

A HANDBOOK FOR THE MEDIA ON
Reporting on Education



TABLE OF CONTENT

Reporting on Education	1
Current Elementary and Secondary Education System	3
RTE Implementation Status in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana	4
Child Protection in Education System	7
Laws Protecting the Children in Education Institutions	9
Ethical Reporting of Child Abuse and Violence	10
Story Ideas	12
Examples of Good Reporting in Print Media	14



Reporting on Education

Education is an important marker for economic and social development, and it can not be undermined. Education system and related issues are constantly in news for this critical reason and its obvious role in our children’s development.

The role of media in this regard is multi-faceted. It informs people of the choices available in terms of their careers and rights but also pushes for policy decisions by critically analyzing the education system. In our country, print and electronic media play an important role in shaping society’s views and influencing the way people think and behave. Especially the dynamic regional news media like the Telugu TV channels and newspapers, who are able to raise critical policy and system issues related to education systems available to our children.

With the rapid growth of Telugu media, its role and responsibilities in covering the complex yet important issues of education becomes even more critical. The current reporting on education in Indian media – both national and regional – does not correspond to its critical role in our society or in our daily lives. This is reflected in recent studies on trends of coverage in regional media (see box).

This handbook provides an overview of the current education system, the Right to Education (RTE) and its current status in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It also provides story ideas for well-rounded and sensitive reporting on protection issues in the education system.

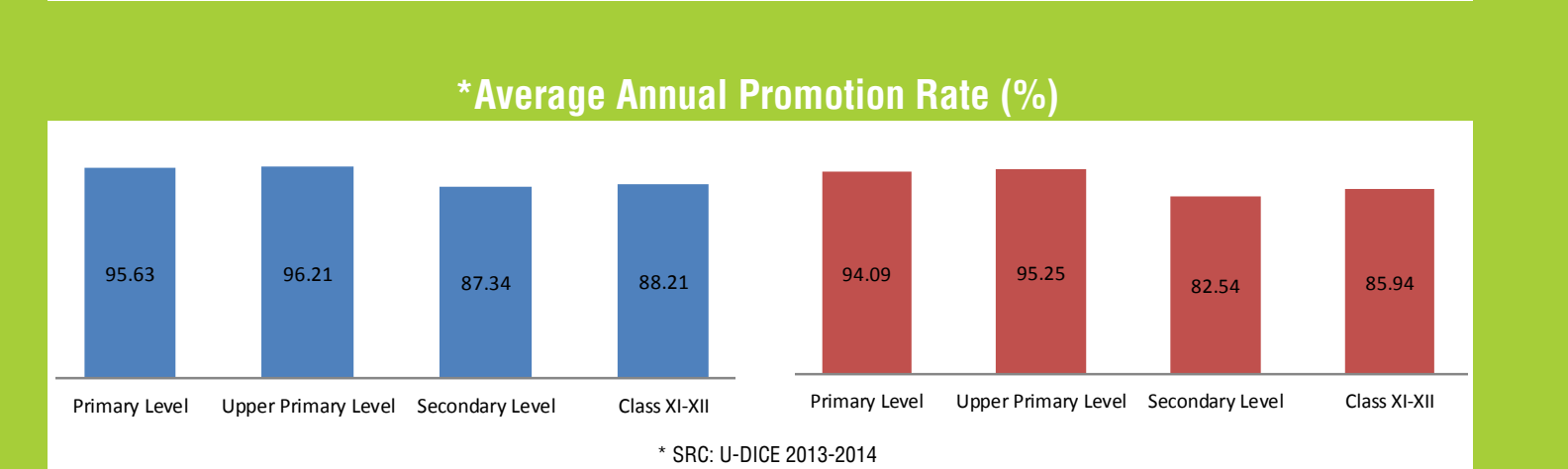
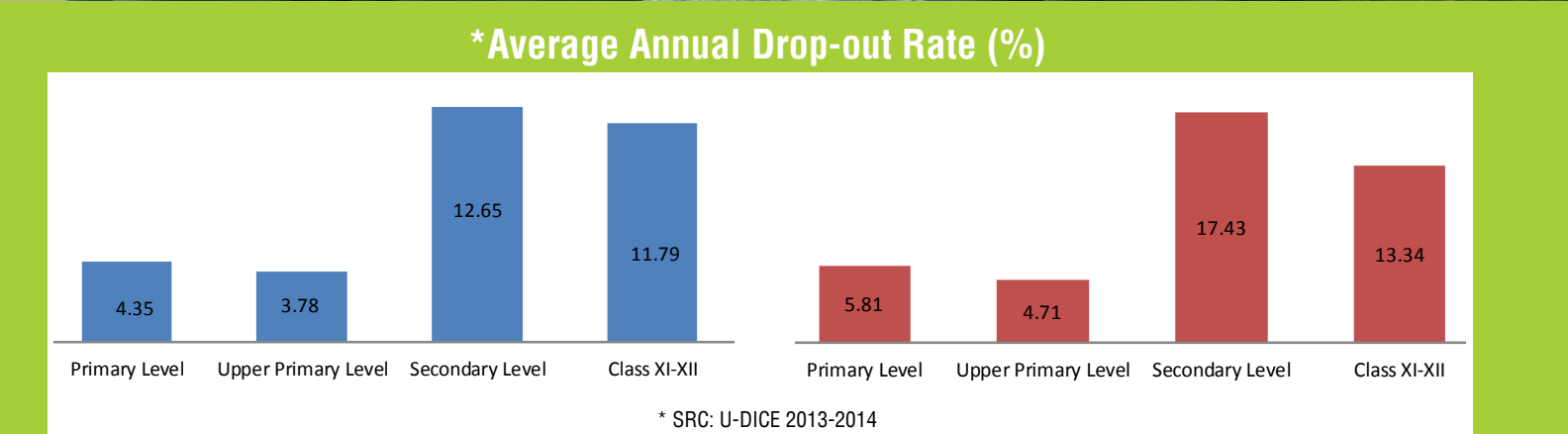
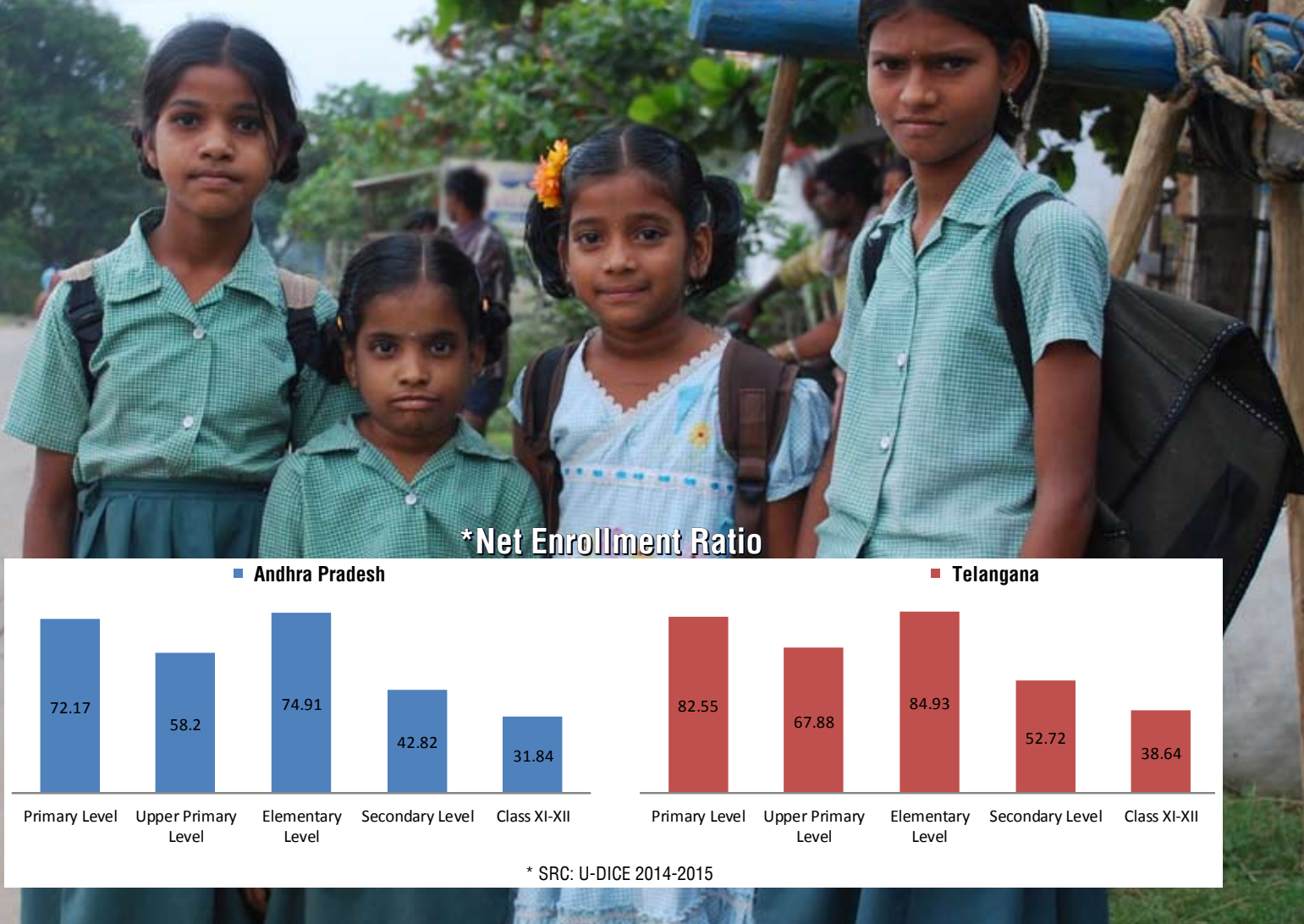
UNICEF works on child rights; it partners and produces material that enables informed and holistic coverage and reportage on issues relating to children. This handbook is one such effort for media professionals and program producers.

