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# **Child Work and Schooling in a Backward Region of Andhra Pradesh, India: Observations from the Field**

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## **Abstract**

The paper made an attempt present the micro reality with respect to child work and educational deprivation of children in the form of observations made based on the field survey in a village of backward district in Andhra Pradesh. The discussion sheds light on the circumstances that lead to the widespread phenomenon of non-school-going children and flourishing child labour in several areas of Andhra Pradesh. The parents' perceptions, which reinforce these trends, have also been highlighted.

***Key Words:*** *Deprivation, Child Labour, and Educationally Deprived Children.*

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# CHILD WORK AND SCHOOLING IN A BACKWARD REGION OF ANDHRA PRADESH: OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

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## **I. Introduction**

The Indian Constitution assures free and compulsory elementary education to every child and prohibits the child employment for the children below 15 years of age. In spite of the norms that every child must be in school and they should be work-free, there are millions of children who are out of school and many of them are working, across the world. Elementary education is the critical factor in educational development and thereby socio-economic development of the society<sup>1</sup>. The norms, assurances and often-stated equality in educational opportunity became rhetoric and continuous persistence of educational deprivation; inequality in educational opportunity across sub-population groups differing by their spatial and socio-economic characteristics is a reality. Hence, a long gap existed between norms and achievements. The factors behind the phenomenon are the unresolved questions giving rise to competing explanations through empirical evidence and emerging theories<sup>2</sup>. Here, hence, an attempt is made to examine the process in which children are being deprived of education.

The paper presents the micro reality in the form of observations made based on the field survey in the villages of Andhra Pradesh. Here we present quantitative data collected during the fieldwork. The paper is organised in the following way. The next (second) section describes the methodology adapted for the field study including the nature of the survey, the selection of the village. The second section delineates the profile of the village studied. The third section presents the observation made during the field visits which includes the levels of educational deprivation and the household characteristics of deprived children, parents' perception on value of child work and schooling and finally the workings of the school. The last section summarises the observations and discusses main points emerging out of the exercise.

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## II. Review of Literature

There is a substantial literature as regards the factors associated with the phenomenon of child labour and educational deprivation of children in the diversified disciplines (like economics, sociology, demography etc.). An important economic factor (contributing to both child labour as well as educational deprivation of children) upon which great deal of debate generated is poverty in terms of income (see Sinha, 2000; Weiner, 1994, Basu and Van, 1995; Lieten, 2002). Conventional wisdom shows that poverty is the harsh reality of child labour. Poverty is measured in terms of income that is the shortfall of bare minimum subsistence. It is said that for poor families the opportunity cost of children is very high where the child's contribution to family income is necessary for those poor families. Basu and Van (1995) and Basu (1999) has shown that the household would send their child to work when their income out of non-child labour source is below the subsistence income, i.e. poverty is the main cause. Moreover, there are observations that shows the children contribution to household income is pulling the household out of poverty (see Lieten, 2002, Ray, 2002).

In addition economic inequalities in the society also influence the incidence of child labour and educational deprivation of children. In a review, Grootaert and Kanbur (1995) pointed out that 'the general economic development, equally distributed is the best and most sustainable way to reducing child labour' (p.198). Swinnerton and Rodger (1999) analytical work inserted the distribution dimension, which extended the Basu and Van (1995) model for which poverty is the crucial factor. Ranjan (2001) has shown the relationship between inequality in the distribution of incomes and incidence of child labour in the presence of credit constraints where greater inequality in presence of credit constraint associated with greater incidence of child labour.

Moreover, the structure of the labour market also influences the economic roles of the children (Rodgers and Standing, 1982; Grootaert and Kanbur, 1995). The structure of the labour market varies along with the changes in socio-economic structure of the society. The process of transition from pre-capitalist society to capitalist brought the increased industrialisation, urbanisation and commercialisation and also increasing wage labour and associated unemployment and thereby created the segmented labour market where child labour is demanded given their attributes that cheapness in terms of their wage, docility and submissiveness.

In fact the poverty factors is linked with the fertility rate or its proxy family/household size (large family size is a result of high fertility). In other words child schooling has negative relationship with fertility/household size. There is a substantial literature on relationship between fertility, family size and child labour (Shariff, 1997; Mamdani, 1971; Cain, 1977; Vlossaff, 1979; Krishnaji, 1983). Mamdani's (1971) seminal work on this issue indicates that high fertility demand is a result of high economic value of children in the agrarian economy context. In other words fertility is an endogenous factor and it responds to demand for child labour. The follow-up studies examined this casual relationship whether it holds true. Shariff (1997) has shown that there is no linear relationship between landholding size and fertility but non-monotonic relationship that exists. A variant, which contrasts with the earlier observation, argued that instead of high economic value of children, it is the high fertility that resulted in child labour (Dyson, 1991). In other words fertility is exogenous factor, which is outside the domain of demand for child labour.

### **III. Methodology**

#### ***i). The Framework***

Here our analysis is about out of school children. It said that as many out of school children are working, they are to be referred as child labourers (see Sinha, 2000). Since there are inherent problems involved in referring so, one may not accept such proposition (see Lieten, 2000; Venkatanarayana, 2004). Given the considerations pointed out in Venkatanarayana (2004), we define all those out of school children as *educationally deprived children* rather than child labourers<sup>3</sup>.

We follow the supply-demand framework to examine the phenomenon of educational deprivation of children. It implies that the levels of child schooling of the region/state/nation depend upon its supply and demand factors with respect to schooling. In other words, one may say, the phenomenon of educational deprivation of children arises out of lack of or inadequate demand<sup>4</sup> for and inadequate supply of schooling<sup>5</sup>. Demand, in general, arises out of willingness and affordability and these in turn depend upon the perceived values of education and costs of schooling, both direct and indirect (opportunity cost of schooling i.e. forgone benefits out of child work). As regards to supply<sup>6</sup> of schooling, it may be seen in terms of availability of and access to and the quality of schooling. However, both the demand

and the supply factors are necessary and sufficient conditions for increasing the levels of schooling.

