

### Quick Facts

- 309 million people in India internally migrate in search of work
- 30% (93 million) of the national migration population are children
- Up to 100 million people a year are short term or seasonal migrants
- Lead source states are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand
- Key Destination states are Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab (UNESCO, 2013).

## THE CHILDREN Education

Seasonal migrants often take their children along when they migrate for work, which negatively impacts upon the regular and continued schooling of children.

This temporary discontinuation of study often results in their dropping out of school altogether (Deshingkar and Sandi, 2012).

Consequently the rights to education for migrant children remains compromised. This adversely affects their human capital formation and contributes to inter-generational poverty.

## Health & Safety

In absence of early education migrant children miss critical inputs necessary in their early years for their physical, motor, cognitive, language and psycho-social development (UNESCO, 2013).

Health risks such as malnutrition and anaemia remain prevalent

among migrant children, resulting in stunting. Further, migrant children are regularly used as child labour at worksites. They are found to be working in sectors such as construction, brick manufacture, salt making, sugar-cane harvesting, stone quarrying, plantations, fishing and rat hole mining in coal mines (UNESCO, 2013, p. 38). Despite the Child Labour (Prohibitions & Regulation) Act, 1986, children work for long hours as unregistered and invisible workers in family labour units, whose wages are paid on a piece-rate basis (UNESCO, 2013).

## Migrating Childhood

# A FLOATING POPULATION

**Internal migrants**, those who move within their national boundaries, represent one-third of India's urban population. These statistics are several times more significant in terms of the numbers compared to those who move across countries, yet this population fails to receive the attention international migration receives from researchers, international organizations and funding agencies (UNESCO, 2013, p.3).

This lack of recognition leads to various concerns for the migrant population including **inadequate safe housing** and **lack of formal residency rights**; **low-paid, insecure and hazardous work** and **extreme vulnerability to trafficking and sex exploitation** for migrant **women and children** (UNESCO, 2013).

### IDENTITY

- In India seasonal migrants lose access to social protection benefits that are linked with their place of residence
- there is no national identification scheme
- and no concerted strategy by the Indian government that ensures portability of entitlements.

### INCLUSION

- Migrants are mostly employed informally
- they are devoid of social security and legal protection
- they work in poor conditions and face labour market discrimination
- minimum wages are often flouted and employers bear no responsibility for health, shelter and other basic requirements of migrants.

## Vathsalya Charitable Trust

A number of non-governmental services have been increasingly pushing for the acknowledgement of internal migrants in India. An example organisation making an important contribution towards strengthening the identity and visibility of migrant workers and their families is Vathsalya Charitable Trust (VCT). VCT is a Bangalore based non-for-profit focused on community development and capacity building within the local migrant community. Their mission is to ensure a sustainable living environment for migrant families through the provision of nutrition, education, health, vocational and life skills training and counselling services. For further information and ways to assist India's *floating population* please visit <http://www.vctblr.org> or find Vathsalya Charitable Trust on facebook, instagram or twitter.   