A study of Telugu TV channels in Hyderabad on children’s issues showed that Telugu TV channels dedicate only 2.50% of their prime time on children-related issues and of this about 19% was on child education. These issues included –implementation of RTE, lack of playgrounds and increased study hours, girl child education, issues relating to unrecognized schools, lack of infrastructure and basic facilities , teacher training; budget allocation and success stories.¹

Another study of Hyderabad edition of print media was done to understand what issues it reports on pertaining to child health/survival, child education and child protection. It was found that from the entire coverage on children’s issue approximately 25% coverage was on child education issues. The issues covered included - implementation of schemes like the KG to PG, Badi Panduga, follow up on the PIL on lack of facilities in govt. school, AP Supreme Court’s committee ruling to look into lack of facilities in govt. school, action against unrecognized schools in Telangana, suicide cases in junior/corporate colleges, private schools’ fee regulation in Telangana etc.²

¹UNICEF Award for Children-Related Programs in the Telugu TV Channels is an initiative of UNICEF and CMS Hyderabad. These Awards are unique of its kind in the country they are designed especially for the Telugu TV Channels to promote children related issues in the State of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Nineteen Telugu TV Channels participated in these Awards in 2014 - ABN Andhra Jyothy, CVR News, DD Yadagiri,ETV2, Gemini News, HMTV, iNEWS, MAHAA News, NTV, Sakshi TV, Studio N, TNews, TV5, TV9,V6 News, Vanitha TV, 6TV and 10 TV. These channels are monitored for 100 days from 6:30 to 10:30pm to understand reporting trends. This handbook includes observations and antidotes by the eminent Jury member.

²Hyderabad editions of newspapers – The Hindu, The Time Of India, Deccan Chronical, Sakshi, Eenadu and Andhra Jyothy were studied for a period of 30 days in July, 2014, to understand the trend on reporting on children related issues. A study done by –CMS Media Lab, Hyderabad



Current Elementary and Secondary Education System

India is home to the largest child population in the world. Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is the Constitutional commitment in India. At the time of adoption of the Constitution in 1950, it was aimed to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) within the next ten years i.e. by 1960. However, this goal is yet to be achieved by India today.

In 2009, The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, popularly known as RTE Act was formed with an aim to fulfill the provisions of 86th amendment of the Constitution of India. Since past two decades, many positive developments have been recorded in government run or funded schools - Infrastructural facilities have improved, gross enrolment is almost universal, dropout rates have declined even for girls at the primary level, and many more teachers have been appointed. More school incentives - such as free textbooks, free uniforms, and serving of cooked mid-day meals have led to better outreach and coverage.

In spite of the development as the records say, the lack of proper reporting and monitoring along with several systemic and structural deficiencies characterize the functioning of government run or funded schools- for example there is shortage of resources, schools, classrooms and teachers, teacher training concerns, quality of the curriculum, assessment of learning achievements and the efficacy of school management. To achieve UEE there are four important components -access, enrollment, retention and quality.

Enrollment and Retention - there has been acceleration in enrolment in recent years, as a result of number of schemes such as - recruitment of local teachers, increasing proximity of schools, serving of hot-cooked meals in schools and incentives for girls. However the official figures on enrolment are often not reliable for many reasons. There is a common trend found that even poor parents today are inclined to enroll their children in private schools because the local government school are not functioning.

Access - A large proportion of minority groups such as the scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) as well as religious minorities like Muslims remain deprived of access to basic education. Children with disabilities and working children are two other categories that have not enjoyed the benefits of universal schooling.

Quality - Quality elementary education in general and primary education in particular has been a serious shortcoming. Studies indicate that states are rushing to achieve enrolment targets but providing substandard education in the process. Much of school quality in fact depends on the teacher. Teachers are expected to enrich a child's learning and schooling experience. But this is often not the case. For many children, the schooling experience is a nightmare. Studies have shown that teachers frequently beat children, terrorize them, and humiliate them publicly. Many forms of discrimination and biases enter the classroom. There is also a growing class divide between teachers and students (of poor parents) especially in rural areas as teachers in many places are among the highest paid government employees in a village.

1 Estimates from UNICEF India website | 2 Annual Status of Education report, ASER, 2014



There are 7 million children in India under the age of 14 years who do not have access to quality education; approximately 50% of all children drop out before they complete their elementary education.

About 20% of children aged 6 to 14 are still not in school; millions of women remain illiterate despite the spurt in female literacy in the 1990s.¹

India has 12 million children living with disabilities. Only 1% of children with disabilities have access to school.

About 96.7% of children (in the age group 6-14 years)are enrolled in school in rural India. However only 71% of the enrolled children are attending school.²

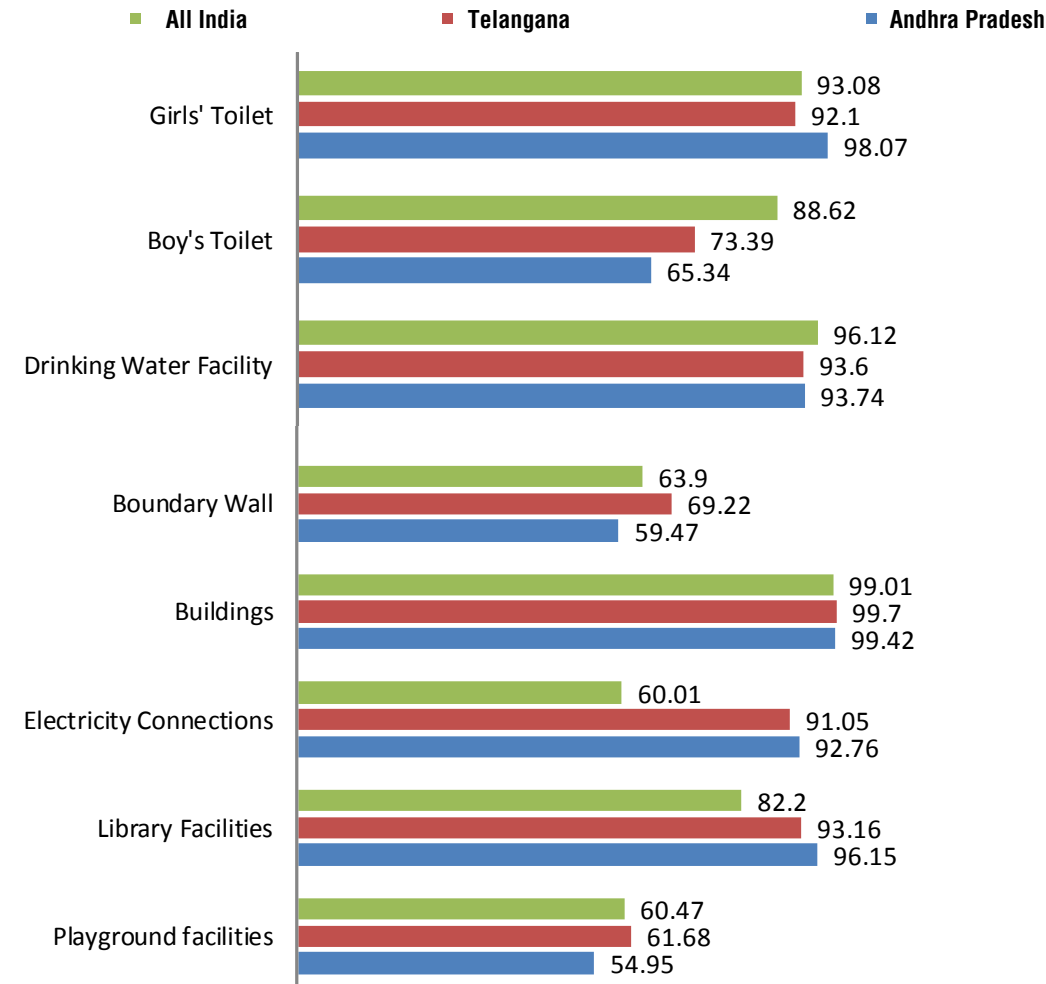
Education is an essential right, which permits each person to receive skills and to blossom socially.

