

# Lost Childhood

## Voices of Out of School Children

A study of 15-18 year old boys and girls in Telangana

June 2016



# Acknowledgements

The study 'Justice for Out of School Children - A study of 15-18 year olds in Telangana' has provided insights into the life of children in the 15 to 18 year age group who are in the workforce in a full time or part time basis in the State of Telangana. These children are grappling with challenges of loss of livelihood, hunger and face a hopeless future and have not benefitted from any of the state policies and programmes. It shows clearly that they confront an unfair reality in search of dignity. In spite of this they have not given up on their battle for survival and are seeking justice every day of their lives.

We owe this study to the children who gave us their valuable time and answered with patience a questionnaire that took 3 hours to administer. We also would like to place on record our appreciation for the entire field research team of MVF headed by J. Bhaskar who meticulously followed the protocols for selection of the districts, mandals, villages and children and took the trouble to contact them in some of the remotest of areas in Telangana.

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M. R. Vikram  
Secretary-Trustee  
MV Foundation

# Preface

The fifteen to eighteen year age in a person's life – be it male or female – is a very crucial stage. Children metamorphose into adults during this period. They try to become independent of parents and elders in the family in taking decisions and making choices. Some of them try to imitate adults by acquiring such habits as smoking and drinking and associating themselves with adults. Parents and society in general are concerned about this transition stage and therefore place many restrictions on both girls and boys in this age group. The result is that many girls drop out of school and confine themselves to their homes helping their parents. Boys, on the other hand, seek some financial autonomy and therefore drop out of school in search of employment. This is the conventional wisdom for explaining the high rate of school dropouts at the secondary education level.

MVF has been aware of the high dropout rate among the girls and boys in the 15-18 years age group. After consulting several others it has been decided to draw up a program of action to mitigate and eliminate this program. As a preliminary, a detailed survey has been carried out in Telangana State over a sample of adolescents who have continued their education against all odds and those who dropped out, not able to overcome the obstacles to their education. The present report gives details of this survey. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that there are programs and policies to provide immunization and nutritious food for new born babies up to 3 years. Then there is the anganwadi program to take care of children in the 3-5 years of age group and the Right to Education Act to provide free and compulsory education up to 14 years. There are policies to improve employability and employment for the youth in the 18-35 years age group. For some reason the 15-18 years children have received scant attention from both NGO's and Government.

It is hoped that we will be able to devise a suitable program based on this survey and find the necessary funds to carry out the programme. As we go along, we may have to fine tune some of our conclusions. We shall be open to such changes. In conclusion I would like to associate myself with the acknowledgement of help received by us.

Dr. M. Krishanmurthi  
Chairman and Managing Trustee





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## Chapter 1

# Status of Children in 15 to 18 years age group

## 1. Introduction

The 15-19 year olds constitute 10% of India's population at 120.5 million persons. In the state of Telangana it is 3.4 million persons and 9.8% of total population.<sup>1</sup>

Only 60 percent adolescent children in the state of Telangana are enrolled in education institutions. This figure includes first generation learners from scheduled castes and scheduled tribe communities and also girls who persist in continuing with their education in spite of adverse family circumstances and a social milieu hostile to their continuance of education. The remaining 40 percent are mostly marginalized children who have fallen through the cracks as there are just not enough government schools at the junior (classes 9 and 10) and senior secondary levels (classes 11 and 12) for them to access. Even if such schools are available, infrastructure facilities and school teachers are woefully inadequate. The atmosphere in schools is found wanting to encourage them continue with their education and support them overcome the lack of environment at home to study. The education system is unable to reach out to them and retain them in schools.

Once out of school, they are forced to being part of unskilled casual laborers at a low end of economy. Even as they grow up, such children struggle to find employment that is steady and are faced with the difficult reality of everyday survival. They live precariously and aspire to get back to schools but lack the capacity to negotiate in an exploitative atmosphere. Lacking in measures for child protection, some of them are out of their families and on streets. They are vulnerable and a few of them get manipulated into illegal activities and in conflict with law. Girls who have dropped out of schools are confined to closed spaces, in their homes doing domestic chores, in home based non-wage work in the informal sector, and even wage work outside the house in farms or factories, always among older persons. They miss not having a peer group, being part of 'youth' or mobility as free willed individuals in markets, street corners or any public space. On the whole, all the children in this age group who are out of schools live with low self-esteem.

Such a large youth population in India on the one hand has been considered an advantage and a dominant view is that if only they were skilled they would contribute to productivity in industrial sector and foster overall growth of the country. This is often referred to as the youth force in India being a 'demographic dividend'.

On the other hand, there is a growing pressure from some sections of the society to consider children committing heinous crimes in 15-18 years age group to be tried and incarcerated as adults. This is especially so after the 'Nirbhaya Case'<sup>2</sup> where there was a demand to treat the juvenile who was involved in the rape of the victim to be tried as an adult and punish him

<sup>1</sup> The study focuses on children in the age group of 15-18 years. However, since the Census data in the country is for 15-19 years old reference to 15-19 is made. There are 120526449 persons in the country in the age group of 15-19 years among whom 63982396 persons are males and 56544053 persons are females. In Telangana there are 3421214 persons with 1765390 males and 1655824 females. Census 2011

<sup>2</sup> In the year 2012, a 23-year-old female physiotherapy intern 'Nirbhaya' succumbed to gang rape that resulted in a national outrage on safety and justice for women. It resulted in the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013. At the same time there was a massive public and media pressure to try the juvenile who was one of the accused in the case be as an adult. This was overruled by the Juvenile Justice Board as it went against the existing Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2006

through adult processes of jurisprudence. Indeed, subsequent acts of juveniles in a similar situation in the country have led to an outrage on the lenience of the justice system towards juveniles and there has been a cry for retributive justice in all such instances.

Throughout the discussion on the matter there is no cognizance of the rapid advances made in research on adolescent brain development of children as unique that propels acts of impulsiveness over rational considerations.<sup>3</sup> By lowering the age of the child to 16 years under these circumstances there is also a dilution of the commitment made by the Government of India's ratification of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Children wherein a child is defined as a person up to 18 years old. There has never been a debate on what the State's obligation is to prevent children from getting into criminality. There is no discussion on investment in their education, protection or development binding the State's commitment towards adolescent children and juveniles in need of care and protection.

There is a need to understand the youth population in the context of their life situations and as subjects in their own right taking into consideration their daily life experiences, fears and anxieties, hopes and aspirations. They are to be seen as a group with diversities in educational attainment, occupational patterns, community identities, and gender and so on. There is a need to go beyond an instrumentalist approach of regarding them as valuable assets or demographic dividend for the benefit of the economy and society or in isolating such children by condemning them as criminals and building a wider gap with those who are better endowed.

## 2. Education and Work Profile of 15-19 year olds

Although a child is defined as a person up to completion of 18 years of age, it is decided to use the age group of 15-19 as a basis in this section as the Census data is available under this age group.

At the All India level there has been a 5% increase in the total workforce in the age group of 15-19 years in the year 2011 when compared to 2001. However this increase is in the marginal workforce of 16% of whom 21.5% are male and 11.5% are female. There has been a decrease in the main male workforce by 4.2% and 25% decrease in female main workers in 2011 when compared to 2001.

In the Telangana there has been an overall 27% decrease in the total workforce in the age group of 15-19 years in the year 2011 when compared to 2001. This decrease is in the entire workforce, main and marginal in Telangana. There has been a decrease in the main male workforce by 32.5% and 28.5% decrease in female main workers in 2011 when compared to 2001 whereas in the marginal workforce there has been a decrease in 4.0% of male workforce and 27.4% of female workforce which is quite significant. On the whole there has been a substantial decrease in the workforce in Telangana when compared to All India figures from 2001 to 2011 (Table 2).

It is noticed that a greater percentage of girls in both main and marginal workers in the year 2011 have attended educational institutions in Telangana when compared to the male workers and

<sup>3</sup> See Dahl Ronald E., Adolescent Brain Development-Aperiod of Vulnerabilities and Opportunities'[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ronald\\_Dahl2/publication/8457353\\_Dahl\\_R.\\_E.\\_Adolescent\\_brain\\_development\\_a\\_period\\_of\\_vulnerabilities\\_and\\_opportunities\\_Keynote\\_address\\_Ann\\_NY\\_Acad\\_Sci\\_1021\\_1-22/links/0c960515db7da63dfa000000.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ronald_Dahl2/publication/8457353_Dahl_R._E._Adolescent_brain_development_a_period_of_vulnerabilities_and_opportunities_Keynote_address_Ann_NY_Acad_Sci_1021_1-22/links/0c960515db7da63dfa000000.pdf)

also the workforce at All-India level. Adolescent boys are in the labour market as wage earners on either long term or short term contracts or as daily wage earners, while girls continue in hidden and invisible work, most of which is non-wage work rendered for their families and unaccounted for.

**Table 2: Work Profile 15-19 years –All India and Telangana  
- Census 2001 and 2011**

| Year | All India Main Workers |         |          | All India Marginal Workers |         |          | All India Total Workforce |          |          |
|------|------------------------|---------|----------|----------------------------|---------|----------|---------------------------|----------|----------|
|      | Male                   | Female  | Total    | Male                       | Female  | Total    | Male                      | Female   | Total    |
| 2011 | 15098122               | 5448644 | 20546766 | 5821090                    | 5929351 | 11750441 | 20919212                  | 11377995 | 32297207 |
|      | -0.40%                 | -0.25%  | -0.36%   | 21.52%                     | 11.06%  | 16.01%   | 4.86%                     | 5.34%    | 5.03%    |
| 2001 | 15158617               | 5462328 | 20620945 | 4790099                    | 5339083 | 10129182 | 19948716                  | 10801411 | 30750127 |
| Year | Telangana Main Workers |         |          | Telangana Marginal Workers |         |          | Telangana Total Workforce |          |          |
|      | Male                   | Female  | Total    | Male                       | Female  | Total    | Male                      | Female   | Total    |
| 2011 | 365336                 | 299849  | 665185   | 116061                     | 120406  | 236467   | 481397                    | 420255   | 901652   |
|      | -32.51%                | -28.51% | -30.77%  | -3.99%                     | -27.43% | -17.55%  | -27.31%                   | -28.20%  | -27.73%  |
| 2001 | 541336                 | 419431  | 960767   | 120881                     | 165917  | 286798   | 662217                    | 585348   | 1247565  |

\*% Difference between 2001 and 2011

According to the Census 2011, 59.8% of the population in this age group in India is in educational institutions. Of those who are not studying in any educational institution, 29.5% attended school earlier whereas 10.6% never attended school. The situation of 15-19 year olds in the state of Telangana is better than the national average with 67.15% of them having attended educational institutions. Of the 32.8% who are not in any educational institution 24.2% attended school whereas 8.6% never attended any educational institution. The percentage of girls not attending schools is greater when compared to that of boys in the country as a whole and in Telangana as well (Table 2.1 and 2.2).

In India the percentage of children who are neither in the workforce nor attending any educational institution is 17.8%. They constitute 6.8% of male population and 24.5% of female population. (Table 2.1). The percentage of children who are neither in the workforce and not attending any educational institution in Telangana is 6.5% constituting 1.8% of male population and 11.4% of female population (Table 2.2). Thus there are a greater percentage of girls in India and in Telangana who are neither in school nor in workforce. In a way, girls' work is not counted for.

30.8% constitute male workforce, and 18.6% of female workforce of the population in 15-19 years in India. In Telangana, the male workforce constitutes 27.7% and the female workforce 25.4%. Therefore it can be concluded that there are more males in the workforce when compared to females. However, the data does not capture the work rendered by girls at home, within closed walls. As they do not get included as part of the workforce their hardship goes unseen, unnoticed and unrecognized. Thus, it is noted that there is an alarming percentage of girls in India and in Telangana in the 15-19 years age group who get invisibilised as their work is not accounted for at all.

**Table 2.1 : Population attending Educational Institutions by Age and Sex in India  
- Census 2011.**

**INDIA**

|   | 15-19 age group      |                      |                      |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|   | Male                 | Female               | Total                |
| <b>Total population</b>   | 63982396             | 56544053             | 120526449            |
| <b>Population attending educational institutions</b>                    | 39905930<br>(62.37%) | 32175831<br>(56.90%) | 72081761<br>(59.81%) |
| <b>Population not attending educational institutions Total (A+B)</b>    | 24076466<br>(37.63%) | 24368222<br>(43.10%) | 48444688<br>(40.19%) |
| <b>Attended Before (A)</b>  | 18623773<br>(29.11%) | 16997807<br>(30.06%) | 35621580<br>(29.55%) |
| <b>Never Attended (B)</b>   | 5452693<br>(8.52%)   | 7370415<br>(13.03%)  | 12823108<br>10.64%   |
| <b>Total Workforce (C+D)</b>  | 19697680<br>(30.79%) | 10518700<br>(18.60%) | 30216380<br>(25.07%) |
| <b>Main Worker ( C )</b>  | 12721891<br>(19.88%) | 4981419<br>(8.81%)   | 17703310<br>(14.69%) |
| <b>Marginal Worker (D)</b>  | 6975789<br>(10.90%)  | 5537281<br>(9.79%)   | 12513070<br>(10.38%) |
| <b>Population neither in school nor in labour force {(A+B) - (C+D)}</b> | 4378786<br>(6.84%)   | 13849522<br>(24.47%) | 18228308<br>(15.12%) |

It is found that there has been a jump of 5.2% among the literates in urban male main workers and 11.9% jump in urban female main workers in India in the age group of 15-19 years between Census 2001 and Census 2011. In Telangana there is a jump of 8.3% among the literates in urban male main workers and a remarkable 19.9% jump in urban female main workers Census 2011 and Census 2001 (Table 3.1). Thus the literacy gain among urban female main workers in Telangana is remarkable when compared to all India data.

There has been a greater jump among the literates in rural main workers in India when compared to the urban main workers. It is found that there has been a jump of 11.5% among the literates in rural male main workers and 18.3% jump in rural female main workers in India in the age group of 15-19 years between Census 2001 and Census 2011. On the other hand when compared to all India figures there is a jump of 34.4% among the literates in rural male main workers and 38.3% jump in literacy among rural female main workers in Telangana between Census 2001 and Census 2011 (Table 3.1) . On the whole there is an overall jump in literacy in both male and female rural main workers in India and in Telangana, when compared to urban main workers. At the same time Telangana's record of jump, especially among girls in this category is noteworthy.

**Table 2.2 : Population Attending Educational Institutions by Age and Sex in Telangana - Census 2011.**

**TELANGANA**

|   | 15-19 age group     |                     |                     |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|   | Male                | Female              | Total               |
| <b>Total population</b>   | 1765390             | 1655824             | 3421214             |
| <b>Population attending educational institutions</b>                    | 1252573<br>(70.95%) | 1044885<br>(63.10%) | 2297458<br>(67.15%) |
| <b>Population not attending educational institutions (A+B)</b>          | 512817<br>(29.05%)  | 610939<br>(36.90%)  | 1123756<br>(32.85%) |
| <b>Attended Before (A)</b>  | 392678<br>(22.24%)  | 435230<br>(26.28%)  | 827908<br>(24.20%)  |
| <b>Never Attended (B)</b>   | 120139<br>6.81%     | 175709<br>10.61%    | 295848<br>8.65%     |
| <b>Total Workforce (C+D)</b>  | 481397<br>(27.27%)  | 420255<br>(25.38%)  | 901652<br>(26.35%)  |
| <b>Main Worker ( C )</b>  | 365336<br>20.69%    | 299849<br>18.11%    | 665185<br>19.44%    |
| <b>Marginal Worker (D)</b>  | 116061<br>(6.57%)   | 120406<br>(7.27%)   | 236467<br>(6.91%)   |
| <b>Population neither in school nor in labour force {(A+B) - (C+D)}</b> | 31420<br>(1.77%)    | 190684<br>(11.49%)  | 222104<br>(6.49%)   |

Among the all India urban marginal workers in the 15-19 years age group it is found that there is a jump of 6.9% among the literates and 17.0% jump in urban female marginal workers between Census 2001 and Census 2011. On the other hand in Telangana when compared to all India figures there is a jump of 16.1% among the literates in urban male marginal workers and a remarkable 32.2% jump in urban female marginal workers in Telangana (Table 3.1).