### ***ii. Field Survey***

During the a few field visits of few villages and a field survey in a selected village an attempt was made to understand the circumstances that keep a child out of school and get him engaged in work of some form or other. The study relied mainly on qualitative research methods<sup>7</sup> in contrast to the quantitative exercises discussed in the earlier chapters. In this fieldwork, the attempt was to examine, *firstly*, parent's perceptions regarding the value of schooling and of child work in the prevailing socio-economic conditions; *secondly*, an effort was made to make an assessment of the perceptions of parents, who considered schooling of children as of value, about the quality of education imparted and the functioning of schools especially, schools in the public sector. For these purposes the qualitative research methods like Focus Group Discussions, Informal Interviews and Case Studies were employed. Besides, focussed informal talks were arranged with knowledgeable persons from among official of the educational department, reporters, influential persons, teachers, and parents. *Thirdly*, an attempt was done to understand the level of community participation in school activities through the observation method.

### ***iii). Methodology of the Field Survey***

The criterion adapted to select the village for field investigation during the last quarter of 2003 was the following: The selected village is located in Mahabubnagar district which is having the lowest literacy levels among the districts of Andhra Pradesh in both the 1991 and the 2001 Census years and also observed the lowest changes in the literacy level during the 1991-2001. Within the district, the Mandal (sub-administrative division of district) with the lowest literacy level was selected. Then the lowest literacy level and the multi-community (basic caste categories: SC, ST, OBC and OC) composition were the criteria for the selection of the village for field survey.

The survey schedule collected basic information<sup>8</sup> on socio-economic characteristics of the households along with data on the number of children in the age group of 5-14 years and their schooling status. A household listing exercise using a short structured schedule was employed with a view to obtaining basic information on every household in the village<sup>9</sup> as well as to building up rapport with households to facilitate selection of individuals for case studies, informal discussions and focus group discussion<sup>10</sup>. Informal interviews with a few parents

were also conducted during the household listing exercise for obtaining information on the availability of schooling facilities or opportunities for basic education for the population, at different points of time in the recent past. Again the parents (old generation) of the adults who are completely illiterates or literates but are drop outs from school, were asked about the reasons for non-enrolment or early dropping out from school of their children. Lastly, parents of children currently not attending school in the age group 5-14 (present generation) were also requested also to report on reasons for not sending their children to school.

#### IV. Profile of the Village

The village comprised a main village and a hamlet inhabited predominantly by STs. Our survey covered only the main village. The village is located in an interior area; away from state highway connecting trading town in the district and the district headquarters of the neighbouring state. The village did not have pucca road connection till the 1990's when a metalled road was constructed. This road was developed into pucca bitumen-surfaced one during the late 1990's. This has facilitated vehicular traffic. Road Transportation Corporation (RTC) buses have been plying twice in a day along the road to the village. The village has a post office but no telephone connection, nor public health care facilities. Though the village is electrified, many of the households do not have electricity connections. Recently, the supply of piped drinking water has come to the village.

The village is inhabited by several communities<sup>11</sup> particularly forward, other backward, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (FC, OBC, SC and ST). They account for 10, 54, 28,

**Table 1: Some Socio-Economic Indicators of the Study Village in Comparison with Top Order Administrative Units: 2001 Census**

Indicators	Village	Mandal	District	State
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Avg. HH Size	5.6	5.2	5.2	4.1
Literacy: All	19.4	25.9	40.7	61.1
Literacy: Female	9.1	15.0	30.1	51.1
% of SC	25.0	18.8	18.2	16.2
% of ST	19.8	4.7	8.7	6.6
WPR	61.1	61.8	54.2	46.8
% of Agrl. workers	93.3	90.5	77.5	22.7
% of Agrl. labourers	37.2	41.5	45.1	39.6

Note: 1. Agrl. workers and agrl. labourers are as percentage of total workers; 2. Mandal is a sub-district administrative unit.

Source: Primary Census Abstract (2001), Census of India.

and 7 per cent of the households/population respectively (see Table 6.1A in appendix). The village economy is largely agrarian with about 83 per cent of the households/population depending on this sector (either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers); 93 per cent of the labour force is engaged in agricultural activities<sup>12</sup> (see Table 1).

Though very few households are landless, the majority are marginal and extremely small farmers. As a consequence of sparse and scant rainfall and lack of irrigation, land has lost its characteristic as a productive asset, a factor which has made out-migration from the village in search of work unavoidable. The irrigation (especially through bore wells) facilities observed in the village is privately owned and limited to a few well-to-do households. Out-migration is a pervasive and seasonal phenomenon and is rampant across all communities in the village. The inhabitants go to the neighbouring Karnataka districts, Bombay and to Hyderabad and to other distant places. About 60 per cent of the households reported that at least one member from each household migrates for employment outside the village and that the migrants belong to all social groups (see Table 1A in Appendix). However, the proportion of the households reporting out-migration across communities is the highest for SCs followed by ST, OBC and FC households, in that order.

The educational backwardness of the village is quite high. They had an overall literacy level of only 9 percent and female literacy of 4 percent in 1991; the corresponding figures in 2001 were 19 and 9 percent respectively (see Table 1). The literacy level of the village is much lower than that of the Mandal (sub-district administrative unit) and the district average, which themselves are the lowest among the districts in the state. The work participation rate (WPR) and the share of the agricultural labour force among the workforce are higher in the village than the district average; the share of agricultural labour is however low, indicating the high proportion of self-cultivators. Antiquated social practices such as untouchability and customs such as the *Basvi* system still exist in the village. The SCs are still considered untouchables and the two-tumbler system is still on.

#### ***i. Household Characteristics of Deprived Children***

It is observed that about 45 per cent of the children in the age group 5-14 were kept out of school in the study village and that this level of incidence is far above the state average for rural children (27 per cent) for the year 1999-2000. Many of those who were attending schools were first generation learners, with illiterate parents. A majority among the children not attending school had never been to school at all.