The earliest years of a child's life are critical. These years determine the child's ability to survive and thrive in life, and lays the foundations for her/ his learning and holistic development. It is during these early years that children develop the cognitive, physical, social and emotional skills they need to succeed in life.

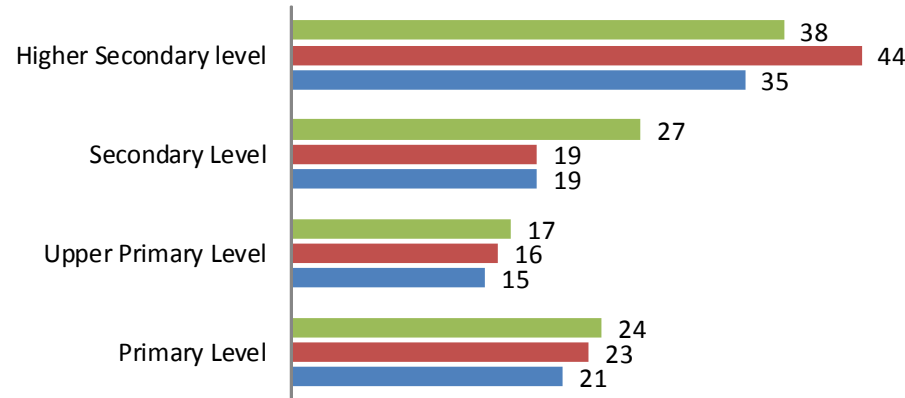
Education yields many long-term benefits, particularly for girls, contributing to later marriage, lower fertility rates and reduced domestic violence as well as lower infant mortality and improved child nutrition. Literacy for the girl child has huge impact on society. An educated mother can help raise a healthy, well nurtured, confident, and happy child. Literacy leads to equal opportunity and empowerment of women.

*Status of RTE in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana- 2014-2015

Schools with - Girls' Toilet, Boys' Toilet, Drinking Water Facilities, Boundary Wall, Buildings, Electricity Connections, Library Facilities and Playground Facilities (%)



Pupil-Teacher Ratio by Education Level



Percentage of Professionaly Trained Teachers (%)



* SRC: U-DICE 2014-2015

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

ECCE refers to programs and provisions for children from prenatal to six years of age, which cater to the needs of a child in all domains of development i.e. physical, motor, language, cognitive, socio- emotional, creative and aesthetic appreciation, and health and nutrition aspects. This would cover developmental priorities for each sub stage within the continuum, i.e. care, early stimulation/interaction needs for children below three years, and developmentally appropriate preschool education for three to six year olds with a more structured and planned school readiness component for five to six year olds. This policy is thus applicable to all early childhood care and education programs/ related services in public, private and voluntary sectors in all settings across regions, that are offered to children under six years. These services could go by the nomenclature of Anganwadis (AWC), crèches, play groups/schools, pre-schools, nursery schools, kindergartens, preparatory schools, Balwadis, home based care etc. and propose to cater to the needs of children from prenatal to six years.

AWC were started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. These centers should provide supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services of which later three services are provided in convergence with public health systems.

Pre- School Education (PSE)

PSE is a crucial component of the ICDS scheme. It aims at development of school readiness and a positive attitude towards school education among children of the age group of three to six years through non-formal and joyful play way activities at Anganwadi centers.

The objective of the PSE is also to strengthen the goal of universalization of primary education, by providing to the child the necessary preparation for primary schooling and offering substitute care to younger siblings, thus freeing the older ones – especially girls – to attend school.

The first six years of a child's life is critical to the child as well as the country. It lays the foundation for lifelong learning and development. The early periods of life are a period of tremendous growth both in terms of expanding the horizons of development and also in deepening the development. A stimulating environment is a necessary condition for development.

Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE)

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

On April 1, 2010, RTE Act and Article 21-A came into effect. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words 'free and compulsory'. 'Free education' means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary

education. 'Compulsory education' casts an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the six to fourteen age groups. With this, India has moved forward to a rights based framework that casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21-A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act.

Any cost that prevents a child from accessing school will be borne by the state which shall have the responsibility of enrolling the child as well as ensuring attendance and completion of eight years of schooling. No child shall be denied admission for want of documents; no child shall be turned away if the admission cycle in the school is over and no child shall be asked to take an admission test. Children with disabilities will also be educated in the mainstream schools.

All private schools shall be required to enroll children from weaker sections and disadvantaged communities in their incoming class to the extent of 25% of their enrolment, by simple random selection. All schools will have to prescribe to norms and standards laid out in the Act and those that don't fulfill these standards within 3 years will not be allowed to function.

Secondary Education

It's a goal of the government to make good quality secondary education available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group of fourteen to eighteen years.

Secondary education has been shown to contribute to individual earnings and economic growth. It is associated with improved health, equity, and social conditions. It is an important channel through which young people acquire skills that improve opportunities for good jobs. High quality secondary education that caters for the widest possible range of abilities, interests and backgrounds is vital not just to set young people on the path to the world of work, but also to give countries the educated workforce they need to compete in today's technologically driven world.

India has 158.7 million children in the 0-6 years age group.¹

About 75.7 million children i.e. 48% are reported to be covered under the ICDS.²

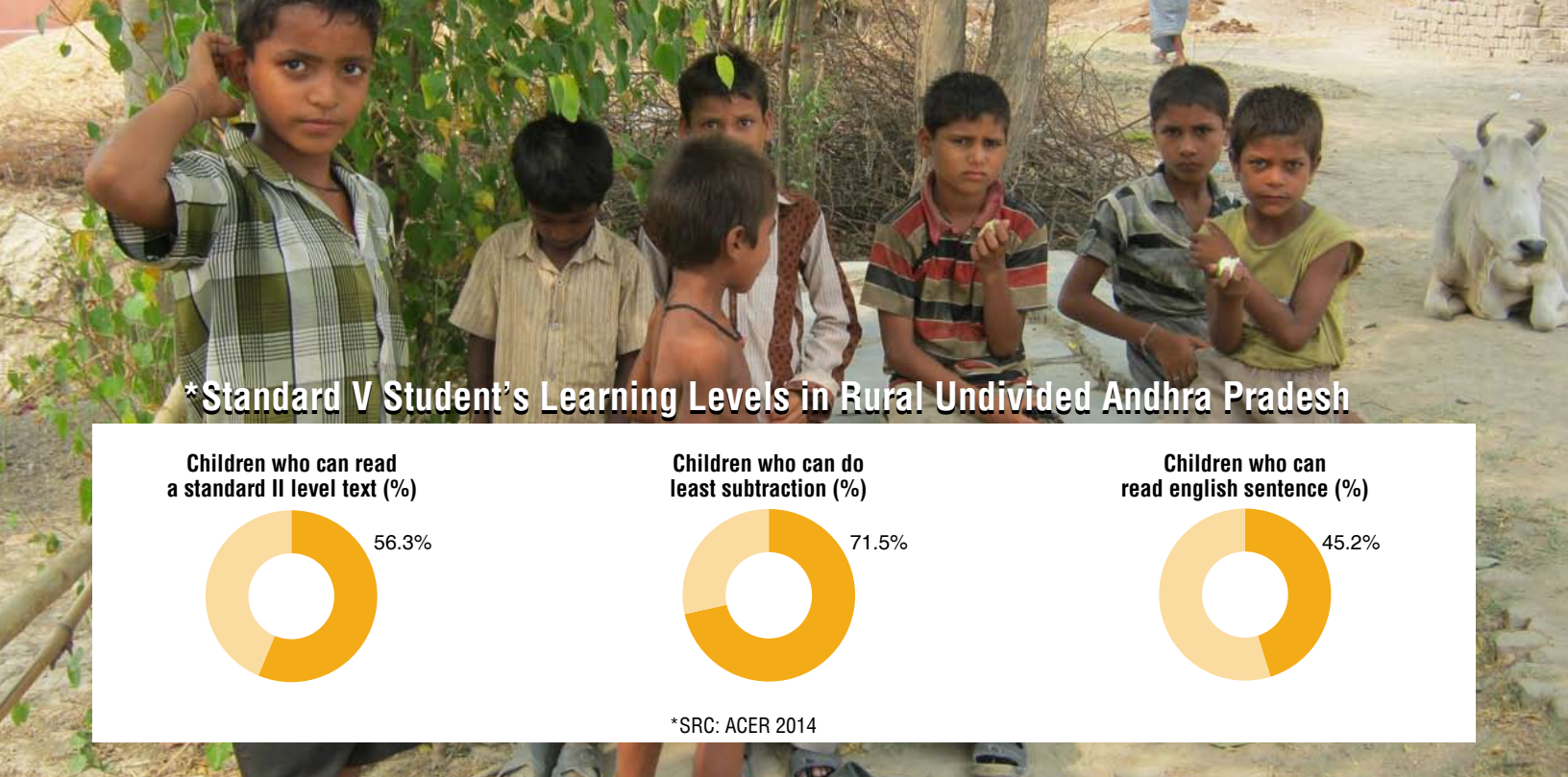
There are around 86,164 AWC (for which data is available) in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

