

# Education of labour migrants as political integration trend in Russia

## La educación de los trabajadores migrantes como tendencia de integración política en Rusia

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Received: 10/06/2018 • Approved: 25/09/2018 • Published 28/12/2018

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#### ABSTRACT:

The subject of the research is the education and migration policy of Russia. The purpose of the paper is to analyse adaptation of foreign citizens having arrived in the country. In the methodological aspect, systemic, institutional, and comparative approaches were used. The methods of the research: comparative analysis, structural and functional analysis, sociological analysis, observation, participant observation, extrapolation. Integration problems were outlined, namely in the field of education of labour migrants. Political directions with regard to the right to receive education by labour migrants and their children were determined. The legislation framework, which determines directions of the state education policy with respect to migrants, was analysed. The results of the research are relevant when making political decisions while formulating new recommendations on observing legal norms of labour migrants and their children in receiving education in the Russian Federation. Development of new points of growth in Russia is impossible without strengthening the mechanisms of education and adaptation of labour migrants to its economic potential and providing the civil peace and harmony.

**Keywords:** Russia, migration, migration policy, education policy, education of migrants, integration of migrants.

#### RESUMEN:

El tema de la investigación es la política de educación y migración de Rusia. El propósito del documento es analizar la adaptación de los ciudadanos extranjeros que han llegado al país. En el aspecto metodológico, se utilizaron enfoques sistémicos, institucionales y comparativos. Los métodos de investigación: análisis comparativo, análisis estructural y funcional, análisis sociológico, observación, observación participante, extrapolación. Se describieron los problemas de integración, principalmente en el campo de la educación de los trabajadores migrantes. Se determinaron las orientaciones políticas con respecto al derecho a recibir educación de los trabajadores migrantes y sus hijos. Se analizó el marco legislativo, que determina las direcciones de la política educativa del estado con respecto a los migrantes. Los resultados de la investigación son relevantes al tomar decisiones políticas al formular nuevas recomendaciones sobre la observación de las normas legales de los trabajadores migrantes y sus hijos para recibir educación en la Federación Rusa. El desarrollo de nuevos puntos de crecimiento en Rusia es imposible sin fortalecer los mecanismos de educación y adaptación de los migrantes laborales a su potencial económico y proporcionar paz civil y armonía.

**Palabras clave:** Rusia, migración, política migratoria, política educativa, educación de migrantes, integración de migrantes.

# 1. Introduction

Russia ranks as one of the leading countries by the number of migrants. On the basis of the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, in modern conditions there is a growing number of entrants from the CIS as compared to the previous years. From January to August 2016, 9 513796 foreign citizens arrived and were registered as migrants on the Russian territory, but for the same period in 2017 the number of incomers amounted to 10 510230 (the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2017). General results of international migration throughout the Russian Federation show that from 2016 to 2017, the migration gain is making evident progress; there is a sufficient difference between the results of annual statistical data.

Therefore, in connection with mass migration processes in Russia, the problem of development of integration conditions in the field of education is actualized for entrants arriving upon the territory of the country. The dynamics of development of economic and political processes on the post-Soviet territory demand that migration and education policies should realise jointly such directions that would assist migrants in becoming mobile, integrated in the society of a host country.

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## 2. Methods

The following categories of political science were used in the paper: migration, migration policy, education policy, migrants' education, migrants' integration. The used scientific concepts do not contradict the system of principles, methods and ways of theoretical cognition, emphasise the principles of practical comprehension of the object of political science, reflect important regularities of formation of modern research approaches (systemic, institutional and comparative approaches) and their peculiarities, demonstrate the arrangement of practical leverage and correlation of theoretical and applied aspects of political activity. The applied categories reinforce the suggested author's argumentation. The methods used in the course of the research are adequate. Among them, it is possible to name: comparative analysis, structural and functional analysis, sociological analysis, observation, participant observation, extrapolation. The used methods and approaches helped to achieve the stated purpose and to solve a set of stated tasks. The theoretical basis of the research is represented by complex instruments of scientific concepts, related to comprehension of specifics of education and migration policies.

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## 3. Results

Let us present the causes of barriers to development of educational conditions that are favourable for labour migrants and their children.

