



EDUCATION



2.2 Migration Card and Migration Monitoring Software: Tracking and educating migrant children in Gujarat

The Gujarat Government's Migration Card initiative helps track inter-state and intra-state migration of school-going children, and the Migration Monitoring Software, introduced in 2009, has enabled tracking and streamlining of implementation in real time. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in Gujarat has used this programme successfully to accommodate and educate migrant children in seasonal hostels and in Tent Special Training Programmes. The programme has helped increase retention under elementary education of children who migrate with parents looking for seasonal employment and reduce the drop-out rates of girls in primary education.

Rationale

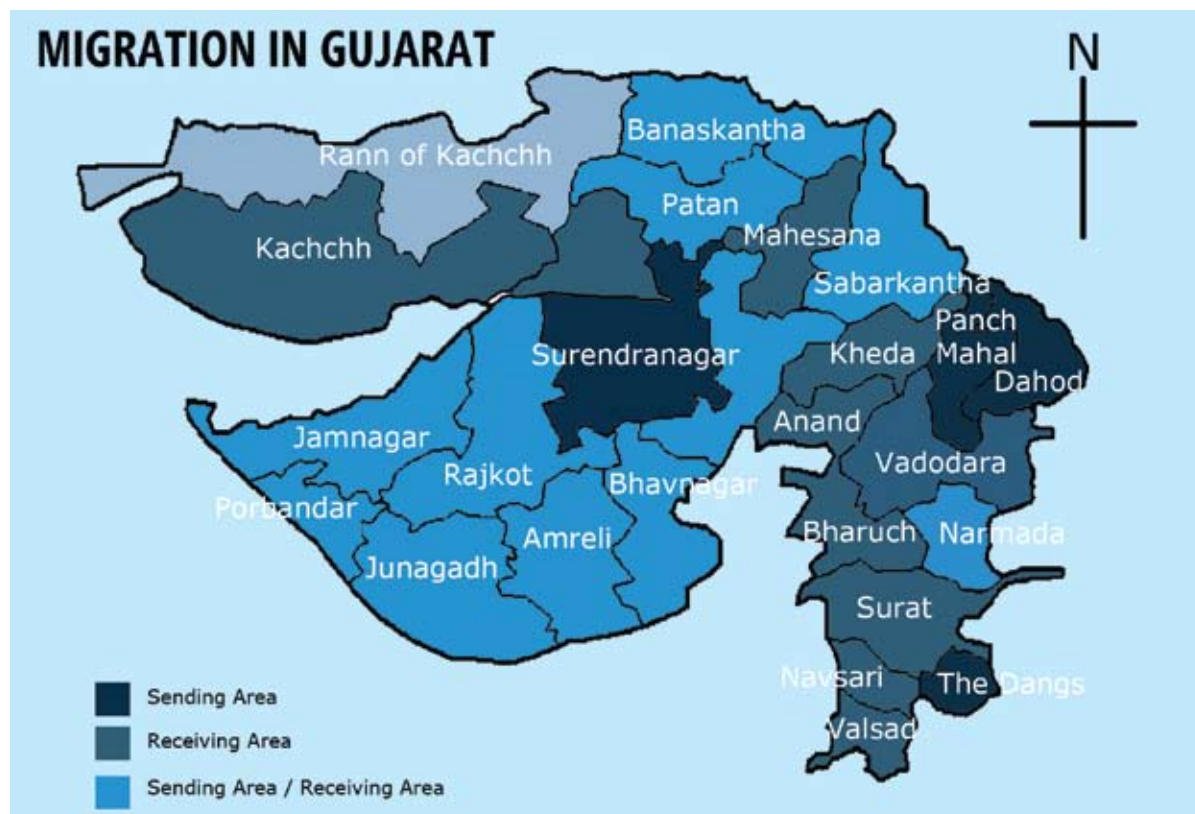
The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 implemented at the national level envisages free elementary education for children in the age group of 6-14 years. The implementation, however, has faced several roadblocks, including high dropout rates among students.

Migration for seasonal employment is one of the factors known to contribute to the dropout rate of children

from schools. Migration due to seasonal employment is caused by many industries including brick kiln factories, construction industry, sugar factories, shipyards, agricultural labour and salt pan units.

While the academic year is from June-April, migration for seasonal employment usually occurs in the months of September-November up to May-June. Therefore, children of parents who seek employment opportunities away from their domicile – within the same state or in others – are often uprooted in the middle of the academic

Figure 1: Mapping of intra-state and inter-state migration in Gujarat



Source: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gujarat, 2013

year. They also face trouble rejoining schools and drop out of schools altogether.

