

# **MIGRATION OF CHILDREN FROM RAJASTHAN AS CHILD-LABOURERS**

## **A Study Report**

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## Migration of Children from Rajasthan as child-labourers

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The Researchers

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## 1. Introduction

Migration is a global phenomenon. People migrate from villages to cities, from one region to another and from one country to another, for a variety of reasons. Since one of the foremost reasons for migration being search for jobs and enhanced quality of life, often migration is equated with upward mobility of people. Kurane and Topno (2006) define migration as a movement of people from 'low opportunity' areas to 'high opportunity' areas for betterment in life. It is customary to club the drivers of migration into two categories, namely pull and push factors. Those which draw people towards metropolis, such as better paid jobs, higher income, improved quality of life, greater access to medical facilities, quality education, etc. are termed as pull factors. Alternatively, those which force them out from their present conditions, such as low income levels, miserable living conditions, lack of job opportunities, etc., are pooled together under push factors. While the pull factors appear to be positive, push factors are negative in nature. In the context of increasing migration from villages in Rajasthan to cities in Gujarat, it appears to be more negative than positive, for they are pushed out of their villages on account of their poverty and despair, and continue to live in misery even when they migrate. The case of child labour migration is even worse; for children migrate as child-labour not only by pull and push factors, but domestic compulsions force them to do so. In fact, children are forced out from lesser evil, and made to choose greater evil. Girl-child, especially the adolescent girls, struggle through their own traumatic experiences in the place of migration.

Evidence indicates that child migration from Rajasthan has increased significantly, over time. The Hindu in 2009 reported that the figures released by Labour Watch from the national Survey Organisation (NSSO) after its 61<sup>st</sup> round had put 34.88 lakh children between 5 and 14 years in Rajasthan in the child labour pool. Child-labour migration is essentially a socio-economic problem inextricably linked to poverty and illiteracy. Recognising that its various pro-active policy interventions have failed to make any impact to arrest child-labour migration, thus far, the Government of India (GoI) has sought the help from all sections of the society to find a solution to this problem. (<http://labour.nic.in/cwl/ChildLabour.htm>). Finding a solution to this growing menace requires an in-depth understanding of the various nuances surrounding child-labour migration. It is possible that reasons for child-migration differ from place to place, and from time to time. Therefore, this research study specifically enquires into the reasons behind child-labour migration from Banswara district of Rajasthan, by focussing on to seven villages in which PavitraAtmaSevikaSangh (PASS) is actively involved in providing succour to people.

### Structure of this research study:

After this introduction in Section 1, Section 2 presents the prevailing wisdom on migration by thematically pooling some of the literature in this respect. Section 3 spells out the rationale, objective and methodology of this short research at the backdrop of the official statistics on Banswara district of Rajasthan. In an effort to unearth the reasons for child-labour migration from seven villages under Sajjangarh Block, an analysis based on both quantitative and qualitative data, is taken up in Section 4, before Section 5 concludes by providing some possible alternatives to mitigate the problem of child-labour migration.

## 2. Prevailing wisdom on migration:

### 2.1 What is child labour?

Child labour is defined in terms of labour done by a child. The word, “work” means full time commercial work to sustain self or add to the family income. Child labour is a hazard to a Child’s mental, physical, social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. Broadly any child who is employed in activities to feed self and family is being subjected to ‘child labour’. A child working part time (3-4 hours) to learn and earn for self and parents after school, is not considered ‘child labour’” (<http://www.childlabor.in/what-is-child-labour.htm>).

### **2.2. Migration – facts and factors**

The National Council for Rural Labour (NCRL) highlights the existence of a high incidence of child labour in a number of sectors. In trying to elucidate the reasons behind high incidence of child labour migration, Smita (2008) finds that it is on account of deteriorating livelihood options; thousands of families are forced out of their homes and villages in search of work for several months every year. These migrations force adults to take their children along, making them drop out of school and closing the only opportunity available to them for an alternate future. In an earlier study, Smita (2007) points out that it is evident that child labour migrations are large and growing, and the number of children below 14 years involved may be about 9 million. It may be noted that in certain types of works, wages are paid on piece rate, irrespective of whether the work is done by an adult or a child. Hence, it becomes an attractive proposition for parents to take their children along to augment their family income.

Studies such as Deshingkar and Akter (2009), and Smita (2008) indicate that distress seasonal migration is on the rise. This occurs due to lack of livelihood options after the harvest of the monsoon crop in most rain fed parts of the country, which gives rise to indebtedness and food insecurity. Sustenance and survival forces the entire family to leave home in search of work. Moreover, persistent drought and environmental degradation have led to the escalation of this trend. Children, who have no choice but to accompany their parents, drop out of schools and are forced into hard labour. There are also a number of pull factors for distress migration, including the high seasonal demand for manual labour in agriculturally rich areas and labour intensive industries.

According to the statistics provided by the Government of India, around 90 million out of 179 some million children, in the six to fourteen age group, do not go to school and are engaged in one occupation or the other. This implies that roughly 50 per cent of children are deprived of their right to a free and happy childhood. Poverty has often been cited as the reason for the child labour problem in India.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was a deliberate policy intervention by the government to address the issue of forced migration. However, this scheme has failed to make any dent in reducing migration, especially in places such as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (MP). Baviskar, (2008), based on a study of migrants from MP, argues that the failure of the district administration to implement programmes like NREGS forces poor adivasis to go to distant and hazardous workplaces. Highlighting the defective approach to this issue by planning commission, she quotes Montek Singh Ahluwalia, who said, “If we want rural prosperity, we have to move labour out of agriculture”; we need to have “flexible labour contracts”. Adivasis in Jhabua are being forced to follow these prescriptions: they are being moved out of agriculture to refurbish roads. They labour under flexible contracts and forego all their rights. With certain amount of sarcasm, she observes that this is the flesh and blood reality of economic

liberalisation, a reality that the abstract prescriptions of economic models fail to capture.

According to the UNDP HDRC (2002), the phenomenon of rural males migrating in hoards, to augment their household incomes, has been increasing rapidly. Strangely, even those castes which normally do not prefer to undertake daily wage have begun to migrate as wage labour. With the improvement in road and communication with remote rural villages, migration has become a regular feature. The report further states that migration among the tribal families has become a universal phenomenon due to lack of local livelihood options. However, non-tribals migrate in search of better opportunities.

### Who migrates?

Often, the entire family migrates. By closely observing the migration pattern, NCRL suggests that it is the poor families from rural areas, with no additional support, which take their children along when they migrate in search of gainful work. By dissecting the migration pattern in terms of caste classification, Smita (2008) finds that migrant populations overwhelmingly belong to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Castes (OBC), and comprise the landless and land poor, including those possessing the least amount of assets, skills or education.

In terms of inter-state comparison, a number of studies show that the socio-economic background of migrants is quite the same across States, implying that migrants consist of the most marginalized and impoverished sections of society, who fall under SC, ST and OBC groups. In terms of age-composition, Desai (2005) ascertains that the dominant age profile of migrant labour is between 21 and 50 years of age. However, older and younger people also accompany them, and contribute to family income. Among children in the 0-5 year old age group, 85 per cent migrate with their families. In terms of gender profile, Smita (2008) suggests that migration is nearly equal among boys and girls up to the age of 10, but beyond that, more girls migrate than boys. Enquiring into the reasons behind this trend, she finds that parents do not want to risk leaving girls in the village without male protection. She adds, in most cases, it is the old, ill and disabled who are left behind in the villages.

Between 1971 and 1981, child-labour in Rajasthan increased by 39.5 per cent. Strange as it may sound, between 1981 and 1991, the growth rate of child-labour reversed with -5.5 per cent. However, between 1991 and 2001, it appears to have made up for the negative growth of the 1980s, as the growth rate of child-labour increased by an alarming 63.1 per cent. This trend is evident from State-wise Distribution of Working Children in Rajasthan according to 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census in the age group 5-14 years, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: State-wise Distribution of Working Children according to , , 1991 and Census in the age group 5-14 years				
Year	1971	1981	1991	2001
Rajasthan	587389	819605	774199	1262570
Source: <a href="http://labour.nic.in/cwl/ChildLabour.htm">http://labour.nic.in/cwl/ChildLabour.htm</a>				

### To where do the people migrate?

Evidence indicates that migration is high in an array of industrial sectors, such as brick making, salt manufacturing, sugar cane harvesting, stone quarrying, construction, fisheries, plantations and rice mills. It is also found that

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agriculturally rich areas also attract a large number of migrant labourers for sowing, harvesting and other operations. Smita (2008) notes, that while migration for industrial work often extends for a longer period, between six to eight months a year, that of agricultural work tends to be of short duration, and takes place several times a year. Seasonal migration appears to be a reality in almost all states, although by varying degrees. She also observes that while the agriculturally and industrially developed states receive the migrant labour, the less developed states remain the net senders. While there is intra-state migration in some states, from one district to another, other states exhibit inter-state migration. There is also evidence of a complicated circulation of labour which defies the surplus-deficit argument, since employers prefer to use migrant labour instead of local labour as it works out to be cheaper and more amenable to control.

A study by Burra (2008) finds that the Adivasi belt of southern Rajasthan is the traditional catchment area for supply of manual labourers to Gujarat. Since the demand for manual labour is increasing, the catchment area is expanding. Khandelwal et al (2008) and Burra (2008) suggest that seasonal migration is increasingly emerging as the chief mode of labour engagement across the country, and especially in the rapidly growing Western economic cluster of Gujarat and Maharashtra. South Rajasthan is one of the important sources of tribal migrant labour.

### Migration and kind of work undertaken

Over half of the working children (54%) are in agriculture, and most others are employed either in construction (15.5%) or in household work (18%). About 5% are in manufacturing jobs, and the remainder (about 8%) are scattered across other forms of employment ([http:// www.indiatogether.org/photo/2006/chi-labour.htm](http://www.indiatogether.org/photo/2006/chi-labour.htm)). Table 2 provides a gender-wise breakup of working children, and their activities.

	Activities	Number of Children (%)			Number of Children (in 100's)		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Children engaged in "economic activities"	4.18	3.86	4.02	52967	45618	98392
2	Attended domestic duties only	0.30	3.15	1.67	3770	37208	40788
3	Attended domestic duties plus free collection of goods, tailoring, weaving for HH only	0.25	1.92	1.06	3178	22693	25897
4	Children at Work	4.73	8.93	6.75	59915	105519	165077
5	Attending schools	72.98	61.45	67.44	925350	725964	1651186
6	Children neither at work nor at school	17.26	20.42	18.80	218889	241255	460205

Source: <http://www.indiatogether.org/photo/2006/chi-labour.htm>

Studies show that children worked in dhabas, as domestic servants in homes, on construction sites, in brick-kilns and in the textile market in Surat in Gujarat (Burra, 2008).



### **Migration and living condition at work places:**

Studies highlight that living and working conditions of migrant labourers at their work places are anything but human. The living conditions are of deplorable in every respect and inadequate, including shelter, nutrition, health and security. The work required of labourers is excessively high, and wages are well below the legal minimum. Women and children are forced to take up physically arduous and exploitative work. Children get drawn into labour from an early age of 6 or 7 years, and they become full-fledged labourers by the age of 11 or 12. Women and girls are additionally made to cope with home responsibilities, besides the psychological insecurity of living in unprotected environments (Smita, 2008). She also notes that there are no mechanisms to address grievances which may generate the possibility of feedback and improvement in the situation. She further observes that the basic clauses of all legal acts related to labour and child rights are flouted, raising the exploitation levels to the extreme. Employers maximize their profits by keeping labourers at barely survival level. The legislation governing migration remains grossly inadequate and poorly implemented.

The nature of work sites varies widely from sector to sector, although there are underlying common elements. Work sites are usually far from habitation, often without even a road nearby. As a consequence, these locations are usually bereft of any basic facilities such as access to water, markets, schools or health centres. In some cases, even when there is a habitation nearby, migrant labourers are shunned by the local population, who tend to regard them unfavourably. Local residents may even erect extra fences around their homes to keep migrants away.