There are 1,07,829 children (6-13 years) who are out-of-school in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.³

A study on reporting education by print media across major cities in India showed that maximum number of stories were on RTE, followed by stories on Vocational/ Professional/Technical Education, University/Admissions and Education System.

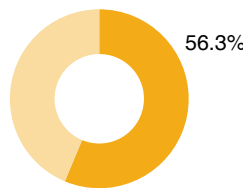
Major stories on RTE dealt with various aspects of the Act, its implementation and the impact on schools which included orders and guidelines given to schools by the government and legal and infrastructure problems. Lesser number of stories concentrated on the provisions of the RTE Act. --Study by CMS Media Lab, Delhi, 2012.

1 Estimates from Census, 2011 | 2 Ministry of Women and Child Department (MWCD), 2011 | 3 SRI-IMRB Survey, 2014

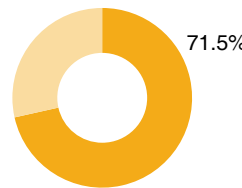


***Standard V Student’s Learning Levels in Rural Undivided Andhra Pradesh**

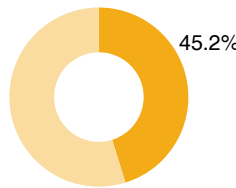
Children who can read a standard II level text (%)



Children who can do least subtraction (%)

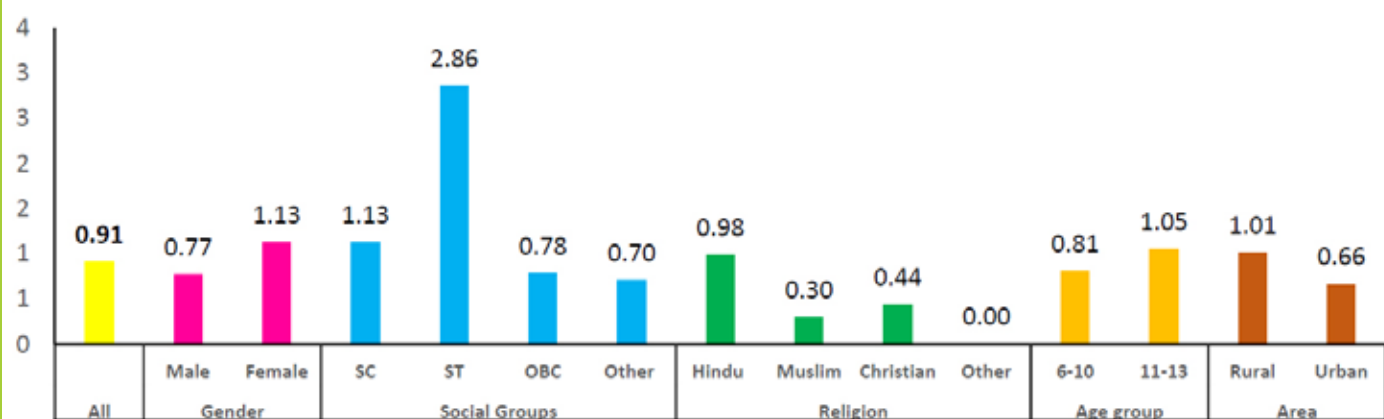


Children who can read english sentence (%)



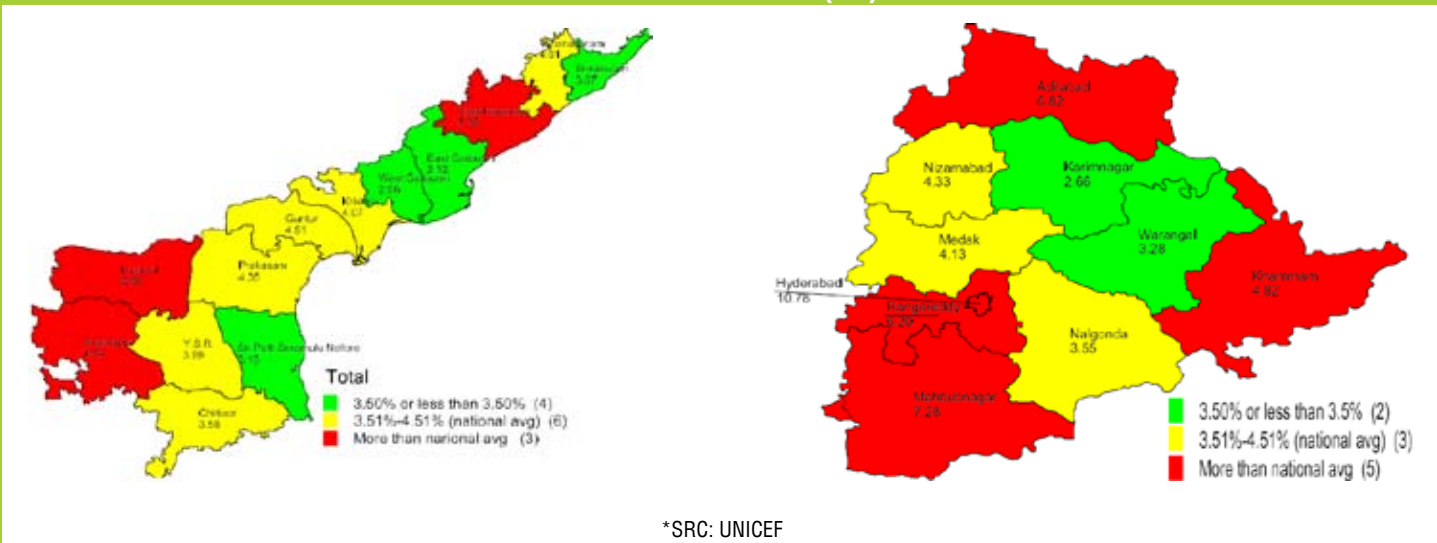
*SRC: ACER 2014

***Out-of School Children (6-13 years) - Gender, Scocial Group, Religion, Age Group and Area (%)**



*SRC: SRI-IMRB Survey, 2014

***Child Laborers (%)**



*SRC: UNICEF

Child Protection in Educational Settings

The achievement of Education for All (EFA) is being jeopardized by the failure to realize the rights of children affected by lack of protection in educational settings like neglect, violence, abuse, early marriage, child labor, unfriendly settings for children with disabilities etc.

Fulfilling the education goals requires not just getting all children into school, but making sure all schools work in the best interests of the children entrusted to them. Ending violence in educational settings is in itself critical for the creation of an environment that is conducive to learning and development.

In addition to addressing these crucial dimensions of children’s rights, investing in protecting children has a direct positive impact on a country’s human capital and economic growth and reduces theburden of government spending on the long-term consequences of abuse.

Children Out of School

Children fail to attend school because they are forced by economic circumstances or because the system allows them to stay out of school. School is also often perceived as boring and irrelevant to their lives.

Policies on various aspects of education (for example, teacher recruitment and qualifications) vary across states, as does the availability, quality, and efficiency of investment in education. In 2002, India accounted for more than 25 percent of all out-of-school children worldwide. They belonged to disadvantaged or minority communities, migrant families, and the urban poor, or were working children, children with special needs, or children in difficult circumstances; a disproportionate number of them were girls.

A Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) says that only one to five per cent of out-of-school children are actually involved in earning significant wages. Many of the children working up to eight hours a day were not earning any significant income as they were involved in jobs like looking after their siblings, cattle grazing etc. and not in wage-earning labor.