It is found that there is a jump of 8.1% among the literates in rural male main workers and 16.6% jump in rural female marginal workers in India between Census 2001 and Census 2011. In Telangana there is a jump of 19.3% among the literates in rural male marginal workers and a remarkable 35.0% jump in rural female marginal workers in Telangana between Census 2011 and Census 2001 (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Literacy Rate among Urban and Rural Main and Marginal Workers- India and Telangana (15-19 years) : Comparison of Census 2001 and 2011**

|           | Year | Urban          |                 |                 |                  |                 |                 | Rural           |                  |                 |                  |                 |               |
|-----------|------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
|           |      | Main Workers   |                 |                 | Marginal Workers |                 |                 | Main Workers    |                  |                 | Marginal Workers |                 |               |
|           |      | Male           | Female          | Total           | Male             | Female          | Total           | Male            | Female           | Total           | Male             | Female          | Total         |
| India     | 2011 | 84.2<br>(+5.2) | 79.8<br>(+11.9) | 83.3<br>(+6.3)  | 83.7<br>(+6.9)   | 83.9<br>(+17.0) | 83.8<br>(+16.4) | 82<br>(+11.5)   | 69.3<br>(+18.8%) | 78.1<br>(+13.4) | 82<br>(+8.1)     | 67.9<br>(+16.6) | 76.8<br>(+11) |
|           | 2001 | 79             | 67.9            | 77              | 76.8             | 66.9            | 67.4            | 70.5            | 50.5             | 64.7            | 73.9             | 51.3            | 65.8          |
| Telangana | 2011 | 85.2<br>(+8.3) | 81.2<br>(+19.9) | 83.9<br>(+10.7) | 88.6<br>(+16.1)  | 85.6<br>(+32.2) | 87.3<br>(+20.0) | 83.5<br>(+18.3) | 72.7<br>(+34.4)  | 78.3<br>(+25.7) | 82.6<br>(+19.3)  | 69.5<br>(+35.0) | 76<br>(+28.5) |
|           | 2001 | 76.9           | 61.3            | 73.2            | 72.5             | 53.4            | 67.3            | 65.2            | 38.3             | 52.6            | 63.3             | 34.5            | 47.5          |

### Jump in Girls Literacy-Telangana

It is important to note the remarkable strides made in terms of literacy in the state of Telangana (which was at that time part of the State of Andhra Pradesh) among boys and girls, more so among girls during the decade of 2001 to 2011 in the age group of 15-19 years. Intensive enrolment drives, 'back to school' programs from 1996 onwards, setting up of Andhra Pradesh Residential Schools for Girls with focus on mainstreaming out of school girl children were some of the initiatives that propelled greater participation of children in schools. After 2004, there has been the scholarship program which was extended for girl children studying in private junior colleges. This incentivized setting up of several private colleges where the scholarship amounts went to the private education institutions was in lieu of admissions of girls into their colleges. They even scouted for deserving candidates in the villages and provided all the documentation support to procure scholarships. This has resulted in increase in enrolment of girls and by 2015 the number of girls studying at secondary school level were on par with the male students.

### 3. Policy Framework

This section gives a brief list of some of the national schemes and policies that address adolescent children and their rights. Under a scheme called Ujjwala, the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India funds NGOs to prevent sexual exploitation of adolescents. It is estimated that there are about 30 lakh women in the country who are engaged in prostitution, of which 40% are below the age of 18, but only 73 rehabilitation centers in 16 states of the country under this scheme. The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA) is implemented in 200 districts. It addresses the nutrition and health of girls age 11 – 18. It also encourages children below the age of 14 to go to school, while equipping older girls with 'vocational skills'.



Interventions that link financial incentives with raising the age of marriage such as Balika Samriddhi Yojana of the Government of India, conditional cash transfers, vouchers and scholarships which aim to enable girls to transition from primary to secondary and higher education are linked to girls' continuing their education without getting married. They assume that such incentives are enough to enable girls to assert themselves and access education without addressing the power structure and gender discrimination within the family, influence of caste and also economic exploitation.

The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) of the Ministry of Women and Child Development is being implemented in all the districts of the country. Its objectives are : 'to contribute to the improvements in the wellbeing of children in difficult circumstances, as well as to the reduction of vulnerabilities to situations and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children.'<sup>4</sup>

More recently, the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Human Resource Development have initiated programs that address out of school children for skill development. For example, the Ministry for Rural Development has the Aajeevika Skills to give young people from poor communities an opportunity to upgrade their skills and also envisage placement projects in partnership with public, private, non-government and/or community organizations.<sup>5</sup> 'Saksham / Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Boys' is aimed at all-round development of adolescent boys to make them self-reliant, gender-sensitive and aware citizens as they grow up to 'help address gender violence and channelize their energies for nation-building'. It covers all adolescent boys (both school-going and out of school) in the age-group of 11-18, subdivided into the categories of 11-14 and 14-18.<sup>6</sup> 'Parvaaz' is meant to mainstream the minority BPL youth of the country by empowering them with education, skills and employment.<sup>7</sup> It is difficult to gauge the reach and effectiveness of all these schemes.

NIIT Yuva Jyoti is a joint initiative of NIIT and NSDC (A Public Private Partnership initiative of Government of India), conceived with an objective of transforming over 7 million unskilled youth into readily employable professionals over the next 10 years. NIIT Yuva Jyoti aims to have a pan-India presence with a focus on skilling and up- skilling the semi-urban and rural youth of India.<sup>8</sup> Learn and Earn / Seekho aur Kamao, is a joint venture of NSDC and IL&FS, Ministry of Minority Affairs to upgrade skills of minority youth in various modern and traditional vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and market potential.<sup>9</sup>

The National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015 under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship aims to cover 24 lakh youth to link skills development to improved employability and productivity.<sup>10</sup> It provides vocational training to both youth and

<sup>4</sup> 1 See, Integrated Child Protection Scheme <http://www.childlineindia.org.in/cp-cr-downloads/icps.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://aajeevika.gov.in/content/faq>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.livelihoods.net.in/article/scheme-adolescent-boys>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ilfsskills.com/ProjectDetail.aspx?IID=10>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.niityuvajyoti.com/Index.aspx>, <http://www.esetsonline.com/2012/2012/06/25/niit-yuva-jyoti-limited-is-a-joint-initiative-of-niit-and-nsdc-a-ppp-initiative-of-government-of-india-niit-yuva-jyoti-limited-2/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ilfsskills.com/ProjectDetail.aspx?IID=11>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.skilldevelopment.gov.in/National-Policy-2015.html>, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship website



employees, integrating entrepreneurship education in the formal education system.<sup>11</sup> It provides for transitioning between vocational training system and formal education system through a credit transfer system. Under the 2016-17 Union Budget an outlay of Rs.1500 crore has been allocated for the schemes of which Rs.1300 crore has been allocated for the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana and Rs. 200 crore for other schemes of training and entrepreneurship.<sup>12</sup> All the schemes for skill development are new and yet to be evaluated.

There is also a policy on provisioning of life skills especially for adolescent children who are marginalized or at risk. These life skills are expected to “a) develop the autonomy and the sense of responsibility of people and communities; b) reinforce the capacity to deal with the transformations taking place in the economy, in culture and in society as a whole, and c) promote coexistence, tolerance and the informed and creative participation of citizens in their communities in short to enable people and communities to take control of their destiny and society in order to face the challenges ahead”.<sup>13</sup> In practice, they are to be implemented through all the programmes designed for adolescent children in lieu of formal education.

State investment in education and infrastructure for secondary school education is negligible. The state does not even plan for or factor in adolescents' entry into formal education. By default, it assumes that adolescents' entry into the workforce precludes them from joining schools. To provide quality secondary education to all by 2017, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was introduced in 2009. Later, to address the issues of equity, vocationalisation in education and to bridge the digital divide among students of different backgrounds, four independent programmes viz. Information and Communication Technology in schools (ICT), Vocational Education (VE), Girls Hostels (GH) and Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) were subsumed under the umbrella RMSA.

According to a study conducted by CBGA <sup>14</sup>, 'In the last ten years, India has witnessed an increase in enrolment at the secondary education level. The enrolment numbers increased from 2.8 crore in 2001 to 5.9 crore in 2013-14 (provisional). However, these figures vary across different social groups. For example, at the national level, only 8.5 percent and 6.5 percent of the ST population are enrolled in secondary and senior secondary level which is the lowest among all the marginalised communities. The same inequality can be seen at the state level where the proportion of enrolment of SC/ST and Muslim children as compared to the General category is stark. Further, it states that 'On looking at the school education budget for various years one can see the imbalance in the distribution of budget between elementary and secondary education. While elementary education receives about 78 percent of the total school education budget on the Union government, secondary education's share has been at 21 percent (2015-16 BE). The share of secondary education did not increase much even after the launch of RMSA'.

Adolescents are also covered under the adult education program Sakshar Bharat – National Literacy Mission and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). There are no special efforts

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.skilldevelopment.gov.in/assets/images/Skill%20India/policy%20booklet-%20Final.pdf> - national policy on skill development and entrepreneurship 2015- pdf.

<sup>12</sup> <http://indiabudget.nic.in/ub2016-17/eb/po.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO, Hamburg Declaration, 1997 <http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea/pdf/con5eng.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> CBGA, Inequalities in Secondary Education: A Study of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

made by the state to enable adolescents' access to these schemes. Of potentially 100 million children in this age group in the country, merely 1% are covered by the NIOS.

#### 4. Legislative Framework

The Constitution of India guarantees all citizens, that includes youth, fundamental rights to equality (Article 14), nondiscrimination (Article 15), special provisions for women and children (Article 15(3)), life and liberty (Article 21), right to education for all children between 6 to 14 years (Article 21A) and to prohibit employment of children below 14 in any hazardous occupation or industry (Article 24). The Directive Principles of State Policy under Articles 39 (e) and (f) makes explicit the State's obligation to protect childhood and youth.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, guarantees the right to education for all children in the 6-14 years of age while children in the 14-18 years are left out.

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, in consonance with Article 24 of the Constitution, states that 'a person under the age of 14 is a child and such persons are not allowed to work in hazardous environments'<sup>15</sup>. The proposed amendment to the CLPRA that is pending in the Parliament extends the CLPRA to cover children up to 18 years of age and introduces the term adolescent to mean a person between 15-18 years of age. The amendment states that 'no adolescent shall be employed or permitted to work in any of the hazardous occupations or processes set forth in the Schedule (A)'. This schedule includes employment in mines, inflammable substances and explosives and in hazardous processes in accordance with the Factories Act of 1948. In other words, adolescents are permitted to work in all other occupations and processes that are not specified in Schedule A. While prohibition of employment of children up to 14 years of age in all occupations and processes is to facilitate the RTE Act, the provision to extend the age up to 18 years is to be in line with ILO Convention 138 and Convention 182, respectively.

In view of the fact that children in 15-18 years are to be given opportunities to enhance their capacities it is unfair to argue for regulating their conditions of work and ask for giving them the right to unionize and bargain for better conditions of work. In fact their vulnerability stems from the fact that most of them are confined to a labour market in the informal, casual labour sector. The importance of providing education becomes imminent to ensure that at least the new generation of young population does not have to repeat the same cycle of backwardness and oppression, inhuman work conditions, lack of security etc.

The Factories Act, 1948, provides for the prohibition of child labour in certain situations. In this Act, a child is defined as a person who has not reached the age of 15.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, an adolescent is defined as a person between the age of 15 and 18. As per S. 27 of Factories Act, women and children are prohibited to work near cotton-openers. However, the proviso to this section creates a scenario where the women and children can be employed in the feed-end if such feed-end is cleared by the safety inspector as being safe.<sup>17</sup> The Factory is mandated to display a notice

<sup>15</sup> Article 24, Constitution of India, 1950

<sup>16</sup> Section 2c, Factories Act, 1948.

<sup>17</sup> Section 27, Factories Act, 1948.

to show the working hours of children in the factory.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this, the Manager of the Factory must maintain a register of children employed at the factory.<sup>19</sup>

For the safety of children, the State Government may make rules for the maximum weight permitted to be carried by adults, adolescents and children.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, in order to employ an adolescent or a child, the adolescent or child must have a fitness certificate granted under the procedure of the Act.<sup>21</sup> Even after such a certificate is granted, adolescents under the age of 17 cannot be employed to work other than hours between 6 am and 7 pm. Moreover, a child is not allowed to work for more than four and a half hours a day and at night.<sup>22</sup> The Factories Act also has a provision for a pecuniary fine against parents whose children are employed in two or more factories.<sup>23</sup>

The Minimum Wages Act 1948 mandates each State government to fix minimum wages for different classes (skilled, un-skilled, semi-skilled workers), and separately for adults, adolescents and children.<sup>24</sup> The adolescent under the Act means 'a person who has completed his fourteenth year of age but has not completed his eighteenth year of age' (Section 2(a)). There is no evidence of the wages fixed for adolescent workers in the State of Telangana.

The Immoral Trafficking Act defines a child as a person under the age of 18.<sup>25</sup> This Act in particular specifically deals with the occupation of prostitution with respect to both adults and children. In the scheme of this Act, any person who causes another person to engage in prostitution is liable to be imprisoned for a period of three years. However, in cases where the person causes a child to engage in prostitution, this punishment may increase to seven years or more, maximum sentence being life imprisonment.<sup>26</sup> There exist similar provisions in cases where a person has been found to engage in prostitution with a child. Moreover, in the mandate of the Act, the Magistrate may place such a child in the protection of any institution under the Children Acts.<sup>27</sup>

Under the Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, 1976<sup>28</sup>, the bonded labour system stands abolished and thus no person shall be forced to work and be unfree against an advance taken. Further, under the Act the debt is extinguished. Contravention of the provisions is a criminal offence.

It is in the context of the above Acts that the Juvenile Justice Act 2015, which provides for care and protection of all children up to 18 years, is relevant.<sup>29</sup> It states that 'whoever ostensibly

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<sup>18</sup> Section 71, Factories Act, 1948.

<sup>19</sup> Section 73, Factories Act, 1948.

<sup>20</sup> Section 34, Factories Act, 1948.

<sup>21</sup> Section 69, Factories Act, 1948.

<sup>22</sup> Section 71, Factories Act, 1948.

<sup>23</sup> Section 81, Factories Act, 1948.

<sup>24</sup> A child under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 means 'a person who has not completed fourteen years of age'.

<sup>25</sup> Section 2(aa), Immoral Trafficking Act, 1956.

<sup>26</sup> Section 5(d)(i), Immoral Trafficking Act, 1956.

<sup>27</sup> Section 17(3), Immoral Trafficking Act, 1956.

<sup>28</sup> [hrylabour.gov.in/docs/labourActpdfdocs/Bonded\\_Labour\\_System\\_Act.doc](http://hrylabour.gov.in/docs/labourActpdfdocs/Bonded_Labour_System_Act.doc)

<sup>29</sup> Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 Some of the principles to be followed in administration of rules are as follows: Principle of dignity and worth; Principle of safety (no harm, no abuse, no neglect, no exploitation and no maltreatment; Principle of equality and non-discrimination. [http://www.cara.nic.in/writereaddata/uploadedfile/NTESCL\\_635761161594843239\\_jjactamedment.pdf](http://www.cara.nic.in/writereaddata/uploadedfile/NTESCL_635761161594843239_jjactamedment.pdf)

engages a child and keeps him in bondage for the purpose of employment or withholds his earnings or uses such earning for his own purposes, shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to a fine of one lakh rupees.<sup>30</sup> In other words it is improper to argue for bettering conditions of work and promotion of livelihoods for raising the incomes of children who are below 18 years of age.

