Transition of college students from small cities to metropolitan cities

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Abstract- A good education institution is that in which every student is welcomed and cared for; a safe and stimulating learning environment exists; a wide range of learning experiences is offered; and good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. According to the 2011 census, the average literacy rate in India stands at 74.04%. While Kerala is claiming the literacy rate of 93.91% in India, Bihar, with its low rate, has merely 63.82%. Arunachal Pradesh is not doing much better with a rating of 67.0%, nor is Rajasthan (67.1%), Jharkhand (67.6%), or even Andhra Pradesh at 67.7%. There is such a huge reason as to why students migrate into metropolitan towns where they find relatively better institutions for education as well as job facilities. The 2011 census report shows that migrants from other states in Delhi and Mumbai numbered 9.9 million. People also called Delhi and Mumbai as Migrant Magnets as there are good institutions and companies which can provide better employment opportunities due to which many people migrates. This paper shows the fact that students from small cities go to metropolitan city colleges and how they become addictive to smoking, alcohol taking, and clubbing. All these habits turn out to be addictions as a result of which they do not focus on their academics and it badly impacts their life. This paper addresses the experience of the students, societal impact, and provides some recommendations that should be implemented by the educational institutions and to parents.

Keywords- Educational migration, Student behavioural changes, Metropolitan education , Substance addiction, Societal &Academic impact.

I. Introduction

In a country which is still struggling with the problem of illiteracy, students are moving from rural to urban areas. This movement from small cities to metropolitan cities is a big stepping stone in many college-going students' lives. Since cities are more developed than rural areas, students here get better career opportunities and options for getting jobs. It is increased by 2007 and had a great rise in educational migrants from 3 million to 8 million during the 2011 census. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are behind the maximum number of migrants as 20.9 million people migrated outside the state from the two states. The combined population of Delhi and Mumbai accounts for 9.9 million, nearly one-third, of other migrants who came from states to both cities. Inter-state migrants have increased by 55% between the 1991 and 2001 Census. It decreased to 33% between the 2001 and 2011 Census because, this time, migration in the state has increased from smaller districts. Don't you feel that while migrating for better education and job, such students are also facing some risks? How are these young migrants

managing their academic responsibilities and long-term objectives against the attraction of metropolitan bars and clubs, with its gatherings, drink, and other distractions?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The period during which college students move from rural to metropolitan areas can be remarkable, bringing both opportunities and challenges for a person. This transitional period can affect one's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. This literature review aims to overview previous works on the impact of college students' transition from rural to metropolitan areas.

A few of these studies have analyzed the issues that arise as a result of this transition phase. As the students leave the small city to take admission in metropolitan cities, it is not just leaving from the close relations but all the social networking and support system previously built (Rokach, 1989). Oswald and Clark estimated as much as 41 percent of school friendships drift themselves further during the first semester of university life. According to Maunder, Cunliffe, Galvin, Mjali, and Rogers (2013), students face new challenges in the process of transitioning to university since they need to form a new peer group, a social positioning that is of importance for how they find their identity in a novel context. With these kinds of challenges, they must also undergo academic challenges and extra-curricular activities. It gets really messy for the students to handle all things at the same time. This can adversely affect their emotional well-being due to which they can get the habit of bad things such as taking alcohols, drinking, smoking or going to clubs for night parties. These challenges can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues (Gallagher & Smith, 2013). As reported in (WHO's 2024 report and National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2023), substance use among young adults is critically high, at 49.6% (16.9 million) of 18-25 year olds reporting alcohol use, while e-cigarette use has surpassed traditional cigarettes among younger teens with 32% among 15-year-olds, both college students and non-college students having similar patterns of substance use.

In the big cities, girls equalize or outstrip boys in substance use by 15 years of age. The widely used substances among them include mainly cigarette smoking, e-cigarettes, and alcohol consumption. In general, literature depicts a huge gap in covering confluence of substance use patterns and geographic shifts from small to metropolitan areas. Students coming from small towns face challenges as they grow into another whole list of academic pressure but an entirely different pace of life, culture, and social environment.