The most disadvantageous groups of children in terms of education are girls and children in the age group 10-14 years and above. Their households are characterised by the following:



they belong predominantly to OBCs (rather than SCs or STs); they are Hindus by religion (even if one excludes SCs/STs). Of course this finding contrasts with the conventional wisdom<sup>13</sup> that children belonging to Islam and to SCs and STs constitute the educationally most disadvantageous group<sup>14</sup>. Across occupational groups, the educationally deprived children come predominantly from agricultural labour households; and among the households by size class of land holdings (operational), they belong to the marginal and small holding categories (see Table 1A in Appendix).

The presence of migrants in the household seems to have a negative impact on children's schooling; it happens so when all the adults of the households migrate. The nature of out-migration is distressful, being largely driven by lack of employment opportunities within the village. The adverse effect of out-migration on schooling of children is found to be the highest in nuclear households. When parents migrate for work with no adult member left at home, children (whether in school or not) have no choice but to accompany their parents. The advantage for parents when they take children along with them is that older children would assist them in work at the destination. In a very few cases parents leave school-going children behind, but these cases are confined to extended families in which there happen to be adult members who do not migrate.

### ***ii. Activities in which Children are working***

Though 46 per cent of the children in the age group 5-14 remained out of school, not all of them were working; but most of the children especially those above 8 years of age, were found to be engaged in some kind of work. Also, the presumption that all school-going children are non-workers is incorrect. A sizeable proportion from among them worked during off-school hours and on holidays. There remains plenty of scope for child work in the village ranging from sibling care to work in own farm and also wage labour. Owing to uncertainty about the means of livelihood, households diversify their economic activities into sheep/goat rearing and out-migration a process in which large numbers of children are engaged. As many households had their own cattle, both draught and *milch* animals, they were in need of caretakers of these animals. For them it is economical to engage a child in that job rather than employing an adult. In the village, on an average, there were 5 goats and sheep and 5 cattle per household<sup>15</sup>. Of course there were, on the one hand, households with large numbers of cattle and sheep and goats, and a few which had none, on the other. The majority of the

households had at least two. The underlying causes of wastage and stagnation in child education according to Dandekar (1955) were migration (19 per cent), employment in family farm (14 per cent) and cattle tending (30 per cent). Cattle-tending being an uneconomic occupation of the family, it was not appropriate for adult members; it was considered an avocation ideally suited for children (Dandekar, 1955).

Another major activity engaging children was sibling care; in about 40 per cent of the households which had at least one child aged below 5 years, the elder children was observed to be engaged in sibling care (see Table 2). Girls get married at a young age of 14 years or even earlier in some cases; early marriage results in high fertility and a large number of children per marriage. It is observed that there are parents with 10 to 12 children born and staying alive. The implication of such a situation on child schooling is the following: Parents nurse only the first-born child; the next and the subsequent children are looked after by their elder brothers/sisters. Given the uncertainty in the means of livelihood, parents do not find leisure time to nurse the children<sup>16</sup>. Thus, older children spend most of their time during their school-going age, for the care of younger siblings. This phenomenon is less intensive in households having an old age person. Coexistence of children in the 0-4 age and an old age person (age above 60 years) in households, relieves elder children from the duty of sibling care and it is transferred to the old member in the household. In fact, one of the objectives in the social component of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is the relieving of older children from sibling care responsibility and entrusting the younger children of 3 to 5 years of age to the care of ICDS centres (locally named as *Anganwadis*) for preparing them for formal schooling and providing them with nutritional food. In Andhra Pradesh, the scheme is claimed to have been implemented on a widespread basis throughout the villages. However, in reality, the scheme (*Anganwadi* centre) has failed, in general, to achieve its social objectives. Children (especially of 3-5 years of age) are supposed to be kept in the centres during the working hours of their parents<sup>17</sup>. But the social obligations assigned to them are not taken up as our field survey of the villages clearly indicated.

Another form of child work is that on family farms. Landlessness is low in this village and many of the cultivators with extremely smallholding are not in a position to afford hired labour. Instead, they deploy all the household members, including children, in the work. On the other hand, cultivation of commercial crops such as cotton facilitates child labour and

thereby a market is created for it<sup>18</sup>. In brief, children are involved in cattle and goat/sheep rearing, sibling care and domestic duties; work in own farms and as agriculture labour in commercial farms.

## **V. Perceptions on Schooling and Value of Child Work**

Child work is neither a recent phenomenon nor is it specific to the developing countries (Weiner, 1994). Its origins may be traced to ancient times and it is found to be prevalent in modern societies all over the world as well<sup>19</sup>. However, in modern societies, child labour is abhorred for the following reasons: *firstly*, negative externalities in the context of changing working relations and environment, on the growth and development of the child<sup>20</sup>; *secondly*, emerging normative perspectives about children, which envisage childhood as a work-free and learning period; and *thirdly*, the perspectives of human capital and human development, which make education an endowment and childhood as the best stage for education. In the first case (i.e. human capital), education is perceived as a means to achieve growth and development and other goals while according to the latter (i.e. human development), education is an end in itself. Thus education is preferred to work in any society. However, the decision to send a child to school is a private decision taken at the household level and these “decisions are responsive to social norms and external incentives...” (Dreze and Gazdar, 1997: 87). It would be possible for parents to send their children to school when schooling norms get embedded in social norms<sup>21</sup> and made a social obligation and non-schooling of children is made a social stigma<sup>22</sup> (Basu, 1999). The state may as well impose this norm as mandatory and make it obligatory for every parent to send their children to school.