In the 90s of the 20th century, the USSR desintegration caused the raise of the nationalism in the Central Asian states (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, etc.), and the study of the Russian language in the educational institutions was discontinued. This is the reason why the labour migrants arriving to Russia are unable to communicate in Russian. At that, they demonstrate the lack of stimuli for integration in the Russian society. First, some of them do not consider Russia as a country of constant residence and wish to return to their homeland. Second, in the majority of Russian cities, which are the centres of attraction of migration flows, over the recent time period, development of ethnic public organisations facilitating adaptation and satisfaction of essential needs of arriving foreign citizens is of tremendous significance. Third, at the initial stage, quite a number of migrants arriving from former countries of the Soviet Union enjoy the support of relatives, acquaintances, countrymen, so-called "migration networks", where they communicate only in their native language, which in its turn diminish their need in studying the Russian language.

In 2011, it was noted that 29% out of 9,1 mln migrants in Russia do not know the Russian language (Agency of Political News, 2011). After introducing a compulsory Russian language examination for labour migrants on the 1st of January 2013 in the Russian Federation, "30 thousand people out of approximately 200 thousand migrants, reckoned among official

workers in housing and communal services and trading, have passed the Russian language test" (Kozlov V., 2014).

In 2017, 53% of migrants from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan use Russian for communication at work as a main language, 8-11% - at home, 12-13% - when communicating with friends (Petrova N., 2017).

There is language illiteracy of migrants not only in relation to the Russian language, but also at the level of knowledge of the written native language. In the opinion of Karomat Sharipov, the chairman of the All-Russian public movement "Tadzhikskie trudovye migranty" ("Tajik Labour Migrants"), ninety Tajik citizens out of a hundred cannot write in their native language (Erastova Z., 2014). In 2013, it was noted that each eighth migrant from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan had not finished school, but 63% of incomers arrived in the Russian territory had elementary and secondary education (Guest Worker's Portrait, 2013). In 2016, 61% of arriving young men and women from the countryside of Central-Asian states did not have even general secondary education (Zhivov A., 2016).

Consequently, there is typicality in the low level of education, language illiteracy of migrants, which is a spontaneous socio-cultural barrier, isolation from the Russian socium, creation of ethnic groupings and, as a consequence, a reason of outbreak of interethnic conflicts.

Besides, there is an obstacle in receiving primary or secondary education by the majority of migrants' children because of:

- illegal residence of their parents on the territory of Russia, which in accordance with the Russian legislation does not allow children to receive educational services;
- the fact that entrance of migrants' children to Russian institutions of secondary special and higher education does not provide social benefits at the expense of federal and regional budgetary funds;
- the fact that tuition fees in all educational institutions are sufficiently high;
- interethnic conflict situations arising during coeducation of migrants' children and Russian children;
- the fact that in connection with the change in the Federal Law "On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens on the Territory of the Russian Federation", since January 1, 2014, foreign citizens are allowed to stay temporary on the Russian territory during 90 days, which does not enable them and their children to preserve durably the legal status of migrants (Federal Law "On the Legal Status...", 2002);
- the fact that uncertainty of the status of labour migrants forces their children to change frequently educational institutions.

The instruments of resolution of problems of establishing favourable educational conditions for labour migrants and their children are the legislative basis in the education field, state migration and education policies, realisation of their directions in this matter with consistent interaction at federal, regional and municipal levels.

Thus, the right of migrants and their children to education is vested at the level of international and Russian legislation.

In accordance with the International Convention on protection of the rights of all workers-migrants and members of their families, "in the state, where family members of workers-migrants are employed, they use the same regime as the citizens of this state do in relation to: access to educational institutions and services in accordance with entrance requirements and other rules that are in force with respect to corresponding institutions and services; access to institutions and establishments of professional orientation and training provided that the requirements concerning participation are met" (International Convention, 1990).

One of the principles of the education policy according to the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" is "ensuring the right of each person to education, inadmissibility of discrimination in education" (Article 3). In the same law in Article 5, the right of each person to education is guaranteed "independently of race, nationality, language, origin, property, social and official capacity status, place of residence, relation to religion, convictions, affiliation with public associations, as well as other circumstances" (Federal Law "On Education", 2012). That is, the right to education was proclaimed, guaranteed in the law quite firmly in several subsections of the articles only without clear indication of the subject

of this right. Hence, such ambiguity in description of the holder of right implies lawful consideration of labour migrants and their children as people having full right to receive Russian education.