This abrupt change by the student can be a heavy burden on the students themselves; hence, sometimes students take alcohol or smoke, or even any other substance to either relieve stress or to get well adjusted in the new environment. However, there is still the need to study more on the long term impacts of the substance use patterns which develop during this transition phase and the protective measures available for the students to uphold healthy behaviors despite the change in environment.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach used in research in this article is Doctrinal research that is Qualitative in Nature. This is an approach where complete analysis of the secondary sources such as articles, journals, research papers, and newspapers is taken. These resources have provided the researcher a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of college students migrating from rural to urban areas for educational purposes or job opportunities, in addition to the impact that social media has on the lives of these students. The focus of the paper will be to look at such patterns in students' rural-to-urban migration as the influence of social media over their expectations and the nature of their experiences can best be understood by referring to the impact of cities over their academic performance as well as personal development.

Challenges and impact

- **Academic Challenges** – The students who come to metropolitan cities from small cities face problems due to loneliness, an overwhelmed environment, and distractions; with living alone in such cities where the culture is the society is different which raises challenges for the student leading to feelings of loneliness as well as being overloaded in the nature of their lives in the urban cities. The environment full of distractions that includes night life, parties, smoking and new peer groups distract students due to which some students make it a habit such as partying, smoking or drinking directly impacting their academic performance through missed classes and incomplete assignments.

- **Social and Cultural changes –** Students movement from small cities to metropolitan cities face significant challenges in adjusting with the social and cultural life of that city. The first major challenge they face is the diverse culture & social norms, different communication styles and even different regional dialects which leads to difficulty in understanding and coping with it. This adjustment period is further complicated by the peer pressure, which manifests in different forms – from the pressure to adopt the culture and their lifestyles, participate in expensive social activities, clubbing, drinking etc., many students are not able to say no as they want to fit in their new social environment which sometimes lead to financial strain or the adoption of the habits that may conflict with their personal values. Perhaps the most significant adjustment comes from the sudden freedom from parental supervision. While this independence offers opportunities for personal growth and decision making, manage their time, finances and daily routines. But for some students this freedom can also lead to struggle with negative coping mechanisms like social withdrawal or excessive partying which impacts students social integration and academic performance.

- **Lifestyle Changes –** Changes in lifestyle from small cities to metropolitan areas are very significant for college students, changing their daily routine and social behavior. As soon as the student enters the college, he or she is exposed to a different cultural landscape, diverse social circles, and personal freedom. This exposure to metropolitan culture often leads to significant behavioural adaptations as the student goes through new social norms and urban lifestyles. This transition phase, on the other hand, may also create for a student unhealthy habit.

Accessibility of clubs and bars together with peer pressure to mix well with the social lifestyle of the city might propel a few students into smoking and drinking. The culture of clubbing is highly promoted in metro cities and leads to exposing students to parties in nights and other entertainment which they would most likely have never encountered at their homes. These new social activities, which are oriented towards networking and entertainment purposes, may in fact disrupt the students' daily life, messing up their sleep schedules, studies, and time management.

IV. SOCIETAL IMPACT

The transition of students from small cities to metropolitan areas brings a significant societal dimension, fundamentally change in family relationships, cultural values and community perspectives.

Relationships with family undergo with substantial changes as adapting the urban life by the students, lead to a gradual shift in traditional family bonds. Parents feel more isolated since they start adopting an independent lifestyle and urban culture while sometimes creating a generation gap. When students go far from their home their cultures changes according to that city. Their lifestyles changes, traditional family bonds undergo substantial transformation, with face-to-face interactions being replaced by digital communication through calls and video chats. This change is often followed by a transformation in parent-child relationships. The integration of metropolitan social norms introduces new perspectives and behaviours that modernize traditional social structures, though this can create tension between urban and traditional values. Dating and romantic relationships undergo substantial changes, with increased opportunities for diverse partnerships and intercultural relationships, which challenges the traditional practices and customs of the family of the marriage.