Child Labor

Conventionally, a child labour is defined as a child in the range of 5 to 14 years, who is doing labour, either paid or unpaid. The term ‘child labour’ is generally used to refer to any work by a child that interferes with their full physical development curtailing the opportunities for education and the needed recreation. Despite a number of efforts made for the eradication of child labour, the situation remains still grave.

The magnitude of ‘child labour’ is also derived on the basis of children not attending schools, providing an essential link between the two issues of child labour and education. This also makes a presumption that reasons for children working are the same as the reasons for children not attending schools.

It is the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s heath or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Poverty, lack of good schools and growth of informal economy are considered as the important causes of child labour in India.

Maltreatment can have a profound and damaging consequence during childhood, adolescence and throughout adult life. Children who have experienced abuse or neglect are more likely to have poorer physical and/or mental health outcomes, social difficulties such as insecure attachments with caregivers and problematic relationships with peers.

They also suffer from cognitive dysfunction which is negative impact of excessive stress on brain development, high-risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, early sexual activity resulting in teenage parenting and behavioral problems such as aggression and adult criminality.

The failure to be protected in settings such as homes, schools, communities, institutions and on the internet, has significant immediate and long-term consequences for children. The irrevocable nature of some of these impacts serves to underscore the importance of effectively preventing and responding to child abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.

Child labor harms children or keeps them from attending school. Under-age children work at all sorts of jobs around the world, usually because they and their families are extremely poor. Large numbers of children work in commercial agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, mining, and domestic service. Some children work in illicit activities like the drug trade and prostitution.

When children take up a small job as a domestic help or restaurant boy against a small nominal salary of, they do not get enough time for primary and secondary education and is most likely to remain completely illiterate, unskilled, perhaps with a weak health and will have to remain unemployed or be engaged as an unskilled labor when they grow up. Hence, no child should be engaged as labor both from legal point of view as well as the child’s future interest.

Child Marriage

Child marriage is violation of children’s rights, children miss out on fundamental rights, such as right to play, right to an education, and girls become exposed to unplanned and early pregnancies. Girls married as children are more likely to drop out of school, have a low-paid job, limited decision-making power at home, more vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Child marriage is still widespread in India, which is home to a third of the world’s child brides. Child marriage is a violation of child rights, and has a negative impact on physical growth, health, mental and emotional development, and education opportunities. Both girls and boys are affected by child marriage, but girls are affected in much larger numbers and with greater intensity. Child marriage can be seen across the country but it is far higher in rural than in urban areas. Girls from poorer families, scheduled castes and tribes, and with lower education levels are more likely to marry at a younger age. Although child marriage is declining, the rate of decline is slow. Broad, multi-faceted strategies are needed to target different aspects of the problem, including deep-rooted social norms and behaviors, the perceived low value of girls, limited access to education, low quality of education, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of transportation, exposure to violence, restricted freedom of movement and economic vulnerability. Child marriage is low among women who have had access to higher education and secondary education.

Zafar, 16yrs: dropped out of his school in Rohini last year, and now works at Humayun’s Tomb as a gardener. “Maar kha kha khe chod dhiya.”

Raji: “I was a slow learner, which angered my teacher. At one point I could not tolerate her verbal abuses and dropped out.”

Tulasi, a Class IV student of a government school in Hassan, was beaten by her teacher for ‘asking for an extra helping in the afternoon meal.’

JAMMU: Despite the law proscribing it, a class VI girl was allegedly beaten mercilessly by her teacher for not getting a high score in a school test. She fractured the fingers of her right hand, was in a state of shock and too scared to go back to school.

TAMIL NADU: My son Shanmugham who is a student of class 11th, went to school one day without his uniform as his only uniform was wet. On that day the Physical education teacher and three other staff of the school beat-up my son for not wearing his uniform. The physical education teacher scolded my son saying that “he could consume poison and die, instead of coming to school without uniform.” After this incident at school my son came back home for lunch in the afternoon my son went to school, called all the teachers and told them that he has been insulted by them and is consuming poison because of this. He consumed the poison in front of the teachers and students, and died before reaching the hospital.

These are the voices of a few of the children scarred by experiences of corporal punishment. For most children fortunate enough to be in schools, this is an unfortunate everyday reality enough to push them out of school. As is evidenced by the ‘voices’ profiled above corporal punishment does not mean physical violence on the child, but also verbal insults, humiliation and loss of self-esteem. Self-perception of children gets altered if not wholly destroyed even before it emerges by such inhuman acts on tender minds.¹

Government of India has recognized that 65% of school going children are inflicted with corporal punishment.² Corporal punishment has been classified as an act of violence and abuse on children.

1 These are excerpts from various newspaper reports and complaints that NCPCR received, over the past year.
2 Study on Child Abuse: India 2007, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2007



Corporal Punishment

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light, mostly involving hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement is called corporal punishment. In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment that are also cruel and degrading. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.

Corporal punishment in both government as well as private schools is deeply ingrained as a tool to discipline children and as a normal action. But most children do not report or confide about the matter to anyone and suffer silently. Children due to fear are often silent and submit to violence without questioning. They sometimes show signs of deep hurt in their behavior but this often goes unnoticed, perpetuating further violence on them. Corporal punishment not only affects the emotional behaviour and academic performance of a child, but also leads to reduction in self-esteem and dignity of child. Because of fear of corporal punishment it makes children more likely to avoid school or to drop out altogether. Hence, corporal punishment is a violation of the right to life with dignity.

More often than not, when a teacher uses violence on children it is an outburst of his/her personal frustration. Teacher training and sensitization, public interest programs, community mobilization, educating children on their rights etc. can additionally play an important role to change attitudes on corporal punishment.

Laws Protecting the Children in Education Institutions

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (www. mhrd.gov.in/rte)

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

Article 21-A and the RTE Act came into effect on 1 April 2010. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words ‘free and compulsory’. ‘Free education’ means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. ‘Compulsory education’ casts an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age groups. With this, India has moved forward to a rights based framework that casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 www. wcd.nic.in/cma2006.pdf

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 has been repealed and the major provisions of the new Act include:

- Every child marriage shall be voidable at the option of the contracting party who was a child at the time of the marriage.
- The Court while granting a decree of nullity shall make an order directing the parties, parents and guardians to return the money, valuables, ornaments and other gifts received.
- The Court may also make an interim or final order directing the male contracting party to the child marriage or parents or guardian to pay maintenance to the female contracting party to the marriage and for her residence until her remarriage.
- The Court shall make an appropriate order for the custody and the maintenance of the children of child marriages.
- Notwithstanding that a child marriage has been annulled, every child of such marriage shall be deemed to be a legitimate child for all purposes.
- Child marriages to be void in certain circumstances such as minor being sold for the purpose of marriage, minor after being married is sold or trafficked or used for immoral purposes, etc.
- Enhancement in punishments for male adults marrying a child and persons performing, abetting, promoting, attending, etc a child marriage with imprisonment up to two years and a fine up to one lakh rupees.
- States to appoint Child Marriage Prohibition Officers whose duties include prevention of solemnisation of child marriages, collection of evidence for effective prosecution, creating

Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 (www.labour.bih.nic.in/Acts/child_labour_prohibition_and_regulation_act_1986.pdf)

The Act was formulated to eliminate child labour and provides for punishments and penalties for employing children below the age of 14 years in various hazardous occupations and processes. The Act provides power to State governments to make rules with reference to the health and safety of children, wherever their employment is permitted. It provides for regulation of work conditions, including fixing hours of work, weekly holidays, notice to inspectors, provision for resolving disputes as to age, maintenance of registers, etc. Through a recent notification, child domestic workers up to 14 years of age working in hotels and dhabas have been brought within the purview of the Act. It is one

Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 (www.wcd.nic.in/childact/childprotection31072012.pdf)

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012 has been drafted to strengthen the legal provisions for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation. For the first time, a special law has been passed to address the issue of sexual offences against children.

The POCSO Act prescribes five sexual offences against children - penetrative sexual assault, aggravated penetrative sexual assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, sexual harassment, and using a child for pornographic purposes. Abetment of or an attempt to commit these offences is also punishable under the Act. These offences are gender neutral vis-à-vis the perpetrator as well as the victim. The Act requires the State Governments to designate the Sessions Court in each district as a Special Court to try offences under the Act. If, however, a Children’s Court under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 or Special Court for a similar purpose has been notified in a district, then that court will try offences under this Act.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 (www.wcd.nic.in/childprot/jjact2000.pdf)

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 is a comprehensive legislation that provides for proper care, protection and treatment of children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection by catering to their development needs, and by adopting a child-friendly approach in the adjudication and disposition of matters in the best interest of children and for their ultimate rehabilitation through various institutions established under the Act.