Under the Juvenile Justice Act, all children in need of care and protection are to be referred to the Child Welfare Committee which is responsible to provide for a care and protection for such children. This would include child labour, children trafficked, children subject to violence and abuse and so on. Under Section 29 (5)n of the Act, 'the Committee shall function as a Bench of Magistrates and shall have the powers conferred by the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) on a Metropolitan Magistrate or, as the case may be, a Judicial Magistrate of the first class.'<sup>31</sup>

There has been a considerable debate in the country on incarcerating children in the 16-18 years if they have committed a 'heinous crime'. This has resulted in the amendment to the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 lowering the culpable age from 18 years to 16 years. Under the new law, special provisions have been made to tackle child offenders in the age group of 16-18 years who commit heinous crimes.<sup>32</sup> The Juvenile Justice Board is given the option to transfer cases of heinous offences by such children to a children's court (court of sessions) after conducting preliminary assessment. The act provides for placing such offender children in a 'place of safety' both during and after the trial till they attain the age of 21, after which his/her evaluation shall be conducted by the children's court. After the evaluation, the child is either released on probation and if not reformed, he/she will be sent to a jail for the remaining term

Such a provision has been criticized as it dilutes the commitment India has made to the UNCRC to define a child as a person up to 18 years of age. More importantly, it cites the debates that have emerged world over in understanding the brain development and its link to behavior of adolescent children.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, Clause 79 of the 2015

<sup>31</sup> Ibid Section 29

<sup>32</sup> The newly enacted Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015 Act introduced clauses to try a juvenile who has committed 'heinous crimes' as under:

**Section 14. (1)** Where a child alleged to be in conflict with law is produced before Board, (5) The Board shall take the following steps to ensure fair and speedy inquiry, namely:— (f) inquiry of heinous offences,— (i) for child below the age of sixteen years as on the date of commission of an offence shall be disposed of by the Board under clause (e); (ii) for child above the age of sixteen years as on the date of commission of an offence shall be dealt with in the manner prescribed under section 15.

**Section 15. (1)** In case of a heinous offence alleged to have been committed by a child, who has completed or is above the age of sixteen years, the Board shall conduct a preliminary assessment with regard to his mental and physical capacity to commit such offence, ability to understand the consequences of the offence and the circumstances in which he allegedly committed the offence, and may pass an order in accordance with the provisions of subsection (3) of **section 18**: Provided that for such an assessment, the Board may take the assistance of experienced psychologists or psycho-social workers or other expert (3) Where the Board after preliminary assessment under section 15 pass an order that there is a need for trial of the said child as an adult, then the Board may order transfer of the trial of the case to the Children's Court having jurisdiction to try such offences.

**Section 19. (1)** After the receipt of preliminary assessment from the Board under section 15, the Children's Court may decide that— (i) there is a need for trial of the child as an adult as per the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and pass appropriate orders after trial subject to the provisions of this section and section 21, considering the special needs of the child, the tenets of fair trial and maintaining a child friendly atmosphere; (ii) there is no need for trial of the child as an adult and may conduct an inquiry as a Board and pass appropriate orders in accordance with the provisions of section 18.

No law on children, especially in the 14 – 18 years age group has taken a categorical position in favour of their rights. For example, it refuses to see girls in their own right as individuals, instead only making space for them as members of either the natal or marital family under the Child Marriage Act. It sees no role for itself in providing protection and safeguarding girls from violence and abuse. This is also true for secondary education. The state does not plan for all children to study beyond class 8, nor does it adequately support those willing to go the extra mile to study further. It always lays the responsibility on the poor and their inability to send children to school. It does not extend the child labour act to abolish all forms of child labour up to 18 years of age. The state dithers from taking responsibility for children.

It is in this context that this study has been undertaken in the state of Telangana to look at the lives of these young boys and girls - the 15-18 year olds - who are not attending any educational institution. What are they actually doing? What is their educational background and if they are in the workforce what are their work conditions? What is the perspective of the children themselves about the opportunities and choices they have and would like to seek?

Children who are out of school join the labour force on adverse terms and conditions with an increase in informalisation of the economy. Simultaneously, the agriculture and farm sector is shrinking and there is greater urbanisation with migration of agriculture labour, small and marginal farmers, in search of work. Children's lives are affected in the process. Although there is a higher growth rate of the economy, the nature of development and its impact on children in the 15-18 years today, and also their tomorrow, needs to be further explored. It is imperative to raise macro concerns and examine economic policies relating to public investment in social sector and child protection. How much has the State invested in such children and their education to play the role that is envisaged of them? How much of demand is there for a skilled work force and what is its relation to the investments in the manufacturing sector which is currently not labour intensive? We would like to pose these questions that are relevant but have not been dealt with, in this study.



## Chapter 2

# The Study



## 1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand:

- the predicament of children, both boys and girls in the 15-18 years age group in the state of Telangana who are out of school and engaged in some form of work or the other;
- nature of their work conditions in relation to gender, occupation and education profile;

## 2. Methodology

The study covered children in the 15-18 years age group who dropped out of schools and have not completed class 10 in the state of Telangana and the sample for the study included the following:

- i.) The districts with least literacy and in those districts the Mandals<sup>33</sup> with least literacy and the least literacy villages in these Mandals. The most backward districts in terms of literacy are Adilabad, Mahbubnagar and Medak. Among these districts the most backward mandals are Bejjur and Bhimini mandals with 39.7% and 39.5% literacy; Gattu and Maganur in Mahbubnagar district that have 39.8% and 30.8% literacy and Kangti mandal in Medak district that has 39.8% literacy. These villages coincidentally have a large tribal population followed by the scheduled castes. This is reflected in the demographic profile of the respondents.
- ii.) One urban slum of Ramagundam which is a town in the mining area of Karimnagar district, one slum each in the industrial areas of Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy district and one slum in the Bahadurpura area that has concentration of minority population in Hyderabad District

Qualitative information in the form of narratives was written by the research team after completion of filling up of the questionnaire. Focused group discussions were also held in their neighborhood both in urban slums and rural areas with boys and girls separately.

The questionnaire had 103 questions which covered among other factors details of household profiles. It also sought answers to the time spent during the period August 2014 to July 2015 on work and the nature of work the adolescent children were engaged in. There were other questions on work conditions, nature of exploitation and health hazards. Further, information was sought on the autonomy the children had in deciding how the wages earned would be spent.

A total of 552 adolescent children in the age group of 15-18 years who were out of school and did not complete 10th class board examination were included in the sample of whom 51.1% adolescent boys and 48.9% adolescent girls were interviewed (Table 1).

<sup>33</sup> Mandal is a sub district administrative unit with a population of 50000 to 75000.



Table 1: Sample Profile

| S.No | District    | District Literacy Rate % | Mandal/ Literacy Rate %   | Boys         | Girls        | Total |
|------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| 1    | Adilabad    | 61.1                     | Bejjur (1)* / 39.7        | 19           | 34           | 53    |
|      |             |                          | Bhimini (2)* / 39.4       | 29           | 24           | 53    |
| 2    | Mahbubnagar | 55.0                     | Bommarajpet (3)* /39.8    | 32           | 27           | 59    |
|      |             |                          | Gattu (4)* /30. 8         | 28           | 27           | 55    |
|      |             |                          | Maganoor (5*) /39.9       | 30           | 30           | 60    |
| 3    | Medak       | 61.4                     | Kangti (6)* /39.8         | 27           | 29           | 56    |
| 4    | Ranga Reddy | 75.9                     | Balanagar (7)** /74.3     | 26           | 26           | 52    |
|      |             |                          | Saroornagar (8)** /72.6   | 25           | 29           | 54    |
| 5    | Hyderabad   | 83.3                     | Bahadurpura (9)*** / 68.8 | 36           | 17           | 53    |
| 6    | Karimnagar  | 64.2                     | Ramagundem (10)**** /68.4 | 30           | 27           | 57    |
|      |             |                          |                           | 282<br>51.1% | 270<br>48.9% | 552   |

**Note:** \*Mandals with low level of literacy; \*\* Urban Slum; \*\*\*Urban Slum with Minority;\*\*\*\*Mining

3. Demographic Profile

Data on the demographic profile of the adolescent children in the study has been analysed with respect to rural and urban, gender, caste, physical disability and marital status.

72.6% of the sample was from rural and 27.4% from urban areas. Most AC (84.4%) were in the age group of 16-18 years in the sample (Table 1.1). The scheduled castes (SC) constituted 25.9% of the sample and the backward castes were 10.9% (Table 1.2). There was a greater concentration of STs in rural areas at 53.6% followed by SCs at 26.2% and with BCs only at 2%. On the other hand in the urban areas BCs constituted 34.4% of the sample indicating a greater presence of BCs in urban areas (Table 1.3). 4.7% of AC mentioned that they were physically disabled. 31% of them were physically challenged, 36% had hearing impairment and 4% had speech impediment (Table 1.4). 4.3% of AC were married. Most of the girls who were married completed only class 3 and most of their spouses never went to school except for one of them whose husband completed class 12.

I am a tribal girl and went to school only up to class 3. I was pulled out of school because my mother's health was getting bad to worse and she needed my support in the family. Since then I have been working as an agricultural labourer. I was married at the age of 10. My husband was 16 years and he studied till class 7. Both of us work as agricultural labour. We have a girl and a boy and both are studying. I have become very weak, unable to work and feel very exhausted and have suffered weight loss.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> S.Sunita, 16 years, Karjalli, Bijpur, Adilabad

### Physical Disability

'I have a bad stammer. When I was admitted into a private school I was teased by my class mates in Class1. I felt bad about it and refused to go to school. Thus, I dropped out of school and now I am working with my father for quarrying. I struggle with this work and get injured at times. I would like to train as a bike mechanic to earn my living. My biggest handicap is my stammer'.<sup>35</sup>

I am deaf and could not follow much in the class. As I was going to a higher class it was becoming more and more difficult to cope with studies. I dropped out eventually in class 7. I am from barber caste but chose to work in a music band group. I also go as casual labour. One day I would like to learn hair dressing fashion like my father.<sup>36</sup>

**Table-1.1: Profile of AC – Age wise**

| Age      | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| 15 Years | 66        | 12.0    |
| 16 Years | 160       | 29.0    |
| 17 Years | 154       | 27.9    |
| 18 Years | 152       | 27.5    |
| 19 Years | 20        | 3.6     |
| Total    | 552       | 100.0   |

**Table 1.2: Profile of AC – Caste wise**

| Caste   | Frequency | Percent |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| SC      | 143       | 25.9    |
| General | 95        | 17.2    |
| ST      | 254       | 46.0    |
| BC      | 60        | 10.9    |
| Total   | 552       | 100.0   |

**Table 1.3: Profile of AC – Rural and Urban Caste wise**

|       | SC % | General % | ST % | BC % | Total |
|-------|------|-----------|------|------|-------|
| Rural | 26.2 | 18.2      | 53.6 | 2.0  | 100.0 |
| Urban | 25.2 | 14.6      | 25.8 | 34.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 25.9 | 17.2      | 46.0 | 10.9 | 100.0 |

**Table 1.4: Disabilities Details**

|                       | Percent |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Hearing Impaired      | 23      |
| Physically Challenged | 31      |
| Mentally Challenged   | 8       |
| Speech Challenged     | 15      |
| Visually Impaired     | 12      |
| Others                | 12      |
| Total                 | 100     |

### 4. Household Profile

In order to understand their quality of life the survey has collected information on housing, availability of food, electricity and toilets. Information on use of mobile phone was sought to have a peep into their connectivity and use of contemporary gadgets.

55% of fathers were in the 41-50 years age

<sup>35</sup> O.Bheem Raj, 18 years, Leninnagar, Saroornagar, RR Dt

<sup>36</sup> M. Veeresh, 16 years, Induvasi, Gattu, MHB

group followed by 24% in the 51-60 years age group and 17% in the 30-40 years age group. 23% of the mothers were less than 35 years and 54% of them were in the age group of 36-45 (Table 2). 22% of the sample was children without one of the parents or with no parents of whom 22% were single fathers and 59% were single mothers and 19% were children without parents (Table 2.1).

Children without parents

'I studied up to class 8 and dropped out as my mother committed suicide by consuming pesticides. We were cheated by my aunt, who is my mother's sister. She sold our herd for Rs.5000 which she never gave us. When my father was seriously ill, my mother went to my aunt to claim her money and my aunt refused to give it in spite of all the pressure from the village elders. My mother became desperate and committed suicide. Father was depressed by all this and never recovered. One night when he was doing night watch on his farm he was bitten by a snake. He was taken to a local quack and then rushed to a hospital, but succumbed and died. My younger sister Amala is studying class 6 in Social Welfare SC hostel. I am now working on a construction site in Hyderabad with my uncle. My sister comes and stays with me at the work site in Hyderabad for her holidays. We sometimes go to the village for festivals. All along I had no contact with relatives while all this was happening, they too did not get in touch with us. Perhaps they thought we would start depending on them. They are now reaching out as I am earning a bit. I would like to educate my sister well.<sup>137</sup>

| Table 2: Age of Mother and Father |          |          | Table 2.1: Profile of Single Parents |    |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------------------------|----|
| Age                               | Father % | Mother % |                                      | %  |
| Less than 35                      | 3.0      | 23.0     | Single Father                        | 22 |
| 36-45                             | 40.0     | 54.0     | Single Mother                        | 59 |
| 46-55                             | 43.0     | 20.0     | Children without Parents             | 19 |
| 56-65                             | 13.0     | 3.0      |                                      |    |
| 66 and above                      | 1.0      | 0.0      |                                      |    |

91.8% of adolescent children lived with their parents (Table 3).

78.5% of AC lived in their own homes. 32.8% males stated that they had access to latrines, 22.6% AG stated that they had access to latrines. 72.1% AB have access to mobile phones when compared to only 11.5% of AG having access to mobile phones (Table 3.1).

92.8% of rural children lived in their own home as against 40.8% of urban children. Of the total number of children only 27.9% had latrines attached to their homes. 8.5% of rural children had no latrines at all while 79.5% of urban children had latrines. 43.1% of AC from rural and 43.7%

<sup>37</sup>Venkatesh, 16 years, class 8, SC,Salindapur Village, Bommarasipet Mandal, MHB Dt

from urban areas had electricity connection in their homes. Likewise 43.1% of rural and 43.7% of urban children had mobile access (Table 3.2).

80% of the families have meals thrice a day, 19.6% twice a day and 0.2% once a day (Table 3.3).

### Housing-An Issue

'We migrated from Mahbubnagar to Balanagar 10 years ago in search of work. We live in a rented house. My parents had to pledge everything they had to pay as advance for taking the one room on rent. I have one older brother and a younger brother and sister who are going to school. My older brother completed intermediate. Parents work for daily wages in construction. They do not have regular work. I do piece work tailoring. At present I earn Rs.3000 to 4000 per month.<sup>38</sup>

'I dropped out of school in class 4 and belong to the scheduled tribe community. My father is rickshaw puller delivering cement, steel, building material. Mother goes for daily wage and she gets work irregularly. I have 2 older brothers. One of them is an auto driver; the other is married to a girl from the same basti. It is a love marriage. We have only one hut and it is difficult with the married couple. The older brother wants to marry only if he can afford to live on his own.<sup>39</sup>

**Table 3: Place of Residence**

| Place of Residence | Percent |
|--------------------|---------|
| With Parents       | 91.8    |
| With Husband       | 3.8     |
| Relatives          | 3.1     |
| Rent               | 1.3     |
| Total              | 100.0   |

**Table 3.1: Accommodation, Latrines, Electricity & Mobile – Availability (Genderwise)**

|    | Accommodation |          |            | Latrines | Mobile |
|----|---------------|----------|------------|----------|--------|
|    | Own %         | Rented % | Temporary% | Yes %    | Yes %  |
| AB | 76.7          | 14.2     | 9          | 32.8     | 72.1   |
| AG | 80.5          | 7.7      | 11.9       | 22.6     | 11.5   |
| AC | 78.5          | 11.1     | 10.4       | 27.9     | 43.3   |

**Table 3.2: Accommodation, Latrines, Electricity & Mobile – Availability (Rural/Urban)**

|       | Accommodation |          |            | Latrines | Electricity | Mobile |
|-------|---------------|----------|------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|       | Own %         | Rented % | Temporary% | Yes %    | Yes %       | Yes %  |
| Rural | 92.8          | 1.0      | 6.3        | 8.50     | 43.1        | 43.1   |
| Urban | 40.3          | 38.3     | 21.5       | 79.50    | 43.7        | 43.7   |

**Table 3.3: Availability of Meals in a Day**

|        | Percent |
|--------|---------|
| Once   | 0.2     |
| Twice  | 19.6    |
| Thrice | 80.2    |
| Total  | 100.0   |

Most households lived in basic shelters and with very little to eat. They also did not have electricity at home nor did they have toilets.

<sup>38</sup> B.Yadamma, 17 years, Vinayaknagar, Balanagar, Rangareddy

<sup>39</sup> M.Kavitha, 16 years, Amruthanagar Thanda, Balanagar, Rangareddy

## 5. Education and Work Profile of Parents

This section provides details of age and education of both parents.

