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## Educational Opportunities and Challenges arising from Migration

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### Abstract

Migration, whether internal or international, has traditionally been viewed through the lens of economic, social, and cultural implications. However, its influence on education often presents positive dimensions that deserve scholarly attention. This paper examines how migration contributes to educational improvement by enhancing access to quality learning, promoting intercultural competence, stimulating skill development, and expanding academic aspirations. Using a qualitative synthesis of previous studies and selected case analyses, this research highlights the transformative role of migration in shaping educational trajectories. Findings suggest that migration fosters better educational opportunities, increases parental investment in schooling, and enriches the educational environment through cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Migration, Education, Skill Development, Intercultural Competence, Educational Opportunities

### Introduction

Migration is a complex socio-economic process influenced by employment opportunities, political stability, environmental factors, and aspirations for improved living conditions. While the negative aspects of migration such as disruption in schooling are often discussed, the positive effects on education remain underexplored. Migrant families often seek better educational prospects for their children, which can result in increased academic achievement and social integration. This paper investigates how migration positively impacts educational access, quality, and outcomes, thereby contributing to human capital development.

### Literature Review

(Rao, 2010) <sup>[4]</sup> highlights that while remittances may fund schooling, such investments depend on household priorities, perceived educational quality, and expected returns, and can sometimes discourage education. Skilled migration, though potentially a means of acquiring training, frequently leads to “deskilling” in host countries where qualifications are undervalued. Education and migration are also shaped by social and cultural structures, with employment often mediated by networks and power rather than credentials, leading many educated youth to pursue migration as a response to limited local opportunities. At the same time, structural inequalities of caste, class, gender, and ethnicity constrain access to mobility, even when families strategically invest in education. Thus, while education and migration may reproduce existing hierarchies, they can also open avenues for transformation, though outcomes remain uncertain and dependent on wider socio-political contexts, household strategies, and individual agency.

(Chandrasekhar & Sharma, 2014) <sup>[2]</sup> conducted a study to examine internal migration among Indian youth for education and employment, drawing on NSSO data from 2007–2008. The study reveals that migration for education is largely intra-state, though inter-state flows significantly contribute to regional imbalances, with Delhi, Maharashtra, and Karnataka emerging as key destinations, while Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala are major source states. Migration for employment, in contrast, is more inter-state in nature, with rural youth forming a large share of migrant workers. The authors highlight how disparities in educational infrastructure and employment opportunities drive these patterns, contributing to internal “brain drain” from less developed states to more prosperous ones. They also note

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limited higher education capacity, high dropout rates, and mismatches between skill supply and labor market demand as factors intensifying migration. The paper underscores the policy challenge of expanding access to higher education, improving retention, and developing state-level strategies to prevent the erosion of human capital, thereby linking migration dynamics to broader debates on inclusive growth and regional equity.

(Dubey & Mallah, 2015) <sup>[3]</sup> explore the causes and effects of migration in India within the context of globalization, emphasizing the dual nature of its opportunities and challenges. Using secondary data, the authors identify key push factors such as lack of employment, rigid educational systems, and political instability and pull factors like better job prospects, quality education, and higher living standards abroad. They argue that migration has led to brain drain and talent shortages in India, particularly in fields like medicine and information technology, while simultaneously generating brain gain through return migration, remittances, and cross-border knowledge flows. The paper highlights the significant role of the Indian diaspora in remittances, entrepreneurship, and global networks, noting that India received over US\$70 billion in remittances in 2011–12, contributing to economic growth. While acknowledging the risks of talent loss, the authors frame migration as a form of “brain circulation” that can benefit both India and host countries if supported by effective policy frameworks.