It conforms to UNCRC, the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) 1985, the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and all other relevant national and international instruments. It prescribes a uniform age of 18 years, below which both boys and girls are to be treated as children. A clear distinction has been made in this Act between the juvenile offender and the neglected child. It also aims to offer a juvenile or a child increased access to justice by establishing Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees. The Act has laid special emphasis on rehabilitation and social integration of children and has provided for institutional and noninstitutional measures for the care and protection of children. The non-institutional alternatives include adoption, foster care, sponsorship, and after care.



Case study of a holistic reporting- ‘Balabadi’ a news feature on Child Education, won an Award at the 6th UNICEF Awards, 2014. The news feature portrayed the story positively, highlighting the success story of a day care program for working parents. It focused on how with limited resources and innovate local teaching aids, the day care educational program was running successfully. The story was an example of rounded reporting, along with quality footage and bytes of stakeholders.

“Such positive coverage is inspiring. When news constantly projects problems and focus on negativity, it leaves the viewers in a state of hopelessness and despair and immune to such stories.”- 6th UNICEF Awards Jury

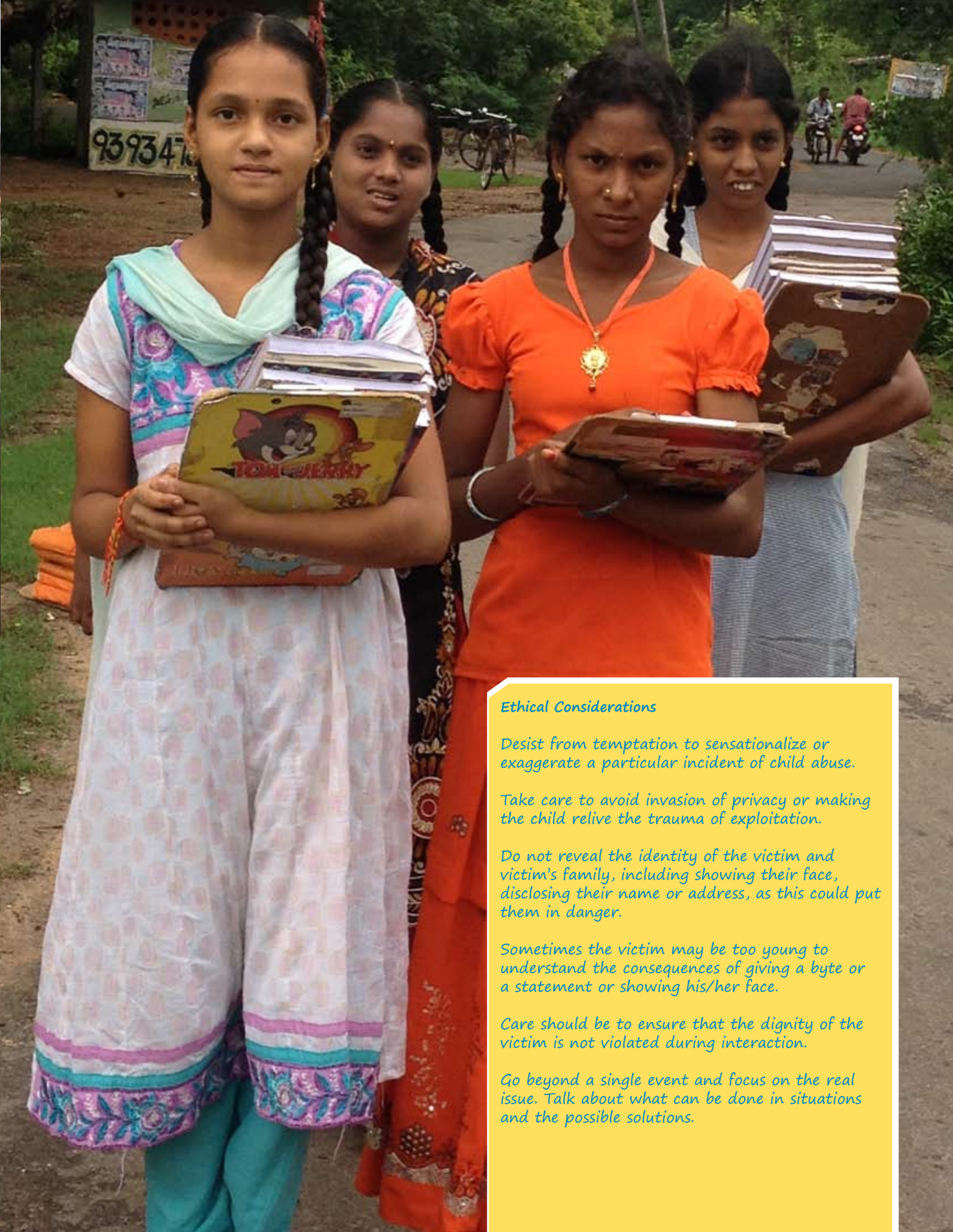
Ethical Reporting on Child Abuse and Violence

Reporting on abuse and violence accurately and sensitively along with keeping the best interest of the child can be a challenge.

For the most part, sexual abuse, bullying, discrimination and child neglect in schools (government, government funded, residential and private) remain invisible and are largely unreported.

The role that journalists play in such circumstances is imperative. Through reporting, a journalist has the power to persuade and/or influence public opinion and policy, in addition to social perspective. If reported truthfully and accurately, articles can serve as a catalyst for positive change on a local, national and even international level, thus helping shift a culture of abuse towards a culture of protection.

Reporting on violence (sexual, physical, emotional and neglect etc.) requires special ethical sensitivity, interviewing skills, and knowledge about victims, perpetrators, law and psychology. As several study reports mentioned in this handbook suggest, the subject of violence and abuse are well covered by the print and electronic media. However we are focusing on how to frame the news in a sensitive manner, through some examples.



- Ethical Considerations**
- Desist from temptation to sensationalize or exaggerate a particular incident of child abuse.
 - Take care to avoid invasion of privacy or making the child relive the trauma of exploitation.
 - Do not reveal the identity of the victim and victim’s family, including showing their face, disclosing their name or address, as this could put them in danger.
 - Sometimes the victim may be too young to understand the consequences of giving a byte or a statement or showing his/her face.
 - Care should be to ensure that the dignity of the victim is not violated during interaction.
 - Go beyond a single event and focus on the real issue. Talk about what can be done in situations and the possible solutions.

STORY IDEAS

Real Issue: Corporal Punishment

1 STORY: ‘A boy beaten up by class teacher for not doing homework’

What could be your story’s focus?

- Pressure of homework in the education system.
- What are the laws protecting children and how the perpetrator could be punished?
- Impact of such situations on victims’ psyche.
- Alternatives to physical punishment.
- What can be done to prevent such incidents?
- If such an incident has taken place, what are legal and other remedies available?

Who should you interview?

Principal, Teachers, District Education Officer(DEO), Psychologists, Women and Child Welfare Institutes (WCD), State Council on Child Protection on Child Rights (SCPCR), Parents and Students.

What are possible questions?

12 Ask Principal - is he/she aware about teachers taking harsh action against the children? What action does the school take against teacher using harsher teaching methods? Are the teachers aware of laws protecting children against corporal punishment. Is self-defence taught in school? Are they taught how to defend themselves in such situations?

Ask DEO/WDC - what actions do they take against schools using corporal punishment for discipline? Do they do random checks on school to check on the teaching practices?

Ask Students - how frequently they are subjected to beating and other forms of punishments by teachers/principal. Who do they report to when they are subjected to corporal punishment?



July 2014. Three visually impaired students of Greenfield School in Kakinada District, were beaten badly by the teacher, for talking in the class. Clip taken from TIMES NOW

Real Issue: Abuse and Violence in Schools

2 STORY: ‘A girl files a police complaint against a male teacher for inappropriately touching her, talking badly with her and blackmailing her’

What could be your story’s focus?

- What to do in such situations and where to get help.
- Whom should the victim talk to?
- How to avoid such situations.
- Defense mechanism that students should be aware of.
- How support is required / available for the victim.

Who should be interviewed?

Principal, Teachers, Parents, Psychologists, Experts from women and child welfare institutes, Experts from State Child Protection on Child Rights and Students.

What could I ask the stakeholders?

Ask Principal - does the school teach the students about good touch and bad touch? What measures are being taken to avoid sexual harassment? How are the students trained to fight sexual harassment? What is the school’s role in dealing with a victim? How does the school protect the victim? What action is taken against the perpetrator?

Ask Parents - do they talk to their children about sexual harassment? Are they aware that there is a law protecting the children from sexual abuse?

Ask Students/Victims - do they feel safe in the school? do they know whom to report to if they are subjected to sexual abuse? do they talk to their parents about problems in school?