Smita (2008), Kumar et al (2008) and Deshingkar and Akter (2009) describe, that living conditions are often appalling and very inhuman. Living spaces are miserable and unhygienic. Most members of the family sleep under the open sky in weather conditions ranging from extreme heat to bitter cold. Those who stay close to roads are constantly exposed to dust and air pollution. The available food is nutritionally inadequate. Each type of work site also has its own set of health hazards, ranging from infections to contamination and toxicity-related diseases, respiratory and gynaecological problems, injuries and accidents, gradual loss of hearing, unwanted abortions among women, and malnourishment, especially among children. There are often no facilities for medical treatment and, they are not entitled to any compensation or insurance, and workers are not paid when they are unable to work even on medical grounds. Women and adolescent girls are also frequently exposed to sexual abuse, especially by contractors and truck drivers. They sleep, defecate and bathe in the open, and they have no option but to travel by trucks and trains, along with men at odd hours of the day and night.

Baviskar (2008), based on his study on migrants from Madhya Pradesh, points out that migrants in search of livelihood are desperate for work and often take up jobs which are injurious to health. Hundreds of migrant adivasis from Madhya Pradesh have died from acute silicosis, caused by inhaling silica, contracted while working in quartz crushing factories in central Gujarat. Thousands more face the same fate.

### **Child labour and legal provisions**

There are legal provisions and conditions of employment namely, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, Minimum Wages Act, 1948, Interstate Migrant Workers (CS & RE) Act, 1979 and Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1976 and international instruments in the ILO. There is also Article 138 on Minimum Age, and Article 182 on the worst forms of child labour. Khandelwal et al (2008) opine that because the ILO Conventions have not been ratified by the Government



of India, there is no corresponding legal framework available in the country to implement its provisions. The labour laws that exist are non-existent in practice at the work sites. Working hours are long and difficult. The migrant labourers, including children, work for 14 to 16 hours daily, and some are required to remain on call around the clock. Work norms are set according to physical capability, but everyone, including women, children, weaker and older men, has to struggle to meet them. Contractors retain control of labourers, not only financially but also physically, forcing them to work even when sick or injured. Women are also expected to work during pregnancy and immediately following childbirth. Baviskar (2008:8) observes that, sometimes, despite the direction from the Supreme Court and National Human Rights Commission, not a single factory has been shut down or penalised, nor did victims receive any compensation.

The Government of India is committed to the United Nations Convention on Rights of Children (UNCRC), most notably to Article 32, which stipulates “*State Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education*”. However policies, laws and lack of implementation coexist in the country without much difficulty.

The Ministry of Industry and Labour is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of child labour laws and regulations. The law provides for legal sanctions against employers recruiting children up to the age of 14, including criminal and civil penalties and fines targeting employers and families, and it empowers labour inspectors and the police to enforce child labour infractions. However, the limited capacity of the government's labour inspection systems to aptly apply and transparently enforce the laws, remain largely ineffective.

### **Impact of migration**

Migration by adolescents has significant psycho-social implications. The most serious impact has been psychological, as the children become adults without any opportunity for development, thereby imbibing the value of a servant. They become alienated from concepts of equality and freedom, so innate to tribals. When abused, beaten, sexually harassed, driven away without being paid, and find no one to protect them, they resign to a life of condemnation and drudgery. They tend to lose whatever self-confidence they have, and become silent sufferers.

While it is true that the poorest, most disadvantaged sections of Indian society supply the vast majority of child labourers, child labour actually creates and perpetuates poverty as it displaces adults from their jobs and also condemns the child to a life of unskilled and badly paid work (<http://www.ecoindia.com/views/labour.html>).

### **Disrupted lives and loss of identity**

Smita (2008) narrates the plight of migrant labourers in terms of their lost identity. She argues that the migrant workers being away from their homes and villages and leading uprooted lives, the first thing that migrants lose is their identity as citizens. As migrants, they forego all of their basic entitlements including access to schooling facilities for their children, free services in public health centres, and Public Distribution System (PDS). They have to buy grain, kerosene and other basic commodities at market prices. Their infants remain outside immunization drives. They also lose the opportunity to participate in *panchayat* (village council) activities, and are often unable to vote or participate in the census, as these usually take place during the first half of the year, and coincide with the migration period. As work sites are away from habitations, there are no government health centres or

schools nearby, nor are they eligible to make use of them. Even when children are enrolled in schools, they often find no acceptance there, and are viewed as outsiders by both teachers and other children. The vulnerability of people who cross their state boundaries is even greater, as they find themselves in alien cultural environment and language, and live at the mercy of contractors.

It is at this backdrop that we undertake this short study enveloping seven villages under Sajaan Block of Banaswara district of Rajasthan.

### 3. Rationale, Objective and Methodology:

Before we spell out the rationale, objective and the methodology, it becomes necessary to have a bird-eye view of the geographical area, and take stock of the macro picture of this region.

#### Banswara District

As the Baseline study presents, among the 32 districts of Rajasthan, Banswara is located in the southernmost part of the state. It is bounded on the north by Udaipur district and Chittorgarh district; on the east by Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh; on the west by Dungarpur district; and on the south by Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh. It also touches the boundary of Panchmahal district of Gujarat on the south-west. It is predominantly a rocky terrain undulated by short ridges and flat-topped hills. For a profile of Banaswara District see Table 3.

1	Total population (Female population 7,40,903 and male population 7,60,686) [Census 2001]	15,01,589
2	Density of population (per sq. km)	298
3	Rural population	92.4%
4	General Sex ratio (Females per 1,000 Males)	973
5	SC females 30462 and male 61733	61733 (total)
6	ST females 5,02,511 and male 5,11,448	10,13,959 (total)
7	General Literacy rate (2001)	44.2%
8	General Male Literacy rate (2001)	60.2%
9	General Female Literacy rate (2001)	27.9%
10	Average annual rainfall	922 mm

Banswara district is subdivided into three sub divisions, eight development blocks and five tehsils. The eight development blocks are Kushalgarh, Anadpuri, Ghatol, Talwara, Peepalkhunt, Bagidora, Sajjangarh and Garhi. The district also has 307 Gram Panchayats, 1474 revenue villages and 215 PatwarMandals.

#### Kushalgarh Tehsil

Kushalgarh was a princely state until 1949, which later became part of the Banswara district. It is one of the five tehsils of the district, and predominantly inhabited by the Bhils. The identified villages/hamlets for this study fall under Kushalgarh Tehsil. We need to keep in mind that one of the important development parameters, i.e., female literacy rate, is as low as 21.8 per cent, which is less than half of the corresponding rate for the state, as shown in Table 4.

<b>Table 4: Socio-economic parameters, Kushalgar Tehsil</b>
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1	Total population	283,534
2	Rural population	96.4%
3	General Sex ratio (Females per 1,000 Males)	979
4	General Literacy rate (2001)	37.33%
5	General Male Literacy rate (2001)	52.5%
6	General Female Literacy rate (2001)	21.8%

The project area comprises of 7 villages located within the jurisdiction of the Sajjangarh Block, which comes under of Kushalgarh Tehsil in Banswara district of Rajasthan. Sajjangraha block has a total population of 134456, encompassing 68165 males and 66291 females. Almost the entire area of the block is undulating and inhabited by the Bhil tribe.

In order to address some of the identified problems, the organization has worked out a set of objectives in its Baseline study, which are as follows:

- & To reduce migration for work, particularly among women and children.
- & To improve health and nutritional status of children
- & To minimize difficulties of the disabled persons
- & To improve coverage and quality of education
- & To organize the Bhil community to access their rights and entitlements
- & To rejuvenate, protect and promote the environment

**Table 5: status of migration in the study villages**

Village	Number of HH	Migration proportion	Mean days of migration	Members migrated (Mean)	Worked in EGS	Place of migration
Goeka Pargi	133	90%	140	1	50%	Ahmadabad, Surat, Baroda
Goeka Baria	204	77.8%	150	2	55.6%	Ahmadabad, Dugra
Jalimpura Bhagat	227	86.7%	90	2	60%	Ahmadabad, Surat, Nadayat, Baroda
Jalimpuramanji	163	80%	120	2	80%	Ahmadabad, Rajkot
Pandwal Onkar	284	83%	60	2	46.7%	Ahmadabad, Baroda, Morbi, Rajkot, Surat
Pandwal Lunja	171	70%	80	2	50%	Rajkot, Surat, Vapi
Ruphgarh	132	81%	150	2.4	55%	Ahmadabad-Sopadi, Valsad, Baroda
Wakkakutta	195	90%	155	1	40%	Banswara, Surat, Baroda

Source: baseline survey

### Rationale of this research

Right to Education Act by the Government of India is a laudable step in the right direction. Although policies and laws are good in themselves, they are not adequate enough to bring about a change and transformation in human societies

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and in the country at large. While an analysis of ground reality helps us formulate appropriate policies, monitoring the implementation of policies and gauging the status of ground reality helps us assess the quality, quantum and process of change. This research on migration of child-labourers from Rajasthan is about the children who are in the age group of 1-16, either studying or dropouts, but engaged in labour which goes beyond the purview of small household assistance children give to parents in the house chorus. For example watering the kitchen garden, assisting the parents in the kitchen, cleaning the house or mopping the house etc., is not considered child-labour. In other words, a child engaged in household chorus, which is not directly connected to livelihood occupation of the family members, is not considered as child-labour.

This research study examined the status of child labourers from 7 villages in Banswara district of Rajasthan, who migrated to other parts of Rajasthan and neighbouring States. It primarily probed into the reasons and circumstances/situation under which children migrated in search of jobs, either with or without adult members of their households. The research also explored the possible options which could reduce or/and stop migration of child labourers.

### Objectives of the Research

The following are the basic objectives of this study, involving 7 cluster villages covered under CFCD project:

- 1) To ascertain the reasons behind children of age group between 1 and 16 engage in child labour and migrate to other places.
- 2) To unearth the difficulties and hardships the children and their families encounter in the places where they migrate to, in search of livelihood.
- 3) To determine the perceived alternatives, which will help the children and their families remain back in their villages rather than migrating in search of livelihood.

**Study Sample:** Purposive sampling was used for this study, and all the households in the 7 villages were considered as universe (see Table 6). As a process, all the households were selected for the interviews. A mixed approach, comprising of both qualitative and quantitative methods, was used. Finally, a semi-structured schedule was prepared for a focused scrutiny. Of the total 245 child labourers identified, 75 children (30% of the total number identified) were surveyed, including 5 scheduled caste children.

Sr. No.	Villages	No. of Households	Identified Child-labourers
1	Goeka Pargi	133	35
2	GoekaBaria	204	45
3	Jalimpuramanji	163	45
4	Pandwal Onkar	284	32
5	PandwalLunja	171	35
6	Ruphgarh	132	19
7	Wakkakutta	195	34
	<b>Total house holds</b>	<b>1282</b>	<b>245</b>

Source: Baseline survey and interview with Project Holder

In addition, eight focus group discussions were held to get more qualitative data.

### **How did we go about the research?**

This research study proposed to gather relevant data, from the sample suggested above, by two instruments

- 1) Survey interview of the household with child-labourers (written scheduled interviews),
- 2) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with parents, children and other stake holders. The researchers visited the villages and held the FGDs. Investigators were trained to carry out data collection. The investigators, then, visited all the seven villages and surveyed a minimum of 10 labour children from each village along with their guardians.

Qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were used since qualitative and quantitative analyses are seen as a continuum, and not as opposites or mutually exclusive models of analysis. The study ensured that both qualitative and quantitative data were utilised for better understanding of the situation and meeting the objectives.

Moreover, the secondary data from Baseline study and other relevant documents were also examined to cull out the finer nuances to comprehend the situation of child labour and migration.

### **Observation:**

The household location and physical situation of the respondents were observed. Some observations were made during the data collection phase.