(Thomas, 2017) <sup>[6]</sup> examines the precarious conditions faced by Indian middle-class youth migrating to the United States for higher education, situating their experiences within the neoliberal university system. Drawing on ethnographic research at a public university in New York, the author introduces the concept of “educational debts,” encompassing financial loans, kinship obligations, and moral responsibilities, which collectively shape students’ migration decisions and everyday lives. The study shows how debt not only facilitates educational mobility but also burdens students with vulnerability to exploitation through low-wage campus labor and restrictive visa regimes. Many students rely on part-time work to survive, while post-graduation uncertainties push some into exploitative “consultancies” in the IT sector, revealing a disjuncture between neoliberal aspirations of upward mobility and the precarious futures many face. The paper highlights how these students’ subjectivities are constructed as “indebted subjects,” embodying both the sacrifices of their families and the contradictions of global education markets, ultimately exposing the uneven realities of transnational class formation in the neoliberal era.

(Attah-Out et. al., 2025) <sup>[1]</sup> conducted a study exploring the effects of labour migration on health and education among tribal communities in Madhya Pradesh, India, drawing on interviews with returned migrants, left-behind adolescents, teachers, and local leaders. The findings reveal precarious living and working conditions at migration destinations, including inadequate housing, sanitation, and healthcare, which adversely affect migrants’ health and expose children to risks of malnutrition and lack of immunization. Educational consequences are pronounced: accompanied children often remain unenrolled in schools, while left-behind children face high dropout rates, irregular attendance, and declining academic performance, compounded by early marriage and child labour. Teachers emphasized parental disengagement and limited awareness

of education’s value, though long-term migrants showed greater investment in private schooling for their children. The study underscores how migration, though pursued as a livelihood strategy, often reproduces cycles of vulnerability, highlighting the urgent need for policy interventions to improve healthcare access, expand educational opportunities, and support left-behind families in tribal communities.

(Roy et. al., 2015) <sup>[5]</sup> investigated the effects of rural–urban labour migration on the education of left-behind and accompanied children in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar through both origin- and destination-based fieldwork. The findings reveal a dual impact: remittances from migrant fathers improve access to schooling, particularly for girls, thereby narrowing the gender gap in enrolment, while simultaneously, the absence of fathers often results in poor performance, indiscipline, and increased vulnerability to dropout among left-behind children. The situation is more severe for accompanied children of construction workers, where frequent mobility, poverty, and lack of school access lead to extremely high rates of non-enrolment and dropout, with many entering the labour force at a young age. The paper concludes that while migration offers temporary economic relief and can enhance educational opportunities for some, it also perpetuates cycles of poverty and exclusion, especially for mobile families, highlighting the urgent need for targeted policies to mainstream migrant children into education systems and reduce their risk of exploitation

### **Positive effects of Migration**

#### **For Families and Communities of Origin**

- Increased household income - Remittances sent by migrants can relax household budget constraints, allowing families to afford school fees and other educational expenses, leading to greater investment in children's schooling.
- Higher educational attainment - Studies have shown a positive link between migration and increased educational attainment in children in countries like India, China, and Latin America.
- Improved skills - Access to education and lifelong learning helps migrants acquire the skills needed to succeed in the labor market, which benefits both the migrants and their communities.

#### **For Migrants and Host Countries**

1. Enhanced skills and opportunities - Migrants gain access to education and training in host countries, improving their skills and helping them integrate into the labor market.
2. Improved education systems - Migrant workers, such as teachers, can contribute to strengthening education systems in both their home and host countries.
3. "Brain gain" - Skilled migration can increase the overall level of education and human capital in the destination country, as migrants contribute their expertise.
4. Positive externalities - Migrants can create "brain gain" by bringing their expertise and skills to a new country, leading to further investments in human capital and a more skilled workforce.
5. Increased returns on education - Migration can highlight the value of education by making it a more

significant factor in securing better economic opportunities and social mobility.

6. **Boost to human capital** - By encouraging individuals to pursue further education and training, migration contributes to the development of human capital, benefiting both individuals and economies.