The Migration Card initiative was introduced in Gujarat in 2001 to track students who were migrating along with their parents within the state or from other states. The main objective was to avoid dropout and ensure the continued education of children during the period of migration. Under the Migration Card Initiative, intra-state children are covered in seasonal hostels at their domiciles while inter-state-children are covered under Tent Special Training Programmes (Tent STPs) in temporary schools set up at the worksites of their parents.

Three cards were printed at the state level and distributed to the schools. The cards would indicate the education level of the student and his/her grades. The student would then continue his schooling at the migrated place and would be permitted to give the examination at the school – either at the migrated place or at the original destination.

While the introduction of migration cards was useful in facilitating the education of migrant children, it had some limitations. In 2009, the Migration Monitoring Software was introduced to overcome these limitations and streamline the process of tracking in real time.

Objectives

Providing education to migrating children in the age group of 6-14 years is one of the main objectives of this initiative. Other objectives of the initiative include tracking and monitoring students migrating from one cluster, block, district or state to another cluster, block, district or state. The programme also aims at increasing retention and reducing the dropout rate of students in Gujarat. Additionally, it endeavours to map intra-state and inter-state migrant children in Gujarat.

Key Stakeholders

This initiative is run under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Mission of the Department of Education, Government of Gujarat. Officials from various sub-departments of the SSA, such as, the Out-of-School Department and Girls' Education Department have been assigned as nodal officers-in-charge of districts under this initiative. The implementing entities at state, district, block, cluster and school levels have been given in *Figure 2*.

At the grassroots level, there are 'Bal Mitras' in Tent STP schools who are special teaching volunteers drawn from the local population. The final and the most important stakeholders are the migrant children.

Figure 2: Key stakeholders of the migration card initiative



Implementation Strategy

Under the Migration Card initiative, three different cards were maintained for facilitating school admissions – Pink Card: Block Resource Centre (BRC) Coordinator; Yellow Card: Headmaster, and White Card: Migrating student. The details of the students used to be manually entered into ward education registers and village education registers, as per the format given by the Ministry of Human Resources Development. However, this manual system faced issues such as lack of accuracy and specificity in records, improper maintenance of the card and loss of card in transit.

Hence, in 2010, it was decided to migrate to an online platform – the Migration Monitoring Software (MMS). A committee was formed for deliberating upon the standardised format to be used online and inputs were taken from the Tribal Department, Child Labour Department, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT), other states and members of the project staff hired for the initiative. Based on these inputs, the MMS was created and launched in May 2010 on a pilot basis in 12 districts and then upscaled to all 26 districts after a successful run. It was recognised that crucial implementation work was required to be done at the cluster level and, hence, it was ensured that internet and computer facilities were provided up to Cluster Resource Centres. As a result, for the first time in Gujarat, 8,000 inter-state migrant students and 16,000 intra-state migrant students began to be tracked.

a. Process flow

A unique pre-printed number is given to each migrant child and is displayed on all migration cards. The pre-printed number helps in preventing duplication and

facilitates online tracking. Each card is then duly filled up by the headmaster of the school in case of intra-state students or the Bal Mitra in case of inter-state students.

These details are then handed over to the Community Resource Centre (CRC) Coordinator who makes an online entry of all the data from the cluster level onwards up to the state level. Thereafter, all reports and information are maintained and monitored online. When migration takes place, the CRC Coordinator of the sending cluster will fill the feedback/OUT form online. Both receiving and sending Coordinators will be updated in real time on their homepage after logging in.

At this stage, a reconciliation process will be carried out by all CRC Coordinators. This is to track children who do not appear at the cluster that they intended to go to. The CRC who receives such a child will send an online feedback recording the new entry and by doing so the CRC Coordinator who was expecting the child to join will also be automatically updated. In cases where the children will remain untraced and the entry will be recorded as such.

b. Project components

The modalities involved in the two cases, intra-state migrants and inter-state migrants are described herein.

Intra-state migrant children: A survey is conducted at the beginning of the academic year in June by the School Management Committee (SMC), other school staff and cluster level officials. The survey shows how many enrolled-students will be sent out of the cluster. In some cases, parents do not inform about intended migration, in which case the children will be accounted for as out-of-school children.