On the other hand, as the norm that every child must be in school during childhood has a practical value given the instrumental value for education<sup>23</sup> viewed from the perspectives of human capital and human development, it would become an incentive. In other words, the instrumental value of education (i.e. social and economic returns) may work as an incentive, and thereby motivate parents to send their children to schooling<sup>24</sup>. Here lies the crux of the phenomenon. At the first stage, there is a trade-off between child work and schooling and the institution of child work is a priori, and the institution of schooling<sup>25</sup> is an emerging one. It is the shift in parents’ valuation from child work to schooling that matters. Hence, the decision-making in favour of schooling is conditioned not only by the anticipated returns to education

but also by the present value of child work. Higher the parents' perceived value (intrinsic or instrumental) of education over that of child work, the more likely is decision-making in favour of schooling<sup>26</sup> and vice versa. Secondly, the extent to which parents perceive sending of their child to school as an investment in general and in comparison to investments in alternative avenues also, it is important. For instance, it was not strange that the farming community households used to invest in land out of their surplus income in preference to investing in children's education though they had school-age children, they opted to keep the children at work on the farm. Investment in land could be justified for two reasons: *First*, land was a symbol of social status especially so in rural areas; and *secondly*, the expected returns on the land were substantial. It implied that the perceived value of investment in land was higher than that of investment in education.

The perceptions, thereby also the value judgement, would thus determine the schooling decisions. However, perceptions are subject to change depending upon the availability and access to information. As Dreze and Gazdar (1997) mentioned "the ability of the parents to assess the personal and social value of education depends, among other things, on the information they have at their disposal". In other words, it may be inferred that information on the (positive) value of education facilitates proper assessment of the benefits from the schooling of children.

Moreover, access to information is influenced by social structures and social interactions. In the Indian society in which the social structure is of a hierarchical order, the value of education does vary across socio-economic strata. In these circumstances the demonstration effect or the role model effect of one community on the others (i.e. among communities) is difficult (but not impossible) to assess, while it is easier for individuals within a community to make. Hence, as per Dreze and Gazdar (1997), "if their entire reference group is largely untouched by the experience of being educated, that information may be quite limited". Again, there exist some internalised ideologies/notions among some communities that education is not suitable or not meant for their children. Such notions produce a *false consciousness* about educational values later during their adult lives. Lord Howell, a colonial education officer of British India, while writing on the progress of education in India, pointed out the prevalence in the country of such a false consciousness. It was felt that education is not only unnecessary to agricultural communities but also injurious to them in the sense that

men of the pen are incapable of agricultural work<sup>27</sup>. Likewise across some caste groups, especially the SC communities, it is considered an imposed ideology<sup>28</sup> because it is prevalent only in certain communities, not all. In a social structure like that of India, the manner in which the particular (dominant) communities visualise the needs of the other (subjected) communities is reflected in their approach to education. Dominant communities hold that education is not necessary for the 'lower' communities<sup>29</sup> (see Weiner, 1994; PROBE, 1999).

Another constraint on the demand for education is occupational rigidity. In a hierarchical society like India's, the roles of individuals and their occupations are determined by the communities/castes to which they are born. Many of the occupations in rural India continue to be traditional and hereditary lines. In the process it is assumed that involvement of the child in work is a learning process of the occupational skills which he/she has, by dint of birth, perforce to acquire. The majority of rural households are pursuing the same occupations that their forefathers had followed. It is observed that there exist wide differentials in schooling levels between households which have diversified/shifted their occupations and those which have not.

The demand for schooling arises, in general, out of willingness and affordability and these in turn depend upon perceived values of education and costs of schooling, both direct and indirect (opportunity cost of schooling i.e. forgone benefits out of child work). In this context we take a look at the situation in the study village with respect to child work and schooling. Child work in this village is a historical phenomenon and it has continued from generation to generation. But, schooling is a new activity, many children attending schools being first generation learners and those not attending school, having never had a literate in their ancestry. Child work is observed to be so remunerative that even in very prosperous and dominant caste households, school-age children, though they do attend schools, work in the fields during holidays and off-time hours after school.

Parental motivations differ between parents who send their wards to school and those who do not. It has been observed in recent studies that there do not exist differences among parents in respect of perceptions on the value of education and therefore of their motivations (PROBE, 1999). However, the experiences of the parents, shared among themselves during informal discussions during the survey, indicated differences in the realisation of the value of education<sup>30</sup>. Almost all the parents (irrespective of whether they send their children to school

or not) agreed that education is useful in deciding their children's future. Though many of the parents of the out-of-school children agreed that education is a good thing, they were not clear about the sort of additional benefits they might derive if their children got educated. Of course, they had heard from government officials, school teachers and other educated persons and people like us who go for advocacy or survey, about the positive aspects of education. One of the mechanisms by which the villagers realised the value of education is their improved access to market. An illiterate parent of a school going child remarked thus:

“You see earlier we rarely crossed our village borders; now we make frequent visits outside the village and we involve ourselves in many transactions including monetary ones, we have observed that being an illiterate entails a disadvantageous position. Having experienced thus I feel my children should not face the same plight; I have therefore decided to give them at least a minimum essential level of education.”

This remark indicates the personalised experience of being an illiterate and the consequent disadvantage, motivating the parent to send their child school.

Since the value of children's labour is high the necessity of child labour for household's survival out-weighs the value of education for their children. An illustration of uncertainty in the means of livelihood causing child labour may be seen in the following case. An old man about 60 years of age replied as follows to a question posed to him about his 12-year old daughter is not being sent to school:

"I have a little bit of land but nothing much do I get from it. In this village, why, even in nearby villages, it is very difficult to find employment in the labour market. At least since seed cotton cultivation started in the village, our children are finding employment. Thank God. Some one in the household has to be working and earning; then only we will be able to eat something. We cannot spare children for the schooling in these difficult circumstances".

The statement indicates that child work is a survival strategy adopted by households under difficult circumstances of adult unemployment, low wages and consequent chronic poverty.