Ask Psychologists - what are the consequences of sexual abuse on children?



November 2014. Over 300 girls of Allahabad district’s Fateh Bahadur school stopped attending school for over a week as a result of sexual harassment by local youths, some of whom, use to be their classmates. Clip taken from NDTV

Real Issue: Lack of implementation of the RTE Act

3 STORY: ‘A specific school with no toilets/ dysfunctional toilets’

What could be your story’s focus?

- Since when is the school having this problem?
- What is the reason behind the dysfunctional toilets?
- Why is this school not getting water? Do the schools in the neighborhood have water?
- Does the school not have a person to clean the toilet?
- How are the students dealing with the current problem?
- What could be a possible solution to this problem?
- Who is responsible for solving this problem?

Who should you interview?

Principal, Teachers, District Education Officer(DEO), Psychologists, Doctors, Women and Child Welfare Institutes (WCD), State Council on Child Protection on Child Rights (SCPCR), Parents and Students.

What are possible questions?

Ask Principal - the reason for nonfunctional toilets? Accountability of funds been sanctioned to build toilets? Does the school have funds to hire a toilet cleaning person?

Ask DEO/WDC - is this a similar situation among other schools in the neighborhood

Ask Students - what are the problems students are facing due to lack of toilets in school and what are they doing about it?

Ask Psychologists/ Doctors - what are the effects of lack of toilets in schools?



August 2015. Warangal girls drop out of school due to lack of toilets. Clip taken from TV 9

4 STORY: ‘A government school teacher’s lack of minimum knowledge’

What could be your story’s focus?

- Is the school following the student teacher ratio as per the RTE?
- Does the school have enough required teachers?
- Are the teachers qualified to teach the required class?
- Did the teachers get any training?
- Poor teaching abilities in government schools and how it can be addressed.
- Present scenario of the state in implementing the RTE.

Who should you interview?

Education Minister, Principal, SSA Officials, RTE officials Teachers, District Education Officer(DEO)/ Mandal Education officer (MEO), NGOs.

What are possible questions?

Ask Education Minister/SSA Officials - what initiatives the government is taking to remove people’s perception about government schools. Why is there a lack of confidence in government schools’ quality?

Ask NGOs - what can the governments do to improve teacher quality. Share success stories.

Ask Principals - what skills training do teachers get?

Ask Parents - are they aware of the situation at school? Do they participate in school activities or are they part of the SMC?



December 2011. A surprise visit to Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, schools in Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda districts of Andhra Pradesh found that the English teacher teaching class 9th and 10th class students was teaching incorrect grammar. Clip by Ashish Chandra

Examples of Good Reporting in Print Media

School bus conductor molests child, held 5-year-old was targeted when she was alone on the bus, which had no woman employee Tribune News Service | Chandigarh, May 14 2015

In a shocking incident, the Chandigarh Police today arrested a 23-year-old school bus conductor for allegedly molesting a five-year-old girl studying in KG at Stepping Stones School in Sector 38. The police arrested Jagjeet, the school conductor, in a case of molestation (Sections 354 & 354 A of the IPC) and various sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

According to a complaint submitted to the Sector 39 police station, the victim’s mother alleged that her daughter returned home last Thursday and was visibly frightened and refused to say anything. Upon being asked, she started crying and disclosed that the “conductor in her school bus touches her private parts and molests her” on finding her alone on the bus as she is the last one to be dropped. The girl also had red rashes on her chest.

She said the conductor also threatened the child when she cried, and told her not to tell about it to anyone else. There was no woman employee of the school in that bus. “She was keeping quiet since the last many days and was reluctant to go to school,” said her mother. The girls parents brought the matter to the notice of the school principal immediately. They alleged that the school authorities told them then that the conductor will be sacked. However, Jagjeet, again came on duty in the bus this Monday following which the girl’s parents went to the school again with a complaint.

The parents alleged that school principal Sanjiv Kumar refused to take action and it was only when parents of students created a hue and cry in the school that the matter was brought to the notice of the police and a case registered.

Police acted immediately: SP
“We acted immediately on receiving a complaint from the girl’s parents. A case has been registered,” said SP (City) Parvinder Singh.
Children’s safety schools’ responsibility: STA

The State Transport Authority (STA), SK Jain, said it was the responsibility of the schools and bus operators to ensure that children were safe in the school buses. After the Delhi incident, directions had been issued to the school authorities and school bus operators to adhere to the standard guidelines. Circulars were also sent to the school authorities to ensure the safety of students.

14 The STA said school buses were not passed without checking police verification record of the school bus crew. The schools and bus operators had been asked to submit personal records of drivers and helpers of their school buses.

School cannot evade responsibility: Victim’s father
“The school principal told us that the conductor is mentally sick. Then how come they hired him? Also, the school authorities said they had hired buses on a franchisee basis and it was the responsibility of the transporter and not that of the school. The name of the school is imprinted on all buses; the authorities cannot evade responsibility?” claimed the victim’s father.

What the principal says
“After receiving a complaint in writing on Monday, we immediately terminated the services of the conductor. We appointed the class teacher of the child to counsel her and enquired from four other girl students who used to travel in the same bus whether any such thing happened with them; there was no lapse on our part,” said Sanjiv Kumar, Principal of Stepping Stones School, Sector 38. The principal admitted that the school bus had no woman employee.

Taking remedial steps: Bus owner
“The moment I came to know about this incident on Monday, I rebuked the bus conductor and asked him to behave properly. He was working with us for the past four years and there was no complaint against him. We are taking remedial measures,” said Amrik Singh, owner of the school buses hired by Stepping Stones School.

Aspirations bring girls to schools, lack of toilets drives them away 47% schools in the country do not have toilets for girls, forcing them to skip classes or drop out totally Live Mint | June 19 2014

New Delhi: Rukiya Khatun, 16, often skips breakfast before going to school, and feels tired and sleepy in the classroom, missing out on important lessons. The reason: lack of clean toilets at her school. Khatun is not alone. Scores of her schoolmates prefer to skip breakfast or a meal during recreation period to avoid having to use the toilet.

Sanitation is a key problem for these girls. Those “who don’t know how to manage it”, like her sister, miss out on regular schooling, says Khatun. But unlike her sister, Khatun is more persistent in pursuing education. “I don’t want to drop out. My sister was a little less motivated as a student and problems in school prompted her to drop out,” says Khatun, a Class XI student in Seemapuri, in north-east Delhi. Archana Yadav, 17, a Class XII student in the same locality, goes a step further and suggests that if schools can provide clean toilets, more girls will be able to complete their schooling. “Whenever we complain, there is a staple answer: it will improve,” says Yadav, whose father is dead and her mother provides for the family as a daily-wager.

“Poor people like us cannot afford the fees at a private school. And the situation in government schools is really bad, often forcing girls to skip classes or drop out,” says Yadav. Nearly 76% of India’s schools are operated by the government, but nearly half these schools don’t have usable toilet facilities for girl students. The situation is relatively better in private schools.

Despite the Right to Education (RTE) Act coming into force on 1 April 2010, the situation has not improved much. More than six decades after independence, half our citizens—over 600 million Indians—simply do not have access to a toilet either at home or in their communities, Census 2011 found.

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2013, published by education non-profit Pratham, the percentage of usable toilets for girls has increased from 32.9% in 2010 to 53.3% in 2013.

ARTICLE ONE- Abuse

But 47% schools in the country still do not have separate toilets for girls, increasing their chances of dropping out or facing regular difficulties. “If the government wants to promote girl education, they have to improve basic facilities for girls in schools,” says Delhi-based Nazma Parveen, whose daughter completed Class XII from a government school. Three years ago, Parveen shifted her daughter from a private school to a government school for financial reasons. Ever since, she says, her daughter has been reluctant to attend school and almost every day Parveen has to motivate her about the benefits of education. “It’s aspiration, not the facilities available, that is taking children to schools,” she says, pointing to a bigger shift India is observing and what experts refer to as “despite government not because of government”. “My husband is illiterate and I am school educated, but we want our children to study and become successful,” says Parveen. “Sanitation is a clear public good,” says Yamini Aiyar, director of Accountability Initiative, part of the Centre for Policy Research. “When we are shaping the future of the next generation in schools, we need to provide basic facilities.”

Aiyar is not sure whether there is a relation between the lack of toilets and education outcome and dropout rates at the primary school level. But there is a correlation between the two at the middle and high school levels, she says. “Since the government has committed to it, they need to deliver. Let teachers take care of education, not physical and peripheral infrastructure,” says Aiyar. The ministry is aware of the situation and is working to improve it through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme and the RTE Act, said a human resource development ministry official.