80% of the fathers never went to school and 11% studied up to class 5. A very small percentage completed class 10 and above. Only 9% of all mothers' went to school. 4.7% of mothers studied up to class 5, 2% from classes 6-8, and none of them is a graduate (Table 4).

64% of fathers were agricultural laborers followed by 10.8% of them working as construction laborers. Among the mothers 66% of them were agricultural laborers followed by 24% casual labour (Table 4.1)

33.5% of parents went on migration in the current year of whom 48.6% were fathers and 52.4% were mothers (Table 4.2) out of which 39.4% were STs and 28.5% SCs. (Table 4.3).

'My father is a wage labourer and we are 3 siblings. My older brother is addicted to sniffing glue as he was working in a company that made glue. We tried to get him out of it, we only ran out of money and the mental hospital said that nothing could be done for him and we brought him home. He now roams around the roads in a mad state and we are helpless. I had to drop out of school in class 7 and work to pay for my brother's health expenses. I do scrub work and am not being paid my salary since three months. The employer says that he is also not being paid for the work so he is unable to pay me. Now I am without a job. My father also worked with a pastor who is not paying him his salary. There is no money for food in the house. We have a hand to mouth existence'.<sup>40</sup>

'My father was not contributing to family income due to substance abuse. In fact he is a big burden and demands money from me and my mother. Sister also dropped out subsequently. After dropping out in class 9 due to ill health I did not go back to school. I went for A/C repair work and then went to work on a construction site as a migrant worker. Now I am back and driving a school bus'.

'Over the past three years there has been drought in the village. My parents had to migrate to earn their livelihood as agricultural labourers on chilli farms in Khammam district. Due to their migration I dropped out of school in class 7 and joined them. Now we are all in Hyderabad city. Father earned a living as an auto driver and the mother was a construction worker and I accompanied her at Rs.200 per day wages. In the past 9 months I have started to work as a sales girl in 'Ladies Shop Corner'.<sup>41</sup>

'I studied up to class 4 from home. I joined class 5 in Bejjur ST hostel and was very home sick and dropped out. We have our own lands and we go to agricultural work. We also have goats. I go with my mother and we earn Rs.100 per day. I and my sister migrate to Khammam for red chillies crop for 2 months. We stay on the site sharing with 15 women and we cook our own food. We work from 7 to 9:30am plucking chillies and after lunch from 11 to 5 pm. We were paid Rs.150 per day for this'.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> K.Shiva, 17 years, Hanumannagar, Kukatpalli, Balanagar, Rangareddy

<sup>41</sup> Swapna, 17yrs, (Karkhastanda, Khanapur, Amangallamdal, MHB) Indrasena Reddy Nagar, Saroornagar

<sup>42</sup> S.Chandrakala, 16 years, Karjalli, Bijipur, Adilabad

**Table 4: Parents' Highest Level of Education**

|                      | Father % | Mother% |
|----------------------|----------|---------|
| Never gone to school | 80.0     | 89.9    |
| Class 1- 5           | 11.0     | 4.7     |
| Class 6-8            | 3.0      | 2       |
| Class 9              | 1.0      | 1.8     |
| Class 10             | 4.0      | 1.6     |
| Inter                | 1.0      | 0       |
| Degree               | 1.0      | 0       |

**Table 4.1: Occupation of Father and Mother**

| Occupation          | Father % | Mother % |
|---------------------|----------|----------|
| Agricultural Labour | 64.4     | 66.0     |
| Construction Labour | 10.8     | 3.0      |
| Driver              | 7.7      | -        |
| Self employed       | 6.6      | 2.0      |
| Casual Labour       | 7.1      | 24.0     |
| Not able to work    | 3.3      | 2.0      |
| Domestic Worker     | -        | 4.0      |
| Total               | 100.0    | 100.0    |

**Table 4.2: Migrant Parents  
- Genderwise**

|        | Yes % |
|--------|-------|
| Father | 48.6  |
| Mother | 52.4  |
| Total  | 100   |

**Table 4.3: Migrant Parents  
-Caste**

| Caste   | Yes % |
|---------|-------|
| SC      | 28.5  |
| General | 30.3  |
| ST      | 39.4  |
| BC      | 1.8   |

It is seen that a large percentage of parents were mostly illiterates thus lacking the experience of the routine of sending their children to school. Their children were thus the first generation learners and had to cope with school going without the cultural capital in the family to support children's journey through formal education. Since they were largely illiterates they could be easily intimidated by the school and its system of governance.

Most adolescent children in the study belonged to families that were poor and whose parents were agricultural labourers, daily wage earners and engaged as casual labour. One third of the families went out on migration in search of work. They lived with uncertainties of being without work.

## 6. Profile of Adolescent Children (AC) in the Study

This section gives details of the school and anganwadi centre participation of the children in the study, their perceptions on why they dropped out of schools- government and private and from hostels, hurdles they faced to re-enroll in schools, their aspirations for education and inability to complete class 10 in spite of repeated attempts.

## 6.1. Access to Pre-School (Anganwadi Centers)

On the whole 26.4% of AC attended anganwadi centres. Among the SCs 35% went to anganwadi centres followed by 26.7% among the BCs who participated in anganwadi centres. Among the STs 24% went to anganwadi centre. (Table 5) Interestingly the percentage of AG who attended the Anganwadi Centre was more than AB (Table 5.1). 25.4% of rural and 29.1% of urban AC went to Anganwadi Center.

**Table 5: Caste-Anganwadi Center**

|         | Yes % | No % | Total % |
|---------|-------|------|---------|
| SC      | 35.0  | 65.0 | 100.0   |
| General | 20.0  | 80.0 | 100.0   |
| ST      | 24.0  | 76.0 | 100.0   |
| BC      | 26.7  | 73.3 | 100.0   |
| Total   | 26.4  | 73.6 | 100.0   |

**Table 5.1: Gender- Anganwadi Center**

|       | Yes % | No % |
|-------|-------|------|
| AB    | 22.8  | 77.2 |
| AG    | 30.5  | 69.5 |
| Total | 26.4  | 73.6 |

**Table 5.2: Rural Urban Anganwadi Center**

|       | Yes % | No %  |
|-------|-------|-------|
| Rural | 25.4% | 74.6% |
| Urban | 29.1% | 70.9% |
| Total | 26.4% | 73.6% |

## 6.2. Education – Enrolment and School Dropouts

All the children in the sample were school dropouts from classes 1 to 10. It is found that 89% of them were enrolled in schools before joining the workforce. 91.4% AB and 85.9% AG went to school (Table 6).

Of those who went to school 90% of them studied in government schools. 34% of AC from the BC community attended private schools when compared to 3.9% of the general category and 7.9% of ST category who attended private schools. Interestingly, none from the SC category attended private schools (Table 6.1). There were more AG i.e. 93.8% who went to government schools as against 86.8% of AB who went to government schools (Table 6.2). Among rural AC, 96.4% went to government schools and among urban AC, 72.7% studied in government schools (Table 6.3).

It is seen that almost every family aspired to send their children to school in spite of odds. Those who sought education for their children in private schools were investing in their children's education beyond their means. Yet, children dropped out of schools before completion of class 10 and many more before completion of elementary education i.e. up to class 8. This shows the failure of the system to retain children in schools, the amount of wastage of scarce resources of parents and more importantly adverse impact on the child's life now and in future.

44.6% of AC in the sample were school dropouts between classes 6 and 8, followed by 28% school dropouts before completion of primary school (classes 1-5). 14.5% dropped out in class 10 and 12.5% in class 9 (Table 6.4).

Education imparted at the elementary school level in most government schools is totally lacking in quality and thus even if the child reached up to class 8 it does not add any value to the child. Children also are fully aware of the fact that they have studied in bad schools where there is no teaching and they have learnt nothing.

Most AC and more so AB stated that they dropped out of schools because they had to support the family indicating the lack of social security for the poor. This was followed by the fact that children did not understand what was being taught in the classroom. In addition, health problems, either of one's own or of persons in the family was stated as a reason for dropping out of school. Corporal punishment, bullying and teasing was also cited as an important reason by male students for dropping out of school. (Table 6.5)

**Table 6 : Enrolment  
in Schools-Gender**

|    | Yes % | No %  |
|----|-------|-------|
| AB | 91.4% | 8.6%  |
| AG | 85.9% | 14.1% |
| AC | 88.8% | 11.2% |

**Table 6.1: Caste-wise Enrolment in Schools**

| Caste   | Govt% | Private% | Private Aided% | Madrassa % |
|---------|-------|----------|----------------|------------|
| SC      | 93.9  | 6.1      | 0.0            | 0.0        |
| General | 96.1  | 3.9      | 0.0            | 0.0        |
| ST      | 91.7  | 7.9      | 0.4            | 0.0        |
| BC      | 64.2  | 34.0     | 0.0            | 1.9        |
| Total   | 90.0  | 9.6      | 0.2            | 0.2        |

**Table 6.2 : AB and AG- Enrolment in Schools**

| Gender | Govt% | Private% | Private Aided % | Madrassa% |
|--------|-------|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| AB     | 86.8  | 12.40    | 0.40            | 0.40      |
| AG     | 93.8  | 6.30     | 0.00            | 0.00      |
| Total  | 90.0  | 9.60     | 0.20            | 0.20      |

**Table 6.4: Class-wise  
Dropouts%**

|               | Percent |
|---------------|---------|
| 1-5th Class   | 28.4    |
| 6th-8th Class | 44.6    |
| 9th Class     | 12.4    |
| 10th Class    | 14.5    |
| Total         | 100.0   |

**Table 6.3: Enrolment: Rural/Urban**

| Rural / Urban | Govt % | Private % | Private Aided % | Madrassa % |
|---------------|--------|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| Rural         | 96.4   | 3.6       | 0.0             | 0.0        |
| Urban         | 72.7   | 25.8      | .8              | .8         |
| Total         | 90.0   | 9.6       | .2              | .2         |



**Table 6.5: Reasons for School dropout**

| Reasons for School dropout                   | AB % | AG%   | Total % |
|--|------|-------|---------|
| Need to help family in work                  | 57.9 | 70.3  | 28.7    |
| I could not understand teaching in the class | 70.7 | 42.5  | 18.1    |
| Family had health problems                   | 62.0 | 12.7  | 10.5    |
| School at a distance                         | 38.3 | 18.5  | 6.9     |
| I experienced health problems                | 37.2 | 13.5  | 6.3     |
| Corporal Punishment                          | 70.7 | 72.5  | 6.0     |
| Mother had health problems                   | 30.8 | 69.2  | 5.7     |
| Family migration                             | 43.3 | 56.7  | 4.4     |
| Lack of required documents                   | 42.9 | 57.1  | 3.1     |
| Harassment by teacher                        | 76.5 | 23.5  | 2.5     |
| I had to take care of siblings               | 5.9  | 94.1  | 2.5     |
| Harassment by classmates                     | 62.5 | 37.5  | 2.4     |
| Teased by male students                      | 90.9 | 9.1   | 1.6     |
| Pressure of marriage                         | 0.0  | 100.0 | 0.9     |
| Sexual Abuse                                 | 0.0  | 100.0 | 0.3     |

### Private School-Woes and School dropouts

I am Muslim boy. I have one older sister, 2 younger brothers and one younger sister. I dropped out of school in class 8. I started to work as a helper in Pipe Company earning Rs. 360 a week. Then I joined as a mechanic to work on machines, welding and soldering. I stopped work for a while because my eyesight has been affected and can't see too well. This has affected my work. Daddy is 50 years old and works as a waiter in a function hall; mother is a cook in a madrasa. I would like to rejoin school and study. But my old school is not giving me my TC. I owe the school 3 months fees. Though I am willing to pay the dues they are not accepting it. Where ever I go they are asking me for the certificates. My parents are willing to let me continue my studies.<sup>43</sup>

'We are 4 members in family. I was admitted in a Private School and was punished all the time for no reason. I didn't want to study in that school. The TC the school issued was lost and they refused to give us a duplicate copy. I could not get admission in another school. So I had no school after that as my parents didn't know how to resolve this. I am now working in a saree shop. As the earnings were not enough, my parents took me with them to collect garbage. I work from 6 am to 6 pm and the bad smell is affecting my health. I have already been treated for this. Mother is hoping there would be some help to put me back to school.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Abdul Aamer, 16 years, Kanchanbad, Asad Baba Nagar, Bahadurpura, Hyderabad.

<sup>44</sup> A.Kishore, 13 years, Nandanavanam, Sarooranagar, RR Dt

18.5% of AC attempted to rejoin schools. More AG attempted to rejoin at 22.3% than ABs at 15.1% (Table 6.9). 61.6% of those who attempted to rejoin were from rural when compared to 38.4% from urban area (Table 6.10). Of the AC who attempted to rejoin schools 53% of them tried at least once and 43% twice to rejoin schools. (Table 6.11)

40% of AC stated that their inability to get readmission was mainly because of being absent for a long time being followed by the fact that the schools had asked them to repeat the same class or just rejected to admit them (Table 6.12).

It is noted that in spite of dropping out of schools there have been attempts by AG and AB to somehow go back to school. However, in insisting on rules and procedures and in being insensitive to the predicament of the first generation learner, the education system has denied the fulfillment of aspirations of children to rejoin school.

It must be noted that completion of class 10 is crucial for availing several opportunities and choices for further education as well for careers. Every child would therefore, want to complete class 10 and are willing to make several attempts to complete the same. Many of them who have failed in the class 10 examination make a couple of attempts. 61% of AB and 39% of AG who could not complete class 10 made one attempt, an equal percent attempted twice and 56.4% of AB and 43.6% of AG attempted thrice and more number of times (Table 6.13). 52.6% attempted to take the class 10 examination once and 47.5% attempted twice and more.

### Class 10-Almost there!

'I am from the Madiga caste and failed in class 10. My father's health is badly affected as we could not afford his health treatment. There was no money to run the family so I was discontinued from school and put to agricultural work. My mother would run the family with the Rs.100 that I earned. I don't like to work, I want to study. I am willing to write class 10 exam in the Open school'.<sup>45</sup>

I belong to ST community and failed in English in class 10. We never had a teacher in English. Even if there was one or two during my entire schooling, they never came nor did they teach well. I live 30 kms away from Bejjur in the forest with no road. I am preparing to take the exam again. I also work on cotton and soya farms. There is no primary school, no buses and very inaccessible.<sup>46</sup>

'We are 5 boys and 1 girl in our family. Father admitted me in a private school, the 'Newton Mission High School'. There was a change in syllabus and also the pattern of maths exam in class 10. Added to this the maths teacher resigned 3 months before the final exam, due to which all the students failed in maths. I got good marks in all the other subjects. I took the supplementary exam in September and I failed again. I worked as computer operator in e seva. The owner offered to train me and pay me Rs 1000 to 2000 per month. Work was for 12 hours with a half hour break for lunch. Sunday too was a working day. Aadhar card, MRO applications etc and worked for 2 months but I was not paid. So I stopped working.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Lakshmi, 16 years, class 7, BC, Borgi Village, Kangtimandal, Medak Dt.

<sup>46</sup> T. Madhukar, 17 years, Bijpur, Adilabad

<sup>47</sup> Md. Yasir, 17 years, Asad Baba Nagar, Bahadurpura, Hyderabad.