Motivation and persuasion are important ingredients of increasing enrolment. The Education Commission (1964-66) Report had made specific reference to this aspect in their report, with particular reference to experience of developed countries' in increasing enrolment. The success stories of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working for the removal of child labour and for educational promotion of children may be seen in this context. Likewise, there exist examples of missionary efforts and successes in educational development in states like Kerala and a few other parts of the country. They approached and made personal interactions with parents; they created awareness of the importance of education among the parents and

motivated them to send their children to school. As a matter of fact even in the village under study the strength of the school has increased in response to the initiatives and interaction of an NGO's (M.V. Foundation) initiatives.

## **VI. The School and its Workings**

The supply factors themselves have a potential capacity to raise the demand for schooling<sup>31</sup>. The supply factors consist of availability, access<sup>32</sup> and quality of schooling, which involve the schooling environment and the educational process. The supply (of schooling) facilitates the realisation of schooling<sup>33</sup>. It is made possible in two ways: *firstly*, by meeting the manifested demand for schooling, which comprises demand on the part of parents who not only have the affordability but also are aware of the value of education and thereby are willing to send their children to school; *secondly*, by translating latent demand into manifested demand. Latent demand is demand on the part of parents who are potential consumers of educational service but who have not sent their children to school either due to lack of willingness or affordability or both. In the case of former, schooling of their children is made possible through easy access (physical, economic and social) to school; however, it is the quality of schooling that is crucial in retaining them (through the completion of their schooling period). Inadequate access or poor quality of schooling or both may have a *discouragement effect* on manifested demand. The second case of translating the latent demand into the manifested demand is through pro-active initiatives by educational service providers through provision of incentives, persuasion and motivation of the parents. In fact, motivation comes from many directions<sup>34</sup>, school factors themselves being one among them. The schooling environment in this study village is found to be neither conducive to satisfy existing (manifested) demand nor transforming latent demand into manifested demand.

### *i). Access to and Functioning of School*

The study village had a primary school, recently upgraded to a middle school. At the time of the survey, there were four regular teachers in the school. There did not exist in this village an institutional agency for imparting schooling till very recent times<sup>35</sup>. Basic education skills used to be acquired by the earlier generation from private teachers. Even after the establishment of a school, its performance remained unsatisfactory for several initial years<sup>36</sup>. There was no pucca building for the school; the classes used to be held in a thatched house. It

was a single-teacher school initially, in which the teacher used to be regularly irregular. If at all he came, he used to play cards with villagers leaving the children under his tutelage totally neglected. Some of the old men who had acquired some education, got it from attending a school in neighbouring village, which is in the state of Karnataka. A graduate from the SC community remembered his school days thus:

“When we were studying in this village school the teacher used to come at 12.30 p.m. and left it at 2.30 p.m. He spent time in the school sleeping; it was our (students) responsibility to wake him up by 2.30 p m for his return. If we failed to wake him up at this appointed hour or disturbed him during sleep, we used get beaten up. Very rarely did he do any teaching”.

Also he narrated the social practices prevalent in the school that denigrated the children belonging to lower castes, especially SC children in the following words:

In the school, we the children who belong to the SC community had to sit at the rearmost row in the classroom leaving the front rows to other (‘higher’ community) children. For drinking water we used to have two pots of water, one for the higher community and the other exclusively for the SC community children.

Of course at the time of our survey, there was no such discrimination ‘officially’ practised in the school; nevertheless but it really did exist. The schooling environment and the process of schooling left several things to be desired. At present, infrastructural facilities such as playing ground, urinals, and black boards were found wanting. Villagers reported that the school functioned according to the whims and fancies of teachers: the teachers come according to their convenience; they left school on their own as and when they felt like going; and no teacher lives within the village.

One of the latent functions of schools is the running of day-care centres (see Eloundow-Enyegue and Davanzo, 2003) for small children. In the study village, some parents, especially from labour households and nuclear families, of young children, say in the age group of 5 to 7 years, would like to leave their children in school when it acts as a day-care centre and to go for work. But the schools failed to perform as day-care centres for small children and as educational institutions. The schools are in fact reluctant to entertain and accommodate children of the school-going age especially younger ones. Many parents complained, during informal discussions, against the unwillingness of teachers to accommodate young (5 and 6 years of age) children. The teachers were of the opinion that it is difficult to manage the children of this age, as they need intensive care and attention. The objection came, may be, from the inadequacy in the number of teachers in schools.



*ii). Parent's perceived quality of education*

As a matter of fact the school environment and its elements do not enthruse many parents to send their children to school and their children to stay in school. Even motivated parents were discouraged by the poor quality of education provided in the public schools; nor were private schools able to accommodate them given the parents' low affordability. Hence they opted the keeping of their children at work. The following is an illustration of the improper service delivery in public schools which caused the diversion of children from school to work place.

A mother of a nine year-old girl reported as follows:

"In fact we have been sending our girl to school for the past two years but she has learned nothing during these two years. She is now the same way she was. Since she was learning nothing, we thought it appropriate to keep her at work so that she would learn working skills which would be of help to her and to us."

Another old women remarked as follows about her grand daughter's dropping out from school:

"We thought of sending this girl to school but she has been learning nothing in school. I wonder what the teachers are teaching. When the girl has some doubts in her studies, the teacher tells her to learn from her seniors. Then the teacher goes on chit-chatting with her colleagues. This is the way they teach our children. Since she is learning nothing in the school we decided to engage her in seed-cotton work. At least we would get some money and she will learn work".

These reports indicate the poor quality of education which inflicts a discouragement effect even on parents who are willing to send their children to school.

*iii). Community Participation in School Activities.*

One of the important factors that had a positive impact on schooling of children is community participation in schooling activities (see Govinda and Rashmi, 2003). In the Indian context, the success stories of Kerala and Himachal Pradesh are attributed, among other things, to civic community initiatives and community interactions with the schooling process (Dreze and Sen, 1995; World Bank, 1999). It is observed that community participation in schooling activities has a decisive positive impact on improvement of the quality of schooling (see Mythili, 2000).

