginalised in the city, faced an uphill task in continuing their education. Although, several measures were out in place, yet the disadvantaged position that the children of migrants are, they struggled to keep pace with the others.

Given this, there is a need to investigate the life situation and choices of the children of migrants and how the pandemic affected not only their education, but also how they suffered a double whammy due to their disadvantaged life situation. It is also important to understand the impact of virtual learning for migrant school children who are having limited or no resources to access online education. Given the thrust of RTE on the education as a right, it raised a pertinent question as to how the children of migrant workers were able to access education during COVID 19 lockdown and examine the challenges faced by them during this process.

In this study data was collected from several locations of Delhi that had predominance of migrant workers. The locations were selected from across Delhi. Some of these areas included Yamuna Khadar, Kidwai Nagar Nalla, Paharganj, Kirti Nagar, Mayapuri, Madanpur Khadar, Masoodpur, Kusumpur& Rangpur Pahadi, Shakurbasti, Nand Nagri, and Bhalaswa Dairy, etc.

The profile of the migrants and their children gives a brief account of the social and economic status of the respondents and tries to understand the original reasons of migration and subsequent reverse migration during the lockdown. Employment opportunities in big cities are one of the leading reasons which forces the people to migrate. The migrant population mostly come and join other migrants from their village who are already living in Delhi. These people help the new migrants to get a job and start their life. They act as a support system for the migrant families. The maximum numbers of respondents included in the study were living in Delhi for a period of more than 8 years as one of the inclusion criteria in the study was having a school going children between the age group of 6 to 14 years in the family. This condition was fulfilled by the families who were living in Delhi for longer duration. Also, the migrant population do not bring their family during the initial years as they themselves do not have proper means of survival. Close to 42 percent respondents belonged to the Scheduled Castes and another 22 percent to the OBC category, demonstrating the lower socio-economic class character of the migrant population.

A large portion of the respondents were engaged as casual workers and daily wage earners and were living in JJ Colonies across Delhi. Majority of them had access to electricity and drinking water supplied either by government or by private entities. During the harvest season, many migrants normally go back to their native place to help the family in the fields every year. This seasonal migration helps them maintain their

relationship with their roots and thus they do not have to face much hardship during the time they had to stay in their native place.

A typical migrant family would be one belonging to the Scheduled Castes, hailing either from Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, migrating to Delhi in search of work, been educated below elementary level and working as a casual worker or daily wage earners such as labours, carpenters, majority earning between Rs 10000 to Rs 15000 per month, living in a JJ cluster.

The study found out that maximum number of reverse migrations happened during the first lockdown as there was uncertainty about the virus among the people and for these reasons maximum number of respondents chose to go back to their native place rather than some other place in search of work.

The reverse migration was higher in the group who were living in Delhi for a shorter period. Those who were staying here for longer period had already established their support system in Delhi and thus theywere able to sustain themselves in Delhi. The primary reason for the reverse migration was lack of work and subsequently lack of resources to sustain themselves in Delhi. Most respondents who reverse migrated went by the time there were some relaxations in terms of travelling. They either used special train ran by the Govt.a of India for the migrant population or by the bus. It was also found out that those who reverse migrated during first few days of the lockdown went walking or by rickshaw or cycles. This was the most vulnerable group who didn't have any means to sustain in Delhi. The uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic cause anxiety and panic among them and thus they in the absence of any other means of travelling started walking towards their native place.

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The findings of the present study reveals that the pandemic has impacted the overall growth and development of the children of migrant workers. The impact of the pandemic was more on those children who reverse migrated during the lockdown. Large number of children dropped out from school during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were not able to continue their education due to various reasons including lack of resources to continue the education in online mode, helping family members financially and so on. The dropout rate was higher in those children who reverse migrated with their parents during the COVID-19.

There was a gap in the education of children for more than a month during the lockdown as there was no infrastructure for the education in online mode. The online mode of education poses challenges for the children belonging to migrant families as there was shortage of ICT devices in the families. There were less ICT devices in comparison to number of schools

going children in the households. Apart from the shortage of ICT devices, expensive internet connection, lack of adequate space in the house and lack of expertise in handling the devices also created difficulties in accessing online education. More screen time was also one of the challenges in child's education in the online mode.