#### **For students and learning**

- **Access to Better Educational Institutions** - One of the most significant benefits of migration is the access it provides to improved educational facilities. Families moving from rural to urban areas or across borders often find better schools, advanced curricula, and skilled teachers, which directly enhance the learning outcomes of children.
- **Exposure to Diverse Learning Environments** - Migration exposes students to diverse cultural and linguistic environments, encouraging adaptability and broadening intellectual horizons. Learning in multicultural classrooms fosters tolerance, critical thinking, and global awareness, skills essential for success in the 21st century.
- **Enhanced Economic Support for Education** - Migrants often seek better economic opportunities, and the increased income can be invested in children's education. Remittances sent by migrant workers are frequently used for school fees, books, uniforms, and higher education expenses, thereby strengthening educational attainment within migrant families.
- **Motivation and Aspirations** - Children of migrant families are often more motivated to pursue education as a means of upward social mobility. Exposure to societies where education is highly valued can reshape attitudes and inspire children to achieve higher academic goals.
- **Transfer of Knowledge and Skills** - Migration facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills across regions. Parents who acquire new skills or educational experiences abroad often encourage their children to pursue similar opportunities. This transfer creates a ripple effect, improving not only individual educational attainment but also community-level knowledge.
- **Development of Multilingual and Intercultural Competencies** - Migration frequently results in bilingual or multilingual children. Learning multiple languages enhances cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills, and academic performance, while also preparing students for globalized job markets.
- **Creation of Global Networks** - Educational experiences gained through migration help create international networks of peers and mentors. Such connections provide academic collaborations, exchange opportunities, and scholarships, which further enrich the learning process.

#### **4. Opportunities for Migrant Children**

##### **Access to Better Education**

Migration often enables children to attend schools with improved infrastructure, qualified teachers, and advanced learning resources. This access not only enhances their academic knowledge but also opens doors to skill development, scholarships, and career opportunities that may not have been available in their place of origin.

##### **Cultural Exposure**

Living in a new environment allows migrant children to experience diverse cultures, languages, and traditions. This exposure broadens their worldview, encourages respect for different perspectives, and helps them develop intercultural communication skills, which are valuable in an increasingly globalized society.

##### **Economic Mobility**

When families migrate to regions with greater employment opportunities, children benefit from improved household income and living standards. With better financial security, they can enjoy access to books, technology, extracurricular activities, and higher education, all of which contribute to long-term economic mobility.

##### **Social Networks**

Migration creates opportunities for children to interact with peers from various backgrounds, leading to the development of new friendships and support systems. These networks can play a crucial role in their emotional well-being, confidence building, and future professional connections.

##### **Personal Growth**

Adjusting to new surroundings helps migrant children build resilience and adaptability. They learn to navigate challenges such as language barriers, unfamiliar environments, and cultural adjustments. These experiences strengthen their problem-solving abilities, independence, and emotional maturity.

##### **Health and Services**

In many cases, migration provides families with access to better healthcare systems, nutritious food, and social welfare programs. For children, this means improved physical well-being, timely medical care, and stronger support for their overall growth and development.

##### **Language and Communication Skill**

Living in new linguistic environments encourages the development of multilingual competence, as individuals learn to adapt to different languages for both academic and social purposes. Such exposure strengthens communication skills, enabling migrants to interact effectively across cultures and contexts.

##### **Broadened Worldview**

Migration often provides students with access to better educational opportunities, including advanced curricula, modern teaching methods, and improved learning resources. Such access not only enhances their academic growth but also exposes them to a variety of ideas and knowledge systems beyond their home context.

##### **Cultural Awareness.**

Migrant students encounter diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives, which broaden their worldview and foster cultural awareness. This exposure nurtures open-mindedness, critical thinking, and adaptability, enabling them to navigate different social and professional environments with greater confidence.

**Motivation and Academic Ambition:** Parents who migrate typically carry strong hopes for upward social mobility and



view education as the primary tool for achieving it. As a result, they instill higher academic ambitions in their children, encouraging regular school attendance, disciplined study habits, and improved performance. This parental motivation not only fosters a culture of learning within migrant households but also inspires children to pursue higher education and long-term professional success.