In the study village, however, the level of community participation in school activities is extremely low. For instance, none of the parents turned up at the Flag-hoisting function on the Independence Day celebration on August 15<sup>th</sup>, the only person who being was the Panchayat president, that too under compulsion from school teachers. Many parents complained against

the way the mid-meal scheme was being organised. In spite of such widespread dissatisfaction among the parents, none of them raised any dissenting voice or questioned the goings on either with regard to indifferent teaching nor irregular school attendance of teachers.

## **VII. Discussion and Conclusion**

It is observed that about 45 per cent of the children in the age group of 5-14 years are kept out of school in the study village. Many children especially those above 8 years of age were engaged in one kind of work or another. As regards the perceptions of parents on the value of child work and schooling, child work scored significantly higher valuation than schooling. It is observed that there exist differences in parental motivations. Some parents send their wards to school and other do not. One of the mechanisms by which they realised the value of education is access to market, urban contacts and exposure to the outside world. Though many of the parents of the out-of-school children were of the view that education is a good thing, they were not clear what precisely the benefits were and whether they would be able to reap the benefits if their children get educated. A high value is ascribed to all kinds of child work ranging from sibling care to work in family farm or wage labour. Though landlessness is rare, the majority of farm holdings are tiny and marginal. As a consequence of scanty rainfall and lack of irrigation, land has lost its intrinsic quality as a productive asset. Owing to uncertainty in the means of livelihood, households diversify their economic activity into sheep/goat rearing an avocation in which a large number of children are engaged and into out-migration. On the other hand, changes in the cropping pattern resulting in the cultivation of commercial crops like cotton, have accentuated the demand for child labour and thereby created a ready market for it. Parents who had been motivated to send their children to school got discouraged by the poor quality of instruction given in public schools; they could not afford to educate their children in private schools either. It is in the face of such an impasse that they opted for keeping their children at work and out of school. These observations from our field survey are seen to conform to the observations made on the basis of the analysis of secondary data.

The foregoing discussion sheds light on the circumstances that lead to the widespread phenomenon of non-school-going children and flourishing child labour in several areas of Andhra Pradesh. The parents' perceptions, which reinforce these trends, have also been highlighted.

## Appendix I

**Table 1A: Household Characteristics and the incidence of Educational Deprivation of Children in a Village (Andhra Pradesh): Field Survey**

<i>Household Characteristics</i>			% of HH	% of Pop	Avg. HHsz	% of CP	% of DC	Incidence	RDI
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>
I	Social Group	ST	7.3	7.3	5.9	8.3	8.3	44.6	0.000
		SC	28.3	27.0	5.7	28.2	29.1	46.1	0.027
		OBC	54.3	54.9	6.0	54.9	58.3	47.3	0.075
		Others	10.1	10.8	6.4	8.6	4.3	22.4	-0.144
II	Religion	Hindu	96.0	95.0	5.9	95.6	97.4	45.4	0.409
		Muslim	4.0	4.9	7.2	4.4	2.6	26.7	-0.149
III	Principal Livelihood of the Households (Occupation)	SENA	8.1	8.5	6.3	8.9	5.0	25.0	-0.146
		Agri Lab	38.4	35.2	5.5	37.7	48.3	57.3	0.377
		Other lab	7.6	7.2	5.6	6.8	5.0	32.6	-0.128
		SEA	44.9	48.4	6.4	45.9	41.7	40.5	-0.062
		Others	1.0	0.8	4.5	0.7	100.0	0.0	-1.000
IV	Sex of Household's Head	Male	91.4	93.5	6.1	93.1	93.4	44.8	0.003
		Female	8.6	6.5	4.5	6.9	6.6	42.6	-0.032
V	Size Class of Land Holding (Cultivated Land)	Marginal	13.6	12.3	5.4	13.1	15.6	52.8	0.213
		Small	16.9	15.7	5.5	16.5	19.5	52.7	0.203
		Semi-Medium	30.3	30.3	6.0	29.8	30.5	45.5	0.020
		Medium	20.7	23.7	6.8	23.8	21.5	40.4	-0.066
		Large	5.6	7.5	8.0	5.0	4.0	35.3	-0.109
VI	Migration Status	None	38.4	37.2	5.8	39.1	31.1	35.5	-0.113
		At least One	61.6	62.8	6.1	60.9	68.9	50.5	0.205
VII	Presence of Old Age (> 60 years)	None	65.9	60.4	5.5	67.7	72.2	47.6	0.139
		At least One	34.1	39.6	6.9	32.3	27.8	38.4	-0.087
VIII	Presence of Children of 0-4 Age	None	59.3	51.6	5.2	58.5	52.3	39.9	-0.149
		At least One	40.7	48.4	7.1	41.5	47.7	51.2	0.157
IX	Occupational Shift of the Member	None	81.6	79.3	5.8	79.6	83.4	46.8	0.186
		At least One	18.4	20.7	6.7	20.4	16.6	36.2	-0.106
X	Presence of Adult Literate	None	48.7	44.6	5.5	48.9	62.3	56.8	0.360
		At least One	51.3	55.4	6.4	51.1	37.7	32.9	-0.274
XI	Presence of Female Adult Literate	None	82.6	79.6	5.7	80.8	89.4	49.4	0.448
		At least One	17.4	20.4	7.0	19.2	10.6	24.6	-0.146

**Note:** 1. Children refer here those who are in the age group 5-14; B. Total number of households surveyed, the total population and child population living in them are 396, 2362, and 677 respectively and the total number of deprived children are 302; 3. **HH**- Households; **Pop**- Population; **Avg HHsz** – Average Households Size; **CP** – Child Population; **DC** – Deprived Children; **RDI**- Relative Disadvantage Index; 4. The average household size of the village is 6 and the average incidence of deprivation is 44.6 per cent; 5. Col 4,5,7 and 8 represents the share of particular category to the total, so if add all (for example ST, SC, OBC and Others) it will be 100 per cent; 6. Read RDI as the positive values indicate that children belonging to those households are relative disadvantage and negative values indicates relative advantage.