### **Tabulation:**

Tabulation of data emerging from interviews, observation and questionnaire were done separately, and then integrated for the analysis. The research objectives were kept in focus while tabulating the collected data. The data from the questionnaire were tabulated using the computer programme Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

## **4. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis:**

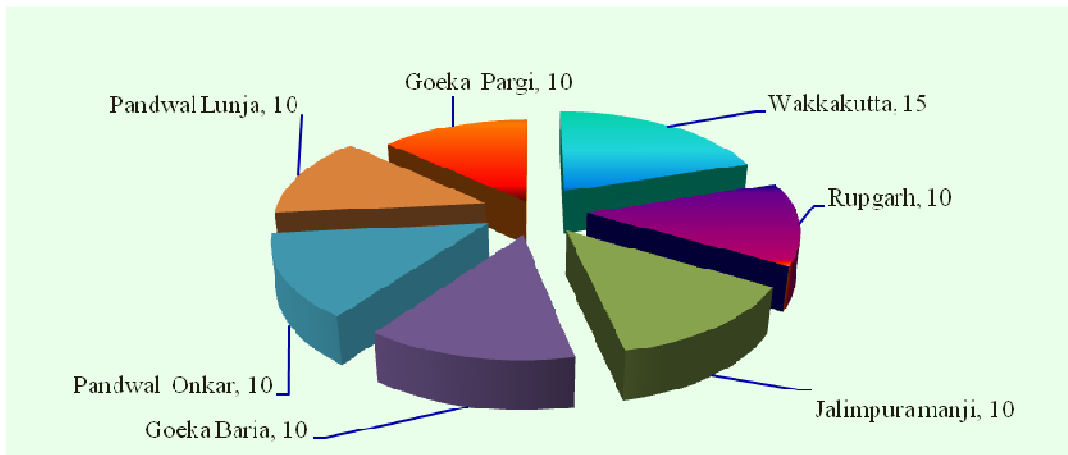
### **4.1. General profile of the survey:**

#### **4.1.1. Area-Coverage:**

This study involved 7 villages located within the jurisdiction of Sajjangarh Block which has a total population of 134456 people. Of the total 245 families with child labourers identified from these 7 villages, a sample of 75 families, i.e. 30 per cent of the total identified child labourers' households was surveyed, which included 5 scheduled caste families. For a representative survey, it was made inclusive of all the seven villages with equal weightage, and factored in various aspects, such as income levels of the families, education levels of both migrant child labourers as well as parents, age composition of child labourers as well as the main bread-winners in the family, religion, etc. As Figure 1 clearly illustrates, in fact the survey covered all the seven villages with equal weightage, except for Wakkakutta. A sample of 15 families was surveyed in Wakkakutta, since it has a larger number of families with child-labourers, proportionately.

Figure 1: Names of villages and number of child-labour households surveyed

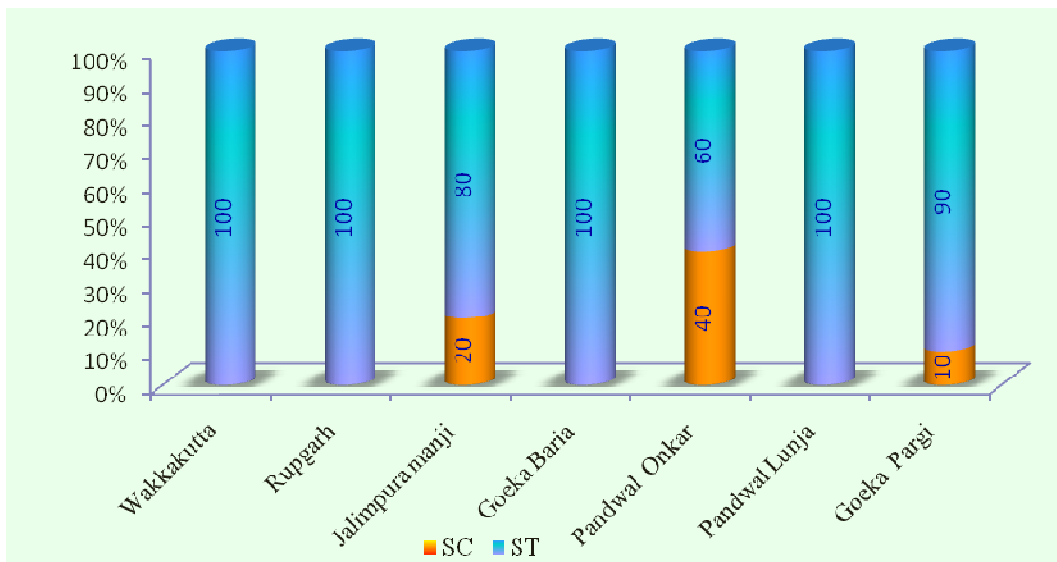
## Migration of Children from Rajasthan as child-labourers



### 4.1.2. Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) groups:

Although Sajjangarh Block primarily falls under tribal region, there are a few pockets with a concentration of Scheduled Caste (SC) groups. In order to ensure a representative sample, it was deliberately designed to incorporate a proportionate number of child-labourers who belong to SC group under the domain of this study. Figure 2 elucidates the composition of SC and ST child-labourers in the 7 villages under enquiry. Among the surveyed units, 40 per cent of them in Pandwal Onkar, 20 per cent in Jalimpuramanji and 10 per cent from Goeka Pargi belong to SC category. Since the other villages such as Wakkakutta, Rupgarh, Goeka Baria and Pandwal Lunja are entirely tribal villages, the entire sample was drawn from ST category.

Figure 2: Name of village and percentage of child-labourers under SC and ST categories:



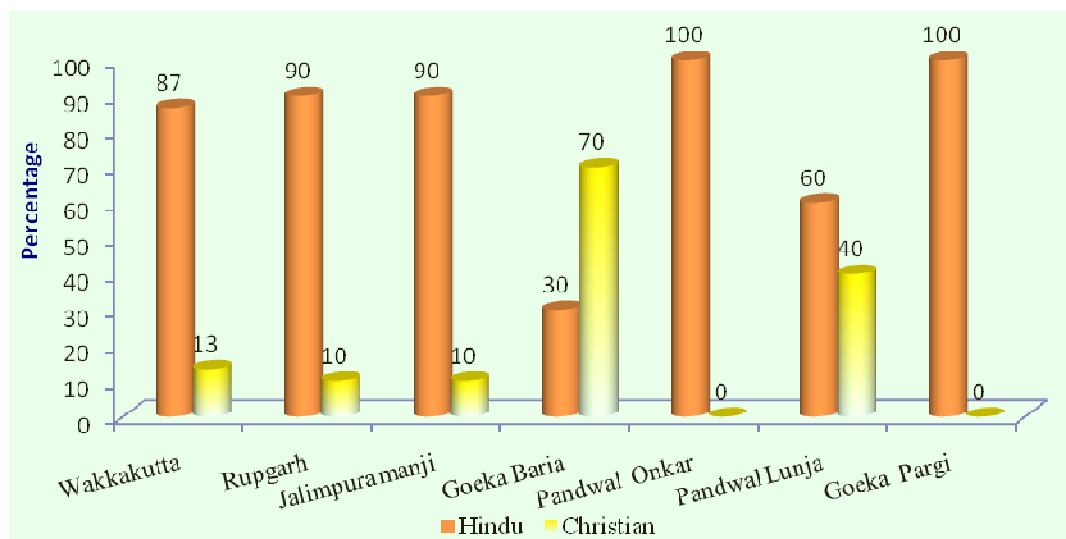
The sample selected for this study also guaranteed a balanced spread of child-labourers who belong to both Hindu and Christian religious denominations. As it is evident from Figure 3, the entire sample from Pandwal Onkar and Goeka Pargi were drawn from Hindu religion.

### 4.1.3 Religious denominations:

Figure 3: Name of the village and percentage of child-labourers under Religious denomination



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The sample from Goeka Baria consisted of 70 percent from Christian and the remaining 30 per cent from Hindu religious segments. While 60 per cent of the sample from Pandwal Lunja comprised of Hindus, the rest 40 per cent were drawn from Christian community.

During the field visits to the seven villages under this study, it came to light that children indeed migrate along with their parents in search of jobs. However, a number of children indicated, during focused group discussions, that they never undertook any labour, but attended to their little siblings, while their parents were engaged in all odd jobs. Not surprisingly, Table 7 indicates that as many as 24 migrant child labourers, i.e. 32 per cent or roughly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total sample, accompanied their parents to cities in order to attend to their siblings. Another 25 per cent of the sample aged above 12 but less than or equal to 14 years spent their summer months in cities as child labourers. It also emerged during the focused group discussions with the children that a number of them, above the age of 12, went along with their kith and kin to cities and engaged themselves as construction workers, rag-pickers, and in an array of other jobs. Some of them also indicated that they worked as agricultural labourers and earned a daily wage ranging between ₹100/- and ₹200/-. A subset of 19 child labourers between the age of 12 and 14, and those who are over 14 but less than or equal to 16 years of age numbering 17 child-labourers, tried their hands in a variety of jobs during summer, trying to earn some money to cover their education expenses.

### 4.2. Data Analysis:

#### 4.2.1. Age composition of migrant child labourers:

Table 7: Name of village and age composition of migrant child-labourers surveyed

Village	Up to 10	>10 & ≤12	>12 & ≤14	>14 & ≤16	Not Indicated	Total
Goeka Pargi	3	1	5	0	1	10
Goeka Baria	2	1	2	5		10
Jalimpuramanji	4	2	2	2		10
Pandwal Onkar	2	3	4	1		10
Pandwal Lunja	4	2	2	2		10
Rupgarh	4	2	1	3		10
Wakkakutta	5	3	3	4		15

<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>75</b>
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#### 4.2.2. Education Level of Child-Labourers:

Among the 75 child-labourers household units surveyed, 50.7 per cent of the total indicates that they did not have the opportunity to study, and consequently remained illiterate. Except for Goeka Baria and Goeka Pargi, the percentage of illiterate child-labourers remains a major issue in all the other villages. If we pay attention to the total percentages under different subcategories of educational levels, it can be deciphered that the percentage in each category declines as they advance from primary to middle to high school educational levels. Perhaps, education is not a priority, at present, for people in these villages, and they look at their children through the prism of money, and thus put them to work as child-labourers to add to the family income. As it is obvious from Table 8, Goeka Baria has the lowest level of illiterate child-labourers, constituting just 2.7 per cent of the total surveyed units, while Pandwal Onkar has the highest level with 10.7 percent of the sample indicating that they are illiterate. It may be noted that Goeka Baria is the only one among the 7 villages which has the highest percentage of child-labourers, who pursue high school grades. In addition to having the highest percentage of illiterate child-labourers in that area, Pandwal Onkar has none of their children in the middle or high school level education. In fact, Pandwal Onkar performs poorly with just 2.7 per cent of the total number of child-labourers pursuing primary school education.

Table 8: Name of village and education levels of child-labourers surveyed (%)

Village	Illiterate	Up to 5th	6th to 8th	9th & 10th	Total
GoekaPargi	4.0	5.3	2.7	1.3	13.3
GoekaBaria	2.7	4.0	2.7	4.0	13.3
Jalimpuramanji	8.0	4.0	1.3	0.0	13.3
PandwalOnkar	10.7	2.7	0.0	0.0	13.3
PandwalLunja	6.7	4.0	1.3	1.3	13.3
Rupgarh	9.3	2.7	1.3	0.0	13.3
Wakkakutta	9.3	8.0	1.3	1.3	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4.2.3. Adult-Males in families:

Gender biases are strong in India, and Rajasthan villages are no exception. In general it is believed that more the number of adult males in a family, the more would be that family's income level. Accordingly, the level of family income may have its implications on its needs and patterns of migration. Hence, we first look at the structure of families surveyed in terms of size and percentage of adult males in each of the 7 villages. Figure 4 demonstrates that 1-adult-male family is the common feature in these villages. In villages such as Pandwal Onkar and Jalimpuramanji, the entire sample consists of 1-adult-male families, while it is 87 per cent and above in the case of Wakkakutta and Goeka Pargi. In the case of Goeka Baria and Rupgarh, the 1-adult-male families account for 70 per cent of the sample in those villages. It is only in PandwalLunja that 2- adult-male families constitute 60 per cent of the sample size.

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Figure 4: Name of village and size & percentage of adult males in the families surveyed



Since almost 78 per cent of the total sample of migrants consists of 1-adult-male families coupled with their low income levels, the hypothesis that larger the size of male-adult families, the larger would be the income level, cannot even be tested, statistically.