Another adopted official document "Concepts of State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2025" confirms the rights of migrants and their children to education in the following principles: "ensuring rights and freedoms of a human being and a citizen; inadmissibility of any forms of discrimination; observation of norms of the national and international right; harmonization of interests of a personality, society and a state" (RF Concept, 2012). These proclaimed principles show relevance of the state migration policy to the education policy.

Undoubtedly, the predetermined lines of the state migration policy extend the rights of labour migrants and their children with respect to accessibility of education and are divided by the territorial criterion, namely realised in:

- the host country: "simplification of entrance and liberalization for implementation of labour activity and education of family members of expatriate employees, concluded long-term labour contracts; enabling foreign citizens to pursue the acquired profession in the Russian Federation immediately after graduating from Russian educational institutions of higher and secondary vocational education; providing access of foreign citizens and their family members to social, medical and educational services depending on their legal status" (RF Concept, 2012);
- homelands: "establishing centres of preuniversity training, studying the Russian language in educational institutions of primary vocational education in countries with the most intensive migration flows; arranging conditions for adaptation and integration of migrants including teaching them the Russian language, legal education, informing about cultural traditions and behaviour standards by forming a corresponding infrastructure in the countries of their birth and in the regions of the Russian Federation experiencing the greatest influx of migrants, as well as using actively the potential of mass media and capabilities of cultural and adaptation centres in the countries of migrants' birth; assistance in promotion of the Russian language and culture abroad" (RF Concept, 2012).

Thus, by means of education not only in the Russian Federation, but also in the homelands of labour migrants, the above-mentioned lines of the migration policy must facilitate integration, social protection of arriving foreign citizens. Such preventive nature with effective activity of certain state structures, public organisations must create the conditions of lowering different barriers in accessibility of education for labour migrants and their children.

Creation of optimal conditions for accessibility of education is a significant direction in extending rights of labour migrants and their children to receiving education.

Article 4 of the Federal Law "On Education" "Legal Regulation of Relationships in Education" allows understanding education accessibility for labour migrants as "creation of conditions for receiving education in the Russian Federation by foreign citizens and stateless persons" (Federal Law "On Education", 2012). However, in the context of modern migration processes, the generalised character of such understanding does not emphasize clearly the relevant aspects of the national education policy; in this connection, concretization of the problem of education accessibility for migrants and their families and importance of specifying the content of educational conditions for them are actualized.

As a result, let us establish the fact that in the education policy of the Russian Federation, the conditions of education accessibility, realisation of directions for ethnic sociocultural development of migrants and their children are not entirely concretized. In general, the education policy is aimed at formation, development, improvement of conditions for ethnic and sociocultural nurturing of Russian citizens; at that, ethnic, national and educational interests of migrants' children have not been taken into account.

The reasons for such situation is nonfixedness of educational problems of workers-migrants and their families.

In modern developed countries of the world, continuous education plays a decisive role in the education policy of these states independently of the student body. Therefore, in Russian conditions, foreign experience may allow extending integration conditions by means of

accessibility of continuous education to incomers, namely extending their rights to receiving educational services under unresolved migration problems.

In the state programme of the Russian Federation, "Education Development" for 2013-2020, the direction of the first task is noted as "formation of a flexible, accountable to the society system of continuous education, developing human potential, providing current and prospect needs of socio-economic development of the Russian Federation" (State programme "Education Development", 2012). It is important to refer the content of this task to the continuous development of educational, cultural potential of labour migrants as well as to promote state interests in economy, policy, it is necessary to continue to support and to develop their cognitive level, and not to stop at the level of eliminating language, legal, historical illiteracy.

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## **4. Discussion**

Let us consider the problems and contradictions of realising the directions of the education policy in relation to labour migrants.

Partially, the right to receive education and accessibility of education to labour migrants is vested in the legislative documents; however, in the society, there is some tension, cautious attitude towards them, which sometimes is manifested through national intolerance and exacerbates the problems of human adaptation in the foreign culture.