There has been impact on child's physical as well as mental health. Large proportion of the nutrition requirements of children are met through the mid-day meal. The school closure resulted in discontinuation of mid-day meal and families who were already suffering financially due to lack of employment were not able to meet the nutritional requirement of the child. Prolonged confinement in homes resulted in disturbed sleeping pattern and subsequently resulted in overall disturbed routine. The social ability of the children was also affected to certain extent as there was very limited interaction with the teachers and peers in the online mode of education. Learning gap also observed in children as compared to the time before the lockdown. This was reflected in their academic performances.

Data collected from children during the survey revealed that they faced additional problem in comparison to the problem faced by the parents during the lockdown. Migrant children who were residing in standalone houses and resettlement colonies were confined to their homes. They were mostly living in single room houses and thus they couldn't study. Children were not able to concentrate in online mode. Lack of ICT devices, poor mobile network, and lack of skills to handle the devices created extra burden on students.

Some of the children who have been bestowed with the additional responsibilities such as helping their family in economic activities and taking care of household in the absence of their mother feared that they will have to drop out from school if the school shifts back to the offline

mode of education as they are comfortable in the routine of online education.

The teachers also faced various problems in e-learning methods. First, e-learning methods were new to them and only handful of teachers received training for conducting classes in online mode. Teachers often faced difficulties in teaching due to low bandwidth and unstable internet connection. Some of the teachers didn't have proper access to ICT devices because their own children had to attend online classes.

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ANNEXURE 1:

Suggestions	Response
The schemes by the centre and state need to be studied to find out the gap in the implementation	Detailed study needs to be undertaken for identifying the gap in the implementation of the schemes by the central and state government.
If there is such an emergency in the future then how to move seamlessly from. Offline mode to online mode without affecting education needs to be included in the recommendation	- Developing adequate infrastructure for online education in school. - Ensuring availability of ICT devices for children/viability of use - Training teachers for the use of technology as well as how to impart quality education through online medium. - Development of SOPs by educational bodies for smooth shift in online medium. - Using online mode more frequently to ensure that in case of transition to online mode all the stakeholders are comfortable.
Suggestion and set of recommendation for ensuring RTE for children during pandemic and other emergency	Included in the report: page 12-21
Specify Special Education Program	Sri Lanka Case Study: Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia[28] Curriculum reform to meet the individual needs of students [29]

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[28]

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/documentViewer.xhtml?v=2.1.196&id=p::usmarcdef_000037951 8&file=/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach_import_ba956a42-7d99-47c2-92f4-ec0ebad31ede%3F_%3D379518eng.pdf&locale=en&multi=true&ark=/ark:/48223/pf0000379518 /PDF/379518eng.pdf#UNICEF_SriLanka_F5.indd%3A.35654%3A1558

[29]

https://www.unicef.org/media/107911/file/Curriculum%20reform%20to%20meet%20the%20ind ividual%20needs%20of%20students%20(Uzbekistan).pdf

Sri Lanka Case Study: Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Response to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia.

Sri Lanka took swift action by closing the schools after the first confirmed death due to COVID-19 with intention of opening school in mid-April. However due to large spread of virus school only started opening up in phase manner in the month of July. Sri Lanka, along with the rest of the world, rapidly adapted to the "new normal" of distance learning. Various efforts were made by the Sri Lankan Government to ensure the continuation of education during the pandemic.

- Ministry of Education Partnered with internet service providers to run its web-based learning programs. They also dedicated two public television channels for airing educational content. Few private channels also volunteered to air educational content created by the government.
- In order to overcome the challenges in imparting education through online medium such as student engagement, attention, understanding; National Institute of Education partnered with Open University to create high quality engaging content.
- NIE also created a national timetable that indicated which teaching content would be available on which media platform at what time, to make it easier for students and parents to engage.
- In order to bridge the digital divide, various efforts were made by the provincial department of education to ensure the continuity of education. For example, the provincial department of UVA realised that all students do not have access to internet and thus they started broadcasting the subject lesson on radio and circulated five newspaper with educational content.
- In order to bridge the learning gap induced due to prolonged school closure and online education, learning diagnostic test was conducted by the school.
- Based on the learning diagnostic test, curriculums were designed in a way to cover up the core competency area.

