



## Instructional Language Preference and Anxieties of Seasonal Migrant Parents in Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

Kerala receives migrants from all over the country; this is much more complex for the state. Some of the languages spoken by migrant children in schools include Bengali, Assamese, Odiya, Hindi, Mundari, Tamil, Kannada and Dhivehi. With the increase in number of migrant families from northern India, the odds of migrant children out of schools also increases as dropping out of school at young ages are perceived normal in many of their native states. But when these children are enrolled in schools in Kerala, they are taught in Malayalam or Tamil which are the instructional languages in Kerala schools. Due to the frequent migration, the instructional language plays a vital role in their learning path. Here, in this research researcher intends to find out the migration trends and language preference of immigrant parents.

Keywords: Migrants, Kerala, Instructional Language

### 1. Introduction

In Kerala, access and retention are at high rates. But there are some areas where continuous dropouts and out of schools are reported. Immigrant pockets of Kerala which is an enlarging trend in all the working sectors. Hesitation from parents to send their wards to schools is also a major issue for the enrolment and retention of migrant children.

Most of the families prefer to engage their elder children to look after their younger children and manage the household affairs when they go to work. Ignorance of parents about the right of children to be educated also is a hurdle. In some cases, even the child is enrolled, due to the linguistic and cultural barriers, child feels insecure and discontinues school.

To support them in their language, educational volunteers are recruited in schools but not in all cases. Lack of availability of qualified educational volunteers from their native states are reported from certain areas. Another major problem is seasonal migration. Several families are seasonal migrants and for about six months, they are migrated to another states. Here, the medium of instruction is a major issue. Some parents are reluctant to send their children to schools since Malayalam or Tamil is the instructional language and that creates issues in their learning when they go back or migrate. In certain districts like Idukki, the migrant pockets are located at far and difficult to access areas.

Lack of Travel facilities to children from remote places prevent them from regular schooling even though SSK is providing transport allowance. Most of the migrant children are coming from extreme economic backward situations. Children are not getting sufficient breakfast due to the work schedule of their parents or poverty. Child enrolled to school remains hungry till noon in several migrant areas and they becomes irregular in school or comes to school when it's the time for food. In least cases, SMC/ PTA are resisting the admission of migrant children pointing out the unhygienic situation of the migrant child and that can affect their children badly.

Samagra Shiksha Kerala has undertaken several measures for the inclusion of children of migrant workers. Every year, survey of out of school children is conducted and best efforts are made to ensure that all the identified children are enrolled in school. The welcome ceremony of out of school migrant

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children (Pravesanolsavam) is celebrated with wide publicity. Cultural fests are also organized where migrant students have an opportunity to demonstrate their talent. Multilingual bridge materials have been assured in schools where age appropriate children is enrolled.

Special awareness programmes are also organized for the parents of migrant children in order to sensitise them. Migrant children who are eligible for transport under the RTE act are provided the transport allowances to ensure that they do not miss the school. An educational volunteer from their own community is a positive factor in dealing with the stigma faced by the children. They will be confident enough to communicate and express freely with the educational volunteer. Various services such as inclusive education facilities and counseling facilities are ensured to them also.

When the parents are moving from one place to another, enrolment, retention and participation in school activities are great hurdles. There, the medium of instruction also is an issue especially in the case of seasonal migrants who migrates to another states within months. Student tracking system should be extended to ensure the quality participation of the child.

Block level out of school monitoring committees will ensure the enrolment of every migrant child. In all the parental and teacher awareness programmes, the need for enrolling each and every child to school is a key area. So now, SSK is working as an interface and various functionaries of the society are reporting the case of out of school issues to SSK.

Transport and Escort facility is given to those migrant children coming to school from faraway places mostly from the deep forests or vast plantations. Transport allowance beneficiaries are children from unserved habitations. Most of the out of schools traced out are under extreme geographically separated school unserved areas.

Children have to travel a very long distance through lonely large plantations. There, schools will not be available as per neighborhood school policy as per RTE due to geographical peculiarities. Most of the beneficiaries are from Tribal settlements and migrant settlements. When SSK allots transport allowance to the needy children, four wheel jeeps or auto rickshaw are arranged under the monitoring of SMC.

Even though Samagra Shiksha Kerala is intervening constructively in the school education of migrant children, a policy which will contribute in the wellbeing and quality education of migrants are necessary. Here, in this study, the researcher intends that the research report will be a torchlight in to problems of migrants and in turn result in wonderful inclusion and integration of migrant children in our schools. This is an individual research report submitted to Samagra Shiksha Kerala and the details collected will be used for research purpose only. The researcher Dhanya P Vasu is District programme officer at Samagra Shiksha Idukki and have more than 10 years' experience in immigrant children's access retention.