Hostel facilities are provided to children of migrating parents. In 2010, boarding and lodging was provided by local NGOs, but since 2011-12, the children are housed in buildings sanctioned and/or constructed by SSA, Government of Gujarat. The hostels are maintained, constructed and managed by the SMC/community themselves, thus enlisting support from the parents who trust local members.

| District Name | IN Migrant | Directly Received | Enrolled | Feedback Pending | OUT Migrant | Enrolled | Feedback Pending | Untraced |
|---------------|------------|-------------------|----------|------------------|-------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| Ahmedabad | 76 | 0 | 0 | 76 | 44 | 3 | 41 | 0 |
| Amreli | 25 | 10 | 1 | 14 | 24 | 15 | 9 | 0 |
| Anand | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| Banas Kantha | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Bharuch | 11 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 18 | 7 | 11 | 2 |
| Bhavnagar | 13 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 21 | 7 | 14 | 0 |
| Dahod | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 5 | 30 | 0 |
| Gandhinagar | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Jamnagar | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Junagadh | 13 | 04 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Kachchh | 13 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 21 | 6 | 15 | 1 |
| Kheda | 19 | 17 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Mahesana | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 21 | 1 | 20 | 0 |
| Narmada | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 0 |
| Navsari | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Panch Mahals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 6 | 15 | 0 |
| Patan | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Porbandar | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rajkot | 27 | 1 | 0 | 26 | 19 | 2 | 17 | 0 |

Image 1: Intra-state report with disaggregated information including untraced children

Source: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gujarat, 2013

Hostel facility includes food and transport for children. In case of medical emergencies, a first aid kit is kept handy and, in serious cases, they are transported by a local community member to the nearest hospital.

Inter-state migrant children: In the case of inter-state migrant children, Tent STPs are set up at worksites under Chapter 2 of the RTE Act, 2009 which provides for alternative schooling to out-of-school children. Setting up temporary tent schools at the worksite has become a viable solution for many reasons. If the migrating students are admitted to regular schools, language proves to be a barrier. In Tent STPs, Bal Mitras (teachers/instructors) who are relatively familiar with the language of the children are assigned to teach.



Image 2: Hostel facility at Sabarkantha district (originally the house of two ‘Bal Mitras’)



Image 3: The group of 25 boys and 24 girls currently staying at the hostel in Sabarkantha district, accompanied by SMC member and two ‘Bal Mitras’ (right)

Moreover, parents are not comfortable sending their children to distant places during their work hours. Bal Mitras, who are education volunteers from the local community, are posted at all Tent STPs. They assess the educational capacity of the children at the site, divide them into groups, teach them accordingly, and ensure that children attend classes.

A morning snack and Mid-Day-Meal are also provided at Tent STPs. For example, a Tent STP school at a brick kiln site in Gandhinagar district receives Mid-Day Meal from an NGO, Akshaya Patra, on a daily basis.

These students come to school daily from 11 am to 5 pm. They are grouped and seated based on their educational competency and not as per age classification. Wherever possible, textbook material for the migrant children is complimented with textbooks from their states of origin. The medium of instruction for the students is Hindi. In their hour of play, they play games that they know from their own hometown and also teach the Bal Mitra how to play those games.

Resources Utilised

Government officers of the SSA implement, monitor and evaluate this initiative. While at the CRC and BRC level there are approximately 12 staff members, at the school level the SMC Chairman, headmaster and PRI member discuss information related to schools at Gram Sabha meetings on a regular basis. Tele-conferencing and interaction with field supervisors is carried out to sensitise and involve SMC members. Each SMC member is given training at the state level and live demonstrations are shown at the school and cluster level. The Bal Mitras appointed at Tent STPs hold graduate degrees in the Arts or Education, and are given a week’s training, and in some cases, where possible, family members of the



Image 4: Mid-Day Meal delivered by Akshay Patra in Sabarkantha district



Image 5: (Left) Tent STP school at a brick kiln site in Gandhinagar district; 'Bal Mitra' and (right) CRC Coordinator

migrant children who have travelled from other states are roped in as teaching volunteers to overcome the language barrier.

The MMS was built by iNDEXTb, which is an organisation under the Government of Gujarat. It was prepared and piloted in 15 days in 2010, and iNDEXTb has undertaken all subsequent maintenance since then. A technical person has been made available at the district and block levels for this purpose.