### 4.2.4 Adult-females in families:

Just as in the case of adult males, the entire sample from both Jalimpura manji and Pandwal Onkar contains 1adult-female families. In Goeka Pargi, 1adult-female families account for 90 per cent of the total sample from that village, while the remaining 10 per cent consists of 2 adult-female families. In brief, almost 79 percent of the total sample from the 7 villages is made-up of 1female-adult families, as presented in Table 9. It may be added that there is no correlation between the size of adult-female in the families and their family income.

Table 9: Name of village and size & percentage of adult females in the families surveyed

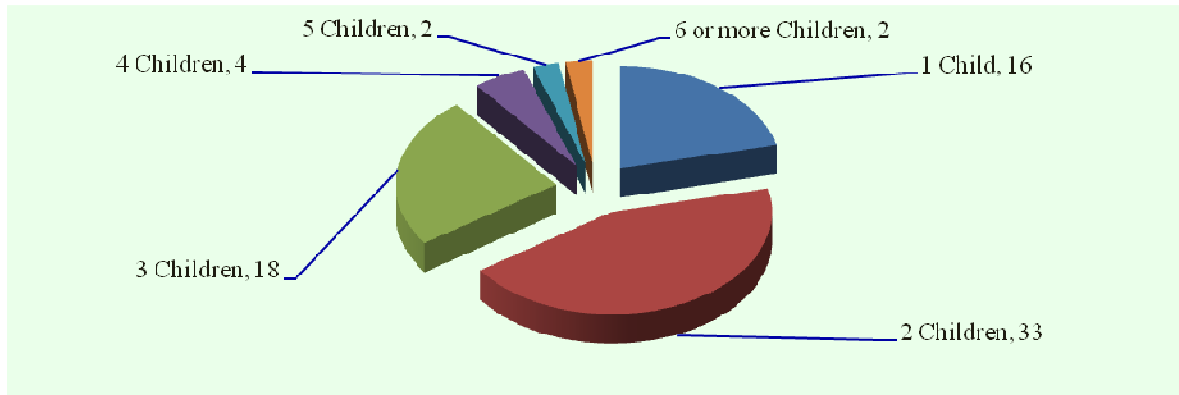
Village	1 Adult Female families	2 Adult Females families	3 Adult Females families	Total
Goeka Pargi	90.0	10.0	0.0	100.0
Goeka Baria	70.0	30.0	0.0	100.0
Jalimpuramanji	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Pandwal Onkar	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Pandwal Lunja	40.0	40.0	20.0	100.0
Rupgarh	60.0	40.0	0.0	100.0
Wakkakutta	86.7	13.3	0.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Although the 1-adult-male or 1-adult-female families form about 79 per cent of the total sample, manifestation of large number of children in the surveyed units appears very alarming. Among the surveyed units, 44 per cent of the families have 2 male children, while another 21 per cent of the households have 1 male child.

However, 35 per cent of the total sample is populated with 3 or more male children, and 2 families are congested with 6 or more male children. This scenario is captured in Figure 5 in terms of size of male-child households and number of such families in each category.

#### 4.2.5. Male-child

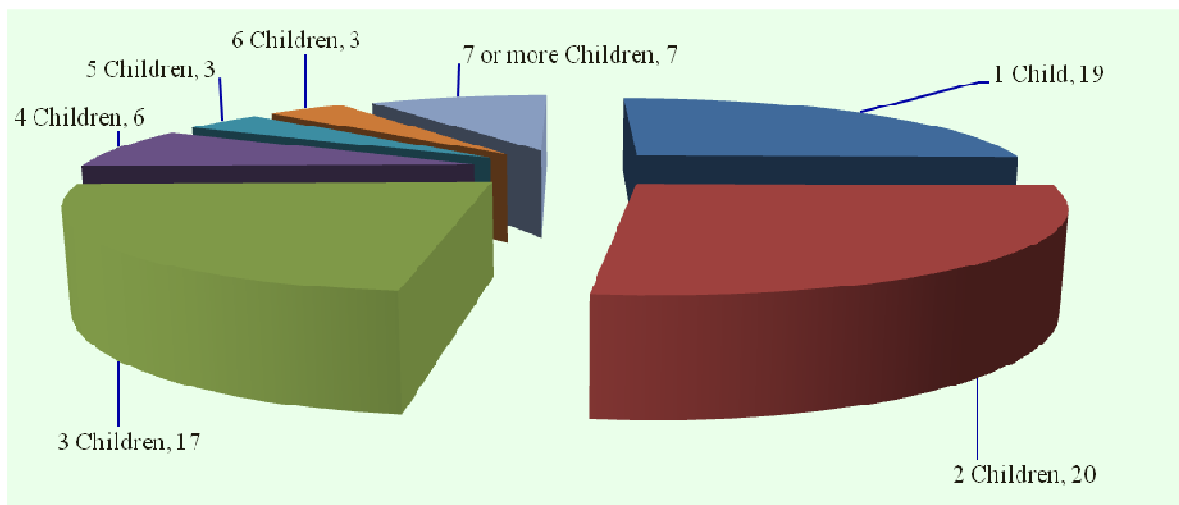
Figure 5: Size of male-child households and number of families



#### Female-child:

It certainly conjures one's attention that the number of families with three or more female children in the 7 villages studied account for almost 56 per cent of the total sample. While 19 families specify that they have 1 female child in their households, another 20 families state that they have 2 female children in their families, as can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Size of female-child households and number of families



It is also important to note that 7 households surveyed indicate that they have 7 or more female children. Since the number of male and female children is so large, despite 79 per cent of the sample comprising of single-adult-male or single-adult-female families, we look at the total number of children in the sample household units under the seven villages taken up for this study.

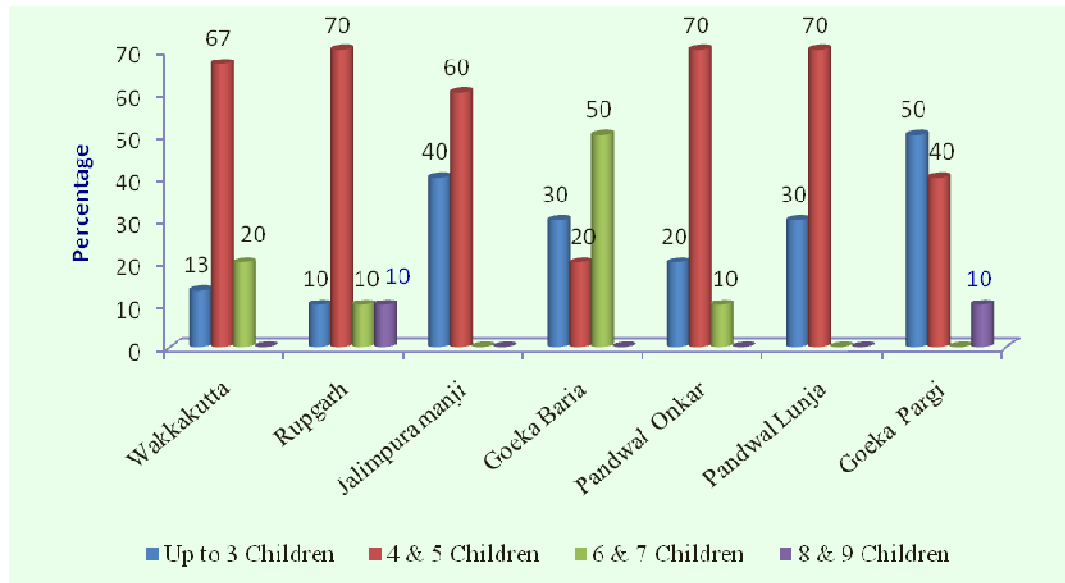
#### 4.2.6. Total Number of Children:

Household units with 4 and 5 children per family dominate the demographic depiction in 5 out of the 7 villages covered under this study. Figure 7 reveals that 70 per cent of the families surveyed in villages such as Rupgarh, Pandwal Onkar and Pandwal Lunja contains between 4 and 5 children per family. Wakkakutta and

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Jalimpuramanji are not far behind in this feature, for 67 and 60 per cent of the surveyed units, respectively, comprise of 4 or 5 children per family. 50 per cent of the families surveyed in Goeka Baria state that they have 6 or 7 children per family. Rupgarh and Goeka Pargi stand exceptional with 10 per cent of the sample in each having 8 to 9 children per family.

Figure 7: Number of children per family as a percentage of the sample in each village

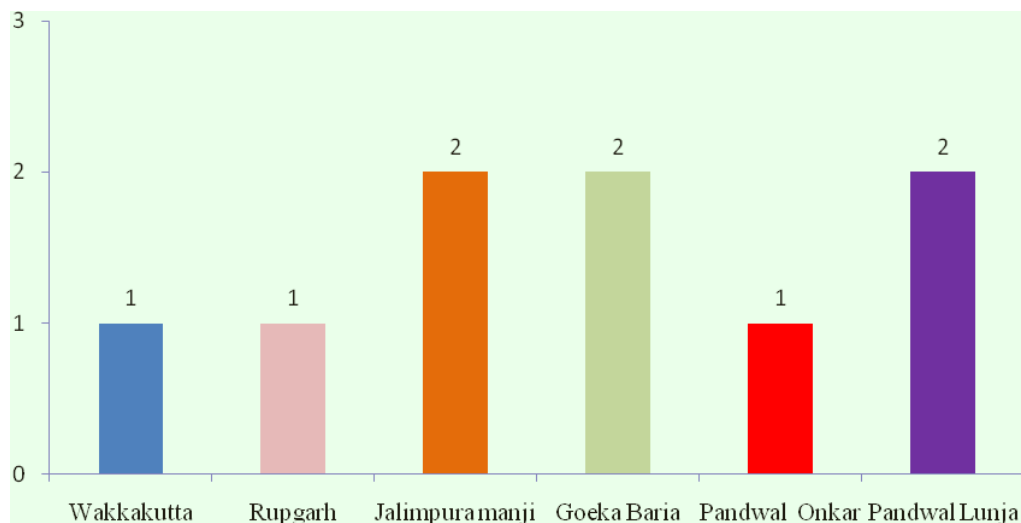


### 4.2.7. Physically/Mentally challenged children:

With the exception of Goeka Pargi, all the other villages considered for this study reveal that the presence of physically / mentally challenged children in the child-labour families is a common feature. While there is one case of physically/mentally challenged child in villages such as Wakkakutta, Rupgarh and Pandwal Onkar, there are 2 such cases in each village such as Jalimpuramanji, Goeka Baria and Pandwal Lunja among the surveyed units. This peculiarity is highlighted in Figure 8. Since these are families who migrate to cities ranging from 4 to 8 months in a year, in search of money and livelihood, it is safe to assume that they leave behind their physically/mentally challenged children to fend for themselves.

Figure 8: Villages and number of physically/mentally challenged children

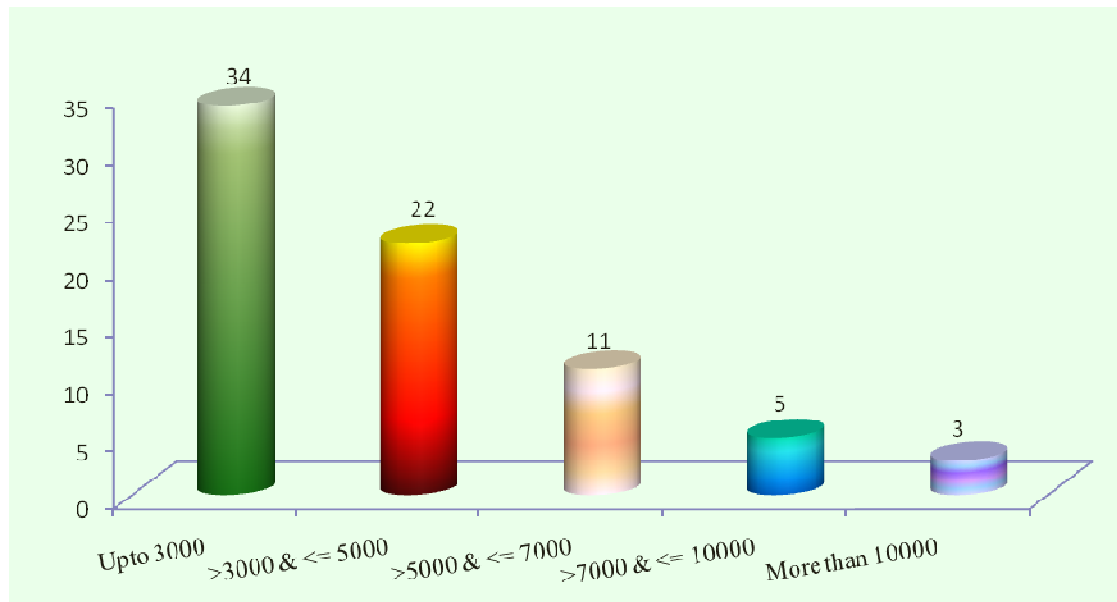
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### 4.2.8. Family income scenario:

A general glance at Figure 9 would indicate that perhaps the foremost reason for migration is the insignificant amount of income earned in their villages. Among the 75 surveyed units, 34 families, i.e. 45 per cent of the surveyed units, disclose that their household income is below ₹3000/- per annum, with another 22 families (i.e. 29%) declaring that their income per annum ranges between ₹3000/- and ₹5000/-. Only 3 households among the 75 surveyed units point out that their household income stretches beyond ₹10000/-.