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## 2. Review of Related Literature

- 1 Perry and John (1997) conducted a study on Migrant Education: Thirty Years of Success, but Challenges Remain by Department of Education and find that Despite over 30 years of work by the Migrant Education Program (MEP), rural migrant students may still be the most disadvantaged student population in the nation..
- 2 Dasari, Alam.(2019) studied on the impact of sarva shiksha abhiyan on the quality of school education a case study of patna district in bihar and observed that even various scheme has been implemented for elementary education, the SSA scheme is helpful to increase enrolment number of student in elementary education.
- 3 Kindler, Anneka (1995) conducted a study on demographic characteristics of migrant students in the United States, their educational needs, the features of federally-funded programs under the Migrant Education Program (MEP) legislation reform, and suggestions for enhancing current migrant student performance.
- 4 Kaladharan(2013) conducted a study on the Impact of teacher training in constructivist pedagogy on teacher competence and learners proficiency in malayalam under sarva shiksha abhiyan And observed that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been undertaking planned and comprehensive programmes for improving the language learning of primary children.

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## 3. Objectives

To find out the preference of instructional language that can ease the process of extension of school education of their child when they are migrated to another state.

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## 4. Methodology

**4.1 Survey** The investigator intends to adopt survey method for this study.

The investigator decided to use questionnaire on the learning related issues of immigrant parents. Survey method is preferred in order to collect the data from various immigrant laborers all over the state. Focus was given to 6 district with intense population.

### 4.2 Sample

Immigrant parents are selected using random sampling method. The present study decided to conduct on the sample of 600 immigrant parents.

### 3. Tools used

Structured questionnaire method was used for data collection using issue of learning based Questionnaire to immigrant parents.

The Google form was used for creating the questionnaire and was distributed to the parents through various functionaries of Samagra Shiksha Kerala.

#### 4. Statistical techniques

Research design: Analytical and descriptive research design

Data sources: Both primary and secondary data were collected from various sources. Primary data was collected from 600 immigrant parents through structured questionnaire method. Secondary data was collected from sources like e-journals, articles etc.

#### 5. Method of sampling:

Purposive random sampling method is used in this research process. 100 samples of immigrant laborers were selected who are migrated with their children.

Purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when “elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Researchers often believe that they can obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in saving time and money”

#### 6. Tools for analysis:

Charts, tables and percentages used for analysis. Likert’s three point scale was used to analyze the opinion of the respondents.

3 Point Likert scale is a scale that offers agree and disagree as to the polar points along with a neutral option. A commonly used 3 point Likert scale examples to measure satisfaction is Agree, Disagree and Neutral.

Microsoft Excel was used for calculating mean values and related conclusions.

#### 7. Statistical Analysis

Questionnaires were distributed to various functionaries of samagra shiksha around the state and the same was sent to the parents/ directly collected and filled up by the functionaries. 600 samples from various districts of Kerala responded to the forms.

Analysis of sample characteristics

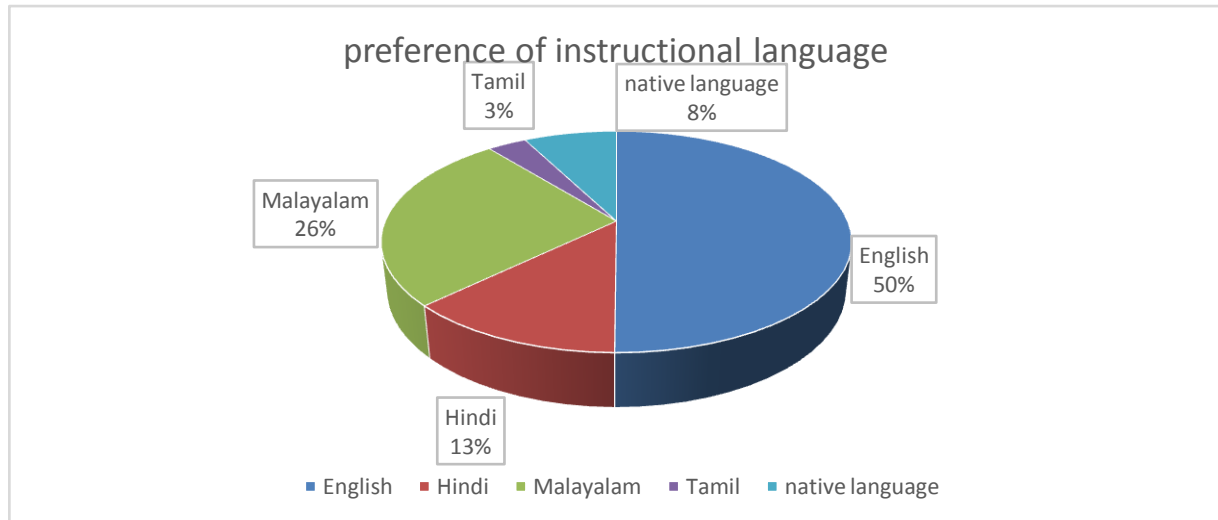
MS Excel was used to analyze the sample characteristics.