Curriculum reform to meet the individual needs of students: UZBEKISTAN

- About 6.2 million learners in Uzbekistan experienced disruption in education due to COVID-19. Inconsistent access to and effectiveness of distance learning modalities across student groups resulted in substantial learning losses, exacerbating existing inequalities in learning opportunities and outcomes. When schools reopened in November and December 2020, UNICEF advocated for inclusivity. This complemented ongoing curriculum reform (proper use of assessment to track learning, the inclusion of all learners and instruction that is tailored to the needs of students at different levels) in the country and increased use of learning assessment, as well as teacher training on inclusive education and on tailored instruction in the classroom to students at different learning levels.
- To assess and compensate for the learning losses, the Government, with UNICEF support, developed blended learning programmes as well as individualized learning remedial and catch-up programmes.
- These programmes aimed to remedy lost learning and reorient instruction in the long-term, with a focus on grouping students according to their learning levels and teaching accordingly.
- UNICEF provided support to identify priority learning outcomes and success criteria, assess learning loss and knowledge gaps and design catch-up plans for students lagging behind.
- The most experienced teachers led the individual or group catch up sessions. Programme Guidelines, which included links to demo videos on using different online applications for teaching, learning and assessing, were disseminated across the country to teachers and principals.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **To minimise learning gaps among students, differentiation, ongoing assessment and use of data must be built into each class**
  Teachers should develop lesson plans that include formative assessment as ongoing support for individual learners and differentiated activities. Better communication with and feedback from teachers helps students gain clarity on what they are expected to achieve and how that builds greater skills and knowledge.
- **Remediation is essential to mitigate long-term learning loss.**
  Continuing reorientation of instruction must also align with children's learning levels, which can be moving targets: teaching needs to remain flexible.

Suggestion 2

Background

The importance of education is often neglected during emergencies as the authorities and people focus on life saving initiatives. It is estimated that nearly 175 million children are likely to experience some level of disruption to their schooling(Save the Children, 2012), including drop out, slowed development and other psychosocial and protection concerns in the coming decade (Nicolai et. Al., 2015).

Lack of access to education directly impacts children's safety and wellbeing. All children are exposed to threats during and after emergencies; however, girls and boys who are out of school are at much higher risk of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. This includes sexual violence and exploitation; recruitment or use by armed forces or groups; hazardous child labour and becoming involved in criminal activities. Additionally, child protection concerns can prevent children from accessing education or diminish educational outcomes. In conflict zones, access to education is barred not only by general insecurity but also by targeted attacks against students, teachers, and educational facilities, as well as the use of those facilities for military purposes by parties to conflict. Armed conflict diverts public funds from education into military spending, making access to quality education difficult or impossible[30]

Education can play active role in disaster relief, post conflict and peacebuilding efforts. It can help the deviants to get back into the society. Schools can provide safe spaces for children to build friendships, play and learn. In addition, education empowers students by giving them a voice, and a safe space to communicate their feelings and concerns(Education in Emergencies, n.d.).Education is an important tool to provide children and communities with a sense of normalcy following a disaster, instilling hope, and mitigating the psychosocial impact of violence and displacement (Education in Emergencies, n.d.-b).

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[30]https://www.educationcluster.net/content-page/education-emergencies-child-protection-collaboration-framework

In India, 1.4 million schools have been closed since the third week of March 2020. Covid has augmented the education divide. While students in private schools seamlessly moved to virtual classrooms, students in the public education system (over 65 per cent of our students are enrolled in public sector schools) have no means to access content online. Majority of the students in our public/government educational institutions would neither have the technology for this transition, nor the economic or social capacity to bridge its inequity[31]. It has put a "pause" on learning of the segment that had been struggling with the learning crisis. Only 8 percent of households in India have a computer with an internet connection. The major challenge of remote learning is disparity in access – from electricity and internet connections to devices like computers or smartphones. This makes migrant children most vulnerable as they do not have enough resources to catch up with the changed style of learning during the pandemic and can easily fall out of the education system.

Though efforts were made by the government across the world to deliver education through online mode, digital divide created hindrance for majority of students. Government provided online learning solution, however due to lack of access to ICT devices and connectivity constraints, majority of children could not effectively learn through remote learning. Factors such as inadequate home environment, attention span of children, low digital literacy of teachers, parents, and students, and lack of skills resulted in low participation in remote learning programs. (Muñoz-Najar et al., 2021)

As per ITU's World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database, 99 percent of the households are covered with cellular network and 98 percent of the houses are covered with 4G mobile network. Only 24 percent of the houses have access to internet and 11 percent had computer at their home. 43 percent of the population in India use Internet. There is 58 percent male and 42 percent female internet users in India (Internet Adoption in India: ICUBE 2020, 2021).)