From the viewpoint of S.A. Dudko, one of the basic contradictions is, on the one hand, explicit statement of the problem of multicultural and tolerant nurturing, on the other hand – a low level of realisation of assigned educative tasks concerning this problem by state and public organisations, educational institutions (Dudko S.A., 2010). At the regional and municipal Russian levels, in comprehensive institutions, there is unpreparedness in arranging adaptation, integration of children-migrants. This can be related to the ambiguity of the federal legislation. Thus, for example, the school teaching staff is obliged to meet, to observe corresponding indicators, concerning schoolchildren progress; the size of the salary depends on the results of schoolchildren's study. Therefore, teachers refuse intentionally to enroll migrants' children in their classes, believing that the latter will do badly at school and will impair the class progress. In a sufficient number of schools, "migrant" classes were formed, where children of different nationalities are taught together and are grouped on the basis of national identity because of the poor language knowledge of classmates. Such form of teaching is ineffective; in the medium term, it leads to formation, development of conflict, disintegrative attitudes in the environment of migrants' children. Certainly, these children are potential citizens of the Russian Federation; therefore, the degree of their adaptation, integration at the stage of the primary, secondary level of education influences the following: whether in future they will be able to assist in integration of their relatives into the Russian society.

An important function in formation of the positive attitude of labour migrants towards the host country belongs to the state education policy as a means of their integration into the multinational Russian society. The state policy must promote the performance of a "counter-task": forming, supporting tolerance of Russian citizens, raising their cultural level, reducing and preventing xenophobic sentiments. Therefore, holding cross-cultural events in educational institutions of the Russian Federation is considered as necessary: contests, festivals of national music, cuisine, religious studies, basics of tolerance, etc. Among migrants' children, the experts consider such measure as the most useful, effective; however, there are certain difficulties when applying it to adult labour migrants.

Realisation of directions of modern state migration and education policy is revealed in the proposition of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, made to the organisations of the Department of Education and Science for sociocultural integration of migrants' children, teaching them the Russian language, concerning establishment and expanding the network of special educational institutions. In different entities of the Russian Federation, such organisations are already existing and functioning successfully, but they are few in number and there is insufficient information about their activity.

It is necessary to note that the compulsory examination for labour migrants, aimed at testing the knowledge of basics of the Russian history, legislation, language, has been introduced since January 1, 2015; at that, highly qualified specialists are freed from such tests. Nevertheless, this positive procedure has some obvious threats. For example, the fee for receiving the work certificate, acquisition of citizenship may seem high to incomers; the mechanism of passing examination can provoke migrants in future to go into shadow, as well as cause corruption growth because of emergence of criminal groups specializing in certificate sales, etc.

At the present time, a draft law "On Social and Cultural Adaptation and Integration of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation", which includes providing the access of labour migrants and members of their families to educational services taking into account their legal status, is considered. This draft law considers social and cultural adaptation, integration of foreign citizens as a multilateral process, namely not only as acquisition of the Russian language, cultural and legal norms of the Russian society by the incomers at a certain level, but also as rendering complex assistance on the part of authorities.

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## 5. Conclusion

For the optimal interaction of migration and education policies, it is necessary to:

- create conditions for establishing the educational environment at regulatory, administrative, design and special, information levels for reception of migrants and their families, where education acts as the most important indicator which promotes nonconflict coexistence of labour migrants and a host society;
- take into account political managerial risks when regulating processes of social mobility;
- develop joint project activity of host countries and homelands of labour force for establishing educational, cultural centres, which would facilitate the rise of cultural and educational levels of labour migrants and their family members.

Thus, the active and significant characteristics of a modern state are not only migration and education policy, but also the right of migrants and their children to education, formation of rights' extension concerning creation of optimal conditions for education accessibility, creation of favourable conditions for accessibility of qualitative continuous education. In their aggregate, such characteristic features of even formal nature allow determining them as a political integration trend at the modern stage. In reality, complex realisation of these political integration directions in the education field may create conditions for achieving transnational harmony and be useful for labour migrants and their children.

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Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015  
Vol. 39 (Nº 52) Year 2018

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