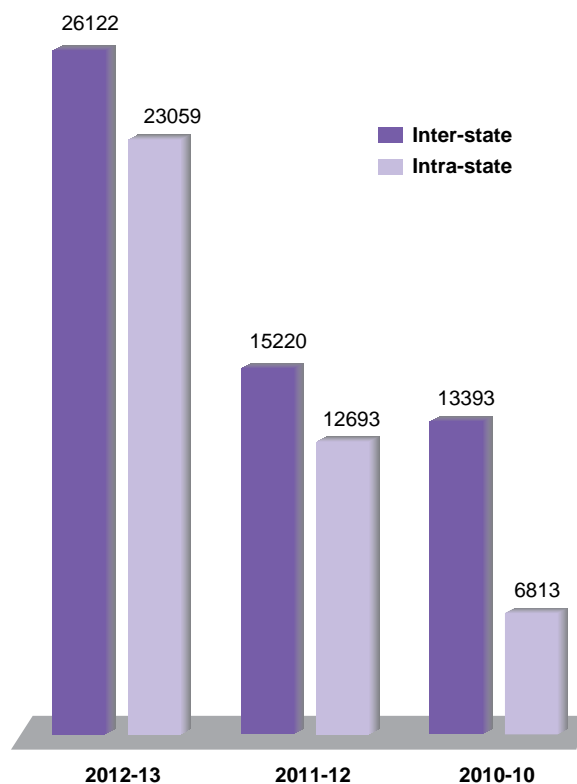
The format of the migration card was made simple to ensure data accuracy. Information on villages, clusters, blocks, districts, District Information System of Education (DISE) code etc. have been pre-loaded into a database. Similarly, detailed information for drop down menus from other states was retrieved from the National Educational University of Planning and Administration (NEUPA).

The MMS has also been made available in Gujarati, Hindi and English for the convenience of both state and non-state users.

Impact

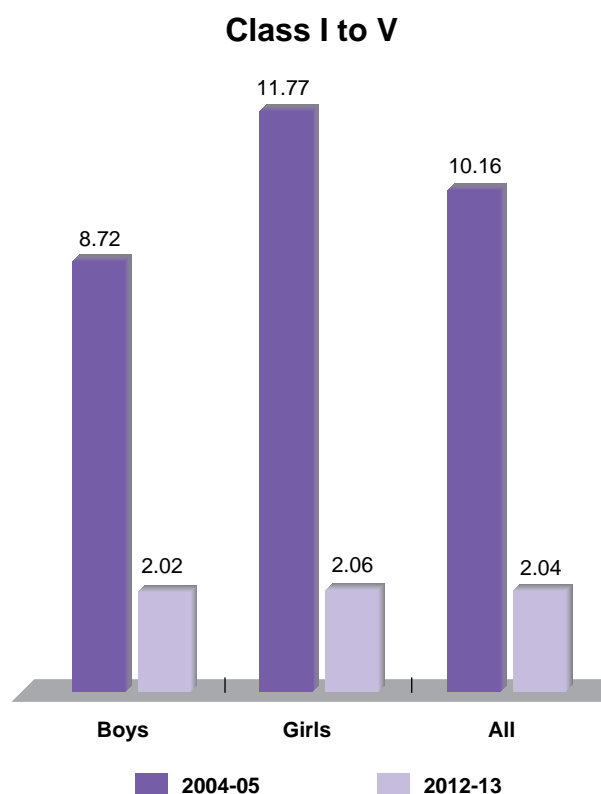
Educational rehabilitation and reduced drop-out rates of migrant children: The Migration Card and Monitoring Software have helped improve time efficiency by reducing the duration of time in tracking migrant children since the progress can be tracked in real time and on a daily basis as opposed to monthly checks. CRC coordinators are able to inform the headmaster of the school in advance, so the needful educational rehabilitation can be undertaken without delay. *Figure 3* shows that the number of children covered under the programme has substantially increased over the years. Also, there is a significant reduction in the drop-out rates of boys and girls till class VII (*Figures 4 & 5*).

Figure 3: Coverage of (migrant children) under the migration card initiative in Gujarat (no. of children)



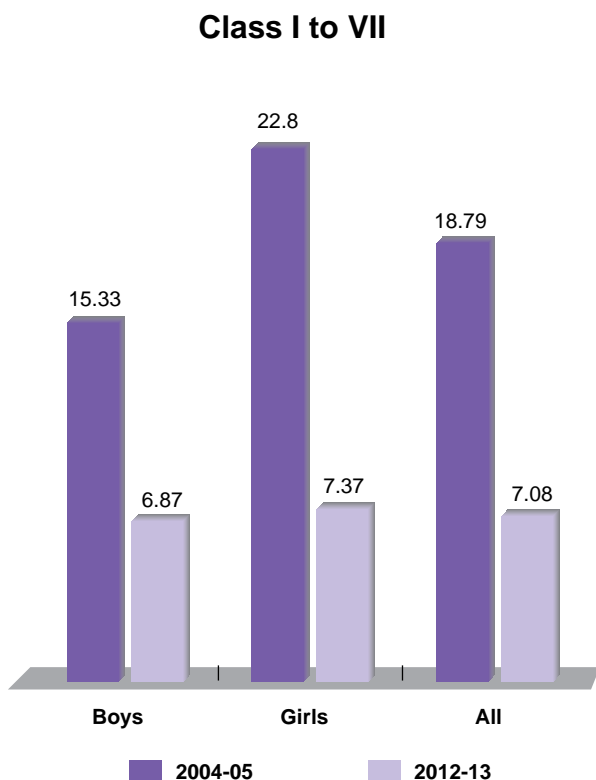
Source: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gujarat, 2013