The official, who requested not to be named, said that while the central government can support the financing of basic facilities, state governments need to monitor the situation on the ground. The official pointed out that nearly 97% of children now have access to education at the elementary level shows the government’s commitment. School education in India caters to more than 220 million students. Each state has its unique problems, both economic and social, said the official. “But everybody is committed to improving facilities and the government realizes the importance of girl child education,” the official added.

The 2013 ASER report indicates that nationally, the proportion of girls in the age group 11-14 who are not enrolled in schools has fallen from 6% in 2012 to 5.5% in 2013. Yet, among all those entering school, nearly half, or 49.3%, children drop out by the time they reach Class X. Among girls, this number is 47.9%, according to official data. The dropout rate among boys stands higher, in most cases due to financial reasons. “Toilets are highly inadequate in schools and are definitely one of the reasons for dropping out. But more than anything it’s a dignity issue and an issue of security for girl students,” says Sachin Golwalkar, programme director at Child Fund India, a non-profit organization working in the field of school improvement, including building toilets in several states.

The issue does not limit to just older girls, but younger ones, too. “My daughter dropped out of school after Class III largely because her school did not have toilets two years ago,” says Yogika Dilip in Pune. “This year when the school established usable toilets, my daughter rejoined.” Mridula, a health and hygiene officer with Action India, a non-governmental organization working for improvement of schooling among girls, says girls often confide in her about the problem they face at school. “It’s a menstrual health issue for grown-up girls. But schools often fail to recognize this. So, even those who don’t actually drop out, end up missing school for a week every month,” says Mridula, who uses only one name. “Going outdoors to answer nature’s call poses a serious threat to the dignity of these girls.”

School dropout and early marriage
Khushnabi Begum, who lives in Delhi’s new Seemapuri slum cluster, got her elder daughter married two years after she dropped out of school. “When a girl does not go to school, there is constant pressure on parents to marry her off,” Khushnabi Begum says, adding that this is the situation in most poor families. There is a bigger side-effect of girls dropping out of schools. According to a 17 June report by philanthropic organization Dasra, India accounts for 40% of total child marriages in the world. Dasra’s report says 61% of women in India in the 25-49 age group were married off before the age of 18. Overall, 47% of Indian girls are married before they turn 18 and 22% of these girls give birth before turning 18, said the report titledMarry me later...

“The cost of lost productivity due to adolescent pregnancies in India is \$7.7 billion a year. Whereas girls who pursue secondary schooling are 70% less likely to marry as children,” says the report. Golwalkar of Child Fund India agrees. Dropping out of school has a direct correlation with child marriage, he says. “If a girl goes on to study in higher secondary and colleges, it will cut down the menace of child marriage significantly. It’s a socio-cultural issue,” he adds. But Aiyar of Accountability Initiative is a little sceptical about the issue. She says more study is required to establish whether dropping out leads to child marriage, or child marriage leads to dropouts. Khushnabi Begum, however, is clear: “Poor people like us want our girls to study more and get well-settled in life. But if they drop out due to several reasons including toilet facilities, the parents come under social pressure to get them married. It’s a mix of aspiration, reality and pressure from the society.” This is the third part of a Mint series on Toilets for India

ARTICLE THREE- Implementing of RTE

Is the Right to Education a reality for India’s children? The somewhat successful implementation of the RTE Act Business Standard | September 13, 2013

India is home to 19% of the world’s children. What this means is that India has the world’s largest number of youngsters, which is largely beneficial, especially as compared to countries like China, which has an ageing population.

The not-so-good news is that India also has one-third of the world’s illiterate population. It’s not as though literacy levels have not increased, but rather that the rate of the increase is rapidly slowing. For example, while total literacy growth from 1991 to 2001 was 12.6%, it has declined to 9.21%.

To combat this worrisome trend, the Indian government proposed the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, making education a fundamental right of every child in the age group of 6 to 14. Unsurprisingly, the reality is very different.

There are 5 main components that the Act puts forth:
• In India, every child is entitled to free and compulsory full-time elementary education (first to eighth grade) as facilitated by the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act. This means elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school run with certain essential standards

- Parents of children covered under RTE are not liable to pay for school fees, uniforms, textbooks, mid-day meals, transportation, etc. until the elementary education is complete.

- If a child has not managed to secure admission in a school according to age, it will be government’s responsibility to get the child admitted in an age-appropriate class. Schools will have to organize training sessions to allow such a child to catch up with others.

- No child shall be held back (failed) or expelled until the completion of elementary education.

- Not following the RTE rules can invite a penalty of Rs 25000.

While the RTE is a ground breaking piece of legislation, the first in the world that puts the responsibility of ensuring student enrollment, attendance and completion of elementary education on the Government., recent surveys by the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and UNICEF show that the state of education has not improved much since 2009, when the act was first proposed.

According to Tarun Cherukuri, City Director for Delhi for Teach For India, there is always a lag to be expected between de jure interventions and de facto outcomes.

“To expect laws to change citizen and public servant behaviour overnight is not realistic,” he says. “ There has been considerable progress in education inputs over the last decade due to efforts like SSA and RTE - pupil-teacher ratios have fallen over 20 percent (from 47.4 to 39.8), fractions of schools with toilets and electricity has more than doubled etc. These are all non-trivial achievements of the state system.”

Schools that have understood the remedial teaching process are unable to act accordingly due to the inappropriate student-teacher ratio.

“The ideal class for the remedial teaching process is of 30 students,” Sangeeta Shrivastva, principal of Kandivali Education Society Schools told DNA. Thus, when the strength of a class varies from 60 to 80 students, it is difficult to provide remedial teaching those who are not up to the set expectations of a class.

“The [RTE] Act does not do enough justice to enable marginal improvements in quality and foster creative solutions within the larger system,” continues Cherukuri. “By making a clear choice for access through the concept of neighbourhood schools, the Act has virtually sealed the door on drawing benefits from economies of scale within schooling systems.”

It seems to be an unassailable fact that the RTE Act appears, on paper at least, to be an ideal solution to the problems of education in India. However, its implementation too has been faulty.

16 Although state education departments and local education authorities are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Act, this responsibility doesn’t seem to have been taken seriously.

“There are no special audit mechanisms like in the case of NREGA,” says Cherukuri. “This accountability mechanism is weak in almost all states and judicial activism through PILs has been the common and reasonably successful recourse.”

Another rather glaring flaw is the “no failure” policy that the Act attempts to implement. What the Act attempts to do is implement a Comprehensive Curriculum Evaluation (CCE), to ensure that tests are not be the singular measure of a child’s progress during an academic year.

“Students are supposed to be tested through multiple formats - presentations, projects, public performances etc,” explains Mr. Cherukuri.”

However, because CCE is not understood properly by officials in many schools, children are constantly passed to higher grade levels, regardless of whether or not they are prepared for that higher level of work. “Most schools use CCE as a medium to excuse themselves from pursuing rigorous work with their children. Most children glide through the system without achieving any significant learning outcomes,” says Mr. Cherukuri, who says he is in favour of CCE, at least in principle.

Further, campaigners claim that children from poor families are often pulled out of school by their parents, who need them to work.

“State and National child rights commissions have been working actively with governments to reduce the percentage of children out of school and [involved] in child labour,” says Cherukuri. “The reality is that there is still a long way to go to achieve 100 percent enrollment and ensure retention within school for at least 8 years of schooling.”

Passing a bill is one easy thing to do. What is seems to be the key in ensuring this Act is successful, is to make parents, particularly in rural areas, aware of the benefits of education and to encourage them to send their children to school.

Like many attempted social changes in India, this too has to start at the community level, requires a widespread change of an age-old mindset and must make people at the helm of affairs accountable.

Photo Courtesy: UNICEF and CMS Photo Collection

References

- 1 District Information System for Education, U-DICE 2014-2015
- 2 Annual Status of Education report, ASER, 2014
- 3 Estimates from Census, 2011
- 4 Ministry of Women and Child Department (MWCD), 2011
- 5 Estimates from UNICEF India website
- 6 SRI-IMRB Survey, 2014

Websites: www.righttoeducation.in | www.unicef.org/india | www.childlineindia.org | www.dice.in
www.infochangeindia.org | www.worldbank.org | www.girlsnotbrides.org | www.asercentre.org

CMS Regional Office
1300 A Jubilee Hills Society, Road No. 66
Hyderabad 500033

91 040 2354 0493
cmshyderabad@cmsindia.org
www.cmsindia.org

UNICEF Hyderabad Field Office
317/A, MLA Colony, Road No.12 Banjara Hills
Hyderabad 500034

91 40 2354 0722
91 40 2354 0744
hyderabad@unicef.org
www.unicef.org