**Source:** Field Survey, 2003.

**Table 2A: The Impact of Household Characteristics on Educational Deprivation of Children in Survey Village: Logistic Regression**

Sno.	Characteristics	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Child Characteristics</b>							
I	Sex: Female Child (Ref: Male)	0.6	0.1	40.5	1	1.95E-10	1.8
II	Age: Elder children (10-14 age) (Ref: Younger children i.e. 5-9 age)	0.6	0.1	35.5	1	2.5E-09	1.8
<b>Household Characteristics</b>							
III	Social Group (Caste) (Ref: Others)			11.7	3	0.008614	
1	Scheduled Tribes (ST)	-0.2	0.3	0.6	1	0.426395	0.8
2	Scheduled Castes (SC)	0.0	0.2	0.0	1	0.880569	1.0
3	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	0.5	0.2	11.0	1	0.000904	1.7
IV	Religion: Muslims (Ref: Hindu)	-0.4	0.3	2.4	1	0.118494	0.7
V	Occupation (Ref: Self-employed in Non-Agriculture)			7.7	4	0.103941	
1	Agricultural Labour	1.6	1.7	0.9	1	0.335318	5.1
2	Other Labour	1.1	1.7	0.4	1	0.513773	3.1
3	Self-employed in Agriculture	1.1	1.7	0.4	1	0.508475	3.1
4	Others	-4.5	6.7	0.4	1	0.506496	0.0
VI	Head of HH: Female (Ref: Male)	-0.2	0.2	1.3	1	0.247106	0.8
VII	Land Holding (Cultivated) (Ref: Large holding)			1.2	5	0.947042	
1	Marginal	0.0	0.3	0.0	1	0.847543	1.33
2	Small	0.1	0.2	0.1	1	0.753778	1.30
3	Semi-Medium	0.1	0.2	0.1	1	0.763115	1.31
4	Medium	0.0	0.2	0.0	1	0.880366	1.26
<b>The Presence of</b>							
VIII	Migrants: Yes (Ref: No)	0.1	0.1	1.4	1	0.244394	1.1
IX	Old age (>60 yrs): No (Ref: Yes)	0.2	0.1	4.1	1	0.041884	1.2
X	Children of 0-4 Age: Yes (Ref: No)	0.2	0.1	3.6	1	0.058856	1.2
XI	Occupational Shift: No (Ref: Yes)	0.1	0.1	0.9	1	0.334802	1.1
XII	Adult Literate: No (Ref: Yes)	0.4	0.1	10.4	1	0.001249	1.4
XIII	Female Adult Literate: No (Ref: Yes)	0.4	0.2	6.3	1	0.012159	1.5
XIV	Size of the Household (Ref: 1 to 4)			12.3	3	0.006316	
1	5 to 7	-0.5	0.1	11.2	1	0.000821	0.6
2	8 to 10	0.2	0.2	1.5	1	0.219824	1.2
3	Above 10	0.5	0.3	3.4	1	0.067053	1.7
	Constant	-2.5	1.7	2.2	1	0.141929	0.1

**Note:** 1. The analysis refers to children of 5-14 age group; 2. This Logistic Regression analysis is based on deviation method i.e. each category of the predictor variable except the reference category is compared to the overall effect; 3. For the details of the sample see note in Table 1 above; 4. The model's -2 Log likelihood is: 744.1; 5. The model has the 73 per cent of explanation power; 6. In this exercise we also examine the each variable contribution to the cause of educational deprivation of children. It is observed that some of the variables considered above do not have much impact, they are: religion, sex of the household head.

**Source:** Field Survey, 2003.

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## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> From the perspectives of human capital, human development, and human rights, all out-of-school children are viewed as educationally deprived as the phenomenon has far reaching implications.

<sup>2</sup> For instance see Sinha (2000), Bhatta (1998), Dreze and Saran (1995), Dreze and Gazdar (1997), World Bank (1997), PROBE (1999) Lieten (2000) Basu, (2000), Basu and Van (1995), Baland and Robinson (1999).

<sup>3</sup> on the basis of the normative approach by which every child should be in school and he/she should work-free. It is agreed that all out of school children are deprived of education which is their basic right (UNCRC, 1989). In this rights framework one may justify referring all out of school children as educationally deprived children

<sup>4</sup> In fact, the children themselves are not decision-makers of theirs schooling rather it is their parents. Hence, child schooling depends upon the parent’s demand for their children’s schooling.

<sup>5</sup> Both the demand and supply factors are influenced by social, economic and political structure of society or economy.

<sup>6</sup> Given the public good nature of the education and its externalities, market may not ensure the supply of schooling. Thus, the provision of schooling is remained with the state’s responsibility. Supply of Schooling has two roles. *Firstly*, meeting the manifested demand (those parents being aware the value of education and willing to send the child) for schooling. *Secondly*, as the supply has the character of inducing the demand, supply of schooling may inculcate (through role modelling, teacher’s interactions with parent’s etc.,) demand for schooling by motivating parents.

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<sup>7</sup> The methods and procedures for conducting such a survey are discussed in the literature. For instance see (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1993; Chung, 2000; Narayana et al, 2000; Narayana and Petesch, 2000; Thomas, 1998; Yin, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> This kind of census helps the informant to get the basic information of each and every household and builds rapport with them and it helps further inquiry (Srinivas, 1974).

<sup>9</sup> The study village has a border with Raichur district of Karnataka and Raichur is the nearest town for the village whereas in Andhra Pradesh, the nearest town is Gadwal (known for designed Sarees). The village is located in the interior 7 km away from Gadwal-Raichur state high way.

<sup>10</sup> To get the information on perceptions, qualitative research methods like Focus Group Discussions, Informal Interviews and Case Studies are employed. Besides, Focussed Informal Talks are arranged with persons ranging from officials (educational), reporters, influential persons, teachers, and parents. There exist a substantial literature dealing with qualitative research methods. For instance, see Chung. (2000), Narayana et al (1999), World Bank (1999), Yin (1993).