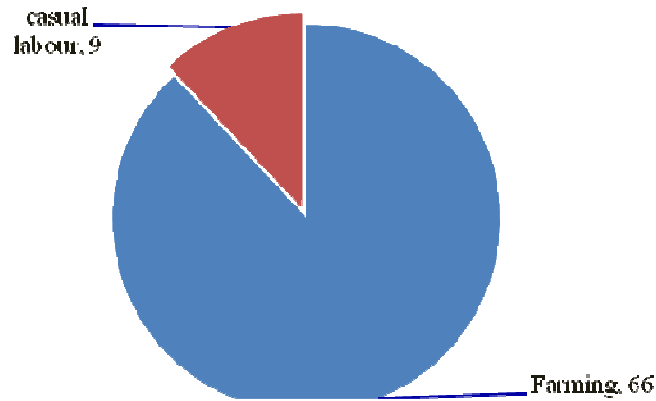
Figure 9: Total household income and number of families



It may be kept in mind that the entire sample is drawn from identified child-labour families. In spite of the fact that 66 families, i.e. 88 per cent of the total sample, specify that their usual occupation is farming, only 3 among them i.e. 4 per cent, acknowledge that their income is more than ₹10000/- per annum. It is natural that as they find it impossible to cope up with their lives' demand with this meagre income, they migrate to cities during certain prolonged period of time in each year in search of better livelihood.

Figure 10: Main wage-earner's usual occupation and number of families:

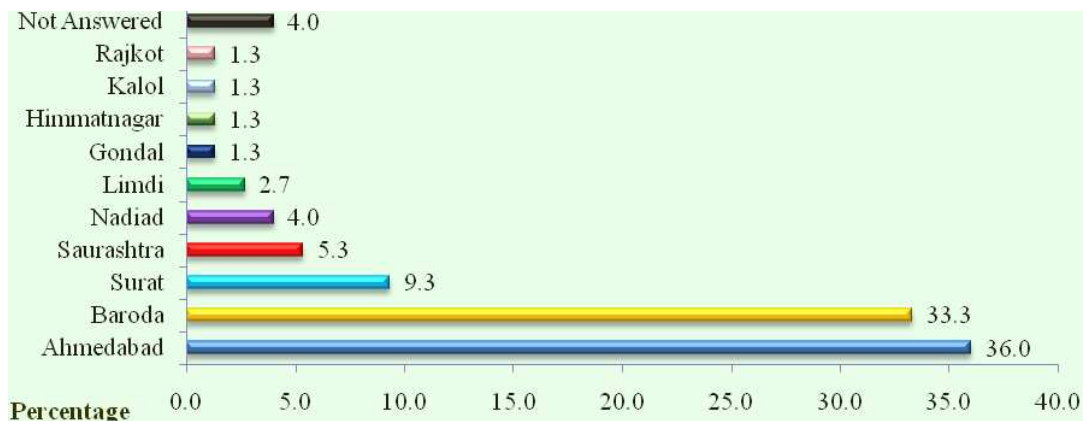




**4.2.9. Preferred destinations for migration:**

During our focused group discussions, some children indicated that they earn more money in some cities, such as Surat, in comparison with Ahmedabad or Baroda. However, the data from the surveyed units unveils that it could be an exception rather than a rule. Perhaps the two major destination cities preferred by the households from the 7 villages under study are Ahmedabad and Baroda. These two cities, together, add up to about 69 per cent of preferred destinations by the sample migrants from these 7 villages. For 9.3 per cent of the surveyed units, Surat seems to appear an attractive destination for migration. Small towns such as Kalol, Himmatnagar, Gondal and even Limdi and Nadiad are attractive destinations for a smaller percentage of the sample. About 5 per cent of sample prefers to migrate to Saurashtra as can be grasped from Figure 11.

Figure 11: Preferred destinations for migration as a percentage of the total sample



**4.3. Reasons for Migration:**

In an effort to cull out the reasons for their migration, and to gauge the degree of emphasis they give to each of those reasons, we look at Table 10, which summarises the responses from 75 household units surveyed.

**4.3.1. Inadequate Income:**

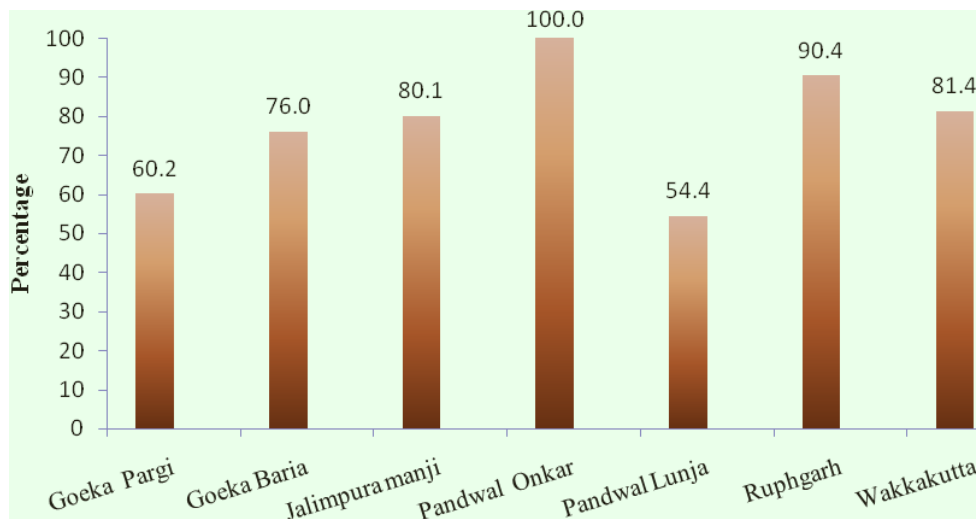
Through formal and informal discussions with people in the project area, and from the sample survey, it emerges that the basic reason for migration appears to be their inadequate income levels. It can be seen from Table 10 as well as Figure 13, in addition to Figure 9 above, that 86.7 per cent of the sample agrees, firmly, that inadequate income remains the critical factor for their migration, and another 12

per cent agree to this view, adding up to a total of 99 per cent of the total respondents subscribing to this assertion. Hence the obvious question is: Has this inadequate income level in their villages anything to do with the size of their land holdings?

**4.3.2. Inadequate landholdings:**

Among the responses emerging from the survey indicates that except for 5.3 per cent, who belong to SC groups and do not own any land, 85.3 per cent of the respondents disagree to this view, implying that they do own certain amount of land. However, we must hasten to add that 26.7 per cent of the respondents firmly agree that their land holdings are inadequate and another 41.3 per cent agree to this view. The baseline study also reveals that almost 78 per cent of total households own less than 3 acres of land in these 7 villages. The percentage of households owning less than 3 acres of land in each of the project village is presented in Figure 12. In brief, it can be inferred that although 68 per cent of the total sample do possess certain amount of land, their land holding is inadequate.

Figure 12: Percentage of households owning less than 3 acres of land



Data Source: Baseline study

**4.3.3. Non-existent alternative livelihood opportunities:**

If their income levels as well as their land holdings are insufficient for a decent living in their villages, the logical question that follows is: Are there any alternative livelihood options in their villages?

**4.3.4. Lack of alternative job opportunities:**

One alternative could be the availability of jobs in their own or near-by villages. Their response is loud and clear that almost 99 per cent, either firmly or otherwise, feel that they have very few options left for them in their village, which will provide them with reasonable income. 92 per cent of the respondents, both those who firmly agree and those who agree, indicate that they lack job opportunities in their village. It may be noted that they disagree to the view that agriculture is not viable. It could be that agriculture is viable, provided they have enough money to purchase modern variety of seeds, implements to till, and pump-sets to irrigate their land, in addition to the natural blessings of timely rain and suitable climatic conditions. At present, alternative job opportunities are non-existent.

Table 10: Degree of emphasis on the reasons for migration (%)

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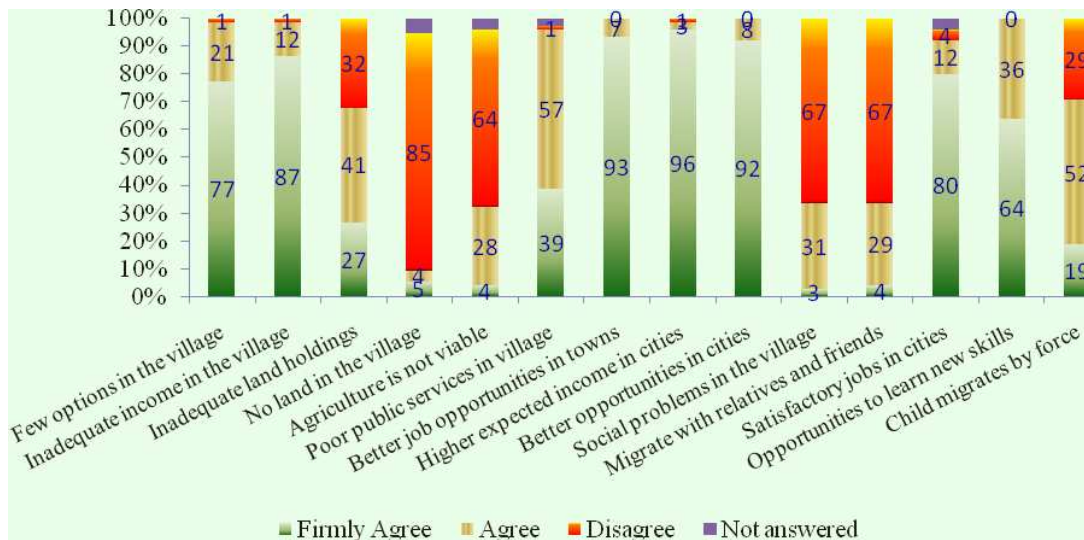
Reasons for Migration	Firmly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Not answered	Total
Lack of jobs in the village	45.3	46.7	8.0	0.0	100.0
Few options in the village	77.3	21.3	1.3	0.0	100.0
Inadequate income in the village	86.7	12.0	1.3	0.0	100.0
Inadequate land holdings	26.7	41.3	32.0	0.0	100.0
No land in the village	5.3	4.0	85.3	5.3	100.0
Agriculture is not viable	4.0	28.0	64.0	4.0	100.0
Poor public services in village	38.7	57.3	1.3	2.7	100.0
Better job opportunities in towns	93.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
Higher expected income in cities	96.0	2.7	1.3	0.0	100.0
Better opportunities in cities	92.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Social problems in the village	2.7	30.7	66.7	0.0	100.0
Migrate with relatives and friends	4.0	29.3	66.7	0.0	100.0
Satisfactory jobs in cities	80.0	12.0	4.0	4.0	100.0
Opportunities to learn new skills	64.0	36.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Child migrates by force	18.7	52.0	29.3	0.0	100.0

### 4.3.5. Poor Public Utility Services in villages:

Poor public utility services such as poor transport system, inadequate health facilities in terms of primary healthcare centres and hospitals, understaffed and casual ways of running schools and educational institutions at the villages, etc., add to their despair. As a result, 38.7 per cent of the surveyed units express that they feel, firmly, the public services are poor, while another 57.3 per cent agree to it. Only one respondent indicates that the public utility services are good enough in his village. It is also amply clear from Table 10 and Figure 13 that for about 67 per cent of the respondents, it is not any social problems that they face in their village that forces them to migrate to cities. The same percentage of respondents also indicates that they do not migrate to cities with their relatives and friends. It is basically, their perceived better opportunities, higher expected income, satisfactory jobs, and opportunities to learn new skills in the cities that motivate them to migrate to cities.