### **Networking and International Opportunities**

Migrant children, particularly in international contexts, often gain access to scholarships, student exchange programs, and collaborative learning platforms that broaden their academic and professional horizons. These opportunities enable them to connect with peers, educators, and institutions across borders, fostering intellectual growth and career development. Exposure to global perspectives also enhances their competitiveness in the labor market, as they acquire skills and experiences valued internationally.

### **Challenges Faced by Migrant Children**

#### **Educational Barriers**

Migrant children often struggle with frequent school transfers, disrupted learning, and differences in educational systems. Language barriers further complicate their ability to understand lessons and communicate with teachers or peers. Limited access to quality schools and resources may cause them to fall behind academically, affecting their long-term educational prospects.

#### **Social Adjustment issues**

Adapting to new social environments can be difficult for migrant children. They may face challenges in building friendships due to cultural differences, unfamiliar customs, or prejudices. Feelings of loneliness and exclusion are common, which can hinder their emotional well-being and confidence in adjusting to a new society.

#### **Economic Hardships**

Many migrant families experience unstable income or poverty in their new location. As a result, children may lack access to basic necessities such as books, nutritious food, or proper housing. In some cases, financial pressure forces them to leave school and take up work, which limits their educational and developmental opportunities.

#### **Health Issues**

The living conditions of migrant families are often inadequate, with poor sanitation, overcrowding, or unsafe housing. Limited access to healthcare services can lead to untreated illnesses, malnutrition, and other health risks. These conditions affect both the physical and mental well-being of children, making them more vulnerable than their non-migrant peers.

#### **Legal and Identity Crisis**

The absence of proper documentation, such as birth certificates or residency papers, creates significant barriers for migrant children. Without legal identity, they may be denied access to education, healthcare, and social services. Their uncertain legal status often leaves them marginalized and excluded from opportunities available to others.

#### **Psychological Stress**

Migration can be emotionally overwhelming for children, as they are uprooted from familiar surroundings, extended

family, and their cultural environment. The uncertainty of adapting to a new place, combined with economic struggles and social exclusion, often leads to anxiety, insecurity, and stress. Over time, these factors may impact their overall psychological development.

### **Discussion**

Migration can be a catalyst for educational progress. By relocating to regions with advanced educational infrastructure, migrant families provide their children with competitive academic advantages. Cultural exposure strengthens adaptability, tolerance, and global competence skills crucial in a rapidly globalizing world. Moreover, improved socio-economic conditions from migration often translate into greater investment in education. There is a clear increase in the access of school education and higher education with multiple responses indicating an increase in the number of students going to school at both the primary and secondary level. Along with access to primary and secondary education, there has been a stark increase in students opting for professional and technical courses with general sentiment being more towards opting for higher studies instead of settling for low paying jobs. The financial stability of the people have also increased over the years as better education has led to better opportunities for the people. However, the benefits also depend on the host region's inclusivity, language support policies, and the migrant family's socio-economic status. Without these supports, the positive effects may be diminished.

### **Conclusion**

Migration, whether internal or international, is often viewed through the lens of economic or social disruption. However, it also carries several positive implications for education, especially when families and individuals gain access to better opportunities, resources, and knowledge systems. Migration is not merely a socio-economic phenomenon; it is also an educational enabler. By opening doors to better schooling, fostering intercultural learning, and motivating academic success, migration contributes significantly to human capital formation. Policymakers and educators should focus on creating inclusive environments that maximize these benefits for migrant learners. While migration is often associated with challenges, its positive effects on education are undeniable. It grants access to better institutions, increases economic support for learning, fosters diversity, and equips students with global skills. Recognizing these benefits allows policymakers and educators to create supportive systems that maximize the educational advantages of migration, ultimately contributing to both individual empowerment and societal development.

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