School and Teacher-Bad Experience

'I am an SC and we are 5 members in family. I dropped out of school in Class 7 as I couldn't learn Maths. The teacher started beating and scolding, harassing, punishing and humiliated me using my caste name, when I asked for help with maths. My parents also supported the teacher. I joined my father in building construction work. I made friends and got addicted to alcohol. My father is also addicted to alcohol and it has affected his health. Now the whole household depends on my earnings'.<sup>48</sup>

'I studied up to class 9 and dropped out as I couldn't cope with studies and more so because of bad experiences in school.. My teachers humiliated me by getting a girl to beat me up. I was too humiliated to continue to study. Father was paranoid and used to beat up my mother always and so I went to live with my grandmother. I learnt to drive a tractor. I am now running an auto and am earning Rs. 3000 per month'.<sup>49</sup>

Table 6.9 : Attempt to rejoin school – Gender wise

|       | Yes % | No % |
|-------|-------|------|
| AB    | 15.1  | 84.9 |
| AG    | 22.3  | 77.7 |
| Total | 18.5  | 81.5 |

Table 6.10 : Attempt to Rejoin – Rural and Urban

|       | Yes%  | No%   | Total% |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Rural | 61.6  | 74.5  | 72.1   |
| Urban | 38.4  | 25.5  | 27.9   |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0  |

Table 6.11: Number of Attempts for Readmission

|                      | Percent % |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Once                 | 53.0      |
| Twice                | 46.0      |
| Three Times and More | 1.0       |
| Total                | 100       |

Table 6.12: Reasons for Rejection of Re-enrolment

|   | Percent % |
|---|-----------|
| School rejected to readmit me   | 17.5      |
| Because I was absent for a long time                                  | 40.0      |
| I missed my final exams.  | 8.75      |
| I was asked to repeat the same class                                  | 17.5      |
| I was refused a seat because no seats were available                  | 2.5       |
| I was asked to pay fees/donations/other charges and I could not do so | 11.25     |
| I was asked to produce medical certificate etc.                       | 1.25      |
| Non availability of hostel facility                                   | 1.25      |

Table 6.13: Number of Attempts for Class 10 examination – Gender wise

|    | Once % | Twice% | Thrice and More % |
|----|--------|--------|-------------------|
| AB | 61.0   | 50.0   | 56.4              |
| AG | 39.0   | 50.0   | 43.6              |

<sup>48</sup> V.Prabhu Das, 16 years,(Chennipadu,Manavapadu, MHB), Subhash Chandra Bose colony, Saroornagar

<sup>49</sup> B.Madhukar, 17 years, Moormoor, Ramagundam, Karimnagar.

6.3. Enrolment in hostels

In recognition of the fact that their children did not have an atmosphere at home that was conducive to study, parents sent them to hostels at a very young age. 21.7% of AC went to social welfare hostels of whom 55% were AB and 45% were AG. It is difficult for the AG to continue in hostel when compared to boys even in classes 1-5 wherein 61.1% of AG as against 38.9% AB dropped out. The percentage of AB who studied while staying in a hostel is higher when compared to AG at higher classes' i.e after classes 6-10. Thus while 56.9% of AB studied up to class 8 when compared to 43.1% AG, 59.5% of AB studied up to class 10 when compared to 40.5% of AG.(Table 7)

Of those who studied from hostels, 31.8% were from SC community of whom 57.9% were AB and 42.1% were AG; 31.8% were from BC community of whom 65.7% were AB and 34.3% were AG. 32.5% were from ST community of whom 38.5% were AB and 61.5% were AG. Significantly it is among the ST community that there were more girls than boys studying from hostels (Table 7.1).

The appalling conditions in the hostels forced the boys and girls to drop out of the education system as a whole. These children were from the most deprived communities – SC, ST and BCs. They also included girls.

**Hostel-Bad conditions and Pushed out of School**

'My parents are agricultural labourers. After class 5 in village school I joined a hostel. There were no toilets, no water in bathroom for bath, no drinking water, no room and nobody to bother. I like to study but could not follow the lessons. The older boys in hostel used to bully me. I finally ran away from the hostel and returned home. I went along with my friends for construction work. It is a real struggle to work. At 6 am I go to work without food, I used to get blisters on my hand. Even so, the contractor used to put me to work. I would like to do electrical or mechanical job work.'<sup>50</sup>

Table 7: Enrolment in Hostels-Class wise and Comparison Gender wise

| Class      | AB % | AG % | AC%   |
|------------|------|------|-------|
| Class 1-5  | 38.9 | 61.1 | 100.0 |
| Class 6-8  | 56.9 | 43.1 | 100.0 |
| Class 9-10 | 59.5 | 40.5 | 100.0 |
| Total      | 55.0 | 45.0 | 100.0 |

Table 7.1: Profile of Children who joined Hostels-Community wise and Gender wise

| Caste | AB%  | AG%  | Total% | AC%  |
|-------|------|------|--------|------|
| SC    | 57.9 | 42.1 | 100.0  | 31.8 |
| GN    | 80.0 | 20.0 | 100.0  | 4.2  |
| ST    | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100.0  | 32.5 |
| BC    | 65.7 | 34.3 | 100.0  | 31.5 |

<sup>50</sup> B.Naresh, 19 years, Kondapalli, Bejjur, Adilabad

6.4. Work Profile of Adolescents

One of the aspects of the study is to understand what children in 15 – 18 years not in schools are actually doing. This section explores the experiences of the out of school child as a worker, beginning with tracing of initial induction into the work force. It has collected data about their work experience for the period August 2014 - July 2015 regarding the number of months they worked, the nature of work they were engaged in, the conditions of employment and if they questioned the employers at any time.

It is found that soon after dropping out of school 24% joined workforce and 40% of AC after one year or more. 35% of them joined between 3-6 months of dropping out of schools (Table 8). 57% of AC first occupation has been agriculture followed by 17% as casual labour, 6% as construction labour, in companies or self-employed (Table 8.1).

98.2% were engaged in work during the current year (Table 8.2). It is noticed that the adolescent children did not have continuous work all through the year. Among the boys 59.2% had work for 8 to 12 months, 42.2% of them had work for 4-7 months and 37.5% had work for 1-3 months. Among the girls 40.8% had work for 8 to 12 months, 57.8% of them had work for 4-7 months and 62.5% had work for 1-3 months (Table 8.3).

Most of the AC were engaged in agriculture work with more number of AG working for more number of months when compared to AB. The work rendered in agriculture is 5 times more than the next sector which is employment in shops. In all other sectors except domestic work and factories the number of AB was more than the AG. There was no AG working in sectors like driving and semi-skilled. The semi-skilled work constitutes the occupations like electrician, carpenter, plumbing, car and auto mechanic, welding and so on. It is significant that a large number of AB were engaged in construction work and as casual labour for a long duration and a very small number for a short duration among AG. Interestingly, four of them were reported that they worked in the NREGA programme which is actually for persons above 18 years of age. (Tables 8.4)

While at work 79.9% of AC never questioned their employer about work conditions (Table 8.5). Of those who questioned only 9.6% questioned on hours of work of which 57.7% were AB and 42.3% were AG. On the issue of better wages 10.5% asked for raise in wages, of which 64.9% were AB and 35.1% were AG (Table 8.6). Of those who questioned hours of work 67.3% were from rural areas and 32.7% were from urban areas. On the other hand a greater percentage of urban ACs raised their voice for better wages at 50.9%. (Table 8.7)

Table 8: Time for Joining Workforce

| Time for Joining Workforce | Percent |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Immediately after          | 24.0    |
| After 3 Months             | 28.0    |
| After 6 Months             | 7.0     |
| One year and more          | 40.0    |
| Total                      | 100.0   |

Table 8.1: First Occupation

| Occupation                        | %    |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Agriculture                       | 57.0 |
| Casual labour                     | 17.0 |
| Construction                      | 6.0  |
| Self Employed                     | 6.0  |
| Mechanic , Electrician and Driver | 4.0  |
| Companies                         | 6.0  |
| Traditional & other skills        | 2.0  |
| Cooking & Bakery                  | 1.0  |
| Total                             | 100  |

Table 8.2 : Whether Engaged in Work During Current Year

|       | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| Yes   | 98.2    |
| No    | 1.8     |
| Total | 100.0   |

Table 8.3: Number of Months with Work

|    | 1-3 months% | 4-7 months% | 8-12 months% |
|----|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| AC | 4.3         | 52.4        | 43.3         |
| AB | 37.5        | 42.2        | 59.2         |
| AG | 62.5        | 57.8        | 40.8         |

First Occupation and Work Experience Thereafter

'I am an SC and studied in a hostel till class 8. After that as my mother was not well I had to stop studying and migrated to work on a construction site at the age of 13. I stayed on site and worked from 6 am to 6 pm as a bonded laborer. I used to carry head loads of sand, cement, small granite and bricks. My stomach muscles used to ache. The contractor used to give my pay to my mother and often used to beat me and abuse me. My earnings helped to pay for my mother's treatment. For my sister's marriage we had to sell away the house at a low price. After this my brother was married. We don't own any land and don't have our own house. My parents built a hut outside the village and that's how we lived. We are now trying to pay off the debts incurred for the sister's marriage. I have cleared my loan with the contractor and am now working in a restaurant. They are paying me Rs.5000 and this is more than what I was earning working on construction. This is also a difficult work as there are a lot of customers and I don't have even a minute's rest.'<sup>51</sup>

I dropped out of school in class 6. My mother tailors sometimes; father sells leafy vegetables and also vegetables. My other 3 siblings are studying. I did chamki work and earned Rs.800 per month for 8 months. Then I took up the work of cutting and folding polythene paper. I go to the company to get material and work from home. I do about 10 kgs per day. I earn @ of Rs.7 per kg. This work causes joint pains so I have to give a break intermittently.'<sup>52</sup>

Once children have been pushed out of schools, they would not sit idle. The question of being totally unemployed did not arise. The work options are based on the parent's experience and network. The compulsion to work and support the family has been of a temporary nature, under extraordinary circumstances. Some have attempted to rejoin schools but have not succeeded

<sup>51</sup> Vippa Shankar, 18 years, Karjalli, Bijpur, Adilabad  
<sup>52</sup> M.D. Sayida, 16 years, Kishanbagh, Bahadurpura, Hyderabad.

and therefore the only option available for the school dropout is to join the labour force sooner than later.

The future of all such children is bleak. While boys survive seeking whatever options available, girls are unable to move to any employment spaces overcoming gender discrimination and patriarchy. They remain as unskilled labour force confined to working in their own homes or in closed spaces such as factories. Both boys and girls are constantly in search of work and within a short span of their life they are exposed to multiplicity of tasks which they engage simultaneously. Therefore, in a year, during seasonal times they work as agricultural labourers and rest of the time they are either in construction work or casual wage labourers. This dynamism of their movement from one kind of work to another for subsistence is difficult to capture. In this effort, even those who have dropped out of classes 9 and 10 have no advantage over those who dropped out at lower classes.

If only the State provided for social and health security and a system of noticing children at risk of leaving the school, they could have been prevented from being pushed out of school.

### Boys-Perceptions in Urban Slums

In a discussion with a gang of youth in a slum with migrant families, on a dried up lake which is often swamped during monsoons, it was found that they were fully aware of the web of networks of local politicians and officials for who they have contempt and think that they deserve no attention. They claim that these 'sharks' were constantly seeking youth support to fight an election or be accomplice to their ill deeds and would do anything to win them over. But these youth were not there to be manipulated and believed would be ready to manipulate. They outright rejected any offers to fund setting up a temple and instead forced them to contribute to their youth club with a small gym. They would not be pawns in the hands of such 'immoral beings' and instead would ensure that the youth were sought after. In the course of discussion one of them stated that he watched Bahubali<sup>53</sup> one hundred and fifty times. They could relate to the 'stars' in the movies, their bodies and masculinity. The message of the triumph of good over evil fighting for justice is what they would like to hear and see over and over again. What came across clearly was that the 15-18 year old boys in urban slums, some of who had barely completed primary school and those who are in higher secondary create a milieu of self-importance as if to hide the deep insecurities of everyday life. They were fully conscious of an unfair and unjust reality and deluded themselves to be the strongest and that they could if they wanted, confront and change the system. They hardly worked for 10 days in a month, and depended largely on their parents for income, and were a fiercely angry lot who have disdain for power and authority.

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<sup>53</sup> A Telugu movie

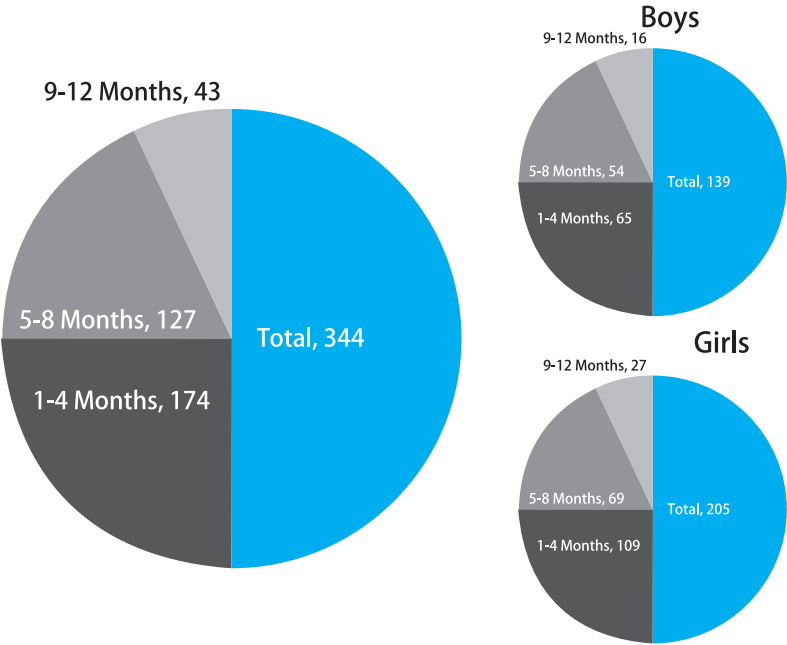


Table 8.4: Nature of Work-Number of Months

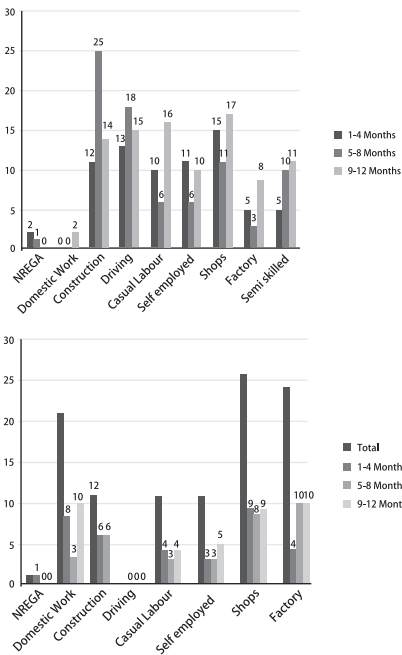
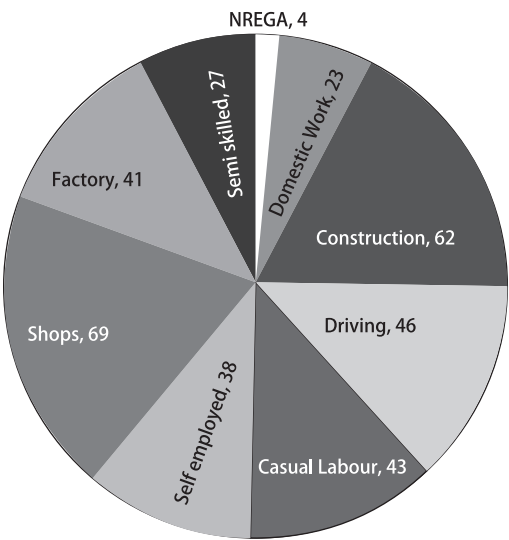
| S.no | Particulars of work | AB/AG | 1-4months | 5-8months | 9-12months | Total |
|------|---------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------|
| 1    | Agriculture labour  | Total | 174       | 127       | 43         | 344   |
|      |                     | AB    | 65        | 58        | 16         | 139   |
|      |                     | AG    | 109       | 69        | 27         | 205   |
| 2    | Shops               | Total | 24        | 19        | 26         | 69    |
|      |                     | AB    | 15        | 11        | 17         | 43    |
|      |                     | AG    | 9         | 8         | 9          | 26    |
| 3    | Construction        | Total | 17        | 31        | 14         | 62    |
|      |                     | AB    | 11        | 25        | 14         | 50    |
|      |                     | AG    | 6         | 6         | 0          | 12    |
| 4    | Driving             | Total | 13        | 18        | 15         | 46    |
|      |                     | AB    | 13        | 18        | 15         | 46    |
|      |                     | AG    | 0         | 0         | 0          | 0     |
| 5    | Casual labour       | Total | 14        | 9         | 20         | 43    |
|      |                     | AB    | 10        | 6         | 16         | 32    |
|      |                     | AG    | 4         | 3         | 4          | 11    |
| 6    | Factory             | Total | 9         | 13        | 19         | 41    |
|      |                     | AB    | 5         | 3         | 9          | 17    |
|      |                     | AG    | 4         | 10        | 10         | 24    |
| 7    | Self employed       | Total | 14        | 9         | 15         | 38    |
|      |                     | AB    | 11        | 6         | 10         | 27    |
|      |                     | AG    | 3         | 3         | 5          | 11    |
| 8    | Semi skilled        | Total | 5         | 10        | 11         | 26    |
|      |                     | AB    | 5         | 10        | 11         | 26    |
|      |                     | AG    | 0         | 0         | 0          | 0     |
| 9    | Domestic work       | Total | 8         | 3         | 12         | 23    |
|      |                     | AB    | 0         | 0         | 2          | 2     |
|      |                     | AG    | 8         | 3         | 10         | 21    |
| 10   | NREGA               | Total | 3         | 1         | 0          | 4     |
|      |                     | AB    | 2         | 1         | 0          | 3     |
|      |                     | AG    | 1         | 0         | 0          | 1     |



Agriculture Labour



Non-Agriculture Labour



Questioning-Loss of Job

'I am a school dropout in class 8 and belong to the ST tribal community. We migrated 10 years ago from Mahbubnagar to Hyderabad. We live in a hut. I took care of my brothers when I dropped out. Later I was admitted in a private school but dropped out when the fees were unaffordable. I am now working in a paper glass manufacturing company. Initially I was paid Rs. 40 and later paid Rs. 100. I was dismissed when I asked for a raise. I am now unemployed.'<sup>54</sup>

Table 8.5: Questioning Hours of Work and Wages

| % Who questioned  |                  | %Who did not question | Total |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| For Hours of work | For better wages |                       |       |
| 9.6               | 10.5             | 79.9                  | 100.0 |

Table 8.6: Questioning Hours of Work and Wages- Gender

|    | Hours of Work % | For better wages % | Did not question% | Total% |
|----|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|
| AB | 57.7            | 64.9               | 50.1              | 52.5   |
| AG | 42.3            | 35.1               | 49.9              | 47.5   |

Table 8.6: Questioning Hours of Work and Wages- Gender

|       | Hours of Work % | For better wages % | Did not question% | Total% |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Rural | 67.3            | 49.1               | 76.6              | 72.6   |
| Urban | 32.7            | 50.9               | 23.4              | 27.4   |
| Total | 100.0           | 100.0              | 100.0             | 100.0% |

6.5. Work Conditions of the Migrant Adolescent Worker

Since several parents were migrant labour, this section deals with their children who migrated for work and whether they went with the family or on their own. It also analyses their conditions of work as migrants.