The National Family Health Survey 2019–21 ("NFHS"), however, shows a significantly larger gender gap in internet usage. The NFHS Report suggests that only 57.1 percent of the male population and 33.3 percent of the female population had ever used the internet. There is also a gap between the rural and

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[31]https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/will-migrants-child-learn-again-1502903874.html

urban internet users. 72.5 percent of the urban males and 51.8 percent of the urban females have ever used the internet, only 48.7 percent of rural males and 24.6 percent of the rural females qualify for this condition. (Ministry of Health & Family welfare, Government of India, 2022).

<u>Problem is accessing Education</u>

- **<u>Digital Divide</u>**

As per ASER 2021, availability of smartphones at home rose to 67.6% in 2021, from 36.5% in 2018, but at least a quarter of schoolchildren did not have access to the devices. The study found that 67.07 percent of the respondents faced problem due to expensive internet connection, 53.04 percent of the respondents faced problem with the daily limit of the data, 14.4 percent of the respondents lacked ICT devices and 20.1 percent of the respondents had problem in using ICT devices for education. 26.4 percent of the respondents felt that accessibility to quality online education was absent due to the lack of space in their house.

Initiatives such as PM E-vidya, Diksha, SWAYAM PRABHA and Mukta Vidya Vani were launched by the government but none of the study respondents had heard about these initiatives. There were also few initiatives taken by the NCERT and SCERT for ensuring e-learning

- **<u>Lack of teacher-student interaction</u>**

One of the major challenges associated with online mode was lack of communication or interaction with the teachers. Only 36.3 percent of the children were able to interact with their teachers during the online classes. 57.7 percent of the children said that it was difficult for them to interact with the teachers in the online mode.

Data collected from schools revealed that the teachers also faced various problems in e-learning methods. First, e- learning methods were new to them and only handful of teachers received training for conducting classes in online mode. Teachers often faced difficulties in teaching due to low bandwidth and unstable internet connection. Some of the teachers didn't have proper access to ICT devices because their own children had to attend online classes. Many

children couldn't attend regular classes due to shortage of ICT devices and thus teachers faced problem in maintaining the classroom environment conducive for learning. In online mode of education, most of the communication was one way rather than a dialogue between students and teachers and thus teachers were not able to communicate with students in proper ways. Children were also distracted due to fear of COVID-19 and thus they couldn't pay much attention to classroom learnings. There were few instances where the online class link was shared among the outsiders, and they entered the classroom and disturbed the teachers.

- **Absence of Policy for emergency education**

Emergencies have not got as much attention as needed. Consequently, capacities in this area amongst practitioners at various levels are limited. Implementing and sustaining quality education interventions during and after emergencies requires specific skills.

The National Disaster Management Plan along with State plans do not have specific thrust on the impact of disasters on children and how to mitigate them.

Suggestions

- Developing adequate infrastructure for online education in school such as smart classrooms, computer labs and infrastructure for recording educational contents.
- Ensuring availability of ICT devices for children/viability of use through various government schemes and help of NGOs and Civil Societies
- Training teachers for the use of technology as well as how to impart quality education through online medium.
- Development of SOPs by educational bodies for smooth shift in online medium.
- *Community Space for facilitation of shared e-learning with all the necessary infrastructure [E-Learning Centres to supplement school in normal days]*

- *Awareness programs in order to inform the children belonging to the marginalised community about different initiatives of e-learning by the government.*
- Promote flexible and adaptive learning methods that can accommodate different circumstances during emergencies. This could include a combination of online learning, radio/television broadcasts, take-home assignments, and other creative alternatives to traditional in-person schooling.
- There is an urgent need to map the critical capacities for education in Emergencies, develop multi-pronged capacity building programs and build a cadre of professionals at various levels in relevant sectors/departments.
- UNICEF has developed a course designed to provide education staff and practitioners with foundational knowledge and skills relating to Education in Emergencies. The Government of India can engage with UNICEF to upscale this course through the Ministry of Education for its agencies and staff.
- Put in place learning recovery programs with the objective of assuring that students attain at least the same competencies of the previous generation
- Improving the efficiency of learning: techniques like targeted instruction can help learning recovery, which means that teachers align instruction to the learning level of students, rather than an assumed starting point or curricular expectation.
- Diagnostic Assessment in order to know the current status of children.
- Bridge courses in order to strengthen the foundation skills.
- Teachers should be trained to educate students who are slow learners along with other students.