<sup>11</sup> These castes include FCs (Vaisyas, Kapus called Reddies), BCs (Kurva- basically sheep rearing community, Boya, Ediga and Teluga), SCs (Madiga - by occupation they are leather workers, and Dasari) and STs (exclusively Lambada community).

<sup>12</sup> This is indicative of the predominance of agricultural activities in the village.

<sup>13</sup> For instance see (Appaswamy, 1999)

<sup>14</sup> The observation in the village is consistent with the state level observation that Muslim children are relatively advantaged in terms of education particularly in rural areas (see Venkatanarayana, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> In another village (in Kurnool district) during my visit it was observed in a SC colony that many families own at least a buffalo (possibly for milching). The animals are given to them under a government welfare programme. To take care of them their children are engaged and each family keeps one child (boy or girl) for this purpose. There was a possibility that all of them could come together and engaged one or two elderly persons for taking care of the animals. But they are afraid that they could not afford the expenses involved.

<sup>16</sup> For many families it is hand-to-mouth existence.

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, not only in the surveyed village but also in other villages, which I visited, social objectives are undermined and they are meant to dispose of the food; for this also they do not conform to any given standard.

<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere workings of the market for child labour in the context of emerging seed cotton cultivation have been elaborated (see Venkateswarlu and da Corta, 1999).

<sup>19</sup> In ancient societies, in the operation of the process of learning-by-doing, child work was considered part and parcel of socialisation. In the transitional period, the changing socio-economic conditions altered the nature and extent of the work in general and child work in particular (See Rodgers and Standing, 1989). In modern societies, the development of industry and allied activities brought rapid changes in the nature of work, the working environment, employment relations and the conditions under which work is carried out (Bequele and Boyden, 1988). Socialisation or the participatory nature of work is replaced by exploitation. In these circumstances, the nature of work that children used to do has changed and as a result it became unsuitable to children of tender age and low physical strength. Therefore, child labour became harmful to physical and mental growth of children.

<sup>20</sup> Especially the harsh experiences during Industrial Revolution of the developed countries.

<sup>21</sup> For example, in the Western context, during renaissance, Protestantism introduced the norm that every person must be able to read the Bible, i.e. one should have the minimum level of education.

<sup>22</sup> As contemporary literature on Kerala shows, sending the child to school has become a social norm.

<sup>23</sup> According to Sen's views on education there are different values: a) intrinsic value (education for the sake of education); b) instrumental value (in which there are derived benefits, both social and economic, of education) (see Dreze and Sen, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> In the economics literature, the rationality assumption implying the economic calculus of human beings, indicates that given the positive returns to education the decision to send the child to school is

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a rational one; when the decision is not in favour of child schooling it would be irrational. In fact, the rationality assumption itself assumes that the decision-makers are well informed about the consequences of their decisions.

<sup>25</sup> In very early societies, there was no specific institution for education; informal instruction used to be given to children by the older members of the family. The family was the only institution where the child could learn work and the nuances of social life (Mendiavich, 1973). As a consequence of the emerging ideology of childhood and negatives aspects of child work, the institution of education has emerged as an alternative to keeping children out of work. In the transitional period, especially in industrial societies, education was more formalised and institutionalised. Moreover, in the modern industrialisation process, which is based on technology, knowledge and skills, education has become an important factor (See Roderick and Stephens, 1978). The demand for skilled labour and thereby the opportunity of high earnings, work as incentives to learn skills which is possible through education. In other words, the derived benefits of education acted as an incentive to parents to send their children to school and for the state to provide schooling facilities. However, the existence of incentives (say, benefits of education) and the reaching out of such information to parents are matters of great concern.

<sup>26</sup> Here information on the value of education is given to parents; but in reality the information may not be true or accurate. Owing to the lack of information on the value of education and thereby lack of motivation, a decision in favour of schooling becomes unlikely.

<sup>27</sup> See The Eighth Quinquennial Review (1923) **Progress of Education in India: 1917-22**, by J.A. Richley.

<sup>28</sup> It was observed during the Colonial period that in spite of positive state efforts, class interest and the ideology of the middle and higher classes did not trickle down to children of lower classes (Mandal, 1971, Gangopadhyaya, 1974).

<sup>29</sup> Weiner (1994) observed that the poor and the lower caste communities and their off-springs have to work with hands and that the upper castes with their heads. In other words, for the poor education is not necessary and for the upper castes it is.

<sup>30</sup> To see these differences we employed a few qualitative research techniques. In the informal discussions with parents of those children who are attending schools as well as of those who are not, which we conducted during individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), the difference became clear.

<sup>31</sup> *Willingness* and *Affordability* are two aspects of demand, of which the former is influenced by motivation, which further depends upon perceptions about the value of education and child work and the latter is influenced by costs (both direct and opportunity costs) of schooling.

<sup>32</sup> Access is seen in terms of the physical availability of school (within the habitation or walkable distance), economic feasibility (cost of schooling especially direct cost like fee remaining at affordable level), social justice (absence of discrimination of children by social background) and quality of schooling which involves the learning environment and the process of schooling.

<sup>33</sup> With respect to the schooling system, factors that influence the demand for schooling are: *exogenous* – namely, factors outside the schooling system such as socio-economic conditions at the household, community and regional levels - and *endogenous* - namely, factors related the schooling system itself.

<sup>34</sup> Interactions among people across space and walks of life improving access to markets and spread of communications networks; perceived value (economic and social) of education enhancing expectations; incentives like providing free education, distributing textbooks and uniforms, free of cost motivating economically poor parents by reducing direct cost and thereby increasing affordability; and also, role models, teacher's interactions with parents, and attractiveness of schooling processes.

<sup>35</sup> In the past, as old people say, there was no public school in the village during their childhood.

<sup>36</sup> The middle-aged people say that during their childhood there was a school but its functioning was very poor.