Figure 13: Degree of emphasis on the reasons for migration (% of responses)

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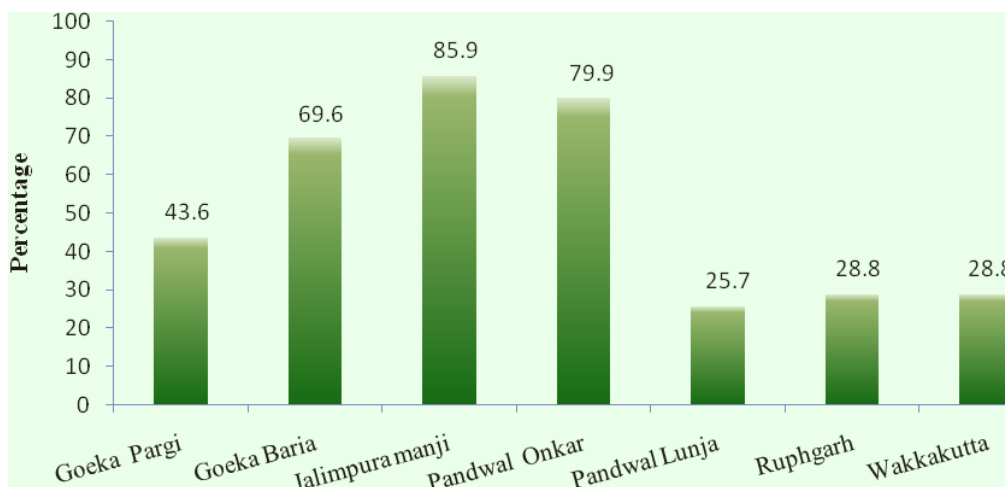


### 4.3.6. Lack of irrigation facilities:

On account of its hilly terrain, rain water never helps in prolonged farming activity. In fact, soil erosion becomes a major issue during monsoon, as the rain water carries away the fertility of the soil down to the lakes and streams, leaving behind the pebbles, which strangely plays a positive role by providing at least a small dose of moisture required for the survival of crops. In this scenario, there are at least 3 possibilities to counter this problem, which are missing at present.

- First of all, there is lack of any action towards watershed management. Watershed programmes can help to create employment, in addition to solving irrigation water shortage.
- Secondly, there is hardly any attempt to explore bore-wells for irrigation. It, once again, could be on account of lack of credit facilities to invest in water exploration and purchase of pump-sets to lift water from bore-wells. This alternative is contingent upon the availability of underground water streams, and the depth of water table in the region. Assuming that it is a viable option, efforts need to be made to move in that direction, which is lacking, as of now.

Figure 14: Households with less than 3 acres of Irrigated Land (%):



Data Source: Baseline Study

- c) Thirdly, the data from Baseline study, which is presented in Figure 14, indicates that 90 per cent of the total households in the 7 villages under study own lands. Among the 7 villages covered in this project, a sizeable percentage of households in villages such as Jalimpuramanji, PandwalOnkar, and even GoekaBaria have access to water from ponds and canals for irrigation. However, their size of landholdings remains less than 3 acres per household. Baseline study highlights that 55 households, accounting for 5 per cent of the total, have access to irrigation facilities from farm pond. However, even those 5 per cent households depend on 13 diesel pump-sets owning households for irrigation. In short, water for irrigation is possible for almost 60 per cent of the land owners. If there is a way to lift water for irrigation, these 60 per cent can opt for at least two crops a year, and to that extent, migration can be arrested. The only factor that prevents them from choosing that option is lack of capital to invest in diesel pump-sets. With 924 households out of a total of 1282 households, i.e. 72 per cent of the total households (or 77.5 per cent among those households who own land) in the 7 villages owning less than 3 acres of land, each household investing in a diesel pump-set is not an economically efficient and financially viable option. In this situation, a cooperative venture among them, which may lead to purchase of roughly 10 diesel pumps per village, can address this issue collectively. Furthermore, through certain amount of professional inputs, if they adopt cooperative farming, it may yield rich dividend for the society as a whole. However, this requires a reality check and a viability study at the ground level.

As of now, lack of irrigation facilities remains one of the major factors responsible for migration. If some practical solutions could be found to address the irrigational needs of these 77.5 per cent of land owners in these 7 villages, to that extent migration can be mitigated, thus curtailing child-labour migration.

#### **4.3.7. Lack of drinking water Facilities:**

Baseline study highlights that except for Rупgarh village which has a well for drinking water, all the other villages considered for this project depend on hand-pumps for drinking water. In all the villages, except for a miniscule percentage of families, which has their water source, all of them depend on public source. Although lack of drinking water facilities may not be linked to their migration, directly, it may indirectly influence their decision not to migrate, considering the fact that they do experience hardship in availing drinking water in the place of their migration.

#### **4.3.8. Lack of skill formation:**

Figure 10, above, indicates that there are only two types of usual status occupation, namely farming and casual labour. This is an indication of lack of any skill formation and human capital building efforts in this region. People in these 7 villages do not have any opportunity to learn any new skills, except the ones they are familiar with from their tradition. In this context, setting up short training programmes in a range of non-farm activities, can help to increase their income levels. Training programmes may provide entrepreneurial skills which will include animal husbandry, sheep-rearing, dairy farming, poultry development, etc., among others. Similarly, training programmes for women could include *agarbathi* making, *papad* making, tailoring, bamboo crafts, and other cottage industrial training. Since people in this region are not familiar or exposed to any non-farm

activity, they settle down to farming during a short period of the year, and end up as migrant labourers without any skills during the rest of the year.

Although the general education level in this region is negligible, even those who get through the present education system have limited technical training opportunities for lack of adequate technical training institutions. Thus, lack of opportunities for skill formation and entrepreneurship compels them to migrate to cities as unskilled labourers.

#### **4.3.9. Lack of capital:**

First of all, various financial assistance schemes and pronounced policies by the government, either directly or through NABARD, have never penetrated the geographical boundaries of these seven villages. Secondly, a glance at Figure 9 above reveals that about 96 per cent of the surveyed units declare that their income level is less than ₹10000/- per annum; implying that saving on a regular basis to build physical capital is next to impossible. This scenario is also captured vividly by the Baseline study. If saving is not possible, forming Self Help Groups or cooperative society has no meaningful consequence. With their small land holdings, Banks will not be forthcoming to lend them money for any dynamic investment opportunities, leave alone banks providing money for consumption. Hence they are drawn towards unscrupulous money lenders for their various financial requirements such as weddings, medical treatments, etc., who provide them loans at an interest rate of 10 per cent per month. Caught in this debt-trap, many of them lose their properties, ornaments, animals, and their other negligible belongings. In order to pay back their loans to the money lenders, and redeem their belongings which are mortgaged against the borrowed money, they are forced to migrate to cities to earn the requisite money. If credit is made available to them at a reasonable rate of interest, it may be possible for them to access those sources, and even invest in productive activities, which are missing at present.

#### **4.3.10. Lack of alternative Income generation activities:**

The two major usual employment and income generation activities that are prevalent in this region are agriculture and casual labour. Despite the fact that a number of alternative income generation activities are potentially possible, they remain unexplored. If activities such as animal husbandry, poultry, dairy development, food-for-work programmes by providing their services to build bunds, watershed programmes, digging wells, levelling their fields, tree plantation, shrimp-farming, etc., are initiated in this region in a coordinated manner, it will help to discourage people from this region to migrate to other cities. In this context, there is a need to address these issues in a targeted manner. The approach could be a three-pronged one: (a) Income generation activities for women, (b) Income generation activities for men, and (c) targeted income generation activities for youth.

- a) **Income generation activities for women:** Our interaction during focused group discussion revealed that women experience much more hardship than men during migration. Therefore, even if men migrate in search of better jobs and more income, if women can be prevented from migrating, it will safeguard women from physical as well as sexual exploitation. In this context, if income generation activities, such as tailoring, *papad* making, *agarbathi* making, handicrafts, animal husbandry, poultry, and dairy development activities can be pursued in a planned and professional manner either through government or non-governmental agencies, it will stop



women from migrating. If women migration is curtailed, we can safely presume that child-labour migration will stop automatically.

- b) **Income generation activities for men:** Since the seven villages under project area come under hilly terrain, double cropping pattern remains out of bound for them. In this context, if employment generation activities are initiated in terms of levelling of fields, land can retain the rain water, which may result in higher yield, in addition to opting for a second crop with irrigation from ponds. Other income generation activities for men may include digging wells, bunding, tree plantation, etc. Experience from places such as Unai, Bardipada, etc., indicate that innovative introduction of new crops such as Sandal wood plantation, growing ladies' finger vegetables, etc., may be a better option in such undulating terrain. Moreover, experiments in Kutch region of Gujarat with date farming, grape-orchards in Bardipada, teak plantation in Zankhvav, etc., in Gujarat have proved to be successful ventures in achieving greater income, thus preventing people from migrating to other places in search of jobs. It may be noted that Sandal-wood plantation, on account of its enormous market potential and relatively shorter time period required to multiply money many-fold, it appears to be a better option as compared with other trees such as teak, etc., which require longer time-span.
- c) **Income generation activities for youth:** Many of the youth in this region consists of first generation literate or partially literate people. Although many of them reached secondary and some even beyond higher secondary school levels, they remain unemployed. As they are not trained in technical aspects, there is no initiative on their own to undertake any innovative ways to engage themselves and be productive, and they join the rest of the unskilled labourers looking for jobs in cities and add to the number of people who migrate. If proper guidance is provided to them in career options, and if they are put through short courses in skill formation and human development, they can play a cartelistic role and contribute substantially to their family income. In the absence of that, they end up as unskilled labourers, thus failing to make the others in their society to realise the importance of education. Perhaps these youth can better understand and involve themselves in watershed management programmes, and become creative entrepreneurs and models for others from their society to emulate, but it is missing at present. It may also be possible to explore activities such as fish-farming, where there are ponds, by the youth. As most people in their society migrate and remain away from their villages for a good part of the year, these youth can work to bring unity in their villages, and can educate their elders in government schemes, and other entitlements, which is provided to them as their fundamental rights in the constitution. Political and social change can be brought about, and the youth can play a crucial role in conscientizing their own people and take social and political actions to get their due from government. They can also advice the rest on growing medicinal plants, cash-crops, genetically modified varieties of teak plants, etc. There is a huge market for medicinal plants since pharmaceutical industries are moving in that direction.

#### **4.3.11. Lack of initiatives by local political leaders:**

Besides the other factors, it also appears that the local political leaders have not taken adequate initiatives to ensure that government policy interventions through rural development and tribal welfare measures reach the people they represent in

this region. Had the political leaders played some positive role with regard to (a) setting up small and cottage industries, (b) employment generation activities, (c) irrigation and drinking water facilities, (d) educational, health and other infrastructure facilities, (e) financial packages to free the marginal farmers from the clutches of the money lenders, (f) ensured that people get their entitled amount of food grains, cereals, kerosene, etc., from the public distribution system, etc., among others, it could have helped to mitigate the problem of migration. Since dynamic political leadership seems to be missing, at present, the issue of migration remains a major issue.

#### 4.3.12. Lack of knowledge regarding importance of educating their children:

People in this region have not felt the impact of education in improving their standard of living. Consequently, there is lack of motivation among parents to



ensure their children's education. It is evident from Table 8, above, although a good number of children join the primary schools, very few sustain themselves during their formative years in schools. Consequently, only a fraction of them get through high school

education and beyond. Moreover, parents view the children as helping hands to attend to their siblings, and to earn some additional income in the place of migration. Hence, they prefer to take their children along when they migrate, rather than leaving them behind to study. As a result, migration and school drop-out rates appear to be highly linked to each other.