27% of AC went on migration for work of whom 66% were AB and 34% were AG. 52% of them went with their families of whom 38% were AB and 80% were AG. While 40% among AB went alone on migration 4% of AG went alone on migration. 12% of AG went in a group and 5% of AB went as a group (Table 9.1).

34% lived on the work site and rest of them in the slums (basti). For those who lived in the slums the arrangement for dwelling was made by the contractors in 48% of cases and 17% depended

<sup>54</sup> V.Kavitha, 17 years, Amruthanagar Thanda, Balanagar, Rangareddy

on their relatives (Table 9.2). 49% of them had water and toilet facilities on the work site. Most of them made their own arrangements to procure food grains with 50% of them carrying it from home and 28% buying it in the local grocery stores. In 13% of cases the employers made arrangements for their food while on migration (Table 9.3).

More than a quarter of the AC have migrated for work, majority of them being boys. It is noted that while girls went along with their families or in groups as migrant labourers, boys went alone. Many of them had to struggle for basic necessities like shelter, drinking water, food, and toilet and so on.

**Table 9.1: Details of Migration  
– Gender wise**

|              | AB%   | AG%   | AC%   |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| With Family  | 38.0  | 80.0  | 52.0  |
| Alone        | 41.0  | 4.0   | 28.0  |
| As a Group   | 5.0   | 12.0  | 7.0   |
| With Friends | 16.0  | 4.0   | 12.0  |
| Grand Total  | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

**Table 9.2: Migrant Labour – Support  
Persons for Dwelling in Basti**

|               | %      |
|---------------|--------|
| Friends       | 2.0    |
| Relatives     | 17.0   |
| Contractor    | 48.0   |
| Other specify | 33.0   |
| Total         | 100.0% |

**Table 9.3: Migrant Labour- Arrangement for Food**

|                             | %     |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Carried food gains          | 50.0  |
| Bought from local groceries | 28.0  |
| Employer arranged           | 13.0  |
| Others                      | 8.0   |
| Total                       | 100.0 |

### 6.6. Sharing of Wages Earned with Parents

While children who are out of school are engaged in work variously, this section focuses on the payments that are made to the children by the employers. It seeks to find out how much of the wages children receive directly from the employer is shared with their parents. It also seeks to know if the wages are actually being paid directly to the parents by the employers. Further, whether these children have a share in the wages earned, what did they spend their wage on and how comfortable are they in asking their parents for cash and what were their major items of expenditure?

86.2% of AC shared the wages earned by them with their parents and 4.9% of AC who received wages directly from their employers did not share wages with parents. In the case of 8.9% of AC, the employers paid their wages to the parents directly (Table 11). Among those who shared their wages 76.5% were from rural and 23.5% were from urban areas. Of those who shared their

wages with the parents, 74.7% shared totally, of whom 62% were AB and 88.9% were AG (Tables 11.1). It is seen that among those who received wages directly from their employers and shared it with their parents 66.4% of them dropped out on classes 6-10 when compared to the 33.6% who never went to school and dropped out of school in classes 1 - 5. (Table 11.2) Among those who received wages from the employers directly and did not share it with parents 59% were from classes 6-10 when compared to the 41% from classes 1-5 and those who never went to school. More than 70% of AC of all classes from 1-10 shared their wages with the parents. It is interesting that children who reached up to classes 9 and 10 shared all their earnings with their parents when compared to those who never went to school. (Table 11.3)

**Table 11: Details of Wages Shared with Family**

|   | Percent |
|---|---------|
| AC who receive wages directly from employer and shared it with parents        | 86.2    |
| AC who receive wages directly from employer and did not share it with parents | 4.9     |
| Parents who get wages of their children directly from employer                | 8.9     |
| Total   | 100     |

**Table 11.1: Details of Wages Shared with Family**

|                | AB %  | AG %  |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| Some Extent    | 1.8   | 0.4   |
| Half           | 17.5  | 4.5   |
| More than Half | 18.6  | 6.1   |
| Total Earnings | 62.0  | 88.9  |
| Total          | 100.0 | 100.0 |

**Table 11.2: Sharing of Wages with Parents- Class wise**

|  | Class 1 - 5% | Class 6 -10% | Total% |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------|
| AC who received wages directly from employer and shared it with parents        | 22.6         | 66.4         | 100    |
| AC who received wages directly from employer and did not share it with parents | 30.0         | 59.0         | 100    |
| Parents who get wages of their children directly from employer                 | 33.0         | 67.0         | 100    |

**Table 11.3: Details of Wages Shared With Parents: Class wise**

|                      | Half % | More than Half % | Total Earnings % | Total% |
|----------------------|--------|------------------|------------------|--------|
| Never Gone to School | 9.0    | 61.6             | 25.4             | 100    |
| Class 1-5            | 11.1   | 12.7             | 76.2             | 100    |
| Class 6-8            | 14.1   | 14.1             | 70.9             | 100    |
| Class 9              | 13.6   | 6.8              | 79.7             | 100    |
| Class 10             | 11.1   | 14.3             | 71.4             | 100    |
| Total                | 12.7   | 13.1             | 73.3             | 100    |

48% of the AC stated that the parents gave them money whenever they asked for it, while 50 % of AC stated that they got it sometimes only and not all times (Table 11.4). It is noted that 60% of AC felt uncomfortable to ask for money from parents of whom there were 52% AB and 48% AG. However of the 37.5% of AC who always felt uncomfortable to ask 65.4% were AG when compared to 34.6% AB. In a way boys had greater freedom to ask parents when compared to girls (Table 11.5).

The most frequent item of expenditure in the preceding fortnight was on cosmetics by AG. This was followed by expenditure on clothes mostly by AB. AG did not make much expenditure on recharging of mobile phones, cinema, travel including motorcycle and alcohol. Apparently, they had limited mobility and networks. But, on food and health, such as for hospital, doctor and medicines the expenditure incurred by both AB and AG was almost on par. In fact, the expenses on health and groceries were contribution to the household expenditure, while other items were consumed by them directly. (Table 11.6)

It is found that most children handed over the wages they earn to their parents. Instances where the wages were paid directly to the parents, the girls outnumbered boys. It is significant that more children who studied classes 6 and above handed over wages to parents when compared to those who never went to school or studied only up to class 5. This indicates that those who dropped out of school at an early stage joined the work force because they had nothing better to do being out of school. They worked not due to compulsions of earning an income and so there was no question of sharing their wages. Subsequently even when they started to earn they did not share their wages. Further, only 48% of them stated that their parents gave them money for expenses whenever they asked for it and the rest of them stated that this was quite infrequent. More girls than boys felt uncomfortable to ask their parents for money.

Sharing of Wages

"I started working as a scavenger from the time I was in class 2 and dropped out of school in class 6. I worked from 7:30 to 8:30 am and 3:30 to 6:30 pm while studying in school. I did scavenging and also worked as an agriculture laborer. Mother would hit me if I said I didn't want to work. I never got any money for expenses. My mother uses all the money for drinking. My brother stays with my uncle and they take his salary. My salary is used to run the house. Why do they have to have children if they cannot bring them up."<sup>55</sup>

Table 11.4 Frequency of Share of Wages from Parents for Expenses

|           | Percent |
|-----------|---------|
| Yes       | 48.0    |
| No        | 3.0     |
| Sometimes | 50.0    |
| Total     | 100.0   |

Table 11.5: Feeling Uncomfortable to ask Parents for Money

|           | AB%  | AG%  | AC%  |
|-----------|------|------|------|
| Never     | 52.0 | 48.0 | 60.5 |
| Sometimes | 28.5 | 71.5 | 2.0  |
| Always    | 34.6 | 65.4 | 37.5 |

<sup>55</sup> Sirisha, 17 yrs, Nandanavanam, Saroornagar, RR Dt

Table 11.6: Items of Expenditure in the Preceding Fortnight

| S.No | Item                    | AB%  | AG%  |
|------|-------------------------|------|------|
| 1    | Cosmetics               | 20.8 | 79.2 |
| 2    | Clothes                 | 61.6 | 38.4 |
| 3    | Groceries               | 56.6 | 43.4 |
| 4    | Mobile phone Recharging | 91.4 | 8.6  |
| 5    | Health                  | 53.2 | 46.8 |
| 6    | Cinema                  | 92.2 | 7.8  |
| 7    | Travel                  | 76.3 | 23.7 |
| 8    | Motor cycle             | 91.8 | 8.2  |
| 9    | Alcohol                 | 89.6 | 10.4 |

The adolescent children did have anxious moments of not having any work to do and most of them-both boys and girls- felt helpless for not having money to spend on themselves - this was followed by feeling sorry for one self for not pursuing education and to be scolded by parents. Most boys when compared to girls feared being ridiculed for not having work and also having to incur debts. On the other hand most girls found it easier to ask their parents for money when compared to boys (Table 12).

Table 12: Anxieties When Not Found Work

|  | Male % | Female% |
|--|--------|---------|
| To be ridiculed  | 30.0   | 19.0    |
| To be scolded by parents                               | 60     | 61      |
| To feel helpless for not having money to spend on self | 77.0   | 80.0    |
| To feel sorry for myself for not pursuing education    | 73.0   | 76.0    |
| To feel bad that I am unable to ask parents for money  | 45.0   | 55.0    |
| To incur debts or any other anxiety                    | 34.0   | 24.0    |

### 6.7. Health

The work rendered by adolescent children is harmful to their health and could cause serious injuries. Most children engaged in agriculture work complained of cuts and bruises and being forced to work in spite of having fever. Normally, they are laid off from work for 3 to 6 days.

The work of construction labourers, brick kiln workers, head load carriers, tractor drivers, bore well site and mining caused injuries resulting in fractures of limbs and head injuries, wounds, debilitating them for a month and even more. The home based labour and domestic worker complained about fever and head ache. The hotel and dhaba workers had head injuries and burns. (Table 13)

Health

'I am a garbage collector and dropped out of school in class 3. I start work at 7 am and do my rounds of collecting garbage. Don't feel like eating after that, but force myself to eat. I get all kinds of skin infections and have breathing problem.<sup>56</sup>

'We are 6 members in our family. My brother is married and his family is living with us. I studied in a private school. When I was in class 7 I dropped out of school as father was diagnosed with diabetes and a lot of money was spent on his health. We took loans and to pay off debts, migrated to Hyderabad from Mahbubnagar. I worked in a stable against the loan of Rs. 5000 as bonded labour. I loved the horses, animals. The situation at home deteriorated and there was difficulty for food too. Meanwhile, I was employed as a DCM cleaner. I learned to drive in 2 years. I got addicted to tobacco and drinks while hanging out with my friends in childhood. I spend on phone charges and cinema once a week. My health is also affected. I drive till late in the night and my eyesight has been affected. I went to the govt hospital for treatment and it has improved. Mother works in the sewage and that has affected her health.<sup>57</sup>

Table 13:Occupational Hazards

| Particulars of Occupation | Nature of Health Hazard | Days laid off from work |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Agriculture               | Fever                   | 3                       |
|                           | Fallen down             | 2                       |
|                           | Small cut with sickle   | 5                       |
|                           | Injury on head          | 5                       |
|                           | Bitten by snake         | 2                       |
|                           | Broken arm              | 45                      |
| Self Cultivating Farmer   | Fever                   | 2                       |
| Domestic Work on wage     | Fever                   | 2                       |
| Construction Labour       | Fracture Hand           | 60                      |
| Brick Kilns               | Injury on head          | 92                      |
| On Tractor                | Leg Facture             | 70                      |
| Head Load Carrier         | Knee Pain               | 1                       |
| Bore well site            | Fever                   | 1                       |
| Auto Rickshaw             | Head injury             | 60                      |
| Hotels & Dhabas           | Back pain               | 30                      |
|                           | Head Injury             | 30                      |

<sup>56</sup> Yellamma, 17 yrs, (Kadmoor, Shabad Mandal, RRDt) Vambe Colony, Saroornagar, Block No.92, RRDt

<sup>57</sup> K.Srinivas, 17 years, (Janampeta, Kothakota, MHB), Bharatnagar, Saroornagar

Almost every child has experienced some health condition like aches and pains, injuries at work place and other ailments due to their work. They do not have any support system from the government to mitigate their health condition, nor are the employers held responsible to provide a safe working environment and compensate for the health hazards. This has resulted in enormous expenditure on their health, anxiety and affecting their capacity to work.

6.8. Leisure

The children in the study i.e. 15-18 year olds are in an age when they are supposed to discover themselves, their confidence and self-esteem in spending time much more with their peers than with the family. Given their life circumstances how often do they meet their friends and does that vary based on gender, rural or urban child and the grade at which the child dropped out of school. Do they watch TV, films, attend social functions, go on a pilgrimage and how much time would they spend on this?

6.8.1. Time with Friends

Of 6.2% of AC who never spent time with friends 44.1% were AB and 55.9% were AG. Of 14.1% who rarely spent time with friends 32.1% were AB and 67.9% AG. Of 50.9% who often spent time with friends 52.5% were AB and 47.5% were AG. Of the 28.8% of AC who spent time with friends daily, 64.2% were AB and 50.9% were AG.

Among the AB 5.2% never spent time with friends, 8.7% rarely spent time with friends 50.9% often and 35.3% spent time with friends daily. Among the AG and AB 7.3% never spent time with friends, 20.2% rarely spent time with friends 50.8% often and 21.8% spent time with friends daily (Table 14 and 14.1).