Findings

- According to 2011 census the number of educational migrants has been increased.
- Mainly the migrants are from the states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and even the migrants within the state has increased much than the different states. According to 2011 census Bihar is the most illiterate states in India.
- The new environment and diverse culture of the city is full of distractions including late night parties, smoking, having alcohols under the influence of new peer groups.
- According to WHO's report and the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2023), substance like alcohols and E-cigarette are commonly used among the students.
- This is mainly due to feeling of loneliness, influenced by peer groups, or break- up of relationships.
- This also harms the students' academic performance, disconnection with the families and siblings and change in one's tradition.

Recommendations
- On the basis of the research the recommendations are the following:

- Parents should be made a part of the academic pursuit of their children even though they are in college. For that every institution should have a meeting for the parents of the child and professors at least twice in a year so that they can discuss the performance of students, attendance, and the overall development. This systematic approach makes parents in contact with the educational life of the child while making intervention at the right time possible in case of requirement.

- There should be establishment of mental health support in educational institutions which is crucial for students mainly first years students who are coming from different states or different districts. Counselling sessions for the students should be made mandatory.

- There should be frequent mental health check- ups and stress management workshops across the entire academic year. Involving mental health check- ups in the college curriculum normalizes the concept of mental health for students and gives them essential life skills for managing their psychological well-being as they adjust to the city.

- A balanced approach involving both parents and institutions is crucial. Parents should implement structured financial controls through monthly allowances and maintain regular communication through scheduled video calls. Educational institutions need to strengthen their monitoring mechanisms through mandatory attendance systems, structured study hours, and regular progress reporting to parents. Key control measures should include strict hostel timing enforcement, supervised activities, and regular counselling sessions.

- There should be the establishment of strict age ban policy by the government to exclude people below the age of 24 years from purchasing or utilizing alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other controlled substances. The age bar must be implemented stringently through a tough ID check on any selling point: shops, clubs, bars, and entertainment corners. Also, night clubs and discos should make the verification of age an efficient one; hence, no one with his age less than 24 years must be allowed entry. If somebody violates the above rules, the punishment shall be severe to both individuals and those who are allowing to do so that the penalty amount in case of an individual or a business licence must be quite heavy and even law complications in few cases should be there.

- Implementation should include regular police surveillance, surprise checks at entertainment venues, and collaboration with educational institutions to monitor student behavior.

Psychological impact:
- the psychological separation might be challenging for the individuals especially for Indian individuals, as most of the Indians live in a joint family and the sole existence of the joint/extended families are based on the emotional bonding and psychological dependencies on each other.

- individuals who have been raised in joint families, they have the tendency to be more emotionally available and have strong attachment towards parents/guardians.

- Separation from the family for the purpose of education/academics is psychologically challenging for the individuals.

- Emotional challenges: homesickness and anxiety are the predominant feelings on moving out, homesickness is the grief which is faced by the individual on moving out, during this homesick phase it was observed the individuals often remember

the tiny moments they spent with their families like watching movies together, dinner etc. homesickness can cause various physical discomforts as well for example- stomach aches, insomnia, headaches etc.

- These emotional challenges are faced by individuals due to various factors such as uncertainty, new routine, academic pressure, responsibility for self-care budgeting, chores etc these add strain on the mental health causing several physical discomforts.

- Independence and identity creation: moving away from home leads to the identity growth, as a children we are known by our parents, guardians or our family name, but in college/university its different we have to create our own name and foster our way towards identity development, not only that living away from home creates a sense of self dependency and this sense of self dependency teaches us numerous life skills such as, budgeting, cooking , and managing daily life activities. This phase of time is also one of the identity exploration periods, although this also creates a inner conflict which is maintaining the family/cultural values and balancing with the new found freedom.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper is an exploration of the significant challenges and potential risks which students face when they switch from small cities to the metropolitan cities for educational and career opportunities. The three major challenges identified by this research are academic challenges, social and cultural changes, and lifestyle adaptation. In such education migration, an all-inclusive approach towards assisting students during this delicate period of transition is called for. Further research should be done to investigate further the long-term consequences of such substance use patterns formed during transition periods and establish protective measures for students. Addressing the challenges faced by students migrating to metropolitan areas is crucial for ensuring their academic success and overall well-being.

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