#### 4.3.13. Lack of electricity:

Although the non-availability of electricity may not be immediately and directly



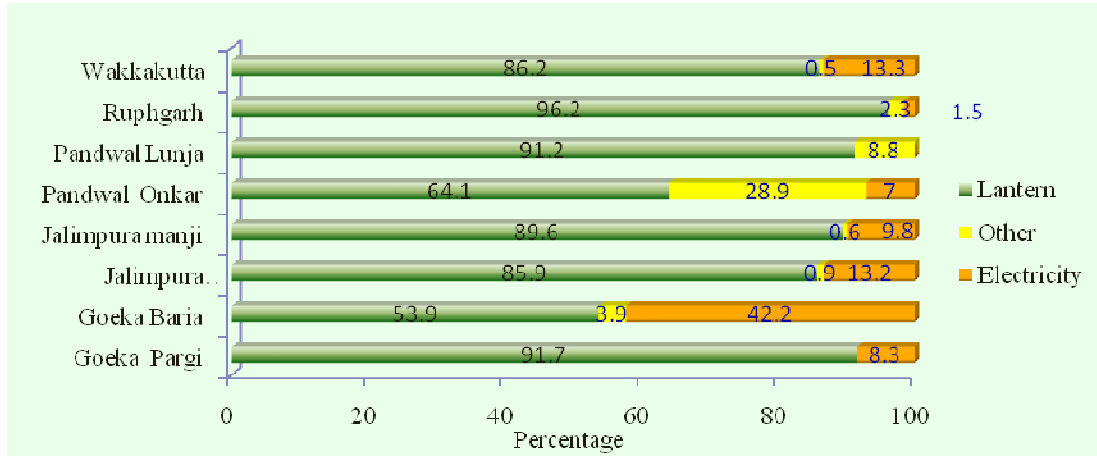
linked to child-labour migration from these seven villages, electricity plays an important role in the quality of life of people in general, and children's education in particular. Figure 15 presents the source of light highlighting the percentage of people using lantern to light up their homes, in this region. Studying under a lantern affects child's eyes, in addition to the expenses involved in purchasing kerosene to light up the lantern.

In this context, an effort made by a firm in Hyderabad with the slogan of 'one light per child' ensure that its solar powered Table Lamps are adequate to provide sufficient light for the child to study. Although it appears to be a business venture, on account of its low cost, easy to carry, tiny and trendy look, it makes it possible for poor rural children to take advantage of this Table Lamps to ensure that their studies do not suffer due to lack of electricity. Since solar powered table lamps, in

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addition to being environmental friendly, can be a sound and practical solution to this power-starved region, it can be of a significant help to the school going children in these seven villages. In the absence of such facilities, children do not spend much time in their studies. Therefore, if these low-cost solar powered table lamps are made available, which does not require any additional running costs; it could help mitigate migration by school going child-labourers to certain extent.

Figure15: Source of light in Project villages (%)



Data Source: Baseline study

### 4.3.14. Lack of initiatives in environmental protection:

Since the main source of fuel for cooking being fire-wood, green coverage in this region has been depleted over the years. It is obvious from Figure 16 that people in these 7 villages mainly depend on wood for fuel. As more and more trees are used up as fuel, it raises important environmental concerns.

Environmentalists point out that deforestation is to be blamed for 10% of all carbon dioxide release entering the atmosphere, by the cutting and burning of trees each year. Cutting of trees leads to greater concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.



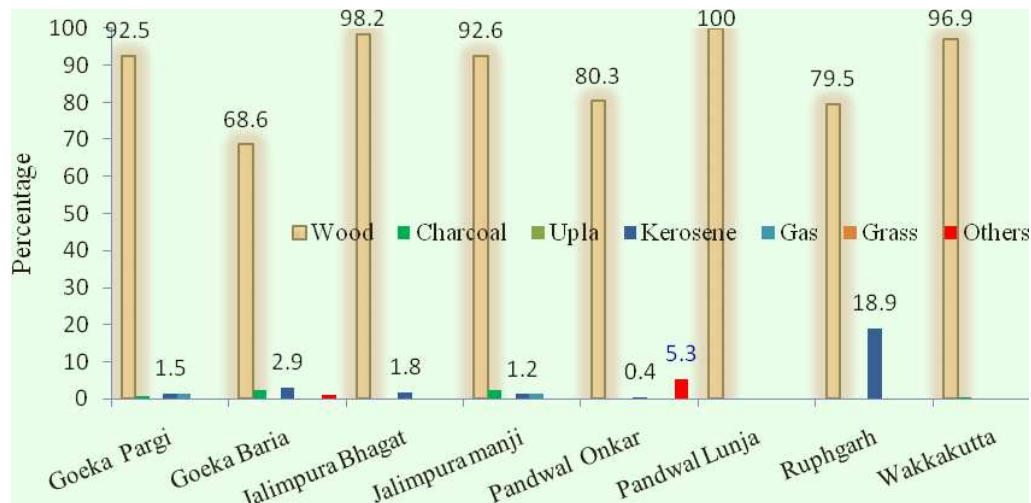
However, organized tree-felling by politicians-timber mafia, combined with increasing use of wood for fuel by villagers in this region has resulted in desertification. It is common knowledge that forests are great moderators of the climate in maintaining a healthy gaseous balance in the atmosphere. They increase humidity by way of transpiration from their surfaces. Thus forests can control soil erosion and landslides. However, since people in these 7 villages are faced with the question of their survival, protecting the environment does not appear to be their priority.

There are no attempts to plant trees, either by people or by the government in this region. If people are motivated and given proper guidance towards afforestation, it can improve the environment, besides adding to the income levels of people. In certain regions of India, innovative commercial tree plantation has made its mark,

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which in turn has helped people to earn some money. Apparently, these efforts seem to be absent in these project villages. Unless some efforts are made to protect the forest and environment, continued deforestation will result in spread of deserts. Barren land will produce less trees and vegetation, which will further erode the top soil, thus affecting the livelihood of the future generation in this region.

Figure 16: Kind of fuel used in project villages (%)



Data Source: Baseline study

### 4.3.15. Lack of Boardings, Ashram Shalasad Student-sponsorship schemes

It is evident from the experiences of boarding schools and Ashram Shalas run by Christian Missionaries in South Gujarat, that child migration can be minimized considerably, even if the adult male and females migrate to cities in search of jobs and livelihood. In places such as Unai and Bardipada, the missionaries have ensured through children sponsorship schemes, that each child in the boarding is covered by a socially concerned sponsor, who would meet all or major part of the educational expenses to get the children through their school, if not college education. In this regard, the experiment in Unai and Bardipada regions of South Gujarat stands tall as witness to eradicate child migration. Moreover, AshramShala (Boarding-school), a scheme provided by the government to meet the educational, boarding and stay expenses of children add to the Missionaries' efforts in providing free education to a sizeable number of children. As a result, parents feel financially free, in addition to their feeling of being secured with regard to their children, even when they themselves migrate. In the absence of such schemes in these seven villages under this project, child migration remains an important but unresolved issue.

### 4.3.16. Loss of identity and citizenship:

During the period of migration, these migrant labourers lose their identity as citizens of this country, and lose their legitimate entitlement, rights, privileges, etc.

- They lose their legitimate entitlement as they cannot access their provision from public distribution system for non-acceptability of their BPL, APL cards, at the place of migration. In fact, they are forced to obtain grains at market prices.
- They lose their privileges to access government hospitals, subsidized medicines, etc. In the cities, the municipal hospital charges lesser price for



the same treatment to those who belong to their own municipality, while these poor migrants pay the price meant for the rich,

- c) They lose their legitimate right to vote as citizens at the place of migration. Although the loss of identity and citizenship and child-labour migration are unrelated issues directly, it has its serious implications on child-labour migrants indirectly. For example, if the parents do not get their right to exercise their BPL or APL cards to purchase their food articles from public distribution system, it does affect the family's capacity to feed the child, adequately, at the place of migration. Similarly, during migration, if the child migrant falls sick, the opportunity to avail cheaper medical treatment and facilities for the child becomes impossible. Therefore, loss of identity and citizenship does affect the child migrant in more than one way.

#### **4.3.17. Satisfactory jobs in cities:**

As can be seen in Table 10 as well as Figure 13, the surveyed sample indicates that except for 4 per cent who disagree that they get satisfactory jobs in cities and another 4 per cent who did not respond to this query, the rest point out that they do get satisfactory jobs in cities, as a reason for their migration. However, considering the ordeal they go through in terms of their living conditions, the hard work, and hazardous chemical substances they sometimes deal with for long hours each day, their revelation of satisfactory jobs cannot be interpreted as job satisfaction. By satisfactory job they imply that rather than remaining unemployed and living a miserable life in the villages, at least they get some money to their satisfaction in the cities. Therefore, it is basically the lack of jobs and alternative employment opportunities which forces them to look for satisfactory jobs in cities to earn some money.

#### **4.3.18. Opportunity to learn new skills in the cities:**

For people in the project villages, opportunity in skill formation is nil. There are no efforts or targeted approaches in providing human capital formation to men, women and the youth, either from the government or from other sources. Consequently, they end up as unskilled migrant labourers in cities. In such a situation, some of them are put into certain difficult tasks with on-the-job-training in dealing with specific machinery. In a way, they do learn to operate that particular machine, and acquire some skills in dealing with that specific machine. To that extent, they feel that migration helps them to learn new skills in the cities. Hence it is not surprising that the entire sample indicates, as shown in Table 10 and Figure 13, above, that they get opportunities to learn new skills in cities. This expressed view only vindicates that they are physically and mentally capable of learning new skills, and they could have graduated from being unskilled to skilled labourers, provided such training and skill formation is possible in their villages.

#### **4.4. Forced migration of child-labour:**

Figure 13 also highlights that 19 per cent of the total respondents firmly agree that children are forced to migrate along with them, while another 52 per cent agree that children are forced to migrate. It has emerged from our focused group discussions that they are forced to migrate on account of two sets of reasons: one set of reasons escalating from internal or domestic compulsions which can be termed as causal factors, and the other on account of external factors which can be clubbed into effects or resultant factors.

#### **I. Causal Factors:**

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Given a choice, these children may not migrate, However, on account of their family's precarious financial situation, either they themselves feel or forced to feel that they should join their parents or relatives, to earn some much needed money for themselves or for their family. Since this "force" comes from within or domestic sources, we club them into internal or domestic factors, such as the following:

- a) **Baby-sitting:** Some children feel forced to migrate with their parents to attend to their siblings while they are busy with their work. This type of force is from within or domestic sources, since they feel that they help their parents in some way, by internalising the reality surrounding their families.
- b) **Lack of alternative option:** From Figure 4 and Table 9, above, it comes to light that about 79 per cent of the sample is made up of just one-adult-male or one-adult-female families. In such a situation, when the parents migrate to cities to earn money, it is not possible for the children to stay behind as there is no one to look after them. Therefore in the absence of boarding and residential educational facilities, children are forced to accompany their parents.
- c) **Issue of 'safety':** Adolescent girl-child is forced to migrate along with parents and family members, on account of the issues of 'safety' back in the village. It may be noted that even in the place where they migrate to, adolescent girl-child is faced with issues of safety there as well. However, since parents are around, the girl-child internalises the situation, and does not feel it as a force. At the same time, when the adolescent daughter is with them, the parents feel secure, and perceive the situation as a lesser evil compared with the option of leaving them behind, at their home.
- d) **To fend for their own study expenditure:** A sizeable segment of children also expressed that they are forced to migrate during summer months to earn some money to cover their school expenses such as school fees, to purchase uniforms, books, etc. Some students pointed out their annual expenses for education in terms of school fees, boarding and lodging, purchase of uniforms, books, etc. work out to be around ₹6000/- per annum. Some of them also indicated that they do earn some extra money to support their families. Since such reasons for migrations emerge from domestic compulsions, and are stifled, often children do not feel that they are "forced" to migrate, but take them as a matter of fact, and hence children do not experience much of a hurt.