Table 14: Time with Friends

|        | AB%    | AG%    | AC%   |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Daily  | 35.3   | 21.8   | 28.8  |
| Often  | 50.9   | 50.8   | 50.9  |
| Rarely | 8.7    | 20.2   | 14.1  |
| Never  | 5.2    | 7.3    | 6.2   |
| Total  | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0 |

Table 14.1: Time with Friends-  
Comparison –Gender wise

|    | Daily% | Often% | Rarely% | Never% | Total% |
|----|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| AB | 64.2   | 52.5   | 32.1    | 44.1   | 52.5   |
| AG | 35.8   | 47.5   | 67.9    | 55.9   | 47.5   |
|    | 100.0  | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0  | 100.0  |

Table 14.2: Time with Friends-Rural/Urban

|       | Daily% | Often% | Rarely% | Never% | Total% |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| Rural | 71.7   | 76.8   | 75.6    | 35.3   | 72.6   |
| Urban | 28.3   | 23.2   | 24.4    | 64.7   | 27.4   |
| Total | 100.0  | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0  | 100.0  |



Among the AC who spent time with friends daily 71.7% was rural and 28.3% in urban. Of those who spent time often 76.8% were rural and 23.2% were urban. 75.6% of rural and 24.4% of urban AC rarely spent time with friends and 35.3% of rural AC and 64.7% of urban AC never spent time with friends. (Table 14.2)

It is noticed that boys have kept in touch with their friends on a daily basis and more often than the girls. Further, girls rarely or never kept in touch with friends. Also, the urban children have rarely or never kept in touch with their friends when compared to the rural children. There is not much of a variation, class wise, in the time spent with friends. It shows that they are far more isolated from their peer group reflecting on the lack of support and camaraderie. For the urban children too this reflects their isolation and tells upon their lifestyle that does not include community cohesiveness.

### **6.8.2. Watching TV**

It is seen that nearly 20% of the AC never watched TV and 8% of them rarely watched TV of whom there were more number of girls than boys (Table 15). Thus among the AB, 32.1% watched daily, 43.4% watched often, 9% rarely watched and 15.5% never watched TV. Among the AG, 42% watched daily, 27.5% watched often, 6.9% rarely watched and 23.7% never watched TV. (Table 15.1).

65.5% watch TV daily in the rural areas as against the 34.5% in the urban area. 73.7% watch TV often in rural area as against 26.3% in urban area. 63.6% are from rural area as against 36.4% in urban area among those who rarely watch TV. 87.9% in rural areas never watch TV when compared to 12.1% in urban area (Table 15.2).

Thus, among the 80% of those who watched TV, it is girls who watch TV daily when compared to boys and there is a greater percentage of TV watching in rural areas when compared to urban areas.

### **6.8.3. Going for a Movie**

On the contrary 60% of AC did not go to see films (Table 15.3). Among AB 40.3% never went to films; 24.5 % watched once or twice; 12.4% watched thrice to four times and 22.8% watched 5 times and above in a year. Among AG 81.7% never went to films; 13.4 % watched once or twice; 2.3% watched thrice to four times and 2.7 watched 5 times and above in a year (Table 15.4). It is noticeable that 78.9 % of rural AC never went to films when compared to 21.1% of urban area.

It is seen that a majority of children do not go to watch movies and most of them being girls. In fact among those who watched movies, girls would have been to the theatre not more than twice in a year when compared to boys. Even among boys most of them would have watched only once or twice and very few went more often. Watching a movie is scarce also because most of the respondents were from rural areas when compared to urban areas.

**Table 15: Watching TV**

|        | Percent |
|--------|---------|
| Daily  | 36.8    |
| Often  | 35.9    |
| Rarely | 8.0     |
| Never  | 19.4    |
| Total  | 100.0   |

**Table 15.1: Frequency of Watching TV – Gender wise**

|    | Daily % | Often % | Rarely % | Never % | Total % |
|----|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| AB | 32.1    | 43.4    | 9.0      | 15.5    | 100.0   |
| AG | 42.0%   | 27.5    | 6.9      | 23.7    | 100.0   |

**Table 15.2: Frequency of Watching TV – Rural, Urban**

|       | Daily% | Often% | Rarely% | Never% | Total% |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| Rural | 65.5   | 73.7   | 63.6    | 87.9   | 72.7   |
| Urban | 34.5   | 26.3   | 36.4    | 12.1   | 27.3   |
| Total | 100.0  | 100.0  | 100.0   | 100.0  | 100.0  |

**Table 15.3: Frequency of Watching Films in a Year**

|             | Percent |
|-------------|---------|
| None        | 60.0    |
| 1-2         | 19.2    |
| 3-4         | 7.6     |
| 5 and Above | 13.2    |
| Total       | 100.0   |

**Table 15.4: Frequency of Watching Films in a Year- Gender wise**

|       | None% | 1-2 months% | 3-4 months% | 5 months & Above% | Total% |
|-------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|--------|
| AB    | 40.3  | 24.5        | 12.4        | 22.8              | 100.0  |
| AG    | 81.7  | 13.4        | 2.3         | 2.7               | 100.0  |
| Total | 60.0% | 19.0%       | 7.6         | 13.2              | 100.0  |

**Table 15.5: Pilgrimage in a year – Gender Comparison**

|       | Yes% | No%  |
|-------|------|------|
| AB    | 36.0 | 64.0 |
| AG    | 23.8 | 76.2 |
| Total | 30.2 | 69.8 |

**Table 15.6: Pilgrimage in a Year – Rural & Urban**

|       | Yes%  | No%   | Total% |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Rural | 66.3  | 75.3  | 72.5   |
| Urban | 33.7  | 24.7  | 27.5   |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0  |

#### 6.8.4. On a pilgrimage

30.1% of AC who went on pilgrimage in a year, 62.7 % were AB and 37.3% were AG. Among the AB 36% and 23.8% among AG went on pilgrimage (Table 15.5). 66.3% of rural went when compared to 33.7% of urban who went on pilgrimage (Table 15.6).

Even with regards to going on a pilgrimage, it was more number of boys than girls who went on a pilgrimage and a greater percentage of those who went on a pilgrimage were from rural areas.

In fact boys have a greater mobility and autonomy to take decisions on going out whether for a movie or on a pilgrimage when compared to girls.

6.8.5. Involvement in Social Functions

Only 7.2% of AC celebrated their birthday. This is expected as many of them would not even know their date of birth.

Only 66.8% of AC attended functions of friends. Among AB, 67.5% attended functions of friends and relatives and among AGs 66% spent time attending functions of friends and relatives (Table 16.1). Of those who visited functions of friends and relatives 33% of them spent 1-3 days , 30% 4-7 days, 21% of them spent 8-10 days, 5% spent 11-15 days, 7% spent 16-20 days and 5% spent 21 days and more (Table 16.2).

The time given to socialising with friends during the year is quite significant. Both boys and girls have spent a couple of days to attend functions of relatives and friends. Based on narratives it is found that boys made adjustments in work to attend functions. Girls, on the other hand, could attend functions as many of them were not involved in wage work.

Leisure and Friends

'I am an SC and dropped out of school in class 5. I have 2 brothers, one older and the other younger. I had to take on my mother's work as she was not well. Now, I have stopped working and stay at home. I don't meet friends, see films or even watch TV. Father is a painter. Mother is at home.'<sup>58</sup>

'I dropped out of school in class 9 and studied in Urdu medium school. My parents work in kirana shop and also as agriculture labourers. We are 5 family members including grandmother. My father then stopped my education. I was told that I had to be at home and not talk to anybody. My mother goes to work sometimes and I accompany her'.

Table 16.1 Attending functions of Friends-Gender wise

|       | Yes% | No%  | Total% |
|-------|------|------|--------|
| AB    | 67.5 | 32.5 | 100.0  |
| AG    | 66.0 | 34.0 | 100.0  |
| Total | 66.8 | 33.2 | 100.0  |

Table 16.2 Attending functions of Friends-No. of Days

|                   | Percent |
|-------------------|---------|
| 1-3 days          | 33.0    |
| 4-7 days          | 30.0    |
| 8-10 days         | 21.0    |
| 11-15 days        | 5.0     |
| 16-20 days        | 7.0     |
| More than 21 days | 5.0     |
| Total             | 100.0   |

<sup>58</sup> R.Lakshmi, 18 years, (Saroornagar, RRDt), Devinagar, Saroornagar, RR Dt

### 6.8.6. Substance Abuse

Only 4% of AC mentioned that they smoked and 71% of them began smoking when they were between 15-18 years of age; 11.9% consumed alcohol and 83% began when they were 15-18 years of age. 13% chewed paan/gutka and 67% began at the age of 15-18 years (Table 17). Most of them were girls. They spent Rs.20 per day on a packet of gutka.

#### Substance Abuse

'I am a Class 7 drop out and BC. I didn't listen to my parents and did not study because of my friends. I work from 7am to 7pm as a painter and my health is not good. I have got into debts. I am addicted to cigarettes and alcohol'.<sup>59</sup>

'I studied in the village school and later the school was not accessible so I discontinued in class 4. I got habituated to gutka in childhood; I consume 2 packets a day now. My mother tried hard to break this habit but I continue.'<sup>60</sup>

Table 17

| Substance        | Yes % | Age at Which Habit Begins |               |
|------------------|-------|---------------------------|---------------|
|                  |       | 10-14 years %             | 15-18 years % |
| Beedi, Cigarette | 4.0   | 29.0                      | 71.0          |
| Alcohol          | 11.9  | 17.0                      | 83.0          |
| Gutka            | 11.0  | 36.5                      | 63.5          |

## 7. Reach of Labour Department

Most children are daily wage earners, casual labour and do not have work every day nor do they have a stable source of earnings. There are also those who are employed as bonded laborers or have been employed as bonded laborers. Under the labour laws the labour department has a duty to ensure their labor rights are protected. Did they encounter the labour officials any time?

Only 22 of the total number of AC were approached by the Labour officers while at work. Of them 18 were AB and 4 were AG. The enquiry was mostly about hours of work, followed by legally acceptable age at which a person should work on mines, health hazards and entitlements while at work and minimum wages (Table 18.1). Except for one case that was an agricultural laborer and studied up to class 10, none approached the government for grievance redressal and only 2 employers were penalized for not complying with the labour laws.

The law does not penalize employment of adolescent children in work. Although there are reports of labour department conducting inspections, it is bound by the labour laws for adults.

<sup>59</sup> B.Bharath, 17 years (Thimmapalli, Arvapalli, NLG), Bharatnagar, Saroornagar, RR Dt

<sup>60</sup> P.Yashoda, 17 years, Dindha,, Bejjur, Adilabad

**Table 18.1 Details of Inquiry by Labour Officer**

|  | Yes |
|--|-----|
| Were you asked about your hours of work  | 12  |
| About pension  | 2   |
| About ESI  | 1   |
| About minimum wages  | 7   |
| About over time  | 3   |
| About labour rights  | 0   |
| About your health entitlements and compensations for injury                    | 8   |
| About Bonded Labour Act and the procedure for release from bondage             | 3   |
| Advised to quit work which is prohibited for above 16 years Mines and Minerals | 11  |

## 8. Skill Training

There is a view that skill training is a path to the well being of out of school children and their future and also for the economic development of the nation. This section tries to understand the preparedness of the children for acquiring skills and their own perceptions on skill and education.

9.8% of AC acquired skills while at work. 43% of them were trained as drivers, 19% as mechanics, 13% in tailoring (Table 19.1).

10% of the fathers were artisans like barbers, drummers and in leather work. 6% learned the skill from their father and among them 7% pursued the skill of their father's occupation. 36.1% expressed their aspiration to complete education. Majority of AC at 47% wanted to acquire a new skill while 16.9% wanted to upgrade their skill in the occupation they were engaged in. (Table 19.2)

Muslims constitute 12.5% of the sample of whom 65.2% are AB and 34.8% are AG (Table 19.3) 12.1% of Muslims never went to schools when compared to 10.9% of those from non-Muslim community who never went to school. The percentage of Muslims who dropped out of school before completion of primary school and at the elementary school level is larger than the non-Muslims. In a way there are far fewer Muslims who reached up to 9th class and 10th class (Table 19.4). The occupation profile shows that while most non-Muslims were engaged in agricultural activities at 60.1% and a lesser percentage in all other occupations, the Muslim AC had more even distribution of its adolescents across occupations. It is significant that 25.3% were engaged in semi-skilled jobs, when compared to only 1.4% in semi-skilled jobs among non-Muslims. Being concentrated in urban areas, 18.7% of Muslims worked in shops, 10.6% in factories and 20% were self-employed (Table 19.5) However there was only 5.3% of AG in the semi-skilled occupations. Most Muslim AG were self-employed working on piece rate in embroidery, zari, sticking chamki on garments etc. Significantly, there is nil percentage of self-employed non-Muslim girl (Table 19.6).

Almost every child was pushed out of school as the school had no capacity to understand and empathise with the first generation learners. Being out of school, parents had the only option to put them into some work about which they had some familiarity. They all began mainly as agricultural labourers. Some among them developed networks and sought to diversify their work joining as construction workers.

It is obvious that boys in the Muslim community have found their vocation in work that involves knowing some skill and discipline. They repair fridges and air conditioners, automobiles and bikes, weld and solder, are painters and electricians and acquired skills on the job. Their professions require meticulous attention to detail as even a minor mistake could cause harm to them. They aspire to sharpen the skills which could take them to a higher-end production process. Perhaps this is due to the networks in their circles that give them such opportunities and confidence to take up these tasks. It was rare for the non-Muslims to have exposure to these kinds of work.

On the hand, children in the agricultural sector aspired to learn music, art and work in the entertainment sector. They wanted to complete their education.

### Aspirations

'We are 4 in the family. I studied up to class 9. I was very disruptive in class so I was dismissed. I dropped out then. I was at home after that. Whenever I asked for money for my expenses there were arguments at home and so I started to work in a bar shop. While I was collecting the empty beer bottles I fell down and hurt my knee by a broken beer bottle. I now work in a kirana shop. I would like to go back to school and study class 10. I will be a model student and study well.'<sup>61</sup>

'My father works as a sweeper on contract basis in the Municipality at Hyderabad. We are 2 brothers and belong to SC community. I am younger and was admitted in a private school. Father drinks, mother is indifferent so I bunked classes. My paternal uncle was unwell and admitted in hospital and my mother went to take care of him and took me along. Later I didn't like to go back to school. I used to loaf around and dropped out of school in class 5. I am now with a band. I give half my salary at home and use the rest for myself. I would like to become a music artist.'<sup>62</sup>

'There was severe drought in my village and in all the villages around. Families after families left the villages on migration. Our family too. I dropped out of school in class 7 and engaged as a bonded labour for 3 years against a loan taken in another village. After 3 years when there was rain all of us went back home and began working as agricultural labourers. I would like to do my higher studies through open schools and qualify for a constable's job. My parents discouraged me from this as they felt I couldn't go back to studies.'<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Alakunta Venkatesh, 16 years, Leninnagar, Saroornagar, RR Dt.

<sup>62</sup> Jeedimetla Narender, 18 years, Harijanbasti, Sanathnagar, Balanagar, Rangareddy

<sup>63</sup>

Table 19.1: Nature of Skills

| Skill                      | %    |
|----------------------------|------|
| Driving                    | 43.0 |
| Electronics and Mechanical | 19.0 |
| Tailoring                  | 13.0 |
| Others                     | 13.0 |
| Construction               | 7.0  |
| Cooking and Bakery         | 6.0  |
| Total                      | 100  |

Table 19.2 Aspirations

|                                     | %    |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Completing Education                | 36.1 |
| Acquiring skill of same trade.      | 16.9 |
| Acquiring skill of some other trade | 47.0 |

Table 19.3: Profile of Muslim AB and AG

|             | Boys % | Girls% | Total% |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Muslims     | 65.2   | 34.8   | 12.5   |
| Non-Muslims | 49.7   | 50.3   | 87.5   |

Table 19.4: Education Profile of Muslims and Non-Muslims

|                      | Muslims % |      |      | Non- Muslims % |      |      |
|----------------------|-----------|------|------|----------------|------|------|
|                      | AB        | AG   | AC   | AB             | AG   | AC   |
| Never went to School | 62.5      | 37.5 | 12.1 | 34.0           | 66   | 10.9 |
| Classes 1-5          | 58.8      | 41.1 | 25.7 | 37.5           | 62.5 | 24.7 |
| Classes 6-8          | 70.5      | 29.4 | 51.5 | 58.3           | 41.6 | 38.1 |
| Class 9              | 50        | 50   | 6.06 | 54.3           | 45.6 | 11.7 |
| Class 10             | 66.6      | 33.3 | 4.5  | 54.2           | 45.7 | 14.4 |

Table 19.5-Occupation Profile of Muslims and Non-Muslims

|                     | Muslim% | Non - Muslim% |
|---------------------|---------|---------------|
| Agricultural labour | 16      | 60.1          |
| Construction worker | 5.3     | 10.5          |
| Self employed       | 20      | 4.2           |
| Driving             | 4       | 7.8           |
| Factory             | 10.6    | 6.0           |
| Shops               | 18.7    | 10.0          |
| Semi skilled        | 25.3    | 1.4           |

Table 19.6- Occupation Profile Muslim-Non-Muslim -Gender

|                     | Muslims % |      | Non – Muslims% |      |
|---------------------|-----------|------|----------------|------|
|                     | AB        | AG   | AB             | AG   |
| Agricultural labour | 50        | 50   | 40.1           | 59.9 |
| Construction worker | 75        | 25   | 81.0           | 19.0 |
| Self employed       | 26.7      | 73.3 | 100            | 0    |
| Driving             | 100       | -    | 100            | 0    |
| Factory             | 75        | 25   | 33.3           | 66.7 |
| Shops               | 71.4      | 29.6 | 60             | 40   |
| Semi skilled        | 94.7      | 5.3  | 100            | 0    |



## Chapter 3

# Conclusion

In the decade from 2001 to 2011 it is seen that there has been an overall 27.2% decrease in the participation of children in 15-19 years in the workforce in Telangana when compared to an all India increase of 5.0%. It also shows that in Telangana the decrease in female workforce is much greater than in male workforce. The literates among female workforce both in rural and urban, among main workers and marginal workers has increased three fold from Census 2001 to Census 2011 and there has also been an overall increase in the literates among workforce in Telangana. It is seen that there is a direct link between the reduction of participation of children in the workforce and their education.