Figure 4: Dropout rates of girls and boys for Class I to V in Gujarat (in %)



Source: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gujarat, 2013

Figure 5: Dropout rates of girls and boys for Classes I to VII in Gujarat (in %)



Source: *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gujarat, 2013*

This initiative has bagged an award from Skoch Smart Governance Award 2013 for the 'Migration Monitoring Software' for helping in increasing retention under elementary education.

Key Challenges

Incorrect data entry has been a challenge, especially as data entry was carried out randomly in the initial phase of the initiative. The need was felt to institutionalise this, and to this end, monthly trainings were carried out to familiarise personnel with the modalities involved.

Another difficulty is in finding schools. In certain cases, schools in remote places were hard to track, therefore the process of using the DISE code of schools was initiated in July 2011.

Identifying the level at which tracking has to be carried out is also challenging. In the earlier stages, the first unit of entry and tracking was at the village level, but this was subsequently changed to cluster level due to frequent shifting by migrant parents.

The language barrier, too, is a challenge. The most pertinent problem in educating inter-state migrant children has been the lack of education material in regional languages.

Requests are placed with the states at review meetings held with the Ministry of Human Resources Development or through state and central communiqués. While certain languages such as Marathi are covered by the Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training, which prints in multiple Indian languages, material in Urdu has been particularly difficult to procure.

In such cases, NCERT material available online is used and Hindi is used as a common mode of instruction. Further, the Government of Odisha now provides textbook material free of cost for this initiative. Since 2013, attempts are being made to induct teachers from other states for Tent STP schools.

Addressing infrastructural issues is also a challenging task. In tribal and remote districts, inadequate internet connectivity limits the use of the online software. Also, construction of permanent hostels could not be implemented earlier due to lack of sufficient funding support. However, the Government of Gujarat has undertaken it and approximately 40 additional hostels are being constructed presently.

Lack of cooperation from parents is also a stumbling block. There are still some cases where the parents do not inform officials about their migration. This challenge is being tackled by teachers and other officials who are trying to generate awareness about the benefits of this initiative.

Inadequate online support and difficulty in coordinating with other states is also a big challenge. Coordinators in states have been given login access and instructions on how to use the MMS. However, a manual system is being followed until such time it is institutionalised.

Replicability and Sustainability

The sustainability of the initiative is seen in its success in reaching out to a large number of inter-state and intra-state migrant children. Community involvement has been enhanced at the grassroots level which has helped in better implementation of the initiative. The strengthening and active upkeep of the role of CRC and BRC coordinators through real time tracking and monitoring have, in particular, contributed to the success of this initiative since 2010.

Administrative support and active participation of the implementing authorities, especially at cluster and block levels, are essential for replicating this initiative. The role of parents, SMC members or even owners of work sites (such as brick kiln owners) must also be given due thought in the introduction of such an initiative. Grievances must be addressed and solved speedily to build a positive environment with such stakeholders.

Conclusion

India's RTE, 2009 cannot be implemented in the true spirit without arresting the high dropout rates. The migrant population is, of course, one of the biggest challenges in this regard. With people from neighbouring states like Madhya Pradesh more prone to migration, it is their children who are sacrificed at the altar of their jobs.

This initiative is especially relevant for those states that witness a high migration rate. It has been crucial in ensuring that the education of migrant children is not broken by the seasonal employment of their parents and in providing a viable option for sustaining their education under the circumstances.

Fact Sheet

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| Theme | Education |
| Nodal Implementing Agency | Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Gujarat |
| Geographical Coverage | All districts of Gujarat State |
| Target Groups | 6-14-year-old children of migratory parents |
| Years of Implementation | Migration Card: 2001 - Present; Migration Monitoring Software: 2010 - Present |



The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in Gujarat has used a tracking system to accommodate and educate migrant children in seasonal hostels, thus helping increase retention of children migrating with seasonally employed parents.