## II. Resultant Factors:

Children feel that they are forced to migrate on account of (a) type of hard work they are put through, (b) pathetic living conditions, (c) exploitation, (d) instances of harassment, (e) instances of oral and sometimes even sexual abuse, either by their own groups or others, etc.

- a) **Type of work:** Children, normally, migrate to cities during summer months. They are made to work under gruelling summer sun. They undergo hardship as they are employed in a variety of hard work such as construction work which involves carrying heavy loads of cement, sand, iron, water, etc. Some children are assigned to feed coal into boiler furnace, and exposed to a very high degree of temperature. Some of them have worked in cotton fields, gathering cotton, collecting potatoes from potato field, etc., under the sun. Some of them are assigned to whitewash or paint houses without proper protective wares. Sometimes, their work involves handling hazardous



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chemical substances, and they fall sick on account of the type of work they are engaged in. It is their sheer need for money that forces them to undertake such strenuous jobs, despite their dislike for such work.

- b) **Living conditions:** Children dislike staying on open grounds, without proper drinking water and sanitation facilities, deprived of a suitable place to cook their food and eat on time, or a proper place to lay their heads to rest, etc. As they lack sanitation facilities, and since they use open fields as toilets, where privacy is next to impossible, they are forced to awake themselves very early to complete their morning ablutions before dusk. In this regard, adolescent girls go through their worst nightmares, especially during their menstruation period, as there is no privacy, whatsoever. Some children narrate that travelling in cities becomes tough, in overcrowded buses, and they have to squeeze their way in and out. In addition, after a full day's work, they go hunting for fire-woods, cook their meals and eat. Moreover, very often, the only place which is available to migrants in cities for their shelter is marsh and filthy open spaces or foot-paths, where they have to overlook the mosquito menace. As they are so tired after a hard day labour, they have no option but to let the mosquitoes live on their blood, resulting in malaria and other diseases. When they fall sick, it complicates their lives, and they come back to their village, since it is not affordable to get medical attention in the cities.
- c) **Exploitation:** While in cities, children are burdened with the work of an adult. However, their wages remain much lower compared with the adults. There are instances, where children are put to work, beyond their regular time schedule, depending on the nature of work. Perhaps the worst suffering is experienced by female child migrants. It may be pointed out that adolescent girls are exploited in more than one way. For instance, after a hard day's work, girls are paid 30 per cent less than their own male child migrants. Moreover, going with the tradition, girls are expected to cook food for their family members, on their return from hard day labour, clean up the utensils before they get some sleep.
- d) **Instances of harassment:** It also emerged from our interaction with the children that sometimes they are picked up by police for staying on open space and foot-path, and harassed till they pay some money to get away from their clutches. Some of them also indicated that they were robbed of their belongings, since the work place is away from the place where they leave behind their little belongings.
- e) **Instances of verbal and sometimes even sexual abuse:** At the place of migration, adolescent girl-child goes through trauma of a different kind, as they are exploited, either by their own groups or city dwellers, and strangers. Girls are often teased by the city dwellers, with sexual undertones. One adolescent girl narrated, "They call us by all sorts of names, and refer to us as beggars". A number of such narrations indicate that they have gone through their most humiliating experiences. In our interactions with adolescent girls during field trip, we realised that girls seldom narrate their own ordeal with regard to sexual abuse during their stay in cities as migrants. However, some of those girl migrants felt a little comfortable to narrate their experiences to one of our lady-researcher. All the same, they only indicated that such sexual abuse and exploitations have occurred to others in their groups, but they themselves have not gone through any abuse as such. Some of them agreed, with certain degree of

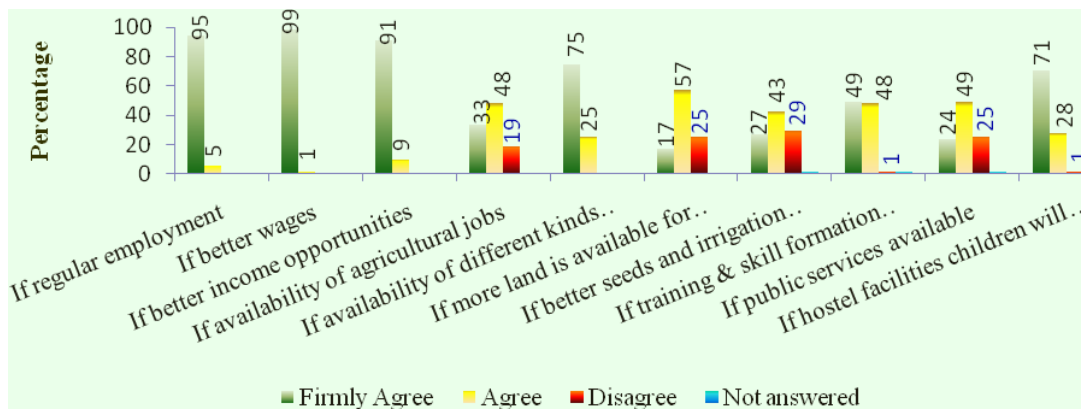
discomfort, that they do indulge in having sex with their own tribes from other villages from their area who have migrated along with them, but with consent.

**5. Conclusion and possible alternatives to mitigate the problem of migration:**

From general observations, data this study generated, and lessons from other studies we learn that migration has been increasing rapidly. On account of its intricate linkages with child-labour migration, increasing number of migrants necessarily implies equally increasing number of child-labour migrants. It also emerged from both qualitative and quantitative analyses undertaken in this study, that children were forced to migrate along with their parents for a host of unavoidable reasons. At the milieu of deteriorating livelihood options and lack of alternative employment opportunities, migration may continue to remain a major but unresolved issue in the seven villages under study. As long as migration continues, forced child-labour migration is inevitable, with its serious implication for the future generation of this region. Therefore, it calls for certain time-bound measures to reverse this trend, in a planned manner.

In an effort to involve the migrants in finding possible alternatives to this serious issue, the questionnaire included certain straightforward questions to solicit their views. The survey proposed a set of possible better facilities for them, and enquired whether they will still migrate if those conditions are met in their own villages. Figure 17 summarises their responses and their degree of emphasis on those conditions.

Figure 17: Degree of emphasis on conditions if met, they will not migrate (% of responses)



It comes to fore, rather vividly, that if they have access to regular employment, better wages and better income opportunities within their own villages, they will not think of migrating to cities to earn money. It can be observed in Figure 17 that there is 100 per cent unanimity among the migrants, including a small fraction among them who only agree as they are sceptical about such an eventuality, that if regular employment is available, better wages are possible and better income opportunities are made available within their villages, they will not migrate to cities.

Our interaction with the children in a number of schools revealed that they migrate to cities during summer as a surrogate option, and not a preferred one, for if there were other viable and gainful employment opportunities in the villages, no one would migrate. From a distance it appeared that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was an appropriate government

policy intervention to alleviate migration issue. However, although MGNREGA has assured one hundred days of guaranteed employment per household, in reality it has only provided partial improvement in their quality of life. A closure scrutiny of MGNREGA reveals that it comes with many pitfalls, and the following are some of them:

- a) 100 days job assurance under this scheme is limited to one person per BPL card holder family, and the income that is possible to earn through this scheme is inadequate to meet the requirement of the entire family. Since about 70 per cent of the sample covered in this study consists of 2 adults plus 4 to 5 children per family, this scheme remains inadequate to deal with migration problem.
- b) Moreover, the Baseline study highlights that, in reality, they get employment only for a few days ranging between 10 to 30 days in a year as opposed to the proclaimed 100 days.
- c) Even those maximum 30 days of employment that is guaranteed through MGNREGA scheme comes with gaps in between. This implies that the families in this area cannot even consider this scheme as an alternative for their survival in their villages.
- d) Even this minimum possible work remains a pie-in-the-sky as one can never be sure of payment for their work, and even if it does, it comes with a time-lag.
- e) The Baseline study also finds that this scheme is entangled with large amount of corruption at the implementation level. As a result of all these problems associated with MGNREGA, this scheme has lost its sheen, among the people in this part of the world, and the net gain from this scheme is negligible.

In this context, possible alternatives to the issue of migration lie in a multi-pronged and time-bound approach, both by government as well as civil society. Since child-labour migration is inextricably linked to migration in general, the following may be considered as appropriate strategies, among others, to deal with this growing menace:

### **Time-bound strategies to mitigate migration:**

#### **I. Short-term Strategies:**

1. Boarding and Ashram Shalas (residential schools) with student-sponsorship schemes to accompany the child through his/her school education, as demonstrated by the success stories of South Gujarat Missionary Boarding Schools model. This strategy requires immediate attention as it has the potential for multiplier effect in the future. If such a measure is put in place, even if adult migration continues for their livelihood, child-labour migration can be arrested in the short term.
2. Alternative Income Generation Activities, such as food-for-work programmes or other agricultural related work within the village. These programmes may include digging wells, levelling of land, creating check-dams, bunds, etc. The funding for these activities may come from government as well as other donor organizations, and socially concerned corporate houses.
3. Irrigation facilities improvement and development, which may lead to at least one quality crop a year, and perhaps even two crops a year.

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4. Credit facilities for purchase of diesel pump-sets, agricultural implements
5. Development and encouragement to cooperative farming practices, wherever possible, and encouraging use of modern implements, fertilisers, etc.
6. Training centres for vocational skills and human capital development: Along with boarding schools, if at least one technical institution is set-up in each block or at least in each Tehsil headquarters, it will result in creation of employment opportunities for school pass-outs, thus enhancing family income.
7. Focused programmes for women in skill formation. This may include, tailoring, *papad* making, *agarbathi* making, bamboo craft, etc., if viable with market links.
8. Providing One-light-one-child solar powered Table Lamps to each child.
9. Strengthening and monitoring midday meal scheme.

### II. Medium Term Strategies:

1. Non-farm activities such as animal husbandry, dairy development, sheep rearing, rabbits breeding, poultry: both chicken and turkey, fish-farming in available ponds, etc.
2. Special efforts to educate girl child through motivating and guiding parents.
3. Solar energy for cooking to prevent tree-felling for firewood or use of gober-gas.
4. Watershed management and watershed programmes.
5. Tree plantation drive: Efforts in this regard may increase employment opportunities, protect environment, as both a medium term and long term strategy. This may include sandal-wood plantation, which will result in an income of ₹25000/- per plant, within a period of 7 years, with an incentive to ensure at least 5 sandal wood trees are planted around their houses, each year based on the experience of Unai, Bardipada. However, these are subject to availability of irrigation and soil suitability, and hence require further reality scrutiny.
6. Drip irrigation is said to be a good alternative for places with less availability of water. However, considering the expenses that is involved, it remains a theoretical option, but needs experimentation.
7. Improving the productivity of land by better seeds, agricultural guidance, modern methods of sowing etc.,

### III. Long Term Strategies:

1. Improving the quality of education in the present primary schools, one teacher per class, quality teachers, etc.
2. Removal of administrative burden from the teachers, delinking teachers from other government related works such as conducting survey, census, election duty, etc.
3. Tree plantation drive: planting trees such as genetically modified teak-wood in their fields, and other trees which require less water and irrigation, etc. Although the gestation period is stretched out over a number of years, such efforts would ensure a stable income for the families in the long run, in addition to protecting the environment.

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4. Ensuring and monitoring that teachers' presence in the school during school time.
5. Encouraging students to take part in physical exercises and other sports activities
6. Promoting Self Help Groups, eventually leading to establishment of saving and credit cooperative societies for men, and more so for women.
7. Non-formal education for adults men and women
8. Conscientization of people in their rights and duties to become better citizens.
9. Programmes for greater interaction and involvement of politicians with people they represent.

In conclusion, this study proposes one difficult, but not an impossible development paradigm: If it is possible for some of the leading corporate houses in India, to adopt one or two specific villages and accompany them in their struggle, the issue of migration can be reduced if not solved completely, at least in those villages. All the same, this study recognises that such a possibility remains too much in the realm of a wish-list rather than a reality. However, it is hoped that at least some of the leading corporate houses play a pro-active role and become trend-setters to make this country a developed one in the future.

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