### **Out of School Children- Characteristics**

This study is about those adolescent children in the 15-18 years age group who are out of school and have not made it to complete class 10. It is not about those who are part of the success story of education of the 15-19 year olds' in Telangana, but about those trapped in existential day to day hardships for fulfilling basic needs and are struggling for survival.<sup>64</sup> It is about those children for whom the State and its public institutions had no role to play in their lives.

The vulnerability of such children while living with uncertainties and loss of self-esteem is unimaginable. Their dreams are limited to tomorrow, perhaps a day without servility and humiliation. They hope to wade through moments of uncertainty in anticipation that they would find work. They move from one kind of work to the other looking for their next meal throughout their childhood and adolescence. They remain unhealthy and do not complain or seek medical advice till they become totally incapacitated. By then the health risk is greater and also gets more expensive. This adds to their anxiety as they experience their body withering away. Many of them live in fractured families with alcoholic fathers, witnessing domestic violence and grow up feeling helpless. Yet, it is their family and their home that gives them stability.

Their memories of going to school, whether government or private school, are not pleasant at all. Teachers do not come. If they do, they do not teach, if they did teach they are just not able to understand and if they sought clarifications they are punished. In the tribal areas there is a school only up to class 5 and after that children are to walk through the forests for 8 kms at least. Many have discontinued their education. Those in the cities have been to school but soon dropped out because nothing was happening in school. Some boys took admission into private schools that signifies the aspiration of parents for their children and their education. But they have not survived due to the extraordinary expenses involved in being students of private schools. When such children sought to shift to a government school, they could not do so for want of a transfer certificate. The private schools would not issue a certificate till all dues were cleared. Thus children dropped out to join the labor force.

<sup>64</sup> See M.V.Foundation Champions – Voice of Girls: A Study of First Generation Girl Students in Senior Secondary Schools of Telangana, 2015, for the factors leading to success of first generation girl students. der, 18 years, Harijanbasti, Sanathnagar, Balanagar, Rangareddy

## State Failure-Cost of Inaction

Clearly, this anomie in the lives of out of school children is an indication of failure of State at every stage of their life. It has failed them at all stages of their education from primary school to secondary education and has tolerated and ignored the reality of these children being out-of-school. This failure is evident in the provisioning of half-hearted education system teasing children with lack of investments in school teachers and infrastructure and its incapacity to reach out to them, with no culture to empathize with poor children and the first generation learner.

There is no well-endowed institutional framework offering protection of these children from child labour, abuse, violence and trafficking. The services of the Juvenile Justice system in terms of the Child Welfare Committee, institutional and non-institutional services of care and protection and integrated child protection scheme are skeletal and have not touched any of these children. Girls are condemned to suffer gender discrimination and values of patriarchy without reach of any State functionary giving them assistance.

The burden of the state's inability to provide social protection, food security, employment, access to credit and livelihood support for their parents, ensuring just labour laws, safety at workplace and universal health care falls on adolescent children.

Thus the cost of State inaction results in whole generations of children in the 15-18 years that is getting more and more marginalized and excluded from their rightful share of State resources and action. They pay a huge price by becoming part of the work force that is stagnant with little scope for bettering their lives. Having missed out on education and benefits thereof, their fate is sealed. Each year there is a new cohort that gets added to a similar fate.

## Formal Education for Every Child Out of School

The challenge is in the State reaching out to each and every child who has been denied her basic entitlements, providing them with opportunities to complete secondary school and in fully recognizing that out of school children are not a homogenous group.

The study has shown that there is diversity in occupational patterns. Many work as agricultural labourers and belong to rural areas, tribal and scheduled caste communities. Since there has been a drought in the last 2-3 years, most such children have migrated out of their villages to work on construction sites in the city or in road-laying or work as agricultural labourers travelling huge distances to pluck chillies and cotton. This is true of both girls and boys.

There has been a greater diversity in the nature of occupation patterns in urban children. They depend largely on menial tasks and manual labor for survival with a few exceptions where they acquire some low level skills on job in motor winding, welding and soldering, automobile repair, carpentry and construction. Migrant labour from districts around Hyderabad settling in squatter colonies work in small units that make electrical equipment, glass, glue, plastic, biscuits, and so on.

There is diversity in nature of exploitation as well. They are often tied to a contractor or a farmer who has given them an advance, and so the terms of their work is essentially forced labour. Many of them are employed by small units and households who are themselves vulnerable and struggling for survival. The exploitation of children in such circumstances is further compounded as they seldom get paid their wages. All of them invariably complained of health hazards and very poor working conditions.

The differences in the lives of girls when compared to boys is profound. Both urban and rural girls are bound to their own homes, and came into public spaces to travel in groups only to work. All their lives they live with the deadly monotony within closed walls There is no meeting friends, going out for shopping or a movie with their peers, playing games or deciding what to wear and when to eat. Girls resigned themselves to marriage and were generally silent on what they wished for themselves. The perception that girls suffered more at the work place was held by 65% of adolescent children. Most of them stated that girls worked longer hours for lesser wage, followed by the factor of sexual abuse and lack of toilets. (Table 20)

Table 20- Factors Causing Difficulties for Girls

|   | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---------------------------|
| Low wages                                     | 52.3                      |
| Long working hours                            | 58.5                      |
| Lack of facilities like toilets               | 36.2                      |
| Teasing                                       | 26.8                      |
| Sexual Abuse                                  | 39.7                      |
| Are to combine domestic chores with wage work | 11.8                      |
| Others, specify                               | 25.0                      |

The education profile of adolescent children is very diverse. A majority of children in the rural areas studied in government schools when compared to those in urban areas who studied in private schools. There are illiterate children, who never went to school, school dropouts at primary level, elementary school and those who reached up to class 10. For those who have never been to school, they aspire to have a better house to live in – a shift from a dilapidated hut or a rented room. They want to be free of substance abuse and train to be good construction workers. Both boys and girls who have completed class 8 and have studied up to class 10 want to complete their education and go ahead if given the support system. Those who are in semiskilled jobs as carpenters, electricians, air conditioning repairing, automobile workshops want to be given further training in their respective field. Girls invariably seek to take up tailoring, whether they have never attended school or have studied up to class 10, as they see it as a way of getting out of jobs which cause aches and pains, and a better social status. These are some of the tangibles they are wanting in the hope that it would lead them to a path of autonomy and freedom.

Given such complex occupation patterns, education attainments, forms of exploitation and family situation the State has to value their past which was an arduous journey. In a sense, all the policies and programmes around skill development and also life skills education as mentioned earlier, are made vacuous as they have become irrelevant to the vast majority of children who are out of school. It is reiterated that the children need another opportunity to get back into the formal stream as their entry into the work force has been due to them being pushed out of schools and it is only through education that the life as envisaged by the proponents of life skills education that 'include competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, ability to organise, social and communication skills, adaptability, problem solving, ability to co-operate on a democratic response that are needed for actively shaping a peaceful future'<sup>65</sup> can be obtained.

At present, given the nature of the exploitation in adolescent children's daily lives and their lack of education they are in no position to seize opportunities. The more there is delay in giving them education, greater is the complexity in enabling them build their capabilities to function as informed citizens. Any programme aiming to enhance their skills and employability has to break in their impoverishment and exploitation through formal education.

## Recommendations

Embedded in the constitutional principles of social justice and equality the recommendations concerning children in the 15-18 years age group are as follows:

1. It is essential that the fundamental right to education for all children in the 6-14 years age group under the 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009' is implemented in letter and spirit. This would ensure that children go to school as a matter of habit. It is also necessary that quality of education is provided in all schools to encourage them continue in school without any disruption.
2. Given that 10.6% of the 120 million children in the 15-19 years are illiterate and 40.2% are not attending any educational institution, in a perspective based on rights and investing in evolving capacities, there is a need to invest in giving them education just so that they are not marginalized and disempowered. The more there is a delay in universal coverage of every child at least up to 18 years of age or senior secondary school, the greater is the cost of inaction resulting in repetitive violations of human rights.
3. There is a role for the education department, the 'Sakshar Bharat' program, Open Schools system to ensure that every child that has been left out is covered and given education. It is often recommended that there is a need to step up vocational education program as youth are unskilled and cannot participate in any productive work at a higher end. It is important to recognize that young people have not been provided with education that would enhance their capabilities and functioning. No skill education can be provided for these children who have been denied basic education.

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<sup>65</sup> Madhu Singh Understanding Life Skills, UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg  
[http://portal.unesco.org/education/es/file\\_download.php/32f065862b89709d9c0575839f1d959cUnderstanding+life+skills..doc](http://portal.unesco.org/education/es/file_download.php/32f065862b89709d9c0575839f1d959cUnderstanding+life+skills..doc).

4. Therefore, there is a need to have a plan to address the backlog of children below 18 years of age who have been left out, even as there is a need to ensure that they are in education stream that provides quality education and an opportunity to catch up with their peers. There has to be a process of inducting them to gain lateral entry into appropriate formal streams through programmes of accelerated education. This would also require setting up of residential bridge courses for at least 3 to 4 months duration, separately for boys and girls.
5. The emphasis on skill development makes sense only when all children receive same and equal education until completion of school up to class 10. This means that children in schools are tracked, retained in schools and with a zero tolerance of school dropouts. Further children in government schools are to be provided a learning guarantee. They just cannot afford to leave school feeling that they have learnt nothing and expected to become part of skilled labour force.
6. The state has failed its children in terms of provisioning for secondary school education. Consequently, at the secondary school level it is the private sector that is dominant making it impossible for poor children to continue in schools after elementary education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 should be extended to cover all children up to 18 years of age and go beyond guaranteeing the right to education to children in 6-14 years age group alone.
7. More importantly the proposed amendment to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 that extends to cover adolescent children in work force in the 15-18 years does not recognise children working in agriculture sector as farm labour, on construction sites, on local units for welding, soldering, carpentry, painting, rolling beedies or working in household units in embroidery work, and those in small enterprises as child labour. In this sense the proposed amendment makes no sense to majority of children found in our study. Considering the exploitation of children and their work conditions, the new enactment must ban all forms of child labour up to 18 years of age.
8. The National Child Labour Elimination Program should be modified to focus on implementing the laws that release children from the workforce such as the Child Labour Act, Juvenile Justice Act, Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, 1976 and so on. In accordance with Section 16 of the SDGs, it must work towards providing justice to these children and create a force of paralegal volunteers to identify all children out of school and in work, and enable enforcement of the relevant labour laws in their favor. In other words the current task of the NCELP for setting up of Special Schools to prepare children to an age appropriate class should be left to the department of education.

## Way Forward

All the above recommendations are based on the belief that these children want change and want to get out of their predicament and have full capacities to be equal partners to reconstruct their lives. Thereby, they will gain confidence to pursue education from the point where they have left off. This would unleash tremendous energy, build a confident youth force, and create

options that go beyond a mechanical skill development program. State has to shoulder the responsibility of reaching out to them and extend itself to constantly engage with them, consult and visibilise them.

This would correct the injustice meted out to them and give them a fair chance to participate in the process of nation building as well. Given the gross neglect of children, continuing violation of their human rights and the deprivation of their basic entitlements it is a moral imperative to provide them all that is necessary in terms of education, health, food security and a condition that gives them a sense of self-worth and importance. If they are to exercise agency they are to be given time and space where they could find their bearings, learn and catch up with all that they have missed in terms of formal education, leisure, friendship, peer group, and a body that is not tired and exhausted.

It is in recognizing that in all fairness marginalized children require a wholehearted and uncompromising effort of one and all in the society to energise those in power and authority to pledge for children's wellbeing. It is in rousing the national consciousness to correct the wrongs that they have been subjected to and ensuring that they their daily sufferings for survival become part of history. Adolescent children's fundamental right to education has to be recognized in law and policy. Only then is justice rendered to children as State's commitment enabling them live with dignity and freedom.

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# Addendum

On July 30th 2016 the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 was enacted as an amendment to the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986.

The Act prohibits the engagement of children in all occupations and processes up to 14 years of age just so that they would enjoy their fundamental right to education under the 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009' (RTE Act). At the same time the amended Act allows children up to 14 years to help the family in fields, home-based work and forest and so on; and as artists in the entertainment industry or sports activity subject to such conditions and safety measures after school hours or during vacations. Further, adolescent children in the age group of 14-18 years are prohibited from child labour in hazardous occupations and processes such as in mines, explosives and other hazardous occupations set forth in the Factories Act, 1948. It also makes engaging child labour a cognizable offence punishable with imprisonment for a term not less than six months to extend to two years or with fine not less than Rs. 20,000 to 50,000 or with both.

## Limitations of the Act

Allowing children to work in family enterprises and in entertainment industry before and after school hours defeats the very purpose of the Act which is to enable children enjoy their right to education.

- It invisibilises the work of millions of children in farm work and also in home based units on beedi rolling, chikan work, bindi and bangle production, agarbatti and papad making, zari and embroidery work, packing and sticking labels, chappal making, handicrafts and several other products that start before and after school hours until late in the night at the cost of children's health.
- It legalizes exploitation of children from deprived and marginalized communities such as Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, Muslims and a large number of girls.
- It maintains status quo and existing caste hierarchies in allowing children to help in traditional family occupation.
- It denies children the time and space to develop and grow as citizens with similar choices and opportunities that well to do children enjoy.
- It contravenes the equitable right of all children to childhood and their entitlements to live a life with dignity as guaranteed by the Constitution of India and the UNCRC to which India is a signatory.

In prohibiting adolescent labour only in mines, production of inflammable substances or explosives and hazardous process assigned to it in clause of the Factories Act, 1948 it actually gives a legal sanction for employment of adolescent children in all other sectors. It ignores the plight of children in the 14-18 years age group as this study has shown. It is totally oblivious to the extent of exploitation and suffering of innumerable adolescent children moving from one kind of work to the other on construction sites, sweat shops in the crowded units of the informal

sector, on farms as migrant labour and so on, trapped in existential day to day hardships for fulfilling basic needs and are struggling for survival. They remain unhealthy and keep working till they become totally incapacitated experience their body withering away. By then the health risk is greater and also gets more expensive. The burden of the state's inability to provide social protection, food security, employment, universal health care, access to credit and livelihood support for their parents, ensuring just labour laws and safety at workplace falls on adolescent children.

Thus the cost of State inaction results in whole generations of adolescent children that is getting more and more marginalized and excluded from their rightful share of State resources and action. Incorporating the clause of allowing children to work after school hours in family and rationalizing adolescent child labour by law children of India would once again lose their battle for living a life with dignity and freedom. Indeed, it is a lost opportunity to provide justice to the most marginalized children in India's democracy.

The amendment to the Act should have instead enabled children engage in activities before and after school hours that fosters their active participation in school as a student and enhances their overall self-esteem and dignity. It should have banned all forms of labour adolescents are engaged in and provided for their access to mainstream education.

[illegible]

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.