#### Details of immigrant laborer’s children throughout Kerala.

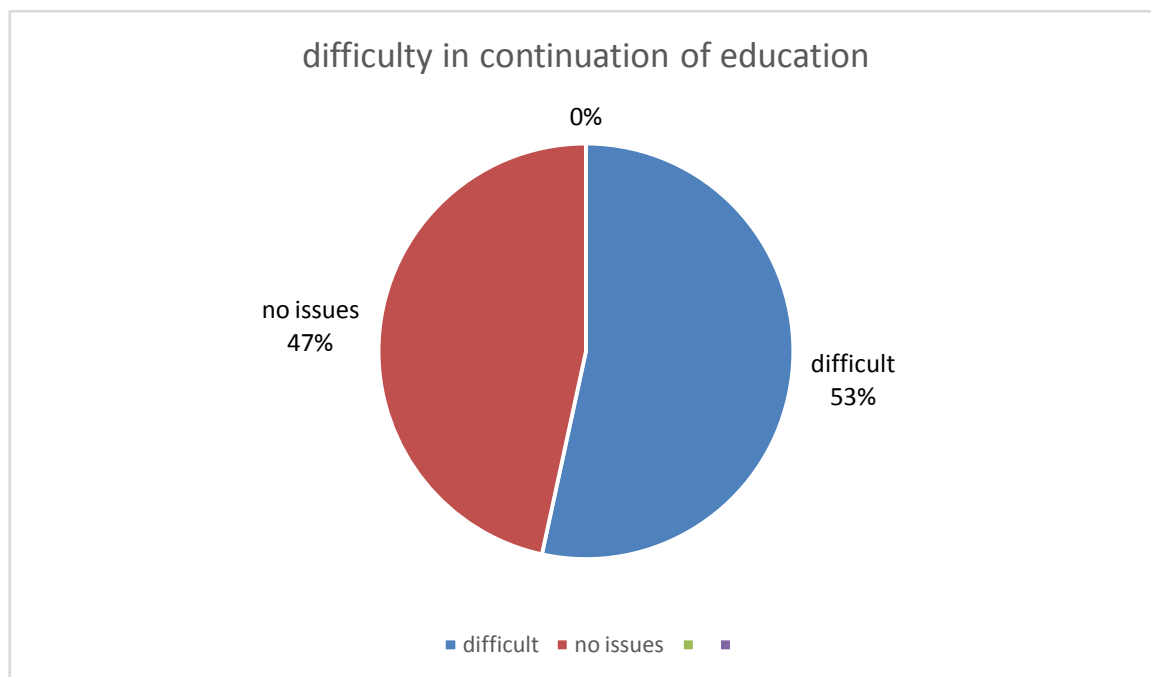
Detailed list of immigrant laborers children enrolled in various schools in Kerala was collected and district wise details of children were tabulated.

<u>Sr No</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Total number of students class 1 to 12</u>
1	Trivandrum	1067
2	Kollam	550
3	Pathanamthitta	192
4	Alappuzha	315
5	Kottayam	224
6	Idukki	749
7	Ernakulam	4679
8	Thrissur	935
9	Palakkad	475
10	Malappuram	421
11	Kozhikode	827
12	Wayanad	65
13	Kannur	785
14	Kasaragod	449
	Total	11733

From the consolidated district wise data of immigrant laborers children, 11733 children are enrolled at various schools under general education in Kerala. The highest number of children are enrolled under Ernakulam district (4679) and lowest number of enrolment is at Wayanadu (65).



As per the survey, 50% of the immigrant parents think that English will be the most appropriate instructional language for their children. 13% of the immigrants intend to have Hindi as their instructional language. 26% of immigrant parents believe that Malayalam is the most suitable instructional language. 3% intend to have Tamil and 8% intend to have their native language as a medium of instruction.



53% of immigrant parents face difficulties in the continuation of their child's education when they are taught in Malayalam and Tamil. As per the opinion of parents, if they are not provided with education in a common language, they will have difficulties in the continuation of their child's education.

## 5. Findings & Suggestions

### 5.1. Findings

- 92% of immigrants from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are not facing any issues related to the medium of instruction in Kerala.
- 92% of immigrants from neighboring states of Kerala prefer the medium of instruction in Malayalam.
- 52.7% of the immigrant population are seasonal migrants who migrate to another state for job purposes.
- 80.4% of seasonal migrants are not enrolling their children in the state where they seasonally migrate.

- 53% immigrant parents faces difficulties in continuation of child's education when they are taught in Malayalam and Tamil.
- 92% of seasonal migrants intends to have a common medium of instruction suitable for their children that could assure continuation of their child's education even after further migration.
- 50% of the immigrant parents demands English, 13% of the immigrants demands Hindi, 3% demands Tamil and 8% intends to have their native language as medium of instruction.

## 5.2 Suggestions

- Case of seasonal migrants could be treated with much more larger vision. Their children's enrolment and smooth transition in school will be possible only if they are provided instruction in national or global link language.

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## 6. Conclusion

Interventions for migrant are truly a milestone in the field of Kerala's school education education. In the present study, the researcher analyzed opinions of immigrant parents about the school education in Kerala, views and aspirations of the immigrants' parents about their children's school education, statistics of immigrant children and proportions. Analysis, inferences, suggestions and findings are included in this research report.

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